A Mission Too Far . . .
Pacific Commitment

Jan Snijders
The Marist Series
Through the Marist Series the Society of Mary (Marists) shares projects by Marists in the field of theology and history and works about the role of the Marists in the church, in particular in the Pacific.

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A Mission Too Far . . .
Pacific Commitment and the Marist Missions
1835-1841

Jan Snijders SM
It looks
as if God asks this commitment
of the Society

Jean-Claude Colin to François Pompallier

3 August 1835
This is a landmark book for historians, but more than that as well. It is the first in-depth scholarly publication on Father Jean-Claude Colin as the French founder of the Marist Missions in the South Pacific. It is an enthralling read for anyone who wonders how French countrymen coped when trying to open a Catholic mission in the New Zealand and in the Polynesian Islands of the 1830s and 1840s. And anyone interested in cross-cultural processes will get a very close look at the culture contacts between French Catholics, Polynesian people and British settlers, all pursuing their own objectives.

A good historian, it has been said, is a prophet in reverse. The perceptive historian has the ability to look back at the past, identify issues overlooked by others, all the while stimulating the reader to search for the implications in the present of what has been discovered. Jan Snijders is such a prophet in reverse. He brings his shrewd intuitions and scholarly reflections to the material of this book as no previous writer on Colin’s leadership in 1835–1841 has so far been able to achieve. In order to shape a rounded view of the founder, Colin, he gives significant emphasis to how his vision was received by his followers. Identifying and explaining the complex context in which Colin exercised his leadership is crucial for the author’s approach. And like a good prophet he questions much conventional wisdom. Hence, his insights may well arouse strong reactions. The book is also a case study of how people of European origin interact with people of vastly different cultures. For this reason it is of immense interest to missiologists and cultural anthropologists. Indeed there are lessons for all who read these pages.

Biography is a perplexing art. Biographers are attracted to their subject for reasons they can initially explain. They then set off on paths that will lead, they presume, to the truth about an issue that troubles them, only to find themselves branching off into surprisingly unexpected insights about
other important but very related issues. This is what I suspect is the pattern of Snijders’ journey in writing this deeply researched book and helps to make it so readable and human.

He is puzzled by the fact that the main themes of Colin’s vision for the congregation, such as ‘Mary in the Early Church and at the End of Time,’ ‘hidden and unknown,’ and ‘instruments of Divine mercy’ rarely, if at all, appear in his correspondence with the early missionaries. The latter for their part, Snijders writes, ‘appear not to know them, in any case they never use them, not even when it would have been very appropriate.’ However, despite this apparently disconcerting fact the author is deeply impressed by Colin’s ability to embed in his missionaries an intense, faith-filled commitment to Jesus Christ. He was superbly successful as a spiritual director of these early Marists, and they deeply appreciated this. Through his leadership Colin inspired his men to be truly humble servants of Christ and people with whom they interacted. Their inner spiritual strength gave them the ability to cope patiently with the world of different and complex cultures that they encountered.

But as an administrator Colin was tragically ineffective. For example, contrary to the well-tested two centuries of missionary tradition in the Church Bishop Pompallier was to be both episcopal and religious superior. This placed the early Marists in an impossible position. Once they had left France, Marists for their religious life, ministry and upkeep were to be the responsibility of the bishop alone. As Snijders notes ‘as far as the missions were concerned, Colin withdrew in an attitude of benign neglect and turned his attention elsewhere’. He did not as founder establish appropriate structures of authority and support for his men. This was a recipe for administrative disaster: his ‘single-minded focus on moral and spiritual issues meant he paid scant attention to practical matters.’ He saw it as his role to remain ‘non-involved in anything but spiritual direction.’

This neglect by Colin of his men’s practical material needs was most regrettable, but equally startling was his disregard of their emotional needs. For example, he failed to write interesting and comforting letters to them so isolated, lonely and in poverty. His rather passive view of Providence did not help. Undoubtedly a man of profound faith he believed that Providence would provide the men and finances for the Pacific mission, but he failed to see that he should collaborate with Providence in building an organisational structure and culture adequate for the missionary task of

1. The quotations throughout the foreword are from the text of Jan Snijders.
religious men. Of course the conclusions of this book are confined only to Colin’s first five years as superior general. We now need rigorous research, similar to that conducted by the author, into the remaining years of Colin’s generalate. However, given the fact that bishops in Oceania were to remain simultaneously the religious superiors of Marists, I personally suspect that any effort that Colin might have made to improve significantly his administrative involvement in the missions would ultimately have been ineffective.

However, in fairness to Colin his failure to establish appropriate structures is not unique. Many founders of religious congregations in history suffered from the same problem. Either they borrowed structures from other congregations (as Colin eventually did by adopting aspects of the Jesuit constitutions), or structures were imposed on them by Rome, or they just let things drift so that the original creative initiative completely collapsed. Today we know that leadership and management have different but complementary roles. Leaders inspire people with a vision; they challenge the status quo. Managers, on the other hand, have the ability to plan and establish appropriate structures and strategies that allow the vision to take concrete form. Managers aim to provide order, support and predictability. Leaders challenge order. Sometimes, though rarely, the roles of leadership and management are to be found in the same person. Such was the case with St Benedict, St Dominic, and St Ignatius. Colin was certainly a leader with a vision, but he lacked management skills. Nor did he delegate to one skilled in management to assume that role. Hence, the tragic consequences for the Marist missionaries.

Though the book primarily focuses on Colin’s impact on his men, particularly in the South Pacific mission, Bishop Pompallier is inevitably a dominant and controversial figure. While he was in many ways a successful, even culturally sensitive, missionary, nonetheless as an administrator or manager he was also a disaster. Pompallier was a bully towards the men, though, like most bullies, he favoured some whom he liked and who did not question his behaviour. Mirroring the worst features of contemporary hierarchical and authoritarian episcopal behaviour, and given his poor relations with his men and financial mismanagement, he ‘brought the mission to the edge of ruin in five years.’ Tragically, Colin from the beginning had his doubts about Pompallier’s suitability for the task, but there was little he could do to stop his appointment. However, he could have built structures to protect his men from Pompallier’s abusive behaviour. He did not do so.
For a missiologist and anthropologist this book is rich in material and reflections. This is not surprising as Snijders, as a former effective missionary and administrator himself, has always had a profound scholarly and practical interest in the relationship between missiology and anthropology. Anthropology is often laying bare the cultural forces that motivate people, though they are so often unconscious of these forces’ existence and their power to control behaviour. This gives the book one of its many unique qualities and a resource not just for Marists but for evangelizers throughout the Church. Only a missionary, who has himself regularly risked travelling by small, fragile boats in tumultuous seas and navigating the dangers of coral reefs, could express such deep sensitivity for the feelings and fears of the early Marists en route to remote islands in the South Pacific.

While I was a member of the newly established Melanesian Institute, Papua New Guinea, in 1969, Jan would sit in the front row of my anthropological lectures, particularly those dealing with the tensions between radically different cultures. He would constantly see connections between the theory and his own experience in the Solomon Islands. He highlights several issues of importance that are bound to stimulate the thinking of contemporary missiologists and anthropologists. As already noted, the personal qualities of the early Marists were indeed remarkable. The men did not seem to have experienced culture jolts and shock on meeting cultures and living conditions so vastly different from their own background in France.

Snijders comments, summarising the letters of missionaries, that ‘Chanel even eats and enjoys the thick white grubs Futunans prise out of dead trees’ and others ‘enjoy the music and the dances, admire the food gardens and the people’s fishing skills.’

This rather surprising fact will surely tempt future researchers to want to go more deeply into the reasons for these positive reactions. Why did the men, mostly of peasant or working-class background, keep a relatively balanced approach to these cultures, despite the fact that they had had no formal specific theological and cultural training for their ministry? These early Marists, contrary to anti-missionary writings among many contemporary social scientists, generally acted in a respectful, non-fundamentalist religious manner towards local cultures. On the whole, as Snijders indicates, the Marists were quite tolerant of local traditional sacred objects and customs.

---

Certain church fathers such as Justin, Irenaeus of Lyons, and Clement of Alexandria either explicitly or in an equivalent manner speak about the ‘seeds’ sown by the Word of God in cultures. Justin claims: ‘Everything good that has been said, no matter by whom, is Christian.’ The Word of God is actively present, although in an incomplete way, in all cultures. In this Snijders’ book we see that the early Marists appear to have accepted this theology. But the questions remain: did they formally know of this theology? If not, how were they influenced to behave in a generally patient and listening manner? Was it due to Colin’s spiritual advice to them to be other Christs in their ministry? Or was it the result of his counselling not to take themselves too seriously by cultivating a good sense of humour?

Another question that is bound to raise further discussion is Snijders’ scholarly reflections on the reasons for the death of Peter Chanel. He writes: ‘why was Peter Chanel killed? . . . The answer was evident for the Marists of his time. Chanel was their martyr!’ Snijders is not so sure. At the end of his analysis he writes: ‘Peter Chanel himself and the Gospel message he brought got caught in the violent politics of a warlike people.’ There are cultural, but especially political, factors that need to be considered in assessing the reason for his death. Hatred for the faith may not have been the motive of the killer. If this was the case, it does not lessen, Peter Chanel’s claim to sanctity. Snijders concludes: ‘his steadily deteriorating health, his terrible toothaches, the deprivations especially of the last half year, and his violent death, surely earn him the title of proto-martyr of Oceania and, if that does not fit into the official definition [of martyrdom], let the definition change.’

Gerald A Arbuckle, sm
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ABBREVIATIONS

ARCHIVES

APM   Archives of the Marist Fathers, Via Alessandro Poerio 63, Roma.
ASCPF Archives of the Sacra Congregatio De Propaganda Fide, Roma.
OPM   Archives of the Documentation Centre of the Pontifical Mission Works, 12, rue Sala, Lyon.

COLLECTIONS of original documents

CS    «Colin sup», Gaston Lessard (editor).
CCC   Chanel d’après Ceux qui l’ont Connu, Claude Rozier (editor).
EC    Ecrits de S Pierre Chanel, Claude Rozier (editor)
FA    A Founder Acts, Jean Coste (editor)
FS    A Founder Speaks, Jean Coste (editor).
LMC   Lettres de Marcellin J.B. Champagnat, Paul Sester (editor).
LO    Letters from Oceania, Edward Clisby (translator and editor).
LRO   Lettres reçues d’Océanie, Charles Girard (editor).
LM    Lay Marists, Charles Girard Girard (editor).
OM    Origines Maristes, Jean Coste and Gaston Lessard (editors).
RMJ   Recueil Mère Saint-Joseph (anonymous editor).

After the first mention the collections are referred to with the above mentioned sigla.
Where possible the documents are referred to with the numbers in the collections as ‘Doc’ or ‘Docs’. Where the collections do not number documents, we refer to pages. Unless otherwise advised, translations are the author’s own.
Polynesian words are printed in italics. At the first mention the meaning is given in a footnote. A list of Polynesian words is placed after the Appendix.
Acknowledgments

We all stand on the shoulders of giants, it has been said. I have had the privilege of standing on three of them: the late Father Jean Coste who reanimated my interest in Jean-Claude Colin, the Founder of the Society of Mary, Father Charles Girard who gave us a ten-volume critical edition of the letters that the early Marist missionaries wrote to the Founder and Father Gaston Lessard who, after his life long collaboration with Jean Coste, did the same thing for the letters of Jean-Claude Colin himself. Without their years of painstaking work it would not have been thinkable to attempt this kind of step by step account of what happened in the 1830s and 1840s in places as far apart as Rome, Lyon, New Zealand and Island Polynesia. With these three I want to mention the late Father Donal Kerr who provided us with the first part of a biography of Jean-Claude Colin, up to 1836, but who was taken to his reward before he could continue. With the last words of his book Donal refers to a future work. Perhaps he will accept this book as part of it.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the help I received from Father Carlo Maria Schianchi of the Marist Fathers Archives in Rome and his assistant Signora Gabriella Pierre-Louis. Other archivists too have been very helpful among whom I would like to mention the Fathers André Mark and Juan Luiz Schuster of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts, Madame Odile Lolom of the Centre de Documentation of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon and Father Bruce Bolland of the Diocese of Auckland.

Among the many Marist confreres who have helped me I want to mention Father Alois Greiler who was a wise mentor and gave me professional guidance in my research and writing. In New Zealand, Father Mervyn Duffy gave me the opportunity to test the reception of my early chapters on the website for Marist Studies. I thank my friend Father Gerald Arbuckle for his enthusiastic ‘Foreword’ and I thank the Superior General of the Society of Mary, Father John Hannan, for his encouragement and for
his support of this publication. Finally, Father Peter Ewart who weeded out the worst mistakes in my English and if exacting readers still wince at an odd turn of phrase, be sure I have been tinkering with the text after Peter had done his best on it.

Jan Snijders, SM
Introduction

A Foster Father

Life has a sense of humour of its own. The man whose ideal it was to live the life of Mary, found himself twice in the role of Joseph.

Jean-Claude Colin, born in France on 7 August 1790, in a hamlet near the village of Saint-Bonnet-le-Troncy (Rhône), having lost both parents at the age of four, was brought up by an unmarried uncle and his housekeeper. He received his first schooling, at the age of ten, from a nun expelled from her convent during the French Revolution and followed his older brother Pierre to the Minor Seminary when he was fourteen. In spite of his delicate health he did well in his studies and was accepted into the Major Seminary of Saint-Irénée in Lyon in 1813.1 Scrupulous and of a shy temperament, he might have remained no more than the nice, little country priest described by Mayet, ‘always looking around where to stand so as to take in as little space as possible’.2 However, in 1814 an older student, Jean-Claude Courveille, entered the same Seminary and gave a new direction to Colin’s life.

Jean-Claude Courveille,3 born in 1787 in Usson-en-Forez (Loire), was a kind of visionary who, in 1811 or 1812, had passed through what he considered a super-natural experience. He was convinced he had been entrusted from on high with the task of founding a Society of Mary, reminiscent of the Society of Jesus, which was disbanded by Pope Clement XIV in 1773.4 ‘I was the support of the new-born Church; I shall be also at the

2. OM 2, Doc 537, 23.
4. The Order was re-established in 1814 by Pius VII.
end of time’ was the message of the Mother of God as Courveille passed it on to his followers. On Mary’s behalf, the members of the new Society, Marists as he called them, were to be the Jesuits of the post-revolutionary Church. The Enlightenment and the Revolution had thrown France into an age of ‘impiety and incredulity’ so destructive of the traditional faith, that for Courveille and many of his contemporaries it was of their very own days that Jesus had said: ‘But when the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?’

Courveille must have been an impressive man. No sooner had he entered the Major Seminary than he was encouraged to recruit followers. The withdrawn little Colin did not immediately attract his attention. He only joined a little later, on the invitation of a friend, Étienne Déclas, hoping in this way to find ‘a life removed from the world in which Mary, his heavenly mother, would play a major role (. . .) The call promised to fulfill all he dreamt of from his boyhood on.’ He never looked back.

Firmly led by Courveille, a band of some twelve young men solemnly committed themselves on 23 July 1816, the day after some of them had been ordained priests, in the chapel of Our Lady of Fourvière, Lyon, to found their Congregation of Marists, the Society of Mary. Although dispersed over the vast diocese of Lyon, and, after its division in 1822 over the Dioceses of Lyon and Belley, aspirant Marists acknowledged Courveille as their leader. Jean-Claude Colin, his older brother Pierre who joined the group when Jean-Claude became his curate at Cerdon, Marcellin Champagnat who had started his branch of Teaching Brothers in 1817, Jeanne-Marie Chavoin who had moved to Cerdon in 1817 and had brought the first group of Marist Sisters together, as well as various lay-associates, they all deferred to Courveille. But it gradually became clear that the man lacked the spiritual depth and the leadership qualities needed. In 1826 he disgraced himself and had to withdraw to another Diocese.

Four years later the personality of Jean-Claude Colin had emerged to the point that the group of ‘Marist’ diocesan priests chose him (in an unofficial election and unknown to their Bishops) unanimously to be their

central Superior, which does not mean they always deferred to him in practice.\textsuperscript{10} In that capacity he went to Rome in 1833–1834 to obtain papal approval for the Society. In 1836, once the branch of the priests was officially approved, they elected him their first Superior General.\textsuperscript{11} The Society of Mary had not been his initiative, the original vision had not been his, nor had he given the Society its name, but in the end he became the acknowledged founder. For the Society of Mary he will always and rightly be: ‘\textit{le Père Fondateur},’ ‘Father Founder’.

In 1835, it happened again. Without Colin having a say in it, at first even unknown to him, other people involved the fledgling Society into a missionary adventure of frightening dimensions in a new mission field on the other side of the world. One of the crucial aspects of the venture, its leadership, was to all practical purposes settled before Colin even heard of it. But within a year the responsibility for the Pacific missions lay squarely in his hands and he was the official steersman on a voyage he had neither chosen nor planned. Within a few years, one of the early missionaries, writing about the Pacific Islanders called them: ‘your children’.\textsuperscript{12} An early biographer of Colin turns this into ‘\textit{Père des Océaniens},’ ‘Father of the Oceanians’.\textsuperscript{13} As a later Pacific Church historian puts it: ‘Like Abraham, Jean-Claude Colin became the father in the faith of a multitude of Oceanians’.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{10} Kerr, \textit{Colin}, 246–8 and OM 1, Doc 358, 2.
\textsuperscript{11} Kerr, \textit{Colin}, 259–78 and 293–9.
\textsuperscript{13} Anonymous (Jean Jeantin), \textit{Le Très Révérend Père Colin} (Lyon: Vitte, 1895) volume 3, 419.
### Main Events

#### 1835

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<td>Cardinal Fransoni writes from Rome to Canon Pastre in Lyon</td>
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<td>19 July</td>
<td>Vicar General Cholleton points to Pompallier as possible leader</td>
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<td>3 August</td>
<td>Colin tentatively approves the project</td>
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<td>7 August</td>
<td>First letter of Pastre to Fransoni</td>
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<td>10 February</td>
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<td>29 April</td>
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<td>30 June</td>
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<td>24 September</td>
<td>Jean-Claude Colin elected Superior General</td>
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<td>24 December</td>
<td>Pompallier sails from Le Havre on the <em>Delphine</em> with four priests and three Brothers</td>
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<td>28 February</td>
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<td>28 June</td>
<td><em>Delphine</em> reaches Valparaiso</td>
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<td>10 August</td>
<td>Missionaries leave on <em>Europa</em></td>
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<td>13 September</td>
<td><em>Europa</em> in the Gambier Islands</td>
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<td>21 September</td>
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<td>Missionaries sail from Tahiti on <em>Raiatea</em></td>
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<td>1 November</td>
<td><em>Raiatea</em> reaches Wallis and drops off Bataillon and Luzy</td>
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<td>8 November</td>
<td><em>Raiatea</em> reaches Futuna and drops off Chanel and Marie-Nizier</td>
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<td>--- November</td>
<td>Colin sends 8,700 francs to Pompallier by a whaling ship</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 December</td>
<td><em>Raiatea</em> reaches Sydney</td>
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<td>30 December</td>
<td><em>Raiatea</em> leaves Sydney</td>
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<td>22 January</td>
<td>Pompallier nearly expelled by action of hostile Maoris</td>
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<td>--- March</td>
<td>War on Futuna</td>
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<td>24 March</td>
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<td>Peter Chanel returns to Futuna</td>
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<td>10 May</td>
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<td>--- September</td>
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<td>12 October</td>
<td>Pompallier received with honours on French frigate <em>Venus</em></td>
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<td>--- October</td>
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<td>12 December</td>
<td><em>Basque</em> reaches Valparaiso</td>
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Main Events

1839

27 January Missionaries of second band leave Valparaiso on *Reine de Paix*

--- March *Justine* brings Pompallier first mail and money from France

13 April *Reine de Paix* in Tahiti. Marists buy half-share in *Reine de Paix*

17 April *Reine de Paix* sails from Tahiti

2 May Missionaries of second band visit Wallis

8 May Missionaries of second band visit Futuna with Bataillon

14 June Second band of missionaries reaches New Zealand

14 June Third band, four priests and one Brother leave from London on *Australian Packet*

--- June Mission headquarters to Bay of Islands

3 July Bataillon returns to Wallis

10 August War on Futuna

--- September Poupinel joins Marist staff at Puylata

23 October Third band reaches Sydney

--- October Colin moves from Belley to Puylata, Lyon

--- November Pompallier sells *Reine de Paix*

10 December Third band reaches Bay of Islands, New Zealand

17 December Chevron and Brother Attale leave for Wallis & Futuna

1840

--- January Opening of the mission in Whangaroa

6 February Treaty of Waitangi

19 February Fourth band, two priests & two Brothers leave Nantes on *Aube.*

19 April Bataillon blesses first church on Nukuatea

26 April Servant and Petit write uncensored letters to Colin

--- April Dumont d’Urville visits mission headquarters at Kororareka

--- May Opening of the mission in Kaipara district

--- May Opening of the mission in Tauranga

16 May Chevron and Attale land on Futuna

6 June Death of Marcelllin Champagnat

11 July *Aube* reaches Bay of Islands with four missionaries

--- July Opening of the mission in Akaroa, South Island
--- August  Brothers Amon and Michel leave the Society and the mission
--- September  Pompallier buys Sancta Maria
--- September  Maitrepierre becomes assistant general
19 November  Bankruptcy of Bank of Wright
8 December  Fifth band of fourteen missionaries sails from London on Mary Grey

1841

24 March  Colin receives uncensored letters from Tripe, Servant and Petit
28 April  Peter Chanel killed on Futuna.
20 May  Colin proposes new vicariate for Central Oceania
12 June  Cardinal Fransoni asks Pompallier to agree to second Vicariate
15 June  Twelve new missionaries arrive in Bay of Islands
21 July  Pompallier leaves for South Island. Épalle in charge in Kororareka
--- August  Opening of the mission in Matamata
Opening of the mission in Maketu
Opening of the mission in Opotiki
21 September  Retreat Belley. Colin offers resignation
27 September  Colin agrees to stay on as Superior General
Forest appointed visitator of the missions
--- October  Épalle hears of death of Peter Chanel. Notifies Pompallier in Akaroa
22 October  Letter Colin to Pompallier. Colin announces end of collaboration
16 November  Sixth band sails from London, three priests, two Brothers, one scholastic
--- November  Colin withdraws to Belley
16 November  Pompallier sails for Wallis on Sancta Maria & Allier
28 December  Pompallier arrives in Wallis
1842

6 January  
Sancta Maria & Allier sail for Futuna

17 January  
Futunans render remains of Peter Chanel to Viard on Sancta Maria

19 January  
Two ships return to New Zealand. Pompallier remains on Wallis

--- May  
Pompallier and Bataillon receive Wallis into the Church.
Chapter 1
How it All Began

The Opening Move

It all began on 4 July 1835, not quite a year after the first Picpus missionaries had sailed from Valparaiso, Chile, for the Gambier Islands in the South-East Pacific.¹ Cardinal Fransoni, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in Rome, usually referred to as 'Propaganda', wrote to Jean-Louis Pastre, a titular Canon of Saint John's Cathedral in Lyon, inviting him to consider heading a new mission in the South-West Pacific.² Pastre was known to Propaganda as the former Prefect Apostolic of the island of Réunion (at the time, Île Bourbon) in the Indian Ocean. Rome had reasons to think that he had not given up the idea of working as a missionary. Also, asked Fransoni, would you think it possible, in case you accept, to find, especially in the Archdiocese of Lyon, good priests to join you?³ Although Fransoni had been a member of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Regulars in 1833–1834 when it dealt with (and turned down) the application of Jean-Claude Colin for approbation of the Society of Mary, and although he may have met Colin at that time, nothing in the letter suggests that he now had the Marists specifically in mind.⁴ Lyon was known for its numerous vocations and for a widespread interest in the foreign missions.

² OM 1, Doc 337.
³ Ralph M Wiltgen, *The Founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Oceania, 1825–1850* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1979), 54.
⁴ If that had been the case, Fransoni would probably have approached Colin directly (or his Bishop) as he had done in 1833 with Marin Ducrey, whom Fransoni knew to have even fewer possibilities than Colin. Cf Kerr, *Colin*, 283, note 15 and 16.
Pastre spoke with the Apostolic Administrator of Lyon, Archbishop Gaston de Pins, and regretfully answered the Cardinal he would have loved nothing more than accept the offer, but, given his age and his health, he was quite unable to take on so awesome a task: ‘It would take another Francis Xavier!’ He felt sure he would have got the support of several Bishops, especially that of the Administrator of Lyon, ‘but at my age . . . ’. The Archbishop forwarded the answer to Fransoni and in his covering letter he confirmed that Pastre would gladly have accepted, but that, given his age and his health, he was indeed unable to take on so arduous a responsibility. He also confirmed that he would have done his best to support Pastre ‘to the best of my ability’. And he left it at that.

Twelve years later, Gabriel-Claude Mayet, the faithful chronicler of things Marist, recorded what happened next. Two days after writing to Fransoni, Pastre was still distressed by his inability to accept the offer of Propaganda, when he ran into Jean Cholleton, one of the Vicars General of Lyon. He told Cholleton about Fransoni’s request and about the negative answer he unfortunately had been forced to give. Would the Vicar General not know a priest whom Pastre could propose to Propaganda? Yes, Cholleton is said to have answered, I know a zealous priest who wants to devote his life to the missions: ‘Monsieur Pompallier’, and he belongs to a new Society. This is what Mayet wrote in 1847 as something he had heard from Cholleton himself. However, that cannot be the whole story.

But first, who was this Monsieur Pompallier?

Jean-Baptiste-François Pompallier was born on the 1st of December, 1801, in an upper middle class family in Lyon. His father died 30 August 1802, his mother remarried with a wealthy silk trader, Jean-Marie Solichon. He attended a good school and tried the novitiate of the Jesuits, but returned to the Diocese and entered the Major Seminary of Lyon in 1826, where he was ordained a priest in June 1829. About six feet tall, handsome, gifted and charming, he moved with grace and self-assurance in the higher classes of society. At that stage he already had expressed a desire to join the Marists and one of them, Étienne Séon, even took his place as a curate in the village where Pompallier was appointed, so as to allow him

6. OM 1, Docs 338 and 339.
7. OM 2, pages 15–93.
to join the community of Marcellin Champagnat and his Brothers at the Hermitage, near Saint-Étienne, which he did in September 1829. He was with the Marist priests when they elected Jean-Claude Colin to be their central Superior in September 1830. With Colin’s approval he moved in 1832 to Valbenoîte, today a suburb of Saint-Étienne, and in 1833 to Lyon, where he was chaplain of the so-called Frères Tertiaires and became the Director of a boys’ school at La Favorite. He moved with ease in and out of the Archdiocesan offices and was particularly close to Vicar General Cholleton, to whom he had confided that he was interested in the foreign missions.

Bypassing Colin

From the very beginning Cholleton had been a warm supporter of the Marist cause. As a Professor at the Seminary of Saint-Irénée, he had encouraged Courveille and the little group that Courveille gathered around him. As Vicar General he looked for some years after the Marists’ interests at the Archdiocese. He shared their desire for the pontifical approbation that would make them free to develop as an autonomous congregation, independent from the bishops. He too must have been worried by the fact that more than a year after Colin’s return from Rome (March 1834), no answer had come to the request for that approbation. As a seminarian he had volunteered for the missions in Kentucky, which explains his interest in the foreign missions. He had been held back for higher studies. He had been involved in the official approbation of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith, a lay movement for the financial support of foreign missions.

When Pastre told him of the letter from Rome, Cholleton probably already knew from the Archbishop. As an experienced administrator Cholleton would have seen a golden opportunity to get the papal approbation. He had no doubts that the energetic and able Pompallier was the right man to lead the venture and that the idealistic young Marists perfectly fitted Fransoni’s description of the good priests needed for the mission. Cholleton was familiar enough with the Marists to know that in an even-

tual official election Colin would, in all probability, become their Superior General. He could have referred Pastre to Colin, but he did not. Pastre had approached him as the Vicar General and quite correctly Cholleton went to see Archbishop de Pins.

Like Cholleton, de Pins was a warm supporter of the Marist project. No sooner had he taken over the administration of Lyon than he gave Champagnat’s Teaching Brothers the status of a Diocesan Congregation. He did what he could to obtain their approval by the civil authorities. For the priests too he had a warm heart, but only in the perspective of a diocesan institute under his authority. Cholleton proposed to mention Pompallier to Pastre as a man to put forward for the mission in Oceania. De Pins, who liked the gifted and charming Pompallier, readily agreed. At this stage at least, the obvious thing would have been to involve Colin. However, unlike his Vicar General, de Pins did not want the Marists to become a pontifical congregation and the Marists had proceeded to elect Colin to be their central superior without his permission. As to Pompallier, he was a priest of the Archdiocese of Lyon and Colin was a priest of the Diocese of Belley without any standing in the matter. One can understand that de Pins saw no reason to involve Colin and Cholleton could not very well do so without the Bishop’s agreement.

But Cholleton had other good reasons to leave Colin out. He was possibly the only one to know¹³ that Colin had on another occasion (probably after his stay in Rome in 1833–1834) already been asked to accept a foreign mission, but had turned it down because the Society had not yet been approved: a good reason to fear that, left to himself, Colin might do the same thing again. As to Pompallier, he was a priest of the Archdiocese of Lyon and Colin was a priest of the Diocese of Belley without any standing in the matter. One can understand that de Pins saw no reason to involve Colin and Cholleton could not very well do so without the Bishop’s agreement.

What would Colin have against Pompallier?

When Pompallier joined the Marists after his ordination in 1829, all of them, including Colin, would have welcomed him as a great asset to their Society. He took part in preaching parish missions and was sincerely

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¹³. OM 1, Doc 358, 1.

¹⁴. Alois Greiler & Justin Taylor, Peter Chanel, Zeuge des neuen Lebens (Ahmsen: private publication, 2003), 10, think that, given a chance, Colin would have presented Peter Chanel for the leadership position. Many things indeed point that way, eg, the fact that Colin took him as a companion to Rome in 1833, and had him appointed vice-superior of the minor seminary of Belley. Claude Rozier, S. Pierre Chanel d’après ceux qui l’ont connu (Rome: Marist Fathers, 1991), 31, note 3, concludes from a remark made by Colin, that he would not have considered Chanel the ‘firm character’ needed for the position. We can only guess.
committed to the Marist project. However, it did not take long before he irritated Jean-Claude Colin. Although the junior priest in the Hermitage, he took it upon himself to write detailed rules and regulations for the community.\textsuperscript{15} When Pompallier and the other priests, against the wishes of Marcellin Champagnat, decided to leave the community of the Brothers and form a community of their own in Valbenoîte, Colin agreed\textsuperscript{16} and again Pompallier took it upon himself to write a rule.\textsuperscript{17} Colin was not happy. He felt they should live Marist religious life before codifying it, ‘running faster than Providence’ he called it.\textsuperscript{18} Also, composing a rule should not be done by one man, but by the whole group.\textsuperscript{19} Consulted about the choice of a superior, the confreres in Valbenoîte preferred Étienne Séon,\textsuperscript{20} after which it did not take Pompallier long before he accepted, be it with Colin’s agreement, an appointment as chaplain of the Tertiary Brothers of Mary and of the school that some of them had founded in La Favorite. The position was offered him by the Brothers themselves, on suggestion of Cholleton.\textsuperscript{21} He went to live in the so-called Tour, near Fourvière, not far from the archdiocesan offices and immediately started writing rules for the Tertiaries.\textsuperscript{22} Not long afterwards he got into conflict with one of the founders, who was also the director of the school, Jean-Claude-Xavier Colard, who was forced to hand over the institution, leaving Pompallier in charge.\textsuperscript{23} Everything taken together no wonder Colin had his doubts about Pompallier’s abilities as a leader of men\textsuperscript{24} and about his endurance in the face of adversities, as surely would come his way in Oceania.

\textsuperscript{15} OM 2, Doc 625, 23.
\textsuperscript{16} OM 1, Docs 242, 2 and 255, 1.
\textsuperscript{17} OM 1, Doc 224, introductory note.
\textsuperscript{18} OM 1, Doc 227, 2. OM 2, Doc 625, 25.
\textsuperscript{19} OM 1, Docs 222, 4 and 225, 1.
\textsuperscript{20} OM 1, Doc 255, 1. OM 2, Doc 625, 24–27.
\textsuperscript{22} OM 2, Doc 625, 27. OM 3, Doc 878, 20. Cf LM, Docs 14 and 15. In 1836 Pompallier submitted the rule for approval in Rome. It shows a remarkable affinity to early Colinian spiritual themes, eg, ‘present age’ and ‘the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph, in the midst of the world, but so close to God, without letting people know what they were’. OM 1, Doc 392, 1 and 17.
\textsuperscript{23} Written in the heat of later controversy, cf OM 4, Doc 909, 4.
\textsuperscript{24} Wiltgen, \textit{Founding}, 122, is of the opinion that ‘Colin was in favour of Pompallier, having encouraged him as early as 3 August 1835 to accept responsibility for heading the mission, because ‘at the present moment I can think of no one else but you who can fill the position that is offered to you’. A rather glum recommendation that, taken in the total context, rather betrays Colin’s unease. Given that the prestigious position was already offered, what else could Colin do or say?
Eleven years later, when problems with Pompallier had mounted, Jean-Claude Colin, then Superior General of the Society of Mary, in the confidentiality of his council, snapped that it was the administration of Lyon that had proposed Pompallier to become Vicar Apostolic: ‘Je n’y suis pour rien!’ (I had nothing to do with it).\textsuperscript{25}

In any case, after seeing de Pins, Cholleton, without contacting Jean-Claude Colin, went ahead and told Pastre that he knew a zealous priest who was keen to go to the missions and whom he would be pleased with: it was Monsieur Pompallier, Director of the boarding school of La Favorite. And, moreover, he belonged to a new Society. Cholleton arranged a meeting between the two, Pastre was very impressed with Pompallier and, if we must believe Mayet’s notes of twelve years later, presented Pompallier to Cardinal Fransoni.\textsuperscript{26} Here again, Mayet (or Cholleton in his oral account to Mayet) skipped a few things. Pastre may have been inclined to pass the good news immediately to Fransoni. Perhaps Cholleton and de Pins expected him to do so, but somebody convinced Pastre to wait, and under the circumstances that can only have been Pompallier himself, wanting to assure himself of the support of his Marist confreres.

Immediately after the interview with Pastre, Pompallier, also bypassing Colin, rushed to consult his fellow Marists.\textsuperscript{27} He went to Valbenoîte, where he could meet with Pierre Colin, Claude Bret, Jean Forest and Claude-Marie Chavas. It is not excluded that he also went to Saint-Chamond, just twenty kilometres further, where his friend Étienne Terraillon was the parish priest and to the nearby Hermitage. There he probably met Cathérin Servant and possibly even Marcellin Champagnat. He received an enthusiastic response, but somebody must have reminded him that they had elected a Superior! In any case, Pompallier rushed back to Lyon to keep Pastre a bit longer from writing to Fransoni, and addressed a letter to Jean-Claude Colin. The fact that, at this crucial point, instead of taking the coach for Belley, he wrote an awkward letter, suggests that relations between the two were not easy.

\textsuperscript{25} OM 2, Doc 641. Around 1840, when the first indications of problems with Pompallier reached France, Colin confided to Claude Mayet: ‘I am happy that he was sent to Polynesia; he would have become an embarrassment in Europe’. Mémoires Mayet, 1S, 23.

\textsuperscript{26} OM 2, Doc 657, 2.

\textsuperscript{27} This is exactly how Pompallier himself, many years later, described the proceedings: ‘I approached my confrères of the Society of Mary’, Pompallier, Notice historique et statistique de la Mission de la Nouvelle Zélande (Anvers, 1850), 6.
Colin and Pompallier

Pompallier’s letter to Colin has not been preserved, but this is how he quoted himself in a letter to Marcellin Champagnat of 13 November:

You know what my purpose is in this important matter as I also made clear to Monsieur Colin in Belley. The mission itself, if I may put it this way, is in my mind of secondary importance. Obtaining the approbation of the Society, or at least permission to bring it under one central Superior, is the main thing. If that happens, I shall be happy to leave for the ends of the earth, to those islands of the Pacific, and those poor savages who do not yet know Our Lord, but who, it is said, are well disposed towards the faith. Let us pray the Good Shepherd that everything develops according to his holy will. It is necessary that my superiors propose me for the mission so that I feel assured. I find it hard to understand why the Lord has chosen me for so great a grace.28

It defies a normal sense of proportion that somebody would consider the opening of a vast new mission field less important than the approbation of a small society, something moreover that at the time they had not given up hope of obtaining anyhow.29 How else is one to read this letter than as an inept attempt to win over Colin?

The letter reached Belley when Colin was out of town for a few days. When he came home, he was faced with an accomplished fact, or even two! Unknown to him, and through the action of outsiders the Society of Mary was on the point of being committed to a foreign venture of frightening proportions. While Pastre simply wanted to present to Rome someone to take his place as head of the new mission, for Colin the stakes were very high. Was it a feasible proposition at all? Would the loose group of Marist candidates support the project? Would enough of them be ready to commit their lives to it?

28. OM 1, Doc 347, 5.
29. In spite of the fact that, apart from the granting of some indulgences, they had heard nothing from Rome since Colin’s return on 21 February 1834 (cf OM 1, Doc 306), they still expected to receive at any moment at least the official permission to elect a central Superior. Cf OM 1, page 777 note 1 & Doc 367, 2 and 4: ‘the brief we all the time still feel we can expect’.
Moreover, the man already asked to head that mission, Jean-Baptiste-François Pompallier, was someone who would not have been Colin’s first choice. That accepting the mission could quickly lead to the Roman approval of the Society was of course welcome news. All of this Colin had to learn from Pompallier, in a letter that must have struck him as remarkable to say the least.

Colin lost no time answering, 3 August 1835. Gracefully apologising for the delay, he does not waste a word on the unworthy suggestion that approval of the Society would be more important than the salvation of souls in the Pacific, nor a hint of peevishness at the way things had been handled. Without further ado Colin goes magnanimously to the heart of the matter: ‘I would be delighted to see you undertake that foreign mission. Don’t refuse what the Lord himself offers you. Be full of courage.’ Pompallier must have mentioned the contacts he already had made with his confreres. Hence Colin’s remark: ‘The same Providence will give you associates’. And, just to restore the proper order of things: ‘You will be of great service to the Society by devoting yourself to the salvation of those poor heathens. This commitment is what God seems to ask of the Society’. This was leadership at its best, and with a finely balanced judgment. He encourages Pompallier to accept what is offered to him, and to do it as a Marist. He gives him the green light to seek associates but he stops short of committing the Society. At the same time he acknowledges that the course of events could indicate what God’s will for the Society might be. In fact, he lets the membership decide, by volunteering!

Colin then takes Pompallier into his confidence by telling him that his agent in Rome (Trinchant) had not long before asked him to release men for a foreign mission venture. His answer had been that he was not in a position to accept as long as the Society had not been approved.

Only in the end does Colin come to the interests of the Society, and in a nearly casual way: ‘If Monsieur Pastre offers members of the Society to Propaganda to take his place in that mission, the offer will surely be well received, and can only be of advantage to the Society’.

30. OM 1, Doc 340.
31. The hint was too gentle for Pompallier to pick up. He repeats it on several occasions: to Champagnat in February 1836, OM 1, Doc 370, 3, in a letter to Colin from Le Havre, LRO 1, Doc 4, 3, and again, five years later, on 14 May 1840, LRO 1, Doc 59, 22.
32. This is the only mention in the available documents of such an offer. Nothing indicates that it was connected with Oceania, cf OM 1, page 775, note 1. The text suggests that Colin had not mentioned it to anyone except, probably, his personal counsellor Cholleton.
Two points of advice for the answer that Pastre would write to Rome: make sure he mentions the problem that you (Pompallier) have brought up (ie, the matter of the pontifical approbation), and that he mentions the Brothers as well as the priests. ‘Both can devote themselves to that mission’. Colin broadens the perspective. Fransoni, and consequently Pastre and Pompallier, were only looking for priests. Colin is concerned with the Society that for him and for Champagnat comprises brothers as well as priests. He does not want priests on their own at isolated posts.

Then, cleverly trying to get a grip on developments, he adds: in case Pastre decides to go ahead and presents you as a member of the Society to take his place, let me know so I can get our agent in Rome to deal with Propaganda directly. Unfortunately, before contact could be made, the trusted Trinchant, who had acted as Colin’s agent, died in Rome on 24 August 1835.33

In the end, Colin’s misgivings about Pompallier still get the better of him: ‘I must however say to you, don’t pull out as things move on. We would do ourselves a bad service at the Roman court. I trust that the good Lord will strengthen you in this calling. For the moment I do not really see anybody but yourself to take up the position that is offered to you. Thus, be attentive. Have courage and trust in God!’ Amazingly, Wiltgen reads what is clearly meant to be a monition, as Colin ‘heaping praise on Pompallier’s head’.34

From Lyon to Rome

Pompallier gave Colin’s letter to Pastre. The two must have informed Archbishop de Pins at this point and been given the impression that de Pins was prepared to support the project. Hence, Pastre, on 7 August, wrote again to Fransoni to tell him that after his letter of refusal he had spoken in confidence of the new mission with a priest of a certain Society of Marists that is expecting Roman approval, and that in many ways differs little from the Society of Jesus. That priest had spoken to his colleagues and had received the written support of his Superior. Pastre decided that for the sake of the other matters mentioned by Colin to Pompallier, it was best simply to enclose Colin’s letter. A clumsy move that Colin had not intended at all!

33. OM 2, page 148–9, note k.
34. Wiltgen, *Founding*, 106.
Strangely, Pastre did not mention Pompallier by name and he removed the covering sheet of Colin’s letter, the only place with Pompallier’s name on it. Proposing a replacement was so important for Pastre that this can barely have been an oversight.\textsuperscript{35} It is difficult to think of another reason for Pastre to do so, than that Pompallier asked him to. Had Colin’s letter made him less sure of himself? Whatever the reason, it meant that Fransoni for some months did not know whom Pastre had in mind to propose. Before this second letter could reach Rome, Fransoni, on 15 August, answered Pastre’s first letter (of 17 July) and asked him to help Propaganda by at least looking around for suitable workers for the new mission.\textsuperscript{36} The answer was already on the way. He could not have been served more promptly.

On 2 September Pastre outlined to Fransoni the different ways to travel to the Pacific, each with its advantages and disadvantages.\textsuperscript{37} He expressed a clear preference for the Eastern route, i.e. around the Cape of Good Hope, preferably by French naval vessels, but if necessary by English ships. One will need them later anyhow. The British may not be very keen to help Roman Catholic missionaries, but with letters of recommendation of the English Ambassador one can get reasonable conditions. Unfortunately, as we shall see, neither Rome nor Pompallier listened to this experienced man.

‘As to the missionaries, I thought that five would suffice for the first party. A larger number might complicate the first contact with the people, which because of the language will be difficult enough as it is. Heaven forbid that the English Methodists arouse persecutions. This small number I could get together without even going outside of the Diocese.’\textsuperscript{38}

Pastre got carried away to the point of forgetting to mention the Marists, so he added in a footnote: ‘He (= the Archbishop) approves the offer of the Marists for the mission under consideration.’

Then something odd happened. Having received Pastre’s second letter with the enclosed letter of Colin to Pompallier, Fransoni broke off the correspondence. Was there something in Pastre’s or Colin’s letter (that he should never have had in the first place!), that put him off? Was it because

\textsuperscript{35.} As the editors of \textit{Origines Maristes} want us to believe. OM 1, Doc 340, introduction.
\textsuperscript{36.} OM 1, Doc 342.
\textsuperscript{37.} OM 1, Doc 343
\textsuperscript{38.} That Bret and Servant already showed a readiness we can guess from the fact that shortly later they were considered firm candidates. Forest was kept back by Colin, so he too must have shown an interest (FS, Doc 172, 14). Chavas was a very close friend of Bret. Much later he went to the mission of Louisiana. These four Pompallier would have met in Valbenoîte. Possibly Cholleton had mentioned Bataillon.
the name was withheld? Did he get a whiff of Colin’s misgivings about the unnamed person to whom the letter was addressed? Whatever it was, on 12 September Cardinal Fransoni approached Marin Ducrey, whom he already had contacted in vain for Oceania in 1833.39

On 22 September Cardinal Fransoni just as suddenly came back to the Lyon option, probably because he had in the meantime found out that Ducrey had died in 1834. As if still a little uneasy about the Marists, he bypassed Pastre and ignored the Marists. He wrote to de Pins as if the whole affair was something between the Holy See and the Archdiocese of Lyon, which canonically speaking still was the case. He thanked de Pins for his readiness to support the new mission and, with an implicit referral to Pastre’s letter, he added that this could be done from Lyon alone. He promised to bring the Archbishop’s good intentions to the knowledge of the Sacred Congregation, ‘which surely will be very pleased and grateful’.40

Fransoni’s letter was mislaid in the Archdiocesan office. After six weeks somebody found it. Then, Cholleton notified Pompallier who in turn informed Champagnat and Colin.41

On 20 November de Pins wrote to Fransoni that he would do his utmost to furnish very good workers for the Western Pacific. Having noticed that Fransoni ignored the Marists, and seemed to think that the Archdiocese of Lyon alone could carry the full load, he now took it upon himself to involve them, adding that ‘the Society of the priests of Mary that works with so much success in the Dioceses of Lyon and Belley, and has applied for pontifical approval, could supply five or six good men immediately’ and would ensure continuity. The Association for the Propagation of the Faith would give financial support. De Pins had evidently come to see that taking on the missions of Oceania was too big an undertaking for the Archdiocese itself. It would take a religious congregation, and one of pontifical right. The mention of ‘five or six’ indicates that the news was spreading and that by then other names were circulating, also from outside the

39. Wiltgen (Founding, 107) thinks that Fransoni may have been displeased with the way acceptance of the mission was linked to approval of the Society. As Fransoni himself would a little later offer approval to get Colin to accept the mission, that is not very likely. Kerr (Colin, 283) cannot think of any reason why Fransoni would have changed course so suddenly in a matter that was very important to him. The editor of OM 1, page 777, note 2) feels that Colin’s letter ‘had not made a bad impression at Propaganda’. Perhaps not, but something must have put Fransoni off. On Ducrey, cf Kerr, Colin, 282–4 and Wiltgen, Founding, 107.

40. OM 1, Doc 344.

41. OM 1, Doc 347.
Archdiocese. The mention of Belley, where Chanel and Maitrepierre had shown an interest in the foreign missions a few years earlier, points in that direction.

In spite of this explicit mention of the Marists, the clerk at Propaganda, in the usual summary, underlined the assurance of the Archbishop and left the Marists out.42

Belley and Lyon

Nearly twenty years have passed now since the soul-stirring promise at Fourvière. Of the twelve or so who in 1816 had committed themselves to found a Society of Mary, only four were left: two in Belley, Jean-Claude Colin and Étienne Déclas, and two in Lyon, Marcellin Champagnat and Étienne Terraillon. Sixteen new ones had joined after 1816, all of them diocesan priests, nine from Belley, seven from Lyon. Both Bishops were in favour of the Marist project, but both wanted the Society to remain a diocesan institute, under their personal sway, and for the benefit of their own dioceses. The request to obtain pontifical approval (and escape from diocesan control) had not been well received in Rome. In fact it had been turned down, but, without telling Colin (or anyone else), Trinchant, his agent in Rome, had cleverly withdrawn the application before the refusal could be put into a decree and thus become practically irreversible. As a result, the Marists in France never received an answer, and had been left wondering why.43

Some of them had reached the point of abandoning the dream of a pontifically approved religious congregation and were ready to settle for the diocesan bands of parish missioners that their Bishops preferred. Colin himself wondered if he should not buy a house in Belley and bring all the men together there. Colin’s preference may have reinforced the desire of some men in Lyon to buy there a house. The Society of Mary was on the point of breaking up. Only Rome could solve the problem.

As he always did, Colin consulted Cholleton, who dissuaded him from throwing in his lot with Belley. In a passionate letter to Marcellin Champagnat, 19 January 1836, Colin expressed his appreciation for the loyalty of Champagnat and Pompallier, who, in the Lyon group, had opposed the local solution. They were the only ones with a truly religious spirit, he

42. OM 1, Doc 349.
How it All Began

wrote, meaning evidently, the only ones to appreciate what it meant to be religious, something that did not come easily to men living for years the life of diocesan priests. Colin’s reservations about Pompallier as the eventual head of the new mission did not make him less appreciative of the man’s sincere commitment to the Society.44

After the letter of Archbishop de Pins of 20 November 1835 to Cardinal Fransoni, history seemed to repeat itself. As had been the case when Jean-Claude Colin returned from Rome in February 1834, the Marists in France now expected action from Rome and nothing happened. As Pompallier wrote to Champagnat on 29 December: ‘Rome is silent’.45

By the end of January 1836, apart from the granting of some indulgences, Fransoni’s letter of 22 September 1835 was still the last thing they had heard from Rome. We can safely assume that Pompallier had given vent to his impatience to Cholleton and the Archbishop. The exciting prospects of a new large mission had become widely known. The lack of further news was unsettling for Pompallier, for Cholleton and Pastre, and for all those who had expressed a willingness to commit themselves. No wonder that the Archbishop found it necessary to put their minds at rest. In the diocesan council meeting of 3 February he declared that he intended to go ahead with the mission to Polynesia, but that, contrary to Fransoni’s suggestion, and as he already had made clear to Rome, the men would have to come from Belley as well as from Lyon.46 He might as

44. OM 1, Doc 358, 2 and 4.
45. OM 1, Doc 353, 3.
46. OM 1, Doc 366. Assuming that the council decision in Lyon refers to the letter of Fransoni of 23 January, the editors of OM 1, Doc 366, find the decision of the Archbishop
well have waited a little longer. Soon after the meeting, two letters from Fransoni reached Lyon.

**Rome on the move**

Rome may have been silent, it had not been idle. De Pins’ letter of 20 November had allowed Fransoni to take formal steps. A lengthy report on the missionaries of the Sacred Hearts (Picpus) in the Eastern Pacific had already been drawn up for the meeting of the Sacred Congregation that was held on 23 December 1835.47 Using letters from those missionaries of as recently as April 1835 the report went into great detail on what had been achieved, on the enormous problems of distance and travelling and on the resistance the missionaries had encountered. That resistance, the report said, is mostly instigated by the Methodists, who were already well established on the main islands. The report gives high praise to the courageous missionaries.

The document mentioned that the Picpus missionaries and their Vicar Apostolic, Mgr Rouchouze, wanted their mission territory to be extended, so that they could move to islands further to the West in case they were forced to abandon the islands on which they were holding only a precarious foothold. This is what Rouchouze had already asked for before he left for the Pacific. At that time Propaganda had turned the request down and it was not likely they would come back on their decision now. Father Coudrin, the Superior General, also opposed extending their commitment. He feared to become overextended.48

At the end of the report two paragraphs were added, evidently in haste, and badly researched.

The paragraphs mention the Society of Mary as being able and willing to take up the new mission and to ensure continuity.

The report recommends the Society by saying it already had received a *Breve Laudatorio*, which technically was not correct.49

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47. OM 1, Doc 351.
49. The reference to the *Breve Laudatorio* must refer to the letter of Pius VII of 9 March 1822, although this was technically not a *Breve*. Cf OM 1, Doc 74, and OM 4, page 500.
The Superior is said to be a Signor Colai (sic!).

The Society is said to differ little from the Jesuits whose organisation and rules they follow (a simple quote from Pastre’s letter).

An application for pontifical approval of the Society is said to be pending in Rome, waiting to be acted upon. Again a quote, this time from Archbishop de Pins. Documents from the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Religious would have shown that in fact the application for approval had been turned down the year before but had then been withdrawn before the refusal was executed. Evidently, communications between Roman departments were not always of the best.

Finally, not knowing that Trinchant in the meantime had died, the report recommends that the agent of the Society in Rome (mentioned in Colin’s letter) take up the matter of the approval with the appropriate Congregation.

The report also notes that the name of the key figure among the Marists whom Pastre had dealt with, had so far been withheld.

As customary, the Relator then formulates the questions upon which the Sacred Congregation is expected to come to a decision.

The first question to the Congregation was: should the Vicariate of Eastern Oceania be extended or should a new Vicariate be established for Western Oceania? The Congregation opted for a new Vicariate.

The next question was: if there is to be a new Apostolic Vicariate, to whom should it be entrusted? The Cardinals decided to entrust this Vicariate to the priests of what they called the ‘Congregatio Mariana’ of Lyon and Belley.

To encourage the Superior of the said Congregatio to accept, he would be given good hope to obtain the pontifical approbation that, it is said, the Archbishop in Lyon as well as Pastre had recommended (which de Pins had not, at least not yet).

At that point of the proceedings Cardinal Castracane, who presented the case, must have recalled that this was the same group he had dealt with in 1833 and 1834 in the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Regulars. At the time the request concerned the approval of a society with four branches under a single superior. ‘Madness’ he had called it! Colin’s letter to Pompallier that Pastre had added, and that wanted to include the Brothers, may have alerted him. But nothing would change his mind: approval was for the priests only.50

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50. OM 1, Doc 352.
On 2 January 1836 Castracane informed the Secretary of Propaganda Mgr. Mai of the decisions taken. This time the staff had done their homework. Castracane now explicitly referred to the *Summarium Regularum Societatis Mariae* presented for approbation in December 1833, recalling that approbation at that time had been asked for a Society comprising priests, teaching brothers and sisters, all under one superior. He again specified that the prospect of approbation be for the congregation of priests only.\(^5\)

One other matter to be defined were the boundaries of the new Vicariate. The eastern boundary was where the Picpus Fathers’ mandate, including what today are the Cook Islands, ended. To the west it had to cover all the islands as far as, and including, New Zealand. To the north the new Vicariate included the Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides (today Vanuatu) and was supposed to go as far as what today are the Marshall Islands, ‘until they meet up with the few Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish missionaries who could be in the Marianas, the Caroline Islands and the Moluccan Islands’. At that point, and not for the first time, Propaganda was getting lost on the oceans, creating confusion on the exact boundaries of this huge Vicariate that was ‘approximately 8,000 kilometers long from east to west and just as long from north to south’.\(^6\)

Roma locuta . . .

The resolutions of Propaganda were presented to Pope Gregory XVI. The official report would have the Pope believe that Propaganda had been dealing all the way with the Society of Mary and that it had subsequently thought it useful also to approach the Apostolic Administrator of Lyon. Fortunately, it added, the Archbishop has graciously promised his support in obtaining personnel as well as finance.

The report ended: ‘The only question now is whether the Superior *Colai* definitively accepts the mission’. And thereby the highest level in the Church acknowledged that Jean-Claude Colin, the man unofficially elect-

\(^5\) OM 1, Doc 355

\(^6\) These details are known from the *relatio* by Mgr Mai for the Pope, OM 1, Doc 356, 3. Propaganda had just invested in a new six-volume atlas, published in Brussels in 1827 (Wiltgen, *Founding*, 46). All the same, Propaganda was not always well informed of the geography of those distant regions, as showed when, in the late twenties, Dillon and de Solages submitted fantastic plans to start a mission from Réunion in the Western Indian Ocean all the way to Easter Island in the Eastern Pacific! Jaspers, *Erschliessung*, 161–76. Wiltgen, *Founding*, 126. OM 1, Doc 387.
ed by his Marist confreres to lead the new Society, but left on the sidelines so far, was to have the final word.

Only then, the report concluded, would the question arise who was to become the Vicar Apostolic of the new mission. The Holy Father at least took things in good order.

On 10 January 1836 Pope Gregory XVI approved the resolutions of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. The Society of Mary did officially not yet exist but it already had a vast mission field!

A momentous step

On 23 January 1836 Cardinal Fransoni informed Archbishop de Pins of the decision to erect a new Apostolic Vicariate (an ecclesiastical territory headed by a bishop) in the Western Pacific, and to entrust it to the priests of the Society of Mary, in the hope that they not only make a beginning with the mission but would in future continue to supply it with the necessary personnel. Fransoni asked the Archbishop to exhort the Superior not to turn down the offer and to let him know that he could expect in this way papal approval of the congregation of the priests. The same day Fransoni also wrote to Pastre. He too was asked to persuade the Superior to accept the mission, and was authorised to promise pontifical approval. The letters must have arrived very shortly after the council meeting of 3 February. De Pins asked Pompallier to make a copy for Colin.

Now, Colin moved fast. On receiving the copy of Fransoni’s letter he took the coach to Lyon where he met with Pompallier, Cholleton, Pastre and, probably, de Pins.

There was no doubt of the enthusiastic support for the mission among the Marists. So, on 10 February 1836 Colin wrote, from Lyon, the momentous letter that determined the future of the Society of Mary and of the Catholic Church in the South-West Pacific. In answer to the request that the Sacred Congregation had addressed to the Society of Mary, he wrote, and in accordance with the purposes of their Society, the Superior and the priests of the Society gladly accept the responsibility offered them by the Holy See, namely to open and maintain a mission in the Western Pacific.

53. OM 1, Doc 356.
54. OM 1, Doc 359.
55. OM 1, Doc 360.
56. OM 1, page 843, note 1.
57. OM 1, Doc 368.
Fransoni’s letter had not mentioned Colin by name, but had referred to the ‘Superior of the said Society’. Colin still had no more than a provisional and ambiguous status. By signing the letter humbly as Colin, priest, but by referring to ‘the Superior and the priests’, he ingenuously introduces himself as the one whom the Cardinal from now on will deal with. Gracefully stepping aside, Colin tells Fransoni that Archbishop de Pins will soon have the honour of letting Propaganda know how many and which ‘priests of the Society’ were preparing themselves for the mission. In other words, whatever the diplomatic niceties, it is the Society of Mary that is sending them. But, not a word about the leadership position!

Fransoni had written of ‘the congregation of the priests’, but Colin deftly parried the innuendo by speaking of ‘the priests of the Society’. He stood his ground and held to his vision of what the Society of Mary was, that is, a community of more than priests alone.

Not having heard as yet from the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Regulars, the only Roman authority competent to actually issue the pontifical approval, Colin appeals to Fransoni to use his good services to obtain the possibility of ‘strengthening the ties that have united them (i.e. the Marists) in the pursuit of the same end’. Having said this, he tightens the screws by saying that approval would hasten the departure of the missionaries, which was what Fransoni wanted. The Society was now committed to Oceania, but its approval was so far only promised, and not by the department competent to grant it. Colin did not relish the prospect of running a mission in permanent negotiation with two bishops!

The clerk at Propaganda got the point. In the usual summary he noted the action required: ‘The Superior of the Marists asks for the approval of the congregation, so as to expedite the sending of the men’.

**Paying a visit to Jean Pastre**

The same day Colin went with Cholleton to see Pastre who showed him the letter he had received from the Cardinal. Together they drafted the answer that Pastre wrote and signed.58

The Marist superior, writes Pastre, is determined to continue along the direction taken He will give full support to what has been agreed between Propaganda and the Archbishop. In other words, Colin understands and

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58. OM 1, Doc 369. Apart from the style and the presentation of Pompallier, we can recognise Colin’s hand in the wording ‘the priests of the Congregation’ instead of the ‘Congregation of the priests’.
accepts that so far dealings were between Fransoni and de Pins, but also intimates that he now takes over: the Superior will let the Archbishop know of five priests and two brothers for the mission.

In a few days, he has Pastre write, the Archbishop will let you know which of the priests should, in his judgment (!), be in charge of the mission in Western Oceania. Once Cholleton had proposed Pompallier to Pastre, and Pastre had judged him eminently suitable, the appointment of Pompallier was a foregone conclusion. Naturally de Pins would also want to do the formal recommendation. Colin steps back to let the Archbishop take the honours, skilfully avoiding to take responsibility for something he dislikes but cannot stop. By having Pastre insert it, but not mentioning it in his own letter, he also carefully avoids waiving his right to recommend a candidate.59

From the day that Pastre had approached Cholleton outside the Cathedral (July 1835) he had been anxious to propose to Propaganda someone to take his place as head of the mission in the Western Pacific. For seven months he had been kept back. This was his hour. Colin had no reason to stop him from doing what in fact was stealing a march on the Archbishop. Cholleton may have tried. In vain. In any case, Pastre writes: ‘Monsieur Pompallier is the man I have in confidence spoken to from the beginning’. We can imagine Colin holding his breath at the eulogy that followed: ‘a man of godly science, prudence and zeal for the salvation of souls’. Science and zeal, certainly. But prudence?

Forging the iron while it was hot, Colin had Pastre add that Pompallier would not desire anything more than that the priests of his congregation be approved and allowed to elect a Superior General before departing, which, as we have seen, was indeed very much on Pompallier’s mind.

Vicar General Cholleton, Pastre adds, is looking after the expenses and I am getting further information about the route around Cape Horn. It

59. The editors of OM 1, Doc 844, note 2, state that it was up to Archbishop de Pins to propose a candidate for the leadership position. This is open to question. Admittedly, it was Fransoni’s own unusual approach that had aggravated the ambiguous situation in which Colin found himself and at this stage Fransoni could only pursue the course taken. By asking Pastre to propose someone for the mission, Fransoni had indirectly given him (and hence de Pins) the opportunity to propose a Vicar Apostolic, thereby infringing upon the privileged position of the Superior. The Pope had entrusted the mission to the Society of Mary and recognised Colin to be its Superior. Therefore Colin should not have been bypassed completely when proposing a candidate for the position of Vicar Apostolic. But, it suited Colin. It left him off the hook! Cf Excursus B.
must somehow have become clear to him that this was the route that Propaganda preferred.

Pushing his own role in the proceedings he adds (in a footnote that looks as if it is thrown in after the two visitors left): ‘I hope to send the chosen one (electum) to Rome’: Pastre still feels he is running the show.

**A personal appeal**

Not satisfied with the appeal to Fransoni, Colin also sent a letter, on the same 10 February, to Cardinal Castracane, who was a member of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Regulars as well as of Propaganda. In spite of his rude rejection of Colin’s project of a Society consisting of priests, men and women, religious and laity, the two had become friends and Colin had great confidence in him. He tried a personal appeal.

Referring to the letter of Fransoni he tells Castracane that the priests of the Society are ready to accept the offer of Oceania with joy and gratitude. It is one of the aims of their Society.

Their joy would be incomplete, he writes, if they did not receive from the Holy See the brief they were still expecting allowing them to be united by religious vows. He refers the Cardinal to the statutes he had presented two years before, which the Cardinal can amend as he sees fit. This time, remembering the negative reactions he had received in Rome two years earlier, he adds, we ask for a brief of approval for the priests of the Society alone. For the good of the mission, says Colin, and before missionaries can depart, their Society that today is still subject to two bishops, and has only a provisional superior, urgently needs a Superior General recognised by both bishops. And this, he says, cannot be achieved without an answer from the Holy See.60

The appeal was no longer necessary. The crucial letter was already on the way.

**Getting into action**

No sooner had Colin’s letter, accepting the mission on behalf of the Society, and Pastre’s letter mentioning him for the leadership position, been dispatched to Rome, than Pompallier began acting openly as the chef de mission. He again rushed to visit the Marists at Valbenoîte. There he saw

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60. OM 1, Doc 367.
to his great satisfaction that with the prospects of the new mission and the promise of speedy pontifical approval, all eyes were now on the future. Back in Lyon, at the urging of Cholleton, Pompallier wrote to Champagnat 61 that feelings in Valbenoïte had improved and that doubts about the future of the Society had disappeared, meaning the doubts on whether pontifical approbation was a realistic expectation and whether they should not opt for diocesan status in Lyon and Belley.

He wrote that he expected two men or at least one to volunteer for Oceania. He asked Father Catherin Servant (staying with Champagnat) who must have made his intentions known earlier, to put in a formal application to the Vicar General. Taking over the broader perspective introduced by Colin, Pompallier asked Champagnat to think of three or four Brothers from whom two could be selected for the first group to leave for Oceania.

In the same letter Pompallier informed Champagnat that a letter of Cardinal Sala, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Regulars and the man handling the approval of religious orders, had reached Archbishop de Pins. Not unwilling to get the credit for a success Pompallier is elated that he had accepted the challenge right from the beginning and drawn the Society into this mission that would assure the approbation everyone had been anxious about for so long.

The Society approved

In the letter that Pompallier referred to, dated 28 January, Cardinal Sala writes he is sure the Archbishop knows that the earlier applications for approval of the Society had come to nothing because of the intention of bringing several groups with diverse purposes together under one superior. In fact, this was the first time anyone in France heard!

As long as the Society is made up of ecclesiastics only, pontifical approval will not be a problem, the letter says. By adding that the Constitutions could be approved at a later date he waives the usual linkage between the approbation of a Society and the approval of its Constitutions that Castracane had still insisted upon in 1833.

The Holy Father, concludes the letter, has given his approval to the plan to send the Marists to those far shores and the Archbishop is urged

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61. OM 1, Doc 370.
to persuade the Marists with this pledge of approval, to go ahead with the mission.\textsuperscript{62}

On 4 March Archbishop de Pins wrote to Cardinal Fransoni. He confirmed what the Cardinal would have known already from Colin and Pastre, namely that the Marists were prepared to send five priests with two Brothers to Oceania and that they would assure continuity. The Marists ardently desire to see their institute approved by the Holy See, and they limit their request to the Society of the priests. For the first time he graciously gives his full support to a pontifical approbation: ‘I have the pleasure to add my warm support to their request’.\textsuperscript{63}

The departing missionaries will be led, he adds, by Monsieur Pompallier, a priest of great merit and piety, whom I warmly recommend and who can come to Rome if required’. On receipt of Colin’s and Pastre’s letters, but before de Pins’ letter can have reached Rome, the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Regulars met on 11 March, probably in a special meeting for this purpose. Cardinal Sala proposed that they formally ask the Pope to grant approbation to the Congregation of the Priests of the Society of Mary. The other branches of the Society, i.e., the Brothers, the Sisters, the Third Order and other groups of laity get an honourable mention, but are explicitly not included in this particular approval. The priests can make simple vows and elect a Superior General. The approval is given in view of the mission in Oceania. Colin as superior of the Society of Mary wants the Society approved before he can agree to let the five missionaries depart. Referring implicitly to the earlier refusal, the approval is limited to the branch of the priests. The Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars acceded to the request and the very same day an official submitted the resolution to the Pope. With the agreement of Pope Gregory XVI the Society of Mary became a religious institute of pontifical right.\textsuperscript{64}

The next day already, Cardinal Castracane wrote directly to Colin to tell him that the Sacred Congregation had granted its accord to the official approbation of the priests of the Society of Mary. This time Colin was the first to be told.\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{62} OM 1, Doc 365.
\textsuperscript{63} OM 1, Doc 371, 1.
\textsuperscript{64} OM 1, Doc 373.
\textsuperscript{65} OM 1, Doc 376.
The centre of decision shifting

Colin had no desire to disturb the existing pattern of management that Archbishop de Pins, Vicar General Cholleton, Pastre and Pompallier had been following in Lyon. On 24 March he passed Castracane’s letter (of 12 March) to Cholleton with a few gentle suggestions of things the Archbishop might like to mention to the Cardinal, so that it would not differ from what he himself would write. He asked that this be made known in Rome so that no-one would think that he did things on his own.66

On 28 March de Pins wrote to the Cardinals Fransoni and Sala. He now more formally recommends l’abbé Pompallier, a priest of the diocese of Lyons and most worthy, for higher office if this is what the Holy Father judges appropriate.

Initial costs of the mission, the Bishop adds, are estimated at 40,000 francs. The Propagation of the Faith has promised 15,000 francs. How much can Rome contribute?

Then de Pins gets the messages mixed up. He promises a rapid presentation of the rules, although, knowing that Cardinal Sala had not insisted on it, Colin is happy enough to take his time, as he had written to Cholleton. De Pins adds that the Marists were in no hurry to elect a Superior General. Here too he was mistaken. If there was one thing Colin had learned from bitter experience, it was that two bishops cannot run a religious congregation together, let alone a far away mission.67 Acknowledging that the Society of Mary is now in charge, the Archbishop writes (in the same letter): the Marists are ready to send five priests and two Brothers. This indicates that the consultations in Lyon, Belley and in the Hermitage were well advanced.

On 11 April, Colin wrote to Champagnat to share all the good news. He reminds Marcellin to get on with the selection of the Brothers. ‘They must be selected with the utmost care: good men, of assured virtue and practical skills, well instructed in the faith. The departure could be sooner than we think.’68

On 13 April Colin thanked Cardinal Sala for the approbation of the Society and told him that he is so busy preparing the departure for Polynesia that the final redaction of the rules will take a little longer.69 Knowing that

66. OM 1, Doc 377.
67. OM 1, Docs 378 and 379.
68. OM 1, Doc 380.
69. OM 1, Doc 381.
there was no longer a deadline, Colin was in no hurry at all. The Colinian Constitutions would in fact not be approved until thirty-six years later.

A Bishop for Oceania

On 17 April Propaganda asked Pope Gregory XVI to appoint Jean-Baptiste-François Pompallier to become the Vicar Apostolic of the newly erected Vicariate of Western Oceania, entrusted to the ‘Society of the Marists’ of Lyon. While calling him a member of the same Society it states that Pompallier has been proposed and highly recommended for this position by the Administrator of the Archdiocese of Lyon and by Canon Pastre. Both recommendations are quoted in full: ‘a man of exceptional piety and merit, a man of godly science, prudence and apostolic zeal, highly regarded by the clergy in Lyon.’ When shortly afterwards Fransoni notified de Pins he described the appointment as conform to the Archbishop’s proposal.

Roman documents of this importance are usually carefully crafted. That the Superior of the Marists to whom the mission is entrusted gets no mention at all is remarkable while he would normally be expected to propose the candidate. It can be read as a silent admission of the somewhat irregular procedure followed by Propaganda itself. It also echoes the fact that Pompallier is not mentioned in Colin’s letters to Rome, which can hardly have escaped the attention of Propaganda. The way the appointment came about is a prelude to later days when Bishop Pompallier considered the missions as entrusted to him personally and the Society of Mary as the organisation obliged to supply him with personnel.

On 29 April 1836 Pope Gregory XVI signed the official document Omnium Gentium by which the Congregation of the Priests of the Society of Mary became a religious institute of pontifical right, and thus withdrawn from the authority of the bishops of Lyon and Belley. The document reached Belley on 20 May and was received with great joy and solemnity.

The opening words of the decree of approbation, Omnium gentium salus, (the salvation of all peoples) are a reminder that among all the pos-

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70. OM 1, Docs 382 and 390.
71. OM 1, Doc 383.
sible ministries and apostolates the Society may undertake, and that all get
due recognition in this founding document, it was its universal mission-
ary commitment that obtained for the Society the official status it holds
within the Catholic Church.
Excursus A :
The Role of Father Jean-Claude Colin

The beginning of the missions in Oceania and the pontifical approval of the Society of Mary were by themselves two unrelated events. They could have taken place independently of each other. In actual fact, the two processes were closely intertwined. How the Marist missions in Oceania began, cannot be told without the story of the approval of the Society, and the latter not without the former. This creates a special bond between the Society of Mary and the Church in Oceania.

In a vague and general way Marist thinking has always seen in Jean-Claude Colin the person who in the years 1835-1836 had a decisive role in obtaining the pontifical approval of the Society of Mary and in committing the Society to the Pacific missions. Rightly so. Now that not only the documents on Marist origins, but also the letters of Jean-Claude Colin and the letters of the missionaries have become accessible, we are able to see the happenings of those years in finer detail and add some nuances.

Although early historians always mentioned his interventions,1 Marist history overall has perhaps not sufficiently acknowledged the crucial role that Jean Cholleton played in this short but all-important period of the history of the Society of Mary. Whatever reason or reasons Cholleton had to move ahead without involving Colin, fact is that Colin became involved only after Cholleton had taken the initiative to point to Pompallier, after Pastre had judged Pompallier eminently suitable, after Pompallier had accepted the offer and after the Marists in the Archdiocese of Lyon had come out in support of the project. Only at that point Pompallier submitted the project to Colin. We have seen how Colin reacted, but historians differ

on the question why Father Colin went along with the project, first in his provisional answer to Pompallier on 3 August 1835, then, on 10 February 1836, in his official acceptance.

We have seen how Colin gently pushed the suggestion aside of accepting the mission for the sake of obtaining papal approbation. In his letter of 3 August he first ignored it and then restored the proper order of things: ‘You will be of great service to the Society by devoting yourself to the salvation of those poor heathens.’ Still, Roach suggests that Colin accepted the mission in order to obtain the pontifical status for the Society:

( . . . ) it was to be the intervention of the Congregation of Propaganda in the affair of a mission in Western Oceania that gave Colin to see that acceptance of the mission by his priests could not be but well received and be of advantage to the Society. To accept the mission on condition of the approval of the Society, that was the plan.

Several historians have uncritically followed suit. Jaspers says: ‘Colin and Pompallier both saw the opportunity to obtain papal approbation for the Society by linking it with the acceptance of the mission to Oceania.’ He is followed by Laracy: ‘When the Vatican (sic!) offered the Marists the islands of the Western Pacific as a field of operation, Colin readily agreed in order to expedite approbation of his society.’ Even Kerr joins in by saying: ‘When, with the quest for missionaries for Oceania, the possibility of a breakthrough emerged, he (= Colin) acted decisively, committing his tiny group to a mission encompassing an enormous swathe of the globe.’ Only Mauro Filippucci goes against the majority view by reminding us that Colin himself wrote to Cardinal Fransoni that foreign missions had from the beginning been part of the Marist project and that therefore the Marists gladly accepted the mission.

2. OM 1, Doc 340, 1.
The Role of Father Jean-Claude Colin

After lining up events in their chronological order, I would venture to say that Colin never really had a choice at all. By the time he became involved in the acceptance of the mission was inescapable and the appointment of François Pompallier unavoidable. The band of Marists was on the point of breaking up in two: a Belley group, led by Colin, and a Lyon group of which Terraillon, parish priest in Saint-Chamond seems to have been the leader. The Lyon men were enthusiastic about Oceania. Terraillon was a friend of Pompallier, so was Forest in Valbenoîte. If Colin had refused to go along, the mission project would have gone ahead anyhow, quite probably with at least some of the Marists around Lyon. It could have been the end of the Society of Mary. In other words, Colin did not so much accept the missions as submit to an accomplished fact.

The only important question we can ask is: how did Colin react? Most people would have shown at least some annoyance at having been bypassed when such momentous decisions are taken. However, nothing in the available documents shows the slightest sign of peevishness in Colin. His extraordinary supernaturalism made him see in whatever happened or other people did, the immediate hand of Providence. Even in this extraordinary situation his single-minded quest for God's will led him to just one tentative conclusion: ‘This commitment is what God seems to ask of the Society’. When he then saw some of his finest men volunteer, he was sure this was the way Providence wanted him to go. On one point he was quite adamant: the missionaries would not leave until the Society of Mary was freed from the bishops’ authority and governed by a central Superior of its own. The good of the mission and of the Society demanded it.

9. OM 1, Doc 340, 1.
10. OM 1, Doc 368, 3.
Chapter 2
Launching the Mission

No lack of volunteers

Immediately after his first interview with Pastre in July 1835, as told above, Pompallier rushed to see his fellow Marists in Valbenoîte and several of them expressed a desire to join him. Although the pontifical approval of the Society was promised in January 1836 and issued in March, the priests were, until their profession in September, under the authority of their respective bishops, and needed to be released by them. In Lyon, the appointments were arranged by Vicar General Cholleton. In Belley Colin himself would deal with Bishop Devie. After 10 February Pompallier began lining up the men. The same week he again went to Valbenoîte and found that Claude Bret had firmly decided to sign on.1 Catherin Servant also was ready and Pompallier asked Champagnat to have Servant apply formally to Cholleton.2

Champagnat had agreed to the participation of the Brothers. Pompallier asked him to propose three or four of them, out of whom they could together choose two. The formal appointment could then be finalised between the Archbishop, being their ecclesiastical superior, and Colin, whom Champagnat considered to be their religious Superior.3 There was great enthusiasm among the Brothers. ‘There would have been more than

1. OM 2, Doc 732, 12 and note 1.
2. OM 1, Doc 370, 4.
3. OM 1, Doc 370, 4. For Champagnat the priests and the Brothers were members of the same congregation and thus to be sent as members of the same team, sent out by the same Society, cf Paul Sester (editor), Lettres de Marcellin JB Champagnat (LMC) (Rome: Marist Brothers, 1985), volume 1, Doc 65: ‘We are sending five of our priests and two of our Brothers’. Canonically Colin had no say over the Brothers, not before and not after the papal approbation of the priests’ branch. His position towards them was ambiguous and he was not always careful with the limits of his authority, which led to some painful situations, cf below, page 297, and CS 1, Docs 58, 5 and 60.
a hundred from the Hermitage but for the Superior saying: «Don't push me. Nobody goes unless I choose him». In other words, Champagnat reserved the right to choose whom he considered suitable. He seems to have taken his time. On 11 April Colin had to urge him on.

In the meantime Cholleton had approached Pierre Bataillon, a diocesan priest of Lyon so far not connected with the Marists, who, at the time of his ordination in December 1835, had expressed a desire to devote his life to the foreign missions.

That Colin was somehow involved in the selections is clear from the fact that he kept back Jean Forest. In Belley Colin would have had even more of a say. There he turned down Jean-Claude Deschamps because, when he asked Colin to be sent to Oceania, he insisted on an answer within eight days. Enough for Colin to answer: 'Well, in that case, you will not go at all.' In the choice of the Brothers too Colin was involved. We know that, in the case of Brother Marie-Nizier Delorme, Colin warned there could be problems because of the fact that Marie-Nizier was not yet of age.

On 12 May 1836, Jean-Baptiste Pompallier left Lyon for Rome to be consecrated a Bishop. On 25 May Colin wrote to him that the official brief Omnimorum Gentium by which the Society was officially approved had arrived. He asked him to express the Society's gratitude to the dignitaries concerned. He admits having alluded to Pompallier's appointment to Cardinal Castracane but, as he put it himself, without trying to prevent this burden being put on him. 'You should submit to what Providence has ordered for you.' He adds: 'The companions of your mission are doing their best to prepare themselves,' implying that the appointments were finalised. Answering on 9 June, Pompallier wrote to Colin that he was looking forward to hearing more news from him, and from the confreres.

5. OM I, Doc 380.
8. Both Kerr (*Colin*, 299 note 13) and the editor of OM 4, page 264, think that this refusal refers to a later date. In any case, Deschamps did not take part in the Marist retreat of 1836 and he never joined the Society of Mary.
10. CS 1, Doc 2, 7. OM 1, Doc 395, 9. Champagnat, on 8 May, still speaks of two Brothers, LMC 1, Doc 65.
appointments of Chanel and Bret (both from the diocese of Belley) are first mentioned in correspondence of May. In a letter to Pompallier on 24 June Cholleton wrote that four priests were appointed and preparing themselves.\textsuperscript{11}

While in Rome, Pompallier received many letters from France and on 16 July, after his consecration, he could write: ‘How are things with my four missionaries and the two brothers?’\textsuperscript{12} Evidently, their appointments had been communicated to Pompallier. On 22 July Peter Chanel wrote to a friend that the news of his departure for Polynesia would soon be all over the place.\textsuperscript{13}

Around that time a third Brother was added to the group.

Who were they?

Peter Chanel,\textsuperscript{14} born 12 July 1803, fifth in a family of eight, was two years younger than Pompallier. His earliest education he had received from an old priest who had gone underground during the persecutions and whom Peter and a few other boys accompanied on his pastoral visits. He taught them on their walks from village to village.\textsuperscript{15} After a few years at the Minor Seminary of Meximieux, Peter had entered the Major Seminary of Brou for the Diocese of Belley and was ordained a priest at the age of twenty-four. That day already he thought of volunteering for the foreign missions. He first served as a curate in Ambérieu, where he found Claude Bret, whom he had known in Meximieux and who ran a school in the town. The two became very close friends, so much so that—unusual in those days—they wrote to each other in the familiar tu.\textsuperscript{16} A year later Chanel was appointed parish priest of Crozet. The two friends thought of volunteering for the missions in Louisiana,\textsuperscript{17} but Bishop Devie held them back. Together they became interested in the Marist project and in 1831 they joined.\textsuperscript{18} In September of that year they took part in the common Marist retreat and both were at the same time assigned to the Minor Seminary of Belley under Colin as Superior. Shortly afterwards Chanel’s sister Françoise joined the

\textsuperscript{11} CS 1, Doc 3, 1.
\textsuperscript{12} OM 1, Doc 398, 8.
\textsuperscript{13} EC, Doc 15, 3.
\textsuperscript{14} For a summary of the life of Peter Chanel, cf EC, 21–9.
\textsuperscript{15} EC, page 135 note 2.
\textsuperscript{16} EC, Doc 11.
\textsuperscript{17} EC, page 74, page 136–7 and Doc 58, 2.
\textsuperscript{18} OM 1, Doc 227, 1.
Marist Sisters in Belley. In 1832 Peter became the principal of the Minor Seminary. In 1833 he accompanied Colin on his voyage to Rome. In 1834 he became Vice-Superior of the Minor Seminary. On 1 May 1835, Chanel’s father died in a tragic accident. No sooner did the Oceania project come in view, than both Peter Chanel and Claude Bret volunteered, having waited five years after their first attempt to go the missions.

Claude Marie Xavier Bret, the third of the group in age, son of a shoemaker in Lyon, was born on 29 July 1808. Wanting to be a priest he was sent to the Minor Seminary of Meximieux where he got to know Peter Chanel. He was a very small man who, later, on the ship to Oceania, joked that he was the only one who could stand up straight and walk without bending his head in the low and narrow confines of the schooner. He was very intelligent. At the age of nineteen he had already finished his second year of theology, but being too young for ordination he was put in charge of a school in Ambérieu at about the same time as Chanel was appointed there as the assistant priest. Held back from departing for Louisiana, he joined the Marists with Peter Chanel in 1831 and was appointed to teach at the Minor Seminary in Belley while still a subdeacon. Ordained a priest in 1832 for the Diocese of Belley, he was in 1834 appointed to Valbenoîte. When Pompallier visited that community to seek associates, he did not hesitate to volunteer. We can safely assume he did not wait long before telling his friend Peter Chanel in Belley.

Only a few months younger than Bret was Catherin Servant, born 25 October 1808, in Grézieu-le-Marché (Rhône). He studied at Saint-Irénée from 1829 to 1832 and was ordained 22 December 1832. On his desire to join the Marists he was appointed by his Bishop, in January 1833, to the Hermitage to work with Marcellin Champagnat. When he heard of Oceania, he must immediately have shown an interest. Pompallier counted on him in February 1836.

The youngest of the four priests was Pierre Bataillon, born on 1 January 1810, in Saint-Cyr-les-Vignes (Loire). He went to school in Lyon and was in Saint-Irénée from 1832 to 1836. Although his father was Mayor of

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19. OM 4, page 222.
22. OM 2, Doc 732, 12, note 1.
23. OM 4, page 353. Later on he used to be called Louis.
24. OM 1, Doc 370, 4.
the village at one time, the family was of moderate means and he had to ask for remittance of the fees. He was ordained on 19 December 1835 and asked the Vicar General to be considered for the foreign missions. He was first appointed as a curate in Saint-Laurent-de-Chamousset, but, when looking around for candidates for Oceania, Cholleton offered him the possibility of joining Pompallier’s team. In July he moved to the Marist community in Valbenoîte and was professed a Marist with the first group on 24 September.

**Antoine Colombon** was born in 1812 in Mottier (Ain). He joined the Marist Brothers in the Hermitage in 1831, and made his profession on 7 April 1834, as Brother Michel, ‘Brother of the Society of Mary’. He was selected for Oceania by Marcellin Champagnat.

At nineteen, **Jean-Marie Delorme**, born 19 July 1817, was the youngest of the group. He came from Saint-Laurent-d’Agny, some 20 kilometers South-West of Lyon. Jean-Marie had received a good schooling and he had picked up a bit of the trade of his father, who was a tailor. Years later, on Futuna, for lack of black cloth, he made a white cassock for Catherin Servant from a bedsheet, which pleased everyone so much that from then on all the missionaries wanted white cassocks! When the parish priest of his village, Jacques Fontbonne, went to join the Marists at the Hermitage, Jean-Marie followed him. He did his novitiate and was professed on 12 October 1834 as Brother Marie-Nizier.

The oldest of the three Brothers on the team was **Joseph Luzy**, born 2 March 1807 in Marboz (Ain), not far from Chanel’s home village. With his brother he had been a student at the Minor Seminary of his home town. When he found the studies too hard, he stayed on at the seminary as a *factotum*, first in Marboz, later in Belley. Colin asked Champagnat

26. APM, personal file Bataillon, undated letter (1832?).
27. OM 1, Doc 372.
29. That Champagnat selected him would seem to follow from what Brother Michel wrote to him: ‘I thank the Lord for having given me this beautiful vocation through your intervention’, 17 May 1840, FMO, 17.
31. Ronzon, *Delorme*, 24. In one of his letters from Valparaiso (28 July 1837) Pompallier writes to Colin that of the three Brothers with him, one is a tailor, one a cabinetmaker and the third a cobbler. LRO 1, Doc 18, 8.
if Joseph should not move to the Hermitage for further formation, but nothing came of it. It is not clear whether he volunteered or was invited, but in June or July he was added to the team for Oceania. In September, while the priests were in retreat in Belley, Joseph left Belley for Lyon and the Hermitage, where he did a retreat and immediately made his profession under the name of Joseph-Xavier, 26 September 1836. He stayed on to attend the opening of the retreat on 2 October in the Hermitage, but left a day or two later later with Bishop Pompallier for Paris.33

This completed the first missionary team to leave for Oceania: one bishop, four priests, two from the diocese of Lyon and two from Belley, with three Brothers, two from Marcellin Champagnat’s Teaching Brothers and one from the priests’ community in Belley.

There is no indication that either Pompallier, de Pins or Pastre, let alone Jean-Claude Colin, even considered having women on the team. Some Marist Sisters in Belley, Françoise Chanel for one, would have jumped at the occasion.34 Colin mentioned the Sisters only after the men were on their way, telling Pompallier that they had decided to offer all their prayers and actions for the intention of the missionaries until the first message would come back from wherever they were on their journey.35 Peter Chanel thought it the most natural thing that the Sisters would follow them to Oceania. ‘We know only too well,’ he wrote later to Françoise, ‘how interested you all are in our mission’.36 In his last letter from Le Havre he made a point of mentioning to Colin that there were Sisters in the group of missionaries leaving for New Orleans.37 He had already found in Le Havre a house where they could stay while waiting for the departure of their ship! He was also realistic enough to accept that as yet it was too early, but he did not forget to tell Françoise about the numerous Sisters’ convents they found in Valparaiso.38

33. *Lettres Luzy*, 8 October 1836. In early July, Colin paid a visit to the Hermitage to discuss a project of joining the Marist Teaching Brothers with the Brothers of the Christian Schools, cf LMC 1, Doc 66. He would have discussed the candidates for Oceania with Champagnat. Not unlikely Joseph Luzy was added to the team on that occasion.
35. CS 1, Doc 5, 1.
36. EC, Doc 31, 2.
37. EC, Doc 29, 1.
38. EC, Doc 31, 2. The Sisters of the Picpus Congregation only came in 1838. Chanel must have met other Sisters. From Valparaiso he wrote to Françoise: ‘The Bishop knows too little yet of his mission to invite a few Sisters of Our Lady’. EC, Doc 36, 1.
The Bishop and the Superior

There is no doubt that Pompallier was sincerely committed to the Society of Mary, even though, as a Bishop, he would not be answerable to the Superior General, and hence felt he could not be professed with the other Marists. The Cardinals Sala and Fransoni explained this to him in Rome, and Pompallier wanted to be in the same position towards the Society as he would have been, had he been a professed member of the Society before his promotion. He intended to make an appropriate declaration when the others would take their religious vows.39

Once the Society of Mary was officially recognised by Rome, two decisions had to be made. Where, in Belley or in Lyon, would the retreat take place at the end of which the Marists could elect their first Superior General and make their first profession? Secondly, where would the central administration be established, Belley or Lyon? Neither of the two questions would have become an issue, had the two bishops, of Belley and Lyon, not publicly announced their claims, as they did just before Pompallier’s departure for Rome. The divided loyalties among the Marists flared into the open. Pompallier showed himself insensitive to the delicate position that religious bishops have within their congregations.40 In his first letter to Colin from Rome, dated 9 June, he wrote:

We shall need a lot of adjustments in our relations to the bishops, now that we move out from under their jurisdiction according to the Brief that has given us our autonomy. Especially towards Lyon we need to be most accommodating in my view. Even though it is true that the Church of Lyon has often made things difficult for us, you know, dear Superior, what she has suffered when this undertaking was gravely compromised by the behaviour of its first leader and only founder. (. . .) Lyon was the first cradle of the Society and in the present situation she can be of great advantage to us. (. . .) Wish that one day the General of the little Society could reside in Rome, near the Supreme Pontiff.41

39. OM 1, Doc 401. The declaration that Pompallier in fact made can be found in OM 1, Doc 404.
40. As told by Colin himself in 1850, OM 2, Doc 709.
41. OM. 1, Doc 395, 11.
Meddling by Pompallier was the last thing Colin needed in this tricky situation, and there surely was no cause to rake up the sad story of Courveille. We can only imagine that he had heard this nasty remark in the heat of an argument. As if the poor Archdiocese had suffered more of the affair than the Marists themselves! Colin did not answer the letter. Showing displeasure?

In the meantime the controversy had come to a head. The documents of the time are suspiciously silent on what exactly happened, but from later narratives it is clear that feelings ran high. Colin feared that, on the point of being established in fact as well as in law, the Society might as yet break up. Nor was he sure that all the aspirants would turn up for the retreat.

Colin panicked and rushed to the Marist Sisters to ask for their prayers. In their parlour, looking up at the statue of the Blessed Virgin, he suddenly knew what to do: hold the retreat in Belley and tell de Pins that the motherhouse would in due time be established in Lyon. While relations with Lyon had remained cool and touchy, Bishop Devie in Belley and Jean-Claude Colin had, after some difficult years, come to appreciate each other. They had become friends. Devie felt that he and nobody else had wholeheartedly promoted the Marists. He had given them a house of their own and really been their protector and guide. Three times, in 1830, 1831 and in 1834 the common Marist retreats had been held in Belley. He accepted Colin’s decision, but took it for granted that he would at least preside at the retreat, the professions and the election.

Archbishop de Pins, although only Apostolic Administrator, always firmly upheld the prerogatives of the Primatial See of the Gauls. He could boast of having opened the way for the new missions of Oceania and of

43. The only hints, possibly, are remarks that Colin makes to Champagnat about Terraillon, the spokesman of the Lyon group. Champagnat and Terraillon lived close to each other and were likely to meet regularly. Colin writes he loves Terraillon all the same, implying there had been some friction. (OM 1, Doc 380, 1). On 6 July: ‘Get Terraillon to examine before God what Mary has the the right to expect from him’ (OM 1, Doc 396, 5). Also OM 1, Doc 396, 1 and note 1.
44. OM 2, Doc 677. Kerr, Colin, 294.
45. OM 2, Doc 625, 20.
46. Cf OM 1, Doc 311 and OM 2, Doc 547, 39.
47. OM 2, Doc 750, 13.
48. Cf OM 4, page 335. In a letter of 20 April 1840, after he had abandoned his position as Apostolic Administrator of Lyon, de Pins bitterly complained of the lack of appreciation on the part of Rome for his involvement in the missions of Oceania of which he
having created the opportunity for the little Society of Mary to become a congregation of pontifical rank. Anyway, moving to Lyon was the only sensible thing to do. Colin himself had expressed this view already several times. Now that the Superior General would have to oversee foreign missions, the need to move from the relative isolation of Belley was even more obvious and Colin wrote accordingly to Archbishop de Pins, who, on that pledge, agreed that the retreat and the election could take place in Belley. Reversing his preference of January that same year, Colin immediately started looking around for a suitable place in Lyon, but he was in no hurry to move himself. Later on he always thought back of ‘his little cell and the seclusion of Belley’. He did not move until three years later.

Five weeks later, after his consecration, evidently not aware of the way Colin had in the meantime solved the problem, and insensitive to what Colin may have meant by not answering the first letter, Pompallier made things worse by writing that he had consulted Cardinal Castracane on the question of where to establish the general administration. The Society, Castracane had said, was still in its infancy and should grow and develop in the places where it was born. Lyon may have been a trying mother, it still was the cradle of the Society, where it enjoyed protection and that allowed it a share of its vocations and resources. The Society should gratefully honour and trust Lyon in preference to the neighbouring dioceses. That is where the General should reside until such time as Rome claimed him. Wise words of a friend of the Society. Not very wise of Pompallier to involve the Cardinal!

Paris

Pompallier returned from Rome around 5 August, did confirmations in Lyon, presided at a profession ceremony of the Marist Sisters in Belley on 16 August, and left for Paris with Champagnat on 25 August. As a Bishop he was in a good position to introduce Champagnat to various officials to

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saw himself to be the originator (Greiler, *Inspiriertes Leben*, private publication), 45. Nor was he the only one to think so. The first mention of the missions in Oceania in the foremost Catholic newspaper in France, *L’ami de la religion*, on 13 August 1836, says the mission is entrusted to ‘missionaries of the Diocese of Lyon’. Somebody must have tipped them off because on 3 September the mission is said to be entrusted to the ‘Congregation of the Priests of Mary’.

49. In May 1833 (OM 1, Doc 271, 1) and in November 1834 (OM 1, Doc 328, 3).
50. OM 1, Doc 403, 1.
51. OM 1, Doc 398, 5.
obtain Government approval for the Institute of the Teaching Brothers. He also wanted to find out how to book a passage to Oceania and he made contact with Government people on behalf of the Oceania mission. He had an audience with Queen Marie-Amélie.

If Father Marie-Joseph-Pierre Coudrin, the founder and Superior General of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts (SS CC, also called ‘Picpus’ Fathers after the street where their head-house was located) had not already heard in some other way, he would have read in the newspaper that a new Vicariate was founded in Oceania (where his own men were active in Hawaii and the Gambier Islands), and that a certain Pompallier was to be the Vicar Apostolic. In any case, he offered Pompallier the hospitality of their head-house in Paris. Pompallier however preferred to stay with the Foreign Missions of Paris (Missions Étrangères de Paris, MEP). Unlike the Picpus Fathers, they lived in central Paris. The day after Pompallier arrived, Father Coudrin came into town to see him.

Coudrin himself was at that time arranging the departure of four of his men to Oceania via Valparaiso. It is inconceivable that Pompallier would not, at that stage, have been told of the disadvantages of going via that same route to the Western Pacific, but the pressure of Roman thinking, the advantages of joining with an experienced organisation and the prospect of seeing the successful mission of the Gambier Islands, made the choice look easy. He booked the eight Marists together with the four Picpus missionaries on the Delphine, the same ship that had carried Bishop Rouchouze two years earlier to Valparaiso. Pompallier visited the Picpus community the next day. On 4 September he went there again to administer confirmations at the Sisters’ boarding school, a week later he celebrated a pontifical Mass in their church and on 13 September he presided at the prize giving.

52. On 24 June, Cholleton was still looking around to see where and how one could arrange bookings, which indicates that at that time nothing had been done yet regarding the journey. Cf CS 1, Doc 3, 7.
Farewells

In August and September the eight new missionaries, the oldest thirty-five, the youngest nineteen, said good-bye to their families. They said farewell expecting never to see them again. Pierre Bataillon ended his first letter to Jean-Claude Colin with the exclamation: ‘À Dieu! . . . Au ciel!!!’ ('Until we meet again, with God, in heaven'). The surviving documents give us a glimpse of how some of them fared.

Pompallier left Paris on 14 September, and given that it took three days to travel between Paris and Lyon he must have gone nearly straight to the retreat in Belley that started on 20 September. After the professions at Belley he may have visited his family in Vourles, but on 4 October he consecrated the new chapel at the Hermitage, where he made a great impression on the many visitors, who all wanted to say personally good-bye, donating gifts ranging from five, six and eight golden napoleons to notes of five hundred and a thousand francs. He left Lyon on 8 October for Paris. Parting does not seem to have been particularly painful. He had a portrait made of himself for his mother and wrote to her from Le Havre.

Peter Chanel had a difficult time. Several of his friends raised objections, and, typical for the gentle and impressionable man that he was, he wavered. The Superior of the Marist Sisters, Jeanne-Marie Chavoin, who had often supported him when he was Superior of the College, got him over the moment of anxiety with ‘a few energetic words about priests who grow mouldy in the midst of comfort and do nothing for God’s glory’. He said good-bye to his sister Françoise, now Sister Saint-Dominique. Their last words were short and simple: ‘good-bye sister’, ‘good-bye brother’. After he left, she cried. They were very close. From Le Havre he began his letter with the touching words: ‘Just a short letter between the two of us’.

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55. LRO 1, Doc 3, 7.
56. Coins worth twenty francs. The value of the French franc of the time may be compared to something between five and ten American dollars today.
57. OM I, Doc 401. Lettres Luzy, 8 October 1836. Wiltgen, Founding, 128. LMC 1, Doc 132, introduction. Farrell, Achievement, 185, puts the consecration of the chapel on 7 October, which is unlikely as Pompallier left Lyon on 8 October. It took several days by coach from Lyon to Paris. The second husband of Pompallier’s mother, Jean-Marie Solichon, owned a large estate at Vourles, where, in 1816 or a bit later, she went to live with the three children of her first marriage. François, as he was called in the family, considered Vourles his home. LRO 1, Docs 7, 19 and 16.
Taking leave of his widowed mother was even more difficult. He went home on Saturday 1 October and had ample time to talk with her and the rest of family. The next day he sang the High Mass in the parish, and preached in two Masses. In a later letter he described his mother as resigned. Father Terrier, the parish priest, received Peter and his mother for dinner and they talked until Vespers. She then left to prepare things for the next day, thinking he would still be there. But he could not face it. Without warning her, he left. She could not read or write so he wrote to Terrier asking him and another friend to help his mother to be courageous. He admitted he should have asked her blessing. He asked Terrier to take his place with her and to be her secretary. Writing a few days later to Françoise he asked her to excuse him with mother. Another way of saying good-bye, he wrote, would have been just too hard on both of them.\(^\text{59}\)

For Claude Bret too it was not easy. Knowing how difficult the departure of their only child would be for his parents, he asked the advice of Bishop Devie who encouraged him to go ahead. He then went to see his parents, to ask their consent. They were reluctant, but in the end while his mother cried, his father could only say: ‘It is not up to me to give you permission for what the Lord calls you to.’ His special friend Claude-Marie Chavas undertook to take his place with his parents. Still, shoemaker Bret entered enough into the spirit of the thing to take all the missionaries’ foot measurements, so he could send them new shoes. By the time they got to Valparaiso Chanel was happy to be able to order ten pairs for each of them.\(^\text{60}\)

For Catherin Servant also, taking leave of his parents was far from easy. On 23 June he wrote to his parents: ‘I understand how big a sacrifice it is, and how painful to nature. My heart does not allow me to underestimate what your heart feels towards me. Don’t forget that the absence of a little time does not take away the love we have for each other . . . I know there is criticism from people, and not everybody will understand that it can also be a source of happiness for parents to give their son to go and win souls in far away countries.’\(^\text{61}\) Two years later, in Hokianga, New Zealand, he still hears in his heart his dear father and mother tell him that nothing is lack-

\(^{59}\) EC, Doc 27, 10; Doc 36, 5 and Doc 57, 1.
\(^{60}\) OM 2, Doc 732, 14. Maurey, \textit{Bret}, 5. EC, Doc 36, 5. Bret continued making shoes for the missionaries for many years. Unfortunately they often did not stand up to tropical conditions. Brother Sauveur to Colin, LRO 6, Doc 739.
\(^{61}\) APM, personal file Servant.
ing from their happiness, except his absence. Your son left you for good reasons, he answers, and he is happier than he can tell you.62

For Bataillon leaving was somehow less dramatic. His mother had died when he was quite small and he had been cared for by his elder sister Françoise. ‘I can’t say that I found leaving France all that difficult, and if I had to do it again, it would have been even less so. Don’t imagine that it is impossible to be a missionary. Just get on the road! The Good Lord will do the rest’, he wrote later to his friend Étienne Séon. With a large family around him, his father seems to have made himself comfortable enough. Pierre kept writing regularly, urging him in nearly each letter to lead a good Christian life. Some years later, Pierre invited him to come to Wallis where he could enjoy a kava drink under the coconut trees every evening!63

Joseph Luzy left Belley in the beginning of September to stay with his family and say good-bye. When the day came, taking leave of his mother turned into a dramatic experience. She was so overcome by grief that she fainted in the arms of the neighbours! At which he quickly walked off.64 Before leaving he wrote an emotional letter to his family. Once on the way, he followed with a more cheerful, even enthusiastic one.65

Brother Marie-Nizier Delorme had already taken leave of his parents, when, just before leaving for Paris, he discovered that at nineteen years of age he was not allowed to leave the country without the written permission of his father. Nor had he passed the selection for military service. He had to rush home to get the necessary documents from his father and from the Mayor of Saint-Laurent; all in so much of a hurry that he forgot to take money for the toll he had to pay to cross the bridge at La Mulatière. The guard let him through but could not believe his eyes when the young man came back the next day to pay the two cents!66

62. LRO 1, Doc 25, 7.
65. Ronzon, FMO, 11.
66. Ronzon, Delorme, 28.
A firm spiritual director

Most of the missionaries had already taken leave of their parents and were in Belley when the retreat opened there on 20 September. The rules for the retreat stipulated that prior to the profession everyone should have a talk with the provisional Superior, ie with Jean-Claude Colin. In this conversation Claude Bret admitted that the encouragement he had been given by Bishop Devie had not taken away all his hesitations. Colin gave him Bossuet’s *Discourse on the Act of Self-Abandonment*, a text he often recommended. We can assume that other missionaries were given the same text, or at least were guided along similar lines.

Only one thing is necessary. Only God is necessary: he is everything, the rest is nothing. Whatever might be, fades before His face, and all nations are a void and a nothing in His eyes. He alone is necessary for man. Him alone we must desire and to Him alone we must bind ourselves. ‘Fear the Lord and observe his commandments’ . . . Everything else is alien to man . . . This is the ground of his being . . . Whatever you might lose, oh man, you have lost nothing provided you do not lose God, you have lost nothing that could have been your own. Let go of everything else: keep only to the fear and the love of God . . . I have abandoned everything for you, O Lord. Do with it what You want . . . (535)

We must let ourselves fall into the welcoming arms of our God, our Saviour and our Father. That is when we learn to use the name ‘Father’ properly, like children, innocent and simple, without effort, without anxiety, without worrying about the future . . . (538)

It is this act of total surrender that creates room for the Spirit to move us, and to turn us entirely into action for God . . . (539)

67. OM 1, Doc 402, 7.
68. OM 2, Doc 727. This text could perhaps be added to the list of classical sources of Marist spirituality, cf Greiler, *Inspiriertes Leben*, 27–47.
The meditation of this little known text seems to have lifted Claude Bret over the threshold. To Bataillon he confided he had nothing to gain any more in this world than heaven. Smiling and joyfully he set out for the journey that, for him, was not to be long.70

It was this spirit of total commitment, based on radical self-denial and flowing from the passionate love of God and of God alone, that Jean-Claude Colin wanted to see in his missionaries as he sent them out into the unknown Pacific. In fact, he sent them not only to the other side of the world, but also up the steep road to instant holiness, which he found more important. The same thing that Mother Saint-Joseph also had meant to convey to Peter Chanel with the firmness that Colin admired in her.71 Only men driven by such saintly determination were able to set their hands to the formidable task of opening up the missions of Oceania, without looking back.72

The retreat in Belley

The retreat73 was held in the Minor Seminary, the profession and the election in the Marists’ own house, the Capucinière. Colin’s choice of Belley and his promise to establish the mother house in Lyon had taken the sting out of the quarrel, but the division was smouldering on, and Colin was determined not to have further discussions during the retreat, especially not with Pompallier present, naturally keen to explain what Rome thought about it. Point one of the rules for the retreat was clear: ‘Not a word on Belley and Lyon.’74 Colin could be decisive!

When it became known that Bishop Devie expected to preside at the professions and the election, and when Colin showed himself inclined to agree, the Lyon faction objected and it fell to the charming Chanel to tell the Bishop he was not welcome.75 Right up to the retreat Colin was not quite certain how many men would in fact take the definitive step.76 He

70. Bataillon to Étienne Séon, 30 July 1837, LRO 1, Doc 19, 1.
71. RMJ, Docs 105, 3 & 138.
72. ‘No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God.’ Lk 9: 62
73. A detailed account of the retreat in Kerr, Colin, 293–309.
74. OM 1, Doc 402, 1.
75. OM 2, Docs 709, 3 and 750, 13
76. OM 1, Doc 396, 1 and 5.
also made sure that only those who were decided to make their vows in
the Society, would vote in the election.\textsuperscript{77}

The newly consecrated Bishop Pompallier was invited to give the retreat
conferences, two each day, and another one preceding the profession and
the election.\textsuperscript{78} Years later Denis Maitrepiere recounted that Pompallier
developed his themes with unassuming modesty. He made the retreatants
taste the riches of the religious vows: to consecrate one’s possessions, one’s
body and one’s soul to Him through religious vows, was the best way
to enter into God’s views. He invited them to approach their vows with
generosity, with love and with joy. On the third day of the retreat Bishop
Devie was invited to give a conference\textsuperscript{79} and every day Colin himself
explained the Constitutions. He had submitted a text in Rome in 1833
that he enriched and reworked both in Rome and back in France. Which
version he used in the retreat and then gave to the parting missionaries is
not clear.\textsuperscript{80}

Seventeen years later Maitrepiere recalled that Colin spoke poorly
and with difficulty, as if unable to express his thoughts.\textsuperscript{81} Colin had long
overcome the nervous stutter of his childhood.\textsuperscript{82} He had been a successful
preacher of village missions and later on he could be quite eloquent as is
clear from the many informal talks recorded by Mayet. Why the haltering
presentation in this instance? The stress of the moment? Or the discrep-
ancy Colin always seems to have felt between his high Marist ideals and
the constraining genre of Constitutions?\textsuperscript{83}

On 24 September 1836, Jean-Claude Colin was elected by the unani-
mous votes of his confreres (including Pompallier) to become the first
Superior General of the Society of Mary. Only one vote went not to Colin
but to Cholleton. Marcellin Champagnat, in his strong and rough accent,
and in his typically undiplomatic way addressed the newly elect:

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\textsuperscript{77} OM 1, Doc 402, 6.
\textsuperscript{78} OM 2, Doc 752, 41.
\textsuperscript{79} OM 1, Doc 403, 10.
\textsuperscript{80} Jean Coste (editor), \textit{Antiquiores Textus Constitutionum Societatis Mariae} (Rome:
\textsuperscript{82} Kerr, \textit{Colin}, 36 and 60.
\textsuperscript{83} Can it have been this sort of frustration of every implementation falling short of his
vision, that withheld him so long from finishing the Constitutions of the Society? The
same thing that caused the contradictions in the way he dealt with the Third Order,
and that made people around him sometimes bypass him in order to get things done?
‘We have just given you a very bad present. What miseries wait for you in your administration! Your dignity lifts you up only to expose you to winds and tempests. ( . . . ) When your sons pass before the great Judge, you will be on the carpet and, if just one is condemned through your fault, you will answer for it’.84

After the election Colin himself made his vows, followed by the vows of nineteen Marist priests, including the first four about to leave for Oceania.85

Pompallier had explained his position to Fransoni:

I intend to make a solemn declaration regarding my relationship to the Society. It will put my status on a par with that of a Bishop who before his episcopal ordination was bound by vows of religion. According to the views of Your Eminence and those of Cardinal Sala, it would be unbecoming for me as a Bishop to make vows to a mere priest, especially so after I have made a promise under oath of immediate obedience to our Holy Father, the Pope.86

So, Jean-Baptiste-François Pompallier, Bishop of Maronea and Vicar Apostolic of Western Oceania, solemnly declared that he belonged, with heart and soul, to the Society of Mary and that he wished to live according to its spirit and its Constitutions as much as he could. It always would be a source of happiness and consolation, he said, to follow the advice of the Superior General, insofar as his duty of obedience to the Pope would allow. He declared that he wished to be a member of the Society ‘until my last breath’.87

Next an assistant was to be elected. When the votes began to converge on his brother Pierre, Jean-Claude intervened, making it clear that it might not be proper to have two brothers at the head of the Society. Pierre quickly withdrew and Terraillon was elected. The strong allegiance

85. OM 1, Doc 403, 19–20.
86. OM 1, Doc 401. Wiltgen, Founding, 128, throws doubt on the claim that Pompallier had been told this in Rome.
87. OM 1, Doc 404.
of Terraillon to the Archdiocese of Lyon created a nice balance with Jean-Claude Colin, who was from Belley.\textsuperscript{88}

The whole assembly then went to visit Bishop Devie and received his blessings and his good wishes for the Society. He congratulated them on the election of Jean-Claude Colin. They then assembled to sign the minutes and dispersed. Champagnat rushed to the Hermitage to prepare for the retreat of the Brothers, Pompallier followed him to bless the new chapel that Champagnat had just finished.\textsuperscript{89}

\section*{The Consecration of Oceania to Our Lady}

Departure for Oceania had been set for 25 October from Le Havre and lots of things needed to be done in Paris and in the port. Pompallier left Lyon for Paris on 7 October, with Catherin Servant, Claude Bret and Brother Joseph-Xavier Luzy. On 12 October, in Paris, Father Bret made the first entry in his diary.\textsuperscript{90}

Chanel and Bataillon stayed behind to complete the necessary purchases and to look after the dispatch of some thirty plus cases. They were to wait for the Brothers Marie-Nizier and Michel Colombon, still in retreat in the Hermitage. The two priests started a novena and they bought a gilt-silver heart on which was engraved: Missionnaires de la Polynésie. On Saturday 15 October the two Brothers had arrived and together they closed the novena with a last Mass in the Chapel of Fourvière after which they performed an act of consecration. The names of all eight of them, written on a ribbon, were enclosed in the ‘ex voto’ heart that Peter Chanel then hung around the neck of the Infant of the Black Madonna.\textsuperscript{91} Next morning the two priests and the two Brothers set out for

\textsuperscript{88} OM 2, Doc 684, 3–4.
\textsuperscript{89} OM 1, Doc 403, 24. LMC 1, Doc 69
\textsuperscript{90} LRO 1, Doc 1, 1.
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Paris. Although none of the missionaries had been present at the original consecration in 1816, their gesture associated them and their missionary project with the original intent of the first Marist group. Colin was told about the consecration and he later followed the example. It became a beautiful ceremony at many later departures.92

Colin’s own farewell messages

It was with the knowledge of their painful farewells still in mind that on 13 October 1836 Father Colin wrote a memorable letter to the missionaries. He addressed it to Chanel, still in Lyon, who took it with him to Paris for the other men.93

It is with a kind of secret jealousy that I see the holy courage with which you break all the bonds of flesh and blood in order to follow the voice that calls you, and to carry the torch of the faith to the peoples of Western Oceania. Wish I could share your happiness, your pains and your labours, so as to share also in the great reward that awaits you in heaven. Unfortunately, my sins make me unworthy of the grace of such an apostolate and of martyrdom. Still, allow me to give you a few points of advice, that may be of use to you and be a sign of my heart-felt love.

1° Never rely on self—not in adversity nor in prosperity—but solely on Jesus and Mary. The more you distrust

who, much later, says it was done on the initiative of Pompallier. Wiltgen, *Founding*, 132, follows Rozier. However, when Pompallier alludes to the event in a letter to Colin (LRO 1, Doc 10, 10), he does so in a casual way, without claiming it was his idea. Chanel does not mention Pompallier (EC, Doc 27, 5). At the time Bataillon did not attribute it to Pomplallier either, though ten years later he did (LRO 1, Doc 3, 2. CCC, Doc 82, 3). Kerr (*Colin*, 306) does not give Pompallier a role. A similar ceremony had already taken place in the Hermitage (Servant to Champagnat, 14 December 1836, LO Clisby 004, 5). It looks therefore more likely that the idea came from the Marist Brothers.

92. For example the fourth group, January 1840, CS 1, Doc 130, 1. The text of the consecration and the original ribbon have not been found. Probably after the loss of the first one, another ribbon was made with all the names.

self and trust in God, the more you will attract the light and the graces of heaven. The man of faith who places his confidence in God alone is unshakeable in the midst of great dangers; he is neither rash nor fainthearted. His device is: ‘I can do all things in him who strengthens me.’ The success of your mission will be the reward of your faith and trust in God alone.

2° Live in the presence of the Saviour. It is on his behalf that you are leaving. It is He who sends you. ‘As the Father sends me, so I send you.’ He will be with you everywhere as in the past he was with his apostles; he will be with you in your travels, on land, on sea, in the calm as in the tempest, in health as in sickness; if you are hungry or thirsty, he will be hungry or thirsty with you. It is he who shall be received where you are, persecuted when you are and rebuffed when you are. See him everywhere and at all times, in all events good or bad, see him intimately united to you, sharing your work, your sufferings, your joys, your consolations. Give him the glory of your actions, disregard yourselves as useless instruments. Constantly thinking of him will be the source of your strength, of your peace and of all the enlightenment you will need.

3° In persecution and in danger, in privations and in temptations, do not argue with yourself, don’t look inward. If you do, desolations, regret and sadness will get the better of you.
and you will feel your courage and your virtue wither away. Immediately turn your eyes and your thoughts towards Jesus and Mary, towards heaven and the sufferings of Our Lord. I urgently recommend you this practice. You will soon feel how important it is.

4° Be men of prayer. Converting souls is more than raising the dead. Such things are not done without prayer. Pray continually for the conversion of your heathens. Offer your actions each day for that intention, and one day a week of your own choice, you can offer all the good actions in each of the branches of the Society for the same intention and for your own needs. This will attract many graces upon you.

5° However busy you are let no day pass without saying at least a few decades of the Rosary. Place every island you may set foot on, under the protection of Mary.

6° As much as circumstances permit and you are up to it, be unassuming, modest, poor, but clean in your clothing and you external attire. If you cannot reach Mgr. Pompallier, then ask each other for the permissions you may need.

7° ‘Woe the solitary’, says the Holy Spirit, and especially in Polynesia loneliness will be dangerous. Only in urgent need will you go out alone, or be alone. In all other situations be conscientious to the point of scrupulosity to be always at least two together, even if you only go for a walk. This precaution will shelter you from many a danger.

8° Finally, be united with Jesus and Mary. Let there be no contention among you, and do not argue among yourselves. Obey Mgr. Pompallier as your Bishop and your Superior. I again recommend that you address all letters to Europe to the Superior of the Society.

I end this letter as I began. I wish you the peace and the love of Jesus and Mary. Be courageous. Do not let fear or sadness take root in your soul. Read this letter again and again. Make
a copy for each. I embrace you all with the utmost tenderness. I promise that the whole Society will pray for you. Use every opportunity to let us hear from you.

By way of postscript Colin added:

I understand you can follow no other rule than circumstances will permit. Nevertheless, you may feel better with a summary of the Constitutions of the Society. I send you one. But remember it is still far from perfect. I shall send it later, because I have not found the time to make a copy. Do not show it to anyone. Mgr Pompallier, or whoever he will appoint, will be your superior. Adieu.

The letter remained a document of great value. The missionaries read it regularly.  
On 18 October Colin addressed a personal letter to Pompallier:  

We are with you on your travels in mind and in heart, and in a more useful way, I hope, by our prayers . . . Be full of courage. I have sent Monsieur Chanel in Lyon a summary of the Rule. Be so kind as to ask Monsieur Coudrin, the Superior of the Picpus, to allow me to correspond with him, so that he can pass me whatever news he gets from Polynesia and let me know how I can get news to you. He is closer to the ports than we are in Lyon.

Do not hide from me the dangers you incur, your sufferings and the other problems you may run into from the part of the unbelievers or from other people. These things will be very useful to me in the choice of future missionaries. Make sure that your missionaries are faithful to the counsels I have given them in my letter to Monsieur Chanel, especially not to go out without a companion. Mind that these counsels are not just mine, they have cost me several days of prayer.

Try by all possible means to maintain among them unity, peace and a holy gaiety. Wherever you will be, you will find

94. For instance, Servant. LRO 1, Doc 31, 23.
95. CS 1, Doc 5.
there your home country, because you will there find God, who, alone, will take the place of father and mother, of brothers and sisters and who will never fail to be with you.

Set great store by consulting your missionaries. It will enhance the interest they take in your projects and foster unity. Be with your whole heart a father and a mother for each of them. You are their Bishop and their Superior; they owe you obedience and respect on both counts.

Think of the poverty and the simplicity of the Apostles; they too were Bishops, and still, often they worked with their hands for the first necessaries of life. Missionaries of Mary will always be known for their simplicity, their poverty and their zeal. Her sweet name will remind you incessantly that you part under her banner, that it she who walks with you, who is the star of the sea, the fear of hell and that under her protection you have nothing to fear. In need and in danger, look only at Jesus and Mary; do not look for help elsewhere. Do not argue with yourself but look up at Jesus and Mary.

Behave and arrange your external behaviour in such a way that people everywhere will recognise in you the children of Mary, and that the missionaries we shall send you, find back among you the spirit of the Society: a spirit of poverty, humility and simplicity.

Receive this letter in the right mind, and see it as a proof of my ardent desire to contribute to the success of your apostolate.

Pompallier appreciated Colin’s letter. Echoing the spiritual direction given by Colin, he wrote: ‘We leave everything to find everything.’96

**Setting the Marist missions on an exceptional course**

From the day Pompallier had told Colin of the invitation to lead a new mission, Colin had been determined that his own reservations about him

96. LRO 1, Doc 10, 18.
should in no way affect the attitudes of his confreres. There is no trace in the surviving documents that he shared his fears with anyone. During twenty years, in all his difficulties with the Bishops of Lyon and Belley, he had always avoided the confrontation and always submitted to their authority. It was a constant feature of his spiritual and administrative convictions that Marists should relate to the Bishops in such a way that these would consider them as their own clergy (tamquam suam). As from 1842 this expression appears in all the drafts of the Constitutions and he often referred to it.97

In January 1836, trying to deal with the threatening break-up of the Society, he wrote to Champagnat: ‘Let us keep up our courage and seek to give our enterprise a more uniform and strong direction with all the means that prudence and submission to Our Lordships the Bishops allow for. (. . .) The spirit of the Society is one of humility, self-effacement and commitment.’98 Did he already feel that very soon he might have to deal in this way with Pompallier?

In his letter to the missionaries as well as in the one to Pompallier, Colin, almost casually, mentions that Pompallier was to be not only their Bishop but their religious Superior as well: ‘Obey Mgr Pompallier as your Bishop and your Superior’. And in the post-script: ‘Mgr Pompallier, or whoever he will appoint, will be your Superior’. In the letter to Pompallier, underlined by Colin himself: ‘You are their Bishop and their Superior, they owe you respect and obedience on both counts’.99

What Colin did here is more than advising. In all their casual appearance, his words are clear-cut and unambiguous. He knows what he is doing and expresses something he is quite decided upon. He is defining the structure of the mission. Pompallier was not a professed Marist and Colin had no authority over him. Pompallier was canonically not a member of the Society and juridically could not bear office in the Congregation. Still, Colin appointed him Superior of the Marists in Oceania. We know Colin as a past master of letter writing and these letters were not written in haste, or on the spur of the moment. He had worked on them during ‘several days of prayer’.

Of course, there was common sense in Colin’s exceptional decision.100 He was dealing with a small group of eight men. Nobody could guess

98. OM 1, Doc 358, 5.
99. CS 1, Docs 4 and 5.
100.Cf below, pages 67: Excursus B. How are missions governed?
where and how they would be able to establish missions. Difficult choices
would have to be made. The obvious thing was to put all authority into
one hand. Father Coudrin had done the same with the first group he sent
to Hawaii in 1826 by allowing Fr Alexis Bachelot to continue in his func-
tion of religious Superior when he was appointed Prefect Apostolic. How-
ever, when in 1833 the Picpus Fathers started their mission in the islands
of the south-east Pacific under Bishop Rouchouze, Coudrin appointed a
separate Superior, Fr Liausu.101 Did Colin know this? At the time perhaps
not and there is no indication that he tried to find out. Five years later he
referred to it.102 Colin knew that what he did, went against established
practice. Still, he followed his own intuition.

Did he discuss it with the men beforehand? The insistence with which,
in the very same letter, he urged Pompallier to consult his missionaries
would be less than sincere, if he had not done it himself in so crucial a
matter. That he was not blind to the human realities of exercising author-
ity, is evident from his reminder to Pompallier that consulting the men
‘will interest them in your enterprises and foster unity’. He knew only too
well that, a few years earlier, the community of Valbenoîte had preferred
not to have Pompallier for their Superior. In none of the replies of the men
to Colin there was a hint of surprise at the arrangement. We can conclude
that the missionaries were consulted and were prepared to accept the ar-
rangement. This would explain why there were only two casual reminders
in Colin’s letter. The men knew established Church policy, they also knew
Pompallier. They were aware of his foibles but seem to have been at ease
with him. Pompallier had the impression that they felt free to give their
points of view.103

Did Colin discuss it with Pompallier beforehand? Unlike the mis-
sionaries Pompallier repeatedly expressed his surprise. From Le Havre he
reminded Colin that, as explained to him in Rome, ‘the Holy See itself
judges it appropriate for all missions staffed by religious, to establish two
separate jurisdictions’. He now had to go against the instructions he got in
Rome. Showing his hesitation he wrote: ‘I don’t think I am going against
the intentions of the Holy Father, when I accept this delegation.’ We must
conclude that Colin did not discuss it with him beforehand and dropped
it on him as a surprise. Pompallier accepted, graciously and gratefully.104

101. Wiltgen, Founding, 20 and 90.
102. CS 1, Doc 305, 6.
103. LRO 1, Doc 8, 10.
104. LRO 1, Doc 4, 3 and 4.
A few months later, on 22 February 1837, from Santa Cruz, Pompallier wrote to Cardinal Fransoni: ‘I accepted the office (that is, of Superior), but let me know if I should give it up so as to have no other responsibility than the mission.’\textsuperscript{105} As far as we know Fransoni did not take up the matter.

What was it that led Colin into this fateful direction? Referring to Pompallier’s letter to Fransoni, Roach comments: ‘Fransoni did not do so (that is, ask for the appointment to be cancelled) for we find Colin instructing his subjects to regard the Bishop not only as their ecclesiastical but also their religious Superior’,\textsuperscript{106} whereby Roach seems to overlook that Colin took his decision four months before Pompallier’s letter to Fransoni.

Kerr suggests it was an inexperienced Colin, carried away by the euphoria of the moment. Or, his uncompromising interpretation of obedience. Or, a bit of both. Kerr even leaves the possibility open that it was Colin’s inability to judge characters.\textsuperscript{107} However, we do not know Colin as a poor judge of character. Ten years later Colin said: ‘These distant missions need unity above all else in the beginning, and this is one way to ensure it. I am not sending men out there to dispute about what they think are their rights.’\textsuperscript{108} But, to get a man so loyal to Rome to go against established Roman practice, there must have been more to it. Colin’s focus was on the importance of obedience to the Bishop for the missionaries in their quest for holiness. The practicalities of governance did not mean all that much to him. At the background may also have been that Colin was leaning backwards to avoid conflict. Attempting the impossible.

Wiltgen comments that what in 1836 began as common sense and as nurturing a delicate relationship, ‘calculated to help avoid an explosive situation, was in reality destined to bring it about!’\textsuperscript{109} Looking ahead into the history of the Marist missions we find that Colin’s decision grew into a matter of principle, and into an awkward sort of governance with long-term negative consequences for the missionaries, for the Society and for the Church in the Pacific Islands.

**Pro-Vicar of Oceania**

Pompallier was touched by the trust Colin put in him. He wrote him four long letters before sailing\textsuperscript{110}, and all of them flow over with declarations

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{105}Quoted from Wiltgen, *Founding*, 131.
  \item \textsuperscript{106}Roach, *Colin and the Mission*, 27.
  \item \textsuperscript{107}Kerr, *Colin*, 302.
  \item \textsuperscript{108}FS, Doc 119, 10.
  \item \textsuperscript{109}Wiltgen, *Founding*, 131.
  \item \textsuperscript{110}From Paris on 5 November, LRO 1, Doc 4. From Le Havre on 28 November, 8 Decem-
of loyalty to the Society of Mary. From Paris he wrote: 'With the grace of God and under the protection of the Blessed Virgin I shall do my utmost to follow the rule and the spirit of the Society in which you have wanted to grant me a delegation of your authority. (...) I am deeply convinced that we cannot succeed unless the missionaries live as good religious according to the rules and the spirit of their institute'.

Propaganda had authorised Pompallier to appoint a Pro-Vicar in France to be his legal representative. The purpose was to have somebody in the home country who could receive the subsidies of the Propagation of the Faith and other gifts on behalf of the mission, and give an account of their use to the benefactors. The Pro-Vicar could recruit missionaries, give them faculties and send them to the missions. The Superior General of the Picpus Fathers, Father Coudrin, was the Pro-Vicar of Bishop Rouchouze in the East Pacific, and on 5 November Pompallier asked Colin to do the same for him. He left it to Colin to judge whether this was appropriate. If not, he mandated Colin to appoint someone else in his place. He confirmed the arrangement in a formal Latin document, dated 23 November.111

If Colin’s misgivings about Pompallier were probably not entirely strange to his decision to make him the religious Superior, so Pompallier may have had his reservations about Colin as a manager. Already the exchange of letters between the two of them did not run smoothly. Not only did Colin not answer every letter he received, he often did not react to things mentioned; nor did he acknowledge receipt of letters, which annoyed Pompallier.112

Would Colin actively support the mission? Pompallier realised how utterly dependent he would be on the supply of manpower and money from France. So far he himself had sought the men, gone after financial means, made contacts, planned and decided. Even if Colin had wanted to, his involvement would surely have led to friction. Colin had limited himself to the spiritual preparation of the men, but now his role had to change. Somebody in France had to push the cart. The example of the Picpus came in useful, so Pompallier wrote: ‘Monsieur Coudrin, their Superior General offered himself to be Pro-Vicar for Mgr Rouchouze, and

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111.LRO 1, Docs 4, 6–7 and Doc 5.
112.From Rome: OM 1, Doc 398, 1. Also LRO 1, Docs 7, 26 and 8, 20.
he is in fact. As for me, I gladly offer you this position: to whom else could I entrust it better?"\textsuperscript{113}

Colin wondered what he was letting himself in for and he asked for a copy of the pertinent Roman document. Pompallier answered it was contained in his general faculties, of which Colin already had a copy. He added that he would notify Propaganda of the appointment, which he did in the letter to Fransoni from Santa Cruz. Although entitled to entrust it to someone else, Colin took it on himself, which made him responsible for the needs of the mission.\textsuperscript{114} Apart from being a bit of a missionary himself that way, he saw it mainly as a means to foster the unity between the missionaries and the other members of the Society.\textsuperscript{115}

On his own request Rome had also allowed Pompallier to take in priests who did not belong to the Society of Mary, provided men in authority, Prefects and Pro-Prefects were Marists. Pompallier declared that he did not intend to make use of this faculty.\textsuperscript{116}

He let Colin know that he had made a last will in which he left everything to the Society. The will was with a public notary.\textsuperscript{117}

From his family estate Pompallier had a regular income of 400 francs a year. He had authorised Father Champagnat to receive it on his behalf and, as he wished to be as much a religious member of the Congregation as possible, he arranged that it be used for the benefit of the Society as the Superiors saw fit. He would not claim it for the mission except in urgent need.\textsuperscript{118} To all appearances relations could hardly have been better!

**Paris again**

On the point of departure the money that Cardinal Fransoni had pledged for the mission in Oceania had not arrived. Pompallier had to appeal to the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon to advance him the promised amount. It was Champagnat again whom he authorised to cash the cheque when it would arrive, asking him to refund the Association on his behalf.\textsuperscript{119} This enabled the Bishop to leave on 8 October with the Fathers Servant and

\textsuperscript{113} LRO 1, Doc 4, 7.
\textsuperscript{114} Colin accepted the charge in a letter of 29 November that has not been found (cf LRO 1, Doc 8, 2 and 4).
\textsuperscript{115} CS 1, Doc 13, 3.
\textsuperscript{116} LRO 1, Doc 4, 8.
\textsuperscript{117} LRO 1, Doc 4, 9.
\textsuperscript{118} LRO 1, Doc 4, 10.
\textsuperscript{119} Pompallier to Champagnat, 7 October 1836. LO, Clisby 002.
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Bret and Brother Joseph-Xavier Luzy for Paris, exactly a week later followed by the Fathers Chanel and Bataillon and the Brothers Michel Colombon and Marie-Nizier Delorme.

The Marist missionaries stayed at the centre of the Foreign Missions of Paris, where Pompallier had stayed already in August with Marcellin Champagnat. The hospitality of the Superior, Father Dubois, and the friendship of the missionaries did them a lot of good.120

Twice Pompallier went out to visit the Picpus general house, on 23 and again on 25 October.121 As he became better acquainted with the Picpus Fathers, he learned of the way they had organised the support of the mother house for the missions. Father Coudrin who was in Paris at the time, assured him that he would gladly communicate with Colin and be of service in forwarding mail and parcels to Oceania.122 Pompallier was initiated in the art of exchanging currencies in the most profitable way, although he found out later that there were better ways than he had heard about in Paris.123

Pompallier used his time in Paris well. He followed up on earlier visits to French officials and was received by King Louis-Philippe, Queen Marie-Amélie and the King’s sister, Madame Adélaïde d’Orléans. He received large gifts from all of them.124

From 1815 to 1830 the French Government had constantly tried to use the Catholic missions to expand its influence overseas. Anxious to foster a French presence on the increasingly important North-Pacific trade route between California and China, the Government had played an active role in getting the Picpus missionaries to Hawaii in the years 1825 to 1827. In 1829 and 1830 the same Government had been on the point of giving significant support to de Solages when he was planning to open missions in the Pacific. It had also intended to establish French Consulates in various island countries, whereby the political aspects of their plans were carefully left out of the texts presented to Rome.125

After the 1830 revolution, the July Monarchy initially withdrew official support for projects concerned with colonial expansion in the Pacific. Naval commanders were to insist with local authorities only that French citizens, whatever their profession, be treated on an equal footing with

120.LRO 1, Doc 4, 2.
121.Luc, Mémoires sur la Congrégation des Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie, 260.
122.LRO 1, Doc 4, 15 and Doc 7, 9.
123.LRO 1, Doc 7, 14.
124.LRO 1, Doc 4, 13.
citizens of other European countries. Still, it did not take long before the old instincts revived and the Government considered it important to have ‘agents to promote our flag in the Great Ocean’ as the instructions were to a navy vessel parting for the Pacific in 1837. The British and American Governments followed similar policies while missionaries of all denominations, on their part, were eager to obtain from their Governments whatever help they could get.

Unaware of the political background, or simply disregarding it, and ‘not burdened by unpleasant memories of dealing with French Government agencies’, Pompallier saw several representatives of a Government that was ‘gradually dropping its anticlerical attitude towards missionaries in whom they saw fine ambassadors of the French spirit and of French culture’. He got important letters of recommendation to French Consuls on the west coast of America, and to French naval commanders operating in the Pacific. Not a little naively, he wrote to Colin: ‘The French state shows its deference to the Holy See through its goodwill and its co-operation with the mission.’

The Superior of the Irish Seminary in Paris gave him a letter for Bishop Polding in Sydney and promised to get letters of recommendation from the Foreign Office in London that might come in useful with Methodist ministers in the Pacific.

Before leaving Paris Pompallier wrote a graceful letter to Father Coudrin to thank him for his help, his support and his friendship.

**Le Havre**

Fathers Chanel and Bataillon and Brother Marie Nizier Delorme were the first to leave Paris for Rouen, where they stayed at the Seminary, run by the Picpus Fathers. The Bursar looked after them well and made them visit the town, the Church of Saint-Ouen and the *Place du Marché* where Jeanne d’Arc had been burned at the stake. On 26 October they contin-

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130. LRO 1, Doc 4, 13.
131. LRO 1, Doc 4, 14. At this time Pompallier called all Protestants Methodists.
132. Lucas, *Mémoires*, 260. Writing to Colin he called Coudrin ‘the good monsieur Coudrin’ and ‘the venerable old man’, LRO 1, Doc 7, 14. Coudrin was sixty-eight at the time.
ued to Le Havre, where they arrived the 27. The next day arrived the four Picpus missionaries who were to travel on the same ship: the Fathers Emmanuel Coste and Louis de Gonzague Borgella, the subdeacon Potentien Guilmard and Brother Bessarion Delon.133

Bishop Pompallier, accompanied by Claude Bret and Brother Joseph-Xavier Luzy also stopped at Rouen. While his companions visited the local churches, Pompallier went to see the Archbishop, the Prince Cardinal De Croy, Grand Almoner of France. This high dignitary and long-time promoter, in fact co-founder, of the Propagation of the Faith,134 had been involved in the early planning of the missions to the South Pacific in 1829 under de Solages and in getting the Government to support it.135 Father Coudrin had been the Cardinal Archbishop’s Vicar General, and he was asking for faculties for his missionaries leaving through Le Havre which fell within the boundaries of the Archdiocese of Rouen. The Marists too received faculties for the duration of their stay. Pompallier’s visit to a highly political figure like the Prince Cardinal can only have helped his attempts to get Government support for the new mission, especially as De Croy had been involved also in the founding of the new Picpus mission in South-Eastern Oceania in 1833.136 Pompallier will have come away with extensive information on many things, especially on the political background of the Government’s support for the missions. Strangely, he does not mention it in his otherwise detailed letters to Colin from Le Havre.

Pompallier and his two companions reached Le Havre on 13 November. Father Servant and Brother Michel followed on the 14. They then had to wait for a favourable wind, which allowed those who had not done so yet, to make their last wills.137 Everyone had time to catch up on correspondence. Marie-Nizier wrote a letter to Champagnat that was circulated in the Brothers’ communities.138 They were a happy group, in Chanel’s words, ‘happy as butterflies’.139

They were impressed with their ship, the Delphine, a 329 ton schooner with three tall masts ‘as high as the eye can see’, as Nizier put it. Pompallier

133.EC, Doc 27, 1. LRO 1, Doc 1, 4.
134.LRO 1, Doc 1, 3. EC, Doc 27, 8. Keys, Pompallier, 32.
136.Wiltgen, Founding, 75.
137.On Servant, cf LRO 1, Doc 8, 3. Peter Chanel already had done so before taking leave of his mother, cf EC, Doc 17. Brother Marie-Nizier, not yet of age, could not make a will, cf LRO 1, Doc 7, 22.
138.LMC 1, Docs 79 and 80.
139.EC, Doc 31, 5.
wrote to Miolano, one of the Vicars General of Lyon, the Honorary President of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith: ‘The Delphine is an excellent sailing ship that has already done several voyages to Valparaiso. The Captain is known as an able and experienced man. He has successfully been sailing the oceans for more than thirty years.’ Joseph Luzy wanted to know exactly and found that it measured 100 feet long, 30 feet wide, 18 to 20 feet high, drawing 14 feet of water.\textsuperscript{140} Next to it lay La Joséphine, on which the Jesuit priests and the Sisters were to sail to Louisiana.

The Marists saw their luggage loaded: eighty cases of it, containing besides personal effects, things for the liturgy, books, bolts of cloth, lots of clothing, agricultural and carpentry tools, plant material and all kinds of seeds. They shared cabins, but had a special place to pray and say Mass.\textsuperscript{141}

Pompallier used the delay to rush back to Paris to take care of some last-minute business. In the leisure time he got his bookkeeping in order and made a detailed financial report to Colin. Expenses and provisions had cost much more than foreseen. The costs of the mission had initially been estimated at 40,000 francs. In fact they had received about 70,000 francs, but after buying all the goods and the tools they might need, and paying the fare to Valparaiso they had only 22,000 left. Barely enough to get to their destination, and leaving nothing to live on once they would get there. For the future, Pompallier admitted he could only trust in Divine Providence. He rightly worried how they would manage in places where literally everything had to be built up out of nothing. He urged Colin to have the Propagation of the Faith send money ahead to Valparaiso.\textsuperscript{142} Colin took no action.

They were lucky enough to lodge free of charge with a rich widow, Mme Dodard, ‘A modern Tabitha,’ as Servant called her. In spite of her extremely poor health, she took in the eight Marists, the four Picpus missionaries and the Jesuits! The Sisters leaving for Louisiana were divided over different convents in town.\textsuperscript{143}

The Marists came to see that eventually the Society should have a house of its own for departing missionaries, in Bordeaux, which was the base of

\textsuperscript{142}LRO 1, Doc 7, 4–7.
\textsuperscript{143}EC, Doc 31, 1. Servant (thinking of Acts 9: 36) to Champagnat, 15 November 1836. LO, Clisby 004, 2.
most ships going to the west coast of South America, or in Le Havre. They also foresaw the need of a similar house, either on the west coast of America, or in Australia. When, in 1833, the mission of Eastern Oceania had been entrusted to the Picpus Fathers, Coudrin had shown a strategic approach new to the Marists. He had first sent four men to Valparaiso to establish a base from where his missionaries could try to get a foothold in the islands, and on which they could fall back if necessary. Such a base, or Procure, at once the residence for the religious Superior, allowed for better communications. One could make better use of the movement of ships and make great savings by negotiating directly with ships’ captains. The contacts of the Marists in Paris and especially in Le Havre allowed them already to identify agents to handle mail and goods for the islands. Pompallier reported everything in detail to Colin, with the remark that he himself did not have the means to start a Procure: a gentle invitation to Colin to take the initiative.

The contacts in Le Havre confirmed what Pastre had already pointed out in September 1835 and what Pompallier would have heard from Coudrin in August 1836, that is, that there were better ways to go to Oceania than around Cape Horn and via Valparaiso. A shipping agent in Le Havre pointed out that there was more regular, faster and much cheaper shipping from English ports directly to the Pacific. Father Coudrin had sent Rouchouze to England in 1833 to explore ways of getting to the Pacific. Rouchouze had found out that the eastern route around the Cape of Good Hope and Australia was by far the better one; important enough to ask Propaganda to extend his jurisdiction over the Western Pacific. Propaganda had not taken over his views and its Secretary Mgr Mai had described the new mission to the Pope as going from the Cook Islands to New Zealand. The Roman dignitaries saw the Marist mission as an extension of the already established Picpus mission. Valparaiso, the ‘Macao of Oceania,’ was the natural place to start from. At this stage, there was

145. The importance of a base such as Valparaiso for Oceania had been well understood by Propaganda. The comparison with Macao as the base from which missionaries operated in China seems to have originated in Propaganda. Cf LRO 1, Doc 10.
146. LRO 1, Doc 8, 16–7.
147. OM 1, Doc 343.
149. Europe gained its first knowledge of the Pacific Ocean in 1513 from Vasco Nuñez
little the Marists could do but follow the Picpus missionaries to the Eastern Pacific and hope for the best.

In Le Havre the world opened up. Pompallier told Colin that the knowledge of English and Spanish would be important for future missionaries. Servant studied Spanish with a Picpus missionary. Chanel, Bret and Bataillon did English with a Jesuit leaving for Louisiana. In Le Havre the world opened up. Pompallier told Colin that the knowledge of English and Spanish would be important for future missionaries. Servant studied Spanish with a Picpus missionary. Chanel, Bret and Bataillon did English with a Jesuit leaving for Louisiana.150

Pompallier made sure the daily exercises of piety were held in common. He gave his priests daily conferences on the special faculties they had received, and on religious life in general. It was not a success. He gave them credit for their understanding and good will. That his conferences did not go down well, he blamed on their lack of background knowledge. The men found more satisfaction in helping out in the surrounding parishes.151

Hearing that their departure had been delayed, Terraillon wrote Pompallier an encouraging letter in which he called him the Francis Xavier of the Society of Mary, waiting in Le Havre just as his great predecessor had waited in Lisbon to depart for the first great mission of the Orient. The letter got to Le Havre after they had left. Where and when Pompallier received it, we do not know, but he treasured it. It is preserved in the Auckland Diocesan archives.152

Finally, on 24 December 1836, the Delphine and La Joséphine were able to sail.

The Superior General

When Colin heard that the Delphine had left, he could look back on an eventful year. The Society of Mary for which he had worked twenty years, and of which he had been the unofficial central Superior for six years, had

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150. LRO 1, Docs 7, 18 and 8, 3. EC, Doc 33, 3.
151. LRO 1, Doc 7, 23.
152. CS 1, Doc 8. In similar words to Chanut, CS 1, Doc 58, 11.
obtained official Roman approbation. He himself was elected its Superior General, and the mission in the South-West Pacific that was so intricately bound up with the approval of the Society, was launched.

In a way he had been fortunate. Pompallier had gathered a splendid group of young men for the pioneer group. Colin’s own contribution was to involve the Marist Brothers of Marcellin Champagnat in the project. He had been able to get Bishop Devie in Belley to release Peter Chanel and Claude Bret.

With the encouragement of Archbishop de Pins the mission had received substantial financial support from the lay association for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon and from Propaganda in Rome. With the men of his team Pompallier had himself taken care of the thousand and one details, the purchases, the dispatching of the goods, the travelling arrangements, making contacts and so forth. There had been no reason for Colin to get involved in all the practicalities. He had wisely let everyone do his own thing. It suited him and it had left him free to concentrate on what he considered by far the most important thing: the spiritual preparation of the men.

Did Jean-Claude Colin, Superior General and Pro-Vicar of Oceania, realise his future involvement would have to be more than that? There is little in the surviving documents that would indicate he did.
Excursus B: How are Missions Governed?1

Religious orders have always felt called to preach the Gospel wherever opportunities arose and where their zeal and initiative carried them. Since the Middle Ages, Abbots and Superiors could send missionaries wherever no Dioceses governed by Bishops had yet been established. They had full ecclesiastical powers over those territories and could delegate their powers to the religious whom they appointed as Superior. Saint Francis Xavier was sent to India by Saint Ignatius of Loyola as Superior of the Jesuit missionaries and at the same time as head of the mission.

Around the same period the Kings of Portugal and Spain founded the Church in the countries that their explorers discovered. They recruited diocesan priests at home, provided finance, and on their nomination Spanish and Portuguese priests were made Bishops in those countries. This was called the ‘ius patronatus’, the patronage system.

In 1622 Pope Gregory XV erected the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, often referred to as Propaganda. It was a group of Cardinals who on behalf of the Pope governed missions in areas beyond the influence of Spain and Portugal. From that time on, precisely defined territories were entrusted to religious orders who were then invited to propose, alongside of their own religious Superiors, other religious whom the Holy See could appoint to ecclesiastical Superiors. The ecclesiastical superior, usually a Bishop, appointed by the Pope, governed the mission, and the religious Superior, appointed by the Superior General cared for the material and spiritual welfare of the missionaries. This was called the ‘ius commissionis’, the commission system.

1. A more detailed and technical treatment of this question can be found in Jan Snijders, ‘The Ius Commissionis and the Diarchy’, in A Piety Able to Cope, <www.mariststudies.org/docs>, Excursus A.
In the normal run of things, Oceania would first have been entrusted to the Society of Mary. Father Colin would first have appointed a Marist to be the Superior of the missionaries and the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda would have asked Father Colin to propose a Marist to become the Vicar Apostolic, that is, the Bishop. The expectation was that under this structure of ‘double governance’ the two superiors, belonging both to the same Religious Order or Congregation, would work harmoniously together, each within the sphere of his own responsibility. This was the way most missions were governed in the nineteenth and twentieth century, until the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965).

The way François Pompallier was appointed, was an anomaly. That Father Colin then made him the religious superior of the missionaries as well, was equally anomalous, even more so because Pompallier was not a professed Marist, that is, not a member of the Society.

The Society of Mary stuck a long time to the exceptional policy that Father Colin introduced. In 1889 the Marists in New Zealand became an autonomous Province within the Society of Mary under a Provincial Superior. When in 1896 the Marist Province of Oceania was established, the Vicars Apostolic remained the religious Superiors with the title of Vice-Province in their respective Vicariates. Only in 1952 the system changed, when Father Alcime Cyr, then Superior General, appointed in each of the missions Regional Superiors, distinct from the Bishops.
Chapter 3
1837: ‘Towards the Fight Proposed to Us’

Perils on the sea (2 Cor 11: 26)

For two months the Delphine and the Joséphine had been swaying in the port of Le Havre. Finally, on Christmas Eve the wind veered to the north-east, the temperature dropped to below zero and it snowed. The captains decided to leave. At nine in the morning the missionaries went on board. They were: Mgr Blanc with seven Jesuits and fourteen or fifteen sisters on the Joséphine, bound for New Orleans and Mgr Pompallier with seven Marists and four Picpus missionaries on the three-masted Delphine, for Valparaiso.1 In the words of Chanel, they were ‘happy as kings’, yearning

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1. LRO 1, Docs 1, 25 and 12, 1.
to face the dangers of the sea. Jesuits and Marists had agreed to stand proudly on deck when leaving port and to sing together the *Ave Maris Stella* (Hail, Star of the Sea) but when the ships hit the raising swell, they all rushed to the rails, emptying their stomachs! As Pompallier later confessed to Colin: the first days at sea one is unable to do anything, but soil one’s clothes and leave everything lying about in total disorder. Although some of them had put on civilian clothing when shopping in Paris, they wore their cassocks all the time on the ship.

In a more vital aspect too, getting out of the port of Le Havre proved a messy business. The two ships touched, but worse, an underwater cable lying across the harbour got caught in the *Delphine*’s rudder. The crew felt that something held the ship back and forced it loose. Unknown to them, two of the four tenons holding the pins on which the rudder hung, had broken off and the third one was severely damaged. Nobody thought of checking. At eleven o’clock the damaged *Delphine* blissfully left port.

They made good speed, passed several other ships and when darkness fell the *Joséphine* was out of sight. As night fell, the English Channel turned very nasty, and next day a rumour went about the French ports that about 32 of the ships that had left at the evening high tide were shipwrecked during the night. The *Delphine* was rumoured to have taken shelter in an English harbour. These rumours were published in the March number of the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* (Annals of the Propagation of the Faith). The Marists in France must have heard it earlier, because Champagnat mentions it in a letter of 23 February. It was corrected only in the May number of the *Annales*. The missionaries themselves did not hear about it until June, when they got to Valparaiso.

On Christmas Day, with the English coast in sight, some of the missionaries had sufficiently recovered to enjoy their Christmas dinner. Pompallier, Chanel and Joseph Luzy took several days to get over their seasickness. The *Delphine* got clear of the English Channel before dark.

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2. EC, Doc 29, 1.
3. LRO 1, Doc 13, 6.
4. LRO 1, Docs 2, 2 and 15, 4. Champagnat always wore his soutane in Paris without being insulted, he was ‘never even treated as a Jesuit.’ LMC 1, Doc 194.
5. LRO 1, Docs 1, 33 and 12, 1.
6. LMC 1, Doc 95 line 75.
7. EC, Doc 35, 1.
8. At least following the Marist story. According to the Picpus Father Emmanuel Coste, Pompallier and two other Marists were sick all the way to Tenerife. Coste to Coudrin, 24 February 1837. By courtesy Father A Mark, SS.CC.
twenty-seven hours after leaving Le Havre. They had to hoist a lantern to avoid a brig. For four days the cold north-easterly wind with hailstorms and rain pushed them along, but on 28 December the sea calmed down and they were far enough south for the temperature to become comfortable. With obvious pleasure Claude Bret describes in his diary how they now all came out, sat on the deck and enjoyed the beautiful sky at night, the phosphorescence on the sea and the porpoises playing around the ship. For two more days the weather was fine and the *Delphine* managed to keep to three knots. Chanel attentively observed the fish and the birds. His interest in nature was known. He had some experience in preserving specimens and a naturalist had asked him to gather material for an entomological collection.9

On New Year's Eve they ran into a storm and the ship had to take in the sails. To maintain steerage one sail was left up, but it got promptly torn off by the wind. During the night another ship approached. The lantern was hoisted too late, and the two ships touched, but fortunately without damage. On New Year's Day the wind fell but it had whipped up a nasty swell in which the ship drifted aimlessly, rolling and creaking, an experience that, Claude Bret wrote, is more unpleasant than the storm itself. The Master sent the Bishop a letter with the good wishes of the crew for New Year and the Bishop sent them an appropriate treat.10

Apart from the eight Marist and four Picpus missionaries and Captain Rouget, there were on board two officers, the master, two apprentices, the Purser and the cook, eight sailors, a ship's boy, and two other passengers, a merchant and a former customs officer. By now they had had time to become acquainted and the sailors had already promised to do their Easter duties.11

Then, on 2 January, the Captain discovered the damage to the tenons and to the pins holding the rudder. By the investigation the third tenon, already damaged, fell off as well. The rudder now hung on one pin only and the sailors had to attach ropes to keep it from floating away in case it should fall off. The nearest land, at eighty miles, were the Canary Islands and that is where they now cautiously set sail for. To make things worse, the wind turned against them and the ship had to tack. Two English ships passed them, one a steamship, bound for India. They exchanged greet-

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9. LRO 1, Doc 1, 26–30. EC, Doc 37, 5.
10. LRO 1, Doc 1, 32.
11. LRO 1, Doc 1, 26.
ings and the *Delphine* raised the distress pennant to ask for help, but the steamer took no notice.\(^\text{12}\)

It took the *Delphine* a week to reach Santa Cruz, on the island of Tenerife. A full week to do eighty miles, while in the first week they had sailed all the way from Le Havre to Madeira. On 8 January, before going ashore, the Bishop could say Mass on board, the first time after leaving Le Havre. They received Holy Communion in thanksgiving for their safe arrival: ‘the Blessed Virgin has saved us’.\(^\text{13}\)

**Santa Cruz**

Santa Cruz, in the Canary Islands, was for all of them the first contact with a non-European country. They were met on the jetty by the French Consul, who, helpful and charming, took Pompallier to meet the Governor and accompanied him on a visit to the Cathedral; in Claude Bret’s description: ‘a Frenchman all over’. The next day Pompallier, in episcopal robes (*in splendoribus*), plus the whole group went to the central church of the town, where they were met by the assembled clergy. While the organ played, all said Mass. A few days later Pompallier visited the Bishop of Tenerife in the nearby town of Laguna. The Bishop offered him the hospitality of his residence, but Pompallier preferred to stay with his men in Santa Cruz.\(^\text{14}\)

Staying on the ship while in port proved very uncomfortable, especially when one night a fierce storm endangered the ship. Moreover, getting ashore and back to the ship was more dangerous than crossing the Ocean, as Pompallier put it. One of the Picpus missionaries had to be fished out of the water when stepping from the ship into the dinghy, another one fell into the water when climbing from the dinghy onto the jetty. Being the only one who could swim, Pompallier feared for the life of his missionaries. So he rented a house on the shore with a certain Louis Caprario, a widower with eleven children. The missionaries made themselves as comfortable as possible, sleeping on the hard floor.\(^\text{15}\)

On 18 January, a week after their arrival, Pompallier wrote Colin a lengthy letter.\(^\text{16}\) He enclosed Claude Bret’s diary of which a copy had been

\(^{12}\) LRO 1, Doc 1, 33–36.

\(^{13}\) LRO 1, Doc 1, 37–49.

\(^{14}\) LRO 1, Docs 1, 39–40 and 12, 17–45.

\(^{15}\) LRO 1, Doc 13, 2 and 15.

\(^{16}\) LRO 1, Doc 13.
made for Colin.\textsuperscript{17} He also wrote to other people in France, among whom Archbishop de Pins. He wrote two letters to Cardinal Fransoni, one of them with a ship sailing from Santa Cruz to Marseille. He let the Cardinal know that he had appointed Colin to be his Pro-Vicar in France and that Colin had accepted. He also told the Cardinal of ‘the present organisation of the mission’, presumably meaning his own delegation as religious Superior.

The ‘present organisation of the mission’ probably included also the appointment of Peter Chanel as Pro-Vicar in Oceania. While in Le Havre he had preferred to take no decisions other than enclosing under sealed cover the appointment of somebody to take his place in case of death. Chanel’s last letter from Le Havre is still signed \textit{missionnaire apostolique}. The next letter we have of him is from Valparaiso and signed \textit{provicaire apostolique}. Some time during the voyage Pompallier must have appointed him.\textsuperscript{18}

It is odd that, while they all had plenty of time in Santa Cruz with little else to do but sightseeing, only Pompallier wrote to Colin and only once. None of the others wrote to either families or confreres. The only likely explanation is that they agreed not to write for the reason that Pompallier gave later to his mother, namely not to upset anyone by the story of the damaged rudder.\textsuperscript{19} The Picpus Father Coste wrote to his superior Coudrin. The Picpus and the Marists got along very well, he said, they had very much the same spirit.\textsuperscript{20}

Pompallier picked up the thread of giving conferences to the missionaries on the rule. Bataillon’s diary does not say if they showed any more interest than in Le Havre. True to his old ways, Pompallier composed a spiritual rule book that he distributed to his missionaries.\textsuperscript{21}

In his diary Claude Bret proved a good observer of the strange world they had landed in. The mild climate, in midwinter as pleasant as in June at home; the abundance of fruit, both tropical and familiar; the small horses and the ill-treated donkeys; the near absence of wagons; the easy-

\textsuperscript{17} Reproduced in LRO 1, Doc. 1.
\textsuperscript{18} LRO 1, Doc 4, 12. EC, Docs 33 and 34.
\textsuperscript{19} LRO 1, Doc 16, 2 and EC, Doc 35, 1. Even so an odd motivation since he could have known that the story would be published in the Annals as in fact it was in the May number 1838, 507–11, with extensive quotes from Father Bret’s diary.
\textsuperscript{20} Coste to Coudrin, 24 February 1837. By courtesy of Father A Marc, SSCC.
\textsuperscript{21} LRO 1, Doc 12, 34. Cf OM 2, Doc 625, 25.
going people, gentle like the climate. Naturally, the Marists did not escape a touch of culture shock:

‘Pitiable to be surrounded by men, women and children in rags, a half naked woman with two children that make you turn your eyes away; a negro who is human only insofar as he speaks, naked men pushing a boat. (. . .) A spectacle of misery and laziness. (. . .) Nothing to eat but a few fish roasted on a fire, no bread. At night the nonchalant islander lies on the pavement and plays a guitar to accompany his monotone songs. Stones for bed and the sky for his roof. Santa Cruz is full of prostitutes ready for every stranger to sow his vices. (. . .) At table especially you feel that you are no longer in France: different things to eat, different ways of eating, pure wine during the meal and just water for dessert’.22

Chanel too was a bit shocked to see the islanders enjoying such a fine climate without any sign of being industrious.23 Bataillon’s diary is more matter-of-fact. On Sunday 15 January, they assist at High Mass, in a nearly empty church, whereby Bret comments:

‘The churches are big and richly decorated. (. . .) The priests are more respected than they would be in France, but our ceremonies are more attractive, our faithful more prayerful and our churches better filled. We miss the beauty and the reverence of our French ceremonies. In this country, entirely Catholic, they keep the abstinence only on Fridays in Lent and during Holy Week. The Mardi Gras was celebrated exuberantly but on Ash Wednesday the church was just about empty. Little in the way of instructions, no catechism classes. No first communion ceremonies. What good a mission could do here!’24

They soon found out that a tropical climate can be less benign than one might think the first days. Servant and Brother Joseph Luzy fell ill and had to be attended to by a doctor. It took Servant a week to get over it and Jo-

22. LRO 1, Doc 1, 52–53 and Doc 12, 16–64.
23. EC, Doc 35, 1.
24. LRO 1, Doc 12, 46–53.
seph even longer. Chanel caught a dysentery and Pompallier walked a few days around with a nasty toothache. Bret suffered of a serious headache that showed little sign of improving when they left.25

The expectation had been that the damage to the *Delphine* would be repaired in ten days or so. In fact, it took the local craftsmen ten attempts before they managed to forge the three brass pins that had to be replaced on the stern of the *Delphine*. The rudder too had in the meantime been repaired but was not put back until 24 February. Another few days to settle payments (whereby Pompallier had to lend the captain 8,500 francs), and to procure stores and provisions. Finally, after fifty-two days, the ship was ready to sail. They left at nine and around noon Santa Cruz had vanished over the horizon. They continued their voyage, eager ‘to run with patience to the fight proposed to us’, as Pompallier had written to Colin, quoting from the letter to the Hebrews.26

**Colin at a distance**

After the retreat and the election in September 1836, in spite of the compromise made in July, Colin stayed in Belley. Although a Marist community was soon installed in Lyon at 24, Montée Saint-Barthélémy, the new Superior General did not move there as yet. He did visit it at times, but mostly in a hurry, only to return as fast as he could to the hill country where he felt more at home. Still busy mostly with his work in the Minor Seminary,27 he would have picked up the rumour of ships wrecked in the English Channel in the night after their departure, and of the *Delphine* having taken shelter in an English port.

Pompallier’s letters from Santa Cruz with Claude Bret’s diary, reached France in early April and somebody passed the news to *l’Ami de la Religion*, the paper most read by Marists at the time. On 27 April the paper reported that the *Delphine* with Mgr. Pompallier and the Marist missionaries had been forced to stop at the Canary Islands for repairs of a damaged rudder. The story in the Annals of the near loss of the *Delphine* was retracted in the May number. From Pompallier’s letter Colin expected the *Delphine* to have sailed from Santa Cruz again around 28 January, which it did only a month later.

27. CS 1, Docs 10, 1and 11, 8. Summaries of Colin’s whereabouts on CS 1, pages 33 and 86.
From Santa Cruz Pompallier recalled the low level of his finances. It reminded Colin of the Bishop’s request from Le Havre for money to be sent ahead to Valparaiso. So far nothing had been done about it. Now he took up contact with the Propagation of the Faith and obtained an advance of 8,700 francs on the grant for 1837. In June Colin entrusted it with a covering letter to a certain Captain Brelivet, who was due to sail to Valparaiso. On 25 May he notified Cardinal Fransoni of the news and of the action taken.

By asking that all mail should pass through him, Colin had made himself somehow personally responsible for communications with the missionaries. Pompallier had made several suggestions on how letters could be sent: through Fr Coudrin and the Picpus head-house, specifically Father Hilarion Lucas, the Secretary General, or through Mr Franques in Le Havre via his business connections in England, or through Fr Cambis, the Rector of the Major Seminary in Bordeaux who looked after the mail for the Picpus Fathers in the Pacific. Mail could also be addressed directly to the ‘French Priests’ at the retreat house in Valparaiso. Before leaving Le Havre Pompallier as well as Chanel had mentioned the imminent departure of the Colibri as a possibility of sending mail to Valparaiso. In spite of this surfeit of options neither Colin nor anyone else thought of writing to the missionaries.

Although Colin had expressed in October 1836 his wish to get into contact with Coudrin, the Superior of the Picpus Fathers, and Pompallier had let Colin know from Paris that Coudrin would be happy to communicate with him, and to be of service in any way, Colin did not follow the lead. Father Coudrin died on 27 March 1837.

One of the lecturers at the Seminary of Saint-Irénée in Lyon was a Sulpician priest, Amable Dénavit, acquainted with the Marists, who was in correspondence with the Picpus missionaries in the Pacific, but there is no indication that Marists used his good offices to get into contact with their own missionaries.

28. LRO 1, Doc 13, 5.
29. CS 1, Doc 89, 2.
30. CS 1, Doc 13.
31. CS 1, Doc 4, 9.
32. LRO 1, Doc 8, 12 and EC, Doc 33, 1.
33. CS 1, Doc 5, 1.
34. LRO 1, Doc 4, 15. There does not seem to have been any contact between the Marists and Father Coudrin after the departure of the missionaries.
35. LRO 1, Doc 19, 2.
Disaster

The Delphine left Tenerife on 28 February. No sooner at sea than Servant fell ill and a few days later showed symptoms of suffocation. Claude Bret’s headaches got worse by the day and he developed what Pompallier described later as a cerebral fever. Chanel took special care of him and left him as little as possible. He was given quinine but the fever did not go down. On 12 March, Passion Sunday, the sea was calm enough for the Bishop and Chanel to say Mass. Of the two sick confreres Servant was diagnosed as suffering of a throat infection but after an emetic he began to improve. Claude Bret however was only getting worse. On Palm Sunday the sea was calm enough to say Mass again and Bret received Holy Communion. Nobody suspected it would be his viaticum. The next day his condition suddenly changed for the worse and he frightened his companions by saying he felt the end was near. He fell into a coma. The bishop administered the Last Sacraments and at half past seven in the evening, on 20 March 1837, Claude Bret died, at 0°40’ North, 24°30’ West.

They transferred his body immediately to the stern of the ship and all night they took turns in twos to pray with his dead body. They celebrated a funeral Mass, and because of the heat of the day, they buried him in the early morning at sea. The Bishop said some moving words, probably in the same sense as he wrote in his diary: we have lost a dear companion, and gained an intercessor in heaven.

With heavy hearts the missionaries continued their long and trying voyage. Their early optimism thoroughly shaken, they now had to go through the terrifying seas around Cape Horn, and at the worst possible time of the year: the southern Winter.

There was no way to let Claude Bret’s parents and the Marists in France know. Only about four months later, from Valparaiso, could Pompallier write to Colin:

I have to tell you something that will console you as well as put your sensitivity to the test concerning one of your spiritual sons whom the Lord has surely crowned in heaven while

36. Holy Communion given to dying person.
37. LRO 1, Docs 12, 67–87 and 19, 1. EC, Doc 35, 2. As Girard writes in his footnote at LRO 1, Doc 12, 81, it is not possible to be sure of any diagnosis. Pompallier later called it ‘headaches that turned for the worse as a cerebral fever’. Pompallier, Notice historique, 11.
38. LRO 1, Doc 12, 86–87.
we were in mid-ocean. Dear Father Bret has died of an illness of nineteen days, that began two days after he had gone on board in Santa Cruz until we reached the Equator. First undefined and passing headaches, then fever. After a blood-letting he seemed at first to recover but then things got worse and he did not get up any more. He was conscious until the last day and he himself told us the end was near. We could not believe it. We tried everything but God had decided to take him away in heaven and crown him in advance. Alas! That His designs be adored and His Holy Name be blessed. Let us hope that this dear collaborator will hence be an intercessor with God and Mary for the mission to which he had consecrated his life. Be consoled, dear Father, and may the peace of Jesus Christ be with you.39

Peter Chanel, Claude's best friend, who had shared his cabin, cared for him and who had not left from his side in his illness, could even four months later not bring himself to mention his friend's name:

... The brig Hudson that has just left for Bordeaux is bringing you news that is going to cause you very great sorrow when you read of the loss we have sustained in one of your beloved sons. Fortunately, every circumstance that can offer consolation on such an occasion attends upon the blow we have suffered. He has left us, this beloved confrere, to return to the bosom of his God. But he cannot cease to be our friend, our confrere. He has merely exchanged his title of missionary for that of protector of our mission.40

To his family Chanel wrote: 'The Good Lord was satisfied with his generous sacrifice and was pleased to crown him before he had reached the field of combat. (...) His death came as a thunderbolt.'41

39. LRO 1, Doc 15, 2.
40. EC, Doc 34, 1.
41. EC, Doc 35, 2. Peter Chanel cut a strand of his friend's hair and treasured it, EC, Doc 53, 3.
Also from Valparaiso Bataillon, writing to Étienne Séon, expressed the hope that Claude Chavas, Bret’s personal friend, would do everything possible to console his parents and assist them in their grief.42

Not wanting to hurt the missionaries’ feelings the sailors skipped the traditional sea-baptism for those who crossed the Equator for the first time.43

### Around the Cape

Once south of the Equator favourable winds carried the *Delphine* along at a fine speed. On 4 April they passed the Tropic of Capricorn (23° 27° S). But then they encountered strong contrary winds and for many days they made barely any headway at all. From the Capricorn it took them a month to reach 50° S, on 4 May. Off the Falkland Islands the sea got very rough and the first snow fell, very welcome insofar as it allowed the ship to replenish its reserve of water that already had been rationed. On 2 June they passed 59° S, the southernmost point of the voyage where they could safely turn west. It took them four days of contrary winds to reach 74° W, where they passed Cape Horn. Another week and they reached 85° W and could turn north.44

All the way from the Falklands, round the Cape, to the island of Chiloé, nearly six weeks, the weather was very stormy with hail, snow, ice, nearly constant tempests, and excessive cold. Both Pompallier and Chanel later recalled this part of their voyage as particularly frightening.45 Once they had passed Chiloé the climate improved and the weather was pleasant. On 24 June they celebrated St. John the Baptist, the name-day of Bishop Pompallier, with a bottle of champagne. They started saying Mass again. Their courage and their trust in God seemed to regain every day new strength again. In other words, spirits had been rather low! Peter Chanel admitted as much in a letter of 23 July, from Valparaiso.46

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42. LRO 1, Doc 19, 1.
43. LRO 1, Doc 12, 88.
44. LRO 1, Doc 12, 88–170.
45. LRO 1, Doc 16, 4. EC, Doc 37, 3. Pompallier, *Notice historique*, 12. How dangerous the passage round Cape Horn was, became very evident in 1844, when Bishop Rouchouze had visited France, bought a ship there, the *Marie-Joseph*, and sailed with six priests, eight brothers and ten sisters for Valparaiso. The ship went down without a trace. Cf Jore, *L’Océan*, volume 2, 144 (note 57) and 356.
46. EC, Doc 34, 1 (with note 3 on page 163). A pious hand has corrected the manuscript to read *prendre* instead of *reprendre*, *gain* instead of *regain*. 
The long months on board were not entirely wasted. They got along very well with the sailors. Marists and Picpus Fathers took turns offering them religious instructions that were well attended. All the sailors, with the ship’s boy, went to confession, several of them did their Easter duties and received Holy Communion on several occasions. One did his first Holy Communion and renewed his Baptismal vows. Pierre Bataillon noted in a tone of bitterness that this good example was unfortunately not followed by the officers. When the weather allowed, Pompallier restarted his instructions to the priests and, at his request, Chanel gave spiritual conferences to the Brothers.47

In the six months they had been on the way, they had seen the four seasons, beautiful days as well as horrible ones. ‘Some days are so delightful’, Chanel wrote after their arrival in Valparaiso, ‘that everybody should want to travel by sea, if it were not for the other days that are rather frightening’. ‘Once you are used to the sea, he wrote to his sister Françoise, there is no better way to travel’. To Bourdin with whom he had sailed to Rome in 1833 he wrote enthusiastically of the pleasure of long sea travelling. Chanel had carefully observed how the officers determined the position of the ship with octant and sextant, the manoeuvring of the ship, the different species of birds and fish in the different climates, the changes of constellations according to the latitudes and the rainbow caused by bright moonlight. He enjoyed the beauty of the phosphorescent wake that the ship’s rudder left behind on the sea. The splendid colours in the sky at daybreak and at sunset he described as the entry hall of paradise. But, he admitted, ‘there also are very bad days, enough to remind the voyager that he is still in a valley of tears’.48

Brother Joseph-Xavier Luzy had got his sea legs: ‘I think I shall always be a good sailor. I feel better than anywhere else. You would not recognise me. I have put on weight. One is well fed on board ship’.49

Like Chanel, Pompallier had come to see the importance of navigation and asked Jean-Claude Colin to make sure the next lot of missionaries would come armed with sextants, compasses and navigation manuals.50

47. LRO 1, Doc 12, 99.
48. EC, Docs 35, 1 and 37, 3.
49. Lettres Luzy, 23 July 1837.
50. LRO 1, Doc 18, 3.
Valparaíso

On 28 June they reached Valparaíso, four months after leaving Santa Cruz, having covered roughly 16,600 kilometers in six months from Le Havre. Chanel wrote that the same voyage should in better conditions have been possible in two months, which is a bit optimistic.51 The Delphine dropped anchor at one o’clock in the afternoon. The Picpus Fathers in Valparaíso came on board to welcome their confrères and their Marist guests. They accompanied Bishop Pompallier, again in full regalia, to the chapel in their house, where they all sang at the top of their voices the Te Deum. The Picpus Fathers had a house big enough to offer hospitality to all of them. Next day, the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, they sang a Pontifical High Mass, à la Lyonnaise. The only parish priest in this town of 35,000 people came to pay his respects to the Bishop.52

Now the Marists got first-hand information about the Pacific missions. While they were in Valparaíso Fr Maigret, Vicar General of Eastern Oceania, arrived from Tahiti and Brother Columban from California. The Marists heard all about the Gambier Islands and how, in two years, the entire population of the island group, including the King, had been baptised. The Picpus missionaries spoke highly of the faith and the lives of their neophytes. They also warned about the resistance one should expect from the Methodists: six months earlier four Picpus missionaries had been expelled from Tahiti, and others had been refused entry.53

France was well represented in Chile by the French naval station and by a Consul, resident in Santiago. There were friendly visits of and to the Consul and the Naval Commander.54 Pompallier wrote an extensive report of the voyage to the Minister of the Navy, Claude du Campe de Rosamel, in which he praises the co-operative attitude of the French officials: ‘Wherever I meet with Frenchmen in positions of authority, I get a feeling of the goodwill of the King and the protection of France; this

51. EC, 35, 1. The Venus left Brest on 29 December 1836 and reached Valparaíso on 26 April 1837: four months, cf Jore, L'Océan, volume 1, 90. Bishop Rouchouze, travelling on the same Delphine two years earlier had taken four months as well, from 20 October 1834 to 19 February 1835, cf Jore, volume 2, 114. The next group of Marists would do it in the southern summer in three months (from 11 September to 12 December 1838). The estimates of the distances are by courtesy of M Puyn, retired Royal Dutch Air Force.

52. LRO 1, Doc 12, 170–1.

53. LRO 1, Doc 16, 6 with footnote 6. Cf Servant to Champagnat, 14 June 1837, LMC, volume 1, Doc 164.

54. LRO 1, Doc 12, 173.
dear *patrie* shows that the Catholic missionaries who leave her bosom for strange countries do not become indifferent strangers to her. Pointing to the enormous distances and the expenses of travelling he expresses the hope that the missionaries may at times be allowed to travel on naval vessels. He points to the dangers that the missionaries face from the primitive islanders, often maltreated by foreign visitors and worthy of compassion rather than punishment if they take revenge. Let the religion do her work of healing the scars and of treating their moral weaknesses. He recalls the difficulties that Catholic missionaries often meet from the non-Catholic ministers who already have gained a great influence in many islands. The only support he asks in this regard is that the islands where French priests are present will regularly receive peaceful visits of the French Navy.\(^{55}\) Pompallier sent this letter directly to the Minister but with copy to Colin, asking him to see what he could do to support his requests.\(^ {56}\) Accompanied by Peter Chanel and two Picpus priests Pompallier went on a visit of several days to the capital Santiago, about forty-five kilometers from Valparaiso, where they were the guests of Bishop Vicuña.\(^ {57}\)

The missionaries enjoyed all the new things they saw. They were surprised by the churches in Valparaiso and in Santiago. Writing to his friend Bourdin, Chanel did not miss a thing: the carriages, the horses and the abominable state of the roads. He commented on the altars, the tabernacles and the cemeteries, and on the singing in the churches. He admired the piety of the people, and the large numbers that took part in the retreats organised by the Picpus Fathers. He expressed his surprise at the penitential self-flagellations in public. Nothing escaped his interest and attention.\(^ {58}\)

Chanel must have walked around and talked to lots of people. A sailor of the French corvette *Ariane* told him of an Englishman who had just finished charting the Strait of Magellan. It had taken him three years to do it, but now the dangerous and long way around the Cape would no longer be necessary. He talked to a ship’s captain (probably Captain Stocks who would later on take them from Tahiti to New Zealand) who avowed he would not go around the Cape for 20,000 francs! Bataillon was the first to contact a ship that might take them to Hawaii: the *Europa*, an American

\(^{55}\) LRO 1, Doc 20.

\(^{56}\) LRO 1, Doc 18, 14.

\(^{57}\) LRO 1, Doc 12, 176–8.

\(^{58}\) EC, Doc 37, 6–8.
brig that already had transported Picpus missionaries in the islands under a certain Captain Shaw.59

The stay of the Marists in the Picpus community was marred by the officious behaviour of Pompallier. The Picpus missionaries did not pay him the deference he was used to, perhaps even calling him frère François, as they were used to do to the unpretentious Bishop Rouchouze (frère Jerôme), a custom Chanel alluded to.60 Pompallier did not hide his hurt feelings in the face of their hosts and later complained that there was not a good spirit among the Picpus religious, because hierarchical rank meant little to them!61 His public outburst embarrassed the Marists who got along very well with their hosts. The Picpus missionaries told the Marists of the importance of having a Superior, separate from the Vicar Apostolic and gave them a copy of their statutes or regulations where things were set out. Four years later Pompallier complained that from this time he never felt the same with the Marists.62

In correspondence with the Superior General

Still at sea, approaching Valparaiso, and the dangerous parts of the long voyage behind them, in the pleasant climate of those latitudes, the missionaries had set to writing letters home, adding bits and pieces as they went along.

They could presume that by then their confrères and families would know of the stop they had made at the Canary Islands, but of course nothing further. Pompallier got a first letter ready, dated 17 July,63 to inform Colin, and through him the family, of the death of Claude Bret and of their safe arrival in Valparaiso. By the time they reached Valparaiso several letters were ready. On arriving they got a parcel of letters on the Hudson, on the point of leaving for Bordeaux.

A few days later the Télégraphe also left for Bordeaux. It carried a second letter from Pompallier to Colin, dated 20 July, with a copy of Bataillon’s diary and among others, a letter of condolence and consolation for

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60. By courtesy of Juan Luis Schuester, general archivist at the Picpus head-house. Also EC, 186, note 3.
61. It was Maxime Petit who, three years later, told Colin about it (LRO 1, Doc 56, 4).
the parents of Claude Bret. A third letter to Colin is dated 28 July and was sent by regular courier overland to Buenos Aires and Montevideo, from where they heard there were frequent ships to Europe.64

Everyone wrote a personal letter to the Superior General. Apart from the three letters to Colin, Pompallier wrote a long letter to his mother. He probably wrote to Marcellin Champagnat. Further letters that have been preserved include one from Bataillon to Étienne Séon, one from Chanel to his family, one to his sister, one a combined letter to Colin and the boys at the Seminary of Belley and one to his friend Jean-Antoine Bourdin.65 Servant wrote to Champagnat who copied his letter in a circular to all the Brothers.66 Only now did they hear of the rumour, published in the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith, that the Delphine would have taken shelter in an English port while ships that had left the same day on the evening high tide had perished. Chanel commented that they had been lucky to get away in time.67

The joy of being able to write letters home was toned down by the disappointment that there were no letters waiting for them. For Pompallier this also meant that, in spite of his urgent request from Le Havre and the gentle reminder from Santa Cruz, there was no money. The 8,700 francs that Colin had arranged to be forwarded in June had naturally not arrived. Nor did anything reach them during their seven weeks’ stay, even though there had been many occasions to get mail to Valparaiso. The news of the marriage of the Duke of Orléans, on 8 May, for instance, had reached Valparaiso by 8 August: just three months later.68

Pompallier was angry. In his second letter (20 July) he vented his feelings:

I wrote to you on 16 January from Santa Cruz. Did you receive my letter? For important things we must get used to keeping copies. Since I have left France I have received nothing, no

64. LRO 1, Doc 17 and Doc 18.
65. Although not all of these letters have been found, it is clear from Mayet, Mémoires, volume 7, 815, reprinted in FA, Doc. 216, note 1, that they all wrote. Pompallier’s letter to the parents of Claude Bret has not been preserved. Pompallier to his mother: LRO 1, Doc 16. Bataillon to Étienne Séon: LRO 1, Doc 19. Chanel to Colin and the boys in Belley: EC, Doc 34; to his family: EC, Doc 35; to his sister Françoise: EC, Doc 36; to Bourdin: EC, Doc 37. Servant to Champagnat: LCM 1, Doc 164.
66. Servant to Champagnat, 14 June 1837, LO, Clisby 006.
67. EC, Doc 35, 1.
68. EC, Doc 37, 17.
letters, no answers. Still, ships have left Bordeaux long after our departure, and have arrived in Valparaiso before us. They could have carried mail. But then one needs to know when there is an opportunity. Therefore one has to have someone in the ports who is alert and willing to be of service. Or one has to rely on a shipping journal that carries such news. Alas, Rome, Lyon, Belley, all are cloaked in silence as far as we are concerned, and, dear Superior, we had wanted so much to get news from the congregation, the priests, the Sisters and the Brothers. We are mortified to leave Valparaiso without having received a word. It could be another year now before we can be contacted.69

Even when writing to his mother Pompallier showed his disappointment.70 The other men were less outspoken, but Chanel too hinted at the pleasure it would have given him to get mail from home. Mail could have reached them if sent with the Colibri.71 Chanel alluded to the name of the ship that took their mail to France: the Télégraphe: if only the mail was as fast! He was a bit homesick. When two French naval vessels, the frigate Andromède and the corvette Ariane appeared in the port of Valparaiso, his heart beat faster at the sight of the impressive ships with their mighty guns and the Tricolour: ‘At once we felt like being in our dear France. How proud we were to be home again!’72

Colin’s own letters were always courteous, concise, methodical and to the point, but he was not good at chatty letters, which is what they now needed. He may well have been irritated by the Bishop’s windy and chaotic writing, and his often patronising and nagging tone. Pompallier’s insistence on detail, and his habit of repeating what he had already said, betray his misgivings about Colin as a practical manager. The absence of money and mail, rightly or wrongly, confirmed his fears. Whatever did or did not happen, they all felt it as a sadly missed opportunity.

Colin was not the only beneficiary of Pompallier’s grumbling. Writing to Cardinal Fransoni he pointed out that he already had sent three letters

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69. LRO 1, Doc 17, 10.
70. LRO 1, Doc 16, 6.
71. Cf EC, Doc 33, 1.
72. EC, Docs 34, 1; 35, 4 and 37, 11–15. The Tricolour of the Revolution had been reintroduced by the July Revolution of 1830, after having been set aside under the Restoration (1815–1830).
to Rome without receiving an answer. He did not tell the Cardinal how unhappy he was with Colin for the same reason, nor did he tell him that the information on New Zealand he had received in Rome had not been of the best. He did share with the Cardinal the poor impression he had of the Church in the Canary Islands and in Chile: the low moral standard of the clergy, the money exacted from the faithful for the sacraments and the poor level of religious instruction.73

He also wrote to Archbishop de Pins and enclosed a second copy of Bataillon’s diary.74

The longest possible way to go

The historian Reiner Jaspers makes the following kind and optimistic assessment:

The Apostolic Vicar Mgr Pompallier carefully prepared the way to open up his mission territory. He sought and got plenty of information from Pastre, who was familiar with the plans already made by de Solages, in Rome, in Paris from the Picpus Fathers, from Government people in Paris, and from the Irish Seminary there.75

This view is not shared by another informed observer, Léonce Jore, who wonders why Pompallier travelled the way he did.76 Nor is it shared by Pompallier himself. Once he had looked at the Pacific from Valparaiso, he realised the mistake. It confirmed all that he had heard in Lyon from Pastre, in Paris from Coudrin and in Le Havre from shipping people. After six months and many thousands of miles at sea, he found himself on the wrong side of the biggest ocean of the world! He confessed as much to Colin:

As the good Lord evidently wants us to begin in Micronesia, it is evident that going from Europe over the Southern Atlantic round Cape Horn, thinking that this was the way to New Zealand, one really takes the longest possible way.

73. LRO 1, Doc 18, 9.
74. LRO 1, Doc 15, 3.
75. Jaspers, Erschliessung, 191.
76. Jore, L’Océan, volume 2, 148.
They found an American ship going to New Zealand but it was already chartered by Protestants who would not think of allowing Catholic missionaries on board. They were soon convinced that, given its immense distance from Western Oceania, and the near absence of shipping in that direction, Valparaiso was not the place for the Procure of their mission. The internal unrest and the threat of wars between the countries of South America only confirmed this view. At the same time, seeing the Picpus Fathers at work, they realised the crucial importance of a Procure, not only for communications and supplies, but also as a refuge in case things went wrong.78

New Zealand?

When, in the late eighteenth century, Europe discovered the Pacific Islands, Church thinking naturally applied to their inhabitants its traditional image of ‘savages’, people excluded from salvation, steeped in vices and ignorance, in need of the redeeming powers of the Christian Faith and European civilisation. This was the spirit that led Protestant missionaries from England, and Catholic missionaries from France towards their ‘poor savages’ (‘*nos pauvres sauvages*’), as Peter Chanel wrote to his sister from Santiago,79 and as Claude Bret had written in his diary about the people of Tenerife: ‘gentle, but also so poor and miserable as children already accustomed to beg. (…) It all gives us an idea of what is in store for us with the *peuples sauvages* deprived of the benefits of religion and civilisation. (…) Begging drifters who want to live without working and live like the *sauvages* of the South Sea.’80

At the same time Enlightenment thinking on both sides of the English Channel had turned the object of missionary compassion into the Noble Savage of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ‘a perfect primitive man who lived in harmony with his natural surroundings, a man of simple needs who

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77. LRO 1, Doc 17, 3. ‘*le chemin de l’école*’, ie ‘the way to school’, like children who look for the longest possible way to get there.
78. LRO 1, Docs 15, 5 and 17, 5.
79. EC, Doc 36, 1.
80. LRO 1, Doc 1, 52.
eschewed social and technological sophistication, a man who possessed a classical dignity and innocence of body and mind.  

Captain Dumont d’Urville had published in 1829 his account of two visits to New Zealand, in 1824 and 1826, and had painted it as a paradise, peopled by splendid Polynesian people. Whatever way one looked at it, in the 1830s New Zealand was not an unknown place in France.

The Association for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon had in 1835 received a letter from Dr WB Ullathorne, Vicar General of Australia, telling them about Maori converts to the Catholic Faith and of a lively interest among Irish settlers in New Zealand to get Catholic priests. In Rome New Zealand had been put on the map by Captain Dillon who had sailed all over the Pacific for years, and had visited New Zealand at least six times, after which he had persuaded his friend de Solages, Apostolic Prefect of the island Réunion, in the Indian Ocean, to set up a common venture to evangelise New Zealand in the late 1820s and had nearly succeeded in getting Propaganda in Rome, the French Government and the Picpus headquarters in Paris to take it on. But for the July Revolution in France (1830) and the refusal of Coudrin to have Picpus missionaries work under the ambitious de Solages, this grotesque project would have been attempted.

No wonder that already in the first letter that Cardinal Fransoni directed to Pastre, New Zealand was the most important and promising target of the new mission in Western Oceania. Pastre understood it that way and gave it due emphasis from the beginning.

In October 1836, in Paris, Pompallier had picked up stories about a French nobleman, Baron Charles de Thierry, who in the early 1820s had visited New Zealand, had befriended a Maori chief, Hongi Hika, had bought extensive tracts of land, learned the Maori language and who had tried in vain to interest first the English then the French Government to establish colonies. Pompallier was impressed and considered him a sort of king in New Zealand. Although the Government did not take the stories

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86. OM 1, Doc 337. The clerk at Propaganda who wrote the summary got mixed up and called it ‘New Ireland’. The original (now lost) must have been correct. Pastre’s answer speaks of ‘New Zealand’, OM 1, Doc 341.
seriously, the Director for the Colonies had given Pompallier a letter of recommendation for Thierry.87

Dubois, the Superior of the Foreign Mission of Paris, had warned Pompallier to stay clear of places where Protestants were already established, adding however that New Zealand was simply too big for Protestants to have covered it all.88

In Santa Cruz Pompallier had met with an old soldier, Major de Plais, who had been in New Zealand and claimed to have befriended the king of New Zealand (no reference to Thierry!). He had given Pompallier letters of recommendation and lent him a grammar of the Maori language.89 No wonder New Zealand always had a central place in Pompallier’s planning, as he wrote to Archbishop de Pins from Valparaiso: ‘I had always presumed that New Zealand would have our first labours’.90

But now Pompallier stood with his band of missionaries on the shore of the Pacific, many thousands of miles from his target, in a place from where there simply were no ships to where he had to go. To make things worse, he picked up stories that things in New Zealand were not as rosy as he had been told in Europe, and that the letters of recommendation he had got in Paris were worth nothing.91 Less sure now that it was the best place to start anyhow, Pompallier had to tell the Superior General in the first letter he wrote from Valparaiso, on 17 July, that to all practical purposes, New Zealand simply was out of reach.92

Now what?

Fortunately, an American turned up who had lived for seventeen months on Ascension Island, today Pohnpei, in Micronesia. The American put him into contact with a captain who also knew the island. Both of them were known to the Picpus Fathers and spoke highly of the people of Pohnpei and of the opportunities for a successful mission. It lay in the Caroline group and from there the missionaries could work the whole of Micronesia and other islands, north and south, as far as New Guinea.

87. LRO 1, Doc 4, 13. Wiltgen, Founding, 133.
89. LRO 1, Doc 12, 27.
90. 19 July 1837, quoted from Roach. Wiltgen, Founding, 153, mistakenly thinks that initially New Guinea was the centre of Pompallier’s interest.
91. LRO 1, Doc 18, 9.
92. LRO 1, Doc 17, 2.
Pompallier saw the hand of Providence in this opening, just when his original plans looked no longer feasible. He knew he had come the wrong way, but he did not cry over spilt milk. He changed his strategy and decided to forget about New Zealand for the time being. Why not sail from Valparaiso to the Gambier Islands and visit the successful mission of Bishop Rouchouze, then sail to Hawaii in order to establish a base, and from there try to reach Pohnpei? The American would go with them and introduce them to the Micronesian people.93

Hawaii was a centre of shipping, from where the other islands were more accessible than from Valparaiso. They could leave some of their belongings with the Picpus Fathers in Hawaii. In spite of great resistance from the Protestants there was still one priest in Honolulu, the Englishman Fr Walsh and one Brother. The latest news was that Catholic priests were allowed to stay provided they did not engage in missionary work among the Hawaiian people. Perhaps one of the three Brothers could stay in Hawaii and wait for the next group of Marists. With New Zealand off the agenda for the foreseeable future, Pompallier lost interest in Sydney as the place for the Procure, in favour of California and Hawaii. The next group of missionaries, he told Colin, should travel to Mexico, cross overland and take a ship in California for Hawaii. Mail should be sent care of Fr Walsh whose address in Honolulu he included.94

To Cardinal Fransoni Pompallier explained that he had to change his plans and why. His presentation gives not only a rosy description of the golden opportunities of Pohnpei as a mission field, but also a wildly optimistic estimate of its ‘quasi central’ location, from where to extend his mission to the Western Pacific.95 One look at his new atlas will have made Fransoni shake his head in disbelief.

An encouraging experience

Pompallier chartered the Europa under Captain Shaw for 150 piastres per person to take them to Hawaii via the Gambier Islands.96 Compared to

93. LRO 1, Docs 17, 2 and 19, 2. The old name Ascension Island was very confusing, because of the island of the same name in the Southern Atlantic. From the seamen the missionaries picked up spellings such as Pounipet, Bonibet, etc. It was later called Ponaie, but the modern name is Pohnpei. In spite of the anachronism we will use its modern name.
94. LRO 1, Doc 18, 4–6.
95. Quoted from Wiltgen, Founding, 138–9.
96. The piastre, a Spanish coin much in use in the Pacific at the time, was about 5.5 francs.
the *Delphine* it was not much of a ship, 250 tons against 329. As a consequence, the accommodation was more cramped. But the missionaries transferred their luggage, that had survived the voyage so far undamaged, and on 10 August they bravely boarded for the first leg of their long Pacific crossing. Peter Chanel and Joseph Luzy were seasick again for a week, but the others by now had their sea-legs. As Servant wrote later: ‘The perils of travelling at sea are more in the imagination of people thinking of it from afar, than in reality’.97 Two Picpus priests, Father Maigret and Father Guilmard, and Brother Columban, (the Irishman James Murphy) sailed with the Marists: an opportunity for the Marists to improve their English. Having heard that English was understood by many Polynesians, and that English and American ships were about the only ones to sail the Pacific, they put a lot of effort into it, but found it difficult to get their tongues around the strange English vowels. Pompallier considered it necessary for the priests but saw little reason for the Brothers to learn it!98

Due to eight days of calm followed by three days of contrary winds, the 5,600 kilometers to the Gambier Islands took them thirty-three days. On 13 September the *Europa* dropped anchor in the lagoon of Mangareva and they transferred to a rowing boat. Three hours under a nearly full moon and the splendid stars of a Pacific night gave them a taste of the beauty of Oceania. It was nearly midnight when Bishop Rouchouze met them gracefully on the island of Aukena. They enjoyed his hospitality and talked into the little hours, while hundreds of islanders sat on the beach, singing as only Polynesians can.

They visited the island of Mangareva, where they were met by the King sitting on top of a magnificent large raft.99 What they saw exceeded everything they already had heard in Valparaiso. Large numbers of friendly converts, enjoying the excitement of foreign visitors in a display of musical exuberance and happy children trying out the French words they had picked up from the missionaries. Pompallier and Chanel, in their written accounts, could not get over the handsome and placid people they met. Page after page their letters reflect amazement at the rapid and total transformation of people from—as they believed—being little more than savage

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97. LRO 1, Doc 27, 5.
98. LRO 1, Doc 21, 1.
99. Unlike most Polynesians, the people of the Gambier islands did not have canoes and used small but also large ocean-going rafts. Honoré Laval, *Mangareva, l’histoire ancienne d’un peuple Polynésien* (Paris: 1938), 248.
cannibals to peaceful Christians, piously kneeling for a blessing from the two Bishops.\textsuperscript{100}

The Marists had ample time to listen to the stories of the successful missionaries and felt enormously encouraged to see that in spite of the unknown difficulties and dangers that still might lie ahead, their project was not a \textit{mission impossible}. With Rouchouze Pompallier discussed at length the options before him. In the end Rouchouze laughed it all off, saying: ‘Wherever you will land up in the end, Bishop, it will be different from what you now think!’\textsuperscript{101} They delegated their faculties to each other, so that each Bishop was empowered by the other to authorise his missionaries to work in the Vicariate of the other, an arrangement that could be very convenient in case missionaries were expelled from one place or another.\textsuperscript{102}

\section*{Tahiti}

Nobody believed the Catholic missionaries would be allowed ashore in Tahiti. On instigation of George Pritchard of the London Missionary Society, Fathers Caret and Laval had been expelled in December 1836, and Caret and Maigret again in January 1837.\textsuperscript{103} Still, on 16 September, after a few days in the Gambier Islands, encouraged by recent information, the \textit{Europa} set sail for Tahiti. After five days at sea they arrived around noon and the ship was allowed to enter port. Thanks to the intervention of Mr. Jacob Moerenhout, a Belgian trader on the island who also functioned as American Consul,\textsuperscript{104} the Marists were allowed to move about freely, and by displaying full purple Pompallier drew large crowds. Queen Pomaré Vahine IV was curious enough to invite Pompallier to the palace and her charm made him think that she and the people in her \textit{entourage} would have liked the representatives of the true Church to stay. Having been expelled already once, Maigret who planned to go with the Marists to Hawaii, and Columban Murphy, who for that same purpose had secretly been ordained a priest by Bishop Rouchouze during their stay in Mangareva, prudently stayed on board.\textsuperscript{105}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[101] Ronzon, \textit{Delorme}, 38.
\item[102] Wiltgen, \textit{Founding}, 152.
\item[104] Since 1830 Jacob Moerenhout was an important trader in Tahiti, importing shiploads of goods from France, cf Jore, \textit{L'Océan}, volume 1, 100.
\item[105] LRO 1, Doc 21, 8. EC, Doc 38, 6. Wiltgen, \textit{Founding}, 152.
\end{footnotes}
The Marists visited Moerenhout regularly, and Pompallier said Mass in the privacy of his home. He also baptised and confirmed the seven-year-old son of the third officer of the *Europa*. The boy, baptised Jean-Marie, was born in New Zealand but had been brought up in Tahiti. Pompallier felt elated at this first baptism of a New Zealand born child: the first fruits of New Zealand, ‘*les prémices de la Nouvelle Zélande*’.  

Pompallier was very appreciative of the reception he received from Moerenhout. He recommended him to the Director of the Colonies at the Ministry of the Navy in Paris for an appointment as French consul. When, shortly later, on request of Queen Pomare, Moerenhout was dismissed as Consul of the United States, he was indeed appointed French Consul, first in Tahiti, later in California.

The stay in Tahiti turned out to be a godsend. This time there were less favourable rumours about Hawaii, and more favourable ones on Tonga, Samoa, Fiji and New Zealand both from Moerenhout and from Captain Stocks who had sailed all over the Pacific for years. Moerenhout had recently been able to purchase a small schooner, the *Raiatea*. He offered it to Pompallier for 400 piastres (2.200 francs) a month, to go wherever he wanted under Captain Stocks, and to keep it for as long as he needed it. The missionaries were to look after their own provisions. In Valparaiso Pompallier had abruptly changed his plans; in Tahiti he did it again. After consulting his men he now decided to forget about Hawaii and to go straight to Pohnpei and from there via Sydney to New Zealand! He did not get a refund from the fare he already had paid as far as Hawaii, but, as he wrote to Cardinal Fransoni, in this way he avoided the cost of travelling from Hawaii to Pohnpei. He chartered the *Raiatea* on the conditions offered. He did not have enough money and left owing Moerenhout about four thousand francs. The *Europa* with Captain Shaw in command, would continue to Hawaii with Maigret and Murphy as planned.

Peter Chanel looked with diffidence at the *Raiatea*. He called it a *méchante petite goélette*, a nasty little schooner (only 60 tons), and without even a copper bottom! This time travelling was going to be very uncom-
comfortable indeed. They took their luggage off the *Europa* and transferred it to the *Raiatea*.

After the favourable stories he had picked up about the Tonga islands, Pompallier now decided to visit Vava’u first, and sail to Pohnpei from there. He might leave a few missionaries with Chanel in Micronesia, and sail on to Australia and New Zealand himself. All of this news, with his change of plan and many interesting details, he communicated to Colin in a five-page letter from Tahiti, dated 2 October. He told Colin to forget about a Procure, not only in Valparaiso, but also in California or Hawaii. By now it had become clear to him that Sydney was the only and the best place because of its frequent communications with Europe as well as with New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. Moreover, in Australia one would find a civilised environment, an established Church under a Vicar Apostolic and a Christian community protected by Great Britain.

Pompallier foresaw that the next missionaries might still come the long way, around Cape Horn, in which case they should avoid Hawaii, where the situation was confused and opposition against Catholics had flared up again. Tahiti was the place to aim for, and if they were not allowed ashore, they could always stay on the ship. Moerenhout would help them on their way. Moerenhout was also a reliable postal address. If they came the other way, around Cape of Good Hope, they could rely on Bishop Polding in Sydney.

He repeated his urgent request for reinforcements and, having seen the Picpus men at work, he now insisted on Brothers as well as priests. In two cases, Hawaii as well as Tahiti, the priests were expelled but a Brother had been allowed to stay! He hoped Colin could send at least four priests and three Brothers soon. He begged Colin also to plead his cause with the Propagation of the Faith. His funds were exhausted. He was at his wit’s end on how to even begin the actual mission work.111

**Tonga**

Two days after mailing his letter, on a magnificent day, Pompallier and his Marist companions set sail on the *Raiatea*, this time directly towards the heartlands of the Western Pacific. Having passed within sight of Palmerston, one of the Cook Islands, they reached Vava’u, the most northern of

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111. *LRO* 1, Docs 21, 10–15 and 22, 2.
the larger islands of the Tonga group on 22 October. The Raiatea narrowly missed getting thrown on the reefs by a sudden contrary wind and the high swell, but got undamaged into the shelter by what even the Captain considered a near miracle. They were received by King Taufa‘ahau, originally the King of the central island group of Ha‘apai, and since 1833 also ruler of Vava‘u. The King even accepted an invitation to dine on the Raiatea. By now Pompallier could read English, but recognised the spoken English words only if Captain Stock pointed them out in a dictionary! Charles Simonet, a French sailor who had deserted from the Astrolabe of Dumont d’Urville in 1827 and had set up a smithy on Vava‘u, served as an interpreter. He was helped by Thomas Boag, an English sailor who had deserted from an American whaler, married on Futuna and settled on Vava‘u where his wife had died.\[112\]

Earlier in the same year 1837, Taufa‘ahau, encouraged if not actually led, by the Methodist minister John Thomas had headed an expeditionary fleet and engaged in two fierce battles on the southern island of Tongata-pu, in support of the Christian chief Tupou against the majority of pagan chiefs of the island. Initially ‘New Testament counsels of peace-making and gentleness prevailed’, but when resistance held out in fortified strongholds that had to be taken by brute force, it led to massacres and atrocities that were rationalised in Methodist sermons with quotes from ‘the books of Joshua, I Samuel, Chronicles and the imprecatory psalms’.\[113\] Although there is no sign of it in our documentation, we may be sure that Pompallier or his companions heard about it all from Simonet and Boag. In any case, the memories of the recent Methodist victory and the influence of John Thomas and his colleague William Brooks were too powerful. The King did not allow Pompallier to leave a missionary on Vava‘u, and they had to move on.

From their local knowledge Charles Simonet and Thomas Boag could point Pompallier towards the island of Wallis, 650 km to the North of Vava‘u, where nearly the same language was spoken as in Tonga. According to Mangeret it was the Wesleyan minister John Thomas who pointed Pompallier to Wallis.\[114\] Although Thomas would hardly have wanted to share the Polynesian islands with the Catholics, he may have seen it as

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112.LRO 1, Docs 23, 4 and 26, 2. Ronzon, Delorme, 41.
113.Garrett, Among the Stars, 76.
a way to get them to move on. Moreover, he may have considered their chances close to nil anyhow. A few years earlier the Methodists had sent Tongan teachers to bring Wallis into the fold, but the Wallisians had killed them all.115 In any case, the Methodists had not yet managed to establish themselves there. The island had a bad name among sailors and Captain Stocks was reluctant to go there, but Pompallier insisted. Thomas Boag went with them as an interpreter in exchange for free passage to Futuna where he wanted to settle again and open a trade store.116

Back on board there was a nasty incident. After the tricky negotiations Pompallier’s nerves may have been on edge. What triggered the outburst we cannot be sure, but Pompallier had explicitly assured Taufa‘ahau his missionaries would not get involved in religious matters, if he let them settle on Vava‘u. It is not unlikely that, after travelling the world determined to preach the Gospel at any cost, his men were not happy with the Bishop’s ready compromise. Whatever it was, he blew up, accusing them of disloyalty, of ganging up on him and of wanting to do things their own way. He threatened them with excommunication, and, as Servant later described it, ‘raising his voice to the point that the crew would have understood what the row was about, had they understood French.’117

Wallis

They sailed on 28 October and reached Wallis on 1 November, the feast of All Saints. They went ashore in their long black soutanes to show that, although they now came from Vava‘u, they were different from the Methodist ministers. They were brought into contact with somebody who evidently was a high chief to whom others deferred and whom Captain Stock and Thomas Boag called the King. With their help and using the bit of English that Pompallier and Bataillon had acquired, they managed to communicate. The King lent them a sympathetic ear and, in spite of the negative pressure from some people around him, he gave permission for Father Bataillon and Brother Joseph-Xavier Luzy to stay. Pompallier

115. One shipwrecked sailor who spent many years in Polynesia tells a lurid tale of the attempt of Tongans (he has them come from Niuatoputapu) to establish their Methodist faith on Wallis and how they were slaughtered by the Wallisians. John P. Twyning, Shipwreck and Adventures of John P Twyning among the South Sea Islanders (London: Dean and Son, 1850), 104–10.
117. LRO 1, Doc 55, 6.
got the King to agree by telling him they only came to study the language and he would take the men away again, if one day they were no longer welcome.  

There were a few tight moments when rowdy Wallisian youths threatened to take over the ship. Calm was restored through the intervention of the King and the missionaries unloaded their cases whereby the young carriers managed to help themselves to some of Brother Joseph's clothing. The King gave them a house near his own compound.

Pompallier left Bataillon a few hundred francs to buy supplies from passing ships and a good quantity of trade goods to exchange for food with the locals. It does not seem to have been Brother Joseph's first choice to stay on Wallis with Bataillon. He later wrote to his family that he had found it hard to be separated from Pompallier and Chanel.

Having promised the two missionaries that he would return within six or seven months, Pompallier sailed on 7 November. Although he now had his eyes on Rotuma he agreed, on request of the King of Wallis, to take fourteen Futunans home first. In any case, he had promised Thomas Boag to take him there.

Futuna

They must have had a very fine sea and wind, because they did the 225 km in a good day and reached Futuna on 8 November. The first contact was a Futunan fisherman in a canoe. He spoke a bit of English and told them he had worked on an Australian whaler and had visited Sydney. He recognised the Marists as Catholic priests and invited them to stay. On land he led them to someone he called the King, named Niuliki, who received them royally with nose-touching and a festive meal of roasted pork, yam, coconuts and other local foods.

Now Pompallier had to choose between Futuna and either Rotuma or far-away Pohnpei. Opting for Futuna would allow the two missionaries to keep in contact. So, in discussion with his missionaries the Bishop changed plans again. He put off Pohnpei for the time being and decided

118. LRO 1, Docs 22, 4 and 28, 17.
119. LRO 1, Doc 23, 5. Ronzon, Delorme, 41.
120. Lillian Keys (Pompallier, 69) says Pompallier made this promise expecting the second group of missionaries to be on the way to join him. That may well be true.
121. It normally took two days or more to sail between Futuna and Wallis, cf EC, Doc 39, 2.
122. Marie-Nizier to Champagnat, 30 September 1839, LO, Clisby 011, 6.
to leave Peter Chanel and Brother Marie-Nizier on Futuna. They too got a house near that of the King which they hoped would give them a sort of protection. They moved in on 12 November. Having understood that there was yet another kingdom on the same island of Futuna, Pompallier handed Peter Chanel some presents he could give to the other King.123

On 13 November Bishop Pompallier, Father Servant and Brother Michel left Peter Chanel behind on the beach, with Brother Marie-Nizier and Thomas Boag, who had asked to be allowed to stay with the two missionaries. The Raiatea took fourteen shipwrecked European sailors on board who were stranded on Futuna, and sailed for Rotuma, some 200 kilometers to the West, where they arrived on 15 or 16 November. There too they were well received but Pompallier had no missionaries left, and could only promise the local people of whom he had heard favourable things that he would return later with a missionary. Six sailors stayed on Rotuma which was regularly visited by whalers. The Raiatea left after one day and set sail directly for Sydney, taking the rest of the sailors along.124

In France

Colin receiving mail

Pompallier’s first letter from Valparaiso, sent on 17 July 1837 by the Hudson, announcing the death of Claude Bret, arrived on 13 November, the same day that its writer left Chanel and Marie-Nizier on the beach of Futuna Island, staring after the Raiatea. It came in a parcel, just before dinner. Colin quickly opened it, glanced at the signatures, and went to dinner. On the way down, and all the way during dinner, he kept wondering. ‘But there is one who has not written! Why has Father Bret not written? That is not nice of him’. It was only after dinner, when he started reading that he found out. ‘He could not write, because he is dead!’ Colin burst out in tears. ‘God be praised! Let His will be done’. He called the community together in the chapel and told them. Everyone present got tears in the eyes and they prayed together.125

123.LRO 1, Doc 22, 5.
124.Wiltgen, Founding, 159.
125.FA, Doc 216, 1, footnote 1. There is an unexplained discrepancy in the dates: 13 November is well attested, but on 27 October Pierre Colin is recorded to have told a group of Lay-Marists of the safe arrival of the missionaries in Valparaiso! Cf LM, Doc 37, 4. If news had reached Pierre Colin three weeks earlier, how is it possible that Jean-Claude only knew on 13 November? Champagnat mentions it first on 25 November. LMC 1,
In the same parcel Colin received Pompallier's second letter, dated 20 July and sent via the Télégraphe. It also contained the Bishop's letter to his mother and to the parents of Claude Bret, a letter of Chanel to his sister Françoise and the family, with many personal letters from all the missionaries.

Colin would have read all the letters and he forwarded those addressed to other persons. He did not sit down immediately to write back. The absence of any definite information on the whereabouts of the missionaries may have held him back. From the letters received he had to conclude that the missionaries would be in Hawaii, still on the way to Pohnpei, or possibly already there. He too would now see the need for a Procure, although Pompallier was far from answering the question where: Valparaiso was out, California, Hawaii and Sydney were all possibilities. Not much to take action on!

On 27 November 1837 Colin decided to write to Pompallier anyhow and he invited others to do the same. The letter has not been preserved but we know he told Pompallier of the 8,700 francs sent in May. He sent the parcel of letters to the Picpus Fathers in Valparaiso, so far the only sure point in the equation. It was not to reach Pompallier until March 1839, ie, fifteen months later!126

On 1 December Father Colin wrote to Cardinal Fransoni to tell him that the missionaries had arrived in Valparaiso, but that, sadly, one had died in mid-ocean. At the time of writing, he could add that in July they had been readying themselves to continue their journey. In view of Pompallier's abrupt change of plans he cautiously added: 'We can presume, if nothing untoward has happened, that by now they will be among their island people.'127

The third batch, with a copy of the letter for the Minister of the Navy in Paris and a letter from Bataillon to Étienne Séon that had all been sent by overland courier via Montevideo and Buenos Aires, arrived much later, somewhere between 1 December and 10 January 1838, although Bataillon had presumed that the overland courier would be quicker.128

Doc 158.
126. Pompallier to Meynis, 17 March 1939, Archives of the Oeuvres pontificalles missionnaires, 12, rue Sala, Lyon (OPM), H30, 000867.
127. CS 1, Doc 23.
128. Colin mentions the letters of 17 and 20 July to Fransoni on 1 December. In his circular letter of 10 January 1838 he mentions the third letter of 27 July (in fact sent early August) as having just arrived. L'Ami de la Religion carried the news on 25 January 1838.
It took the *Raïatea* with Bishop Pompallier, Catherin Servant and Michel Colombon a month to cover the distance from Rotuma to Australia. On 9 December 1837 they sailed into Sydney Harbour, just when a violent tropical storm hung over the town. It could not dampen their joy. The three were most graciously received by Bishop Polding and invited to stay in his own residence where they celebrated Christmas together.

Again there was no mail waiting in Sydney. No letters, no news, no money. However, there were so many exciting things to tell that in his first letter, dated 23 December 1837, Pompallier kept it to a sigh of frustration: ‘How I would love getting an answer to all the letters I sent to Europe!’ Undeterred he recounted all the good news, of Wallis and Futuna, and of the advantages and the facilities that Sydney and, as he now saw, only Sydney could provide.129

Bishop Polding offered to take care of mail to and from France. An Irish priest in the Bishop’s house, John McEncroe, was to be Pompallier’s agent. They were given a room in the newly built Seminary to store the goods they did not want to take along immediately. The Governor of the Colony made special arrangements for the mission goods to pass through customs even though they were brought in on a Tahitian ship from a non-British port. They found out that mission goods sent from France could enter Australia on the same conditions as goods from Britain irrespective of what ships, British or French, they arrived on, provided French ships had come without commercial stops on the way. All mail, all personnel, all goods should from now on come the shorter, safer and much cheaper way of London-Sydney. He urged Colin to send him reinforcements as soon as possible, specifically two Brothers to start the Procure. A priest with them would be very useful, but on that point he hesitated. Priests were badly needed elsewhere and the long-term presence of a French priest in Sydney could cause problems.130 There must have been something in his contacts with Bishop Polding that made Pompallier think so.

Of particular concern was his financial situation. He had practically nothing left now and he had promised to visit Wallis and Futuna within

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129.LRO 1, Doc 22.
130.LRO 1, Doc 22, 6. The letter was published in the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, (1838), 70.
five or six months. The trip would cost some four or five thousand francs. The sort of house needed for a Procure would cost about 20,000 francs. Bishop Polding gave Pompallier a letter of introduction to Thomas Poynton, an Irish Catholic settler on the Hokianga River in New Zealand, who ran a trade-store and a sawmill. Poynton's Australian-born wife had become a Catholic and had travelled to Sydney to have her first daughter baptised. Poynton himself had come to Sydney when Bishop Polding arrived there in 1835, and he had asked for a priest. The Governor of New South Wales gave Pompallier a letter of recommendation to James Busby, the British Resident in the Bay of Islands, and Polding gave him a similar document for Thierry who had just returned to New Zealand.

On 30 December 1837 Bishop Pompallier, Father Catherin Servant and Brother Michel Colombon left Sydney on the *Raiatea* and on Wednesday 10 January 1838, after an pleasant and easy voyage, three hundred and eighty-three days after leaving Le Havre, the first Marist missionaries sailed up the Hokianga River, on the north-west coast of the North Island of New Zealand.

**Conclusion**

Pompallier's docility to the Roman perspective that made him take the western route, disregarding the advice of Pastre, and without researching the best way to get to his mission field, had made the opening of the Marist missions in the Pacific difficult, dangerous and needlessly expensive. But whatever misgivings Jean-Claude Colin had about Pompallier as the leader of the mission, the man had proved to be an undaunted pioneer. He never gave up. He was adaptable, could drop earlier plans and improvise.

The constant changes at least illustrate the extreme difficulty of Pompallier's undertaking, compounded by the wrong start.

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131. He landed in New Zealand with £113.8s.6d. By courtesy of Bruce Bolland, Diocesan Archives of Auckland.

132. On these and other letters of recommendation, cf Keys, *Pompallier*, 79–81. On Poynton, cf Wiltgen, *Founding*, 203–4. Thierry had returned to New Zealand 4 November 1837 only to discover that the lands he claimed were occupied and that all his claims were illusory, cf Jore, *L'Océan*, volume 1, 188–94.

• When leaving France, the plan was: Valparaiso—Gambier—New Zealand.
• In Valparaiso it became: Gambier—Hawaii—Micronesia.
• In the Gambier Islands he changed to: Tahiti—Hawaii—Micronesia.
• In Tahiti he changed to: Micronesia (direct)—Sydney—New Zealand
• On the way it became: Tahiti—Tonga—Wallis—Futuna—Sydney—New Zealand.

It turned out as Rouchouze told him: whatever plan you make now, in the end you will get somewhere else. As Pompallier put it himself to Archbishop de Pins: ‘I am obliged to follow step by step God’s designs which become clear day by day in the opportunities it pleases Him to offer me.”

But he pushed on regardless. With barely a penny in his pocket, he went ahead with just one priest and one Brother and continued the planning for a Procure in Sydney. Cholleton’s choice of the leader had not been so bad after all.

It looks as if Pompallier had feared all the time that Colin would not be a good hands-on manager. He betrays these feelings by the tone of his letters and the repetitive detailed instructions. Perhaps Cholleton had similar misgivings when he bypassed Colin at the crucial decisions of the beginning.

At first Colin did not catch the seriousness of Pompallier’s financial situation. He took no action until he got the letter from Santa Cruz and subsequently did little to find out if there was not a way to get mail and money quickly to Valparaiso. It could have been done. He could also have sent a fast letter via London to Sydney on the off-chance of catching Pompallier somewhere. That too could have been done.

While the missionaries now faced the challenge of first contact with people of alien cultures and in strange countries, the Society and its Superior General had to invent ways of supporting them.

134. Pompallier to de Pins, 19 July 1837. Quoted from Roach, Colin and the Missions, 44.
Chapter 4
1838 Part 1: The Second Wave

Confusion in the Pacific

Contrary to his own expectations Bishop Pompallier managed to achieve in the beginning of 1838 what he had hoped for when leaving France: he had established missions on two Polynesian islands and, himself, he had reached New Zealand. At the same time, unknown to him, his repeated changing of plans, first to abandon New Zealand and opt for Micronesia, then to put off Micronesia and return to the original plan, had thrown everyone else into confusion.

While the Marists sailed to Tonga, Wallis, Futuna, Rotuma and Sydney, the Picpus Fathers Maigret and Murphy, who had come with them from Valparaiso as far as Tahiti, continued on the *Europa* to Hawaii as planned. In the meantime Father Bachelot, the Apostolic Prefect of Hawaii, had arrived there from California, but was refused permission to stay ashore. He lived on a schooner in the port, waiting for a ship on which to leave again. When the *Europa* docked in Honolulu, the Queen Regent of Hawaii, Kaahumanu II, ordered Maigret to leave again by the same ship he had come on, and to take Bachelot with him, even though the *Europa* was chartered to go to China! Columban Murphy was allowed to stay in Hawaii on the grounds that he was not a priest. He had kept his priestly ordination on Mangareva a secret so that the French Consul, Captain Dudoit, had obtained the permission on false grounds but in good faith!

The Consul offered to sell Maigret and Bachelot a schooner that he owned, the *Honolulu*, and they decided to buy it rather than go to China, even though Dudoit had already loaded it with trade goods. They agreed to the price of 4,000 piastres, ie, 22,000 francs, one third to be paid in

cash, the remainder on arrival in Valparaiso. Expecting Pompallier to do what he had said, namely to sail directly from Tahiti to Micronesia, they arranged for the Honolulu to take them first to Pohnpei (some 1,500 km), where they thought they could give the Marists a hand. In July, after its planned trading voyage, the ship would return to Pohnpei and take them back to Valparaiso.

The Honolulu left Hawaii on 23 November 1837 when in fact Pompallier was on his way from Rotuma to Sydney. Barely at sea Fr Bachelot fell ill and on 5 December he died on board. Maigret kept his body in a sealed tarpaulin until he could bury him, a week later, on a small island near Pohnpei. On 13 December (with Pompallier safely in Sydney) Maigret wrote in his diary: ‘Ascension Island came into view this morning and we arrived there about four o’clock in the afternoon’. But Pompallier was not there! There was little else Maigret could do than let his ship go to China and stay behind in Pohnpei, to wait for Pompallier. When, seven months later the Honolulu returned and there still was no word from Pompallier he left (29 July 1838) for Tahiti and Valparaiso.

Confusion in Rome

From Valparaiso, Peter Chanel had advised Colin of the presence in France of a Picpus missionary, Father François d’Assise Caret, one of the three who had succeeded in converting the Gambier Islands in only a couple of years. His Bishop, Rouchouze, had sent him to explain in France and in Rome the situation in Eastern Oceania, to obtain wider canonical faculties for otherwise unsolvable marriage cases and to get additional financial support. Caret had left Chile before the first Marists got to Valparaiso in June, 1837. When on 7 September he reached France he found that Father Coudrin, the Founder of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts, had died in March and had been succeeded by Mgr. Raphael Bonamie. On 13 November, the same day that Colin received mail from Valparaiso, Bonamie too received a letter from there, probably by the same ship, still addressed

3. Jore, L’Océan, volume 2, 35 and 64. Wiltgen, Founding, 161–3. Peter Chanel can have heard about these events from Baty in May 1839, EC, page 430–1.
4. EC, Doc 34, 1. Father Caret was born 1802, in Miniac, diocese of Rennes (information SS.CC. archives).
to Coudrin. Father Pagès, the local superior in Valparaiso, had written on 18 July, the day after Pompallier’s first letter from Chile, reporting that Pompallier had chartered the Europa, that the Marists had given up hope of getting to New Zealand and were on the point of sailing for Pohnpei in Micronesia, via the Gambier Islands and Hawaii. Caret was in Paris, read the letter and immediately saw the dire consequences of that decision: Pompallier would soon be immersed in far away Micronesia and from there perhaps in Melanesia. As a consequence, for the foreseeable future nothing would be done about Tonga, Samoa, Fiji and, worse still, New Zealand, allowing the Protestants to consolidate their positions all over Polynesia. The fiery little Caret persuaded his new Superior General to support another attempt to get these Polynesian main islands assigned to their congregation, as they had already tried to do, without success, two years earlier. Unaware of the fact that in the meantime Pompallier had changed plans again, dropped four missionaries in the Polynesian Islands and was approaching Sydney, Caret left France on 4 December for Rome with ample documentation and far-reaching recommendations.

Pompallier’s letter from Valparaiso would have been on Cardinal Fransoni’s desk when Father Caret called on him. The Bishop’s change of plans, practically writing off New Zealand and Polynesia, must already have alarmed the Cardinal. The analysis of the little Breton straight from Polynesia who knew the situation intimately, could only confirm his worst fears.

At the same time the Cardinal received Colin’s letter of 1 December, laconically reporting that the Marist missionary team was on its way to the ‘islands of their destination’. Fransoni concluded that Colin did not understand the strategic implications of this turn of events. Colin had added that he was getting three or four priests and two brothers ready to leave ‘during the course of 1838’. His letter was low-key and did not show the sense of urgency and frustration that both Pompallier’s letter and Caret’s exposé exuded. Colin, moreover, offered to send two or three

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6. Frédéric Pagès, SS.CC., had come to Chile with Bishop Rouchouze in 1834 and handled day-to-day business in Valparaiso. Cf EC, Doc 38.
7. Chanel’s letter telling Colin about Caret (EC, Doc 34, 1) had reached Colin with the rest of the mail from Valparaiso, on 13 November, so he knew about Caret being in Europe. But from the tone and the content of Colin’s letter of 1 December we must conclude that at that time the two had not yet met.
9. Dated on 1 December from Belley, the letter would have taken ten to twelve days.
10. CS 1, Doc 23, 3.
missionaries to Rome to obtain at the very centre of the Church the faculties and the instructions needed. The flattery was wasted on Fransoni and the last thing he needed were Marist missionaries on a leisurely visit to Rome. Things moved fast. Caret arrived in Rome on 15 December and next day Fransoni had his Secretary deliver a fast riposte to Belley, telling Colin not to waste time and money sending missionaries to Rome, but to get them on the way to Oceania quam citissime (as quickly as possible). Colin was out of tune!

On 17 December Caret had a private audience with Pope Gregory XVI. He presented the Pope with the statue of Tu, the ancestral spirit-god of Mangareva and submitted a report stressing that the major Polynesian island groups, Tonga, Samoa, Fiji and especially New Zealand had much larger populations than the islands in Eastern Polynesia. The Methodists had been active everywhere for years. Unless immediate action was taken, they would soon be so deeply entrenched that they could bar entry everywhere to Catholic missionaries. The Secretary of Propaganda, Mgr. Mai, took up the matter again with the Pope on 14 January 1838 and Gregory XVI extended Rouchouze’s jurisdiction westwards, as far as, and including, New Zealand. On 25 January Fransoni wrote to Pompalier. He told him that, given his involvement in other areas that would surely take up his time, his attention and his resources for years to come, Bishop Rouchouze had been authorised ‘on an interim basis’ to extend his missionary work to Tonga, Samoa, Fiji and New Zealand. A similar communication went the same day to Bishop Rouchouze. To both bishops went identical, extended faculties for solving marriage cases. Caret got a special subsidy of 3.000 Roman scudi, with the stipulation however, that the money could be used only for Eastern Oceania, perhaps an indication that Fransoni himself was uneasy about the rather irregular way he had been forced to handle the problem.

What then happened, or rather, did not happen, is strange. There is no trace of any attempt to inform Father Colin, the Superior General of the congregation to which the territories concerned were officially entrusted!

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11. CS 1, Doc 24.
12. In the margin of a later letter of Colin (19 May 1838) somebody in Propaganda (perhaps Fransoni himself) scribbled: ‘quanti ahimè ritardi!’ (Dear oh dear, even more delays!) CS 1, Doc 35.
After his visit to Rome, Caret met with Colin.\textsuperscript{15} There is no sign that, even after that meeting, Colin knew of the new arrangement in the Pacific. It therefore looks as if Fransoni and Caret had agreed to keep Colin in the dark. Evidently, Colin was not only out of tune, but out of favour as well!

Fortunately, the extension of the Picpus Fathers’ jurisdiction did not lead to friction in the Pacific. In August 1838, probably before Caret had returned to Valparaiso, Captain Dupetit-Thouars on the frigate \textit{La Vénus}, had on orders of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris, exacted punitive reparation on the Government of Tahiti for the expulsion of the Fathers Caret and Laval, both French citizens, in December 1836. The \textit{Venus} trained her guns on the capital Papeete and the Captain requested a written apology from Queen Pomare to be addressed to the King of France. He imposed a fine of 2,000 piastres, insisted that the French flag be raised on an island in the port and saluted by twenty-one shots from the guns of the Papeete fortress. The Queen defiantly refused to pay but George Pritchard, Methodist missionary, later British Consul, fearing the consequences, paid on her behalf. She did write the apology but when the flag was raised, the Queen’s gunners had to beg for gunpowder from the \textit{Venus}! The ramshackle guns of the fortress managed twenty-one shots and French honour was restored. More important for the mission, French citizens were guaranteed future freedom of movement in the realm of Queen Pomare. As a consequence the Picpus Fathers could now work in Tahiti.\textsuperscript{16} At the same time they had found an opening in the Marquesas Islands: no dearth of opportunities in the Eastern Pacific, no need to fall back on lands to the west.

\textsuperscript{15} In March or April 1838 Colin tried to get the second group of missionaries to travel with Father Caret to Valparaiso and his letter to Fransoni suggests he then knew Caret (CS 1, Doc 35, 2). Ten years later Colin spoke of having discussed certain problems with Father Caret (\textit{Mémoires Mayet IV}, 550). As Caret did not return to Europe for a second time and died in the Gambier Islands on 26 October 1844, there can be no doubt that Colin and Caret met in early 1838, although no direct mention of this meeting has been found in the Marist or the Picpus archives (information from Jean Louis Schuester, SS.CC. archives, Rome). That Colin did not hear of the new arrangement seems a fair conclusion from the fact that there is no mention of such a monumental change of policy in Colin’s next letter to Fransoni of 19 May (CS 1, Doc 35), nor in letters of the time to the missions.

Pompallier getting his feet on the ground

Happily unaware of these goings on, Pompallier arrived at the Hokianga River on 10 January 1838. The *Raiatea* was taken by a pilot through the dangerous shoals and they sailed forty kilometres up the river to Totara Point, where they landed at the house of the Irishman Thomas Poynton to whom Bishop Polding had referred him. Thomas and his wife Mary with the three children put the best of their wooden buildings at his disposal and Brother Colombon and Father Servant did what they could to turn the biggest room into a chapel. Come Saturday 13 January Pompallier said Mass for the first time in New Zealand. On 11 January the *Raiatea* sailed away, back to Tahiti. By the end of April she would have reached her home port and when Maigret arrived in Tahiti on the *Honolulu* from Pohnpei, Moerenhout could tell him that the Marists had succeeded in establishing beach-heads on Wallis and Futuna and that their Bishop was in New Zealand. Maigret took the news to Valparaiso.

The Wesleyans were already well established in the area. In addition to their headquarters in Mangungu they had fourteen so-called ‘preaching’ stations on the river. Soon one Wesleyan missionary had so aroused his flock that a crowd of some twenty Maoris turned up, probably on 22 January, at Poynton’s house with the intention of expelling the Bishop from the land and throwing his ‘wooden gods’ into the river. Thomas Poynton, helped by a friendly Maori chief, succeeded in calming them down while Bishop Pompallier sat quietly in the house, saying his breviary. European Catholics as well as Protestants rallied behind the Bishop and from then on the Catholics attended Mass and received the Sacraments regularly at Totara Point. Servant and Pompallier began visiting Maori villages and learning the Maori language as well as improving their halting English. Both of them wrote with optimism of the promising contacts and the friendly reception they received on most places.

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17. Information on this distance by courtesy of Father Tony Williams, S.M. A fine description of the Hokianga and its environment at the time can be found in Lillian Keys, *Pompallier*, 91–6.
19. LRO 1, Doc 31, 5–7. The name *Maori* was not yet in general use for the New Zealand Polynesians until a few years later. The missionaries initially speak of *Nouveaux-Zélandais*, LRO, Doc 31, 8. To avoid confusion we allow ourselves the anachronism. Cf Yarwood, *Marsden*, 170.
20. Four years later (LRO 1, Doc 59, 26) Pompallier writes that the Catholic Europeans
Peter Dillon, famous among sailors for having found in 1827 the remains of two lost French ships, the *Boussole* and the *Astrolabe*, at Vanikoro Island, and among missionaries for having planned, in 1829–1831, with Gabriel-Henri-Jérôme de Solages a vast mission covering the entire Pacific had visited the Tongan island of Vava’u shortly after the Marists. When in February 1838 he sailed into the Bay of Islands on the schooner *Jess*, the news quickly reached settlers on the Hokianga River and Pompallier walked across to visit him. In Dillon’s own account he ‘introduced Pompallier to the most powerful local chiefs and to the leading British and American residents’ while Pompallier gave him a letter for Mme Adélaïde, *Princesse d’Orléans*, in which he recommended Dillon for the position of Consul to New Zealand.

Pompallier used the opportunity to write to the Director for the Colonies, Fillau de Saint-Hilaire, to let him know he had presented his letter of recommendation to the Baron de Thierry. The Baron had been most kind and had promised his support but, Pompallier added, it is good to know that people in this country do not take him or his undertakings very seriously.

When the news that Pompallier had been harassed by the Methodists reached Sydney, a French warship, the frigate *Héroïne*, under Captain Cécille, promptly sailed to New Zealand to show the flag and pay a courtesy visit to Pompallier in the Bay of Islands. She also brought part of the mission goods stored in Sydney. The Captain had sent a letter ahead to Hokianga, and Pompallier walked across to the Bay of Islands where, on 10 May 1838, he was received on board with military honours. Pompallier said Mass on the deck of the warship and, when he left the ship, the guns had advised him to leave (because he did not speak English at the time) and to ask Polding to take over the mission. Somebody may well have said so, but as a general statement it differs so much from the contemporary accounts of both Pompallier and Servant that we can safely put it down as an exaggeration such as Pompallier often used to dramatise his position.

22. Dillon to Scratchley (destined for Colin?), 18 February 1839. APM, Z 208. Davidson, *Dillon*, 278. Dillon tends to ascribe to himself a prominent role. Pompallier does not mention the event in his May letter to Colin.
25. According to Fr. Servant twenty leagues, ie a good hundred kilometers, LRO 1, Doc 26, 3. Road distance today would be 66 kilometers (information from Tony Williams) but it must have felt like a hundred in 1838!
roared. The message was loud and clear: this man belongs to a mighty nation that will stand up for its citizens.

Pompallier was certainly not unaware of the political interpretations that some people were inclined to attach to his presence. Referring to the first months after his arrival he wrote: ‘People involved in politics felt threatened. They suspected me to be a secret agent for the French Government.’ If that was the case, then the action of the Héroïne can only have confirmed the suspicions of at least some British citizens in the Bay area. Still, that was not Pompallier’s impression. ‘I believe they now see that they were wrong.’ In any case, he felt a lot safer after the visit of the warship. The Annals of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith reported favourably on the intervention of the French Navy.

The first letters from New Zealand

Before returning home Pompallier wrote a few letters from the Bay of Islands, where mailing was easier than from the Hokianga River. Apart from the duplicate of his letter from Sydney, that he had already sent on 20 March, his letter of 14 May 1838 was the first one from New Zealand. He asked Colin to make a copy for Cardinal Fransoni but at the same time he wrote directly to Rome as well as to Mr Meynis, the secretary of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon.

With colourful details Pompallier told Colin of the Héroïne, how he was received on the ship, and on the pastoral work he had been able to do on board: forty-year old sailors who made their First Communion. Many others who had to come to New Zealand ‘where they thought to meet only savages and found Jesus Christ’ (1). He could tell him of the attack by Protestant Maoris on 22 January (6) and of the peaceful way it had ended.

26. In the context of the time their apprehensions were not entirely unfounded. Keys, Pompallier, 87–90.
27. LRO 1, Doc 24, 3–4.
28. Annals, (1838), 76.
29. We do not know how that duplicate was sent. It did eventually reach Lyon, but we do not know when. LRO 1, Doc 22, introduction. Eight months later, Colin had not yet received it. CS 1, Doc 54, 1–2.
30. OPM, H30, 00866
31. LRO 1, Doc 24. The editor’s paragraphs are indicated between brackets.
32. Mgr Bonamie met with Captain Cecille after his return to France and wrote to Colin that Cecille had given Pompallier all the help he could. Bonamie to Colin, 16 September 1839, APM, 2231/10449.
He shared with Colin his joy at the friendly reception he had met with in several Maori tribal places.

Pompallier told Colin that he began to feel at ease speaking English and could provide pastoral service to the Catholic Europeans in their own language. The need to learn English put the study of the Maori language back. He praised the British authorities who maintained a strict impartiality between the different missions and would not allow the use of violence. With obvious satisfaction he reported: ‘There will be no other combat than that of the word and by persuasion’(6).

Pompallier also aired his frustration at not having received as yet any mail, news or money from France, and at the debts he had been forced to make. He listed all the letters sent so far, asking Colin to acknowledge receipt as soon as feasible(3). He explained how he had planned his new house, down the harbour from Totara Point. He let his imagination run riot on how he would spread his missionaries if he got large numbers of them(8)! He told of his dreams of a schooner to visit his men on Wallis and Futuna, and what land he could buy in the Bay of Islands if he received some money. Eight tightly written pages in all! It must have kept him up all night.

With the experience of sailing the oceans of the world, he could confirm what he had already written from Sydney. He excluded all other ways than going round the Cape of Good Hope and across the Indian Ocean. There can be no better place for the urgently needed Procure than Sydney. New Zealand may geographically not be central to Polynesia, but the prevailing winds and the frequent shipping made the Bay of Islands a good base, and easily reached from Sydney(8).

Pompallier expresses his disappointment in Servant and his limited abilities: ‘Poor Father Servant is not of much help. His partial deafness is a real handicap in the beginning of the mission, especially in his contacts with outsiders. I can use him only for internal work on the station, he does some writing and I get him to give a few instructions to the English Catholics’(5). The unpleasant tone of his remarks reveals that, to put it mildly, the two did not get along well. Brother Michel Colombon does not even get a mention.

Servant himself had stayed behind in Totara and he had not waited for a mailing opportunity. He writes on a very different tone: a contented missionary, working hard to learn the languages that he needs for his ministry and optimistic about the prospects of the mission. He was not unaware of
the Bishop’s feelings but Pompallier opened and read the outgoing mail. Servant had to watch his step!

There were letters to his parents,34 to Étienne Buffard, the parish priest of his home village, Grézieu-le-Marché, and to a priest in Saint-Chamond, Antoine-Adolphe Thiolière du Treuil. Servant has plenty to tell his family, of the trip across the Pacific, the visit to Tonga, the founding of the missions on Wallis and Futuna, the voyage to Sydney and finally, the arrival in New Zealand. He enthusiastically gives the first impressions of his new country and its people. The climate suits him, food is sober but adequate. The people are tough and hard working. They are well disposed to the Catholic missionaries. Having reassured his family, he exhorts them to accept the sacrifice of his absence whole-heartedly: ‘We are not permanently in this present life. Unless providence arranges things differently which, humanly speaking, is not to be expected, we meet again in heaven.’

To his two friends he goes into more detail on the voyage, the near disaster on the reefs near Vava’u, the beauty of the Pacific islands, the impressive Christian community in the Gambier Islands, the hostility of the Protestants and the way they were received on the islands of Wallis and Futuna where the Protestants had not yet ensconced themselves. He recounts how they were received in Australia and how they had fared in New Zealand so far. To them he describes (what he left out to his parents!) the attack of 22 January, and how since then things have settled down. He feels he is making progress in Maori and in English, which he finds the more difficult language.35 Pompallier had taken Servant’s letters to the Bay of Islands and mailed them with his own.36

With the same occasion Pompallier mailed a letter he had already written to Cardinal Fransoni before walking across to the Héroïne. It was the Bishop’s first letter to Rome since leaving Valparaiso and he explains why he had to change his plans several times. He tells the Cardinal of the failed attempt to start a mission on Vava’u and of the successful establishment of

33. In an uncensored letter of 26 April 1840, LRO, Doc 55, 6: ‘The company of the bishop has often been a source of pain and bitterness.’
34. LRO 1, Doc 25, 1.
35. LRO 1, Docs 26 and 27. The dates on the letters are unsure, probably added when an opportunity arose to dispatch them. In all his letters Servant writes extensively on the Maori people, their way of life, their behaviour, their customs.
36. Pompallier gave the letters to the captain of a French whaler, the Mississipi, that was on the point of leaving for a direct voyage to France (LRO 1, Doc 24, 2). Jore (L'Océanie, volume 2, 404) says the Mississipi left the Bay of Islands on 3 May. As Pompallier’s own letter is dated 14 May, Jore must be mistaken.
missions on Wallis and Futuna. He recounts his visit to Sydney and Mgr Polding and, of course, his arrival in New Zealand. His account of the first months is optimistic and he does not dramatise the incident of 22 January. He proudly mentions his first adult baptism, and the name he gave: Gregorio, in honour of Pope Gregory XVI. In the end he expresses his admiration for the talented Maori people and already mentions the prospect of sending students to Rome for priestly formation in not too far a future.37

Another letter went to Mr Meynis of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon. Pompallier gracefully thanks them again for their support and he describes his voyage over thousands of miles across the Pacific Ocean, the near shipwreck off Vava’u, the events at Wallis and Futuna, the stop in Sydney and the arrival in New Zealand. He also mentions the need of a schooner and of a house in the Bay of Islands and asks for their continued support.38

Wallis and Futuna

The four missionaries on the islands of Wallis and Futuna, had, all things considered, not fared too badly. The “Kings” with whom Pompallier had negotiated, Vaimua, the Lavelua of Wallis39 and Niuliki, the King of Futuna, protected them and the four were reasonably well looked after. Naturally they shared the vicissitudes of island life.

On Wallis the two missionaries had to flee with the Lavelua when a powerful islander went berserk and terrorised the whole island for a few weeks. After six months the two missionaries had a good house at their disposal where Bataillon could say Mass. All the time however, he refrained from openly evangelising. In view of the Wallisians’ distaste for the Christian religion that they identified with the Tongan Methodists, he

37. ACPF Congressi Oceania, vol 1, 485r–488r. Propaganda keeps two nearly identical letters of Pompallier, both dated Hokianga 21 May 1838 (the date must have been added later). One is obviously a copy, most probably written by Servant and sent by a different ship. It must have arrived later: the secretary of Propaganda speaks of only one letter, cf CS 1, doc 55.
38. OPM, H30, 00866.
39. Vaimua was at the time the paramount chief of Wallis, his title was Lavelua. Bataillon and Brother Joseph refer to him as the King, or the Lavelua or with his name Vaimua. Niuliki was the paramount chief of Futuna. In Futunan the highest chief was often called Sau, but Chanel and Marie-Nizier usually call him le Roi (the King) or Sa Majesté (His Majesty). We shall follow the usage of the missionaries.
did not show the real purpose of his presence. Vaimua said he did not like ‘men with books’.40

Futuna suffered a devastating cyclone in February whereby the missionaries lost their house and lived in a corner of Niuliki’s house for some time. Because of the cyclone food was scarce for a few months, but the fertile soils of Futuna quickly recovered. In May Niuliki had another house built for them.

As Pompallier had heard already during his short stay, Futuna had in fact two ‘Kings’. The eastern part of the main island with the smaller, uninhabited island Alofi formed the ‘kingdom’ of Tua (or Alo). The western part of the main island was the ‘kingdom’ of Singave. The two kingdoms were regularly at war.41 The kingdom that had won the last war was called Malo (victorious) and its King held sway over the entire island. In the 1830s the Tua side was Malo and its King Niuliki ruled the entire island. Singave had lost the last war and was called Lava (vanquished). Its King Vanae had submitted to Niuliki and did no longer play a political role of importance; at least not openly. The Malo often flaunted their superiority and the humiliated Lava resented their inferior status. In March 1838 open hostilities broke out again between Tua and Singave, which unsettled life for the islanders and the two missionaries. After a number of casualties on both sides, peace was restored.

On Futuna lived an shipwrecked Englishman, named John Jones who ran a little schooner, mostly between Futuna and Wallis.42 After the cyclone season he decided to make a trip to Wallis and on 23 March 1838, shortly after the outbreak of war, Chanel was able to visit Wallis for the first time. Until then he did not even know if his confrère was alive, and Bataillon did not know that Chanel and Marie-Nizier were on Futuna! After entering the lagoon, Jones, who spoke the language, made enquiries from the Wallisians in the approaching canoes. Once he was reassured,

40. LRO 1, Doc 28, 17–18.
41. In 1616 the Dutch explorers Isaac Le Maire and Cornelius Schouten were the first Europeans to visit Futuna and Alofi. They put them on European maps as the ‘Hoorn Eilanden’, after the Dutch town of Hoorn. They noted the presence of two kings who were not on friendly terms. It appears that Singave was Malo at the time and the Tua people, Lava, lived on Alofi. Frédéric Angleviel, Wallis et Futuna (1801 – 1888), Contacts, Évangélisations, Inculturations, (Montpellier: Thèse Université Paul Valéry, 1989), volume 1, 138.
42. Jones was helped by his former shipmate John Poyer Twyning. They had built the schooner together. Twyning also lived in Futuna and married a Singave woman who bore him a daughter. Twyning, Shipwreck, 82.
Chanel waited for Bataillon who arrived on the beach after dark, calling out in French if there were Frenchmen on board. 43

Chanel discovered that Bataillon was good at learning the language. He had already succeeded in composing the beginnings of a grammar and a lengthy list of words that Chanel was happy to copy and that helped him with Futunan. 44 The two missionaries did not know whether Pompallier had reached Australia and New Zealand. 45

Not infrequently ships, especially American or English whalers, called at both islands. Some were on the way to New Zealand, others came from there. A few even came straight from the Bay of Islands, but the missionaries on the shallow Hokianga river would not have had contact with them. Also, the movements of whalers were unpredictable and often they left before the missionaries on the islands could get a letter on board. 46

The Society of Mary in France

The acceptance of the missions of Oceania had not only led to the pontifical approbation of the Society of Mary, it had also put the Society on the map in France. In Colin’s own words, the missions had become ‘a source of blessings’. 47

When Jean-Claude Colin had, unofficially, become the central Superior in 1830, there were eleven men committed to the Marist project. 48 By the time the Oceania mission came into view, one of them had pulled out and nine others had entered: nine in five years. In 1836 Pierre Bataillon joined in order to leave with the first missionary group. Twenty took their vows at the end of the founding Chapter in September, four of them left for Oceania which left sixteen professed members in France.

43. EC, Doc 39, 3. The fare was 40 francs. Chanel told the story of his trip to Wallis, of his meeting with Bataillon and his stay on Wallis in a letter to Brother Marie-Nizier on Futuna. In 1845 Nizier copied the letter for Colin. LRO 3, Doc 389 [12–15].
44. Wallisian is close to Tongan, Futunan is closer to Samoan. Polynesian languages have nearly the same grammar and, with predictable changes of consonants, they have many words in common.
45. LRO 1, Doc 42, 1.
46. In the 1840s there may have been as many as 700 American whaling ships in the Pacific Ocean. Howe, Where the Waves, 93–4.
47. CS 1, Doc 13, 1.
48. OM 1, Doc 220, 2.
Even before the first missionaries had embarked, new candidates presented themselves.\(^4^9\) In May 1837 Colin could tell Fransoni that several priests from among those who had made their profession in September 1836, had now volunteered for Oceania. Moreover: ‘A large group of candidates have presented themselves for the Society.’\(^5^0\) Around the end of the school year 1836–1837, when Pompallier and his team were in Valparaiso, the Society counted sixteen novices. During the next school year seven novices made their profession and seven new novices entered.\(^5^1\)

Some of the twenty-three novices, most of them priests, who joined the Society within two years of its approbation, may have had some connection with the Marists before the Oceania missions became part of the Marist project, and to what extent the missions to Oceania influenced their decision to join is impossible to say. Still, in two years’ time the number of Marist priests, professed or novices, had more than doubled.

The Brothers too had done well. At the end of 1837 Champagnat could report to the Ministry of Education that the Marist Teaching Brothers ran 29 schools in 6 Départements, six of which were newly started in 1837. No less than sixty-six requests came in for the Brothers to take on new schools.\(^5^2\) Jean-Claude Colin and Marcellin Champagnat could afford to work on a follow-up team.

### Colin in action

From the day the *Delphine* sailed out of Le Havre, destination Valparaiso, there was little Father Colin could do but wait for the first news. The letter from Santa Cruz indicated that the first leg of the voyage would take longer than foreseen, and it took eleven months before he knew that the missionaries had reached Valparaiso. And then, so it appeared, they were heading into an entirely new direction!

Pompallier later conceded that Colin had been right in not sending a follow-up team before hearing from Valparaiso but he also felt that by then Colin should have had a team ready to leave. He did not see why from that moment it took Colin another nine months to get a team on the way.\(^5^3\) He had a point. Leaving problems to solve themselves came natural-

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\(^4^9\) LRO 1, Doc 10, 10.
\(^5^0\) CS 1, Doc 13, 1.
\(^5^1\) CS 1, page 653.
\(^5^2\) LMC 1, pages 309–12.
\(^5^3\) LRO 1, Doc 37, 6.
ly to Colin. ‘My great principle has always been to wait for the moment of Providence’. However, this time there was more to it. Colin had consulted the Bishops of Lyon and Belley. It seems they both had supported a delay. Still, to follow the imagery Pompallier liked to use, the man battling away at the front, not knowing what action if any, was being taken, cannot be blamed for expecting a little more decisiveness.

On 10 January 1838, Father Colin addressed a circular letter to the priests and the Brothers of the Society of Mary. As Champagnat himself was in Paris, Colin asked Champagnat’s deputy, Brother François Rivat, to circulate it to the Brothers as well. Colin could only tell them that in early August the missionaries had been on the point of leaving Valparaiso ‘for their destination’. He evidently did not want to go into the sudden change of plans and expressed the hope that they would now be among the people to whom they were sent, and would be working the land that by design of Providence had become the ‘heritage of the children of Mary’. He referred to Cardinal Fransoni urging him to send reinforcements as quickly as possible.

Colin held to his policy of sending only volunteers. It is a great consolation, he wrote, to see several men in the Society anxious to commit themselves. So much fervour is a sure sign of divine protection. We cannot let everyone go. Our numbers do not allow it. The problem is to choose those who are called by Jesus and Mary. Missionary work is a vocation that can only come from on high. There were more volunteers than the Society could afford to send and it was his unenviable task, he wrote, to know what Jesus and Mary wanted. He begged the whole Society to pray that Jesus and Mary make him know their will. For that purpose he organised in great detail and in all the branches of the Society a campaign of prayers to be said until the Feast of the Purification of Mary (2 February). Shortly afterwards he appointed the missionaries for the second group.

On 3 February 1838, L’Ami de la Religion reported that the Marists were ready to send a second group of missionaries to Oceania to reinforce

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54. OM 2, Doc 425, 17.
55. This is known only from a later remark of Pompallier, where he reproached Colin for having listened more to the Bishops of Lyon and Belley than to him. How he found out is not clear. LRO 1, Doc 59, 24.
56. CS 1, Doc 26 and Doc 31, 1.
57. CS 1, Doc 26, 1. Champagnat went a step further and mentioned in a letter to the French Government that Pompallier and his missionaries had reached their destination which, but unknown to Colin and Champagnat, they in fact had! LMC 1, Doc 173.
the small group of three priests and three brothers that at that moment formed Bishop Pompallier’s missionary staff, effectively doubling it.

**Selecting a team**

Although several of the Marists who made their profession in September 1836 volunteered, Colin selected only one of them for the next group and he made him its superior: **Claude-André Baty**. Born in 1811 in Saint-Jean sur Reyssouze (Ain), Claude was a student in Belley when Colin was the Superior there. As a deacon he was part of the staff under Chanel and in 1835 he moved to the Marist community of the *Capucinière*. He probably volunteered for the first group, but as he was ordained only in December 1835, he would not have been a serious candidate then. In any case he was not selected and after the profession he was assigned to join Pierre Colin at the new Marist house in Lyon, that functioned as a Novitiate. Claude-André was Socius to Pierre Colin, the Novice Master. During the school year 1837-1838 he was at Valbenoîte from where he volunteered for the second group.

**Louis-Maxime Petit** was the first Marist who did not come from south-eastern France but from Arras, on the coast of the English Channel. Born in October 1797, he became a priest in the Diocese of Boulogne. When Pompallier was in Le Havre on the point of leaving for Oceania Petit heard about it and asked if he could join him. The Bishop answered it was too late to join the present group but if he wished to come in a later group, he should enter the Society of Mary. He entered the Marist Novitiate in May 1837.

Colin’s suggestion to Cardinal Fransoni, to send a few missionaries to Rome, probably came from Petit. On 20 January Colin wrote to him to forget about going to Rome, quoting the Cardinal. It gave Colin an opportunity to give him some of his manly spiritual direction: purify your motivations! Colin made him wait for the appointment to the islands, insisting that he learn to accept decisions of his superiors instead of arranging his own life. He was professed on 16 July 1838.

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58. OM 4, page 195.
59. Montée St Barthélémy, 24. Later on they moved down the same street to number 4.
60. APM, personal file Petit.
61. Mémoires Mayet, 1A, 80. CS 1, page 652.
62. CS 1, Doc 29.
The third priest was Jean-Baptiste Épalle, born 8 March 1808 in Marlhes, the same parish where Marcellin Champagnat came from. After the Minor Seminary in Saint-Jodard he entered Saint-Irénée in 1834 and joined the Marists in September 1837. Both he and Petit were assigned to the missions while novices. They were professed together on 16 July 1838.

In January 1838 Fr Champagnat left the Hermitage for Lyon and Paris where he hoped to obtain Government recognition of the Marist Brothers as a teaching order. He was in Paris from 18 January to 24 April from where he mailed two letters to his former companion Servant, and again from 14 May to 2 July. His absences complicated the selection of the Brothers. On 23 January Colin wrote to Brother François Rivat that Bishop Pompallier had asked from Valparaiso for three or four Brothers to be sent with the second group. Expecting Marcellin Champagnat to be back soon, he added: ‘When Father Champagnat returns we shall arrange things’.

The selection of the Brothers had in fact started before Champagnat left. Brother Denis Bron, superior of the community in Saint-Didier, had volunteered. Champagnat answered: ‘I think your desire comes from God. I believe you have the graces and the gift for that work. Keep it in mind. Keep your accounts in order so that if you are called to leave, you will be ready’. In the end, Denis never left for Oceania.

Another Brother, François-Régis Boiton, was selected by Champagnat but he then contacted Colin to say he wanted to become a priest. On

63. Antoine Monfat, Dix Années en Mélanésie (Lyon: Vitte, 1925), 48–51.
64. Épalle remained unsure of the validity of his profession because he had not done a full year of novitiate. Colin advised him to make his vows again in private after arriving in Valparaiso, which he did. He did it again in the hands of Bishop Pompallier, but then began to doubt if Pompallier was authorised to receive vows of Marists and he appealed to Colin. LRO 1, Doc 122, 2.
65. LMC 1, page 328. Colin was in Belley and Champagnat did not go there.
66. LO, Clisby 013, 1.
67. CS 1, Doc 31, 1. The request for three or four Brothers sounds like a free quote from Pompallier’s letter of 28 July from Valparaiso: ‘four priests and three Brothers’, LRO 1, Doc 18, 5. In the same letter Pompallier says he hopes to leave on 1 August. It is a pure coincidence that Colin makes it 10 August which is the day he in fact left. He cannot have had that information. It confirms that Colin did not keep letters on hand, often quoted from memory and did not look up things such as dates.
68. LMC 2, 171–2.
69. LMC 1, Doc 168.
70. LMC 2, 231–2.
10 June he spoke about it to Terraillon\textsuperscript{71} who advised Brother François Rivat, the acting Superior to let the Brother take leave of his parents as if departing for Oceania which would give François time to write to Champagnat in Paris. Champagnat was not convinced and upheld the original appointment for the missions. He wrote to Rivat to send Brother François-Régis to Lyon to a printer to pick up the trade before the departure. Then Colin overruled Champagnat. Under the circumstances he did not consider François-Régis a suitable candidate for the missions and he took him off the list. As to the priesthood, he let the Brother know that it was entirely up to himself to decide. If he wanted to change his ecclesiastical status for the priesthood he should leave the congregation and be dispensed of his vows.\textsuperscript{72} He seems to have left. There is no further mention of him in the records.

Another Brother, Marie-Augustin (Joseph) Drevet,\textsuperscript{73} born in August 1809, professed in 1835, was first appointed for the missions then taken off the list to make place for François-Régis and put back again when Colin intervened.

The second Brother was Élie-Régis (Étienne) Marin (or Marrin). He was born on 20 September 1809. A carpenter by trade, he must also have had some years at school. He joined the Marist Brothers in 1835. Within a year he was temporarily professed and on 9 October 1837 he made his perpetual profession. On 12 January 1839 he wrote from Valparaiso with such enthusiasm of the privilege of having been sent to the missions that we may conclude he had volunteered. It seems Father Colin hesitated about his selection for the missions.\textsuperscript{74}

Then there was Florentin (Jean-Baptiste) Françon. Born in 1815 in La Versanne (Loire). From his later success as a farmer in New Zealand we may conclude that he must have worked on the farm before joining the Brothers in 1835. He was professed together with Élie-Régis on 9 October 1837. He probably had no formal schooling other than what he received as a Brother in the Hermitage. He did not volunteer for the missions but was sent. He wrote a few years later to Brother François: ‘As you know, I left not by my own choice, but because I was sent’.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{71} CS 1, Doc 38.
\textsuperscript{72} LMC 1, Doc 197, l. CS 1, Doc 41, 3.
\textsuperscript{73} LMC 2, page 358. Ronzon, Frères Maristes, 35.
\textsuperscript{74} Ronzon, Frères Maristes, 22–23.
\textsuperscript{75} Ronzon, Frères Maristes, 30. Letter to François, 9 March 1842, quoted in Ronzon.
The selection of these four Brothers confirms that Marcellin Champagnat followed a different policy from Colin. Colin left the initiative to the men, and reserved to himself the judgment of their suitability and the final decision. Champagnat allowed men to volunteer, but did not hesitate to appoint someone who had not volunteered.

Later, after three months together on the ship, the priests were not happy about the way the Brothers had been selected. Especially if the Procure was to be entrusted to them it would be important to select them more carefully. One of the three (Florentin?) had told them he had just once mentioned Oceania, and was appointed without further ado. He regretted being on the way to Oceania.76

Money matters

On 13 January 1838 Colin wrote to Mr Meynis, the Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon, asking for a generous allocation. He was preparing to send four priests and two catechists in the course of the year. In fact they will leave, quoting Cardinal Fransoni, ‘as quickly as possible’.

Colin argued that he not only had to cover the costs of travelling, but that the best way of getting money to Mgr Pompallier was to entrust it to the missionaries. Meynis had read Pompallier’s letter from Valparaiso and knew, not only that Pompallier was running out of funds but also that he had not received the 8,700 francs that had been granted in May. ‘You know’, Colin could write, ‘what financial situation he must be in at present’. He urges that it would be a great advantage if the Propagation could make an advance on next year’s allocation ‘because you know how difficult it is to transfer money once the missionaries have left’77.

When, at the end of May 1838, Colin received Pompallier’s letter of October 1837 from Tahiti, he forwarded it to Mr. Meynis to support his application. On 8 June he wrote again. The Propagation would have preferred to wait with the subsidy until the end of the financial year, but Colin urged that without an advance on the allowance for 1838 it would be difficult to get the missionaries to New Zealand.78

76. Baty to Colin, 12 January 1939, APM 1404/20033. Pompallier too was not impressed: ‘they are of good will, but poorly trained and not too bright’, LRO 1, Doc 34, 17.
77. CS 1, Doc 27.
78. CS 1, Doc 37.
Where to go, and how?

By the time Colin had his second team appointed four months had passed since he got the letters from Valparaiso and he still knew no more than that Pompallier had redirected his planning towards Micronesia. Valparaiso was now off the list as a place for the Procure and Pompallier had advised against sending missionaries round Cape Horn. He had said the next group of missionaries could best travel via the Caribbean Sea and Mexico to Hawaii, where he was thinking of setting up the Procure, although he also mentioned the possibility of a Procure in California or Mexico.79 Not much to go on!

During Lent the Picpus missionary François Caret returned from Rome and met with Colin. At that moment Caret was already booked to leave in May from Bordeaux for Valparaiso. Not unlikely, Caret convinced Colin that, as nobody knew where Pompallier and his missionaries had gone to, Valparaiso was as good a place as any to find out. Colin asked him to arrange for the Marists to travel with him. Unfortunately, his ship turned out to be fully booked already. On 31 May 1838 Caret sailed on the Zélima with four priests and twelve Sisters of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts.80

Colin then got Archbishop de Pins to approach the Minister of the Navy and the Colonies, Claude Ducampe de Rosamel, to whom he had recently forwarded a letter from Pompallier. As Pompallier had suggested the Archbishop asked for passage on a Government vessel to Polynesia or at least to Valparaiso.81 Even after a follow-up letter the Ministry did not answer and nothing came of it.

On 19 May Colin wrote to Cardinal Fransoni to explain why no action had as yet been taken on the Cardinal’s urgent request to get the missionaries on the way. The second group had been appointed, three priests and three Brothers (‘catechists’) were ready to leave but the hope to receive more recent news about Bishop Pompallier’s whereabouts had made Colin put off the departure. However, he added, he had come to the conclusion that it did not make sense to wait much longer, and he had decided to send them as quickly as possible to Valparaiso, in the hope that they could find out more there. A first attempt, namely to have them travel with Fr. Caret has failed, Colin wrote, but he was now looking for another opportunity.

79. LRO 1, Doc 15, 5–6; Doc 17, 4 and Doc 18, 4.
80. Information thanks to Father Jean-Louis Schuester, SS.CC. Archives, Rome.
81. LRO 1, Doc 20, 5. CS 1, page 63, note 4 and Doc 37, 1.
Given the long time since news had come from Pompallier, one could not exclude the possibility that he had perished at sea. Colin mentioned this in as many words to the Cardinal and asked for the broadest possible faculties to allow the missionaries to cope with any eventuality. He proposed that Claude-André Baty be appointed Vicar Apostolic or Pro-Vicar in case anything untoward had happened. On 26 June, Rome granted the faculties as requested.

 Shortly after writing to Fransoni, Colin received Pompallier’s letter from Tahiti. As far as there at least, nothing had gone wrong. The Bishop’s enthusiastic descriptions of the newly converted Gambier Islands were a source of joy. But as to further information the letter was a disappointment. If anything, it added to the confusion. Colin now learned that, while in Tahiti, Pompallier had also given up hope of doing anything in Hawaii. He then had been looking again at Tonga, Samoa, Fiji and even New Zealand, without, as yet, losing sight of Micronesia. On the other hand, instead of Honolulu, Sydney was again in the picture as a possible base. In fact, the letter left it all very open. Pompallier now preferred the eastern route, around the Cape of Good Hope and Australia, without excluding the western one around Cape Horn. He heaped praise on Moerenhout in Tahiti and his readiness to help the missionaries who might still come his way.

 Half way through 1838, nearly a year and a half after the first Marist missionaries had left their mother country, Jean-Claude Colin knew only that they had come as far as Tahiti and had sailed on from there. Beyond that point, he had no idea where they were, nor indeed whether they were still alive.

 There had been good reasons to worry about the way things were going on the other side of the world. Propaganda in Rome had panicked when it learned that Pompallier was redirecting his activity away from Polynesia and Father Caret had got the Pope to redraw the missionary map of the Pacific. Rome felt that Colin underestimated the seriousness of the situation and looked in vain for a sense of urgency in Lyon. Colin was unruffled and took his time getting a follow-up team together, and when the team was ready he did not know where and how to send it on its way.

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82. CS 1, Doc 35, 3–4.
83. CS 1, page 64, note 1. CS 1, Doc 54, 5.
84. LRO 1, Doc 21. Dated 2 October 1837, the letter had not reached Colin when he wrote to Fransoni on 19 May 1838. He mentions it in his letter to Meynis of 8 June. CS, Doc 37, 1. Eight months!
85. LRO 1, Doc 21, 11–15.
Chapter 5
1838 Part 2: Still Worlds Apart

Problem solved

In October 1836, when Peter Chanel passed through Paris, he happened to meet with Mgr Ferdinand Donnet, a former classmate of Colin and Champagnat in Saint-Irénée, now Coadjutor Bishop of Nancy.¹ ‘Write to your Superior General’, he had said to Peter Chanel, ‘I am at his disposal.’² When shortly afterwards Donnet was appointed Archbishop of Bordeaux he offered the Marists the pilgrim shrine of Verdelais, on the River Garonne, upstream from Bordeaux. The Archbishop saw it as a parish ministry. Colin did not really want to accept parishes but it was a Marian pilgrimage, and it could be a suitable base for home missioners as well as a good place for Champagnat’s Teaching Brothers.

So far this had nothing to do with Oceania. However, from Le Havre Pompallier had already told Colin that Bordeaux was the port from which most French ships left for South America. The Rector of the Major Seminary there, Monsieur de Cambis, looked after mail to the Pacific for the Picpus Fathers and Bordeaux had been mentioned as a possible site for a procure. In the perspective of travelling to Oceania via Valparaiso, Verdelais would be useful for missionaries, mail and mission goods.³ It did not take long before the connection was made. The fact that Caret had left from Bordeaux would have helped.

On 3 June 1838 Father Colin wrote to the Archbishop and presented the Fathers Jean-Baptiste Chanut and Jean Balmet for an appointment to Verdelais.⁴ At the same time, Colin wrote to Father Convers, the former Principal of the Capucinière in Belley, who was preaching missions in the

1. OM 3, Doc 888
2. EC, Doc 53, 7.
3. LRO 1, Docs 7, 11 and 8, 17.
4. CS 1, Doc 36.
Diocese of Angoulême, to go to nearby Bordeaux and, apart from contacting the Archbishop in connection with Verdelais, look for a ship going to Valparaiso. Convers immediately found one: the Basque, and the booking was arranged.\(^5\) It really was not all that difficult! On 12 July Chanut presented himself in a letter to the Archbishop and alluded to the importance of a Marist house in Verdelais for the missions.\(^6\)

On 20 July, Colin could write to Cardinal Fransoni that the missionaries were now booked to leave from Bordeaux between 20 and 30 August. He introduced and recommended the three priests and supported their own request for more precise faculties.\(^7\)

Colin explained to Mr Meynis, the Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith, why he was still sending the men to Valparaiso: 'It is a route we have experience with and it keeps us in contact with the Picpus missionaries. For the time being it appears to be the safer thing to do, in spite of Mgr Pompallier's preference for Sydney'.\(^8\)

**Preparations**

Later in June Claude Baty and Maxime Petit travelled to Paris and walked unexpectedly in on Marcellin Champagnat in his room at the residence of the Foreign Missions of Paris, where Champagnat was trying to get Government recognition for his Congregation. Champagnat took Baty to the Ministry where they asked for letters of recommendation and applied for a grant to help them on their way. The Ministry enquired about them with Archbishop de Pins and on 30 June de Pins wrote a letter to vouch for the two priests and to support their request for a mission that, as he said, was of great importance for the religion and for France. He recalled the support that Bishop Pompallier had received two years earlier from the King and the Royal Family who were very conscious, he said, of the value that a French mission in those areas could have for the mother country.\(^9\)

As soon as Champagnat had returned to the Hermitage after his second journey to Paris, Colin asked him to make sure clothes and shoes

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5. Letter quoted in CS 1, Doc. 36, note 2.
6. CS 1, Doc 40, 3.
7. CS 1, Doc 42.
8. CS 1, Doc 37. Pompallier had explained from Tahiti that he had come to see Sydney as probably the best place for the Procure, but without being very definite about it. LRO 1, Doc 21, 11.
9. LMC 1, Doc 196. CS 1, Doc 39.
were readied for the three Brothers as departure could be imminent. All the time, nobody thought of doing one of the things Pompallier had insisted on so much from his very first letters: learn English!

**Taking leave**

Only of Father Jean-Baptiste Épalle we know something of the pain of saying good-bye. His mother had died earlier. His older brother Barthélémé was a priest in the Archdiocese of Lyon. After joining the Society of Mary in 1837, Jean-Baptiste volunteered and was appointed to Oceania in June 1838. Before leaving he went to stay a week with his old father but he put off the painful moment of telling his Dad he was leaving for the missions. The last evening Jean-Baptiste did tell him, but in such a gentle and cautious way that Dad did not immediately get the message. Still, he knew there was something wrong and in the early hours of the morning he at once understood and rushed half-clothed into his son’s bedroom. Jean-Baptiste stopped the emotional outburst by asking to be left alone a moment to dress. He then slipped down the stairs and jumped out of the window to avoid the creaking door. He went to the church to say Mass, where he was caught by his sister, warned by her own premonitions. While she went to call their father, he slipped out of the church and marched off, in the direction of Saint-Étienne. Witnesses later described him as a priest rushing off, on the way to anoint a dying parishioner.

**Writing letters**

As the last letter he had received was the one written in October 1837 from Tahiti, Colin still had no idea of what had happened to the first group of missionaries after their departure from there on the *Raiatea*. It looked as if the missionaries would have to leave with the gloomy prospect of searching all over the Pacific for their Bishop and their confreres. Still, wherever they were, Colin set to writing them each a personal letter. The one to Pierre Bataillon (the only one we have) was a dose of typical Coliniian spirituality:

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10. CS 1, Doc 41, 1.
11. LRO 1, Docs 7, 18 and 8, 3.
13. LRO 1, Doc 21.
14. CS 1, Doc 44. Servant mentions the one he got in LRO 1, Doc 39, 1. So did Chanel, EC,
How beautiful to work only for the glory of God, to live only for the salvation of souls. You must feel very humble at the thought of being in God’s hands the instrument of his mercies. Be so in his hands that they can work through you in all your ministry. Never consider the deprivations you suffer, as long as Jesus and Mary keep you in their hands. With them you lack nothing, with them there are no dangers. My dear brother, do not live, let Jesus and Mary live in you. Be with them at all times and nothing will be beyond you.

Use the opportunities you get to write to me from time to time. Do not fear to write to me of your problems, of your joys. (. . .) Whatever interests you, interests me. I want each and everyone of you to write to me of whatever goes wrong, of the dangers he may be in for body or soul. Are the spirit of the Society, the unity, the courage, the spirit of faith and of prayer maintained among you? Remain united and obedient to Mgr Pompallier.

I leave it to others to give you news of the country and to tell you of the blessings that God grants to the little Society of Mary. We are readying helpers to come to your aid and we do what we can to send you what you need.

The last paragraph is remarkable. Colin is anxious to be told everything, but in spite of the urgent requests of the Bishop and his missionaries (from Valparaiso and Tahiti) to be given news of the Society and of everything going on, he leaves that pointedly to others. Himself, he will not indulge in small talk but at least he has come to see the importance of news. He sticks to what he evidently sees as his own role: spiritual guidance.

Colin made sure the word went around that everyone was welcome to contribute mail. Marcellin Champagnat wrote to Marie-Nizier who also got a letter from the Brothers in the Hermitage. We can safely presume they wrote to Michel Colombon as well.

With the help of the Abbé Vuillod, of the neighbouring village of Attignat, Chanel’s mother wrote to her son a letter that unfortunately has not survived, and Chanel got a letter from Bishop Devie. We happen to

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15. LO, Clisby 011, 1. Clisby 012, 1.
16. EC, Doc 57, 1.
17. EC, Doc 56.
know there was a letter for Brother Joseph-Xavier Luzy from his family,\(^{18}\) for Servant from his family\(^{19}\) and from Terraillon,\(^{20}\) and letters for Bataillon from Étienne Séon and his former parishioners.\(^{21}\) There must have been many others, letters as well as gift parcels.

**The spiritual director**

To the parting missionaries Fr Colin wrote a lengthy letter, similar to the one he had addressed to the first group (additions to the earlier text and significant changes are printed in italics).\(^{22}\)

*May the grace and the peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the powerful protection of Mary, our good and tender mother, be with you and accompany you everywhere.*

*These are the good wishes that my heart makes for each of you and that it will renew every time at the foot of the sacred altars, as it does every day for your brothers who have opened up the way to Oceania for you and who call you to come and share with them the labours and the merits of the apostolate. With the help of the grace and the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the support that this divine Saviour never refuses to whoever dedicates himself without reserve to his service, with the powerful protection of Mary, you will be happy and safe of all danger, you will find everywhere a hundredfold of what you have left behind, your parents, your friends, your country. Anyway, is not the whole world home to the apostle who is consumed by the zeal for the salvation of souls, and who burns only from the desire to make his God known and to extend his reign? I said it to those who went ahead of you on the road you are going, and I cannot help repeating it, yes, it is not without a secret jealousy, I admit it, my well-beloved brothers, that I see you breaking with a holy courage all the bonds of flesh and blood in order to follow the voice that calls you, and*

\(^{18}\) LRO 1, Doc 23, 22.

\(^{19}\) LRO 1, Doc 41, 1.

\(^{20}\) LRO 1, Doc 40, 1.

\(^{21}\) LRO 1, Doc 43, 1.

\(^{22}\) CS 1, Doc 48. For the earlier letter see CS 1, Doc 4, above page 49.
carry the torch of the faith to the non-believing peoples of Oceania. Wish I could share your happiness, your pains and your labours. But I am not worthy of the grace of the apostolate and of martyrdom. Allow me at least to repeat some of the points of advice that, at their departure, I gave to your confreres whom you are about to rejoin. These points may be useful to you. At least they are a last proof of my concern and of my heartfelt love.

1° Never rely on self—neither in adversity nor prosperity— but solely on Jesus and Mary. The more you trust in God and distrust the own self, the more you will attract the light and graces of heaven. The man of faith who places his confidence in God alone is unshakable in the midst of great dangers; he is neither rash nor fainthearted. His device is: ‘When I am weak, I can do all things in him who strengthens me’. Remember always that the measure of your faith and of your trust in God alone will be the measure of success of your mission.

2° Live in the presence of the Saviour. It is on his behalf that you are leaving. It is He who sends you. “As the Father sends me, so I send you”. He will be with you everywhere as in the past he was with his apostles. Yes, my brothers, let this insight of faith get into the depth of your mind: he will be with you in your travels, on land, on sea, in the calm as in the tempest, in health as in sickness; if you are hungry or thirsty, he will be hungry or thirsty with you. It is he who shall be received where you are, persecuted when you are and rebuffed when you are. See him everywhere, I adjure you for your own happiness and security. See him at all times, in all events good or bad, see him intimately united to you, sharing your work, your sufferings, your joys, your consolations. Give him the glory of your actions, disregard yourselves as useless instruments. Constantly thinking of him will be the source of your strength, of your peace and of all the enlightenment that you will need sorely at every moment.
3° In persecution and in danger, in privations, in temptations and in illness, do not argue with yourself, do not look inward. If you do, desolations, regret and sadness will get the better of you and you will feel your courage and your virtue wither away. Without reasoning or inner reflection, turn your eyes and your thoughts immediately towards Jesus and Mary, towards heaven and the sufferings of Our Lord. I urgently recommend you this practice. You will soon feel how important it is.

4° Be men of prayer. Converting souls is more than raising the dead. Such things are not done without prayer. Pray continually for the conversion of the heathens. Offer your actions each day for that intention, and one day a week of your own choice, you can offer all the good actions in each of the branches of the Society for the same intention and for your own needs. This will attract very precious graces upon you.

5° I do not want to speak of the confidence you must have in Mary, or of your zeal to make her known and honoured. You are her children; can you forget it? It is under her banner that you depart. See her always walking in front and in your midst. However busy you are, let no day pass without saying at least a few decades of the rosary. Place every island you may set foot on under the protection of Mary and if you can, leave there a medal or a picture of this Queen of Heaven as a sign that the island belongs to her and that you consecrate it to her.

6° ‘Woe the solitary’, says the Holy Spirit, and I will not hide it from you, my dear confreres, especially in Polynesia loneliness will be dangerous. I would surely fail in my duties, and leave out an essential point of my tender concern for all that touches upon your spiritual security, if I did not explicitly recommend you to avoid loneliness. Remember that only urgent need will allow you to go out or to be alone, especially in the beginning of your work. In all other situations be conscientious to the point of scrupulosity to be always at
least two together, even if you visit a sick person or only go for a walk. This precaution will shelter you from many a danger.

7° As much as you can and as circumstances permit, be unassuming, modest, poor, but clean in your clothing and you external attire. Nothing is more conform the spirit of our Society than modest simplicity and being unpretentious in outward appearance and behaviour.

8° Be united, my dear confreres, and let there be no contention among you. You are members of one body and Jesus Christ is its Head. The joys, the troubles, the misery of your brothers are those of all of you.²³ It is this union that will show that you are humble of heart, apostles of a God who is all love, Deus caritas est, and truly children of Mary. Do not forget there is merit in following the advice of others, even against your own judgment, whenever God’s glory is not at stake.

9° What shall I say of obedience, the virtue that, in the words of our Constitutions, leads by a straight road to heaven, quae recta via ducit ad coelum? If you are men of obedience, you will surely gain victories, it is the Holy Spirit that says so, and I do not hesitate to add that you will preserve your soul from all danger and that you will make sure of your salvation. When you reach Mgr. Pompallier place yourselves under his paternal hands so that he can give you your assignment according to God’s will. You will look upon him not only as your Bishop but also as your Superior. Until that moment, obey each other as brothers, do nothing without listening to each other, and ask each other permission so as not to deprive yourselves of the merits of obedience.

10° Do not seek your own interests, but only those of Jesus Christ, be of a pure and right intention. Be always full of respect for other religious and other priests, look upon the good they do as if it was your own, be considerate to them in everything by your honesty, your modesty and your humility.

²³. According to a text correction of Mayet, Mémoirs Mayet 5, page 362.
11° Offer frequently the merits of the actions and virtues of Mary to Jesus Christ, and offer to God the Father the infinite merits of his divine Son. This practice will obtain you and your pagans manifold graces.

12° Use every opportunity to give us news about you and interesting things for publication in the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith. Letters with this material will go unsealed directly to the Superior General of the Society in Lyon. Personal letters for your parents or friends can also be enclosed in the parcel for the superior.

The Propagation of the Faith asks for the number of adult baptisms, children’s baptisms, catechumens, Easter communions, and the number of establishments. They like to get details on the way of life, the customs and the productive activities of the people to whom you are sent.

I finish how I began. I wish you peace, unity, the love of Jesus and Mary.

Be courageous, do not let fear and unrest enter your hearts.

*I have the honour to be, with the most tender love, my dear Fathers and Brothers, your very humble and obedient servant,*

Colin.

Colin appears to tone down here his former rule that all correspondence should pass through him. What he does not modify is what he had decided on Bishop Pompallier being the Religious Superior of the missionaries. The sending of the second group was a chance to review the situation but whatever had been his original motives, nothing indicates that he even considered a change.

Compared to the letter of October 1836 the most striking difference lies in paragraph six,24 raising the question what caused Colin to become even more anxious about missionaries being alone? The only thinkable

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24. Claude Otto, ‘Plutôt trois que deux, seuls jamais!’ in *Forum Novum*, 1 (1990), 280, ascribes the change to letters from the missions about missionaries being put alone. That cannot be the case. When Colin wrote this letter, he had not received any mail from the missions yet! The last letters he had got were from Tahiti.
reason is his contact with Fr Caret, earlier that year. It cannot be a coincidence that in the only direct mention we have of this meeting (by Colin himself in 1846) he recalled: ‘Father Caret, the Picpus priest, said that for the priests the dangers come after the conversion of those people rather than before.’25 The topic had come up between them.

**Departure**

When the missionaries were on the point of departure, somebody in Lyon suggested to follow the example of the Foreign Missionaries of Paris. Recalling the words of the Prophet: *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings*, those who stayed behind would kiss the feet of those leaving.26 Most Marists considered that too dramatic. Not our style! Colin heard about it later and agreed: keep it simple and fraternal!27

On Wednesday 8 August 1838 Fr Jean-Baptiste Chanut took the coach to Bordeaux to take up his appointment in Verdelais, Maxime Petit and Jean-Baptiste Épalle travelled with him.28 They arrived on Saturday and were received by Monsieur de Cambis at the Major Seminary. On Monday de Cambis accompanied them on the steamer to Garonelle, a landing place on the River Garonne from where pilgrims used to walk up to Verdelais.29 They stayed with the parish priest.30 Petit and Épalle returned to Bordeaux to meet Baty.

Baty stayed another couple of weeks in Lyon and Colin wrote from Belley a personal letter to encourage him.31 He was the Superior of the group and in case something had happened to the first group, he would be in charge of the mission.32 Before leaving Baty answered with an emo-

27. CS, Doc 1, 80.
28. They became friends and kept writing at each other. From Valparaiso, 15 February 1839, and from New Zealand, 10 November 1840, LRO 1, Doc 77. The letters from the second group during the voyage are not published in *Lettres reçues d’Océanie* (LRO), but accessible as manuscripts in APM 1404/20033.
29. Information from Father Henk van der Wielen, SM, for many years the parish priest of Verdelais.
30. CS 1, Doc 46.
31. Colin’s letter has not been found.
32. CS 1, Doc 47. Colin had asked Rome to appoint Baty to Pro-Vicar, or even Vicar Apostolic, in case Pompallier had come to grief. As far as we know Rome had not taken up the suggestion. However, even without any official instruction it was clear Baty
tional letter of farewell: ‘(. . .) You tell us not to let our courage dwindle. Mine is as strong as ever. (. . .) I have straightened out my conscience as if I were going to die for sure.’ On Sunday 26 August he left Lyon with the three Brothers. They arrived in Bordeaux on Wednesday and had a look at their ship, the Basque. Loading was nearly finished and the ship was on the point of moving to Pouillac, near the mouth of the River Gironde. The missionaries received a lot of help from the Superior of the Marie Thérèse Sisters and from a Catholic businessman, Monsieur Fresquet.

As Archbishop Donnet planned to go to Verdelais for the installation of Father Chanut on Sunday 2 September, Baty and Épalle went there as well. Petit and the three Brothers remained in Bordeaux. There were plenty of bright ideas on what last minute purchases could be useful, but Baty as superior and Petit as bursar held the purse-strings. Perhaps because of that there was a bit of friction between the priests and the Brothers. They had never lived together in one community before.

Shortly after Baty left, Colin received Pompallier’s letter from Sydney that put an end to all the uncertainty. He rushed the letter (or a rapidly made copy) to Bordeaux. It caught the men after they had boarded already. Thus, only on the point of leaving, they found out where they had to go! They now knew that Bataillon and Luzy were on Wallis, Chanel and Delorme on Futuna. They now knew that Pompallier, Servant and Colombon had reached Sydney and would be in New Zealand. The new missionaries also understood that London–Sydney was definitely the only route for the future, but obviously the present arrangements could not be changed. Baty was relieved and grateful: ‘We received the letter of Mgr Pompallier that you have been so kind to forward to us. It has given us great pleasure. We have blessed God for the protection he has given to our confreres, we are all anxious to join them and share their labours.’

would as superior of the second group have to respond adequately to any eventuality.

33. How could a letter sent from Sydney in December that would normally take four months, arrive only in September? After discovering and proclaiming the advantages of Sydney, Pompallier seemingly did not make use of them, even for this important message. The letter carries no postmark.

34. From Pouillac, 7 September 1838. APM, 1404/20033.
Money matters

On 20 July Colin could tell Fransoni that the Propagation of the Faith had given 33,000 francs over the financial year 1837 and 30,000 for the year 1838. A total allocation of 63,000 francs. This was to cover both the travelling expenses for the second group and the allowance for Bishop Pompal-lier and the mission.35

Perhaps recalling the lost 8,700 francs, the directors of the Propagation proposed to give the missionaries 50,000 francs in hand and to keep 13,000 in reserve. Colin agreed.36

When the last four missionaries were about to leave, the Propagation of the Faith handed the 50,000 francs to Pierre Colin who as Superior of Puylata acted as General Bursar. Pierre Colin deposited the money in a bank and got the bank to write out a personal cheque to the bursar of the group, Maxime Petit. Baty carried the cheque and passed it to Petit. Four days before their departure not all bills had come in yet, but Baty reported that they had spent 21,700 francs and reckoned that by the time they would reach Valparaiso, their funds would be down to 43,000 francs.37

Handling the large cheque proved not as easy as they had thought. By some sort of misunderstanding the cheque stipulated that it could be cashed only in Paris. The bank in Bordeaux wanted to charge Petit 5% on the 50,000 francs for the days it would take to forward the cheque to Paris and get the endorsement back. Petit decided to take only part of the money in cash and leave the rest with Fresquet who would deposit it in a bank. The ship’s owner and the captain gave Petit a cheque for the same amount, to be paid out in Valparaiso. They would then charge 5% for the time it would take to send the cheque back to Bordeaux and have it refunded by Fresquet. At first sight this might look a serious loss, but as Maxime pointed out to Pierre Colin, for the same number of days the same money was gaining an interest in Bordeaux and with a bit of luck one could even make a profit! Lending money for interest was considered immoral in the Catholic theology of the time and the theologians at the Seminary where the missionaries lodged, were horrified. They saw Maxime Petit heading for eternal damnation. For a businessman like Fresquet it was the most natural thing to do. The Rector of the Seminary, Monsieur de Cambis, sid-

35. CS 1, Doc 42, 1.
36. CS 1, Doc 43, 4.
37. From Pouillac, 7 September 1838. APM, 1404/20033. It means they had received more and large gifts on top of the 50,000 from the Propagation of the Faith.
ed with his staff, but granted that Petit could have special graces of state, allowing him to make a responsible decision! Petit suggested to Pierre Colin that if the Superior General disapproved of his solution, they could ask Fresquet to take up the deposit. Because of all the fuss Petit missed the party in Verdelais, but when he finally got there, Baty and Épalle put his mind at rest and agreed with what he had done.38

On Tuesday 11 September 1838,39 at eight o’clock in the morning, the Basque sailed out of the Gironde into the Atlantic Ocean, heading for Valparaiso. Apart from the six Marist missionaries the ship carried about forty passengers, men, women and children. Many of them were practising Catholics, happy to have priests on board, and to attend Sunday Mass whenever the weather permitted. One was the Marquis de Larrea, the Ecuadorian Ambassador to the Holy See, to Rome and to France, a widower with two children.

### The voyage

Before reaching the Equator the Basque was becalmed for a time and later went through two violent storms. One squall became very bad during the night and a sailor fell overboard. The search went on all night and till eight in the morning, but without result. For the rest they had favourable winds, often making two leagues (ie, about 11 kilometers) an hour for days on end. On 20 September they sailed closely past Madeira. Brother Élie was the only one to be seriously seasick. Baty admitted having felt a bit sick at times, but never to the point of vomiting. He enjoyed the sailing, and grew poetical about the small white caps of the waves around the ship, comparing them to lambs in a fertile meadow. He described with pleasure the dolphins playing around the ship, the flying fish and the whales blowing close to the Basque.

On 18 October they passed the Equator and Neptune gave the priests a special dispensation to cross the Line without the usual baptism. The voyage was not without excitement. One day a fire broke out in the galley that had women and children screaming. Another time a row broke out between some young fellows and a married man about his wife. The Officers and the Ambassador sided with the man but most of the passengers

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38. Petit to Pierre Colin, 8 September 1838 (postmark), APM, 1404/20033. Cf Exodus 22: 25. The ‘grace of state’ is a theological nicety, assuming one gets special graces and enlightenment for the work one has to do.

were against the Captain. The pious Marists were thoroughly shocked at the shouting and the swearing that went on.

On the latitude of the Falkland Islands they had some very fierce storms, with huge waves that threatened to swamp the ship and water got into the cabins so they had to bail them out. Épalle quoted psalm 22: ‘Though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me’, and assured Colin later that he slept soundly through the bad nights. When they got to the feared Cape of Horn, not only did they happily sail along in fine quiet weather, it did not even get really cold. Experienced sailors had never seen the like of it, and the Basque could sail close enough to the land for the passengers to see the mountains of the Cape.40

Maxime Petit showed himself a promising missionary. He managed to give catechism to the sailors and two of them made their First Communion. He spent a lot of time with the Ambassador, who told him of the lamentable state of the Church in Ecuador. On the one hand good and pious people, thirsting for instruction in the Faith, and longing to receive the sacraments; on the other hand a poorly educated clergy, the large majority not living the state of celibacy and especially during the carnivals misbehaving grossly. They insisted on generous stipends, for instance Mass stipends of one piaster (4.50 francs) as compared to one franc in France. Many people were deprived of the sacraments because they could not afford them. What Ecuador needed were good French priests, and the Ambassador intended to write to Father Colin. Petit urged Colin to give an eventual request from Ecuador serious consideration. It could also be very useful, he added, as a supporting base for the missions in the Pacific, as a source of vocations and of financial support.41

Valparaiso

On 12 December 1838, after ‘three months and a day’, as Baty counted, the Basque sailed into the harbour of Valparaiso. A very fast voyage indeed. The Picpus Fathers must have seen the Tricolour and two of them came out in a small boat to meet them. Like the first group eighteen months earlier, the Marists were fraternally received, ‘as if we were of their own’.

40. Baty to Colin, 16 January 1839, APM 1404/20033 and Élie-Régis to Champagnat, 12 January 1839, LO, Clisby 009.
There was no mail waiting for them, nor did they expect it after such a fast voyage. They enjoyed the hospitality of the Picpus Fathers who refused to accept any remuneration. The Brothers gave a hand to the builders putting up a convent for the Sisters who had arrived in late August with Caret.

The stories that the Marists had picked up from the Ecuadorian Ambassador were confirmed when they saw the splendid work of their Picpus hosts among the local people: baptising children that the parents could not afford to have baptised by their own priests, confessing laity and priests alike, even running a language school. The only thing the Picpus Fathers were not allowed to do was bless marriages to help couples living in irregular situations. People were full of praise for the French priests. Baty exulted: ‘Poor America! May God preserve France, the glory of Christendom, the glory of the priesthood!’42

Jean-Baptiste Épalle renewed his vows all by himself before the crib, during Christmas night. Colin had overlooked authorising someone officially to receive the vows, but it did not worry Épalle too much: ‘I trust the Council of Trent will not mind’.43

On 12 January 1839 Baty wrote a first letter to Colin and a second one four days later. Épalle and Petit joined in and the mail went with the Charles Adolph, on the point of sailing for Bordeaux. Fr Colin had asked Baty to make copies of any letter and send them by another ship. Dutifully Baty sent a third letter a week later, mostly repeating what he had told in the earlier ones.

The Marists were well received by the Commander of the French Naval Station, Captain de Villeneuve, and by another French captain who happened to be in port. They went to visit them several times and did what they could to develop good relations with the Navy officers. De Villeneuve showed a letter from Pompallier but they already knew most of its content. The missionaries could only confirm what Pompallier had found, namely that few ships went from Chile to New Zealand, and only in certain seasons. They agreed that communications between France and the Western Pacific should in the future only go via Sydney. Although Caret would have brought the Roman decree with him that allowed the Picpus Fathers to extend their activities further into the Western Pacific, there is not the slightest hint of it in the letters from the Marists. As the situation had changed radically, the Picpus Fathers must have agreed among themselves not to bring up the subject.

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42. Baty to Colin, 12 January 1839, APM 1404/20033.
43. Épalle to Colin, 14 January 1839, APM 1404/20033.
Colin receives the first letters from the missions

Some time in October 1838, a month after the departure of the second group of missionaries, Colin received Pompallier’s letter of 14 May, written in the Bay of Islands after the visit of the Héroïne. In his Sydney letter the Bishop had written: ‘This is what I would like: one priest to join Chanel, one for Bataillon, four priests and two Brothers for Rotuma and Pohnpei, and four priests with two Brothers for New Zealand.’ Now, in New Zealand, his dreams have expanded. He now needs ten priests and seven brothers for New Zealand, two priests for Wallis and Futuna, two priests and one Brother for Pohnpei. Rotuma is not mentioned here, but a page later it is. As often is the case, Pompallier seems to use figures mostly for their rhetorical effect.

Pompallier’s first letter from his mission field gave Colin a lot to think about, and he shared his views with the Marist community in Belley. Fortunately, the faithful Mayet was present and his notes give us valuable insights in Colin’s thinking at the time. Even when pressed by the urgent requests of Pompallier and Fransoni, Colin did not take the initiative to invite this or that man for Oceania. He organised prayers and waited for volunteers for the third group. The Blessed Virgin would surely choose her missionaries and inspire them to come forward.

As to the 20,000 francs that Pompallier needed to buy a schooner he said: ‘That money does not worry me. The Blessed Virgin will provide it: if she wants the goal, she will provide the means.’

For the first time we hear Colin reflecting on the mission in a wider perspective. He speaks of the Christian community founded by the Picpus missionaries in the Gambier Islands and calls it a small Christian republic comparable to the Reductions of the Jesuits in Paraguay. The small communities on the islands of Polynesia lend themselves to this approach. It is easily done (très facile), he says. In New Zealand the model is not appro-

44. LRO 1, Doc 24. Cf above page 110. In contrast to the Sydney letter, that took eight months (from December to the first days of September) the first letter from New Zealand, sent by the Mississippi, a French whaler, did it in three to four months which was not unusual via the Indian Ocean. Servant had not written to Colin on that occasion, but he had written to his parents (LRO 1, Doc 25) and to two friends (LRO 1, Docs 26 and 27). These letters passed through Colin’s hands and it was understood he would read them.
45. LRO 1, Doc 22, 5.
46. LRO 1, Doc 24, 7.
47. The notes on this important conference are in the Mémoires Mayet, 1, 614–6. They are published in CS 1, Doc. 52.
propriate, he explains, because of the large scale presence of Europeans and the commercial activities that the Maoris become involved in.

Where did Colin pick up this for him rather unusual strategic thinking? The story of the Jesuit Reductions may have been part of the Church history taught in the seminaries of the time. Contact with Jesuits in Lyon is not impossible, although there are no indications of it in the documents. The Reductions had recently received a casual mention in the Annals of the Propagation, but nothing more. Among the books that Colin regularly used, there does not seem to be anything to explain these insights.

The religious ideal of the Picpus missionaries, says John Garrett, was ‘the assembling of non-christian populations into Reductions (villages gathered together around a nucleus of priests who followed a religious rule). The forest Reductions of the Jesuits in Paraguay established their general model for the small islands of the Pacific’. If this had been indeed the way the Picpus missionaries looked at that time upon their work, one would expect them to have spoken of it in those terms to their first Marist visitors. One would then have expected Pompallier or Chanel to allude to it from Tahiti, or Servant later on from New Zealand, but in none of their enthusiastic accounts of the visit to the Gambier mission, it gets a mention. The more likely scenario is that the idea comes from Father Caret, whom the first Marist group never met. Caret could very well have picked it up in Rome and when he met with Father Colin after his return to France, it would have been another topic in their discussions.

Colin’s talk to the community of *la Capucinière* in Belley contains another remark that does not ring a Colinian tone. He spoke of the need to form a local clergy in due time ‘because missionaries cannot be everywhere’. ‘However’, he adds; ‘there are countries, China for one, where indigenous priests do not succeed, although they are very pious.’ This last remark again confirms the suspicion that Colin had recently talked with

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50. Garrett, *Among the Stars*, 88. Garrett ascribes this ideal to the Picpus missionaries of the time. What this attribution is based on, he does not say.
51. In the Introduction to Laval’s book on Mangareva (page X), Maurice Desmedt quotes an article of a certain P. Lesson in the *Revue d’Orient*, 1844, and in *l’Univers*, 1846, that also alludes to the Paraguay Reductions, however, no mention of the Reductions has been found in Laval’s own text. It all goes to conclude that Garrett’s statement has little foundation in the documentary evidence. The idea probably became common coinage only in later years.
52. CS 1, Doc 52, 5.
somebody who at least had discussed foreign missions and mission policy with well-informed people in the Church. Caret again?

**Pompallier, Colin and Propaganda**

As soon as Colin received Pompallier’s letter of 14 May 1838, he had a copy made and forwarded it on 10 November to Cardinal Fransoni in Rome with a covering letter of his own. He expressed his intention to send another eight or ten priests in 1839. He underlined Pompallier’s need for a small ship and thanked the Cardinal for the faculties the last group of missionaries received in August, just before their departure.53 He did not mention Pompallier’s remark that, if the Society did not have the manpower, Rome could be asked for another solution. However, Pompallier had also written to Fransoni himself and expressed the need for more missionaries in the most vivid terms, adding: ‘If Propaganda College in Rome could give my mission a few of those good men that it has in abundance, what benefit it would mean for the flock that would then, I trust, soon know Jesus Christ, their true shepherd.’ He also mentioned a Mgr Palotti, director of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, whom he had befriended in Rome, and who had shown a great interest in the new mission. Pompallier suggested that a copy of the present letter might be forwarded to Palotti. Due to internal problems in Palotti’s Society, nothing came of it.54

Propaganda must have received the Bishop’s letter at about the same time as Colin did, and without wasting any time (10 November) the Secretary, Mgr Ignazio Cadolini, wrote to Colin. With fine diplomatic ambiguity (he had not yet received the copy, and thus did not know that the bishop had mentioned the same thing to Colin as well) he told Colin that Pompallier had urgently asked for ‘other workers’, leaving it open whether this meant just ‘more missionaries’, or ‘other’, that is, non-Marist missionaries. Less diplomatically the Secretary wrote: ‘Even though I am fully convinced that, with your characteristic zeal, you will do your utmost to respond to the desires of the good Bishop, I consider it my duty to unite my requests to his, and that you will do everything possible to rush to the aid of the Bishop new missionaries who await the rich harvest you mention yourself.’55 Propaganda was not going to be rushed into another panic decision, as it had done under the influence of Caret the year

53. CS 1, Doc 54.
55. CS 1, Doc 55.
before, but it surely looks as if Pompallier’s impatience had made a better impression in Rome than Colin’s relaxed management.

**On the other side of the world**

While Propaganda Fide in Rome and Father Colin in France looked towards the future of the missions and the second group of missionaries made its way over the Atlantic Ocean and around Cape Horn, an occasion presented itself in September 1838 to the missionaries in New Zealand to send mail to France. Servant had made another copy of Pompallier’s letter of 14 May. The Bishop added some notes and wrote a new letter dated 14 September 1838. He added a letter for his mother and one to the parish priest in Vourles. Servant added an eight-page letter for Colin, dated 16 September.\(^56\)

There was good news to tell. About thirty Maori tribes, from more than a hundred kilometres around, led by influential chiefs, had shown an interest in being instructed in the Catholic Faith. Pompallier knew enough of the language now to give instructions, compose a summary of the catechism and translate the prayers. A few people had received baptism.\(^57\)

However, his financial situation was precarious. He was already 1500 francs in debt and dared not raise any more loans. Selling off mission goods would make a bad impression. It was an embarrassing situation. Europeans as well as Maoris did not know what to make of a Catholic Bishop living in poverty and in debt. It was harmful for the status Pompallier felt he needed to have in front of the Maori chiefs he was dealing with. People had donated materials for a church, but he did not have the money to build it.\(^58\)

For lack of money Pompallier was unable to go and visit the missionaries he had left behind on the islands of Wallis and Futuna. An additional reason however, he wrote, was that he could not leave Father Servant a long time by himself. Servant did all right with good-willing people but he was part-deaf and could not hold his own if confronted with a hostile opponent.\(^59\) Evidently, relations between the two were not good.

The two letters show that Pompallier was under severe stress. ‘Nearly two years since I sailed out of Le Havre and no sign of life, no help!’ ‘If this

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56. The letters to Madame Solichon and the parish priest of Vourles have not been found.
57. LRO 1, Doc 29, 4.
58. LRO 1, Doc 29, 2 and Doc 30, 1.
59. LRO 1, Doc 29, 2.
goes on much longer I shall be obliged to leave by the first passing frigate and go to Rome to complain to the Holy See of the way I have been abandoned.’ He was becoming suspicious of people. ‘I told you in an earlier letter’, he wrote to Colin, ‘to send mail to a Mister Turner in the Bay of Islands. Please, do not send him anything. He told me he is leaving. The heretics hold the post-office. Do not send anything except with the next group of missionaries or with a French Government vessel’.\(^{60}\) As the nasty remark on Servant shows, the strain on Pompallier’s mind was not good for the way he related to his two companions.

Equally significant is that in two letters to Colin (on 4 and 14 September) there is not a word of the new place they had moved to. As already arranged with Bishop Polding, Thomas Poynton had given a plot of land to the Church in Papakawau, three hours by boat down the harbour from Totara Point and Pompallier had a small house built there for himself and his companions. There was a larger room to celebrate Mass for the local Catholics, and three small rooms. As they moved by boat down the Hokianga they were accompanied by Irish and English Catholics as well as by canoes with Maoris of different tribes. On 29 June he had said Mass for the first time in the new house and given his first sermon in Maori. Some tribes had built rest-houses in Papakawau so they could stay there and be instructed in the Faith.\(^ {61}\)

Father Servant’s eight pages to the Superior General show no strain or stress, whereby we must keep in mind that Pompallier insisted on reading all outgoing mail. Still, Servant cheerfully wrote of the good reception by the Catholics as well as the Maoris of the area and of the new house in Papakawau where they had installed a chapel and could say Mass. He told at length of the attack of 22 January, and how they were defended by the European people. In the end the Maoris had said they did not want to get involved in the disputes between Europeans. ‘Let them sort out their own differences’.\(^ {62}\)

Pompallier and Servant had enjoyed their first visits to Maori villages in the interior where they were received amicably and were presented with a large pig. He enjoyed telling Colin of his attempt to speak of the Blessed Trinity with the help of his three-cornered hat.\(^ {63}\)

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60. LRO 1, Doc 30, 1 and Doc 29, 3.
62. LRO 1, Doc 31, 7.
63. LRO 1, Doc 31, 17.
On 12 October another French warship entered the Bay of Islands. It was the *Venus*, under the command of Captain Dupetit-Thouars, who on orders of the French Government, had tried to intervene in July in Hawaii in favour of the right of French citizens to settle in Hawaii. The presence of British and American men-of-war had cramped his style and he had achieved nothing. In August, in Tahiti, there had been no disturbing foreigners around and he had succeeded.

Dupetit-Thouars sent a message across to Pompallier who was away from Papakawau visiting villages. When he came home he found the message and walked to the Bay of Islands where he was the guest on board of the *Venus* for two days. The Captain accompanied the Bishop on a formal visit to the British Resident, Mr James Busby. Together they paid an official call on the local chief Rewarewa and other chiefs in their *pah* (fortified village). Dupetit-Thouars admired the way Pompallier dealt with Rewarewa: 'It was obvious that the chief was not accustomed to receive the like, nor to be treated by the whites with so much benevolence and honour.'

The Captain and the Bishop also visited a settler, Mr. Roberton, who gave Pompallier a plot of land for a chapel from the 360 acres he had bought from Rewarewa for a shilling an acre. The Captain certified the transfer of title. When Pompallier left the ship, he again was honoured with nine volleys to underline that he belonged to a powerful nation just as able and willing as Great Britain to look after its citizens.

Realising that with the return of the *Raiatea* to its owner in Tahiti, it would be known there that he was living on the Hokianga River, Pompallier wrote to Moerenhout to tell him that ships coming into his direction should not enter the dangerous river mouth of the Hokianga, but go to the Bay of Islands and send a message overland.

Futuna

Peter Chanel stayed about a month with Bataillon on Wallis and returned to Futuna on 27 April 1838. Warfare was gradually abating (28.04) al-

67. Jore, *L’Océan*, volume 2, 86. The visit of the *Venus* is not mentioned in any of Pompallier’s letters. He did not write at all between September 1838 and August 1839.
68. Baty to Colin, 18 April 1839 from Tahiti, APM, 1404/20033.
69. The following information is taken mostly from the diary of Peter Chanel for 1838, EC, pages 319–403. Dates in brackets.
though there still were occasional threats of violence (30.04). The Futunans had evidently become used to the presence of Peter Chanel and Marie Nizier Delorme on their island. They were not the only Europeans. There was Thomas Boag, who lived mostly with the missionaries and an Englishman, Jones, who had a small schooner and employed an English sailor, Georges. The schooner made occasional trips to Wallis, which allowed Bataillon and Chanel to exchange letters (30.08). It occasionally even went as far as Fiji. Sometimes the diary mentions other Europeans without information as to who they were.

After the cyclone of February a new house had been built for the missionaries, but due to the fighting in March it took a long time to finish. In May they moved in, but it was not completed until late June (23.06). Chanel then asked and got permission to build a second house on the other side of the island, among the Singave people (13.08). Most of the time the missionaries got plenty of food from Niuliki, or other islanders, often the nicest fish, and the choices bits of pork (25.07).

Even when they still lived in a corner of Niuliki’s house, the two used to get up very early to say their prayers and celebrate Mass before youngsters would came in to chew the kava roots. Everyone apparently felt free to move in and out of the missionaries’ house at any time (13.07). On their walks over the island Chanel and Nizier often stayed the night in different people’s houses. Chanel notes he sometimes had to listen to coarse or obscene stories, which means he understood more of the language than he admitted (31.07)!

When Niuliki went to live on the North side of the island, Chanel too had a place built there, in a place called Poi. When the first Mass was said there, Niuliki told the people of the area to attend. He gave the good example and Chanel was edified by their respectful behaviour (06.05). They obviously understood that whatever the missionaries were doing somehow connected up with their own feelings for the sacred. The silence was broken only by a few crying babies whom Chanel called his choirboys (06.04). People loved to assist at ceremonies, listen to Chanel and Nizier singing, and gaze with admiration at the colourful pictures with which the little chapel was decorated. Seeing the missionaries make the sign of the cross, some imitated them. Two girls took the initiative of decorating the picture of Our Lady with flowers (18.07).

The two missionaries had soon taken to the local kava culture. They took it first thing in the morning with the King or with the neighbours (11.06) and on every thinkable occasion, several times a day. Like the Futunans, they received and donated kava roots whenever custom demand-
ed it (28.04), and accepted an offering of kava in honour of their God (09.08). They often attended and enjoyed the dances, that could go on for a good part of the night (30.09).

Especially during the Southern Winter, whaling ships called or came in view. Every time they caused great excitement and had people rushing to possible landing sites to sell food, fruits or pigs. Sometimes the two missionaries bought things too. Chanel shows his anger at the unfair trading that sometimes went on, when sailors paid with worthless trinkets for valuable food, and obtained girls for guns and powder. One girl that the sailors got onto their ship did not like their behaviour and jumped overboard (22.05). Chanel was frustrated at not knowing enough English or Futunan to tell them what he thought of it all. When Marie Nizier heard that the whaler John Adams of Nantucket was on the way to New Zealand, Chanel tried to send a letter or a message to Pompallier in case he was there (31.08) but nothing came of it.
Life on Futuna had its charms. After a trip with Jones’ schooner around the island Chanel wrote with admiration of the beauty of Futuna and walking across the island he admired the carefully tended taro plantations (09.06). He enjoyed taking part in extended picnics on the uninhabited island Alofi, admiring the luxuriant vegetation, and looking at the remnants of earlier occupation. He enjoyed the plentiful fruits and foods as well as the crayfish, the crab and fish they caught (25.07). He tried his hand at catching eel, but dropped his keys in the process. Once the two lost count of the days and ate meat on a Friday (20.07).

Later in the year Jones returned from a trip with the news that in Fiji a French warship had bombarded villages in reprisal for the murder of a French captain. Chanel regretted the use of violence, but also considered it a useful lesson that would bear its fruit on all the islands. He hoped the ships would call at Futuna but they did not (12.12).

The two missionaries quickly got into the habit of constantly exchanging presents, a custom at the heart of Pacific cultures (18.06). Pieces of cloth were always welcome, and once he made Niuliki happy with a pair of underpants (30.06). The Futunans liked Nizier and the many useful services he rendered. He often shaved the King and members of the royal family (19.09) and was grumbled at when the King’s brother-in-law found the knife not sharp enough (21.07). He discovered how to turn nails into iron fish-hooks that were very popular (11.10). His talent for tailoring came in very useful when he made a dress for the King’s granddaughter (08.08). The American James, who had managed to get himself a Futunan wife, brought her along for Nizier to cut her a dress, which he did (10.11).

The two missionaries caused an uproar when they broke a taboo by putting up a latrine behind their new house (04.01.39). After all, what are beaches for! They pulled it down again as fast as they could.

Chanel joined in people’s feasts and expressed grief when people were sad. He lived so close to them that he was liked and respected by many. One grandmother showed him her granddaughter and said she would not want her to marry anyone but a French nobleman, but the French noble-
man present told her kindly to teach her granddaughter to be a good girl (04.07).

Both were often called to visit the sick. Occasionally Chanel could secretly baptise a dying child or adult, but he was aware of the danger of being accused of sorcery and on occasion he did not go to the funeral of a person he had baptised (22.08). Nizier too did baptisms. Although there was interest among the people to know more of the lotu (i.e. the Christian religion) and adults at times asked for instruction or baptism, it was clear that Niuliki would not hear of Futuna becoming Christian. Chanel bided his time (21.08). The growing sympathy for Chanel did not stop someone from stealing a precious bottle of liqueur (eau des Carmes) (26.09).71

Their health held out reasonably well. Once Nizier badly hurt his arm, and Chanel, when climbing over the hill in the dark, hurt his back as he slipped three times ‘sur mon derrière’ (15.12). When the kava had been too strong, his stomach could be upset, sometimes leading to serious vomiting (05.10). He had fever at times (06.05), but his sense of humour survived the miseries. Some nights an itch kept him from sleeping, but, ‘the local lice came and comforted me’ (06.12).

Wallis72

As time went on, the Wallisian people, like the Futunans, became used to the presence on their island of the two white men, so very different from the visiting sailors and beachcombers; different also from the Methodist missionaries they knew about from Tonga. The two were allowed to move around everywhere and attend traditional religious ceremonies (31.03). They certainly had gained the respect of many people, and often received gifts of food and the nicest bits of pork at feasts (30.03). They were allowed to visit the sick, often even asked to come, and, given an opportunity, Bataillon would baptise a dying person (22.04).

Apart from occasional bouts of bad temper, the Lavelua Vaimua (the paramount chief, or ‘King’), liked the missionaries and invited them very often to his house for kava and meals. They sometimes went with him as he went visiting villages on the island. The Lavelua let his colleague Niuliki on Futuna know that if he did not want his two missionaries to remain, he could send them to Wallis where they were welcome (20.04).

71. A medicinal liqueur they used for all sorts of ills.
72. This information is found in the diary of Peter Chanel who was in Wallis from 28 March until 26 April 1838.
Another chief, Tuugahala, threatened the Futunans he would take revenge if they dared harm their missionaries (25.04).

Gradually the whole of Wallis knew that these two papalangi (Europeans) had their own lotu (religion), but that it was different from the one in Tonga. People came to see the religious ceremonies in the missionaries’ house and the two felt free to speak about it (18.04). Bataillon and Luzy refrained from saying they had come to convert Uvea to their lotu. The island was very divided on the issue. Most people felt secure in their old religion, and there was a deep distrust of any lotu papalangi, inevitably associated with the Methodism in the Tonga Islands. Quite a few people, including a brother of Vaimua were inclined to accept the lotu of Bataillon (12.04), and Bataillon had secretly gathered a small band of catechumens who met on one of the twenty odd little islands on the ring of the vast lagoon that surrounds Wallis. The Lavelua did not approve but mostly pretended not to know. Some people urged Bataillon to force the issue by placing before the King the choice, either to accept the lotu or to send Bataillon away (04.04). But all through 1838 the missionaries thought it better not to come out into the open.73

Cultures in contact

By the middle of 1838 the missionaries had lived for half a year in the midst of Polynesians, in New Zealand or on the islands. Remarkably, at about the same time, three of them felt they should start writing down what they had observed. In May 1838 Joseph-Xavier Luzy, started an eight-page description of Wallis and its inhabitants. A year later he added a few pages and two more in May 1840 before he had an occasion to mail them.74 Also in May 1838 Pierre Bataillon started a Notice sur l’île et la mission de Wallis (‘Notes on the Island and the Mission of Wallis’) and he too added a few pages in May 1839. It was a thorough piece of ethnography, twenty-two finely written pages (forty pages print), with a detailed description of the island, its people and their way of life.75 The two sets from Wallis are very much alike, as one would expect, but they show an active involvement on the part of both missionaries in the study of their new environment. In New Zealand, Servant did not put his impressions in a formal report but the letters to his parents and his two friends in

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73. LRO 1, Doc 28, 25–6.
74. LRO 1, Doc 23.
75. LRO 1, Doc 28.
May 1838 (each of four pages) and his letter to Colin in September (eight pages) reveal a keen observer and they contain all the material for a good study. Peter Chanel started a diary, or chronicle, on 12 November 1837, four days after arriving on Futuna. It soon got lost and on 26 December 1837 he started anew. Nearly every day he noted down the small events and impressions that make up the warp and woof of grass-roots history and ethnography.

One would have expected the symptoms of culture shock. The way they had reacted to the local people on the Canary Islands and the romanticism that their visit to Mangareva aroused, prove they had no natural immunity. Still, once they were on Wallis, on Futuna, or along the Hokianga River in New Zealand, they wrote of the Polynesian people in ways that are singularly free of the jolts that exposure to alien cultures so often causes.

Even if two cultures are similar and contact is less intensive than was the case for the early Marist missionaries, people exposed to another culture often show symptoms of culture shock. Some react by looking down on the ‘other’ people, finding them ridiculous or childlike. Often they react with moral judgments: what the others do is reprehensible and draws out condemnation. As their early letters show, the Marist missionaries expected to meet barbarous cannibals. They came full of the usual prejudices, but very soon their prejudices melt away in the face of reality. Half a year after their arrival they are in no way judgmental and simply describe what they see, factually and with sympathy. Servant is amused in the beginning by the Polynesian nose-touching but on the whole they see nothing ridiculous and nothing terribly wrong in the people’s way of life.

In other cases, culture shock takes the form of romanticism. The strange culture is exotic and idealised. The strange people are perfect and much better than we ourselves. They embody the ‘noble savage’ invented by Rousseau, not yet tainted by the evils of ‘our’ civilisation. But the mis-

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76. In LRO 1, respectively Docs 25, 26 and 27. Together 16 pages print.
77. The first part of the diary, in one copy book, covering the years 1838 and 1839 is published in EC, pages 313–483. The second copy book containing the diary for 1840 and 1841 is lost.
78. Above, respectively pages 47–8 and 58–9.
80. The experience of the first Marist missionaries would seem to confirm the assertion of Obeyesekere: ‘. . . there is no reliable account in early texts about precontact anthropophagy among the Maori or any other Polynesian group’. Gananath Obeyesekere, Cannibal Talk (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005), 58.
sionaries are too close to reality to become romantic. Although the Sin-
gave side seemed more open to the lotu and more welcoming than the Alo
people, Chanel noted that Singave men as well as women behaved less
modestly than the Alo, closer to King Niuliki.81

Nothing is more likely to draw out symptoms of culture shock than
having to eat strange kinds of food.82 But in New Zealand as well as in the
islands, the missionaries appreciate the local food, potatoes, pork, taro,
yam, coconuts, the many different fish, crab and shellfish. In the islands
they quickly take to kava. Chanel even eats and enjoys the thick white
grubs Futunans prise out of dead trees.83

The missionaries on Futuna enjoy the music and the dances, admire
the food gardens (30.05.1839) and the people’s fishing skills. They disre-
gard Colin’s injunctions against moving about alone and Nizier cheerfully
measures a local bride for a dress.

Bataillon wonders how the Wallisians ever managed to build their
vast houses and canoes without the steel axes and knives they had only
recently obtained. He admires the gardening skills of the men, the va-
riety of their food crops, the rotating use of the land, the courtesies of
the kava ceremony. Luzy admires the huge ocean-faring canoes, and the
courage with which the Wallisians take to the open ocean. Where Colin
fears indecent nudity, Bataillon finds people modestly dressed in colour-
ful tapa-cloth84, and men and women bathing on separate spots, far apart.
He finds no sign of idolatry, but great respect for the taboos. He sees that
some chiefs may have two or more wives, but that the common people are
monogamous and that they are generally faithful to their spouses. He sees
people sharing their food and notices their generosity to strangers: in all
a well-ordered, hierarchical society where authority is respected, where
men grow and prepare the food, and women take care of the children and
produce the tapa-cloth.

In New Zealand, Servant admires the Maoris, strong and well-built
men who work hard. From his house on the river he looks at them with

81. EC, 335, 14.03.1838.
82. With a wink at his own New Guinea experience, Luzbetak (page 206) calls it
cuisinophobia!
83. Chevron to family, 21 October 1840, in Rozier, Chanel, Doc 16, 28. Chevron says they
were eaten raw. More likely, as elsewhere, they were eaten after being roasted for a few
moments on a small fire. Maoris do the same (information Father Peter Ewart).
84. Laval too (Mangareva, 35) makes the point that, even before European contact, the
women in the Gambier Islands were always modestly dressed with a long tapa-cloth
knotted over one shoulder.
respect, easily paddling their canoes even in rough weather. He sees people of good and forceful character, with a sense of humour, who have fun imitating the whites.

What was it that went right? The Marist missionaries were defenceless, unarmed, entirely dependent on their Polynesian hosts. They displayed a great trust in the goodwill of the Polynesians. In comparison with the Methodists in New Zealand and in the islands, they were poor, and had very little to offer but a strange religion. Unlike the visiting sailors, they respected the women and showed compassion with the suffering. The Polynesians responded with kindness. Was it their very dependence that guarded the missionaries from the feelings of superiority that are at the core of culture shock? And, was it precisely their respect and their trust that brought out the best in their hosts? Right in the beginning Bishop Pompallier expressed concern that his men were perhaps too other-worldly to stand up to the rigours of mission life. He need not have worried. They managed very well.

The closing of the year 1838.

Two years after the Marist missionary venture had started, it still consisted of different plays, each on a different stage, with little connection between them. Two groups of missionaries had left for the South Pacific: the first one in December 1836, consisting of one Bishop, four priests and three brothers; the second group in September 1838: three priests and three brothers. The people in one place mostly knew nothing of what was happening elsewhere. After leaving two men on the beach of Wallis and two on Futuna, it took several months before the two on Wallis knew that there were two on Futuna! Pompallier himself had no news from them and the men on the islands did not know if their Bishop had ever reached New Zealand.

By the end of the year 1838 Colin had received letters from the first band, from Santa Cruz, Tenerife, Valparaiso, Chile, Tahiti, Sydney and New Zealand. The missionaries had done everything possible to keep him au courant and all except the last batch of letters (sent in September 1838) had in fact reached him. He and the men of the second band, now in Chile, knew that the first group had safely reached its destination.

Colin had sent 8.700 francs and mail in May 1837, after receiving Pompallier’s letter from Tenerife. He had sent mail in November 1837, after receiving the letters from Valparaiso and hearing of the death of Fr Bret.
He had entrusted another parcel of mail and a large sum of money (50,000 francs, not counting other gifts) to the second group in September 1838. By the end of 1838 neither the letters nor the money had reached the missionaries.

When the second group left, Colin could expect that, travelling round Cape Horn, they would take nine or ten months to get to their destination. He also knew that letters could go much faster via London and Sydney. He could have put the Bishop’s mind at rest by letting him know that a second group was on the way and by which route. Unfortunately, he did nothing.

Christmas and New Year were difficult days for Pompallier. He would have held Christmas services for the Catholics on the Hokianga, perhaps he paid a pastoral visit to the Bay of Islands. But his thoughts will have gone back over the two years since he had left France. All that time, no word from France, from Colin, from his friends in Lyon, from other Marists, from his family. No word from Rome where he had felt appreciated. No reinforcements, no money. He knew nothing of what Colin had done, or of what was on the way. He felt abandoned and let down. His letters, begging for a response, for help, for encouragement, remained unanswered. Was nobody listening? He even ceased writing.

His two companions did not seem to share his impatience and his frustrations. Perhaps they were less ambitious, happy enough to do the things at hand. At least Catherin Servant showed no sign of the mental strain that plagued the Bishop. Unfortunately, the three had not grown into a community of warm support for each other. In fact, relations were strained and unpleasant.

Also by the end of the year, the second group had safely reached Valparaiso after a fast and relatively easy voyage. They were gracefully received by the Picpus missionaries and were busy absorbing all the new insights and perspectives of another world. Like their predecessors they were on the wrong side of the Pacific and wondering how to get to their destination but unlike their predecessors, they at least knew where they had to go on the immense Pacific.
Chapter 6
1839 Part 1: The Separate Worlds Connect

In France: renown

In less than three years after the little known loose groups of Marists in the Dioceses of Lyon and Belley had been officially recognised as a religious institute of pontifical right, they had drawn national attention. In May 1837 both Les Annales de la Propagation de la Foy and L’Ami de la religion, a Catholic national paper, told the story of the voyage of Pompallier and his seven companions as far as Tenerife. In January 1838 both publications took their readers to Valparaiso with the sad report of the death of Claude Bret in mid-ocean and the problem the missionaries then faced in having to cross the Pacific. In March the Annals announced that the Marist Fathers were readying a second group of missionaries, mentioning also the possible opening of a Procure in California. On 11 September 1838 L’Ami told its readers that Pompallier and his two companions had reached Australia and New Zealand, that English Protestant missionaries had tried to push them out of New Zealand, that they had been helped by a rich local French citizen and that a French naval vessel was about to sail from Sydney to New Zealand to show the flag in their support. In October L’Ami announced the departure of the second group of missionaries from Bordeaux. In November the Annals published Pompallier’s letter from Sydney nearly in full. They left out his detailed requests for

2. L’Ami de la religion, 27 April 1837, 183.
5. L’Ami, 11 September 1838. This news must have been sent in February or March by a correspondent in Sydney, possibly an officer of the Héroïne, ie, before the ship left for New Zealand. With the rich local French citizen the article probably referred to the Baron de Thierry, who, however, was not involved in the events of 22 January at Totara Point.
missionaries but printed his complaints about letters not being answered.\(^6\) In January 1839 they published, again in full (all eighteen pages!), the first letters from New Zealand from Pompallier and Servant.\(^7\)

Not only the Pacific missions attracted the attention of the newspapers. In February 1839 a parish mission in Moidieu near Vienne, in the Diocese of Grenoble, that first threatened to collapse through the indifference of the local people, caught the headlines when it became a great success in the hands of four ‘missionaries of the Society of Mary in Lyon’.\(^8\) There were other more casual honourable mentions for the priests, such as Fr. Deschamps preaching in Saint-Vincent. The Marist Brothers got into the paper several times for opening schools in various places.\(^9\)

**Also in France: financial support**

The young Society of Mary did not have the means to finance the missions it was entrusted with. Archbishop de Pins had from the beginning involved the Propagation of the Faith. It gave the Marist missions impressive subsidies: in the four years 1836, 1837, 1838 and 1839 it donated respectively 25,000, 33,200, 52,181 and 78,000 francs, whereby we must think of the French franc as somewhere between five and ten US dollars in today’s money. Together with sister organisations in Paris and elsewhere, it supported other missions as well.

From the 78,000 francs for 1839, 40,000 was handed to the third group of missionaries that left in May, led by Father Petitjean, 1,100 went to refund the loan that Captain Bernard had given to the Bishop in March 1838\(^10\) and 20,000 francs was set aside for the schooner Pompallier needed.

Such sums were brought together by the regular contributions of many thousands of ordinary working people, many of them readers of the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith. This association, organised by Marie-Pauline Jaricot in groups of ten, hundred and thousand, committed themselves to contribute one *sou* (= five centimes, a quarter to half a dollar) a week. The missionaries were very conscious of where their money came

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10. For the loan from Captain Bernard, cf below, page 175.
from. One spoke of the ‘sacred coins of the Propagation of the Faith’.\textsuperscript{11} The missionaries themselves were well known to the clergy of Lyon and Belley. They had studied together and had been their colleagues in the ministry. The clergy will have given full support to the fund raising.

**Attracting quality recruits**

Given the image that the Society of Mary was quickly acquiring in France, and the massive support of the laity, it is no wonder that she attracted men of quality. In the year after the founding Chapter of September 1836 no less than sixteen diocesan priests entered the Novitiate. By September 1839\textsuperscript{12} twenty-seven new Marists had joined the Society, among whom were the later founder of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, Saint Julien Eymard, two future Bishops (Épalle and Viard), one future Superior General (Favre), men like Poupinel and Rocher who in a few years would put the administration of the missions on a more professional base and several others who will for ever be venerated as ‘founders of Churches’,\textsuperscript{13} such as Petitjean in Christchurch\textsuperscript{14} and Chevron in Tonga.\textsuperscript{15} In assigning missionaries Colin could maintain the high standards of generosity and commitment that he considered essential.

The Marist Brothers too attracted many candidates. During 1839 seventy-one postulants took the religious habit and twenty novices made their first vows. The Brothers took on six more schools, bringing the total to fifty-two. It was the year that Marcellin Champagnat resigned as Superior General and Brother François was elected to take his place as ‘Director General’.\textsuperscript{16}


\textsuperscript{12} CS I, page 652–7.

\textsuperscript{13} Although used first by Paul VI in 1978, the expression ‘founding new Churches’, is so appropriate here that we allow ourselves the anachronism. Cf ‘Directives’ in AAS, LXX (1978), 478.


Also in France: a frustrated superior

When, in October 1838, Colin had received Pompallier's letter of 14 May and the letters that Servant had sent to his two friends,\(^{17}\) he had simply passed them to the Propagation of the Faith. They were published – nearly in full - in January 1839.\(^{18}\) Once Colin saw them in print, and possibly because of reactions he picked up in or outside of the Society, he made up his mind not to let that happen again.

A few months later, in April 1839, Colin received the letters sent in September 1838\(^{19}\) and those that the missionaries of the second group sent from Valparaiso. This time he did not simply send them to the Propagation of the Faith but asked his trusted friend Gabriel-Claude Mayet to edit them for publication. It was probably when instructing him on what to take out and what to leave, that Colin showed his irritation. Mayet noted down his remarks.\(^{20}\)

With all respect for the Bishop's zeal and hard work Colin could only feel distaste at Pompallier's impatience and his constant moaning about more men and more money. 'You must know how to put up with things,' he said. 'Did Francis Xavier have that much money? Was he also not a long time alone? Planting the faith in a country takes suffering. Isn't that one of the first things in the apostolic life? In four years, if I am not mistaken, Francis Xavier asked eighteen times for more men, and only four times he got reinforcements from Europe.'

Another thing that Colin missed was piety! 'Where is Our Lady in all of this? The Picpus Fathers put a statue of Our Lady in the pagan temple,'\(^{21}\) he said, and 'when we took possession of Puylata we went on our knees and put an image of Our Lady in every room. Nothing of that with them! The history of our mission must be edifying!'

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17. LRO 1, Docs 24, 26 and 27.
19. Pompallier to Colin, LRO 1, Docs 29 and 30. Servant to Colin, LRO 1, Doc 31. That these letters arrived in or just before April is clear from Colin's letter to Fransoni, 26 April 1839, CS 1, Doc 63.
20. Mémoires Mayet 1, 186–90, printed in full in CS 1, Doc.64.
21. There is no mention of this in the Marists' accounts of their visit to the Gambier Islands. The nearest Pompallier gets, is where he recounts that a pagan temple was turned into a rural chapel (LRO 1, Doc 21, 4). Colin's Marian devotion would have supplied the statue. He also could have heard it from Caret. As Caret was coming from Rome when they met, he probably carried the statue of Our Lady that Pope Gregory XVI had donated for the Gambier Islands and he would have told Colin. Cf The Annals (1840), 89.
What also annoyed him was Servant constantly calling Pompallier ‘His Grace’ and using phrases such as: ‘I had the honour of accompanying His Grace’.22 ‘Inappropriate for a simple missionary Bishop in New Zealand!’ was Colin’s verdict. He grumbled at the description of the Bishop’s house as the Episcopal Palace!23 And he found it pretentious to say that for those missions one needed great virtue and scholarship.24 He even thought of inserting bits and pieces of his own into the letter to be published, such as: ‘as long as a missionary has his head on his two shoulders, he knows no fear’.

In short, what he wanted to see in the letters was ‘modesty, simplicity, devotion to Our Lady and a manly nerve that rallies the readers with the courage of lions!’ In the end he had Mayet cut out the offending bits, but he refrained from entering phrases of his own. In any case, the Annals did not publish the censored version! Did they object to Colin’s censorship? Whatever the reason, for a whole year the Annals published nothing on the Marist missions.

Colin’s annoyance is understandable but a bit unfair on Servant who, unknown to Colin of course, suffered most under Pompallier’s bad temper and who moreover could not get a letter away without the Bishop reading it. Nor could Colin know that it was Pompallier himself who insisted on the pompous language to the point of telling off his Picpus hosts in Valparaiso for not using it. Sniffing at the ‘Episcopal Palace’ was unnecessary: it was clearly ironically meant. In the end, magnanimity carried the day. He praised Pompallier as a ‘man of vision, of a truly evangelical vision. He takes long strides towards his goal, sees nothing but his goal, and even if he makes a wrong step or two, he achieves what he set out to do’.25

From France: a third group

When, in October 1838, Colin received the first letters from New Zealand, he set his mind on sending ten to twelve missionaries26 as asked by Pompallier. Writing to Cardinal Fransoni on 10 November he speaks of sending eight to ten priests in the course of 1839.27 During the following months enough volunteers came forward for Colin to write to the Propa-
gation of the Faith on 12 April 1839 that he could count on eight to ten missionaries, priests and brothers. They could leave in June. However, the Directors advised against sending such a large group. Given the hazards of travelling and of transferring too much money by one and the same occasion, they would rather see Colin divide his missionaries over two groups, which he did. They also advised Colin to send them via London and Sydney and no longer via Bordeaux and Valparaiso. He informed Fransoni accordingly.

The first one Colin appointed was Joseph-André Chevron. Born in 1808 in Nantua, Haut-Bugey (Ain), diocese of Belley, he entered the Seminary and was a brilliant student, earning a cum laude for his end essay. Being too young for ordination he taught among other places in Belley when Colin was the Principal there. He became a priest for the Diocese in 1831 and although oversensitive and of precarious health, he asked to be sent to the foreign missions. Mgr Devie asked him to serve for ten years in the Diocese which he did.. When, in 1838, he was the parish priest of Montanges he applied again and was given permission to join the Society of Mary. Colin immediately assigned him to Oceania. After his departure Colin confided to a friend of Chevron that he admired his strong character, his courage and his generosity so much that he would not hesitate to propose him if a second Bishop had to be appointed in Oceania. Until he moved to a Marist community Chevron had kept his plans a secret but when it became known that this priest was going to Oceania, a man in his parish who had made no secret of his distaste for anything religious, publicly converted.

Philippe Viard was born in 1809 in an upper middle class family in Lyon where his father was a public notary. He had studied at the Minor Seminary of l'Argentière together with Bataillon. As a seminarian, he used to serve Pompallier's Mass, and for Pompallier he remained 'le petit Viard' (the little Viard). Ordained in 1834 he was (as of March 1836) a curate.

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28. CS 1, Doc 62, 1.
29. CS 1, Doc 63, 2.
31. As a member of the staff he signed a declaration in favour of de Lamennais against the wishes of Colin and the Bishop, cf OM 2, page 424.
32. He worried a lot about his health and refers to it on nearly every page of the letters he sent during the journey.
34. Mémoires Mayet 5, page 499.
in the town parish of La Guillotière, in walking distance from the Montée Saint-Barthélémy where the Marist Novitiate of Puylata opened the same year. He was a man of limited ability, but a devout priest with a reputation of successful pastoral work. He had a great devotion to Our Lady of Fourvière and was considered a bit of a saint, not always taken seriously by his colleagues. He arranged his transfer to the Marists in all secrecy and joined the novitiate on 1 January 1839. He was professed after less than five months.36

A second Lyonnais was Jean-Baptiste Petitjean, born in 1811 in Mornant, near Lyon and ordained a priest for the Archdiocese on 28 February 1836. At one stage he had thought of mission work in Madagascar, but he entered the Society of Mary and was a novice in Puylata until his profession on 19 May 1839.37

The choice of the fourth man illustrates that interest in the Society was extending beyond the Dioceses of Lyon and Belley. He was Jean-Baptiste Comte, born in 1810 in Silenzin, Haute Loire, in the Diocese of Le Puy. He joined the Marists as a seminarian shortly after the founding Chapter of September 1836, and entered the Novitiate in Belley. He was ordained a priest in March 1838 and continued his Novitiate in Puylata.38

There was only one Brother this time. He was not selected by Marcellin Champagnat but had made his own decision: Jean-Baptiste Grimaud. He was born in 1809, as the only son of a rich family of Saint-Cassien, near Grenoble. At an early age he already expressed the desire to enter religious life. His parents did everything they could to talk him out of it, but at the age of 29 he went his own way and joined the Marist Brothers in the Hermitage. On 15 August 1838 he received the religious habit from Marcellin Champagnat under the name of Brother Attale. When his parents made a last attempt to have him change his mind by offering him immediate transfer of their estate, he asked to be sent to Oceania and was professed 15 May 1839, just before leaving.39

36. In Mémoires Mayet Ia, pages 84–6, Viard is described as being not of the brightest. His fellow curates once sewed the sheets on his bed together to see how he would react: he just slept in a chair! In 1841 a lay advisor wrote to Colin (APM, Bataillon, personal file): ‘They should never make Viard a bishop: too narrow-minded and too rigid’. In 1846 Viard was made a Bishop without consultation of the Society. Colin was annoyed. Mémoires Mayet 4, page 551.
38. APM, personal file Comte.
As the new missionaries were to leave shortly after their profession, Colin gave them a forceful dose of spiritual direction in a letter nearly identical to the ones he had written to the first and the second groups of missionaries with one minor but not insignificant addition: he now gives explicit permission to write directly to families and friends. He maintains the reference to Pompallier being both Bishop and Superior and he repeats the warning never to go out alone.40

After receiving the first letters from New Zealand Colin had spoken to the community in Belley of dividing the vast Vicariate of Bishop Pompallier and appointing other Bishops.41 His remarks must have become common knowledge. If Colin did not repeat them on his own initiative now, his new missionaries will have brought it up and he confirmed his intention of asking Rome to erect a new Vicariate. Once in New Zealand, they shared it with their confreres.42

As had been done with the second group, Colin used the opportunity to send letters to the missionaries. Colin’s letter to Bataillon shows his deep concern:

Sadly, how long we have to wait before we hear from you. Since you have been left on the island of Wallis we have heard nothing from you, nor from Monsieur Chanel. Console our hearts and use the first occasion to write to us. We pray the Good God for you without ceasing, and we entrust you often into the hands of Mary, your loving mother. Even among the savages and in the midst of all sorts of dangers, she will be with you and protect you. Keep yourself tight between her loving hands. Be courageous and full of confidence.43

Judging from Servant’s reaction he got a similar letter,44 and we can assume letters went to the other men. He wrote to Pompallier to tell him, among

40. CS 1, Doc 68. The first and second letter can be found in CS 1, respectively Docs 4 and 48, above pages 49 and 129.
41. CS 1, Doc 52, 6.
42. A few months after their arrival Maxime Petit wrote to Colin: ‘Now I have heard of your project to have a new Apostolic Vicariate erected . . .’ LRO 1, Doc 56, 1.
43. CS 1, Doc 69.
44. Cf LRO 1, Doc 52, 1.
other things, that the Propagation of the Faith had set aside money for a ship.45

**Group three leaving**

With departure imminent there was a little panic when the money from the Propagation of the Faith had not yet come. On 17 May 1839 Colin wrote an urgent letter to Meynis asking for twenty-five or thirty thousand francs as an advance on the coming financial year. When exactly the money came is not clear. Possibly after the first two had left already.46 Before Colin returned to Belley, he wrote a gracious letter to the directors and thanked them for their generous support and specifically for their promise to pay for a schooner. The need for a vessel of their own was nicely illustrated by the letters Colin had received in April from Valparaiso, telling him that the second group of missionaries, led by Claude Baty, had been able to continue its voyage only because the Picpus Fathers owned a ship themselves.47

On Pentecost Sunday, 19 May, Philippe Viard, Jean-Baptiste Comte and Jean-Baptiste Petitjean made their profession in the hands of the Superior General, assisted by Claude Girard, their Novice Master, and Pierre Colin, the local Superior. Joseph-André Chevron who had only just joined, was to do his Novitiate on the ship under the direction of Philippe Viard.48 Four men, as Colin wrote to Fransoni, ‘full of zeal and courage, of proven virtue, sound doctrine and adequate learning’.49

Again Colin was vividly aware of the sacrifice his missionaries were making and how much it cost them. On Wednesday after Pentecost he wrote to Lagniet in Belley that Petitjean and Viard had left and that the other ones would go in a day or two. For three of them leaving must have been particularly painful: ‘The missionaries over whom the Holy Spirit has come down on Pentecost are leaving. The Blessed Virgin has taken three of them by their hair and forced them to leave.’50

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45. CS 1, Doc 72.
46. That would explain why Colin gave Petitjean 2,000 francs in hand when leaving.
47. CS 1, Doc 75.
48. According to the Roulleaux summary of the lost Chanel diary, Chevron made his profession on 31 May 1840 on Futuna before Peter Chanel, EC, 489. Other sources give 11 July 1842 in Tonga. Cf Alois Greiler, *Biographical Notes on Marist Priests and Brothers during the Generalate of Father Colin*, (private publication, 2009), 44.
49. CS 1, Doc 82, 24.
50. CS 1, Doc 70, 2.
Only of Chevron there is a record of saying good-bye to his family. He later described it as the most difficult time of his life. He had asked the parish priest of his home parish to prepare his mother but when he came to say good-bye, she held on to him and did not want to let go without his promise to come back and see her again. He agreed he would, turned off and added: ‘in heaven’. He appreciated the special trust Colin had in him by sending him to Oceania without further formation, but Colin was a good judge of men. Chevron became an outstanding missionary. At the end of July, the Superior General wrote a fine and warm letter to Chevron’s mother: ‘I would fail in my duty if I did not share your pain, but even more if I did not admire you for having given one of your children to God to be the apostle of those disadvantaged islands’. So far, it is the only known letter of Colin to the parents of a recently departed Marist missionary.

Group two: half-way to New Zealand, the other way around

Having left France on 11 September 1838, the second group of missionaries had an easy voyage. When, after three months, on 12 December, they reached Valparaiso, it looked as if they too would get stuck there, like their Bishop a year and a half before. Fortunately, a few days after their arrival, Father Maigret who had been stranded at Pohnpei until 28 July, also arrived on the schooner Honolulu that he had bought in Hawaii. He offered to take the Marists to Mangareva, where Rouchouze wanted the ship for an exploratory trip to the Marquesas Islands. It was foreseen that the Bishop would need it for a month. Maigret proposed that the Marists stay on Mangareva to learn English and Polynesian. After the return of Bishop Rouchouze the ship would take them via Tahiti to New Zealand, calling at Wallis and Futuna if the winds permitted. Épalle was not much in favour (‘a waste of time’ he called it), but he finally agreed because of the opportunity to learn languages. It shows that Baty as the superior of the group made decisions in consultation with his men.

A thing the missionaries now learned the hard way was to care for the mission goods they brought along. Cases and boxes were not waterproof,
clothes had not been packed properly. One cassock had four big holes in it through moisture and mildew. Quite a few things had to be thrown away already. The cases and boxes were not properly labelled and numbered, and there was no list of what each of them contained. Just what was needed to whet the appetite of suspicious Customs Officers. As a consequence things that should have passed as mission goods, were classed merchandise for which duty had to be paid as import. Pompallier had warned them about this but, as with other things he had written about, nobody had taken notice. Thanks to the Picpus Fathers they got off lightly, paying no more than 24 piastres, whereby Baty remarked that in Sydney things would probably have been a lot stricter. When their goods had to be loaded on the Honolulu, and pass through Customs again, now as export, the Picpus Fathers were their guardian angels and a good lady secretary was so kind as to make up a proper manifest.

In Valparaiso Fr Baty discovered that the 8,700 francs that were sent from France in May 1837 had eventually reached Valparaiso and had been sent on. Transferring money by cheque to Valparaiso had proved easy, but as Maxime Petit found out, it was not a good idea to do it through the shipping company with which one travelled. Settling accounts with the Captain for the final fare and the little extras, involves an amount of haggling and one is not in a strong position to haggle with an agent who is holding one’s money! Another lesson for Colin to pass on to the next group: make sure you carry small change. Traders and vendors do not like high-value golden coins.

Crossing the Pacific

The Honolulu was a very small schooner, 34 tons, about half as big as the Raiatea that had taken the first group from Tahiti to Wallis, Futuna and New Zealand. Shortly before leaving, Maigret was able to make the final payment and the ship was officially re-registered as the Reine de Paix.

56. LRO 1, Doc 17, 8. This letter written from Valparaiso on 20 July 1837 had reached Lyon in November 1837, months before the second group was appointed. Were the instructions passed to them?
57. Baty to Colin, 25 January 1839, APM 1405/20043. From Pompallier’s letter of 23 December 1837 he could have known that things were a good deal easier in Sydney!
58. This is as much as Baty could tell Colin at that stage. Baty to Colin, 12 January 1839, APM 1405/20043.
59. On 25 January Baty still calls it the Honolulu.
They sailed on 27 January 1839. Becalmed for many days they took forty-seven days to get within sight of the mountain tops of Mangareva, compared to thirty-three days for the *Europa* in 1837. On 18 March they landed on Akena Island to discover that Mgr Rouchouze had not waited for the *Reine de Paix*. He had found another ship and was gone with his missionaries to explore the Marquesas Islands. They were expected back any day, but when they had not turned up at the end of the month, the Marists decided to wait no longer.

The absence of Rouchouze and the stay on Mangareva forced them to reconsider their options. Maigret admitted that Bishop Rouchouze was not all that happy with the *Reine de Paix*, not only because the purchase meant a big bite out of the mission budget, but also because of the worries and the recurring expenses involved in keeping a ship. The Marists still had to get across the Pacific and they could imagine that their Bishop would want to get a ship of his own. Maigret and Baty came to a sensible agreement. The ship had cost 4,000 piastres (22,000 francs). Each mission would pay half the purchasing price and the two missions would own it together. Each bishop had the use of it for six months of the year. If the Bishops disagreed with the deal they could come back on the arrangement and sell it.

The *Reine de Paix* left on 2 April and against five days of the *Europa* they took eleven days to reach Tahiti. The Protestants there continued to do everything in their power to turn the people against the Catholics and, as Baty tells it (from hearsay of course), they used a magic lantern to show slides of the Pope, assisted by Catholic priests, cooking Protestant ministers in a large cooking pot. If the story was true, the Tahitians were not impressed. The Marists were free to walk around anywhere and, while curiously observed and followed, they could contact any people they wanted. In fact, they were invited into some homes.

Jacob Moerenhout, French Consul as from August 1838, again proved to be an excellent host and did everything he could to help the Marists along. He showed them an article in a local paper in which Captain Stocks,

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61. The last letter of Pompallier they had read was the one from Sydney (LRO 1, Doc 22). In this letter Pompallier does not yet mention needing a ship of his own.
62. Pompallier made his share 10,000 francs. LRO 1, Doc 33, 5. Figures meant little to him!
63. After his dismissal as American Consul, Moerenhout was promptly appointed Consul of France, cf Jore, *L'Océan*, volume 2, 233–4.
who had sailed the *Raiatea* with the first group to Wallis, Futuna and New Zealand, described the hazardous shoals at the mouth of the Hokianga River. Moerenhout also handed the Marists letters from Pompallier in which he wrote that the next group of missionaries, were they to come that way, should go not to Hokianga, but to the Bay of Islands and notify him by overland courier. On 17 April 1839, they sailed from Tahiti

**Visiting Wallis**

Now they had very favourable weather indeed and in just over two weeks, on 2 May, the *Reine de Paix* reached Wallis. After rumours in Tahiti that Bataillon and Luzy were being harassed, the visitors were happy to find them safe and in good health. The parcels of letters were the first mail in nearly two and a half years and the newcomers unloaded cases of clothing that could be used as gifts or exchange. Together they walked all over the island, and both Pierre Bataillon and Joseph Luzy were full of stories on whatever there was to be seen. The visit was a terrific boost for the morale of the two isolated missionaries. Wal-

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64. Baty to Colin, from Tahiti, 15 April 1838, APM 1405/20043.
65. LRO 1, Doc 28, 26.
lisian people may at times have wondered if Bataillon and Luzy were all that different from the beach-combers that were well-known on all Polynesian islands. The arrival of six missionaries, and on a ship of their own, undid much of the damage caused by the fact that Bishop Pompallier, having promised to return after six months, had not appeared after eighteen.

Although the Lavelua Vaimua, the King of Wallis, liked the missionaries personally, he and many Wallisians wanted to have nothing to do with their lotu. He was under a lot of pressure to expel them. For a month or more he had prevented Bataillon from meeting with his little band of catechumens. Bataillon used the presence of the new missionaries and their ship to come out into the open with his purpose to convert Wallis. He challenged the King to say openly he wanted the missionaries to leave. After a lot of pushing the Lavelua reluctantly agreed to come on board the Reine de Paix where he was wined and dined (and surprised that his ancestral gods did not strike him down for it!). Sunday 5 May the band of missionaries sang a High Mass to the accompaniment of a little organ they had brought along. It attracted a lot of people. The Lavelua himself cautiously stayed away.

When he understood the ship would go to Futuna, the King humbly asked them as a favour to return to Wallis after their visit to Futuna and bring back some fifteen Wallisians who were stuck on Futuna after having sailed there in their own craft. It gave Bataillon the idea of visiting Chanel and Nizier. Monday night, 6 May, the ship left, leaving Brother Joseph Luzy alone on Wallis. Bataillon promised to be back in about ten days.

Again, the party had a fine north-easterly wind and did the forty leagues (about 220 kilometer) in thirty hours. The chiefly Tuugahala went along to serve as a pilot, accompanied by seven other Wallisians. He had become a supporter of Bataillon, had received instruction in the Faith and had turned his little island of Nukuatea into a safe haven for catechumens.

Expecting the Reine de Paix to return, Brother Joseph wrote a long letter to his brother Alphonse, then assistant priest in the parish of Divonne. He had a long list of things he needed, some of them would be lying around, such as different saws that his father did not use any more, for other things he asked his brother to find benefactors: carpentry and

66. Estimates are that in the 1840s and 1850s there were as many as two thousand so-called beachcombers scattered all over Polynesia and Micronesia. A few were French, but most were English or American, some were escaped convicts from Australia, most were adventurers or deserted sailors. The Polynesians usually tolerated them and were happy to make use of their skills. Cf Howe, Where the Waves, 102–8.
67. LRO 1, Doc 38, 3.
gardening tools, things for repairing boots, axes and knives, sewing materials, combs, razors and soap etc. Obviously Joseph was a practical man, having to exercise all trades at once on an island where even the most ordinary things cannot be found but where his activities would attract a lot of attention from the Polynesians, eager to learn. He was in good health, they got all the food they wanted, the people were leaning towards the Faith, he wrote, but the all-powerful King held them back. One day, he added, he too would surely bow for the grace of God!  

When the ship did not return as expected, Luzy kept the letter for the next occasion, a year later, together with the long report on Wallis he had started in May 1838.  

Visiting Futuna

Early in the morning of Wednesday 8 May the Reine de Paix reached Futuna. The rain was so dense that the ship was about to drop anchor before it was seen. When the missionaries came ashore near Alo, the Futunans were surprised to see no less than seven of them, one of whom spoke Wallisian! It was the first time, after a year and a half, that Chanel and Nizier received visitors. They were speechless, ‘a joy beyond expression’, as Chanel put it.  

With colourful ribbons out of the boxes on the ship they decorated a corner of Niuliki’s house to use as a chapel. Next day, Ascension, was celebrated by five Masses, said by each in succession. The last one was a solemn High Mass, to the accompaniment of the small organ donated by a kind lady in Lyon. Bataillon presided and gave the sermon in Wallisian. No wonder a large number of Futunans attended, as did King Niuliki himself, and they behaved in a most respectful manner.

The missionaries’ own house had not yet been rebuilt after the last cyclone but they were both in good health. The unexpected arrival of seven missionaries, and on a ship of their own, made a similar impression on

68. Lettres Luzy, 12 May 1839.
69. LRO 1, Doc 23.
71. The organ was a gift of a Mrs Bertrand for Chanel and stayed in Futuna (EC, page 480, 15.12.39). There is also mention of an accordion, but it is not clear whether this refers to the organ or to a second instrument.
Futuna as it had done on Wallis. It undid the damage that the missionaries’ credibility had suffered by the broken promise of Pompallier.72

While Br Marie-Nizier was admired by the newcomers for his fluency in the Futunan language,73 they found Chanel, to his own frustration, still struggling. Bataillon commented later that due to the constant warfare on Futuna, Chanel had less contact with the people and not much opportunity to devote himself to study of the language.74 Very kind of him, but not quite true. Even in times of war, Chanel was in daily intensive contact with the people and, as his diary shows, he devoted nearly every day several hours to language study.75

For Chanel and Marie-Nizier there were gift parcels and letters but there was plenty of other excitement and most letters were put aside for later. Two letters Peter Chanel answered immediately. His mother’s letter would have confirmed what the confrères had already told him namely that his sister Françoise had died on 24 April 1838. He wrote to mother immediately and gave the letter to be taken to New Zealand for mailing.76 Because Françoise had been the beneficiary under his former will, he now made another will and on Colin’s request he also made out a document granting somebody power of attorney.77

On Thursday 16 May, three days before the schooner sailed for New Zealand, he took time to write to Colin. That the letter he had received from Colin was in the same spirit as the one to Bataillon78 seems clear from Chanel’s reaction:

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72. EC, Doc 45, 6.
73. Ronzon, Frères Maristes en Océanie (FMO), 30.
74. LRO 1, Doc 38, 4. Bataillon said the same to the newcomers. Baty repeats the remark, LRO 1, Doc 32, 1.
75. A few years later Fr. Chevron wrote to Colin that when one is over thirty, the exhausting climate affects one’s ability to learn another language (LRO 1, Doc 126, 4). Rozier rightly points out the weakness of the argument. We must simply accept that Chanel was one of those people who even with a passive knowledge of a foreign language (and Chanel did understand Futunan very well) find it hard to start speaking it. EC, page 230, note 6.
76. On 18 August 1839 Pompallier put the letters from Wallis and Futuna on a French whaler, the Pallas, that was not to reach Le Havre until thirteen months later. The mail was forwarded from Le Havre on 24 September 1840. Chanel’s mother never got her son’s letter. She died on 13 September 1840. Neither the letter that the newcomers brought from her, nor Peter’s answer have been found. Cf CS 1, Doc 200, 1.
77. EC, Docs 43 and 44.
78. CS 1, Doc 44.
‘Accept, my Very Reverend Father, our sincere feelings of thanks for the wise advice that you have kindly given us. May it bear fruit in our hearts! Please keep enriching us with your good counsels.’

The visitors walked all over the island and were received by several chiefs. They learned to drink kava and were entertained by dancing groups of men and women well into the nights. It so happened that just these days Peter Chanel said Mass for the first time in Singave, with Claude Baty and Maxime Petit in attendance.

The Wallisians who had come with Bataillon soon became unruly and wanted to return. To the annoyance of Chanel, Tuugahala used his time by getting himself another wife from Singave. The Futunan people were anxious to see the Wallisians leave, but all the time the island was lashed by unseasonable strong northerly winds and constant rain. On Saturday the wind veered to the north-east and it became impossible to return to Wallis.

The missionaries gathered for a council meeting on their ship. The north-easterly was ideal for a fast sail towards New Zealand so the new missionaries decided to leave. Bataillon did not mind waiting on Futuna for another occasion to return home. When Chanel and Nizier handed the others their mail, they got on to the difficulties with Pompallier, especially his insistence that all letters, even those to the Superior General, should pass unsealed through his hands. The new missionaries also heard of Pompallier’s offensive behaviour in Valparaiso and of his tantrum in Tonga. From later events we can conclude that they decided not to make an issue of it. They also agreed that some of the new men should come back to Wallis and Futuna, and, a bit rashly for sure, promised that the ship would soon return. They sealed their resolutions with a fraternal drink.

Maxime Petit had decorated the make-shift chapel, using, among other things, a beautifully embroidered robe of Our Lady of Fourvière, that had the Futunans rush in for an admiring look. Next morning, 19 May 1839, Pentecost Sunday, all five priests said Mass, the first one a solemn High Mass, with singing and organ. While the ship was readied they had break-

79. EC, Doc 45, 7.
80. Wallis lies north-east of Futuna.
81. For the promise to send the ship back soon, cf LRO 1, Doc 55, 10.
82. EC, page 433 (18.05).
fast together on board. Chanel gave Petit some rare shells to be sent to his friend Bourdin. Bataillon made final additions to his lengthy report on Wallis for Fr. Colin. Then, they embraced and Chanel, Marie-Nizier and Bataillon went ashore. The anchor was lifted and the ship sailed off, heading for New Zealand. The three looked at the sails dropping behind the horizon, expecting it to return soon.

**Bataillon on Futuna**

Bataillon wrote later that he gave Chanel a hand in rebuilding his house. Chanel’s own account suggests that the visit of the *Reine de Paix*, as well as the presence of Bataillon, got Niuliki into action. He made his people cut posts in the bush, sew leaves for the roof, carry sand from the beach for the floor and he did everything in his power to get the job done, in fact he joined in the work himself. The missionaries too worked with the people and kept their interest alive by donating a few pigs.

The two also worked on the language together, translated catechetical texts, prayers and hymns from Wallisian into Futunan and even composed a hymn to Our Lady, straight in Futunan. They visited all the hamlets on the island and crossed over to Alofi. Bataillon found the Futunans more open, simpler, less prejudiced against Europeans. He was convinced that, were it not because of the endemic warfare between Tua and Singave, Futuna would already have been converted.

Bataillon challenged Niuliki to bring in all the *atua muri* (charms) that hung here and there on trees and on particular places. He would burn the lot! Niuliki and the chiefs laughed at him, sure he would be too afraid of the misfortune that the spirits would bring down on him. Bataillon’s own story is that the next day the two missionaries went on a tour of the island and burnt most of the *atua muri* they found, with the villagers looking on in fear from a safe distance. The next morning the people were surprised to see the missionaries walking round unscathed. At least, that is Bataill-

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83. On the way to New Zealand the shells for Bourdin were washed overboard! LRO 1, Doc 49, 6.
84. LRO 1, Doc 28.
85. EC, pages 435–43.
86. Text of the hymn in Futunan, LRO 1, page 251.
87. Unlike Wallis, Futuna has no safe anchorage. Ships would call, but they seldom stayed for any length of time.
lon's story.\textsuperscript{88} A few days later he questioned Niuliki on his ancestral god Tanga-Roa and reduced the King to silence.\textsuperscript{89}

Chanel's meticulous day-to-day account confirms that on 1 June Bataillon challenged Niuliki to bring all the \textit{atua muri} to be burnt and that on 5 June, on a walk around the island, they did in fact burn one \textit{atua muri}, belonging to the notorious trouble maker Vae Tosso. He does not mention anything more.\textsuperscript{90} Whatever happened, Chanel's short, sober and casual mention strongly suggests that he was not all that happy with the confrontational tactics of his confrere. He had never done such a thing.\textsuperscript{91} Chanel took a more tolerant view of the ancestral religion as is clear from the fact that a few days later, when the prophetess Faremaa uttered an oracle of the god Tanga-Roa in the presence of the two missionaries, Chanel presented her with a nice dress for one of her daughters.\textsuperscript{92}

Chanel tried to talk Bataillon into staying longer, but he could not leave Brother Joseph Luzy much longer alone on Wallis. When the weather improved and Jones decided to sail to Wallis, Bataillon left, 3 July 1839. He had spent fifty-six days on Futuna.\textsuperscript{93}

The return trip turned into an adventure. There were more Wallisians than Jones' little schooner could carry and the Wallisians did not want to leave the canoe behind on which some of them had come. They decided to travel by their own craft, promising to stay close to the schooner. However, the canoe was much faster than the ship and during the night they got far ahead, heading too far south, in the direction of Samoa. In the morning the canoe could only just be seen from the masthead and Bataillon urged Jones to go after them. When the men in the canoe saw the ship following them, they misunderstood its intention and paddled even harder: further into the wrong direction! Then the weather closed in and Bataillon tried to get Jones to go searching for them, but Jones decided to abandon the pursuit and turn to Wallis. It was a rough night and Bataillon feared for the lives of the people in the canoe: 'if only they had been baptised and were in the state of grace!' Bataillon had to tell the King that the men he had promised to return to Wallis were lost at sea. The \textit{Lavelua}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{88} LRO 1, Doc 38, 4. Ronzon, \textit{Delorme}, 67, quotes an unidentified account that largely supports Bataillon's version. It could be a later paraphrase of Bataillon's own tale. Cf Excursus C at the end of the present chapter, \textit{On PowerEncounter and Iconoclasm}.
\item \textsuperscript{89} EC, page 439 (10.06).
\item \textsuperscript{90} EC, page 437 (01.06) and 438 (05.06).
\item \textsuperscript{91} Bataillon says it was the first time this was done. That would be true.
\item \textsuperscript{92} EC, page 439 (11.06).
\item \textsuperscript{93} EC, page 443 (03.07).
\end{itemize}
was upset, but he also had more confidence in their seamanship than Bataillon. In the end he did not blame Bataillon but his own men for their recklessness. As it turned out, they got to an island in the Fiji group and returned many months later to Wallis.94

**In New Zealand: the first sign of life**

All the time, Bishop Pompallier had been immersed in his missionary work. The little house in Papakawau was constantly full of people. When he was at home, the Bishop himself gave instructions in the Faith morning and evening and whatever he was doing, Maoris from far and near would walk in, sit down and ask questions, tell stories of their lives and tribes, beg for one thing or another, and he had always time to listen and to talk with them. As unpleasant as he could be with his two confreres,95 with the Maori people he was invariably kindliness itself.96 He went on long tours, walking through the dense forests across rivers and swamps to visit the *pahs* (fortified Maori settlements). He would often talk through the night, building contacts and making friends. This was the toughest part but also the core of his missionary effort and he did it mostly himself. Writing to Cardinal Fransoni on 10 November 1838 he explained that so far he had visited the tribes in the areas of Hokianga, the Bay of Islands, Kaipara and Mangonui, within a radius of 35 to 40 leagues (200 kilometer) around his residence.97

He considered this work too difficult for Father Servant, who usually had to stay home with Brother Michel and mind the shop. For lack of a printing press, he had Servant copy the sheets with religious instructions and prayers by hand.98 Between September 1838 and March 1839 he only wrote one letter to Colin—emotional and full of complaints, as he described it himself—and entrusted it to someone in the Bay of Islands for mailing. For lack of a good opportunity the letter was still lying there

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94. LRO 1, Doc 38, 5. Cf Chanel’s later hearsay version, EC, Doc 56, 3.
95. ‘The company of the Bishop has often been a source of sadness and bitterness’. LRO 1, Doc 55, 6.
96. Petit to Colin, LRO 1, Doc 56, 8.
98. ‘Father Servant still suffers of his half-deafness; all the same, he helps a little at the station itself’. LRO 1, Doc 33, 7. The copying by hand is mentioned in LRO 1, Doc 39, 8.
months later. When he found out, he was happy the letter had not been sent and he tore it up.\textsuperscript{99}

Then, in March 1839, a French ship, the \textit{Justine}, under Captain Bernard,\textsuperscript{100} arrived in the Bay of Islands, bringing a parcel of letters. It contained the letter that Colin had sent in May 1837 with money\textsuperscript{101} as well as the letter he sent in November 1837 after he had received the news of Fr Bret's death at sea. There also was a letter from the Picpus Father Liausu in Valparaiso. None of these letters have been found. Only now Pompallier learned that after receiving his letter from Santa Cruz Colin had approached the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon and obtained a grant of 8,700 francs. The money, in the form of about 100 ounces of gold, had been sent to Valparaiso. The letter of Fr Liausu told him that the money had reached Valparaiso only after the Marists’ departure from that port in August 1837. Father Liausu had divided the money in two lots. He had entrusted 50 ounces to Captain Dumont d’Urville who was on an exploratory voyage in the Pacific on the \textit{Astrolabe} and who would, in due time, visit New Zealand.\textsuperscript{102} The other 50.72 ounces he had given to Captain Bernard. On his arrival in Tahiti Bernard had been shown Pompallier’s Promissory Note and he had paid off Moerenhout.\textsuperscript{103} The remainder, 73 piastres, about 400 francs, he now handed to Pompallier.\textsuperscript{104} It was the first money the Bishop received since leaving France. Captain Bernard lent him an

\textsuperscript{99} ‘I wrote with a deeply distressed heart (. . .) a letter that would have hurt you because of the bitterness that I felt and that only God understands the depths of’, LRO 1, Doc 37, 3. Having lectured Colin on keeping his letters on file, Pompallier became confused about his own letters. On 14 August 1839 (LRO 1, Doc 33, 1) he claims to have written a letter (number 13) on 14 May. On 28 August 1839 (LRO 1, Doc 37, 3) he writes that he destroyed letter 13. There is no trace of a letter number 12, nor of a letter dated 14 May 1839. He may have confused it with a letter of 14 May 1838 (LRO 1, Doc 24). We cannot exclude that there were two letters, with the numbers 12 and 13, of which one was destroyed and the other became lost. More likely there was only one, not sent but destroyed; while the other one existed only in Pompallier’s confused memory.

\textsuperscript{100} The \textit{Justine} left Bordeaux in September 1837 with 237 German migrants for Australia. During a stop in Brazil they decided to stay there. Bernard then took freight to Valparaiso where he loaded horses for New Zealand. Liausu gave him the mail and the money for Pompallier. Cf Jore, \textit{L'Océan}, volume 1, 101.

\textsuperscript{101} LRO 1, Doc 59, 4.

\textsuperscript{102} He would reach the Bay of Islands only in April 1840. Jore, \textit{L'Océan}, volume 2, 87.

\textsuperscript{103} Pompallier did not have enough money in hand when he chartered the \textit{Raiatea} in October 1837 in Tahiti. He had left owing Moerenhout a considerable sum of money; as we can conclude now, close to 4,000 francs.

\textsuperscript{104} LRO 1, Doc 37, 5.
additional 200 piastres, about 1100 francs, on a Promissory Note against the Propagation of the Faith.

On 17 March Pompallier wrote to Mr Meynis. He thanked the Propagation of the Faith, although at that time, nearly two years later, he had received only a small part of the money. But, it was the first sign of life after leaving France. He was delighted and the good news restored his spirits.105 He sent Meynis copies of the Promissory Note he had made out to Captain Bernard.

Reinforcements!

Friday 14 June 1839 was a memorable day. The Reine de Paix sailed into the Bay of Islands. It was a moment of deep emotion. With tears in their eyes, the new missionaries sang the Salve Regina, and thanked the Lord for being ‘the instruments of his great mercy’ to the people of Oceania, called to bring them the light and the benefit of the Gospel. It was eight in the evening when the schooner dropped anchor. Baty, Petit, Épalle with the Brothers Marie-Augustin, Florentin and Élie-Régis went ashore. By chance they ran into Brother Michel Colombon who was staying with a Protestant former sea captain who ran a trade store in the Bay. Michel had come there for business four weeks earlier, but had fallen ill with jaundice. He took them to the family where they were warmly received.106 The man gave them a letter that Pompallier had left for the new missionaries he was expecting. In accordance with these instructions Baty wrote to Pompallier and handed the letter to a courier. Pompallier got the letter two days later. He walked across and met his new missionaries.

Imagine, he wrote to Colin, the joy and the renewed forces that came over this warrior, besieged on all sides and in dire need, exhausted by fatigue and success, on the point of losing

105.OPM, H00867.
106.LRO 1, Doc 32, 2 and Doc 76. This last document, marked 1 November 1840 by Poupinel, must indeed be of June 1839 as the editor of LRO explains in his introduction. Noteworthy is the phrase ‘instruments of mercy’, a Colinian saying since early days, cf Summarium 1833, number 43 (Coste, Antiquiores Textus I, page 71) and Constitutions 1842, number 358 (Antiquiores Textus, II, page 102). Bataillon used it too (LRO 1, Doc 44, 1).
everything, who then at once sees reinforcements and help arriving: this was the joy I felt in the Lord.\textsuperscript{107}

The dramatics may not have impressed Colin, but the arrival was a milestone in Pompallier’s life. The absence of information, the lack of perspective, the hard work, and the living in cramped conditions, had taken their toll. Many months of feeling abandoned, looking with expectation at the rare ships entering the Hokianga River, only to be disappointed, again and again. No sign of life, no word of assurance, neither from France, nor from Rome. No money, just getting deeper into debt. In the mid eighteen thirties about five or six hundred Europeans had settled round the Bay of Islands and Kororareka had become a busy little town. But the Bishop in New Zealand was stuck at an isolated spot called Papakawau, unable to realise his projects, unable to move to the Bay where in the course of a year some 150 English, American and even French ships would call.\textsuperscript{108}

Then, two and a half years after he left France, a year and a half since he had settled in New Zealand, he finally got reinforcements. All the time there had been just the three of them. Now, at once, they were nine. No less important, he received a considerable amount of money to get the mission moving.

From the new arrivals the Bishop also heard for the first time about the four missionaries he had left on Wallis and Futuna. He now learned they had managed to settle down among the island people and, although there were no spectacular successes to rejoice in, they were holding their own and in good spirits. He also was sure now that the news of the mission having been established on the Islands and in New Zealand had reached France and Rome. The first, exploratory phase of the Marist missions had come to an end. The separate worlds had connected.

By chance, it was that same Friday 14 June 1839, that five more missionaries, Petitjean, Comte, Viard, Chevron and Brother Attale Grimaud boarded in London the \textit{Australasian Packet} for Sydney. This time they were coming the simple and straightforward way. Compared to the first two groups they would get to Oceania in half the time and at a fraction of the cost.

\textsuperscript{107}LRO 1, Doc 33, 1.
Excursus C:  
Power Encounter and Iconoclasm

From the moment they settled on the island of Uvea (Wallis) Father Pierre Bataillon and Brother Joseph-Xavier Luzy had been very open about their lotu (religion). They prayed and worshipped where everyone could see, and when possible they stressed the difference between their lotu and the one in Tonga. But they had cautiously refrained from openly saying that they had come to convert the island. On one occasion Bataillon had shown a bold front. In January, when the Lavelua Vaimua made fun of the god of the missionaries, Bataillon warned him to beware: who knows but our God’s hand will strike your island! A few days later a cyclone blew down two thirds of the houses and many fruit-trees. People attributed the disaster to Bataillon’s God and they blamed the Lavelua for provoking him. It shook their convictions even more when they found out that the catechumens’ island of Nukuatea had not suffered much damage at all! The catechumens felt confirmed. The King was upset but he hid his feelings. He put up a brave front and went on as before. The experience jolted Bataillon. Six months later he admitted he had acted ‘(…) by I don’t know what sort of instinct’ . He soon discovered that in the Wallisians’ eyes the event had given him an aura of taboo that inspired fear and respect, and he thanked the Lord.1

The experience made him bolder. Staying with Chanel on Futuna, after the visit of the Reine de Paix, in June 1839, Bataillon openly went into discussion with Niuliki about the ancestral religion and reduced him to silence. A few days later, he challenged the King to gather the atua muri (charms) on the island for him to burn. He then went round with Chanel and they did in fact burn at least one. Chanel was not happy. Not his style. Bataillon seems to have felt that Futuna was ripe for conversion, but that

1.  LRO 1, Doc 28, 24–25. Probably the same cyclone (2 February) that destroyed Chanel’s house.
the gentle Chanel was too kind and therefore not getting anywhere. A few months later he wrote to Colin: “The burnings and all we said to them on the subject, have weakened their belief in these follies and have enhanced Father Chanel’s authority on the island.”

On Wallis as on Futuna Bataillon engaged, be it on a very small scale, in what later missiological literature has called ‘power encounter’, the biblical archetype of which is Elijah at Mount Carmel challenging the four hundred and fifty prophets of Ba‘al. As the Bible tells the story, Ba‘al remained silent at their prayers, but Yahweh sent fire over the sacrifice at Elijah’s prayers.

Pacific Church history knows similar incidents. In Lent 1834 Maputeteoa, the high chief of Mangareva in the Gambier Islands, had stood by when Matua, a priest of the old religion, had ‘allowed the Picpus missionaries, surrounded by the people, to hack down the images of the old deities in the temple that he had given them for their worship’. When in 1835 Bishop Rouchouze arrived, he himself ‘broke the coral idols with a heavy hammer as his followers processed and chanted in his train’. There is no mention of these happenings in the Marists’ letters, meaning, either they did not hear of them, which seems rather unlikely, or, more likely, they found it all rather distasteful. As we saw, Colin had heard about it, probably from Caret. He saw nothing wrong in it.

The Catholics were not the first in the field. In the 1810s, the Protestant missionaries burnt religious effigies in Tahiti. In 1822 Tahitian converts visited Hawaii and Queen Kaahumanu was so impressed by the account of the burnings that she brought many of the idols on Hawaii out of concealment and had them burned in the presence of her Tahitian guests. These stories too must have been known among the Picpus Fathers when the Marists visited them.

In 1829, in Tonga, Taufa‘ahau, the tall and imperious high chief of Ha‘apai, and a man of great daring, openly reviled his old gods and put their mana publicly to the test. He entered the shrine of an inspired priestess of his own shark god and struck her twice in the face. He then tried to

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2. LRO 1, Doc 38, 4.
4. 1 Kings 18: 20–40.
6. CS 1, Doc 64.
8. *Mana* refers to extraordinary powers that some people are believed to have because of their special relationship to the gods.
spear a shark from his canoe, believing the shark to be the offended god. The shark got away and Taufa‘ahau had two Methodist teachers thrown overboard to get the spear and bring it to the shore. When they did so unharm ed, ‘Taufa‘ahau’s determination to turn Christian was strengthened.’ One can be sure that the story was all over Tonga, and Thomas Boag, who had lived on Vava‘u and spoke the language, would surely have passed it on.

The surprising thing about the first Marist missionaries is not that, having got away with it once, Bataillon indulged in a little power encounter of his own, but that it plays so small a role in their approach to evangelisation. The only instance that occurs regularly in the accounts of Pompallier and Servant from New Zealand, as well as with Peter Chanel and Bataillon, is the breaking of food taboos, mostly on initiative of the Polynesians themselves, but encouraged by the missionaries. It will play a major role in the tragic death of Chanel as we shall see.

Power encounters remained a not uncommon feature of Pacific missions. In the 1880s, in the Solomon Islands, Clement Marau, an Anglican Deacon from the Bank Islands, was assigned to convert the island of Ulawa and ‘he personally exposed the impotence of greatly feared local spirits by joining in the cutting down of a sacred grove.’

On the island of Nggela the Anglican Charles Sapibuana, whom Bishop Patteson had taken to Norfolk Island in 1866 and returned to the village of Gaeta, gathered a small group of converts in his own kin-group. They were baptised in 1878. ‘They let go their old superstition, and faced danger in the strength of a new religion, refusing to attend sacrifices, treading on forbidden ground where sickness once was found through fear, and doing things which once brought death.’

Honoré Laval, one of the Picpus missionaries involved in the conversion of Mangareva, justifies the smashing of the idols by comparing it with Constantine pulling down the pagan temples of ancient Rome. Garrett calls it: ‘a memorable iconoclastic Pentecost, designed to dismay the anthropologists.’

Tippett gives a well-balanced discussion of an issue that indeed appals anthropologists, missiologists and observers in general. There can be no

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9. Garrett, Among the Stars, 73.
10. Garrett, Among the Stars, 186.
doubt that instances of power encounter and iconoclasm have destroyed valuable archaeological and anthropological material. He points out that in most cases indigenous people took the initiative themselves, even if—out of fear—they then asked the foreign missionary to actually dispose of the sacred objects. ‘We are confronted with changed lives, in mental set, in behaviour patterns and in spiritual satisfactions. It is a change from fear to triumph. If the Melanesian chooses to demonstrate this by dismembering or burning his tindalo or burying the skull of his ancestor, we ought to accept this at its face value, an act of faith and of victory’.13

Pacific cultures belong to the Pacific peoples. They are within their rights when they adhere to them and also when they change them. People are entitled to express their spiritual experience in whatever way they choose. Twenty-first century outsiders have no more right to condemn religious change than nineteen century missionaries had the right to impose it. Tippett claims to have investigated hundreds of cases, and to have found only two or three in which a missionary was foolish enough to take the initiative.14 If he did not count Bataillon in, that would be one more.

13. Tippett, Solomon Islands, 108. Tidalo (on Guadalcanal) are the ancestral spirits. Sometimes the word refers to objects that are believed to embody their presence or power.
14. Tippett, Solomon Islands, 106.
In New Zealand: not a hearty welcome

Father Claude-André Baty knew Bishop Pompallier. Baty had joined the Marists in 1834 and he taught in Belley for two years. He had taken part in the retreat preached by the Bishop in September 1836 and been in the first profession group when Pompallier made his declaration of loyalty to the Society of Mary. He had moved to Puylata around the time that the first missionaries left.

Maxime Petit had been in contact with Pompallier when the first group was in Le Havre. As he was working in the Diocese of Boulogne to which he belonged, he probably went to see the Bishop personally.

Jean-Baptiste Épalle joined the Marists only after the first missionaries had left. He had probably never met Pompallier. The three Brothers must all have been in the Hermitage in October 1836 when Pompallier blessed the new chapel of the house. They would not have met him personally.

In any case, the man who walked in on them after two days in the bush was not the man they had known or heard about. They expected the charming and cheerful leader who, only a few years earlier, had aroused missionary enthusiasm among the Marists in France. But, eighteen months of restless work, of hard living and tracking through the bush, of living roughly in Maori villages and, much more, eighteen months of loneliness and frustration, of feeling abandoned, had taken their toll. He seemed disgruntled and aloof. They felt sorry for him, ‘crushed down by the burden of work’, as Baty described him. ‘Let us hope we can comfort him and respond to his zeal’.1

But, comforting Pompallier was not easy. Their happy tales of visiting Wallis and Futuna were met with disapproval. The newcomers were con-

1. LRO 1, Doc 32, 2.
vinced they had done the right thing: ‘Our passage through the islands did the missions a lot of good’.2 The Bishop’s only reaction was they should have come straight to New Zealand and not have gone to the islands without permission.3 When, two months later, Pompallier got around to writing to Colin, he needed only five lines in a letter of nine pages to tell Colin about the two islands, without mentioning even one of the four missionaries there by name.4

The Bishop reproached the newcomers for having unloaded a quantity of gifts in Wallis and Futuna. Everything should have come first to the headquarters of the mission for the Bishop to distribute.5 He was annoyed also that the little organ with which they had so much success in Wallis and Futuna, had stayed with Peter Chanel. In his next letter he asked Colin curtly to send another one: ‘the heretics have one and we do not’.6

A source of particular irritation was the printing press. After muskets, nothing had so much prestige under the Maoris as books. Literacy had spread widely and the Protestants ran three presses in New Zealand, flooding the country with reading material.7 The newcomers had bought a printing press with a stock of letters but it had been stowed away without being checked. When they opened the boxes, they found that the supplier had forgotten the letter ‘o’, frequent in Maori. Petit and the two brothers spent days filing away the bars from the letters ‘b’, not used in Maori.8 Whether in the end the machines were incomplete or faulty, or whether it was their lack of training—on which Pompallier had insisted so much—it took them weeks to get the printing press going. In September it finally produced an eight-page statement of the Catholic faith, the Apostles’ Creed and the Lord’s Prayer: the first Catholic printing in New Zealand. It gave the missionaries something in hand they could distribute in the villages.9 For the impatient Bishop this was not fast enough; he sent Colin a catechism manuscript to be printed in France.10

From the beginning the men were not happy with what they saw as the Bishop’s hyperactivity. They expected a more regular life, and time

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2. LRO 1, Doc 32, 1.
3. LRO 1, Doc 55, 12.
4. LRO 1, Doc 33, 6.
5. LRO 1, Doc 34, 13
6. LRO 1, Doc 37, 8.
8. LRO 1, Doc 34, 5.
9. Simmons, Pompallier, 42.
10. LRO 1, Doc 34, 8.
for prayer and spiritual exercises. The Bishop's zeal and good heart, wrote Maxime Petit later, makes him rush out at all times and do all sorts of things. 'He looks askance at us when we–more than he does–divide our time between duty to the neighbour and to ourselves. In the early days here, Father Épalle and myself did our spiritual exercises as much as possible at moments we thought he would not notice. Not that he stopped us from praying, but because on several occasions he reproached us for praying all the time.'¹¹

All the upbraiding must have created a far from happy atmosphere in Kororareka: a repeat of what Father Servant and Brother Michel had put up with for year and a half on the Hokianga. What could they do but listen to the constant nagging in stony silence! Naturally they would afterwards talk–subdued–among themselves, which led the Bishop to blow up and reproach them for ganging up on him, or, as he put it, nurturing an esprit de corps, in the sense of 'forming a clique'. On one occasion he got so worked up that he threatened to get other missionaries from somewhere else.¹²

**Action**

With men at his disposal and money in his pocket, Pompallier wasted no time. He decided to settle immediately in the Bay of Islands. At a cost of £370 he 'purchased a beach section with a house to serve as headquarters for the New Zealand mission'.¹³ It meant the missionaries could begin unloading the *Reine de Paix*. The house had a room big enough for Sunday Mass. The same year he bought two other sections of land adjoining the plot that he had bought from John Roberton during the visit of the *Venus*. He also acquired 'a large piece of land (…) for the sojourn of the natives and above all for several establishments of the Mission, college, store, hospital, workshop, school, church' and for a cemetery.¹⁴ A young Catholic Irishman was employed to open a school for the European children as the settlers asked.¹⁵

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¹¹. LRO 1, Doc 56, 6.
¹². LRO 1, Doc 56, 3. He asked Bishop Polding to find him at least one English-speaking priest.
¹³. Simmons, *Pompallier*, 41.
¹⁴. Simmons, *Pompallier*, 41. LRO 1, Doc 33, 5.
From that moment Kororareka became the Bishop’s residence, the main station of the mission and the Procure. He kept the Fathers Épalle and Petit and the Brothers Florentin and Marie-Augustin with him. Petit was appointed Procurator in charge of sorting out and storing the mission goods. Claude-André Baty and Brother Élie-Régis were assigned to join Father Servant and Brother Michel at Papakawau.16 Even though he had only just arrived and knew neither Maori nor English, Claude Baty was put in charge of the mission on the Hokianga. He was told to take no notice of whatever Servant might tell him, as he ‘was not of one mind with the Bishop’.17 Given the atmosphere in Kororareka, Baty lost no time getting away. He and Brother Elie-Régis packed their bags and walked across to the west coast. A few weeks later the Bishop sent Épalle on the Reine de Paix around the north to the Hokianga to bring them their cases.

At this stage Father Catherin Servant had been in the Hokianga area for nearly a year and a half. English was still a problem, but he was fairly fluent in Maori.18 He was less emotional than Pompallier about the hardships they had to put up with and the resistance they ran into. It appears he had spiritual resources that Pompallier lacked and perhaps envied. But, Servant made up his own mind about things and was not inclined to be obsequious. Not that he challenged the Bishop, at least there is no mention of it. More likely he just ignored Pompallier’s moods and took no notice of the constant moaning. In any case, relations between the two were strained. Writing to Colin Pompallier called ‘poor Father Servant’ part-deaf. He considered him incapable of running a mission, even calling him ‘a real innocent’.19 But Servant was no ‘innocent’. He was a fine linguist and observer. Once Pompallier got out of the way, he proved to be an able missionary with great empathy for the Maori way of life.20 He spent a lot of time visiting the tribes, the very thing Pompallier had judged him incapable of. Fortunately Baty and Servant got along well.

When Pompallier left Papakawau, the Hokianga people missed their benefactor. As a result the chiefs at first had little respect for Servant and Baty.21 Some adherents threatened to give up attendance at religious services if the gifts did not keep coming!

16. LRO 1, Doc 33, 7.
17. LRO 1, Doc 33, 7 and Doc 55, 6.
18. LRO 1, Doc 97, 4.
19. LRO 1, Doc 29, 2.
20. LRO 1, Doc 39, 2.
21. LRO 1, Doc 39, 4 and Doc 55, 5.
In September Pompallier used the *Reine de Paix* for a trip around the north point of New Zealand to the west coast. He visited Whangaroa where he arranged to buy some land from two settlers, and Mangonui. In both places he distributed the newly printed booklets. He sailed up the Hokianga and bought a hundred acres of land at Purakau, as an alternative for Papakawau which had proved to be unsatisfactory.²² The new site was not developed as a mission centre, there was not even a church built, but served as a place for the missionaries to live and from where it was easier to visit the Maori villages. Servant, writing to Colin shortly later, does not mention either the Bishop’s visit, or the land purchase. As we shall see later, this time there was a confrontation.

The first task of the new missionaries was studying languages. In spite of the fact that Pompallier had urged Colin already from Le Havre to have the missionaries start learning English as soon as they were assigned to the missions, none of them had done so. Now they had to start from scratch. It meant that Pompallier was called in time and again to interpret. It cost him a lot of time and it hurt his pride to be reduced to be the interpreter whenever the carpenter needed a piece of timber or the cook a basket of potatoes: ‘Bishop and all that I am, I have to be everybody’s interpreter!’²³ At the same time the men had to learn Maori for which Pompallier had composed a grammar in Latin and a list of useful words.²⁴

Unpacking the mission goods proved an unnerving job. In spite of Pompallier’s instructions to the contrary, things had been packed helter-skelter, without lists of contents for each case. As a result several cases had to be opened at the same time to find specific items, which meant the locals were in the house all the time, admiring what came out of the boxes and trying to get hold of whatever took their fancy.²⁵

**Writing to Colin**

Even before Pompallier reached Kororareka, Baty had begun a letter to his friend Claude-Pierre Nyd. He finished it a few days later.²⁶ Others also

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²² Simmons, *Pompallier*, 42.
²³ ‘Hélas, tout évêque que je suis, il faut alors que je sois l’interprète de chacun!’ LRO 1, Doc 34, 7.
²⁴ LRO 1, Doc 34, 9–10.
²⁵ LRO 1, Doc 34, 3.
²⁶ LRO 1, Doc 32.
wrote. Two months later, in August 1839, a French whaler, the *Orion* entered the Bay of Islands, so they wrote again. All letters had to be handed unsealed to the bishop who dealt personally with the captains. Pompallier himself sent a nine-page letter to Colin, dated 14 August. Four days later, 18 August, he wrote what was meant to be a duplicate, but, before he got it away, another whaler, the *Pallas*, came in, delivering a letter of Colin and one from the novices at Puylata. He quickly answered both and gave the two letters with the mail that had come from Futuna two months earlier to the captain of the *Pallas* although he knew she would go whale hunting before returning to France. On 28 August he wrote again via Sydney and London, expecting it to be the faster way.

The Bishop’s letters are filled with rhetoric about the immensity of the task he had faced for so long nearly alone (presque seul) and the paucity of the means at his disposal compared to the vast numbers of priests in France. He lavishes praise, in a rather condescending tone, on the Maori people: ‘What simplicity, what frankness in those souls, what docility, what fervour for the instructions in the Faith’. He glories in his own role: ‘It is a great consolation for a priest, for a Bishop, to instruct those dear souls, to give them catechism and even a school education! Children, youth, men and women, girls and old men, they all crouch down around you and listen with the same docility’.

He is grateful for all the clothing he has received and suggests that the benefactors write their names in each piece, so that the catechumens who get the clothes can adopt the baptismal names of the benefactors.

He explains that, even with *Reine de Paix* at his disposal, he cannot go to Wallis and Futuna until the new missionaries speak enough English and Maori to manage by themselves.

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27. Cf LRO 1, Doc 84, 1.
28. LRO 1, Doc 36.
29. LRO 1, Doc 33.
30. These two letters have not been traced.
31. LRO 1, Docs 34 and 35.
32. LRO 1, Doc 37, 1.
33. LRO 1, Doc 37. The letters sent via Sydney and London arrived in March or April 1840. Shortly afterwards, in the first half of May, Colin received the mail sent with the *Orion*. The *Pallas* went whale hunting in the South Pacific for eight months. She called again in the Bay of Islands in May 1840 and went then to Le Havre where it arrived in September 1840. CS 1, Doc 200, 1.
34. LRO 1, Doc 33, 2.
He urges Colin to assign in each group someone who is in charge of packing and listing the missions goods they bring along. In France there should be a Procurator to supervise the collecting and packing of mission goods and to help the missionaries who often lack experience in material matters.35

He also needs a few really competent men to be Pro-Vicar or Apostolic Prefect for a part of the mission. He wants someone from France to visit the missions and represent its interests on his return. From letters alone it is impossible to understand the situation.36 He specifically names the Marists he would like Colin to send: Jean-Baptiste Chanut, Benoît Lagniet and Jean Forest, men he knows well. 'France has enough priests for the salvation of the French. The Society should work for the salvation of Polynesia and its twelve to fifteen million inhabitants.'37

Surprising is that Pompallier now asks Colin for someone to supervise the missionaries, someone who makes sure they follow the rule and apply themselves to their own sanctification.38 Coming from Pompallier, Bishop and Superior, it sounds like an admission of defeat. After a year and a half with Servant and Colombon, and two months with the second group of missionaries, he implicitly admits that he cannot handle them. He has no specific complaints about their religious or priestly life, he says. Nor can it be said that they neglect their prayer life. If anything, he finds they pray too much! Saying they need to apply themselves more to their ‘rule’ and to their ‘sanctification’ is his code for saying they fail in the hearty and warm obedience (obéissance cordiale) he wants the missionaries to practise towards him.39

To the novices

His letter to the novices is the sort of spiritual conference one would expect from a Bishop visiting a Novitiate. He underlines the importance of the Novitiate and the value of the hidden life they lead in preparation to their future ministry, but at the same time the letter betrays the problems and the tensions in the New Zealand mission. ‘We are overwhelmed by the task. Oh, come to our aid, dear Society of Mary! But come to our aid

35. LRO 1, Doc 33, 9 and Doc 34, 4.
36. LRO 1, Doc 34, 16.
37. LRO 1, Doc 34, 15.
38. LRO 1, Doc 34, 15.
in the way of the obedience that is so dear to you, and that is the most effective cause of success and holiness. Obedience must be the virtue *par excellence* of missionaries and catechists and the children of Mary.\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 35, 4.}

Equally revealing is another passage. As mentioned above, the missionaries in New Zealand wanted a regular life in which work and spiritual exercises alternate. They would have liked to say Mass every day, but there was only one Holy Eucharist a day, which limited each one to saying Mass every third day and on Sundays. It even happened that they said Mass only once a week, because ‘the work had to go on’.\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 56, 6.} To the novices Pompallier wrote: ‘Prayer, pious thoughts and sentiments are good things, but what we need in the missions is action, the full commitment of all a man’s faculties, full co-operation with God in everything of his service. Piety must not stand in the way of this commitment to the full.’\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 35, 4.}

For the first time in all his letters Pompallier also mentions the need for Sisters in the missions. ‘For priests, brothers, and soon perhaps sisters, there are beautiful souls to win here’\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 35, 5.} What triggered this sudden interest in the Sisters is not clear. Perhaps the novices had mentioned them.

### Selling the *Reine de Paix*

All the initiatives that Baty and his team had taken, for instance, the detour to Wallis and Futuna, unloading goods for the missionaries there, leaving the little organ on Futuna, had met with the Bishop’s disapproval. As far as we know, he at first said nothing of them spending 11,000 francs as a fifty per cent share in the *Reine de Paix*! They must have wondered. It took a few months before he showed his hand. On his return from the west coast Pompallier said the ship was unsafe, too long for its width and not seaworthy. Épalle dutifully agreed: ‘the ship nearly capsized on the North Cape’.\footnote{Keys, *Pompallier*, 115.} In October or November Pompallier caught the captain and crew drunk on board. He chased them off the ship and fired them. Finding himself without captain or crew, he sold the ship for £600 stg to John Roberton.\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 59, 32.}
Historians Simmons and Wiltgen have accepted the alleged reason for selling the ship at face value. But it defies common sense to stick the label ‘unseaworthy’ on a ship that has sailed from Massachusetts (where it was built) round Cape Horn into the Pacific Ocean, travelled repeatedly between Hawaii, Tahiti and Valparaiso and that had just finished another voyage from Hawaii to Micronesia, probably China, back to Micronesia, Hawaii, Gambier Islands, Tahiti, Wallis and Futuna to New Zealand!

What was wrong with the Reine de Paix seems to be firstly that it was selected by one of the Picpus Fathers for whom Pompallier had no time. Secondly it was bought by the same Father Baty who had, also without the Bishop’s permission, taken the initiative to visit with this ship his isolated confreres on Wallis and Futuna. Thirdly it was only a humble schooner of 34 tons, not in the same class as the large vessels of the Protestants. Selling this handy little ship was the first capital blunder of Pompallier. He could have paid off the Picpus mission with a fraction of the money he spent in a short time on fares and on chartering other ships. In the end, the purchase of the 120 ton Sancta Maria a few months later, and the running of it, ruined the finances of the New Zealand mission. As Maxime Petit commented to Colin, it was the Bishop’s conviction that the mission should put up a big show, and impose itself by an impressive set-up. But, he added drily, ‘not exactly what the apostles did’.

Servant writing

The newly arrived missionaries had brought parcels of mail and on 15 October 1839 Servant took a day off to do his correspondence. The letter he had received from Colin must have been in the same spirit as the one to Bataillon. Servant appreciated the firm spiritual guidance from the Superior General:

Your letter of 1 August 1838 has reached me here and it has given me unbelievable joy. I bless God a thousand times for the paternal feelings you express and for the concern you have for my spiritual welfare. I am touched by your exhortations. I am grateful for your directions and warnings that

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46. Simmons, Pompallier, 46. Wiltgen, Founding, 214.
47. LRO 1, Doc 56, 6.
48. CS 1, Doc 44.
make me feel your love for me. I am very happy to live in your memory and in your vigilance.⁴⁹

On four closely written pages Servant gives Colin a charming and realistic picture of his visits to the Maori pahs. He took Baty along from the beginning. He tells of their attempts to communicate, of the situations they run into, the misunderstandings and of how, in the end, through patience and listening, the message of peace and reconciliation gets across. Although empty-handed, they managed to do some good. On one place in Whirinaki they convinced chiefs and people to make peace with a neighbouring tribe instead of going to war, and in Waima they stopped a chief from killing a man who had committed adultery with his wife.⁵⁰

The Protestants continued to spread all sorts of false information about the Catholic doctrine, but it had, writes Servant, sometimes the effect that people came to talk to the priest to hear his side of the story, which gave him a good opportunity to instruct them. He describes himself doing this, his three-cornered biretta on the head, breviary in the hand. The Protestants, he says, sometimes baptise people without previous instruction so as to keep them from going to the priest. He too on one occasion was asked to baptise somebody alleged to be in danger of death, but he refrained from doing so, convinced the man would live. He did, and was instructed before baptism.⁵¹

From Terraillon too Servant had received a letter and on the same 15 October he answered him as well. Four pages show Servant to be a close observer of Maori ways. Nothing escapes his careful attention: their gestures, the tone of their voices in different circumstances, the horrible faces they pull at times, the decorations on the bodies of men and women, their works of art, their music and their dances. He describes it all in great detail, with respect and empathy, and without paternalism or romanticism. The letter was the first sketch of what eventually grew into a worthy monument of ethnography.⁵²

The same 15 October Servant answered the two letters he had received from Marcellin Champagnat. He tells his former house-mate of the dan-

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⁴⁹. LRO 1, Doc 39, 1.
⁵⁰. LRO 1, Doc 39, 3–4.
⁵¹. LRO 1, Doc 39, 7–8.
⁵². LRO 1, Doc 40. The ethnographical study exists as manuscript, Moeurs et coutumes des Neo-Zélandais 1838–42, APM, 1661/24563, later published by Ernest Simmons as Father Servant Marist Missionary in the Okianga (Wellington: Reed, 1973).
gerous travelling by canoe through the Hokianga estuary and the sometimes even more dangerous walking through the bush where he had to walk a tree trunk lying across a 30 or 40 feet deep torrent. He nearly lost his balance and dragged himself like a snake to the other side.\(^{53}\)

Servant also wrote to his parents who must have expressed concern for his safety and he puts them at rest with this sympathetic picture of the life he leads and of the Maori people he is engaged with:

They like us very much and they would not think of harming us. Living among them is absolutely without danger. When I go visiting their villages, they ask if I am hungry and they find it a pleasure to share their food with me. When you meet them they want to hold your hand and greet you; sometimes they do so by touching nose to nose, which is an important sign of friendship among them.\(^{54}\)

**In the islands of Polynesia: Wallis**

Already before the visit of the six new missionaries, in May 1839, several Wallisians had shown an interest in the *lotu*. Bataillon had gathered a group of catechumens, led by the chief Tuugahala. They met discreetly for prayers and religious instruction on Nukuatea, a small island on the outer ring of the lagoon that belonged to him. The *Lavelua* got along well with the two missionaries personally but, like many of his people, he detested the white men’s religions. When, in March 1939, he fell ill, and his healers could not help him, the King ordered Bataillon in a fit of anger to get off the island. When Bataillon pretended to get ready to leave, the King did everything he could to keep him back.\(^{55}\)

Uvea, or Wallis Island as Europeans called it, had a bad name. Many ships, whalers and traders, used its safe lagoon as a shelter, but looting ships was a national pastime and Tuugahala was feared by sea captains as a gang leader.\(^{56}\) But, the mustard seed was sown and at work. When in October 1838 people on Wallis planned to attack an American whaler, the

\(^{53}\) LO, Clisby 013, 4.

\(^{54}\) LRO 1, Doc 41, 3.

\(^{55}\) LRO 1, Doc 28, 25.

\(^{56}\) EC, page 376, 30.08.38.
John Adams, and had the Lavelua’s permission to do so, it was Tuugahala who kept them back.⁵⁷

The visit of the Reine de Paix changed the nature of the mission. It tore off the last pretence and made it clear that Bataillon and Joseph-Xavier were missionaries and had settled on the island for no other purpose than converting it to their lotu. During Bataillon’s absence on Futuna, Brother Joseph had baptised six children. One of the Lavelua’s grandchildren too had fallen ill and died before Brother had a chance to baptise it. The number of catechumens was increasing but the Lavelua’s resistance only grew stronger. He chased the catechumens from Nukuatea, beat up one of their leaders and destroyed a house. But all the time he let the missionaries live in his own compound, perhaps to keep an eye on them . . .

Bataillon handed the visitors his first, fifteen page report on Wallis and its people, for mailing from New Zealand.⁵⁸ He started another one when he got back to Wallis in July. Because he had not thought in time of making a copy of the first one, he repeated—from memory—a lot of data already contained in the first one. Part of the new letter,⁵⁹ apparently written in view of being published in the Annals, is a passionate appeal in the name of ‘we, poor Ocean islanders’ and addressed to ‘you, children of Saint Ireneus’ (the founder of the Church in Lyon).⁶⁰ It is in very much the same bombastic style that Pompallier used and that must have been acceptable at the time.

Bataillon developed a broader vision of missionary work than the familiar ‘saving of souls’. Already before we came here, he writes, other people had introduced cotton, water melon, maize, tobacco, and sweet potato. The Marists had brought in orange, pineapple, potato, flax, melon, beet, chicory, rape, mustard and the castor-oil plant. They were also trying to grow cabbage, onions and carrots. They had tried various grains, such as wheat, rye and hemp but without success. ‘Perhaps the seed was too old’, he explains, ‘or we sowed it in the wrong season.’ The grape-vines of which they had brought different varieties, were doing well, but Bataillon doubted if they would produce grapes. Some things died, others flour-

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⁵⁷. EC, page 384, 02.10.38. Rozier thinks that Chanel got the story from Jones, and that Jones got it from Tuugahala himself, boasting of his own role and importance. The context however does not exclude that Chanel got the story from Bataillon’s letter. Even if it does come from Tuugahala, it is remarkable as a change of attitude in comparison with his earlier behaviour.

⁵⁸. LRO 1, Doc 28.

⁵⁹. LRO 1, Doc 38, 11–22.

ished. There were a hundred orange-trees and growing well. Cotton too was promising. Brother Joseph had succeeded in spinning a good quantity of cotton, ready for weaving. Hemp too would be useful. Although seldom mentioned in the letters, it is evident the Marists had a program of introducing useful plants into Polynesia, ‘for the good of humanity and even religion! ( . . .) Especially in Oceania, a missionary must be a man of all trades (un homme universel).’

Even more important for humanity and religion, Bataillon writes, would be to find remedies for the tropical diseases they encountered. He gives lengthy and detailed descriptions of what appear to be yaws, leprosy and filariasis. As the islanders blame these things on evil spirits, healing them would prove that the spirits do not exist or at least that the God of the missionaries is stronger than their evil spirits. The story went that the Protestant missionaries in Tonga had tablets against some of these diseases and Bataillon plans to find out. In the meantime he wants Colin to see if doctors in France recognise his descriptions and can supply remedies. He regrets not having used his time in France to learn more about diseases and not having brought along books of medicine.

The missionaries, he reminds Colin, live and work in an English speaking world. There are many Protestants and he has to refute their calumnies and accusations but he knows not enough English. He begs Colin to send him books of apologetics, catechisms, bibles, Church history, especially on the Reformation, prayer books, all in English. Especially among the Europeans that we find all over the Pacific, he says, we should spread good books to replace the rubbish they often have brought along. They inhabit the islands where we work; we are just as much responsible for their salvation as for the heathens.

He praises the Methodists in Tonga for having translated large parts of the Bible. The translator, a certain John Thomas (whom they had met when visiting the island of Vava’u) has caught the genius of the language, says Bataillon. He has obtained a copy of the translation and is going through it carefully and critically. On controversial issues he finds what he considers a few perverse and intentionally false renderings, but he gracefully acknowledges the accuracy of texts on the Holy Eucharist. Only, he

61. LRO 1, Doc 38, 23–5.
62. LRO 1, Doc 38, 24.
63. LRO 1, Doc 38, 25.
adds, it seems that instead of bread the Methodists use the breadfruit for Communion. How awful!64

In early September Falemaa, a Wallisian chief, went across to Futuna on Jones’ schooner and spread the story that Wallis would soon accept the lotu. When a Tongan chief, Tuponeafu, on a visit to Wallis, converted with his family to the Catholic faith, it made quite an impression.65

In the islands of Polynesia: Futuna

Unlike Bataillon on Wallis, Peter Chanel (by now ‘Petelo’) had never made a secret of his intention to convert Futuna, but his approach had been very low-key. After twenty months he could report only four adult and sixteen infant baptisms, all in danger of death. Tales of oppressive behaviour by Protestant missionaries had reached Futuna from Tonga, Fiji, Samoa, Hawaii and Tahiti. As a result there was widespread distrust of the lotu papalangi (white men’s religion). Nevertheless, Chanel could write: ‘King Niuliki promised Bishop Pompallier that we would be well looked after on his island, and he has done everything to keep word. He likes us as a father.’ In March 1839, an important advisor of the King said openly that Petelo’s lotu would be a good thing for Futuna...

‘Because the Bishop had not come after six months as he had promised, Brother Marie-Nizier and myself were considered liars, and men who had been abandoned by their kin.’ The visit of the Reine de Paix had changed their situation. ‘The arrival of our confreres has the best possible effect on all the minds,’ he wrote during their presence, ‘they listen to us with pleasure, everyone wants to meet the new arrivals, and they do not stop asking for their names. When told of the interest that the people in France take in them, their eyes fill with tears. Wherever we turn up it is: marié Farani!’ (long live the French).66

Still, by having not been considered a threat in any way, they had also been rather harmless. But the visit made clear that the religious future of Futuna was at stake, that Chanel and Marie-Nizier were not there because they had been abandoned by their own people. On the contrary, they were on a mission, backed by a large organisation overseas. Once Bataillon had

64. LRO 1, Doc 38, 26. The editor of the LRO reminds us that the translations were done by a group of people, and that Thomas was not the most important of them, but he was the only one Bataillon had met. LRO 1, page 271, note 30.
66. EC, Doc 45, 6.
left (3 July), Chanel and Marie-Nizier were on their guard for signs of estrangement.

Shortly later, still in July 1839, only a little more than a year after the last war, deep-seated resentments were working their way again to the surface. The vanquished, called the Lava, in Singave, nurtured their hostile feelings against the victors, called the Malo, living in the eastern part of the island called Tua. Singave hooligans raided Tua hamlets, and while the old Lava men proclaimed their loyalty to Niuliki, they were in fact scheming to bring him down. They would sit down to negotiate, promise to rein in the young hotheads, but at home they expressed regret when the young men returned home without having killed a Malo. The ancestral gods spoke loudly of revenge, and war cries resounded at the background of peace initiatives. A whaler from Sydney sold muskets and powder at the price of ten pigs apiece, chiefs around the old Vanae (the senior Singave chief) shouted the old war songs and kava was offered him with the ceremonial usually reserved for Niuliki. Peter Chanel walked all over Singave with Thomas Boag and observed the mysterious rituals that nobody wanted to explain. On the point of returning to Poi they were asked by the Singaves not to tell the Malo about what they had seen. Chanel did his best to turn the tide, but in vain. Both sides got hold of more muskets and one young man badly hurt himself trying out his musket with a bag of powder between the legs! On 9 August the Singave crowd bought another ten muskets.

The next day Niuliki prepared a meal he wanted to present to the Singave elders as a sign of goodwill but when he got to the Tuatafa Creek, he ran into open warfare. The Singaves initially managed to throw the Tua back. After one or two volleys the muskets were useless, and a pitched battle followed with spears, lances and war-clubs. In man-to-man fighting the Singave were outnumbered two to one. Soon the young Singave warriors ran, leaving their elders to die on the field, as was customary. The wounded were mostly massacred on the spot, with an Englishman, William Peel, who had joined the Singave side.

That day Singave lost eighteen men, mostly elders. Only a few of the wounded survived. The Tua lost ten men but had a large number of wounded, many of whom died later on. Niuliki himself had received a
spear through his shoulder. He appealed to Chanel and Marie-Nizier who had remained in Poi the entire day, to care for the wounded. The victorious Tua rampaged all over Singave, burning houses, killing pigs, cutting down trees and destroying food gardens. Late in the evening they returned home, shouting victory and loaded with the spoils of war. They also carried the Englishman Moara (Moore?) whom they had captured in Singave, stripped nearly naked. They offered the missionaries some of the seized pork but Chanel refused.71

Chanel was very concerned about the precarious situation of Sam Keletaone, the chiefly Singave man who had first contacted the missionaries on their arrival. He was a renowned warrior and widely seen as a potential king and contender for the paramount chieftaincy of Futuna if ever the tables turned on the Tua. He was a friend of the missionaries and Chanel stayed with him whenever he was on that side of the island. He had openly expressed his interest in the Christian lotu. Chanel advised his friend to flee to Wallis on the Sydney ship that had been fishing around Futuna. Sam got away before the formal surrender of the Lava. Chanel thereby put the man whom the Malo hated the most, out of their reach!72

For days the Futunans of both sides were busy burying the dead and carrying the wounded to their villages. Once the fighting was over, the Lava gradually came down from the densely wooded mountain sides where they had taken refuge, and presented the symbols of submission to King Niuliki, who accepted the surrender magnanimously.73 The actual fighting had been extremely bloody, but warfare on Futuna was in no way vicious savagery. Women and children were not hurt and no revenge was taken once the fighting ended.74 Within a few weeks Chanel observed Singave people working on new taro gardens.75

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71. EC, Doc 56, 5.
72. EC, page 456, 15.08.39. In 1845 Brother Marie-Nizier described it as an act of great charity, which it was. However it must have been seen as a political statement all the same. Rozier, Chanel, Doc 76, 25–6.
73. A similar thing happened two months later, cf EC, page 471, 27.10.39.
74. EC, page 458, 21.08.39. Children were tapu in war, cf EC, page 332, 04.03.38. One thing and another confirm what has been pointed out by different observers, namely that warfare in Polynesia was highly ritualised. ‘No matter how serious the issue, the formalities of consultation and the etiquette of war were always strictly followed.’ Kerry Howe, quoted in Obeyesekere, Cannibal Talk, 130.
75. EC, page 464, 10 September.
Unlike some Europeans on the island the two missionaries had stayed away from the actual fighting, but for many days they were busy, caring for the wounded, removing spears and arrows from bleeding bodies, and consoling the bereaved. Peter Chanel cried when he saw the mutilations of the wounded and the humiliation of the vanquished offering their submission. ‘From that time’, he wrote later to Bishop Devie, ‘people seem better disposed towards the religion than before’. It would be interesting to know whether this applied to both sides, but Chanel does not say.

On 8 September Niuliki came and asked for goat’s milk for his sick child, a week later he visited them and prepared them a meal. On his way to Asoa Vere, on 16 October, Niuliki walked through Poi and passed the house where the two were present, without calling in. On his way back he walked past again. It was unusual enough for Chanel to mention it in his diary, but as subsequent events show, relations between Chanel and Niuliki were as friendly as before. On 30 September 1839 Marie-Nizier wrote to Champagnat: ‘Since that time the King has shown us every care and been more attentive to our needs than those of his own children’. On 5 December Chanel ate with the King and the senior chiefs as usual.

A few days later Chanel felt free enough to argue with the King who wanted to make an offering to the atua muri. Niuliki did not give in but he listened. On 22 December Chanel had a friendly discussion with the King on religious matters. Also in December a group of people were building a little sanctuary for an ancestral spirit to obtain rain. Peter Chanel surprised them by not going to look at them and not lending them his tools for a job he said was for the devil. People put it down to a bad mood and let him get away with it. On 15 November a pig he had just bought was stolen while Chanel was away. The relatives of the thief came to apologise and gave him another one.

76. Chanel has left us two lengthy and detailed accounts of the war: his diary, EC, page 453–5 and his long letter to Bataillon, EC, Doc 51, 2–4, and a shorter account in a letter to Bishop Devie, EC, Doc 56, 5. Other accounts of this war are found in Nizier to Champagnat (30 September 1839, LO, Clisby 011, 22–8) and, much later, Nizier to Colin (29 July 1845, CCC, Doc 76, 21–6). Also, Twyning, Shipwreck, 120–7.

77. François Rouleaux-Dubignon, later a missionary on Futuna in his summary of the Chanel diary interprets Niuliki walking past the missionaries house without calling as a sign of his growing resistance to the lotu. Neither the letters Chanel wrote at the time, nor the diary justify this interpretation. Rozier also rejects it. EC, page 472, note 5 and page 483, note 3. More likely it was connected with the long drought that the ancestral spirits failed to bring to an end. Cf EC, page 468–9.

78. LO, Clisby 011, 10.
At times there were people who expressed a desire to become Christians. On 29 September Chanel mentions a young catechumen who came to apologise because he had carved his face as a sign of mourning, evidently something he knew Chanel disapproved of. On 14 November Chanel speaks of a real interest in religious instruction among Singave people. They now, he noted, are no longer afraid to eat fish and birds that are taboo. Nizier wrote about the same time: 'Most of the islanders appear well enough disposed to us. But many are afraid their gods will be angry with them if they become Christians.' A dying young man wanted to be sure there were coconuts in heaven and the same clean water as on Futuna before accepting to be baptised! On 3 December a chief told Chanel the whole island would turn Christian if the King allowed it. One Futunan kindly brought a nice piece of pork as an offer to the God of the *papalangi* (white men).

On 18 September Chanel baptised a sick child of Musumusu (a chief close to the King); it died a week later. On 9 November a small son of Niuliki was seriously ill. With the consent of Niuliki and his wife, Chanel baptised the child in a full baptismal ceremony. The child died and on 9 December he gave it a Christian burial. People were moved to tears by the beautiful ritual and said they too wanted to be buried that way.

**Chanel takes care of his correspondence**

The *Reine de Paix* had brought a thick parcel of letters. Once the visitors were gone Chanel had the time and the leisure to answer. He wrote a long letter to Bishop Devie, in which, with many other things, he reflected on the death of Claude Bret with the conclusion: 'Missionaries die; the mission goes on.'

79. LO, Clisby 011, 30.
80. This description of the situation on Futuna in the second half of 1839 is based on the daily jottings of Peter Chanel. Marie-Nizier’s letter from that period to Champagnat (LO, Clisby 011) confirms the general picture given by Chanel. Later accounts of Marie-Nizier give the opposite impression, namely of growing hostility towards the missionaries after the visit of the *Reine de Paix*. Cf LRO 3, Doc 350, 7 (of October 1844) and LRO 3, Doc 389, 37 (of July 1845). His later interpretation tallies with the one of François Rouleaux. In 1843 and 1844 Marie-Nizier and Rouleaux were both on Futuna and they had the complete diary of Chanel in hand but both were promoting their Martyr.
81. EC, Doc 57, 3.
He wrote a long letter to his friend Bourdin\textsuperscript{82} and to Antoine Séon to whom he confided that the moment of grace for Futuna was near.\textsuperscript{83} He wrote to Bajard, the chaplain of the sisters of Fourvière through whom he sent his regards to Canon Pastre, the man who set the Marists on the way to Oceania.\textsuperscript{84} He wrote to Bolliat, the priest in Cras, where his mother lived,\textsuperscript{85} and to Vincent Vuillod, the parish priest of Cras whom he thanked for looking after his mother.\textsuperscript{86} He wrote to two boys at the Minor Seminary of Belley, Claude Buiron and Loïys, and an open letter to all of the boys.\textsuperscript{87} His letters show Chanel the warm-hearted man he was. With every letter he sent greetings to former colleagues and to friends, often with special mention of their mothers or sisters. He did not forget the Sisters and the ladies who did the house keeping for Séon. He retained an interest in what happened in France, and mentioned the new steamboats on the Rhône that the visitors must have told about and that, he added, must make travelling a lot easier for Colin.\textsuperscript{88} He did not forget the parents of his friend Claude Bret, of whom he had heard that they had taken their loss with edifying resignation.\textsuperscript{89} All letters give the impression that he felt safe and expected Futuna to turn to the Faith in not too far a future.

\textbf{From France, group three on the way}

As we have seen, Peter Dillon had met in February 1838 with Bishop Pompallier in the Bay of Islands. He would have been told how the Marists had travelled around Cape Horn. Later that year he left the Pacific, passed through Paris and reached London on 10 January 1839. He immediately started a commercial venture to exploit his knowledge of the Pacific and joined up with a Sydney man, Daniel Cooper, a pardoned convict, who had built a successful shipping business in London. Dillon had an acquaintance in Paris, a certain Peter Scratchley, to whom he sent a letter, dated 18 February, that found its way to Father Colin. From his extensive knowledge of the oceans Dillon argued that Cape Horn was about the worst way to go to New Zealand. He recommended travelling through London

\textsuperscript{82}. EC, Doc 53. Bourdin was to be his first biographer.
\textsuperscript{83}. EC, Doc 54, 2.
\textsuperscript{84}. EC, Doc 55.
\textsuperscript{85}. EC, Doc 58.
\textsuperscript{86}. EC, Doc 57.
\textsuperscript{87}. EC, Doc 52.
\textsuperscript{88}. EC, Doc 54, 6.
\textsuperscript{89}. EC, Doc 54, 9.
where his friend Cooper offered passage to Sydney for £70, a journey of four to five months at the most. Cooper could also arrange passage from Sydney to New Zealand for a mere £10. Mission goods to Sydney cost £2 per ton.90 As far as we know the Superior General did not react at the time.

On 29 April 1839 Pierre Colin wrote to Heptonstall, Bishop Polding’s agent in London, asking for accommodation for five missionaries and begging him to look for a ship to Australia. He may have mentioned Peter Dillon; in any case Heptonstall contacted Dillon who came to a provisional agreement with Cooper and offered bookings for five men on the newly commissioned *Australasian Packet* for 1625 francs (£65) per person. Pierre Colin accepted the offer by letter of 16 May. That same week the missionaries were in retreat, followed by the Solemn Mass of Pentecost Sunday and professions. Colin gave them some 2,000 francs in small change for travel expenses and on Tuesday 21 May the Marists in Lyon saw Petitjean and Viard off on the river-steamer leaving Lyon: a lot more comfortable than the former coaches! In the excitement Pierre Colin forgot to tell the missionaries that their bookings were already arranged through Peter Dillon.

As the river-steamer drew out of the city they felt the pain of leaving, but the comfort of the vessel allowed them to get over it, as Petitjean later remembered, ‘in sweet conversation’.91 They relaxed after the last-minute bustle, and reflected gratefully on the eager care of Poupinel and the concern of their superiors. Mutual support carried them along and they enjoyed each other’s company.

They moved up the Saône and via the canals of Bourgogne they reached Paris where they stayed at the centre of the Foreign Missions of Paris. The bursar had already bought what was further needed (a list had been sent ahead) and they only needed to pack things. They visited the Ministry of the Navy and with the letter of recommendation from Archbishop de Pins, and the help of Vigneti, who was an acquaintance of Jean-Claude Colin92 and Secretary at the Ministry, they obtained letters of recommendation from the Minister, Duperré, to naval commanders in the Pacific. They visited the Picpus headhouse and met with a venerable old priest, an uncle of Fr Bachelot whose death on the way to Pohnpei had just become

90. APM, 2276/11653.
91. CS 1, Doc 70, 2.
92. Petitjean to Colin, 25 May 1839, APM 1405/20034. How Colin had become acquainted with Vigneti we do not know.
known in Paris. Another steamer took them to Boulogne (although the coach would have been 18 francs cheaper!) where for an extra 1.25 franc they booked a bed on the ferry and reached London twelve hours later, well rested, on Monday 27 May 1839.

Comte, Chevron and Brother Attale left Lyon Thursday 23 and reached Paris on Saturday. They stayed at the same place and left early the next morning. They made good use of the short time they spent at the Seminary listening to the experienced missionaries in charge there, Dubois the Rector and Tesson the Bursar. Both found the Marists trusting just a bit too much in Providence. They drew the Marists’ attention to the importance of the natural sciences, of botany and geology, and invited them to send plant seeds to the botanical society in Paris. Comte listened with some surprise at their interest in such earthly matters but passed it on to Colin. They went on to Boulogne and crossed over to London where they arrived Tuesday 28 May. On 23 July the departure of five Marists, via London, was mentioned in L’Ami de la Religion.

London

Heptonstall had arranged a boarding house for the missionaries, run by a respectable Catholic for 25 shillings a week: ‘less expensive and more comfortable’ than a hotel. Petitjean and Viard ran into a local businessman, a Mr Knill, who helped them get their luggage through customs without trouble and have it stored. Chevron, Comte and Attale followed two days later, but with barely any knowledge of the language it was a hassle for the two groups to find each other, and to contact Heptonstall.

Not knowing about the arrangements already made, the missionaries started looking around themselves for a way to book for Sydney and were directed by a Catholic who they felt was not entirely trustworthy, called Devoy, to the Captain of the Sultan, about to leave for Australia. They had nearly come to an agreement when Dillon was informed by Heptonstall of their arrival and turned up with Pierre Colin’s letter! Petitjean had no choice but wriggle out of his near-agreement with the Sultan but he clev-

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93. Bachelot and Maigret had sailed from Honolulu in November 1837. Bachelot died 5 December at sea and was buried near Pohnpei. Maigret left Pohnpei in July 1838 and reached Valparaiso in December, a few days after Baty.
95. L’Ami de la Religion, 23 July 1839.
erly used it to bring the fare with Cooper down to sixty pounds. For that price they booked on the Australasian Packet.\textsuperscript{97}

Petitjean reported to Colin that they had left Lyon with 40.781 francs, and having paid their expenses in London and their fare to Sydney (5 x 60 = £300, or 7,500 francs), they had, including a few other gifts, 35,360 francs left.\textsuperscript{98} In London they were told that personal cheques for more than £300 (7,500 francs) would take a month to be cashed in Sydney, so they divided the money among themselves and each one took a personal cheque small enough to be cashed immediately.\textsuperscript{99} It then appeared that the boxes of the second group were missing and Comte had to cross back to Boulogne to trace them. Their first conclusion: new missionaries should know at least some English before departure, even if, in Chevron’s words, it is ‘the most barbaric language spoken under the sun’. Second conclusion: the Society should as soon as possible open a house in London to facilitate travelling to Oceania, but also because of the pastoral opportunities of London. Petitjean gave Colin addresses of people who he thought would be happy to help.

That left them with three weeks to explore London. They found things very expensive in what they called ‘the port of Babylon’. They could not believe how big London was (‘twice the size of Paris’) and how well laid out it was, with sidewalks everywhere, wide open squares and parks closed off for carriages. ‘La plus belle ville du monde’, ‘the most beautiful city of the world’. Quite a few Catholic churches, ‘small, poor but very clean!’ They lodged near the church of Saint Thomas but, in order not to embarrass the parish priest, they went to say Mass at different places. Everywhere they went priests were friendly and invited them for breakfast.

Dressed in frock coats (redingotes) tailor-made in Lyon, they went on long walks, admired Saint Paul’s, London Bridge and Westminster Abbey. Moving about without a map, they got repeatedly lost.\textsuperscript{100} They would go out without noting down their own address, and without money in their pockets to take a cab. Afraid to take a coach, for fear they would not find their way back, they walked for miles! England was a real discovery. They were surprised at how well the British people lived (carpets to the front

\textsuperscript{97} Dillon tells the story a bit differently. Cf Davidson, Dillon, 298. Davidson calls the ship the Australia.

\textsuperscript{98} Petitjean to Colin, from Gravesend, 15 June 1839, APM 1405/20043.

\textsuperscript{99} Comte to Poupinel, from London, 14 June 1839, APM 1405/20043.

\textsuperscript{100} Petitjean to Paillasson, from Sydney, undated, APM 1405/20043.
door!), how calm and composed they were, and how courteous and helpful. Even at the customs office, things were tidy and clear.

Our Frenchmen got a little dose of culture shock. Comte found the English peaceful (police are unarmed!), phlegmatic, but, he added, they all look alike. Women lack the delicacy and modesty that only religion can give! Those big blond men, Comte felt, all stared at his black hair and beard.\(^{101}\) They struggled with the English food (seasoned so as to melt the palate!). You become an Englishman by eating all dishes together and mixing them. Petitjean is full of praise for everything except the English kitchen. ‘When it comes to cooking, the English are ignorant.’ Not to mention the British habit of drinking beer at table instead of wine!

They paid a visit to Lord Petre, scion of an old Catholic noble family, who was a Director of the New Zealand Company that sent regular ships with migrants. They got various letters of recommendation.

They had a look at their ship, the *Australasian Packet*. A new ship, just being registered. Small, but beautiful and comfortable, *vraiment coquet* (distinguished)! They were assigned three cabins, Viard and Attale sharing one, Chevron and Comte the next one. Petitjean had a cabin for himself. They were given two little cabins to say Mass when the weather permitted. They bought Mass wine, flour (to make hosts), candles, paper and pencils, deck chairs and chamber pots.\(^{102}\)

**Travelling**

Inspection by the British Customs was a mere formality. When the Customs Officer saw a theology book he closed the bag and let everything pass. The missionaries got the mission goods and their personal luggage on board in London and followed the ship to Gravesend from where they sailed on 14 June 1839. In spite of their objections the two boxes that happened to hold their chalices were stacked under in the hold so they could not say Mass.\(^ {103}\) The ship sailed with 36 people on board, crew included. The courtesy and the respectful manners of the British surprised the French priests. They were even more surprised when they were asked to

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102. Petitjean to Colin, from Gravesend, 15 June 1839, APM 1405/20043.
103. One of them wrote it was done out of malice which, given subsequent events, is unlikely. It look as if the Frenchmen were inclined to suspect everywhere the anticlericalism common at home. Colin believed and quoted it (CS 1, Doc 99, 6).
say a prayer before meals whereby all present, Jews and Protestants, would stand up, hats in hand.

After a few rough days the sea calmed and a fine wind carried them to São Tiago, in Cape Verde, where they stayed four days to take on water. The captain kindly had the sailors go down into the hold to get the boxes with the chalices, so they could say Mass.

Cape Verde was what the Canary Islands had been to the first group: their first confrontation with a non-European world. The tropical vegetation deceived them into thinking they had found the horn of plenty. 'If only their natural laziness would not prevent these people from working!' They saw the numerous slaves and picked up stories of ill-treatment by their owners, and they met a poorly instructed clergy that they found showed little zeal. Their missionary spirit tempted them to get involved, especially when people started kissing their hands, but they stuck to distributing medals.

Petitjean wrote to Colin and to his brother-in-law Paillasson, Viard wrote to Colin, Brother Attale to Champagnat. There may have been other letters. The stories were published in the Annals of January 1840. On 16 July they celebrated the feast of Our Lady of the Carmel and left that evening.

During the three months sailing, from Cape Verde round the Cape of Good Hope across the Indian Oceania, they knew rough days but for the most part the voyage was uneventful. Only in Bass Strait the *Australasian Packet* barely escaped being thrown on an uncharted submerged rock. Nearing Sydney the Captain had slaughtered the remaining livestock for a last festive meal when the ship was becalmed for a week (without meat). Finally in the early morning of 23 October the ship dropped anchor.

### Sydney

The missionaries presented themselves to Bishop Polding who took them to the chapel for a *Te Deum* and graciously offered them the hospitality of his residence. Next Sunday there was a solemn High Mass in the Cathedral in thanksgiving for the fortuitous voyage of the new missionaries. They immediately wrote to Pompallier that they had reached Australia.

104. CS 1, Doc 114, 6. Petitjean to Paillasson, July 1839, APM 1405/20043.
Sydney at that time had ‘a population of over 20,000, and a main street
two miles long, with splendid public buildings and residences that would
have done credit to a provincial town in England.’ The buildings re-
mined the Frenchmen of London, except that Sydney streets were wider
and the houses stood apart, well spaced and surrounded by gardens.

The Marists were impressed by Bishop Polding and his Benedictine
monks, especially their care and compassion for the numerous convicts,
many of whom were Catholics from Ireland and Canada. The positive
impression they had gained of the British people in London changed
when they saw the harsh and arrogant treatment meted out to convicts in
Australia. Petitjean accompanied Polding on a visit to the prisons. He was
told how they were often sent off to Australia on the smallest of pretexts.
The Benedictines also told him about the aboriginal people and the inhu-
mane way they were treated.

There were several ships to New Zealand, but some were booked full,
others had left by the time the Marists found out about them. Finally, by
the end of November, they managed a booking on the Marthe and reached
the Bay of Islands, probably on 10 December 1839.

In France: a new player on the field

In 1838 a man joined the Society of Mary who was to play a major role
in the running of the Pacific missions, Victor Poupinel. He was born
in 1815 in Vassy, in the Diocese of Bayeux, Normandy, and had passed
through the seminaries of his Diocese. As a seminarian he learned of the
Society of Mary and its missions from the Annals of the Propagation of
the Faith. Shortly after becoming a deacon, in July 1838, he was given
permission to enter the Society of Mary with a view of going to Oceania.
He joined the Marists at the Minor Seminary of Belley while Jean-Claude
Colin was officially still the Superior there. It did not take Colin long to
notice his extraordinary gifts. In September 1838 Poupinel was sent to
Lyon to do his novitiate in Puylata under Claude Girard as Novice Master.

106. Yarwood, Marsden, 270, quoting a letter of Samuel Marsden from 1836.
107. Petitjean to Paillasson, undated, from Sydney. APM 1405/20043.
108. The armed rebellion of Louis Papineau, 1837–1838, had probably led to a wave of
deportations.
109. Petitjean to Paillasson, undated, from Sydney. APM 1405/20043.
110. LRO 1, Doc 47, 2.
111. Monfat, Les Tonga, 115, makes it 9 December.
112. CS I, page 111, note 1.
Local Superior was Pierre Colin who handled day-to-day business for his brother Jean-Claude, especially in financial matters and for the missions. In May, Poupinel while still a novice was asked to do secretarial work connected with the missions. Perhaps his Norman background helped, in any case, he immediately set to learning English. From that time on, many letters to Rome, to the Propagation of the Faith and others, are of his hand. He made his profession on 3 September and was ordained a priest twelve days later. He was immediately appointed General Procurator for the missions.

A few months earlier, in May, just after Petitjean and his companions had left for London, a parcel of documents from Rome arrived in Lyon for Bishop Pompallier. Deacon Victor Poupinel forwarded them to Heptonstall with the request to hand them to the missionaries, or, if they had left, mail them to New Zealand. In a brave attempt to write in English he introduced himself as the man looking after the affairs of the missions and he humbly apologised for the mistakes he was bound to make, as he put it, in your ‘outlandish language’.

Heptonstall had graciously offered his services to the Pacific missions and between the two of them they quickly rationalised communications. From now on mail for Oceania will go via the Superior of the Foreign Missions in Paris and the Chaplain of the French Embassy in London. Parcels are to be addressed to an agent in Boulogne. Everything comes together at Heptonstall’s office who will take care of sending things to Polding in Sydney. Expenses will be refunded by Charles Weld of the Propagation of the Faith in London. Weld will be reimbursed by the Propagation in Lyon via Choiselat, their Secretary in Paris. Unfortunately, for some time to come, it remained a theory.

It was a learning experience for both. Often Poupinel made the first draft (minute) for a letter and Colin would annotate. Some letters went through several drafts before the final text (expédition) was neatly written and sent off. The drafts were often filed for reference, but Poupinel always kept a summary as well. For Cardinal Fransoni Poupinel wrote a draft that contained minor matters such as asking advice on the possible opening of a Marist house in London, the disappointing lack of news from Wallis and Futuna, the increasing numbers of migrants from England to New Zealand etcetera. The final version was trimmed back to the business at

113. CS 1, Doc 73, 1.
114. CS 1, Doc 80, 3.
hand and dispatched.\textsuperscript{115} It gave Poupinel a chance to learn from Colin’s way of handling affairs: short and to the point. From then on all letters were acknowledged and referred to by their dates, something that, to the irritation of Pompallier, Colin seldom did. Amounts of money were given in exact figures with details on how and when they were sent. Little things that added a welcome edge of professionalism to the administration of the missions. If only everybody would follow suit!

\textbf{Widening the horizon}

Victor Poupinel took over the contacts with the Propagation of the Faith and from Meynis he enquired how other missions operated. He wrote to the Picpus head-house about shipping opportunities and got a prompt answer from the Superior General, Mgr Bonamie, about a navy vessel due to sail for New Zealand.\textsuperscript{116}

At the end of September Colin sent Poupinel with Antoine Dubreul, still a novice, on a tour to Paris and Normandy. From their base at the house of the Foreign Missions they paid a visit to the new Foreign Minister, Marshal Soult,\textsuperscript{117} whom they found enthusiastic about the support that the French Government could and should give to its foreign missionaries: ‘bringing Catholicism to those islands means making them French! (\textit{on les francisera})’\textsuperscript{118} French commanders must protect French missionaries, because they spread French influence in the Pacific and open the way to French commerce. If the mission buys land it should be registered with naval captains. The Government must establish French stations, send consular agents and give financial support. Poupinel got the impression that the Minister’s concern was not only commercial and political, but religious and humanitarian as well. Soult was indignant at ‘the barbarous way Britain was destroying primitive peoples’ and France should call a halt to the English invasion into the Pacific (\textit{paralyser l’envahissement des Anglais})! He asked for a detailed report on the activities of the Marist missions.\textsuperscript{119} They also visited Jean-Baptiste Teste, the Finance Minister, who

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{115} CS 1, Doc 82 shows two drafts, the final version and a summary of a letter to Cardinal Fransoni.
\item \textsuperscript{116} CS 1, Doc 89, 1. The supply vessel \textit{L’Aube} that in fact sailed only on 19 February 1840 under Captain Lavaud. Cf Jore, \textit{L’Océan}, volume 1, 197.
\item \textsuperscript{117} A cabinet reshuffle in May 1839 had put new men on positions that were important for the missions.
\item \textsuperscript{118} CS 1, Doc 97, 4.
\item \textsuperscript{119} CS 1, Doc 97, 13. Petitjean and his companions.
\end{itemize}
promised a thousand francs for the missionaries who had visited the Ministry a few weeks earlier.120

Poupinel and Dubreul went to see the Nuncio, Antonio Garibaldi and the Rector of the Irish College in Paris, McSweeny, who immediately offered the Society of Mary a college in Limerick. They also paid a visit to the Picpus head-house.

They went to Normandy where two priests in Caen, friends of Maxime Petit, had donated altar linen and vestments for the missions. In the same town they visited Jean-François Yvert, a layman who had asked to become a missionary in Oceania.121 In Le Havre they renewed contact with Franques who had been of great help to Bishop Pompallier in December 1836. Franques undertook to notify the Marist administration regularly of ships travelling to the Pacific. Poupinel showed imagination and initiative by giving Franques the names and the whereabouts of the Marist missionaries with the request to pass the information to captains sailing for the Pacific. They returned to Lyon the first week of November 1839.

Politics

Around that time, as it happened, Paris was buzzing with rumours of projects concerning New Zealand. The claims of the self-styled Baron Charles de Thierry of having obtained vast tracts of land in New Zealand, and of being recognised by indigenous chiefs as a sort of sovereign had been discredited but shipping interests in Bordeaux had an eye on the Banks Peninsula and the Chatham Islands while London and Paris suspected each other of planning to take possession of New Zealand. The French Navy wanted a permanent base and the Ministry of Justice a penal colony. The feeling in Paris was that France was letting the British get away too easily with establishing dominance over the Pacific. A convention was worked out in secret between French officials and the Compagnie Nantobordelaise, specially founded to put French settlers on the South Island of New Zealand. The convention foresaw in the appointment of a Royal Commissioner. Even those not privy to the deal admitted that appointing a Consul with a wide mandate and stationing a naval vessel were the least one could do.122

120. CS 1, Doc 111, 1.
121. CS 1, Doc 174, 1.
122. Jore, L’Océan, volume 1, 188–205.
As Poupinel was visiting ministries and dignitaries he must have picked up at least some of these rumours. He knew of Pompallier’s contacts with the Navy and he had read the Bishop’s letter of 14 May 1838 with the story of the visit of the Heroïne. At the Picpus head-house they would have told him of the intervention of the Vénus in Tahiti. Naturally Poupinel would consider it part of his mandate to promote the good cause.

In the course of these events he met with a certain Emmanuel Éveillard, a fervent Catholic, who had already applied for the post of Consul in New Zealand. The man had been received by the Foreign Minister but his written application was full of self-praise and far-fetched dreams. He argued that many of the poor British settlers in New Zealand as well as the Polynesian tribes would easily rally to the French cause if only there were more French Catholic priests than Protestant ministers. There should be monks of different orders to found abbeys and develop agriculture, establish schools and take up the role of the ancient monasteries in France. His application made much of the spiritual benefit of the French presence for the Maoris. The Government should actively support this development, not excluding significant financial help for the missionaries. He supported the idea of buying the Chatham Islands to establish a college of higher education, including a seminary. Without telling him the ministry quickly put Éveillard’s application aside. They opted for Lavaud, a sober naval commander.

Éveillard saw in the Marists a promising avenue to pursue his ambitions. He wrote a seven-page letter to Colin expounding not only the need for a French Consul in New Zealand, but also for the Society of Mary to take on the pastoral care of the penal colony he expected to be established in New Guinea. 123

After his return to Lyon Poupinel kept up a busy correspondence with the officials he had met with in Paris, 124 with the Nuncio, 125 and others. 126 On 9 October the Minister for the Navy, Admiral Duperré, promised naval facilities for mail, and support from naval commanders. 127 Out of the letters received from the Pacific a report was composed for Marshal

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123. CS 1, Docs 102, 104 and 113.
124. With Soult, CS 1, Docs 106, 119, 123 and 129.
125. With Garibaldi, CS 1, Docs 101, 108 and 128.
126. With Teste, CS 1, Docs 111 and 127. With Duperré, CS 1, Doc. 115. With Vigneti CS 1, Doc 124.
127. Duperré to de Pins, 9 October 1839, APM 2275/11629.
Soult.128 Unaware of the fact that the Ministry had in the meantime discarded the candidacy of Éveillard, Poupinel kept pushing not only for free passage on Government vessels and for the speedy appointment of a Consul in New Zealand, but also for Eveillard’s candidacy. He even tried to get the backing of the Nuncio, of Archbishop de Pins, of McSweeny and of a prominent cleric, Olivier, who was a personal counselor of the Queen.129

What Jean-Claude Colin thought of Poupinel’s involvement with the high and mighty he kept to himself. He knew what was going on. It was probably not quite his style but he signed the letters, having inserted little corrections here and there. When Éveillard had the missions and the Society mentioned in secular papers like *la Gazette* and *la Quotidienne* Colin had Poupinel urge Eveillard to hold off.130 On the wild project for the Chatham Islands he urged that nothing be done without Bishop Pompallier’s concurrence. Of the commitment to pastoral care in a penal colony, he stipulated it was thinkable provided the Government asked for it. Although the new Procurator still needed to develop a degree of circumspection, the Superior General gave him plenty of room.

**Buying land in New Zealand?**

When passing through London Petitjean had noted the lively interest many British people took in New Zealand, and the talk about cheap land there. Several people had suggested that to acquire substantial land-holdings would be of advantage to the Catholic mission. Petitjean found the suggestion rather distasteful, but at the same time important enough to add a special postscript to his letter to Colin after boarding in Gravesend.131

In his talks with Meynis, Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith, Poupinel had heard how Mgr Portier, Bishop of Mobile (today Alabama), who had initially relied on support from the Propagation, had attained financial independence by the judicious acquisition of land, and how Mgr Loras, Bishop of Dubuque, was well on the way to do the same.132

Colin found the question important and difficult enough to submit to Cardinal Fransoni in Rome.133 His letter, dated 20 July was answered on 27

128. The report is dated 22 November 1839, CS 1, Doc 100.
129. To de Pins, CS 1, Doc 107; to McSweeney, Doc 103; to Olivier, Doc 109.
130. CS 1, Doc 102, 2.
131. Published in the footnote of CS 1, page 143.
132. CS 1, Doc 82, 19 and 20.
133. CS 1, Doc 82, 26.
August: ‘You ask my view on the advisability of buying land and properties in New Zealand in order to make the mission self-supporting. I do not think it would do damage to the mission provided the income from those properties is used exclusively for the benefit of the mission. It is done in other mission fields without prejudice to the Church. It did not cause a scandal and people did not take offence.’

They need not have worried. The missionaries had quickly discovered how much the Polynesian people valued land, in New Zealand as well as in the tropical islands. The Marists were aware that the Protestant ministers were involved in buying land and they knew what it did to their reputation. They quoted a saying they had picked up among Maori people: ‘They took our land and gave us a book.’ As a result the Marist missionaries took a more restrictive view than Propaganda in Rome and the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon. When Pompallier bought land around this time from the Maoris at Kororareka, a casual visitor overheard the Bishop saying he would ‘hold the land in trust, to be returned to the Maori people when the possession of land would be of greater importance in their eyes than it was at that time.’ These words alone should be valued as a monument to his wisdom, to his love and to his respect for the Maori people.

**Writing to Pompallier**

The new man alongside Colin made all the difference also to the correspondence with Bishop Pompallier. Colin had written only four letters in three and a half years. When Poupinel became involved, four letters went in half a year.

The first one, of which we only have a résumé, is dated 24 May, the day after Comte, Chevron and Brother Attale left Lyon. It announced their departure and how much money they carried for the mission. It also told

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134. Published in a footnote of CS 1, page 156, note 2.
135. Petit to Colin, LRO 1, Doc 57, 1. The same month of April Comte told his parents of Waimate, a place he had passed when walking across from the Bay of Islands to the Hokianga after his arrival in New Zealand: ‘A splendid place where several Protestant missionaries have established themselves: beautiful gardens, fields full of cattle and sheep and extensive cultivated lands.’ LRO 1, Doc 54, 3.
136. Overheard by Jameson, a visitor to New Zealand in 1839. The quote is in Simmons, *Pompallier*, 43.
137. In May 1837, 27 November 1837, August 1838 and 1 December 1838.
the Bishop that the Propagation of the Faith agreed to the purchase of a schooner.\textsuperscript{138}

The occasion for the second one, dated 21 September, was information that had come in about a navy store ship about to leave Brest for New Zealand.\textsuperscript{139} Poupinel used the opportunity to react to the list that Pompallier had spelt out on 21 May 1838, of the nine letters sent since 24 December 1836, and that so far had not been acknowledged systematically. He assured him that all of them had arrived. He also acknowledged the ones of September 1838. And these, he tells Pompallier, are the last ones we have received so far. There was always a chance that letters had gone astray, he admitted, but it seemed imprudent to send more missionaries until there was further news! There was even more reason for the reminder than Poupinel knew. Apart from the March letter to Meynis and the letter he tore up later,\textsuperscript{140} Pompallier had not written between September 1838 and August 1839!

Having read the anxious appeals of Pompallier in the letters from September 1838, Poupinel accounts for all money sent so far: 8,700 francs in May 1837 to Valparaiso with Captain Brelivet; 52,240,80 francs with Baty in September 1838 and 41,738,60 francs with Petitjean via London, in May 1839.\textsuperscript{141} Another thousand francs has been promised by the Government in Paris and will be sent as soon as possible. But at the time of writing, September 1839, nobody in Lyon knew if any of this money had in the meantime reached Pompallier!

The Bishop is told of the suggestions that the new missionaries had been given in London about buying land in New Zealand, about the consultation of the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda and of the answer given. In any case, ‘there are letters from Rome on the way through Polding’s agent in London.’ The Bishop is also informed of the new arrangements by which all mail will now go to Oceania, namely via London and Sydney, and asked to use the same channels.

Although Poupinel addressed Bishop Pompallier in the letter with the same \textit{Votre Grandeur} that Servant used and that had annoyed Colin, who had always stuck to the less formal \textit{Monseigneur}, the Superior General signed the letter.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{138} CS 1, Doc 72.
\item \textsuperscript{139} CS 1, Doc 89.
\item \textsuperscript{140} Pompallier to Meynis, 17 March 1939, OPM, H00867. It was received in Lyon just before Christmas 1839, cf CS 1, Doc 119, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{141} CS 1, Doc 89, 2.
\end{itemize}
When Poupinel returned from Paris and Normandy, there was good reason to write a third letter to Pompallier, dated 9 November 1839.¹⁴² He was happy to tell the Bishop of the enthusiastic support he had met with in Paris, involving several ministries. Naturally he did not forget Soult’s remark: make those islands Catholic and you make them French! He also passed on the Foreign Minister’s suggestion to have all land deals registered with French naval captains, a thing Pompallier had already done.¹⁴³

Poupinel’s hand shows where he does what Colin refused to do: he slipped in a few news items. For a priest of the Archdiocese of Lyon, as Pompallier was, it was more than small talk to know that Cardinal Fesch had died in Rome, whereby the See of Lyon had become vacant. Pompallier must also have been grateful, if perhaps less than happy, to know that his supporter, Archbishop de Pins, was for political reasons passed over for the succession in Lyon, in favour of Cardinal Isoard, archbishop of Auch, who then died before he could take possession of the See.¹⁴⁴

On 29 December, Poupinel wrote to inform Pompallier that Baty’s letter from Tahiti had reached Lyon and what information it had given on the 8,700 francs sent in May, 1837, and seemingly lost. He told Pompallier a letter had arrived from Petitjean in Cape Verde, and informed him of what the Government was planning for New Zealand, the appointment of a French Consul and the penal colony in New Guinea, and of what had been written in connection with the project of a school in the Chathams.¹⁴⁵

After the Marist retreat in September 1839 Maîtrepiere moved into Puylata as an assistant with a particular interest in the Oceania mission. From the same time we note Poupinel adopting a lower profile. He gets involved in preaching missions and we hear little of him apart from keeping the books of the Procure and drafting some letters. The change is so striking, it cannot be a coincidence. Did the senior ranks feel that the young man from Normandy was going too far too fast? And that Colin had given him too much leeway? If the same senior ranks had indeed a hand in the change, they unfortunately missed seeing the improvement in communications that Poupinel had brought about. Nobody picked up the thread.

¹⁴². CS 1, Doc 97.
¹⁴³. When Captain Dupetit-Thouars called in the Vénus in October 1838.
¹⁴⁴. CS 1, Doc 79, 10. Fesch died 13 May 1839. De Pins was known to be a légitimiste because he opposed the House of Orléans that had supplanted Louis XVIII of the House of Bourbon in 1830. Cardinal d’Isoard died 7 October 1839.
¹⁴⁵. CS 1, Doc 122.
Chapter 8
1840 Part 1: Wave After Wave

A series of waves,
each one breaking upon the coral ringed shores of the South Seas,
each one overtaken by the next before its energy is quite spent

JW Davidson

Group after group

The second group of missionaries, led by Claude Baty, had left France in September 1838, circling the globe in westerly direction, around Cape Horn. Letters sent in January 1839 from Valparaiso reached France on 26 April of that year. Also in January 1839 Baty wrote from Tahiti and that letter reached Colin on 22 November. The missionaries landed in New Zealand in June 1839, but in the beginning of 1840 this was not yet known in France.

The third group, led by Petitjean, left in June 1839, via London, east bound around the Cape of Good Hope. Letters sent in July from Cape Verde reached France in December. By that time they themselves had reached New Zealand, but news of their arrival did not reach France until many months later. Early 1840, three full years after the first departure, the Superior General knew of only the first group that they had reached Wallis, Futuna and New Zealand. Understandably, he was inclined to put off further departures.

However, the work of Victor Poupinel was bearing fruit. On 16 September 1839, Mgr Raphael Bonamie, Superior General of the Picpus Fathers, wrote to Colin to let him know that a naval vessel was preparing to

1. CS 1, Doc 63, 2.
2. CS 1, Doc 101, 3.
3. CS 1, Doc 114, 6.
leave for New Zealand from Brest.\textsuperscript{4} On 16 December 1839, Nicolas Soult, Minister of Foreign Affairs and President of the Cabinet in Paris, offered free passage for four missionaries on the supply ship the \textit{Aube}, going directly to New Zealand.\textsuperscript{5} As the news got around, a few older priests in Belley volunteered, but Colin did not release them: ‘As a good \textit{pater familias}, I have to look after the continuity of the family. If I let the senior members leave, what would become of the house, of me, and of the Society?’\textsuperscript{6} Colin assigned two priests who had recently joined in order to go the missions and Champagnat selected two Brothers.

Poupinel composed a gracious and substantial letter of thanks to the Minister. While reminding him that their first purpose was to work for the salvation of souls, he wrote, the missionaries retain a great love for their mother country and will in that spirit always promote the good of France. As the \textit{Aube} was sent out in the context of the planned French settlement on the South Island of New Zealand, for which a Royal Commissioner was being appointed, the letter assured the minister that the missionaries would always conform to what the Royal Commissioner determined for the good order, the policing and the governance of the French settlements. ‘Great respect for the law is the spirit that will guide us everywhere, and I am sure that our missionaries will recommend submission and good order to all people by their example and their influence.’\textsuperscript{7}

\textbf{Who were they?}

On 23 May 1839, \textbf{Jean Pezant}, a twenty-eight year old priest of the Diocese of Clermont, took the coach at Clermont and found there were two older priests already on board: Jean-Claude Colin and Étienne Séon. The two had left Lyon after seeing off Viard and Petitjean leaving Lyon for Paris, London and the Pacific, and were on their way to Bordeaux and Angoulême where two Marist priests had become informally involved in a parish.\textsuperscript{8} Pezant had been dreaming of the foreign missions but his parish priest strongly opposed it. He got into a conversation with Séon: Pezant told him of his dreams, Séon spoke of the missionaries who had just left for Oceania. Pezant asked if he could enter the Society and Séon referred

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{4} Bonamie to Colin, 16 September 1839, APM 2231/10449.
\item \textsuperscript{5} CS 1, Doc 119, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{6} CS 1, Doc 130, 3.
\item \textsuperscript{7} CS 1, Doc 119, 4.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
him to the older man in the company, Colin, who had kept quiet until then. Whatever it was Séon and Colin told him of the Society of Mary and its missions, Jean Pezant immediately knew where his vocation lay. Back home, his parish priest acknowledged the workings of Providence and Pezant entered the Novitiate. He was assigned to the missions, professed on 7 January and appointed superior of the next group.9

Jean-André Tripe had already been in charge of a parish in his Diocese of Fréjus (Var) when he joined the Society. Later on he claimed that he never had the intention of committing himself permanently to the mission. He was somewhat older, had the habits of a settled parish priest and was rather set in his ways. Colin later described him as: ‘full of virtue, but hot-headed, a man from the South’.10 It did not stop Colin from accepting him for the Society. After a short Novitiate he was appointed to the Pacific mission.

Brother Claude-Marie (Jean-Claude) Bertrand. Born in 1814 in Saint-Sauveur-en-Rue (Loire) he was a second cousin to Champagnat. As a boy he wanted to be a priest and began seminary studies but had to abandon them to help his mother run the family shop when his father died. He entered the Hermitage in 1835 and made perpetual profession on 10 October 1836. He was a well educated man, a qualified teacher and was in charge of an orphanage at Saint-Chamond when he was appointed to Oceania.11

Brother Amon (Claude) Duperron was born 1811 in Chauffailles (Saône-et-Loire). He entered the Hermitage in 1837 and, probably without a period of temporary vows, made perpetual profession on 10 October 1838. He later said he only entered religious life to avoid having to marry a rich girl instead of the poorer one he was in love with. Whatever the truth of that statement—possibly an excuse for his later behaviour—he was accepted for profession and selected for the foreign missions.12

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9. CS 1, page 123, note 1. The meeting with Colin in the coach left a lasting impression on Pezant. He mentioned it in a letter during the voyage to Oceania, Pezant to Colin 30 January 1840, APM, 1405/20047, and again, thirty-three years later, 22 July 1873, APM, personal file.
10. Tripe to Poupinel, 1 August 1844, APM, personal file Tripe. Mémoires Mayet, S1, 24*.
12. Ronzon, Frères Maristes en Océanie (FMO), 60.
Departure

On 7 January, 1840, the Fathers Jean Pezant and Jean-André Tripe made their vows in the chapel of Puylata. The gilt-silver heart that Peter Chanel had hung around the statue of Our Lady of Fourvière was taken to the Marist house for the occasion and the two priests added their names on the enclosed ribbon. Colin gave them his blessing and they embraced in a farewell for ever. Colin recounted the events and the departure in a letter to the communities of Belley and used the occasion to introduce the special prayers for the missions that became traditional in the Society.

They carried several parcels of letters and were given 29,000 francs from the Propagation of the Faith for Bishop Pompallier. For Poupinel it was an occasion to write on Colin’s behalf. The involvement of the Government broadened the Marist missionary horizon. Missionaries devote themselves not only to the conversion of the heathens, he wrote, but also to the betterment of their temporal state. For France it is an opportunity to show its loyalty, its generosity and its commitment to promote the civilisation of numerous and worthy peoples, just what Poupinel had heard from Government people during his visit to Paris. Poupinel could tell Pompallier of the favourable instructions to naval commanders, of the appointment of a Royal Commissioner for New Zealand and the general goodwill in Paris for the Pacific missions.

On the way

The two Brothers moved from the Hermitage to their own community in Lyon and made their separate way to Paris where they joined the priests. Both groups travelled by coach and arrived safely in Paris where they lodged as usual with the Foreign Missions of Paris. It was a very cold winter. The rooms had no heating and the water froze in their rooms! Perhaps the reason why the welcome they got was not as hearty as with earlier groups.

Colin had given the missionaries letters of introduction to various Ministries and to the Nunciature. Vigneti helped them along and they

13. Tripe would in fact return to France in 1844 and rejoin his Diocese.
14. CS 1, Doc 130, 1–2.
15. CS 1, Doc 126, 1.
16. CS 1, Doc 134, 9. The canals may have been frozen over as well, which would explain why they travelled by coach and not by river steamer like their confreres six months before.
were well received everywhere.\textsuperscript{17} When Colin learned that Soult as Minister of Foreign Affairs had asked them to report to him personally on the progress of the missions and on Maori culture, he had Poupinel rush a letter to Pezant to prevent letters going directly to the Government. What was meant for the Government should pass unsealed through Marist headquarters.\textsuperscript{18} From their hosts the missionaries learned of a compendium of Roman instructions for missionaries. It was too late to get copies but they informed Colin.\textsuperscript{19}

They met with Captain Cecille who had visited Pompallier on the \textit{Héroïne} in May 1838 and he gave them a letter for the Bishop. They got the thousand francs that had been promised and the usual letters of recommendation to naval captains and French officials and were given boxes of seeds and vine cuttings. They learned that Lavaud, already the Captain of the \textit{Aube}, was appointed Royal Commissioner for New Zealand and that a naval vessel would be stationed permanently in New Zealand to protect the French settlers about to leave for the South Island. They met with Éveillard who still hoped to become French Consul in New Zealand one day. They made an attempt to meet with the Picpus Fathers but the Picpus headhouse was just then readying seven missionaries of their own and too busy to receive the Marists. Apart from books in English they bought \textit{Voyages du Capitaine Dumont d’Urville}, the book Peter Chanel was reading on Futuna.

Having finished their business in Paris they travelled with nine large cases to Brest where they arrived 19 January and lodged in the Navy Hospital until boarding. Even before sailing out into the Ocean, Tripe was seasick and the two Brothers felt queasy at the rolling of the heavily loaded ship in the harbour. In any case, it gave them time to relax. Pezant wrote two long letters to the Superior General and Claude-Marie wrote to Champagnat.

As he relaxed, Pezant had time to reflect and he cried at the thought of his mother,

‘old and in poor health. I shall surely not see her again in this life. It tears at my heart. Thanks to God, mother was perfectly resigned and told me to go in peace. (…) The memory of my brothers and sisters who have always done so much for me,
pains me very much. I am so sorry I did not tell them I was leaving when I saw them last, ( . . . ) but it was better so.20

The Marist headhouse still proved not up to the job of fitting out missionaries. Instead of letting each have the necessary clothing made personally (ready-to-wear clothing and shoes were unknown at the time) there appears to have been a general supply from which clothing and shoes were packed in their cases. The sleeves of Pezant’s shirts were far too long and his shoes were too small!

Handling money also was a problem. They lost count of their expenses and left 230 francs lying in their room in Paris. The Brothers proved to have very little in the way of clothing and when departure was delayed again and again, they had to buy warm clothing in Brest, quite expensive but a godsend once they got into the unseasonably wintry Indian Ocean.21

**Going around the world**

For months the *Aube* had been lying for anchor in Brest, waiting until the authorities formulated their instructions to Captain Lavaud.22 When the missionaries got to Brest, they had to wait another month, utterly bored. Finally, on 19 February 1840, the Captain could hoist the sails. When the ship left the port, the four missionaries gathered in their cabin to pray. They then went on deck to waive their home country good-bye. When they came out, a fog bank hid everything but a few rocks, the sky and the sea. Tears welled up in their eyes.23

For more than a week the *Aube* was battered by storms and the missionaries were violently seasick in their cramped quarters, so much so that Pezant managed to fill five pages on the horrors of sea-sickness!

The ship called at Tenerife where they had the Bishop consecrate a chalice so they could say Mass on board. They had a dose of culture shock at what they saw as ‘dreadful moral corruption, laziness, dirt and shameful nakedness. I was proud to be French’. The ship called at Saint-Louis and

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22. Jore, *L’Océan*, volume 1, 188–205, describes in detail the political and diplomatic bungling in England as well as in France concerning the future status of New Zealand.
Gorée in Senegal, where, on the advice of Captain Lavaud, they bought 30 lbs of tobacco to take to New Zealand.

The bewildered missionaries underwent the usual ceremonies on crossing the Line although Neptune did not apply the full severity of the French Navy and after paying five francs they escaped a dunking. Overcoming their initial reluctance they got into the spirit of the thing.24

On 11 May the *Aube* turned around the Cape of Good Hope into the Indian Ocean. For nearly two weeks they had beautiful weather but then it turned quite cold and for a month fierce storms pushed them eastwards along the 40º degree South. The *Aube* was heavily loaded and a few other vessels on the way to Australia overtook her.

It was not a happy group. There was a Maori on board, called Etaca, serving as a sailor. Brother Claude-Marie Bertrand enjoyed the opportunity to teach him and tried to pick up the Maori language. He noted down words and little sentences, and cleverly discovered that Maori did not have tenses like French. Pezant proved an officious sort of Superior. He stopped Claude-Marie from working with Etaca and took it on himself. Claude-Marie had to swallow twice but booked it as a small sacrifice to the Lord.25

Brother Amon Dupeyron neglected the common spiritual exercises and was several times reprimanded by the Superior, which he took badly. As Pompallier later wrote to Colin, Pezant did not know how to keep a community happy and how to get along with the Brothers.26

The pious Marists were often shocked at the behaviour and the language on board. There were heated discussions on religious matters with the officers and the crew that led to angry outbursts of anticlericalism. Problems arose in part from the fact that the Brothers as well as the Fathers sat at table with the officers. Their remarks and table manners provoked especially the younger officers.27

The itinerary was somewhat open. During the voyage there was talk of calling at Cape Town, but that was cancelled. Then the idea was to go directly to the Banks Peninsula on the South Island with a previous call at Hobart where the missionaries could disembark and look for a ship to the Bay of Islands. Because of the many shallows in Bass Strait the *Aube*

24. Pezant to Colin 29 April 1840, APM 1405/20047. Later on, Pezant advised Colin that at least on naval ships missionaries should refuse to take part in the baptisms, LRO 1, Doc 74, 6.
27. Pompallier to Pierre Colin, 6 August 1840, LRO 1, Doc 69, 2–4.
passed South of Tasmania, and plans changed again. The ship did not call at Hobart and went directly to the Bay of Islands where they arrived late in the evening of 11 July 1840, after five months at sea.

Brother Claude-Marie wrote to Brother François Rivat, expressing among other things his warm feelings for Marcellin Champagnat, not knowing of course, that Marcellin had died a few weeks before.28 Pezant had started a letter to Colin in May at sea, but he sent it only on 4 September.29 Pompallier announced the arrival of the fourth group to Colin on 22 July.30

**Reporting to Rome**

In March 1840 Jean Cholleton went on a voyage to Rome and Colin used the opportunity to write to Cardinal Fransoni. Cholleton had already expressed a desire to join the Society of Mary when, after the death of Cardinal Fesch on 13 May 1839, it became clear that de Pins would not become Archbishop of Lyon, the Archdiocese he had governed as an Apostolic Administrator for twenty-five years. Colin still introduced Cholleton to Fransoni as Vicar General.

The contacts of the Fathers Pezant and Tripe with the Foreign Missions of Paris had drawn Colin’s attention to the existence of Roman instructions for the missions. He asked Fransoni for these documents to help the missionaries prepare for mission work.

Colin informed Cardinal Fransoni that the last news he had received from Pompallier was from September 1838, nineteen months earlier. He complained that he had not received any news at all from Wallis and Futuna, apart from the fact that Bataillon, Luzy, Chanel and Marie-Nizier had been dropped there in November 1837, two and a half years before! Of the second group that left in September 1838, he only knew they had got as far as Tahiti. Of the third group that had left in June 1839 he only knew they had been in Tenerife and Gorée. He confessed to Fransoni that under the circumstances he was reluctant to send more missionaries. Still, a fourth group had just left in order to profit of the free transport on a naval vessel.31

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28. Ronzon, FMO, 44.
29. LRO 1, Doc 73.
30. LRO 1, Doc 64.
31. CS 1, Doc 147.
Promoting Peter Dillon

The confusion that had arisen with the booking of Petitjean and his companions from London in June 1839 gave rise to new correspondence when, in January 1840, Peter Dillon wrote an angry letter to Colin. Naturally assuming that the missionaries had known about his deal with Pierre Colin, he could think of no other explanation than that Heptonstall had talked them into changing to another ship. Moreover, he wrote that the other ship (the Sultan) was such a rotten old wreck that he would not send a dog on it ‘for which I had any friendship’.32 The missionaries had caused him a lot of extra work and expenses. Recalling his early services to the Church when he planned a first mission to the Pacific with de Solages, and claiming large landholdings in New Zealand, he hoped to be appointed a stipendiary French Consul in New Zealand and he asked Colin to use his influence with Ministers in Paris in his favour. He must have been hard up, because he asks Colin to answer him post-paid.33 Also in January, Dillon’s wife died which is probably why this letter was sent only on 24 April 1840 with another one in which he could tell Colin that the Australasian Packet with Father Petitjean and company had reached Sydney on 23 October. He again offered his services to get mission goods to Sydney and repeated his convictions that a French Consul was needed in New Zealand.

On 2 May Poupinel answered on behalf of Colin, partly in English. He apologised for the confusion about the bookings: it was all our fault, we forgot to give the missionaries a copy of the letter we wrote to you confirming the booking you had offered. No fault of Heptonstall!34 Poupinel assured Dillon that the Society would do its utmost to get a Consul appointed. In fact, after his vain efforts to get Éveillard appointed, Poupinel was careful not to get involved in pushing another candidate.

Missed opportunities?

When Tripe and Pezant passed through Paris they heard of an association in England that promoted emigration to New Zealand and offered free passage to Catholic missionaries. Tripe told Colin35 and two weeks later Colin wrote to Bishop Thomas Griffiths, Vicar Apostolic of London, to

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32. In fact, the ship went down with all hands shortly afterwards, CS 1, page 334, note 2.
34. CS 1, Doc 159.
35. CS 1, Doc 134, 4.
find out if there was any truth in the story. Heptonstall, who answered on his behalf, had to disappoint Colin. Free passage was allowed only if Catholic priests accompanied Catholic migrants.

Poupinel’s attempts to correspond with Heptonstall in English had given the English Benedictine the impression that, in view especially of their missions in the Pacific, the Society would be interested in having Marists learn English. He used his letter to Colin to offer a place for a Marist in the Benedictine College of Downside that was looking for a French teacher. In his answer Colin ignored the opportunity this opened up for the Society. He focused simply on the service he might have rendered to the Benedictines, but, unfortunately, he did not have the men. ‘If one day our numbers increase, I would gladly help you with two priests.’ Moreover, he adds, ‘the rule forbids putting a man by himself.’ Heptonstall may have raised an eyebrow. By himself? In a Benedictine abbey? And was it more important for the English to learn French than for the French to learn English?

Two months later Heptonstall tried again. He offered to send a Benedictine monk to Lyon to teach English and learn French at the same time. Meanwhile an enquiry had come in from two English seminarians who might be interested in joining the Society of Mary. It proved a good excuse for the Marists to turn down Heptonstall’s second offer. The seminarians did not come and nothing further was done. Opening up to the wider world was not a Marist priority.

A few months later Colin received a letter from Petitjean, who had become acquainted in Sydney with John Joseph Therry, an Irish priest working in Hobart. Therry had met with Captain Dumont d’Urville and offered him in writing 20 acres of land he owned 25 miles from Sydney with a good anchorage and a fund of £100 to build a college to train mission workers for the Pacific. Perhaps he wrote, the French nation would support the project and find religious to staff the college. He sent Petitjean a copy and, as Therry intended him to do, Petitjean forwarded it on 24 February to Colin for the Society and for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon.

36. CS 1, Doc 138.
37. CS 1, page 237, note 1.
38. CS 1, Doc 153.
40. Petitjean to Colin, 24 February 1840, LRO 1, Doc 50. Therry mentioned the Jesuits as a possibility. Still, in spite of the fact that he knew the Society of Mary had no English speaking members yet, he must have had the Marists in mind as well. Otherwise, why send it to Petitjean? Therry remained a friend of the Marists. Later he tried to give
Nothing ever came of any of these projects. Although the Society was engaged in a part of the world where at that time English was the only lingua franca as Pompallier had repeatedly pointed out, the full importance of learning that language had not become clear to Colin. He even used the commitment to Oceania—the main reason for promoting English in the first place—as an excuse for not accepting the Benedictine offer! A few years earlier Colin had spoken with great vision: ‘The whole world must be Marist’ but when windows opened up to that world, all he had to say was: ‘We all have more than enough to occupy ourselves, without looking for other work.’ We must conclude that in its early years the Society of Mary missed out on several promising opportunities, in Ireland (when a college was offered in Limerick) and now in England and Australia.

Sailors and a stowaway from Oceania

In May the local paper of Le Havre carried a story of three native New Zealanders (the name Maori had not yet become familiar in France) who had arrived on the whaler Albatros. The national paper l’Univers took up their cause and reminded its readers of what had happened a few years earlier when two sailors from the same country had been whisked away to England by representatives of the Methodist missionary agency. Why does our government not do something? Does France not have its own missionaries in New Zealand? ‘In Lyon we have the headhouse of the French missionaries who sent Mgr Pompallier to New Zealand. What better way to make them look with favour on our compatriots than to give them the faith of France: Monsieur Colin, the Superior General of the Marists would surely open his house for them and convert them while they are here.’

Éveillard and Meynis both wrote to Colin the same day (the Marists only read l’Ami de la Religion). Colin, or perhaps Poupinel, jumped into action, letters went to Vigneti in Paris, to Franques in Le Havre and to Langlois, the superior of the Missions Étrangères in Paris, offering to take in the three Polynesians and look after them. However, in the meantime Franques had found out the three were not from New Zealand at all! Two were Hawaiians, one was from the Tuamotu Islands, countries where the


41. FS, Doc 2.
42. CS, Doc 153, 2.
Picpus Fathers were active. The last one claimed to have fled his island because the Protestant missionaries forced him to dive for fish every day. He had hidden on a French ship in order to get to France and become a Catholic! Once in port, the Captain had just put them ashore and left them to fend for themselves. Franques had contacted the Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith in Paris, presumably to alert the Picpus Fathers. What became of the three Polynesians we do not know.\footnote{CS 1, Docs 161, 162, 163, 165, 166, 168 and 169.}

**Communications**

As mentioned, Colin complained to Fransoni on 22 March 1840 of the scanty news from Oceania. A month later he received Pompallier’s letter of 28 August 1839. The letter had been eight months on the way and it was the first one Colin got in a year.\footnote{The last ones had been two letters of September 1838 (LRO 1, Docs 29 and 30) that Colin had received in April 1839, cf CS 1, Doc 63.} To make things worse, the Bishop wrote of entrusting letters to French whalers even though they take a lot of time hunting on the way, casually adding that, of course, the route via Sydney and London was faster!\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 37, 1.} This astonishing logic led on 22 April to a rather curt letter admonishing Pompallier not to rely on French whaling vessels but, please, to use the speedier way via Sydney and London.\footnote{CS 1, Doc 154. Poupinel was preaching missions in early April in the Diocese of Moulins (CS 1, Doc 151, 7). The letters to Polding and Heptonstall of the same date (CS 1, Docs 153 and 155) indicate that Poupinel was back on 22 April. Still, no draft but only a summary has been found of the letter to Pompallier. Reactions of Épalle and Pompallier later show it was indeed understood as a ‘curt admonition’.} In letters to Bishop Polding in Sydney and to Heptonstall in London Colin (or Poupinel?) assured himself of their help in getting the blocked communications to flow again. Colin’s reaction was understandable and not undeserved but through an unfortunate concurrence of circumstances, his letter was destined to ignite the conflict with Pompallier.Ironically, within weeks, on 12 May 1840 another parcel of letters arrived with the Bishop’s letter of 14 August, sent with the Orion. Pompallier asks for pictures of the Pope and Colin passes the request to Cholleton in Rome.\footnote{LRO, Doc 33, 11 and CS 1, Doc 173, 17.}

From Bonamie Colin had confirmation of Captain Cecille’s visit to Pompallier in May 1838.\footnote{Bonamie to Colin, 16 September 1839. APM 2231/10449.} From Franques in Le Havre Colin heard via
Peters, the Captain of the whaler *France*, that the missionaries were building a new chapel in the Bay of Islands and that Pompallier was extremely popular. By the end of April Colin had to hear from Peter Dillon in London that Petitjean and his companions had reached Sydney on 23 October.\(^{49}\) In early May Colin also knew that the British government had sent a Governor to New Zealand whereby ‘it became a British colony’\(^{50}\) One thing and another must have shown Colin that better communications between Lyon and the missions were not impossible.

An important thing he overlooked was keeping the missionaries informed of things at home. Keeping up with current affairs was evidently not part of Marist life. From his isolated post on the Hokianga River Baty asked how the Society was doing in France. Did it continue to grow? Who were the new Marists? What works did the Society take on? Other missionaries had the same questions. Baty asked Claude Girard to do something about it. Colin may have had his reasons to restrict his own letters to a spiritual exhortation and leave sharing other news to others. But without an organised plan, the missionaries were dependent on casual remarks in letters and on the stories of newcomers.\(^{51}\) Nobody in France seemed to see the implications of keeping a widely spread society together. As a result the missionaries often felt left out, even abandoned.

**In New Zealand: Arrival of the third group**

While in France group four, of Pezant, Tripe, Bertrand and Duperron was getting ready to sail, group three, Petit-Jean, Viard, Chevron, Comte and Brother Attale Grimaud came in sight of New Zealand. On 9 or 10 December 1839, the *Marthe* dropped anchor in the Bay of Islands. Pompallier received them with his episcopal blessing and set to rearrange his personnel. A week later the Bishop heard that a ship would leave for a trading cruise to the tropical islands. Against the recommendation of Colin who wanted Pompallier to keep Chevron with him for a time, he sent Chevron and Brother Attale to Wallis and Futuna. Chevron was added to the

\(^{49}\) Dillon to Colin, 24 April 1840. Colin to Dillon, 2 May 1840, CS 1, Doc 159, 11.

\(^{50}\) Colin to Fransoni, 5 May 1840. CS 1, Doc 160, 2. Colin can on 5 May hardly have known of the Treaty of Waitangi (6 February 1840). He must have heard that William Hobson left London in August 1839 for New Zealand for the purpose, cf Michael King, *History of New Zealand* (London: Penguin, 2003), 156.

\(^{51}\) LRO 1, Doc 66, 2.
team. Attale was to replace Marie-Nizier whom Pompallier wanted to have in Kororareka. They were given to understand that they would reach Wallis in about three weeks.

Pompallier appointed Comte to Purakau on the Hokianga River as an assistant of Baty. Servant was called to Kororareka. Brother Florentin, who had arrived with the second group six months earlier, would go with Comte and replace Michel Colombon who was likewise changed to the Bay. Comte got a letter away to his family and on 9 January the two left with fifteen carriers for the long walk to the west coast.

In early January 1840 Pompallier appointed Epalle and Petitjean with Brother Elie-Regis to open a mission at Whangaroa where he had been able to buy a property. They were assisted by an energetic and able convert Maori chief, called Amoto. Viard was to stay at Kororareka with Maxime Petit and Brother Marie-Augustin, soon to be joined by Servant and Brother Michel.

Having sold the *Reine de Paix*, Pompallier asked Captain Lateste of *Le Nérée* to buy a ship for the mission in France and to sail it to New Zealand. Lateste carried a letter of authorisation, dated 7 December 1839, for Colin. In early January he asked another Captain, Pelletier, of the *Meuse*, on the point of leaving for France, to take over from Lateste in case Lateste was unable to execute the plan. He too got an appropriate letter for Colin, dated 7 January 1840. Only the next day Pompallier realised he had not even acknowledged the arrival of the five missionaries of the third group! He corrected the oversight quickly with a second letter for Colin, dated 8 January. Grateful for their arrival he mildly excused them for having taken so long in Sydney before making the trip to New Zealand which should not take more then 8 to 10 days. He expressed his satisfaction with the much easier quicker and cheaper travel via London and Sydney, but regretted that there was only one Brother in the group. He could use three Brothers for every priest! Not a word of acknowledgment for the letters the missionaries had carried.

He told Colin lightly that ‘the Fathers on Wallis en Futuna are well and that their missions are making reasonable progress.’ In fact he had had no news from them for half a year! He told Colin he had sent Chevron and Attale to visit the two islands. ‘You must have received the news

52. CCC, Doc 6.
53. LRO 1, Doc 54, 3.
54. Details of this foundation in Simmons, *Pompallier*, 45.
55. LRO 1, Doc 44.
56. LRO 1, Doc 46.
from these two interesting missions through the long letters I sent you six
months ago, forgetting (or just ignoring) that he had entrusted their mail
to another whaler, the *Pallas*, which he knew had gone hunting instead of
returning to France. Then, in a postscript, he expressed his satisfaction at
the appointment of Victor Poupinel as Procurator for the missions.57

**The Treaty of Waitangi** 58

For years New Zealand had been *de facto* a British colony. English, Scot-
tish and Irish people entered in large numbers and settled everywhere.
There was barely a Maori tribe, Pompallier wrote in 1840, that did not
have at least one British subject living nearby. The Maori chiefs who ruled
over their tribes had no authority over the settlers. Unruly adventurers
as many of them were, they recognised no authority or, at the most, the
far away British Governor of New South Wales. Small British settlements,
says Pompallier, can be found in every bay.

Then, on 9 January 1840, the corvette *Herald* entered the Bay of Islands.
It hoisted the British flag and the ship’s guns gave the salute. The officer
in charge, Captain Hobson, acting as Lieutenant Governor, on behalf of
the Governor of New South Wales, called an assembly of local chiefs and
settlers for 5 February near the mouth of a little stream, called Waitangi.
Pompallier joined the convocation, in full purple dress, in the company of
Servant, who had just a few days earlier come across from the west coast.
They had not been invited and their arrival raised a few eyebrows but
Captain Hobson had an officer’s respect for rank and, to the annoyance of
the Methodist ministers, offered ‘the one Lord that New Zealand could
boast’59 a place of honour at the proceedings.

Hobson asked the Maori chiefs if they were prepared to become sub-
jects of the British Queen and accept to live under her protection. Pompall-
lier was asked by several chiefs if they should or should not sign. Pompall-
lier explained that he and his missionaries had come only for the salvation
of souls and were there for the service of all people. He kept a strictly
neutral position and refused to express an opinion.

As Servant wrote to Colin a month after the event, the large majority
of Maori chiefs made it clear in their typical, colourful eloquence that they
did not want the Queen of England to extend her authority over them. If

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57.  LRO 1, Doc 47.
there was to be a British authority, let it extend itself only over the British settlers who had intruded upon Maori lands. They complained of the extensive lands the strangers had appropriated and they would gladly give back the bibles they had received in order to regain their land. Some asked Hobson to leave their country. In the end, Servant writes, more moderate speakers took over and stressed the advantages of accepting British sovereignty. The next day, many signed.

Hobson went around the country and held convocations in different places. Servant wrote that in Hokianga one chief asked the Lieutenant Governor if a Maori chief could do the same, namely, go to England and proclaim sovereignty there?

Pompallier was convinced that the Maoris did not and could not understand the full implications of the event. Anyhow, it was a farce, he said, to ask the question after raising the flag and firing by a salvo of naval guns. He had his doubts whether what he called the *prise de possession* would get international recognition. He noted afterwards that American and French warships entered the Bay of Islands without acknowledging British sovereignty and he expressed the fear that the British act could lead to international tensions but he admitted that the new Governor had been most respectful. When asked, Hobson announced that the Catholic Church could proclaim its religion all over New Zealand and would receive the same protection as other churches. Adding insult to injury, Hobson asked the Methodist missionary Henry Williams to convey this message to the Maori chiefs present. The mission ship was allowed to anchor everywhere without charge and mission goods could be brought in free of duty. In fact, Pompallier admits, the *prise de possession* has brought law and order and that can only be for the good. Having been scrupulously impartial, the Catholic Church got no blame from the Maoris for what had happened, while criticism was frequently directed at the Protestant ministers who had openly favoured the treaty. What upset many Maoris most was the presence of British soldiers on their lands.

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60. King, *History*, 163.
A great missionary \textsuperscript{62}

Treaty or no treaty, Pompallier pursued his missionary work with vigour. He would have preferred to make a tour to the South Island as well but he had no ship and as he had to hire one at great cost, he limited himself to the North Island. Catherin Servant who was the best Maori speaker of the moment, was to assure continuity of religious services and instructions in Kororareka in his absence. Pompallier took Viard and Brother Michel with him as well as a Maori catechist, Romano.

From the Bay of Islands he went south along the east coast. In the Bay of Plenty he received an enthusiastic welcome in Tauranga where he delighted the local people with a pontifical Mass, and enrolled several hundred catechumens. He went for several days walking into the interior, climbed mountains and was carried through swamps. His reputation had preceded him and he was respectfully received on many places. He then sailed on to Ohiwa harbour from where he walked to Opotiki where a chief from the Bay of Islands had married into a local tribe and had already built a chapel. After successful visits to tribes near Whakatane he moved back up the coast and spent several weeks in Coromandel Bay, calling at coastal villages and walking inland, staying two or more days at several places.

Viard described Pompallier amid the Maoris as follows: ‘When they are near His Lordship they cannot bear to part company with him. «Epikopo, I am hungry», they say and without more ado they sit down and Epikopo shares his food with them. His zeal never runs out, his courtesy is never worn down.’\textsuperscript{63}

When possible his missionary tours were followed by foundations and appointments. In October 1838 he had visited the Kaipara district overland. In May 1840 he sent Petit and Michel Colombon there to start a mission. After his visit to Whangaroa in September 1839 he sent Épalle, Petitjean and Brother Élie to open a station. After his visit of Tauranga he appointed Viard there. As he explained to Colin, he would not send his missionaries anywhere until he had made the first contacts himself and broken the ground.\textsuperscript{64} This was Pompallier at his best. This is where he

\textsuperscript{62.} Simmons, \textit{Pompallier}, 45–8
\textsuperscript{63.} This quote in Simmons is from 6 January 1840, before the present trip, cf LRO 1, Doc 45, 3. But Viard can have seen it in the Bay of Islands. It tallies with other testimonies and is so graphic that it must be true and typical for the way Pompallier got along with the Maori people.
\textsuperscript{64.} LRO 1, Doc 91, 34.
was happy. ‘I enjoy the missionary tours in New Zealand, and the dangers involved, as if I were in heaven’.65

In the Bishop’s absence the naval vessels he had been waiting for, the Astrolabe and the Zélée, under the command of Captain Dumont d’Urville, paid a call at the Bay of Islands. On arrival Dumont d’Urville heard of the prise de possession but he did not raise the appropriate signals of recognition for British sovereignty. He found Hobson not at home and went to see Hobson’s Secretary to whom he explained that in the absence of instructions from his Government he was not able to acknowledge British sovereignty.66

Dumont d’Urville carried mail and fifty Spanish gold doubloons, representing half the money that Father Colin had sent in May 1837 and that Father Liausu in Valparaiso had divided between him and Captain Bernard. Dumont d’Urville handed Petit the money and Petit received the Captain with all the signs of respect the little mission station could muster. Petit celebrated a Solemn High Mass at which Dumont d’Urville and a detachment of sailors attended. The two ships left again on 4 May.

**Correspondence**

When the first missionaries left, Colin could not possibly have appreciated fully how crucially important a free flow of letters to and from Oceania would be. By asking them to pass all mail through Lyon, he just followed a practice that was common in religious communities: handing outgoing mail unsealed to the Superior.67 The Superior had the so-called right of ‘visitation’, ie, the right to monitor the mail. Colin had another good reason in this case: keeping an eye on what news from the missions would become public.68

Equally common was that the right of ‘visitation’ did not extend to lower superiors with regard to letters to or from higher superiors. The 1833 Constitutions, a version of which Colin gave to the missionaries, explicitly mention the exception.69

When Colin appointed Pompallier to be the religious Superior, it would have been understood to include the ‘visitation’ of letters. Like Colin the

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65. LRO 1, Doc 59, 22.
67. Coste, Antiquiores Textus, VI, page 17, 35. CS 1, Doc 4, 9.
68. Cf CS 1, Doc 64 and Doc 135.
Bishop was concerned how the outside world would see his mission, especially as articles from the Annals were taken over in Australian papers and from there even appeared in local newsheets in the Bay of Islands itself. There was no place for bad news or for remarks that might exacerbate the already difficult relations with the Protestants.70 However, he also saw himself, as he should, as a delegated, thus lower, superior within the Society and he must have known that correspondence with higher superiors, namely to and from the Superior General, was exempt.

Nevertheless, already during the voyage Pompallier wanted the missionaries to hand him unsealed all their letters, even those addressed to Father Colin. When, in May 1839, Chanel and Bataillon entrusted their mail to the visitors for mailing in New Zealand the matter came up and the two expressed their discontent with the Bishop’s ruling. Later that year Baty must have sent a letter that was sealed and from something Pompallier said to him, Baty concluded that Pompallier had opened and read it. Also, when Servant received Colin’s letter that had come with Baty, it had been opened.

When, in September 1839, Pompallier came to Papakawau, Servant and Baty challenged his right to read their letters from and to Colin. It was an unusual and painful experience for Pompallier but the men stood their ground. The Bishop was out of order and he knew it.71 He gave in and later, writing to Colin, he admitted that when the rule was made, before their departure, an exception was made for correspondence with the Superior General.72 In practice, entrusting letters to departing ships remained something the Bishop reserved to himself—it involved payments and he handled the cash!—and he expected the men to hand him their letters unsealed. There was little they could do but comply and expect him to read them first. They even suspected him of destroying letters he did not like.

In spite of everything, the Marist missionaries were very faithful to Colin’s request to use every opportunity to give him news. For them as well as for their Bishop, writing letters was a way to cope with their isolation, as Claude-Marie Bertrand put it to Champagnat: ‘You can’t imagine the pleasure it gives me to take a few moments to talk to you. To have an idea, you would need to be several thousand leagues away from your dear friends.’73

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70. LRO 1, Doc 59, 12.
71. LRO 1, Doc 55, 8. Servant says he wrote to Chanel and Batalillon to tell them. His letter has not been found and it left no trace in the letters of either Chanel or Bataillon.
72. LRO 1, Doc 91, 30.
73. Bertrand to Champagnat (who was dead by then), 18 July 1840, LO, Clisby 018, 1.
Although most of his letters to the missionaries have gone lost, it seems that Colin wrote to each of the priests at least with every group leaving. No small talk, no news; just a short word to kindle their spiritual fervour. But they were highly appreciated and often provided an occasion for lengthy answers.

Philippe Viard

A month after his arrival Viard wrote to his former parish priest at La Guillotière in Lyon. His letter is full of naïve admiration for Pompallier. He recounts how Maoris maltreated a French settler and set fire to his house. The story went around and the French settlers in the area came together to take revenge, whereupon the guilty tribe warned they had the guns to defend themselves. As Viard tells it, Pompallier rose to the occasion. He got two ships that lay for anchor in the Bay and went to the tribe. As he approached he saw a large number of warriors armed to the teeth. He went ashore and the simple sight of the epikopo calmed them down. They received him with joy, promised to pay compensation and said they wanted to make friends with the French.

Even more naïvely Viard writes that in the six months since Pompallier had settled in the Bay of Islands there had not been even one death among the Catholic adherents while several very sick people had recovered after they had received baptism in danger of death.

The first story is clearly not the account of an eyewitness and as he had not been there long enough to speak Maori or know the people, the second one too can only come from Pompallier himself. These tales of what Servant mockingly called the Bishop’s mirabilia tell us at least how Pompallier wanted others to see him.74

We probably do hear an eyewitness where Viard describes the great patience with which Pompallier treats the Maoris and how he keeps up his sweet demeanour even when they behave like troublesome children, sitting down at his table and sharing his food uninvited!75

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74. LRO 1, Doc 55, 2. Ps. 9: 1 ‘narrabo omnia mirabilia tua,’ ‘I will tell of all thy wonderful deeds.’
75. LRO 1, Doc 45.
Catherin Servant

On 5 March Servant wrote from the Bay of Islands in answer to the letter Colin had sent him with the third group. He expresses his appreciation for Colin’s spiritual direction, or, as he puts it, ‘the holy exhortations and your amiable and fatherly concern’.

He tells Colin of the signing of the treaty after Pompallier called him to Kororareka in January to assure the continuity of religious instructions. He is with Maxime Petit who is the Bursar and easily fills twelve pages with colourful tales of his visits with Baty to Whirinaki and Wairoa. He also re-counts visiting alone places like Ahipara, Tairutu, Wangape, Pawera, and Motu Tapu. He enjoys his work with the Maoris who feel enough at ease to share a joke with him. When one man greeted Servant by touching noses, his friends called out: watch it, you touch a priest’s nose and you will die!76

On 14 May he wrote to Champagnat how he narrowly escaped getting lost at sea.77 He had gone to Whangaroa on a visit to Épalle and Petitjean whom he had not met yet. On the way back the canoe was driven past the entrance of the Bay of Islands and they barely managed to get ashore, miles to the south. After an awful night in a derelict hut full of lizards, they took to the sea again and were driven even further off. This time they spent the night at sea, chilled to the bone. The next day by rowing very hard they managed to reach the shore, again on a deserted spot.78

Maxime Petit

Petit wrote to Colin on 8 January and to Poupinel on 21 February. His work as the Bursar takes up so much of his time that he is not making much progress in either Maori or English. On behalf of Pompallier he asks for Bible commentaries and Church History books. The people love nice church ornaments and the pontifical ceremonies draw people from near and from afar. Don’t hesitate to send precious things for fear they would be stolen, he adds. Maoris would never steal anything sacred!

He needs cassocks for the priests and lay-clothing for the Brothers because Pompallier has forbidden them to wear cassocks.79 Judging from

76. LRO 1, Doc 52, 6.
77. The trip to Whangaroa must have been between 3 March (he did not mention it to Colin that date) and 26 April when he writes he had spoken with Épalle, who was at Whangaroa.
78. LO, Clisby 016.
79. Brother Florentin to Brother François, 9 March 1842, Ronzon, Frères Maristes en
his shopping list, the mission storeroom must have resembled a bazaar: tobacco, church bells, all sizes of nails, carpentry and gardening tools, ink for the copying machine and letters for the printing press (234,800 letters ‘a’ and 81,600 letters ‘e’, please), vast quantities of printing paper and any amount of colourful second-hand clothing: ‘sometimes a gift to a chief wins a friend, he turns to the Church and converts with his whole tribe’.

The next day Petit wrote again with details of the exorbitant costs of travelling. Equally expensive are building materials: timber costs four times as much as in France, and a good carpenter has to be paid 15 to 18 francs per day. Marie-Augustin is the only Brother at Kororareka and has three hired carpenters with him. Even local food is expensive and Maoris take it for granted that they can stay for days on the mission and be fed while they are there. The Bishop pays for the medical expenses of Catholic adherents for fear they would go over to the Protestants! But Petit also speaks with admiration of the zeal with which people from far and near attend Church services and follow religious instruction. ‘It can only be the Holy Spirit!’

Jean-Baptiste Petitjean

At the end of January 1840, barely six weeks after the third group had arrived, people from Whangaroa, a bay to the north, came to Kororareka and refused to leave until the Bishop gave them a priest. To the objection that none of the new priests knew the language, they answered: we shall teach them! Pompallier asked the Fathers Petitjean and Epalle and Brother Élie-Régis to go with them. On 18 March, from Whangaroa, his first mission station, Petitjean wrote to his brother-in-law Auguste Paillasson who acted as an intermediary with the rest of the family. Referring to his first appointment he wrote:

‘This, my dear brother, is what religious life is like. To be everywhere as if you were nowhere. To be attached to neither people nor places, always ready to leave everything behind, at the first wink of the Superior. You are always ready to part for another place, where the Lord has prepared other friends, other brothers. It hurts, of course, but while it hurts,

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Océanie (FMO), 31
80. LRO 1, Doc 49, 5.
81. LRO 1, Doc 51, 4–7.
the spirit is joyful, the heart expands and becomes more apostolically minded.\(^{82}\)

**Jean-Baptiste Comte**

After a few months in the Hokianga area Comte wrote to his parents. He describes in striking detail the walk with Brother Florentin across the North Island and their arrival at Purakau. Servant, Baty and Brother Michel received them as ‘friends, brothers, sons of the family’. He must have picked up a lot of the language in a short time, his letter has quite a few Maori sayings. He was very impressed by the kindness of the Maori people, the care they took of the missionaries and their piety. ‘In the midst of our dear sauvages, God covers us in consolations. People love us, we love them. This mutual love compensates for everything we left behind.’\(^{83}\)

In spite of the restraint of knowing that Pompallier might read everything, the letters of the missionaries bring out the depth of their commitment, their love and respect for the Maori people and their determination to stand up to the extremely tough conditions of mission life.

The spirituality of the missionaries was evidently able to cope. In August 1839 Pompallier had written to Colin: ‘Let us try to form in our religious a spirituality that leaves the head and all practical abilities free to cope with material matters. Mission life is [not a contemplative but] a mixed vocation.’\(^{84}\) He need not have worried. But how was he himself coping with his vocation of leading these splendid men?

**Enough is enough**

When on 2 March 1840 Pompallier left for his tour down the coast, Servant stayed in Kororareka for the daily religious instructions and the church services. With him was Maxime Petit, the Procurator. Servant had felt guilty for some time. Under the constraint of Pompallier’s censorship he had not been fully honest with his Superior General. The picture he had painted of the mission was too rosy, and he knew that at least some confreres felt the same. He had talked it over with Baty who agreed something should be done. He had gone to Whangaroa and consulted Épalle

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82. LRO 1, Doc 53, 1.
83. LRO 1, Doc 54, 1.
84. Explanatory insertion [...] by JS. LRO 1, Doc 33, 10.
and Petitjean. Épalle, always the faithful servant, had objected: there should be no complaints to Colin about the Bishop.\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 56, 1.}
It seems Petitjean had not expressed an opinion but Maxime Petit agreed with Servant. As Procurator of the mission, he was deeply worried about the finances. The good of the mission demanded an appeal to the Superior General.

Pompallier was gone for seven weeks and could return any day, when an English whaler for anchor in the Bay was about to leave for London, Servant grabbed the chance. On 26 April he wrote a strongly worded letter, seven pages long.\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 55.}

The first thing he wanted to put right was the overtly optimistic picture that the Bishop but he himself too had painted. The numerous conversions, he tells Colin, that earlier letters may have told you about must not be taken too literally. There may be a fair number of adherents but genuine conversion is by far not their first interest. Perhaps carried away by anger, he now depicts the Maoris as often greedy, scheming, ungrateful and devious. They want money for everything, even for the use of their canoes when you go to say Mass for them and for the food they give you when you visit them. Many come to church only for the presents they expect to get.

What he really wants to write about is the Bishop. Pompallier, he writes, is simply incapable of financial and material administration while, at the same time, he keeps everything in his own hands. He just paid £40 stg for a dinghy worth £30, although they did not really need it. When the owner asked £50 per month for the ship the Bishop needed for his trip down the coast, he just paid without trying to get the price down. In any case, the

\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 56, 1.}
\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 55.}
Bishop should not get involved in financial deals at all. It is painful to hear from outsiders that the Bishop is easily cheated and knows nothing of business matters. He should leave those things to the Procurator.

To a certain extent the distribution of gifts is unavoidable. But the Bishop should not be the only one to make gifts. It puts the priest into a position of always having to refuse. As the Maoris put it, the priests have a ‘hard heart’. If for that reason priests do not have the respect of the people, they have little chance of succeeding in their work.

The Bishop treats his priests harshly. For the smallest things he covers them with recriminations, not only in private, but also in front of other people. Colin is now told for the first time of the painful incident in Vava’u where Pompallier blew his top when he had the impression the men disagreed with the way he handled things. Recently, when some untrustworthy sailor called, the Bishop offered him hospitality and then told off his own men in the sailor’s presence. Both Servant and Petit have repeatedly been scolded in front of local people. In this country we could not do without the Brothers but they are not treated as Brothers. The Bishop’s corrections are harsh and humiliating. As a result, the Brothers close up and are discouraged. Brother Michel has repeatedly been treated badly in public.

The Bishop is lavish in promising all sorts of things, but he cannot be relied upon to keep his word. The most serious case of course is the neglect of the missionaries on Wallis and Futuna. Pompallier promised to visit them in six months. Two and a half years later he has not been there yet. The Fathers who visited them promised to send the ship back in six months: the Bishop took no notice. The consequences could be serious. All the money and all the resources of the mission are used in New Zealand, and specifically on headquarters. The men on Wallis and Futuna are left in dire circumstances. There should be another Vicar Apostolic for the Islands.

Servant admits to Colin that he has been on the point of abandoning New Zealand and returning to France but Epalle and Baty talked him out of it. He would rather be sent to the tropical islands where he thinks more good can be done and he asks Colin to support his request with the Bishop. Having finished his letter Servant showed it to Maxime Petit.

On 3 March, immediately after Pompallier’s departure, Petit had already written to Colin about the exorbitant cost of things, such as 1250 francs (£50 stg) per month for the ship Pompallier had just left on for his trip down the east coast, and 2500 francs (£100 stg) for the fare of Father
Chevron and Brother Attale to Wallis and Futuna plus 250 francs (£10 stg) for each day the ship would stay in either island.87

When, on 26 April, Servant showed him his letter Petit immediately sat down to get a letter away in support of his confrere. What Petit had failed to do in March and wanted to put right now was to tell Colin that the excessive payments he had mentioned in March were not always necessary and in fact partly a matter of poor management. To make sure nobody but Colin would read this letter (dated 27 April 1840) he sealed it (‘to be read by the Reverend Father Superior General of the Society of Mary and by no-one else’) and enclosed it in another, harmless one.88

Since his visit of Wallis and Futuna, Petit begins, he has been wanting to write in the same sense as Servant and he is not the only one. Once he already did but when he failed to get the letter on the ship he burned it: ‘The reason that made me put off writing to you was the fear that our letters would be opened.’89

Petit confirms the complaints of Servant. Pompallier’s obsession with the so-called esprit de corps (meaning the Bishop’s feeling that the Marists ganged up on him). It has frequently led to painful recriminations and reproaches. The second group was told off for visiting Wallis and Futuna, the third one for staying too long in Sydney. In a fit of temper Pompallier had even threatened to take his complaints to Rome and to get other missionaries.

Petit adds that Servant should also have told Colin about the row in Valparaiso, when Pompallier turned on the Picpus Fathers because he felt they did not show proper respect for his episcopal dignity. Colin should know and perhaps straighten things with the Picpus administration. They may well be unhappy anyway with the fact that their ship has been sold. Who knows, he adds, when they will get their money and if they will get all they are entitled to. In any case, unlike Pompallier, we got along very well with the Picpus Fathers and we all have the highest regard for them.

While he disagrees with Servant that a disproportionate part of the money is spent on Kororareka, he does support his observations on the way the Bishop handles money. Just two months after selling the Reine de Paix Pompallier paid an untrustworthy trader £100 stg for Chevron and Attale to travel to Wallis and Futuna. For his present trip, on what Petit

87. LRO 1, Doc 51, 1.
88. LRO 1, Doc 56 and Doc 57.
89. LRO 1, Doc 56, 10.
calls a dangerous little ship, he is paying enough to buy the ramshackle thing in less than six months.  

The bishop is a pushover for any smooth-talking scoundrel around. Recently some character asked for a loan of £150 stg Pompallier called me in, writes Petit, and asked me in the presence of the fellow if I agreed! And that was not the first time he did something like it.

Petit touches the root of the problem by pointing to the Bishop’s conviction that the mission should put up a big show, and impose itself by an impressive set-up. His comment: “This is not how the apostles acted and I personally am convinced that a noble simplicity will gain just as much respect.”

“I do not want to go further into matters such as the loans the Bishop makes, or advance payments to dishonest men who know how to get him to agree with flattering talk, or his rash agreement to proposals by clever and greedy fellows who know they can get away with anything.”

In the end charity prevails. The problems with the Bishop are due to his extraordinary zeal and his kindness. And, like Servant and Viard, he praises Pompallier’s endless patience with the Maoris that, he says, he has often admired.

Petit is also prepared to propose solutions. He knows from the latest arrivals that Colin is thinking already of a second Vicariate. He supports that plan. When a second Vicariate in Oceania is erected, he proposes, the Society should open a Procure in Sydney and appoint a Procurator there. With a property of our own in Sydney the Society would be independent of the whims of any Bishop. Two priests in Sydney means one could be constantly travelling around the missions. The Procurator could at the same time be the Major Superior for the missionaries and all Marists should be free to write to him in sealed letters as if he were the Superior General. The subsidies from the Propagation of the Faith should not go directly to the Bishops but to the Society. The Procurator can divide the funds under the responsibility of the Superior General according to needs.

Contrary to what you may have heard (meaning: from Pompallier), Petit writes, there are no problems with having a house in Sydney. From the priests who stayed with Bishop Polding we know that he would be happy to have us. Some people (read: Pompallier) oppose it for fear the Society would be asked to take up work in Australia.

90. LRO 1, Doc 51, 1.
91. LRO 1, Doc 56, 6.
92. LRO 1, Doc 56, 5.
Petit argues in favour of the Society of Mary itself investing in Oceania. The way things are going now, he writes, the Marists own nothing of all that they build. When everything is built, a Bishop can just send us away empty-handed. With a place of our own in New Zealand we would be safe from the whims of chiefs and Protestants and a Bishop will think twice before sending the Marists away.

In a veiled reproach directed at Colin as well, Maxime Petit challenges Pompallier’s principle that the Superior General of the Society should limit himself to being a sort of spiritual director, without involvement in the Marists’ welfare and their missionary activities: ‘It is wrong to say that the Superior of the Society should deal only with the spiritual welfare of his religious.’

In Maxime Petit the Society of Mary had a sharp analyst and a far-seeing planner. He saw that the system of double governance that was part of Church Law at the time should effectively be established in the Marist missions. It was followed by most missionary congregations and by the Holy See itself and provided missions with a much needed balance of power, or, as Petit put it, a happy counterweight (meaning: against the Bishop). Colin had rejected it, initially perhaps on practical grounds, but in fact mostly on a narrow view of personal sanctification. Petit was not afraid to speak out boldly. He saw abuses while appreciating the good being done. It had not taken him long to see the structural weaknesses of the Marist missionary undertaking. Only, nobody listened.

There was a Marist house founded in Sydney in 1847 but it took until 1889 before the Marists in New Zealand became an autonomous Province. In 1898 another Province was erected for the island missions and a Provincial appointed. Nevertheless the Society of Mary in Polynesia and Melanesia did not become a functioning religious institute until the second half of the twentieth century.

The first letter from their Bishop

When the Fathers Baty, Petit, Epalle and the Brothers Augustin, Florentin and Élie-Regis visited Wallis and Futuna in May 1839, they had expected and promised that the Reine de Paix would return within six months. In October or November Pompallier sold the ship. On 10 December of the

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93. LRO 1, Doc 56, 2.
94. LRO 1, Doc 56, 3: ‘un heureux contrepoids’.
same year the Fathers Chevron, Comte, Petitjean and Viard with Brother Attale arrived in New Zealand. A few days later Pompallier heard that a trading ship was on the point of leaving for the tropical islands. He was told the ship expected to call at Wallis and Futuna in two or three weeks. He immediately booked Chevron and Attale to visit the confreres. It also was his first sure opportunity to communicate with the missionaries whom he had left on the two isolated islands in November 1837. On 14 December 1939 he sat down and wrote:

‘How I suffer in my heart because I have not been able to visit you since I left you on your islands. It is one of most painful crosses of my mission to have no possibility of communicating with you as often as I would like. From your letters that I received through the confreres who have come to join me last June, I understand that for you too it is an ordeal. (. . .) I have been waiting for more than eight months for the frigate Astrolabe under Captain Dumont d’Urville. He should be here any time now. If he does not come within six months I shall hire the first ship available to visit you.’

Without explaining why, he tells his men that the Reine de Paix is no longer at his disposal. The missionaries who visited them are in good health and after them another group of four priests and one brother has arrived. The Bishop now resides at the Bay of Islands where the Procure is established. His mind had been put at rest, he writes, by the news the visitors were able to give, but he would have been happier had they come straight from Tahiti to New Zealand. He could then have used the ship for a visit himself. ‘But once I was reassured about you (. . .) I put off another visit until now’.

Pompallier goes on to tell the missionaries in the islands of the assurance from the French Government that naval vessels in the Pacific would be ready to protect them. He expands on the success of the mission in New Zealand. Everywhere on the North Island he senses a movement towards the Catholic Faith, and the Hail Mary is heard daily in many tribes, in spite of the fierce resistance of the heretics. He is sending them a third

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95. The letter has survived thanks to a copy that Nizier made for himself and that he quoted in full to Colin on 14 October 1860. APM, personal file Delorme. Part of the letter is in CCC, Doc 13.
A nightmare-trip\textsuperscript{96}

Chevron and Attale sailed on 17 December and their voyage began badly when their ship was becalmed for days within sight of the New Zealand coast. Then they ran into a violent storm that killed one of the sailors. On 4 January they reached the Fiji group and stopped at Levuka, on Ovalau Island. The two were in awe before the dark-coloured, and what Chevron described as ‘Hercules-sized’ Fijians. The ship’s crew made it worse with tales of the Fijians’ murderous and cannibalistic habits. Their apprehension was not put at rest when they heard that Levuka was near the island of Viva where in 1834 the French vessel \textit{Aimable Joséphine} was sacked and burned, and its Captain Bureau with his crew massacred. In revenge Dumont d’Urville had bombarded the village from the \textit{Astrolabe} in 1838. They heard that there were two Anglican missionaries on Ovalau and the first Fijians who came on board evidently had some knowledge of Christianity: they reverently touched the cross on Chevron’s chest and he gave them some medals.

After ten days of trading the ship tried to leave the anchorage but stranded on a sandbar. Within hours numerous canoes approached and the crew readied the guns to repel an attack. For days the ship manoeuvred in nasty squalls, all the time threatened by canoes full of hostile warriors. In those desperate circumstances the rudder was damaged and had

\textsuperscript{96} Chevron’s colourful narrative fills 17 printed pages in LRO 1, Doc 62. Strangely enough he nowhere mentions the name of the ship or the Captain. It certainly was not the \textit{Reine de Paix}, as Rozier and Ward suggest, EC, page 489, note 1. Anthony Ward, \textit{Ever your Poor Brother} (Rome: Marist Fathers, 1991), 225.
to be repaired. The only thing the two missionaries could contribute were their prayers and the medals they threw into the sea! Finally, on 22 January 1840, after abandoning an anchor, the ship reached open water.

They then cruised through the length and the width of the Fiji group after which they went to the Tonga islands and called at Ha’apai and Vava’u where they barely survived a cyclone and were nearly thrown on the reefs several times. From there they visited Tongatapu, just when King George Taufa’ahau was waging war on the pagan chiefs who refused to convert to Christianity. Finally, on 1 May they sailed from Tongatapu and on Saturday 9 May 1840 they reached Wallis, five months after leaving for a trip that they were told would take two or three weeks.

**Wallis**

Initially Bataillon had never openly spoken of his intention to convert the people of Uvea (Wallis) to the lotu. After the visit of the Reine de Paix, in May 1839, Bataillon turned open and frank about the missionary purpose of his presence. There had been a small number of adherents, barely tolerated, even maltreated, by the Lavelua. They met in secret on Nukuatea, one of the little islands on the ring of the lagoon, that belonged to Tuugahala. In February 1840 the Lavelua’s patience ran out. He mounted his big double canoe and in a show of strength he approached Nukuatea. The people on the main island looked on nervously, including Bataillon who got his little boat and compass ready to flee if necessary. The confrontation lasted four days, but it did not come to blows and Tuugahala stood his ground. When the King sailed back empty-handed, the anti-lotu die-hards withdrew to another small island and planned a revolt. Bataillon went to see them and, as he told it himself later on, convinced them to get even with the Lavelua, not by overthrowing him, but by joining the lotu. Whatever the truth of this rather improbable claim, the tide turned.97

In April the catechumens felt strong enough to build a big church on Nukuatea. Bataillon blessed the altar on Good Friday, the church on Saturday and on Easter Sunday (19 April) he inaugurated it with a Sol-

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97. The story is taken from a letter dated 6 January 1842, LRO 2, Doc 125, 2. Bataillon was not averse to embellishing his stories and blowing up his role in the events. The precise date and the mention of the double canoe point to a reliable memory. The conversion of the die-hards on Bataillon’s suggestion that it was a way of getting even with the King, is too good to be true.
A Mission Too Far . . . Pacific Commitment

emn High Mass. He counted 300 catechumens. When, three weeks later, Chevron and Attale reached Wallis they were told that there were up to 800 of them. The rapidly growing support also drew increasingly violent resistance. Chevron found the island about evenly divided between those who wanted to be instructed in the *lotu papalangi* and those who refused to have anything to do with it. At times there was a real danger of civil war. Although he personally liked the missionaries, the *Lavelua* stood clearly on the side of the traditional religion and the issue took on the form of a struggle for political power between the old King and the ambitious Tu-ugahala. So far, the converts were numerous enough to hold their own.

The visit of Chevron and Attale was a windfall for the catechumens. They all wanted to touch noses or shake hands with the new missionaries and after Sunday Mass on Nukuatea the visitors were regaled with kava. The grace of state, Chevron wrote, carried him through when a chiefly old man honoured him with a piece of fruit out of his own mouth after chewing on it. Bataillon needed Chevron to stay with him in what really was a time of extreme danger. The catechumens were ready for armed resistance in case the pagans decided to resort to violence.

Bataillon added a page to the long treatise on Wallis he had begun in September 1839 and to a letter for Séon begun in November. What is needed now, he wrote to Colin, is a printing press. He had taught some young people to read and they were quite able to teach others. He ended on an optimistic note: ‘The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice, let the many islands be glad!’ The visitors boarded the ship for the night and he gave them the letters. Besides their schooner, there was a whaler at anchor in the lagoon. When a rumour went round that a nightly attack was being planned, the crews stood by all night at their guns. At daybreak the two ships slipped out of the lagoon. Chevron could not even go ashore to pick up the breviary he had left behind.

Futuna

Not wanting to get involved in the war of August 1839, the Futunan chief Falemaa had skipped off to Wallis in time and returned by the end of the year. He spread the story that soon Wallis would be entirely Christian. He

98. LRO 2, Doc 125, 4.
99. LRO 1, Doc 38, 29–32.
100. LRO 1, Doc 43, 6–8.
101. According to the Latin Vulgate text the missionaries were familiar with: *Dominus regnavit, exsultet terra, laetentur insulae multae*, Ps 96: 1.
102. LRO 1, Doc 62, 51.
vowed he would do anything in his power to stop Futuna going the same way, and recalled with glee how the Wallisians had killed Tongan teachers a few years earlier and how the Lavelua had beaten up some early Christian adherents.  

During January 1840 a Sydney based schooner, the Sisters, called at Futuna. Its Hawaiian sailors attempted a mutiny, but they were caught before they could murder the Captain and his wife with their three children. They escaped to Singave but Niuliki forced the Singaves to hand them over to the Captain. Chanel did not feel well and he was very busy instructing sick people around him. He sent Nizier to visit the ship and offer fresh fruit. They exchanged little presents. The Captain’s wife gave the missionaries a pot of jam.

In February Chanel had found out how high feelings were running on Wallis, when he asked a visiting canoe from Wallis to take a letter to Bataillon. He was bluntly told they had other gods and would do him no favours. A most unusual reaction.

Nevertheless, when Chevron and Attale landed on 16 May 1840 Futuna was comparatively quiet. Peter Chanel was delighted to receive them, but, at the same time, bitterly disappointed that his Bishop had again not bothered to come himself. On top of that Brother Marie-Nizier was told to board the ship for New Zealand! As Chevron half expected to return to Wallis to support Bataillon that would leave Chanel alone with a newcomer who did not speak a word of the language. His health was declining and his feet were in a poor state. Chevron told Chanel of the 250 francs the Captain would charge the Bishop for every day spent off Wallis and Futuna. The Pro-Vicar of Oceania, always gentle and flexible, could also take responsibility. He decided on the spot not to keep the ship a day longer and disregard the Bishop’s arrangements. Both Chevron and Attale would stay on Futuna for the time being and Marie-Nizier was not to go to New Zealand. The Captain was told that they would hand him a parcel of letters next morning but that they did not need his services any longer; there would be no passengers.

Pompallier had written a letter to Niuliki. Chanel read it out to him and the King was pleased. Chanel then must have stayed up half the

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103.EC, Doc 56, 6.  
104.EC, page 485. The story is also told in Twyning, Shipwreck, 127.  
105.EC, page 487.  
106.LRO 1, Doc 62, 52.  
107.EC, Doc 59, 1.  
108.EC, Doc 59, 4.
night. He wrote to Pompallier but we shall never know how he expressed his disappointment and how he explained his decision to disregard the Bishop’s orders on Marie-Nizier. The letter has not been traced.

To Colin Chanel expressed his profound disappointment with Pompallier for not coming himself. It would have been an ‘unspeakable consolation’. He explained why he felt justified to go against the instructions of the Bishop: the bad tracks on Futuna and his bruised feet.

While Bataillon, he wrote to Colin, is on the point of converting the people of Wallis, Futuna is still far from it. Listing the causes for this lack of progress, he mentioned in the first place the fact that the Bishop still had not come for a visit. The problem lay, he wrote, not with the people of Futuna. ‘I have every cause to be happy with their good character’. Nor was it Niuliki personally. Chanel called him with some affection ‘my good King Niuliki’ (mon bon roi Niuriki) who had assured him that the island would soon turn Christian. Chanel blamed the delay on the contest taking place on Wallis reverberating on Futuna. Another thing that kept many people back was their reverence for the King. They just could not get themselves to come out openly against him. And, said the humble Chanel: ‘it is my sinfulness and my lack of zeal that delays the conversion of this island.’

The core of the problem however he described with great empathy and understanding for what conversion to the Christian Faith meant to the Futunans:

Our good King Niuliki, said to be the man into whom the greatest god of the island descends, seems to have a great fear of what his islanders will say if he rejects a god he has so often told them is powerful and terrifying.

Chanel devoted an entire paragraph to the earthquakes that just then terrified the Futunans. It started a week ago, he wrote, with one, mighty shock at four o’clock in the morning. It felt, he wrote to Colin, as if the earth would open up under my bed. Not used to be woken up like that

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109.EC, Doc 59, 1.
110.According to the Analyse by Roulleaux of Chanel’s lost diary (EC, page 487), the King continued to send food to the missionaries and Chanel used every opportunity to speak with him about the lotu. The King maintained his neutral position, saying it was up to the people to become Christians if they wished.
(Chanel must have been a good sleeper) it took him some time to get over the agitation. He had counted nineteen aftershocks in twenty-four hours.

Futunan tradition has it, he wrote, that one of their gods, Mafuike fulu, sleeps at great depth under the earth and when he turns over in his sleep he shakes the island. When earthquakes become particularly intensive Mafuike fulu suffers of itch and he scratches himself. The Futunans do not understand, Chanel adds soberly, that their island is of volcanic origin and they are not aware of the danger they would be in if the seemingly extinct volcano came to life again.

It is touching to think of Chanel, sitting on a tree trunk in his hut all night, with a burning candle as only light. And then to read his thoughtful and lengthy account of the Futunan explanation of earthquakes. In no way does he make it sound ridiculous; on the contrary, he recounts it with respect. At the same time there is his sober understanding of volcanic activity. As if Chanel was sorry for the fact that Futunan religious feelings are threatened, not by the Christian faith itself, but by the disenchantment of nature entailed in contact with, we would say today, Western secular thinking. ‘Please’, he wrote to Colin, ‘send us good medical handbooks, supplies of medicines, small surgical tools. It is dreadful to visit the sick and not be able to help them at all’. In other words, no good talking about beliefs, give us what we need to help them effectively. Chanel had come to understand from missionary experience the secular dimension of evangelisation.111

Chanel has seen the sordid side of natural religion. In each illness people see the hand of an angry god. Each god has his little sanctuary. People rush to bring their valuables to whatever god is presumed to be the cause of their illness, all to no avail. But at each sanctuary there is a greedy man or woman with alleged links to the gods, claiming the right to take the people’s gifts for themselves. Chanel is no romantic. He is too close to the ordinary man and woman on the island to look at the Futunan way of life from the aristocratic point of view, let alone with the eyes of the cultural romanticist who tends to ‘ignore a whole class of native men and women in a subaltern status’.112

‘It is said that France is the most beautiful place after heaven. But there is a beauty about these islands that France would be jealous of’. However tough his life is, and however frustrating his lack of success, Chanel loves

112. Obeyesekere, Cannibal Talk, 80.
Futuna. Twice he speaks about his death. ‘Death will soon come and thin our ranks. (…) When we are dead, others will come to take our place’. It was to be his last letter to Jean-Claude Colin.

Chanel had asked Colin to keep Bishop Devie informed, so he could presume that his former Bishop would know of the voyage to Oceania and of his whereabouts. Now Chanel writes to tell Devie of the visit of Bataillon, the fighting on Futuna in August, of how he tried to intervene and how the King did everything in his power to prevent the war, to no avail. He shared with the Bishop his impression that since the war people’s minds were better disposed towards the faith than before. On the neighbouring island of Wallis there was more success to report. The Lord has blessed the work of Bataillon. His island counts many catechumens and some have had to suffer for their faith. A Tongan chief has converted to the Catholic faith while staying on Wallis and wants to return to Tonga with a priest. The Protestants have nearly everywhere established themselves before us. The Methodists have Tonga in their power, they are now spreading into Fiji. They were in Samoa but Anglicans have taken their place.

Chanel tells of promising contacts with a Fijian chief who visited Futuna and with people from Rotuma. Chanel mentions Tikopia where a Polynesian language is spoken not unlike Futunan. He has heard from the Picpus Father Maigret that Pohnpei too was a promising place. As to Futuna, things are slow but there is hope that the King will decide for the Christian Faith when Bishop Pompallier comes as promised.

Nothing in the letters that Chanel wrote on this occasion suggests that things could go seriously wrong. On Wallis Chevron had sensed the threat of violence, but arriving on Futuna, he wrote, the only threat was from the frequent aftershocks of the earthquake.

113. Chanel would have heard this in May 1839 from Baty and Petit, who had travelled with Maigret from Valparaiso to Tahiti in January 1839 after Maigret had stayed half a year in Pohnpei.
114. LRO 1, Doc 62, 52.
Chapter 9  
1840 Part 2: The Burden of the Day

‘We have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat’  
*Mt 20: 12*

The Polynesian Islands

Wallis

On Wallis Island the year 1840 was a period of rapid progress but also of constant tension. In May Bataillon counted 800 catechumens. On 3 November, when there was an opportunity to get a letter to Futuna with Jones, Bataillon wrote to Chanel that he was instructing 1,400 people.

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1. LRO 1, Doc 38, 29.
2. CCC, Doc 17, 2.
He also recalled that in December 1839 Bishop Pompallier had promised to hire a ship and visit them within six weeks if Captain Dumont d'Urville whom he was expecting, did not come soon. Now, ten months later, Bataillon complained to Chanel: ‘What to think of the delay of Monseigneur? I cannot understand it at all. For three years now he leaves us in this predicament. (. . .) Many of the catechumens are ready for baptism, it would be so much better to wait for the Bishop, but how much longer can I wait?’ He was prepared to put things off until Christmas. But, he wrote to Chanel, if the Bishop does not come, ‘why don’t you come to do the first baptisms on Wallis?’

At the same time there still was fierce resistance. Feelings were running high and at times the island was on the verge of armed conflict. Bataillon badly needed help. Would it be possible to let him have Chevron and Attale at this crucial time? ‘I have no idea what situation you are in yourself just now. I therefore do not want to ask you formally. But if the work on Futuna is not too heavy, please, weigh before the Lord, if it would not serve the glory of God and the salvation of souls to send me Father Chevron and Brother Attale, at least until Monseigneur sends us reinforcements?’

Futuna

On Futuna life changed for the better when, on 16 May 1840, Father Joseph Chevron and Brother Attale landed and joined Peter Chanel and Marie-Nizier Delorme. They enjoyed each other’s company and prayed together. The two newcomers could tell Chanel and Marie-Nizier at leisure about the growth of the Society in France, the new missionaries in New Zealand, and of happenings in Belley, Lyon and the Hermitage. They

4. CCC, Doc 17, 4–7.
5. CCC, Doc 17, 3.
6. Peter Chanel's diary for 1840 and 1841 is lost (Cf EC, pages 313–5) and for these two years we have to rely on Chevron's letters published in CCC and on the Roulleaux 'analysis' of Chanel's diary (EC, pages 488–96). Roulleaux wrote his 'analysis' on Futuna a few years after Chanel's death (EC, pages 315–6) when he had the complete text of the diary in hand. However, a careful comparison with the surviving parts of Chanel's diary (1838 and 1839) shows that Roulleaux is inclined to give a darker picture of the period preceding Chanel's death and a more negative picture of the Futunans and their leaders than Chanel himself. It very much looks as if Roulleaux was setting the scene for the martyrdom and—we may suppose, unconsciously—adjusting his account accordingly.
could tell their hosts of the Bay of Islands and of the mission in New Zealand. They could tell them of the alternative way of travelling via London and Sydney and of their impressions of England and Australia. After two and a half years of isolation Chanel and Marie-Nizier enjoyed being part of the wider world again.\footnote{Chanel to Auguste Girard, 22 October 1840, EC, Doc 60.}

Chevron and Attale were introduced into missionary work and life. Chanel and Marie-Nizier helped them learn the language and they were initiated in the finer points of Polynesian culture. The description of life on Futuna that he wrote for his parents and that was later published in the Annals, is perhaps the most detailed one of Marist Pacific ethnography.\footnote{Chevron did not yet speak the language, therefore his account (21 October 1840, no less than 11 closely printed pages in CCC, Doc 16) must in the main be read as the sediment of conversations with Chanel and Marie-Nizier. However, the paragraphs 59–66 stand apart. They give lurid descriptions of cannibalism and infanticide as allegedly practised on Futuna before Niuliki became King. We do not find anything like it in the writings of Peter Chanel or Marie-Nizier. In spite of two instances of infanticide (EC, page 493, 10.09.40) even the Roulleaux summary has nothing of the sort. Marie-Nizier tells (hearsay in 1867 about the 1820s!) of a rare case of cannibalism about 20 years before the arrival of the missionaries (CCC, page 178). Chevron cannot have collected the stories himself from native narrators. Insofar he had, he would have underestimated their creativity! What Chevron relates on this point sounds more like the wild yarns that beachcombers loved to feast on. In fact Chevron [62] refers to ‘a traveller’, possibly the Twyning who lived on Futuna at the time, whose book (Shipwreck) has numerous tales of this sort and who recounts similar things of Futuna, likewise of many years ago and thus equally hearsay (pages 94–5). If things had been as bad as described, and as recently as suggested, it is highly unlikely they would have changed so much in so short a time. We can say there is nothing here to gainsay Obeyesekere’s contention that there is no reliable evidence of precontact anthropophagy in New Zealand or in other Polynesian cultures (Obeysekere, Cannibal Talk, 58).}

Chanel’s last letter to Colin shows that he had reflected deeply on what conversion to Christianity meant to a Polynesian people. He will have shared his thoughts with Chevron and Attale, putting them on the road to their future ministry.

Being a larger group the four missionaries were able to have, for the first time, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Vespers and sung Masses were celebrated on the feast of Corpus Christi, on the Assumption and on Sundays, attracting people from all over the island. Joseph Chevron, who was not yet professed,\footnote{The vows that Chevron took before Chanel must have been temporary vows. Later he} made his first religious vows in the hands of Peter Chanel.
Pompallier had written a letter to Niuliki. Chanel invited him to come and he read it out to him. The King listened attentively and assured Chanel that from then on people would listen to his instructions and the island would soon be Christian. At the opening of Niuliki’s new house at Fikavi, on 14 June, Chanel presented him with a set of royal robes that Marie-Nizier had made and the missionaries got a generous part of the food that Niuliki distributed. Later on too, he brought them loads of taro.

One sick old man who had visited all the sanctuaries on the island to no avail came to see Chanel on the advice of his family and friends and said he would break the food taboos and become a Christian. Chanel received him and prayed over him. When the man felt better after that, several people said they would accept that the Christian religion was the true one if the man recovered.

Feeding four men proved a bit difficult and after a time Chevron moved to Tamana, a valley in Singave, the western half of the island. Catechumens came and worked the missionaries’ gardens at Poi. The missionaries’ house at Poi was becoming a sort of safe house where people went into hiding after a fight and where catechumens took refuge when pestered. When it also became a house of prayer where people from all over the island especially from Singave gathered to pray, Niuliki told them to build small prayer houses in their own villages.

From August on it happened more often that rascals stole bananas, breadfruit and courgettes from Chanel’s garden. Relations with Niuliki were less secure and the King was less generous with food than he used to be, but he denied being angry with them. Chanel had the feeling that, having eliminated Vanae, and being more secure as the King of the whole of Futuna, Niuliki’s trust in Fakaverikere (his personal ancestral spirit) had been confirmed and strengthened. In October food was short but, according to Chevron, it never got so bad, at least not during his time with Chanel, that they had to go to bed on a so-called Wallisian meal, ie,

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10. EC, Doc 59, 4.
11. EC, page 489. Evidently, breaking the food taboos was considered the critical step in going over from the traditional religion to the Christian lotu.
12. Roulleaux makes it that this is happening all the time, but Rozier thinks that Roulleaux exaggerates.
13. CCC, Doc 16, 60.
without food.\textsuperscript{15} Chanel tried to get himself a house built in the Singave district.\textsuperscript{16} Niuliki agreed grudgingly but was not cooperative.

All the time Chanel was instructing a growing number of Futunan adherents and catechumens as well as Thomas Boag and a few white beach-combers. Thomas was received in the Church on All Saints. Peter Chanel’s health was going down. He suffered of violent toothaches that he tried to alleviate by chewing tobacco, which then made him vomit.\textsuperscript{17} He also suffered of rheumatic pains and general weakness.\textsuperscript{18}

On 6 November Jones’ schooner arrived in Futuna from Wallis, carrying a number of Wallisian catechumens. The story was that nearly the whole island had now gone over to the \textit{lotu}. The Lavelua and his family were about the only ones holding on to the ancestral religion. The story thoroughly upset King Niuliki and people who opposed the \textit{lotu} feared for the same thing to happen on Futuna. When Chanel saw Jones and the catechumens coming to visit him, on 6 November, he sent Marie-Nizier and Attale to a large feast being held at Fikavi, in the hope of getting food for his guests. Niuliki turned his back on them and they came back with nothing but a piece of liver that Niuliki’s son had thrown at them. Fortunately Chanel still had a pig he could kill! When Marie-Nizier went to see Niuliki later he denied being angry and assured Brother that they could get food at his place whenever they needed it. A few days later they did indeed get a large basket of food.

Chanel often spoke with Niuliki about the \textit{lotu}. The King did not refuse to listen but repeated over and again that he had to talk to the people and the chiefs. All the time the Wallisians stayed at Poi and delighted the nearby people with their public prayers and their singing, day and night.

Bataillon’s request to send Chevron put Chanel in a quandary. In the end he decided he could not refuse and he agreed. Just when Jones was about to leave for another trip to Wallis, Chevron suffered badly of open wounds on his feet and he had to walk on two crutches to Vere where the ship lay for anchor. Chanel followed him and nearly drowned crossing a

\textsuperscript{15} ‘Going to bed on a Wallisian meal’ meant without food and drinking kava instead to kill the hunger. It must have been a Futunan joke at the expense of the Wallisians. CCC, Doc 16, 31.

\textsuperscript{16} Chanel had a house there earlier on, but it was burnt down with many others in the August 1839 war.

\textsuperscript{17} EC, page 492, 17.08. In the 1970s, when the skull of Saint Peter Chanel was still on display as a relic in the chapel of the Marist Fathers in Rome, a dentist visiting the house had a close look at the teeth and observed that Chanel must have suffered badly from toothaches (from personal memory JS).

\textsuperscript{18} EC, page 495 (02.11) and page 498 (24.12).
creek because of the high tide. Chanel made his confession and they said good-bye, 20 November 1840.

**New Zealand**

**A flow of letters**

Early in May 1840 Pompallier saw the *Pallas* entering the Bay of Islands after nearly a year hunting for whale in the South Pacific. When he heard that now the Captain planned to sail directly to Le Havre, he wrote two long letters, both dated 14 May 1840.19

From the first one, intended for publication in the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith, we get a picture of the situation of the moment. Petitjean was in Whangaroa with Brother Elie-Régis. They had built a timber house and planted a vineyard.20 Servant was back in the Hokianga area with Baty, Comte and Brother Florentin. Viard had settled in Tauranga and Petit was roaming around the Kaipara area with Brother Michel Colombo. Épalle was in Kororareka to manage headquarters with Brother Marie-Augustin.

Pompallier was on a high: ‘Writing is like withdrawing from the battle field for a moment to get a message away for the benefit of the troops, only to get back into action immediately’. In four pages he enumerated the places he had visited during his two-months tour, as far as Rotorua. About forty Maori tribes, possibly as many as 27,000 people, had declared in favour of the Catholic Church. He had stayed two to six days in each place, teaching the rudiments of the Faith and refuting the calumnies that the Protestant ministers had spread about him. Some people had been told so often that he was the antichrist—not knowing what the word meant—that they thought it was his family name. ‘Oh ye, ancient nations of the Church, for so long heirs of the Faith of the apostles and martyrs, pray for the success of our labours!’ To do justice to the opportunities of the moment, so he claimed, he would need fifty priests for New Zealand alone, even more Brothers and soon also sisters, a ship and at least three good printing presses.

The second letter was addressed to the Superior General and dealt with administrative matters and personnel. The second letter, of no less than seventeen pages, got down to the familiar grumbling. Blind to the fact

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19. LRO 1, Docs 58 and 59.
that he was part of the problem, he lectured Colin on how to get mail and funds promptly to New Zealand and improve communications. He acknowledged having received all mail and moneys sent, but he does so mostly in the usual vague way that makes it difficult to identify particular letters and particular amounts. His office must have been in a mess. Reading that Colin had not received any news from Chanel and Bataillon, he said he is sure that by now the letters will have arrived,²¹ conveniently forgetting that precisely the letters from Wallis and Futuna were in fact still on the Pallas which just then was anchored in the Bay!²²

Pompallier repeated his complaints about the missionaries not coming directly to New Zealand. He wanted Colin to give departing missionaries strict instructions not to stop in Sydney longer than necessary, even quoting the Gospel to justify his insistence: ‘salute no one on the road!’²³

Pompallier urged Colin to convince the Propagation of the Faith of the pressing need of vast sums of money. It costs 5,500 francs to send out one missionary, their up-keep comes to 1,000 a year per person, without counting the cost of housing and of running a mission ship (15,000 to 18,000 a year). This got Pompallier on the subject of the Reine de Paix. He explained how he got the ship and why he sold it: it was not seaworthy. Anyhow, one ship cannot possibly serve two missions. He had sold it for 15,000 francs (£600 stg) but, unable to get the Picpus share of 7,500 francs, to Bishop Rouchouze, he asks Colin to take that amount from the allocation of the Propagation of the Faith and send it to the Picpus headhouse in Paris.²⁴

Pompallier devoted a long paragraph to the question of publishing material from the missions in the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith. These publications often appeared in the Australasian Cronicle which was the Sydney Catholic paper of the time, and from there they were taken over by the papers in New Zealand. He had just read two of his own letters to Colin in the local paper! He asked Colin to make sure the published material contained nothing that could hurt other people’s feelings, including the Protestants in New Zealand. It would only make things worse.²⁵

After a detailed and balanced account of the events at Waitangi, Pompallier gives the Superior General an assessment of his men. Pompallier

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²¹ LRO 1, Doc 59, 24.
²² LRO 1, Doc 59, 7.
²³ LRO 1, Doc 59, 8. Lk 10: 4.
²⁴ LRO 1, Doc 59, 32.
²⁵ LRO 1, Doc 59, 12.
finds his missionaries generally lacking in what he calls a ‘religious and clerical civility, more important here than in France because the English are more demanding on this point’. This applies especially to Petit and Baty. Servant is anyhow of limited ability and half-deaf, but good enough for the paper work. Petit has been the bursar and local superior, but he barely manages and Pompallier will send him to Kaipara. He wants Épalle in Kororareka as Procurator and as head of the local mission. Épalle at least presents well and he has an impressive way of preaching, just what is needed here!26

Especially the Brothers are lacking in civility and cleanliness in clothing and living and they have nothing like the skills of the English settlers. All except Augustin and Marie-Nizier whom he praises for their good manners. Both are hard workers!

Servant and Baty have shown the least consideration for Pompallier’s hierarchical rank. As a result, even if they were excellent in their work, he could not give them higher responsibilities. Delegating authority is a good thing, but how can a Bishop do so unless men are outstanding in what he calls ‘priestly unity’?27

Evidently, Pompallier’s relations with the men are becoming a matter of major concern. About six of the seventeen pages expand on the ‘intimate union of heart and affection that should bind the clergy to their Bishop’. The men, he complains, seem to want a Superior of their own, and he suspects they got the idea from the Picpus Fathers in Valparaiso. ‘I sometimes get the impression that they look upon me as an outsider, not as a member of the congregation. Did I not accept the mission for the good of the Society that I shall always cherish?’ It must be the influence of Protestantism and of the modern world, its rejection of all authority and its desire for freedom. Should we not rather go against these trends by even more obedience, to the Holy Father, to the Bishops? ‘Please, do not think I say this because I happen to be a Bishop!’ No, his only satisfaction in life is to expend himself for the salvation of souls. He prefers the Franciscan rule, because Franciscans are wholly in the hands of the Bishop, not like the Jesuits. The priests’ work is blessed with success to the extent that they are obedient. There is little blessing on the work of men who are led astray by the ideas of a neighbouring mission (meaning the Picpus).28

26. LRO 1, Doc 59, 18–20.
27. LRO 1, Doc 59, 23.
28. LRO 1, Doc 59, 22.
On 23 May Pompallier wrote to Pierre Colin to thanks him for two episcopal rings that he had sent him.\textsuperscript{29}

\textbf{Reshuffling again}

Less than two months later, on 11 July, the \textit{Aube} brought four new men: the Fathers Jean Pezant and Jean-André Tripe, and the Brothers Jean-
A Mission Too Far . . . Pacific Commitment

Claude Bertrand and Amon Duperron. The cards had to be reshuffled again. Brother Bertrand was appointed to the Hokianga and walked across with de Thierry. The two walked a whole day with a train of carriers through dense forests. They waded through swamps and rivers and stopped in a Maori village for the night. The next day, late afternoon, they reached the river at de Thierry’s place. Brother was exhausted and he was happy to stay for five days in this relatively comfortable place. De Thierry then took him by boat but they had to break off the trip because of bad weather. They got a ride on a large Maori canoe that took them to the place of a Protestant missionary. After a few days Brother Bertrand was helped to reach Purakau.30 He carried a letter for Comte and Florentin calling both of them back to the Bay of Islands, They were to embark on the Aube and start the first station on the South Island, in Akaroa.

It would be unfair to put the constant changes down to haphazard decision making and poor planning. New missionaries had arrived in three waves, six months apart and the Bishop had to adjust to the constantly changing availability of personnel and to whatever opportunities presented themselves.

As a result, by early August 1840, the New Zealand mission had six stations. On the east side of the North Island there was Kororareka in the Bay of Islands, the residence of Bishop Pompallier. With him were Épalle as Procurator, Brother Augustin and the newly arrived Father Tripe. Brother Michel too was back there. North of the Bay of Islands was Whangaroa with Petitjean and Brother Élie. South of the Bay we find Philippe Viard in the new station of Tauranga. On the west side of the island there was Purakau on the Hokianga estuary, staffed by Servant, Baty and Brother Claude-Marie Bertrand. Working from Purakau was Maxime Petit with the intention of establishing eventually a new station to the south, in Kaipara. Comte, Pezant and Brother Florentin were on their way to start the Akaroa mission station. Two and a half years after their arrival in New Zealand the Marist missionaries were covering a lot of ground and constantly extending their sphere of influence.

On 22 July Pompallier wrote to Jean-Claude Colin to acknowledge the arrival of the Fathers Pezant and Tripe, and the Brothers Amon Duperron and Claude-Marie Bertrand. From the letters they carried he is shocked to learn that at their departure Colin had not received any mail from him for nine months. ‘I am distressed to read that the large numbers of letters

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30. Ronzon, FMO, 45.
we have written have not reached you (...). Our letters may have been intercepted, because we do write many'. He wonders if that could be the reason why the Society is not sending him more missionaries? 'My God, what harm to the mission!'  

A good week later, 30 July, Pompallier wrote again to announce that he was on the point of buying a schooner of 120 tons for 25,000 francs (£1,000 stg), which meant using nearly all the money brought by Pezant and Tripe. He had been told that there was a Brother in the Hermitage who had served in the French Navy and begged Colin to send him this man to take charge of the ship. The Brother can in turn train others. A mission ship run by Brothers would be a truly 'religious and apostolic vessel'.

On 6 August Pompallier writes again to Pierre Colin in reaction to what had happened on board of the Aube. He asks Pierre Colin to tell departing missionaries not to discuss religion with the ship’s officers. An educated way and good manners are all that is needed. Naval vessels are no worse than others, and what happens at sea is no different from what happens all over the place. As to the Brothers he writes: ‘However holy their religious state, we must accept that they have a lower rank in society and lack the education of their table companions. It can provoke especially the young officers, often highly educated and from the most distinguished families of France, but not infrequently very critical of religion. It would be better if in the future the Brothers joined the lower ranks at table.' He must have told other people the same thing. Pezant took it up

31. LRO 1, Doc 64, 3. Fact is that all the letters sent by Pompallier up to and including September 1838 (04.09.38 & 14.09.38, LRO 1, Docs 29 and 30) had been received in France in April 1839 (CS 1, Doc 63, 1). We can safely assume they were acknowledged in letters carried by the third group that left in June 1839 (Cf LRO 1, Doc 72). Colin had acknowledged them again in September 1839 (CS 1, Doc 89, 1). After September 1838 Pompallier had written one letter that he destroyed before it was sent (LRO 1, Doc 37, 3). There also is mention of a letter of 14 May 1839 (LRO 1, Doc 33, 1) that indeed has not been traced, but other mentions throw doubt on whether it ever existed. Possibly a confusion with the letters of 14 May 1838 (LRO 1, Doc 24) and 14 May 1840 (LRO 1, Doc 59). Apart from that doubtful one, Pompallier certainly did not write between October 1838 and August 1839 (14.08.39, 18.08.39 & 28.08.39, LRO 1, Docs 33, 34 and 37). Only the letters of August 1839 had not yet reached France when the Aube sailed in February 1840. Pompallier’s desperate sighs and the allegation of Protestants destroying Catholic letters may make for good drama, only these ‘many’ letters never existed.

32. LRO 1, Doc 65.

33. LRO 1, Doc 69, 4.
later with Colin. It was on his request that the Brothers had been seated with the Fathers at the officers’ table but he now thinks it would be better if on government ships the Fathers and the Brothers would all take their meals with the lower ranks.\textsuperscript{34}

**Peter Chanel out of favour**

Shortly after 6 August 1840 the ship that had carried Chevron and Brother Attale to Wallis and Futuna, returned to the Bay of Islands, carrying the letters of the Island missionaries. Pompallier mentions they had submitted their letters to him. Whether that means they had not sealed them, is not clear. In any case he opened and read them. On 30 August he forwarded the mail to Colin and in the covering letter he recommended the publication of Chevron’s account of his voyage, addressed to his parents. He referred to the letters that Bataillon and Chanel had written to Colin and approved their requests, among other things for a printing press on Wallis. However, he insisted that all gifts should first come to New Zealand for him to share out as needed.\textsuperscript{35}

It means that Pompallier had also read Chanel’s criticism of the Bishop’s delay in visiting them, naming it as the first reason why Futuna was not yet converted.\textsuperscript{36} Servant had already challenged Pompallier’s right to read mail for the Superior General, now it was the Pro-Vicar, Peter Chanel, who not only criticized his handling of the mission, but who had kept back Brother Marie-Nizier against the Bishop’s explicit orders! Pompallier forwarded the letters, but not without a caustic comment: ‘Unfortunately, not all religious have enough knowledge and experience of religious life. The first ones, who came with me,\textsuperscript{37} had not done a novitiate and most of those who came later, did not finish a full novitiate.’\textsuperscript{38} So much for Peter Chanel!

Pompallier proposes to send somebody who understands the missions to France to help the Superior General select the missionaries. He also wanted an experienced religious from France to come as provincial or

\textsuperscript{34} LRO 1, Doc 73, 6.
\textsuperscript{35} LRO 1, Doc 71, 1.
\textsuperscript{36} EC, Doc 59, 1.
\textsuperscript{37} They were: Peter Chanel, Catherin Servant and Pierre Bataillon.
\textsuperscript{38} LRO 1, Doc 71, 4.
official visitor to give spiritual direction to the missionaries. Given all his other responsibilities the Bishop cannot possibly do it himself.\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 71, 4.}

He finished his letter by informing Colin that he had bought a ship for 28,000 Francs, repairs and refitting included. If Colin in the meantime had bought a ship in France as Pompallier had asked him to do, then, so he wrote: ‘Sell it again or send it with the next group of missionaries, I can always sell it here’. He also sent him the papers of his new ship, the *Sancta Maria*, to have it insured in France.\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 71, 6.}

**Things going wrong**

The same letter, of 30 August 1840, brings up serious problems with two of the Brothers. On arrival of the *Aube* in July, Brother Amon Duperron had come to see the Bishop and told him he had no intention of working in the mission and wanted to leave religious life. He was very angry with the two priests he had travelled with, especially Father Pezant. Pompallier found him cocksure, self-centred and ‘without any of the virtues one would expect in a religious’. He prevailed upon Amon to stay at least a month and see what things were like. Amon did and behaved well enough, but at the end of the month he still insisted on leaving. There was little Pompallier could do but let him go. He was a baker by profession and found employ in a hotel in the Bay. Pompallier concluded that Pezant had not handled him properly on board ship and added the priests should show more consideration for the Brothers who, he wrote, were often little more than house servants to the priests. He also wanted Champagnat to be more careful in the selection of Brothers for Oceania.\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 71. Duperron was killed four months later (8 December 1840) in a hunting accident with his own gun. Épalle administered him the last sacraments. LRO 1, Doc 82, 2. Pezant later humbly admitted that he had not always treated him the right way, LRO 2, Doc 142, 1.}

Unfortunately, at about the same time, there was another tragedy. As he told it himself, Pompallier saw that Brother Michel Colombon was friendly with Europeans and he found out that Michel made little presents from things he took from the mission store. He had reprimanded him several times and warned him he would dismiss him if it happened again. Apparently Michel had since given a shawl and a pot of hair cream to a young married lady. Pompallier went through Michel’s room and found...
other little objects that he assumed Michel intended to use as presents. As it was the third time Pompallier dismissed him on the spot. He found employ as a tailor some 25 kilometers from Kororareka.

Pompallier was not sorry to see him go: ‘The mission lost nothing by this dismissal. God’s work does not suffer by losing unworthy members’. The young man had been a burden on the mission from the beginning: affectionate, too feminine in character, and inclined to particular friendships. His attentions to the lady had been remarked upon by outsiders as well. He called Michel a thief and a hypocrite, breaking his vows while continuing to receive the sacraments. ‘May the Lord have mercy on him’. He hoped that Champagnat could send him another tailor.42

Épalle, now in Kororareka as a sort of Provincial, responsible for guarding the religious life of the confreres43 wrote by the same occasion to confirm what Pompallier had written already. Echoing the Bishop he painted the sad events against the background of the ‘great enemy of salvation who rages here even more than elsewhere’. If anything he laid it on a bit thicker: Amon had claimed he had never wanted to be a religious and had joined only to avoid a marriage his parents intended to force him into. As to Michel, the Bishop had treated him with admirable kindness, but stealing is like drinking; once it has become a habit it is hard to break, especially if it is used to satisfy an even stronger passion: love. The Bishop had moved him away from the object of his passions but the sinful friendship had continued all the same. He should have been sent away a year ago. It seems, he wrote to Colin, he has gone back to the Hokianga to stay with the lady in question in the absence of her husband. Neither of the two Brothers had shown any remorse. Fortunately, Épalle added, people here barely know them as religious because Pompallier had forbidden the Brothers to wear a religious habit. Épalle assured Colin, there was no public scandal.44

42. LRO 1, Doc 71, 5. Was Pompallier competent to dispense a perpetually professed religious from his vows, as he did with regards to Amon, or dismiss one as he did with Michel? Canonically they were not members of the pontifical congregation of the priests (in which he was a Superior), but of a diocesan congregation of Lyon. There may have been something in the faculties Pompallier had received from Rome, or some understanding with Archbishop de Pins. Nobody challenged the Bishop’s actions.

43. LRO 1, Doc 71, 4.

44. LRO 1, Doc 72, 2–6. Épalle alleges that there was an improper relationship between Michel and Mrs Poynton at Totara Point. The alleged friendship may have been the reason why Pompallier called Michel from the Hokianga station to Kororareka in January 1840. In a letter to Épalle of 2 November 1840 Michel rejects the charge of
Disappointment on the South Island

In early 1840, British plans for New Zealand were not known in France, so the *Compagnie Nanto-Bordelaise* proceeded with its plans to send out settlers and establish a French colony on the Banks peninsula of the South Island. The Ministry of the Navy and the Colonies appointed Captain Lavaud Royal Commissioner for New Zealand. He left on the supply ship the *Aube* on 10 February 1840. Nine days later Captain Jean Langlois left on the *Comte de Paris* with a number of families from Rochefort, about sixty people in all. When the *Aube* sailed into the Bay of Islands on 11 July, Lavaud saw the Union Jack flying and found that Great Britain had in the meantime taken possession of New Zealand. He came to a provisional arrangement with Hobson to the effect that both would ask for instructions from their respective governments. Meanwhile there were no objections against the French settlers establishing themselves at Akaroa; they would be treated on an equal footing with the British.

Hobson took no chances and quickly sent two men of his staff on HMS *Britomart* to the Bay of Akaroa, where they put up a flagpole and hoisted the British flag, which at that point had not yet been done on the South Island. When a group of hostile Maoris approached they were driven off by warning shots.

Pompallier called Father Comte and Brother Florentin from the Hokitika mission and appointed them with Father Pezant to open the first mission on the South Island. Pezant who had only just arrived on the *Aube* was to take care of the French settlers. Comte, who by then spoke Maori, would try to make missionary contacts with the local tribes and was asked to be an interpreter for Captain Lavaud.

In the same letter Michel suggests he wanted to give Pompallier an excuse to dismiss him because he found it too difficult to live as a religious. To a Protestant minister he said he wanted to work as a catechist and not as a domestic servant to the priests. He never married and had occasional contact with some of the Marists. He used to gather Maoris for religious instruction and he prepared some of them for baptism. For a time he lived with Father Rozet and at times Father Petitjean went to stay with him, cf LRO 1, Doc 109, 1. A few times he took part in Marist retreats. There was talk of him wanting to return to the Society but it never came about. He acquired a property in Reefton where he was known as an excellent gardener: ‘Jimmy the gardener’ as he was called. He died there on 14 March 1880. On his gravestone he is remembered as ‘Antonio Michel’. Ronzon, *Frères Maristes en Océanie* (FMO), 16–22.

The *Aube* left the Bay of Islands on 27 July 1840\(^{46}\) and when Lavaud approached the Banks Peninsula, on 15 August, he found the *Britomart* for anchor and the British flag flying. Two days later, the *Comte de Paris* sailed into the harbour. The sailors put up two large tents and on 19 August 1840 the settlers went ashore.

Langlois had bought land in the area at an earlier visit, in 1838, but, as so often happened in the Pacific, he must have dealt with the first people he met who, as now became clear, were not the landowners of the Banks Peninsula at all. Then British settlers turned up claiming they had bought the land already! It took lengthy negotiations and new payments before the Maori chiefs allowed the Frenchmen to stay.

Captain Lavaud had been a gracious host during the long voyage from France, but once it became clear that there was no future for France in New Zealand, he lost interest. There were many complaints about him and Langlois wrote to Paris. While Langlois was most helpful, Lavaud turned cold and non-cooperative. Pompallier had assumed that the priests would be well looked after by the settlers and had therefore given them very little money. In fact, they were left destitute. They had to build their own hut but thatching was beyond them. The roof kept leaking. They received naval rations like the settlers but had to borrow money to buy potatoes. Comte went with Florentin hunting for wild pigs of which there were plenty but hunting was not their game either. With sixty settlers in a scarcely inhabited area, food was scarce. Recalling the reception they had enjoyed in Paris, Pezant enclosed a letter of complaint to Marshal Soult leaving it to Colin to either send or destroy it.\(^{47}\)

Having bought the *Sancta Maria* with the money Pezant and Tripe had brought along, Pompallier had little or nothing left. He borrowed 10,000 francs on a promissory note against the Marist Fathers in Lyon from the French whaler Captain Joseph Ratau who had been for anchor in the Bay of Islands and with whom he had made friends.\(^{48}\) It allowed him to leave on 20 September for another tour down the east coast of the North Island, taking Father Tripe along.\(^{49}\) He continued to Akaroa where the carpenters

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\(^{46}\) Pezant gives 30 July, Jore makes it 27 July.

\(^{47}\) The letter has not been found. Cf LRO 1, Doc 74.

\(^{48}\) The promissory note was presented to the Marist administration on 7 May 1841. According to the books of Procure it was dated 3 September 1840 and paid off on 17 May 1841. Cf *Comptes-Rendus des recettes et emplois des sommes allouées aux missions étrangères confiées à la Société de Marie*. APM 512.01. CS 1, Doc 259.

\(^{49}\) For Pompallier’s first visit to the South Island cf Simmons, *Pompallier*, 52–5.
of the *Aube* caulked the Sancta Maria and put copper sheathing on the bottom.\(^{50}\) For the six weeks they were there, Pompallier and Tripe stayed on board the *Aube*. Pompallier went ashore nearly every day, always with Captain Lavaud, sometimes calling on Comte and Pezant without giving them a chance to talk with him personally.\(^{51}\) Pompallier told Comte off because of his arguments with Lavaud, without hearing Comte's side of the story. Against the advice of the missionaries he ordered a Chapel to be built in timber, for 1000 to 1200 francs. He arranged that the missionaries would get two rations a day from Lavaud.\(^{52}\)

On 14 November the work on the ship was finished and Pompallier took Comte and Pezant for a missionary visit to Otago. While for anchor there, 26 November 1840, he wrote a long letter to Colin (eighteen pages!)\(^{53}\) about the great reception he was given by the Otago people who, he wrote, were less under the influence of Protestant missionaries. The contacts were promising and they asked for a priest, but all he could do was refer them to Comte. He took the chief's ten-year old son Porure with two other boys for instruction to Akaroa, hoping to have them trained as catechists.\(^{54}\) Some people in Otago showed him a collection of large wall pictures from French history they presumably had obtained from French sailors in exchange for food. When in one house he saw a few obscene ones he upbraided the owner who admitted it was wrong and tore them up to the applause of the people standing around.\(^{55}\)

All the activity gave Tripe ample time to write to his family and to Colin with his impressions after four months in New Zealand. He had been in the Bay of Islands all the time and born the brunt of Pompallier’s moods. While several years older than the Bishop he had felt humiliated and treated rudely. He waited until Pompallier had left for Otago and found a British ship to get his letters away.\(^{56}\)

In December Pompallier returned to Akaroa and left for Port Nicholson (later Wellington), taking Pezant and, perhaps because of rumours of

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50. LRO 1, Doc 80, 5. Simmons, *Pompallier*, 53. Pompallier had let himself be ill-advised. This costly operation was quite needless. The tropical *teredo navalis* worm that attacks wooden ships' hulls in tropical waters, is no threat under New Zealand conditions.
51. LRO 1, Doc 78, 5.
52. LRO 1, Doc 86, 4.
53. LRO 1, Doc 80.
55. LRO 1, Doc 80, 20.
56. LRO 1, Doc 78.
impending war,57 two officers of the *Aube* to buy supplies. On 24 Decem-
ber they reached Port Nicholson where he was well received by the ap-
proximately 150 Catholics there and even by some Protestants. The people
must have been delighted to have unexpectedly a Bishop, their Bishop,
for Christmas celebrations. Pompallier was very busy, baptising, hearing
confessions and preaching. The Catholics started a subscription for the
building of a Church and a Protestant donated a plot of land.58 They re-
turned the officers to Akaroa and Pompallier stayed there until the end
of February. In late February he left for the North Island, leaving Tripe in
Akaroa as a companion for Comte and Florentin. Pezant he took along on
the *Sancta Maria* for a new assignment.59

France

A great loss

Gradually the lay-brothers in the Society had grown apart into two dis-
tinct groups. The first ones, founded in 1817 by Marcellin Champagnat as
a branch of the wider ‘Society of Mary’60 were centred on the Hermitage,
near Saint-Chamond. They grew into the Marist Brothers of the Schools.
The other Brothers were scattered throughout the priests’ communities,
devoting themselves to domestic work. Colin called them the ‘Brothers
of Saint Joseph.’ They became the so-called Coadjutor Brothers, lay-mem-
bers of the branch of the Priests.

By the end of 1839 nine Brothers had left for Oceania, eight of whom
had come from the Hermitage, one (Joseph-Xavier Luzy) from the priests’
community in Belley. There were two hundred and fifty Brothers teach-
ing in 43 village schools in France.61 The congregation counted one hun-
dred and twelve professed members, the rest were still in training.62 Of
the Brothers of Saint Joseph, there may have been about ten at the most,
spread over different houses.63 During the priests’ retreat of 1839 Colin

57. LRO 1, Doc 90, 1.
59. LRO 1, Doc 78, 1.
60. I.e., comprising the four branches of priests, brothers, sisters and laity, as originally
63. Bernard Bourtot, ‘Les Frères Coadjuteurs de la Société de Marie sous les généralats
    Colin et Favre, 1836–1885’ in *Documents SM* (Saint-Priest, 57, 2001), 9.
brought up the future of the Brothers and it was decided to formally separate the two groups. Champagnat opposed the separation! He felt it went against the original vision of the Society. The decision to separate the two groups intended to clarify a situation that had become increasingly confused, but even after the separation mutual arrangements remained vague for some years and the status of those in Oceania was left in mid-air.\(^{64}\)

Marcellin Champagnat was asked to speak to the assembly but after a few sentences he had to give up. His health was rapidly deteriorating. Colin took the initiative to arrange for his succession. With Champagnat’s agreement and the consent of the Archbishop, who was their ecclesiastical superior, he had the Brothers elect a Director General at the end of their retreat at the Hermitage. On 12 October 1839 Brother François Rivat, at 31 years of age, became Director General with 87 votes out of 92 present. The next two in numbers of votes received, Brother Louis-Marie Labrosse (29) and Brother Jean-Baptiste Furet (32) became his assistants.\(^{65}\)

In March 1840 Maitrepierre spent a week in the Hermitage and found Champagnat weakening.\(^{66}\) On 24 April Colin wrote to Champagnat: ‘I hope to visit you soon. I fear the void that will follow if the Lord calls you: \textit{f\textipa{\textup{i}}at voluntas Dei} (may God’s will be done).’\(^{67}\) On 13 May Colin wrote to Cholleton in Rome that Champagnat was approaching death.\(^{68}\) On 24 May Colin went to visit him. Marcellin made his will and left his Brothers a spiritual testament.\(^{69}\) At four o’clock in the morning, 6 June 1840, Marcellin Champagnat died, his Brothers gathered around him, singing the \textit{Salve Regina}.\(^{70}\)

Marcellin Champagnat had been with the original group that in 1816 at Fourvière dedicated themselves to found the Society of Mary. Only four of them were still there when in 1836 the priests’ branch was officially approved and established. Marcellin Champagnat was one of those four. He not only started the branch of the Teaching Brothers, but can truly

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65. Farrell, \textit{Achievement}, 228.
66. CS 1, Doc 151, 8.
67. CS 1, Doc 156.
68. CS 1, Doc 173, 3.
69. OM 1, Doc 417.
70. Farrell, \textit{Achievement}, 232.
be called a co-founder of the Society of Mary. He was beatified in 1955 and declared a Saint in 1999. Marcellin’s role in the Pacific missions is described in a special section at the end of this chapter.

**Colin in the shipbuilding business!**

About the last thing Colin would have wanted to become involved in was buying or building ships. But that was precisely what Pompallier asked him to do. Around the turn of the year 1839–1840 the Bishop spoke of his needs with Captain Lateste of the whaler *Le Nérée*, and then with Captain Le Peltier of the *Meuse*. He wanted a 100 or 120 ton brig to be built by the renowned shipyard Normand in Le Havre for twenty to twenty-four thousand francs. Both captains were prepared to sail it for him to New Zealand. He gave each of them a letter to that intent. Colin was to oversee the undertaking and get the money from the Propagation of the Faith.

Le Peltier announced his arrival in France on 29 July 1840, Lateste on 19 August. Now Colin had not only to buy a ship for Pompallier, he also had to choose between two captains! Colin dutifully approached the shipyard of Le Normand through Franques, the shipping agent in Le Havre who had been of great help to the mission on a former occasion. Franques was in contact with Le Normand and answered it could be done, but Colin should come in person to Le Havre to look into the details and sign a building contract. He warned that a ship of that size would cost three times as much as Pompallier had mentioned, namely sixty to seventy thousand francs, but that it in the long run would be an excellent investment! However, he added, building a ship takes time. There is no time to lose: ‘axe into the wood!’

Colin got this letter when he was on the point of leaving for a prolonged absence, including the retreat in Belley from 22 to 28 September. He decided not to go ahead with the ship. It would absorb the entire allocation of the Propagation of the Faith for that year, just when he was getting another group of missionaries together. Instead of writing directly to Franques and cancelling the whole thing, he took the cumbersome way of instructing Poupinel to get Yvert, a prospective lay missionary in Caen, to go to Le Havre on his behalf.

71. CS 1, Docs 186 and 188.
72. CS 1, Doc 194: ‘*hache en bois!*’
73. CS 1, Doc 197, 3.
Poupinel wrote to Yvert on 10 September but Yvert did not grasp the urgency of the matter and did nothing. The good laymen in Le Havre waited in vain for Colin to come and Le Normand even put off a business trip to England in order to meet with the Superior General personally.\(^74\)

During Colin’s absence the *Pallas* arrived in Le Havre carrying among other things Pompallier’s letter of 14 May 1840 in which the Bishop did not even mention the project any more but talked only of buying a ship locally for twenty to twenty-two thousand francs.\(^75\) That let Colin off the hook. Only, it was not until 3 October that he got around to tell Franques that the deal was off, with apologies for the confusing way that things had been handled.\(^76\)

**New men on the stage**

The founding Chapter of 1836 had elected Étienne Terraillon to be assistant to the Superior General. He remained the parish priest of Saint-Chamond until November 1839. He then moved to Puylata at about the same time as Colin did. We can safely assume that the moves were decided upon in discussions during the retreat of 1839, in fact a sort of mini-chapter. Apart from a few personal letters, Terraillon never got involved in matters concerning Oceania.

During the same retreat elections were held for a second assistant and Denis-Joseph Maîtrepierre, who had also given the retreat conferences, was added to the administration team. Born in 1800 in Cormoz (Ain), Maîtrepierre had known Peter Chanel from the Minor Seminary of Meximieux (Peter was one class higher). He did philosophy in the Minor Seminary of Belley when, in 1825, Jean-Claude Colin made his entry there and theology in Brou with Peter Chanel. On 15 July 1827 he was made a deacon in the same ceremony in which Chanel was ordained a priest. He became a priest of the Diocese of Belley in 1829. In 1831 he joined the Marists together with Peter Chanel and Claude Bret. In 1839 he was rector of the Minor Seminary of Meximieux, but at his election as an Assistant he moved immediately to Puylata. His function was vaguely described as assistant or visitator.\(^77\) Together they formed a youthful team: Colin 50, Terraillon 48, Maîtrepierre 39 and Poupinel 24.

\(^{74}\) CS 1, Doc 200.

\(^{75}\) LRO 1, Doc 59, 33.

\(^{76}\) CS 1, Doc 203.

\(^{77}\) OM 4, page 308–10.
Denis Maîtrepierre had always been interested in the foreign missions. Together with Chanel and Claude Bret whom he knew from the Minor Seminary of Marboz, he applied in 1831 for the missions of Louisiana. Like the other two, he was kept back by Bishop Devie. As an Assistant to the General, he could be expected to play a significant role in the running of Oceania.

On 1 March 1840 Soult had been replaced by Thiers as Foreign Minister, and Duperré by Roussin as Minister for the Navy and the Colonies. It was important to present the interests of Oceania to the new Ministers. For some unknown reason not Poupinel or Maîtrepierre but Claude-Marie Chavas and Étienne Séon went to Paris in May to present the new Ministers with an updated report of the missions. They renewed the standing request for travelling facilities on Government ships and for protection of the missionaries by Naval units in the Pacific. On both counts the new Ministers reacted favourably. Roussin confirmed the interest of the new Government in the Pacific missions and Colin sent him a letter of thanks.

Improving, but at the same time disturbing communications

In April or May 1840 Colin got two of the three lengthy letters that Bishop Pompallier had written in August 1839. But there must have been more. On 18 July 1840 Father Colin wrote an open letter to Maxime Petit meant for all the missionaries. Unusual. Until now he had mostly waited until a next group was on the point of departure. His action may have been triggered by the two letters from Pompallier or, more likely, Colin had received by the same mail a letter of Petit or of someone else, we cannot be sure. At least from Maxine Petit there must have been more letters than have come to us. Otherwise, why address this letter to Petit? Whatever it
was, Colin was alarmed. Not only did he not wait for the usual opportunity, but his tone is panicky: ‘make sure you are not being isolated!’ Meet at least once a year for a common retreat. If things become too difficult, do not be afraid to return to France: we welcome you with open arms! Tell this to all the confreres!

By the end of September 1840 he also got Pompallier’s third letter of August 1839, plus the more recent mail from May 1840. The August letters told him curtly that the missionaries on Wallis and Futuna ‘are all right, but things go slowly’. Nothing more. The letters had been written shortly after the arrival in New Zealand of the second group who had visited the islands and given the Bishop what for him too had been the first news from the islands.83 That the four missionaries on Wallis and Futuna had been visited by the second group and further details, Colin did not hear from the Bishop (who was angry about the visit) but from Baty’s letter to his friend Claude-Pierre Nyd.84 The letters from the islands he did not get until September when the Pallas reached Le Havre. In other words, it took nearly four years before the Society of Mary in France got substantial information on its missions in the Pacific Islands.

From the letters Colin came to understand what Pompallier had gone through when he had been confined for a year and a half to the relatively isolated Hokianga estuary, without a sign of life from the Society, from France, from Rome; and without money unable to move to the Bay of Islands where ships came and went. How he had felt abandoned, let down and humiliated by the fact that the reinforcements he had promised to the Maoris did not come. Only now did Colin understand that Pompallier had passed through a period of dejection until, as he wrote to Cholleton, ‘the good God has consoled him in his multitude of pains’ with the arrival of the second group.85 Did Colin also understand that he was part of the problem?

The pessimistic tone and the anger that Colin read in Pompallier’s letters were partly drowned out by the touching description of catechumens, fierce men with frightening tattoo on their faces, consulting him on delicate matters of conscience, and his graphic tale of tracking through the bush with a long line of carriers, carrying an altar, a box with ornaments, sitting together on the ground, sharing a meal, sleeping in the same hut covered with his coat, and being carried on a chief’s shoulder through a

83. LRO 1, Doc 33, 6 and Doc 37, 2.
84. LRO 1, Doc 32. When exactly Colin got this letter we do not know.
85. CS 1, Doc 173, 10: ‘Le bon Dieu l’a consolé selon la multitude de ses douleurs’.
river. Colin was moved and copied it all for Cholleton in Rome who in
turn passed the letter to Cardinal Fransoni.86

The headhouse now had to digest a mass of information, but not all of
it was good news. It had to ask itself how to proceed with its undertaking
on the other side of the globe. The information received confirmed Colin’s
concern about the well-being of the missionaries and their relations with
the Bishop. Even without having received as yet the worst letters, namely
those of Servant and Petit of April 1840,87 Colin began to suspect that per-
haps he was not being told the whole truth, as indeed was the case. This is
where the new Assistant stepped in.

A no-nonsense Assistant General

Two years later Maîtrepierre remarked: ‘If Pompallier writes to Rome, he
fills twenty pages and they still do not know what it is all about. Colin
writes two pages, forceful and precise, and everything is clear.’88 It sounds
like the sigh of frustration he must have uttered already in 1840 after
working his way through nearly fifty pages full of Pompallier’s emotional
outpourings.89 Reducing them to a manageable summary and formulating
conclusions was not a task for the young Poupinel, but for a senior policy
maker and a man who worked, as Colin said of him, methodically.90
Maîtrepierre took it on, basing himself mainly on the most recent
information, namely Pompallier’s two letters of 14 May 1840. Had he had
the forceful and revealing letters in hand of Servant and Petit, Maîtrepierre
would have been much more severe!

In his summary, Maîtrepierre is scrupulously objective.91 On eight
handwritten pages it leaves out nothing of any significance and he gives
no comment. The summary opens with the following key points:

86. CS 1, Doc 173, 1.
87. LRO 1, Docs 55 and 56. Entrusted to an English whaler, they reached Lyon only in
March 1841.
88. April 1842. A remark noted down by Mayet. Mémoires Mayet, S1, 132. Cf CS 1, Doc
341, addition i.
89. LRO 1, Docs 33, 34, 37, 47, 58 and 59. Forty-five pages handwritten, fifty in print in
LRO.
90. CS 1, Doc 255, 5.
91. LRO 1, Doc 60. The Ms in APM is not signed or dated. Charles Girard, the editor of
LRO, identifies Maîtrepierre as the author from the handwriting. It must have been
written after the arrival of the Pallas, in late September, but most likely before the letter
to the missionaries of 21 November.
Chapter One: Communications

1. Via Valparaiso, round Cape Horn, very long. Connections between South America and the Australian islands rare.
3. With naval ships or whalers. From Le Havre, Nantes or Lorient. Safe. Frequent.
4. Mail to Polding. Almost weekly connections between Sydney and the Bay of Islands. The Bishop of Sydney is happy to help the mission of New Zealand. Because of the mistrust of English people towards the French, letters must be addressed in the English language and look as little ‘French’ as possible.

In a similar way he deals systematically with general observations on the mission, personnel, the bishop’s feelings (minus the emotional outbursts) and the expenses of the mission. The contents, fifty-one points in all, will be known to readers of the preceding chapters.

The last point:

51. In the fervour of his charity, the Bishop repeats over and again: ‘Have pity on me and on the poor sheep of my fold’

His conclusions

Having given the bishop’s point of view, Maître pierre draws eleven conclusions and formulates three recommendations:

‘From the letter follows:
1. The mission of Oceania is difficult and expensive.
2. The mission is ripe and needs workers.
3. The mission is under threat from the Methodists.
4. Some of the missionaries lack tact and urbanity (‘savoir vivre’).
5. The Brothers lack order, cleanliness and show poor workmanship.
6. The Vicar Apostolic fears that the religious state stands in the way of the sort of dependency he wants to see in his priests. As much as in the past he wanted to see the Marists independent of the Bishops, he now expects from them a blind dependency (‘une dependance aveugle’).

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92. The numbering to fifty-one is by the editor of LRO.
93. CS 1, Doc 60
94. Maître pierre alludes to Pompallier’s often repeated claim that he had accepted the mission in order to obtain pontifical approval for the Society, ie, a central Superior of
7. The religious fear that the way they are governed deprives them of the advantages of religious life. They have only the same means of striving for holiness and perfection as diocesan priests.
8. This mutual fear creates unrest and withdrawal (‘réserve’) and as a result there is not the trust that makes it easy for the Superior to exercise his authority and for his subjects to accept it.
9. To overcome this harmful and dangerous fear, it would be useful to have the means to help both sides find ways of handling the problem.
10. The mission expands but it is not consolidating its position; on the contrary, tensions are building up while it spreads.
11. Means must be found urgently to mould, consolidate and bring to perfection the good that is being done with so much, perhaps too much, activity.

These are his three recommendations:

1. ‘One of the best ways to establish the sweet bonds that unites the confreres and maintains the religious and apostolic spirit would be a Provincial who visits the priests and the Brothers, who keeps up the spirit of their calling with his circular letters, who brings them together when possible for a common retreat, who by different means keeps abreast of their spiritual needs and guards over their interests with the Bishop.
2. Would it not be useful, even necessary to have a second Bishop, a Vicar Apostolic or a Prefect Apostolic, to build on the good that has started but is not being consolidated? The present Vicar Apostolic is carried away by his zeal to open new territories and start new mission stations. It would be useless, if not harmful, to try slowing him down and bring some moderation into his approach.
3. Everything considered, we must move beyond the normal steps. The state of the missions demands or appears to demand a forceful moral intervention of the administration. Prudently, but with a supernatural and active prudence.’

**A large wave**

On 29 March 1840 Colin had written to the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon to submit in a general way the needs of Oceania, mentioning specifi-
cally the ship Pompallier needed. He added that he was thinking of sending ten subjects, or even more.95 Did he really have that many in view? In May he mentioned five or six in a letter to Fransoni.96 In July Franques in Le Havre notified Colin of a whaling ship, the France, under Captain Peters, about to leave for the Pacific. Colin had to answer he was making preparations for four or five men, but just then he had no missionaries ready. There evidently were not as many volunteers as Colin had hoped for. In any case, before sending any, he wanted to be sure that a particular ship planned to go directly to the Bay of Islands via the Cape of Good Hope and he wanted to know the fare.97

He took the opportunity to write to Pompallier (18 July 1840) that he had only two missionaries ready and that he still hesitated if he should send these two by ships that he knew would leave in September and October or keep them to form a larger group later on. He knew the Pallas could arrive any day and he wondered if he should not wait for the mail it would bring. There were other promising contacts but nothing definitive. Let the neophytes pray to Mary that she send them missionaries. It is all in her hands.98

One man Colin could be sure of was Antoine Séon. Born in 1807 as the son of a shoemaker in Lyon, Antoine wanted from early on to become a priest. A benefactor paid for his studies, he entered the Minor Seminary in Meximieux and was ordained for the Diocese of Belley in 1831. He was on the staff of the Minor Seminary in Belley when Colin was the Principal. He joined the Marists in 1833 and was professed in the founding Chapter of 24 September 1836. He probably applied for Oceania together with Chanel but was kept back as a teacher, as acting-rector and bursar in the Marist house of the Capucinière. He probably tried again in the autumn of 1839 and he may have been the one Colin was thinking of when he said he could not yet afford to let the senior Marists in Belley leave: ‘What would become of me and of the Society?’ Now Séon had experience of leading a community and his motivation had matured. Colin released him and made him Superior of the fifth group.99

Michel Borjon, born in 1811, was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Belley in 1837. Not long after his ordination he entered the Marist Novi-

95. CS 1, Doc 148, 2.
96. CS 1, Doc 160, 3.
97. CS 1, Doc 183.
98. CS 1, Doc 185, 7.
tiate in Puylata. During the school year of 1838–1839, while still a novice, he taught at the Minor Seminary in Belley. Austere, inflexible and severe, he had more success as a prefect than as a teacher. Still, Julien Favre said later of him he had the makings of a saint, more even than Peter Chanel.\textsuperscript{100} He made his profession on 3 September 1839, at the end of the Marist retreat. He continued teaching in Belley and in the summer of 1840 he applied for Oceania. He must have had some particular connection with the Marist Brothers as he wrote a letter of farewell to Brother François Rivat, the successor of Marcellin Champagnat.\textsuperscript{101}

\textbf{Antoine Garin}\textsuperscript{102} was born in July 1810, in Saint-Rambert-en-Bugey. His father was a notary who could afford to have a private tutor in the home for the education of his children. From 1825 to 1831 Antoine attended the Minor Seminary in Belley that took in non-clerical students from well-to-do families as well as seminarians, but he already dreamed of becoming a priest. In 1831 Antoine opted for the Major Seminary in Brou where he was ordained a priest in 1834. He was later described as ‘tall, reserved, quiet in manner, austere and a little cold on first acquaintance’.\textsuperscript{103} He worked in the parish of Chalamont in the unhealthy and economically-depressed region of the Dombes. Seeing priests of his Diocese leaving for the foreign missions he turned to the Society of Mary that he knew from the Marist missions in the Bugey and from the Minor Seminary. He made a short appearance during the Marist retreat of September 1837 but he did not stay.\textsuperscript{104} On 1 December 1838 he was inscribed as a novice in the Society but he remained in Belley, teaching with Claude Mayet on the staff of the boarding school in the school year 1838–1839. With the encouragement of both Colin and Maîtrepierre he decided in October 1840 to volunteer for the missions.\textsuperscript{105} Just before leaving for Oceania, on 21 November 1840, he made his profession without having done a real, formal novitiate, a thing he later regretted.\textsuperscript{106}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{100} CS 1, Doc 91, 2. Julien Favre was to succeed Colin as Superior General in 1854, and was teaching in Belley at the same time as Borjon. He is quoted with these words in Mémoires Mayet, 1, page 95.
  \item \textsuperscript{101} LO, Clisby 019.
  \item \textsuperscript{103} Goulter, \textit{Sons of France}, 80.
  \item \textsuperscript{104} CS 1, Doc 17, 2.
  \item \textsuperscript{105} CS 1, Doc 202.
  \item \textsuperscript{106} LRO 1, Doc 111, 8.
\end{itemize}
François Roulleaux-Dubignon, born in 1805 in Séez (Orne), tried seminary studies several times only to give up each time. At one stage he had gone as far as Minor Orders. He trained as a printer and worked as a sacristan. He was a friend of François Yvert, whom he wanted to accompany to Oceania as a layman. Yvert recommended him to Father Colin and Roulleaux visited Colin in Belley. Colin invited him to come and do a retreat with the Marists: ‘Let him come and see if the Society suits him’.107 He stayed a few months at Puylata and received spiritual direction from Colin. As he remembered it himself, Colin impressed on him to live the simplicity of a child before God. He was a very sensitive person but Colin made him step out of his interior doubts and worries into a more relaxed piety (une piété aisée). Colin advised him to outgrow his inward worrying by a manly commitment to active ministry in Oceania. He started his Novitiate in Puylata and the intention was he should continue it and do further theological studies on board ship. Colin decided he could make his profession and be ordained in due time in New Zealand.108

Louis Rozet, born 1813 in Neuville-sur-Saône became a priest of the Archdiocese of Lyon in 1837 and was appointed assistant priest in Saint-Martin-en-Coailléux, not far from the Hermitage. The stories of Bataillon, Viard and other priests of the Archdiocese, buzzing round among the clergy of Lyon, made Louis Rozet decide to become a missionary himself. The people in his parish and his parish priest encouraged him. There was no question of joining the Society of Mary at this time but Colin accepted him for Oceania. Fearing the emotions of a farewell, he left without saying good-bye to his parents.109

Marist Brothers

In his letter of 8 January 1840 Pompallier complained that there was only one Brother in the third group that had just arrived. He needed three Brothers for every priest!110 Colin sat down with Brother François Rivat and together they selected six Brothers for the next departure.111
**Brother Basile**, Michel Monchalin, born in 1814 in Pertuis (Haute Loire), entered the congregation in 1835 or 1836. A simple country boy who kept the rough manners of his peasant background. He was trained as a bootmaker and only slowly learned to read and write, on board ship and in New Zealand.

**Brother Colomb**, Pierre Poncet, born in 1816, also illiterate.

**Brother Emery**, Pierre Roudet, born 1819 in Revenais (Isère), is literate and a tailor by trade. He hoped to be a catechist in the missions.

**Brother Euloge**, Antoine Chabany, born 1812, entered the congregation in 1839, probably barely literate.

**Brother Justin**, Etienne Perret, born 1814, entered the congregation in 1838 and had volunteered for Oceania.

**Brother Pierre-Marie**, Pierre Pérénon, born 1805, entered the congregation in 1832 after graduating from regular schools and several years of Seminary training. He was Director of a school when he asked to be sent to Oceania. Pierre-Marie was a special case. Reporting to Propaganda Colin counted him with François Roulleaux-Dubignon as a seminarian and as a candidate for ordination. On Colin's advice Pierre-Marie continued studying theology on board ship.112

Little more is known of the background of these six Brothers.113

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**The first lay missionaries**

When, in July 1835, Cholleton approached Pompallier in connection with the letter of Cardinal Fransoni to Jean Pastre, Pompallier was, as mentioned, chaplain of a school in La Favorite, and director of the lay group *The Tertiary Brothers of Mary* who ran the school. One of this lay group was **Louis Perret**, born in 1802 of a well-to-do Lyonese family.114 The family was friendly with the Jaricots one of whom, Pauline, had founded the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon. Louis was also a friend of Meynis, its secretary. He was trained as an architect and an accountant but not of strong health. He happened to be in Rome when Pompallier came there to be consecrated a Bishop and together they visited the catacombs. Perret and his friend Antoine Philippon volunteered for Oceania but Pompallier put them off for later. In July 1838 Perret renewed his offer. In August 1839 the Bishop invited him to come as a Tertiary Brother: ‘Come as Tertiaries,
make your vows when you get here’. Pompallier urged Colin to send him Louis Perret: ‘There is more then enough work for him here’.115 Meanwhile his mother had died. His doctor and his brother advised against it and the scrupulous Perret stayed in Belley to come to a decision. The call by Pompallier weighed on his mind and he consulted over and again. Colin won him over with a dose of his manly spirituality: ‘Stop consulting and come to a decision yourself! Be warlike, be a man! Keep up your good humour and everything will be easy!’116 In the end he left without saying good-bye to his old father, who was sickly and depressed.

In François Yvert, born in 1790 in the Vendée, living in Caen, Normandy, the Marist missions received, as he put it himself, a worker of the eleventh hour. He had always wanted to become a priest. For some reason he did not pursue his ideal and got married. They had one child but in 1829 they separated. After that he lived in Caen, Normandy, far from his wife, who was financially independent. In the summer of 1839 he went to Belley to apply for entrance in the Society of Mary as a Brother Catechist for Oceania. He did not find Colin at home but he did meet with the Marist Sisters. On 10 September 1839 he put his application in writing, adding that if he could not be a religious, what about going as a layman under the aegis of the Society? Colin initially opposed it but in May 1840 he was accepted as a lay-missionary. The Society would not accept the responsibility of sending him, but if he took the decision himself, the Superior General would recommend him to the Bishop and treat him as a Marist in all respects.117 He picked up the printing trade and was asked to buy whatever was necessary to put up a printery in New Zealand.118

Another worker of the eleventh hour was Benjamin Dausse, engineer at the Ministry of Public Works in Paris. He too had been married but his daughters were grown up and, encouraged by several spiritual directors, he wanted to dedicate the rest of his life to missionary work. He applied first to the Picpus Fathers but when that did not work out he turned to the Marists, possibly through contact with Louis Perret. He visited Belley (perhaps with Perret) where he got to know the Marist Sisters and made a pilgrimage to Annecy, the tomb of Saint Francis de Sales.119 In August

115. LRO 1, Doc 71, 10.
116. CS 1, Doc 216, 6–9. ‘Il faut être belliqueux, il faut être homme (...) si vous conservez la gaieté tout devient facile’.
117. CS 1, Docs 88, 174 and 180.
118. CS 1, Doc 197.
119. CS 1, Doc 207 and Doc 223, 2.
Colin wrote him a letter of encouragement that he mistook for an order of the Superior General to go to Oceania. When Colin found out, he made him understand that he had no authority over him at all. Colin would be happy if he went, but only by his own decision.120

After their departure Colin sent Louis Perret and Benjamin Dausse a message of missionary spirituality, addressing them as 'apostolic missionaries'. They must have felt honoured!121 Their names were entered on the ribbon in Fourvière with those of the priests.122

**A attractive offer**

When Petitjean and the third group of missionaries passed through London in July 1839 they met with Lord Petre, a director of the New Zealand Association in England. There was some correspondence on the possibility of profiting of a free passage on migrant ships. In September 1840 Lord Petre asked the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon to find a Catholic priest for the new settlement that the New Zealand Association planned for Port Nicholson (later Wellington). Meynis, the Secretary, passed the letter to Colin. There are quite a few Catholics already in New Zealand, he argued, and more are going all the time. Lord Petre feels sure they will be able to support a priest.123

Shortly later, when Yvert was in London, Lord Petre repeated his request in person. Yvert made careful enquiries and passed them on to Colin. Lord Petre offered free passage for one priest. Land would be allotted to the Church both in the town and in the country side. Yvert stressed that, of course, Pompallier would be delighted with this extension of the mission, and the tone of his letter suggests that he had mentioned this aspect to Lord Petre as would only be natural.124

On 27 November 1840 Colin wrote to Lord Petre.125 The obvious answer was to do what he had done in reaction to earlier suggestions of Éveillard, namely tell His Lordship that he would pass the suggestion to Bishop Pompallier who was responsible for the mission in New Zealand.126

120. CS 1, page 360, note 1.
121. CS 1, Doc 231. 'Apostolic Missionary' was evidently also used as an honorific title.
122. LRO 2, Doc 130, 3.
123. CS 1, Doc 201.
124. CS 1, Doc 213.
125. CS 1, Doc 221.
126. As Colin had done with the suggestions in 1839 concerning the Chatham Islands.
A pastoral initiative in Pompallier’s jurisdiction, but independent of him, was unthinkable and contrary to Church law.

Still, Colin did not take over Yvert’s remark that Bishop Pompallier would only be too pleased. In fact, Colin did not mention Pompallier at all but only the other thing Yvert had told Lord Petre, namely that it was Marist policy to keep two priests together, adding that one could work in town, the other one among the Maoris of the area. Colin asked for more information and invited Lord Petre to stay in contact.

What can his reaction mean, if not that Colin was beginning to look for a way out of the problems that his Assistant had brought into clear focus. Maitrepierre had recommended another Vicariate, a second Vicar Apostolic. Could the suggestion of a Marist project in Port Nicholson, far away from the Bay of Islands, point the way? A project moreover that could be financially self-supporting?127

A crucial letter

The impending departure of the fifth group asked for action. Something else was needed than the usual spiritual guidance, so he asked Maitrepierre to write. The Assistant tackled matters in a concrete way. The paragraphs at the end are of Colin himself.128

Earlier letters had mentioned obedience almost casually, as point seven or eight.129 Now, after a general introduction and mention of Father Champagnat’s death, the letter opened with a strongly worded statement on relations with the Bishop, reaffirming his position as religious Superior:

‘Profound respect for the worthy Bishop whom the Lord has constituted to govern the nascent Church of Western Oceania. Faith shows you in him Jesus Christ teaching, Jesus Christ baptising, Jesus Christ sending you, Jesus Christ directing you. (. . .) Obey your Bishop, as I said, obey Monseigneur Pompallier. He represents the Superior General in

127. In fact it was exactly what Maxime Petit had advised Colin to do in his letter of 27 April 1840 (LRO 1, Doc 56), a letter however that Colin had not yet received.
128. This letter is dated 21 November 1840. CS 1, Doc 218. Mayet points to the different style from Colin’s own letters, Mémoires Mayet 5, page 364.
129. The earlier letters were dated 13 October 1836 (CS 1, Doc 4), 2 September 1838 (CS 1, Doc 48) and 8 May 1839 (CS 1, Doc 68).
those countries, he takes his place. (. . .) There will be a day, I hope, that *Monseigneur* will be so heavily burdened with the weight of his immense and complicated administration, that he will entrust to one of you the care of directing you in your religious life. His episcopal functions will thereby become like those of Bishop in Europe, more simple and less burdensome, and the Provincial you will be given can guard more directly and more efficaciously over you as religious.

The letter stresses obedience in a way that would please Pompallier and in fact confirms the arrangement that, unknown to Colin, Pompallier had already introduced, namely to appoint a distinct religious Superior. Unfortunately, a religious Superior selected and appointed by the Bishop and entirely dependent on the Bishop cannot be the counterweight needed under the circumstances. Colin’s letter had the reverse effect of strengthening the Bishop’s position by putting the Society’s stamp of approval on what Pompallier had done on his own account, and to his own advantage.

Comparing this letter with the recommendations of Maitrepierre, one gets the impression that Colin and his Assistant have come to a futile compromise in which Maitrepierre would have wanted Colin to appoint a Provincial as was usual in foreign missions, with Colin holding on to his exceptional policy based on a narrow interpretation of personal holiness disregarding the risk of abuse of power. The net result was that nothing changed.

The growing fear that Lyon is not being told the whole truth is expressed in saying that the best means of serving the Society and to live religious obedience is to keep the Superior General informed of everything that happens in the mission:

> ... what is good, what is mediocre, what is bad; what is strong and what is feeble. (. . .) If I am not well informed I would not dare send any more of my sons. I would not know into what situation I am sending them. Write to me with trust and in confidence. Prudence and discretion will guide me always in using your communications.

In none of the three earlier letters had Colin spoken specifically of the Brothers. Now he must have heard something that explains the following paragraph:
‘As for those who are your companions and who are by custom called Brothers, let this term retain its full meaning for you. Love them like brothers, regard them as children and be fathers to them. In our houses in Europe we are happy to have them at our tables, to foresee their needs, and ease their burdens by sharing them. More than once I have seen our Fathers working in the kitchen, serving at table, washing the dishes to help a Brother who is indisposed. The Society is directed by the same spirit here and there. I am convinced that there as here, the Brothers are regarded as members of the same body.’

Half way through page eight, Colin takes over from Maitrepierre and adds a few points himself (propria manu). One particular point he must have found not strong enough and he added: ‘Do not be afraid! Letters to the Superior General will be opened by nobody but him; and the same applies to letters he sends to you.’ An indication that complaints may have reached him about Pompallier infringing upon the right of religious to communicate confidentially with their Superior General.

Colin sent a copy to Pompallier with a covering letter (dated 21 November 1840) in which he authorised him to borrow money locally against promissory notes for the purchase of a ship.

Under the circular Colin penned in haste good wishes and personal greetings. To Chanel he said he would write a separate letter (he may have done so but it has not been found). He thanked Servant for his letters. Forgetting about the letters Epalle wrote from Valparaiso he thanked him for a few words on a letter from Petit. He thanked Viard for the letter written to his former parish priest: ‘it was read in Church and had the parishioners in tears’. He thanked Petitjean for his detailed travel account, and Comte for the letters to his family that were used widely: ‘they moved people and created an interest in Oceania’. He let Bataillon know that his description of Wallis would be published in the Annals. He would write him a short personal letter as well. He thanked Maxime Petit, for the ‘three short messages I have received on different occasions’, perhaps a

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131. This letter has not been found but is referred to by Pompallier on 19 June 1841, LRO 1, Doc 100, 4.
132. CS 1, Doc 218, 24–8
discreet acknowledgment in public of a letter that may well have been the source of Colin’s unease.

He ends with greeting the Brothers Michel, Elie and Florentin ‘and the other ones whose names I do not remember just now’. The other five cannot have been pleased by this casual treatment! That Michel Colombon and Amon Duperron had in the meantime left the Society and the mission, Colin could not yet know.

Another circular

Fortunately, the Brothers had a Superior of their own. On 6 June, the day Marcellin Champagnat died, his successor, Brother François Rivat, had sent a circular to all the Brothers of the Congregation with the text of Champagnat’s ‘Spiritual Testament’. The next departure, half a year later, was his first opportunity to send his circular to Oceania, with a copy of the testament and a ‘Letter to the Brothers of Polynesia’. François recalled the death of Marcellin, ‘a good father, a reliable guide and an understanding conso ler for all the Brothers of Mary’. He attributed it to Father Champagnat’s intercession that there had been no less than sixty postulants in 1840.

Notwithstanding the restriction of the papal approbation to the priests in 1836, the separation between teaching brothers and coadjutor brothers in 1839 and the death of Marcellin Champagnat, François assures the Brothers that ‘all has continued on the same footing as before and it appears that the good God daily showers new blessings on all the branches of our work.’ Like Champagnat he speaks of Oceania being entrusted to the Society of Mary in its original sense of comprising priests and brothers. He calls Colin the Superior General and announces that Cholleton will be the Provincial for the Brothers. The six new missionaries from the Hermitage have been selected ‘in concert with Father Colin’, and Oceania he calls the ‘mainstay of our work’.

Bankruptcy!

The preparations for the departure of the missionaries were complicated by serious flooding of the Saône that caused the water to rise to the front

134. François always called himself ‘Directeur Général’. He called Father Colin ‘Supérieur Général’ like Champagnat had done. François was given the title ‘Superior General’ only after the congregation was officially recognized by the French Government in 1852. cf Gabriel Michel, Frère François, 181–4.
135. OM 1, Doc 417.
136. LO, Clisby 020, in English translation.
door of 4, Montée St.-Barthélemy. Yvert had been in Lyon to prepare for departure and was the first to leave for Paris. On Wednesday 26 October 1840 Fathers Antoine Séon and François Roulleaux joined him in Paris at the usual address. Together they travelled to London where they went to see Heptonstall and, as instructed, handed him the cheques they carried, totalling 50,000 francs. Séon endorsed them. Heptonstall deposited the cheques with Wright’s, the bank used by the Diocese of London, by most of the clergy and by influential Catholics in England.

Having appointed Séon Superior of the group, but anxious to encourage his lay-missionaries, Colin had told Yvert and Perret in an undefined way to look after practical matters: ‘During the voyage and until you arrive, be with Mr. Yvert the soul of the little caravan. Foresee everything and take care of everything.’ Yvert took it literally and started looking around for a ship. He found the Mary Grey, a new ship, of 392 tons, fitted for sixteen passengers and readying for Sydney.

After Poupinel’s flattering letter of 2 May, Peter Dillon could not be blamed for considering himself the protector of the Marist missionaries. Now, for the second time he felt the Marists bypassed him! He came to see them and tried to get them to book on one Cooper’s ships even though it would leave later. Séon and Roulleaux favoured Dillon’s proposal but Yvert took charge. He confirmed twelve bookings on the Mary Grey and took an option on two more.

On Friday 18 November 1840 Séon paid for the fare by signing a cheque for £660 stg (16,566 francs) on Wright’s Bank. The bank paid the fare to the shipping company. The next day at five in the afternoon Wright’s declared bankruptcy! Monday morning Heptonstall came to see the Marists in utter confusion to tell them what had happened. In the final declaration of insolvency the Bank admitted owing Father Séon representing the Marist missions the amount of £1,332, 8d, precisely what was left from the 50,000 francs (£2,000 stg) after paying for twelve fares.

Now the three had no money except the change in their pockets! For the rest of the voyage they would have to rely on the money that the rest of the group would bring from Lyon. They owed £50 stg for the luggage, and still had to pay the fare for the thirteenth and fourteenth passenger. They knew they would also have to pay about £120 stg to travel from Sydney to

137. CS 1, Doc 216, 2. This is what Colin wrote to Perret on 20 November 1840, but to do so he must have spoken in the same way to Yvert earlier on.
138. Cf CS 1, page 334, 2.
New Zealand. But, most importantly, they would have nothing to hand to Pompallier for the running expenditure of the mission!

Yvert informed Puylata on 24 November.\(^{139}\) The next day Dillon shot off a letter to Colin in which he put all the blame on Heptonstall. Had the missionaries only come straight to him, he would have advised them against putting any money in Wright’s, because there had been rumours. Heptonstall, so he wrote, had again interfered when a better deal could have been made with Cooper, just as he had done in June 1839. In Lyon, Meynis agreed that Heptonstall had shown himself not much of a businessman by having Séon endorse the cheque without restrictions.\(^{140}\)

Colin immediately answered Dillon to thank him for his good services, committing the Society to make use of Cooper’s ships whenever possible, but also pointing out nicely what Yvert had written but Dillon had left out, namely, that not having waited for one of Cooper’s ships, they had at least ‘grabbed the Sydney fare out of the shipwreck!’\(^{141}\) He authorised Dillon and Cooper to act on behalf of the Marists in the bankruptcy proceedings. They eventually recovered five shillings in the pound and Colin told him to send the money directly to Pompallier.\(^{142}\) To be on the safe side, he asked Choiselat-Gallien, the Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith in Paris, to have one of his contacts in London keep an eye on things.\(^{143}\)

Colin did what he could. The Propagation of the Faith had set aside 10,000 francs to pay off the Picpus Fathers for their share of the Reine de Paix, as Pompallier had asked. Colin now mandated Séon to draw 10,000 francs on a promissory note against the Marist administration, which meant postponing to pay off the Picpus.\(^{144}\) Other expenses too could be charged to Lyon. Even though they had not chosen to travel on his ship, Cooper acted the gentleman. He allowed Séon to draw money on his account in Sydney if necessary and he promised to take care of any luggage that had to be sent on. Colin thanked him in a charming letter on 22 December 1840.\(^{145}\)

\(^{139}\) CS 1, Doc 219.
\(^{140}\) CS 1, Doc 220.
\(^{141}\) CS 1, Doc 222, 3.
\(^{142}\) Davidson, Dillon, 299. CS 1, Docs 232 and 272, 2.
\(^{143}\) CS 1, Doc 229.
\(^{144}\) CS 1, Doc 224, 1.
\(^{145}\) CS 1, Doc 232.
On the way: a difficult community

While Fathers Séon and Roulleaux and the lay-missionary François Yvert in London were struggling with the loss of their funds, the rest of the missionaries left Lyons in three groups. Father Louis Rozet and Louis Perret left for Paris where Perret finalised arrangements with Benjamin Dausse. They paid a visit to the Picpus Fathers and were received by various officials. They could present the Queen with a short history of the mission but it was not a good time to ask for a donation. Charities were swamped by projects for the flood victims in south-eastern France.146

They crossed over to England and with Séon, Roulleaux and Yvert they went to see the Bishop, nearly getting lost in a London pea-soupy fog. He received them with great kindness and showed them a letter from Cardinal Fransoni. The Bishop had recommended the missionaries to Lord Russell, the Minister of the Navy.147

On 1 December the Brothers and Dausse had also reached London, where Séon was hard put to find the £110 stg needed for two more places on the Mary Grey. They even considered leaving two men behind, but that would cost about the same, so they decided against it.

In spite of the holiest of intentions on the part of all of them, it proved a hard task, even for an experienced Superior like Séon, to forge these fourteen men into some sort of a community. Dausse could write he was as docile as a child, Yvert and Perret could bravely declare their complete submission to the Superior of the Society,148 but in the shortest time the independent characters clashed. Colin's confusing encouragements had made Yvert think he could overrule the Superior, so he proudly reported: 'I did everything by myself, ( . . . ) I showed myself inflexible!'149 When Perret arrived, Séon told him to keep the books, a thing that Yvert had neglected. Perret got the accounts in order but failed to keep the Procure properly informed. As a result, when unpaid bills and promissory notes rolled in, Lyon had no idea when the flood would stop!150 Yvert and Perret had a row whereby Roulleaux took sides in favour of Yvert. Things got to the point that some men threatened to walk off. Poor Séon knew nothing better than withdraw and apply to himself a dose of old-fashioned discipline! After five days of turmoil he managed to restore the peace in what he called his triple community and got credit from most for his kindness

146. CS 1, Doc 223, 4.
147. CS 1, Doc 226, 15–16.
149. CS 1, Doc 209, 3.
150. CS 1, Doc 231, 7.
and humility. To Colin he sighed they should all have done a Novitiate before launching into this adventure. All the time Rozet was too busy with his first culture shock. He wrote home about the disgusting table manners of the English people: eating vast amounts of beef with very little bread, and washing it down with beer!

Perret had a good look around London and recommended to Colin to open a house in London for travelling missionaries. The house would soon pay for itself and many of the things needed for the missions such as clothing were far cheaper in London. Moreover, it could be source of vocations! On 8 December the May Grey sailed, carrying fourteen Marist missionaries!

On 22 December Colin sent Perret and Dausse, care of Cooper, a few pages of spiritual exhortation, followed by a stiff monition for each of them on keeping Superiors properly informed. Cooper forwarded the letter to Sydney where they were handed to Séon when the missionaries were on the point of leaving for New Zealand.

Colin could be proud and he was. When he heard that old Father Dubois, of the Foreign Missions in Paris, had said he did not know of another group of missionaries as large as this one in the last 150 years, Colin enjoyed quoting him.

On 21 December the Superior General crafted a letter in polished Latin to Cardinal Fransoni: eleven missionaries from our Society and three laymen have committed themselves to the sea and the winds, going in the joy of the Lord: ‘ibant in Domino gaudentes’.

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151. CS 1, Doc 226.
154. CS 1, Doc 228, 2.
155. CS 1, Doc 230, 7.
When in 1835 the missions of Oceania were offered to Jean-Baptiste François Pompallier and so, indirectly and unofficially, to the Society of Mary, Marcellin Champagnat was living with Catherin Servant in the Hermitage, near Saint Chamond, with well over a hundred young brothers, mostly called ‘the Little Brothers of Mary’. They were founded, trained and led by Champagnat as a branch of the Society of Mary for the purpose of providing a Christian education to children. The Archdiocese of Lyon had approved them as a religious congregation in 1822 and from 1830 when the priests elected Father Jean-Claude Colin (unofficially) as their central Superior, the Brothers acknowledged him as—in a spiritual and non-canonical way—their Superior General.

Champagnat heard about the mission project before Jean-Claude Colin did, because Pompallier first went to Valbenoîte to see if any Marists would be interested in joining him in case he accepted. He may have gone as far as Saint Chamond where his friend Terraillon was the parish priest and where he may have met with Servant unless Servant had been by chance in Valbenoîte. In any case, Pompallier and Servant somehow met. Pompallier may even have met Champagnat himself on that occasion. If not, Champagnat would have heard all about it when Servant came home after the meeting. When Pompallier met with an enthusiastic
response from his fellow Marists, he put the whole thing to Jean-Claude Colin in Belley.

By letter of 3 August Colin cautiously encouraged Pompallier to go ahead, provided enough Marists volunteered, because their readiness to commit themselves would in Colin’s eyes prove that it was God’s will for the Society. However, somewhat out of context, he at once stipulated that if it were decided to go ahead, the Brothers should be included. ‘Both [Fathers and Brothers, JS] can devote themselves to that mission.’

What made Colin take this initiative? First of all it simply was the common understanding of all Marists that their Society was one of priests, brothers, sisters and laity. Secondly because Colin saw the danger of priests being put by themselves on lonely mission posts. Thirdly the Brothers in the Hermitage were trained in various practical trades as well as in teaching catechism. In the context of the missions Colin often referred to them as ‘catechists’.

Did Colin consult Champagnat before taking this initiative? No, we must assume that Colin took the initiative of his own accord. He answered Pompallier’s letter the day he got it. There was no time to get into contact with Marcellin. Assuming that Pompallier and Marcellin had met in Valbenoîte or in Saint-Chamond it is theoretically possible that Champagnat had offered the Brothers to Pompallier and it cannot be entirely excluded that Pompallier then had mentioned this in his letter to Colin (a letter that has not been found) but nothing points in this direction.

What did Champagnat think of the missionary project? Farrell tells us that Champagnat ‘headed the list of those who had applied for missionary work.’ There is no contemporary document to back this assertion but it seems to go back on an old oral tradition among the Marist Brothers. Quite possible. But his age (46 at the time), his health and the responsibility he carried for a rapidly expanding new congregation, excluded any serious consideration of it.

There is no indication that Champagnat was happy with the acceptance of the Oceania missions or with Colin’s initiative to include the Brothers, but Champagnat’s loyalty to Colin as the Superior of the whole Society of Mary, including the Brothers, would have carried the day. The planned

1. Colin’s wording shows that he was not directly involved in the decision making. At that point Archbishop de Pins considered the Pacific mission a project of the Archdiocese of Lyon, to be entrusted by the Holy See to one of his priests, namely Jean-Baptiste-François Pompallier. Cf OM 1, Doc 340, 1.
2. Farrell, Achievement, 170.
participation of the Brothers soon became public knowledge. Brother Joseph Luzy who had joined the Marists in Belley and who had never been at the Hermitage before, visited the house in September 1836 and if we may believe him, there would have been more than a hundred Brothers ready to leave for Oceania but for Champagnat saying: ‘Stop bothering me, nobody will go unless I choose him!’ With large numbers volunteering there was not much else Champagnat could do. It did set the pattern that he followed for the four missionary groups that left in his life-time. In contrast to Colin, who sent only volunteers, Champagnat also sent men who had not volunteered. Why? If there were so many volunteering?

Even after Pompallier’s explicit request in February 1836, Champagnat was in no hurry to come to a decision. On 11 April Colin urged him on because departure could be sooner than thought. In May Champagnat selected Marie-Nizier Delorme and Michel Colombon. Some time in July, Colin added, from Belley, Brother Joseph Luzy. In December 1836 the first group left: one Bishop, four priests, three Brothers.

Before he died, on 6 June 1840, Champagnat sent six more Brothers, three in September 1838, one in June 1839 and two in February 1840. If we hold these figures against the growth of the Institute we run into a striking contrast. From 1818 when the first Brothers made a commitment to the Institute, it grew to some 105 professed members in September 1836 when the priests were officially approved. At the end of 1839 they counted 250 Brothers in 43 establishments.

The interest that Luzy had witnessed in September 1836 did not disappear. Six months after Marcellin’s death his successor, Brother François Rivat, wrote to the Brothers in Oceania: ‘The accounts of your labours and successes (. . .) have caused a great revival in zeal and enthusiasm for the mission of Oceania. There was hardly one who would not have liked to enlist in the company of the holy priests of Mary to go and labour with

4. Brother Attale Grimaud (third departure) not only volunteered; he joined the Congregation in order to go to Oceania. Brother Élie-Régis may have volunteered, but Brother Florentin Françon did not, as he later wrote: ‘As you know, I left not by my own choice, but because I was sent’. Ronzon, *Frères Maristes en Océanie* (FMO), 30.
5. OM 1, Doc 380, 1.
6. LCM 1, Doc 65.
8. Farrell, *Achievement*, 229. If we take 250 for the number of Brothers at his death, Champagnat sent 3.2% to Oceania, compared with 13 out of 47 Marist priests, ie, 27.7%.
them and with you. Together with Colin he then selected the Brothers for the next departure. They sent six in one go! It is difficult to avoid the impression that Colin felt Champagnat could have been more generous and that, after Campagnat had died, he used his influence on Brother François, to restore the balance. After 1841, when the problems in Oceania had become fully known in France, Brother François did not send any Brothers to Oceania for more than three years.

Bishop Pompallier had noticed the contrast: ‘I really blame Father Champagnat that in the last group there was just one Brother against four priests. I shall only forgive him, if in the next group there are at least two for every priest’ (written before he knew of Champagnat’s death).10

Also, there is little evidence that Marcellin tried very hard to raise interest in Oceania. In several circular letters he did not mention the missions.11 It may be another indication that he did not consider foreign missions to be a part of the original Marist vision, to which Marcellin Champagnat remained always very attached. More perhaps than Jean-Claude Colin, who in later developments saw Providence pointing the Society into new directions.12 Must we leave it at that?

A similar case?

There is one incident of the same period that may provide us with a parallel. In the summer of 1838 the Marist Fathers accepted the parish with the pilgrimage centre of Verdelais, near Bordeaux. Colin proposed a Marist priest in the person of Jean-Baptiste Chanut to Archbishop Donnet. Chanut was installed in Verdelais just around the time that the second group of missionaries sailed from Bordeaux. The diocesan parish priest with whom the Marists initially worked and lived together, saw the arrival of religious as a great opportunity to get ‘a Brother, very useful for us to clean the rooms, serve at Mass, help us with the reading during meals, and finally do some work in the gardens.’13 Chanut passed his request to Colin, but, unsure of his chance of success under those terms, he presented Verdelais as an ideal place to receive new candidates, a training centre for

9. 20 November, 1840. LO, Clisby 020, 1.
10. LRO 1, Doc 59, 29.
11. For instance the circulars of 13 January and 9 September 1839 (LMC 1, Docs 238 and 266).
12. André Lanfrey, La SM comme Ordre inachevé, 11.
13. CS 1, Doc 46, 10. Cf Clisby, Contribution, 125.
the Brothers and a starting point from where one could take on schools in the region.14

Champagnat was not taken in and did nothing. Chanut got Terraillon (parish priest in Saint-Chamond) to put pressure on Champagnat but in vain. On 3 February 1839 Terraillon let Chanut know there was no chance he would get what he wanted.15 On 22 February Colin increased the pressure on Champagnat with a letter that borders on an illegitimate use of authority: appealing to religious obedience he ordered Champagnat to do something over which Colin had canonically no authority. His remark that a Brother would do more good in the service of a priest than teaching in a village school, cannot have pleased Champagnat!16 It seems that Champagnat hesitated17 but in the end the priests had to find someone else to clean their rooms and tend their garden!18

Did Champagnat’s attitude to the missions reflect the feelings of the Brothers? Assuming their enthusiasm for the missions did indeed keep up, he must have seen things differently. There must have been strong personal reasons for his refusal to send large numbers of Brothers to Oceania. If there is any value in the parallel with Verdelais, it is difficult to think of another reason than precisely his reluctance to see his Teaching Brothers as ready domestics for the priests.

Also, Champagnat knew his fellow priests. He knew their ingrained clericalism too well not to foresee how they would treat the Brothers. Very kind of Colin to introduce the title ‘catechists’ but to Champagnat it must have looked very much like the Verdelais request all over. Also, he must have known, better than the Brothers themselves, better than anyone, how inadequate their training still was in view of the demands that would be made on them. If this was indeed what held Champagnat back from sending many Brothers, history proved him right.

14. CS 1, Doc 53, 8.
15. CS 1, Doc 58, 5.
16. CS 1, Doc 60. The Marist Brothers were at the time a Diocesan congregation of Lyon and in spite of the unofficial spiritual bonds, the Holy See had expressly excluded them from the approval of the priests. A religious Superior cannot extend his authority over a member of his congregation (in this case Champagnat) to an undertaking (in this case the Marist Brothers) entrusted to that member by an outside authority (in this case the Archbishop of Lyon). Colin was out of order!
How did things work out?

The detailed letters of the first group to leave for Oceania, in 1836, show no friction between Fathers and Brothers. Peter Chanel and Marie-Nizier got along very well on Futuna. Marie-Nizier did the washing and most of the cooking but Chanel did a lot of gardening and took part in building work. Chanel encouraged Nizier to do pastoral work, instruct and baptise, which in those days was exceptional.

At least in the early years, Bataillon and Joseph Luzy got along reasonably well on Wallis although Luzy would have preferred to stay with Chanel or Pompallier and Bataillon was less inclined to share his pastoral work with Brother Joseph Luzy. In New Zealand the Protestant Reverend Williams wrote in 1839: “That papist bishop and his two priests are very active. (. . .) If somewhere there is an opportunity, you can be sure to meet them there.” As Pompallier was alone at the time with Father Servant and Brother Michel, it means the suspicious Methodist did not see Michel to be different.

It seems there were some problems in later groups. When the second group under Baty went to Verdelais with the Archbishop, they left the Brothers in Bordeaux. When the fifth group of missionaries was in London in December 1840, Antoine Séon went with the priests to visit Bishop Thomas Griffiths. He too left the Brothers home: “We did not think we should take the Brothers along.” It became especially difficult when the fourth group travelled on a naval ship and the Fathers and Brothers sat at table with the ships’ officers. Claude-Marie Bertrand was an educated man and a qualified teacher, so the problem must have arisen especially with Amon Duperron. Pompallier concluded that in the future the Brothers should not sit at table with the officers but with the lower ranks. Pezant who acted as Superior of the group and who later blamed himself that he had not been able to get along with Amon, objected and found that it would be better if the Fathers and the Brothers would all take their meals with the lower ranks.

Pompallier defined the problem in terms of what he called ‘civilité’, ie, clean-liness in clothing and appearance, table manners, language, and

19. LRO 1, Doc 23, 5.
20. Ronzon, Frères Maristes en Océanie (FMO), 17.
22. CS 1, Doc 226, 15.
23. LRO 1, Doc 69, 4.
24. LRO 1, Doc 73, 6.
general behaviour. Most of the Brothers were peasant boys with little or no previous schooling. Living together in the large community of the Hermitage will not have done much to spruce them up. Pompallier argued that the English people were more demanding in this respect than the French.

After a time Pompallier stopped the Brothers wearing the soutane, which they bitterly resented. In 1842 Brother Claude-Marie wrote to François: ‘To my serious regret I have been forced to abandon Mary’s habit and to wear lay clothing. I have found this very difficult.’ Adding insult to injury, the habits were torn up and used for other purposes. The Bishop also ruled that priests and Brothers should take their meals separately. Some priests, for instance Borjon, Pezant and Petitjean, simply disobeyed and took their meals with the Brothers.

Apart from Pierre Bataillon, the men of the first group had lived for several years a regular religious life in a community with one or two Brothers. As time went on, Colin was forced to send former diocesan priests after a short, or even without, a Novitiate. That is when complaints became more serious. Even of Brother Attale Grimaud, a well-educated man of a well-to-do family, Petitjean wrote as if it was the most natural thing of the world: ‘There are four of us with the Brother who serves as our domestic’. And Pompallier commented: ‘Only one Brother was sent, just for the service of the priests’. The passports of some of the priests of the fifth group indicated that they were accompanied by a servant, it being assumed that the ‘servant’, namely the Brother concerned, did not need a passport of his own. It took an official of the République to correct the feudal presumptions of the priests. In one of his many complaints about the small number of Brothers, Bishop Pompallier once put it this way: ‘There are not even enough Brothers for the service of the priests on the mission stations’.

29. Petitjean to Paillasson. APM, 1405/20043.
30. LRO 1, Doc 65, 13.
32. LRO 1, Doc 59, 29.
The Revolution had not turned France into an egalitarian society and for the Bishop and many of the priests social levels were a natural and unchangeable fact of life. It was a mistake, Pompallier wrote to Pierre Colin in connection with the problems on the Aube, ‘to put our Brother catechists with the priests at the table of the senior staff, made up of well educated young men, often of the most distinguished families of France. Our Brothers, although much higher in God’s eyes because of their religious state, are not of a similar rank or education. They may provoke those young men who, of themselves, are already prejudiced against anything religious’.33

Pompallier’s high regard for the religious state did not prevent him from treating Brother Michel shabbily. When Servant, who had lived together with the Bishop and Michel for a year and a half, finally had an opportunity to get a letter away without Pompallier censoring it, he wrote (obviously with regard to the way the Bishop had treated Brother Michel): ‘It is impossible to do here without Brothers (…) but justice demands that they be treated as Brothers. If they need to be corrected, it should be done in the way of a spiritual benefit, wisely and prudently, in proportion to the reasons for it. And certainly not in the presence of strangers and Maoris. Fits of anger and humiliations are not only far from edifying and charitable, their only effect is that the victim closes up and is discouraged.’34 The dismissal of Brother Michel and the way he was sent away empty-handed into the rough world of 1840 New Zealand is a black page in Marist history.35

While often treating them badly, Pompallier deplored in just about each letter that he did not get more of them!36 At the same time he could be disdainful: ‘The Brothers that Champagnat sent are nice fellows, but their religious training is poor and they are not too bright.’37 ‘Most Brothers (…) know little of the trades that they have been trained in. Their workmanship is by far not as good as that of the English settlers here.’38 And, when stressing the urgency for the missionaries to learn English he

33. LRO 1, Doc 69, 4.
34. LRO 1, Doc 55, 7.
35. Cf Ronzon, Frères Maristes en Océanie (FMO), 18.
36. ‘Champagnat should send four Brothers for every priest!’, LRO 1, Doc 59, 29.
37. LRO 1, Doc 34, 17.
38. LRO 1, Doc 59, 19.
added: only for the priests, Brothers do not need it! Some priests stopped the Brothers from learning English.\textsuperscript{39}

The fourth group to leave, on the Navy vessel the \textit{Aube}, found among the crew a Maori, called Etaca. Brother Claude-Marie (a trained teacher!) found great satisfaction in teaching him and in trying to pick up the Maori language. He had noted down already lots of words and discovered that unlike French the Polynesian language did not have tenses. Pezant pushed him aside and took it on himself to work with Etaca.\textsuperscript{40}

The fifth group counted six Brothers and the Superior, Séon, wondered how he could keep them occupied. It was a surprise to him when they grabbed at the chance to improve their literacy skills and enthusiastically joined the English language lessons.

The full story of the Brothers in Oceania in the first decades has still to be told! Fortunately, by his early death Champagnat was spared the anguish of knowing how heavy a burden he had put on the shoulders of the men he sent to Oceania.\textsuperscript{41}

\textbf{Colin}

What about Colin? Did he really accept the Brothers as missionaries in the same sense as the priests? That he did not know them all personally is understandable, given their large numbers and dispersal over numerous village schools. Reporting to Cardinal Fransoni he always gives the names of the priests but in spite of Fransoni’s request, he never mentions the Brothers by name.\textsuperscript{42} In the first circular to the missionaries of 21 November 1840, he greets Michel, Élie and Florentin ‘and the others whose names do not come to mind’.\textsuperscript{43}

It would appear that Colin had not reflected on the special difficulties the Brothers might meet when living and working with the Fathers. In the letters he wrote to the missionaries on their departure, in October 1836 and in September 1838, relations with the Brothers are not mentioned as a matter needing special attention. Not until the open letter to the missionaries of October 1840 does Colin take up the subject. By then he seems

\textsuperscript{39} LRO 2, Doc 234, 6.
\textsuperscript{40} Bertrand to François, 18 July 1840, LO, Clisby 018, 10.
\textsuperscript{41} After 1841, when the problems in Oceania had become fully known in France, Brother François did not send any Brothers to Oceania for more than three years.
\textsuperscript{42} CS 1, Doc 82, 6. Doc 147, 3 and Doc 230, 3.
\textsuperscript{43} CS 1, Doc 218, 27.
to have received indications that things were not as they should be. In contrast to Champagnat, Colin had not seen the danger.

**Conclusion**

The conclusion of this author is that Marcellin Champagnat held back from sending more Brothers to Oceania because he understood how ill-prepared many of them were and because he feared the disappointments and humiliations that awaited them from the clerical and caste-conscious priests and bishops of the time. The problem was not the manual work. The Brothers were used to that in the Hermitage and would not have expected anything else. Anyway, the priests did plenty of it too. The manual work of the Brothers did often more to attract Polynesians, anxious to learn European skills, than the catechising of the priests.\textsuperscript{44} The heart of the matter is best put into words by Brother Claude-Marie Bertrand a few years later:

> Not all the priests are the same, no, some get along very well with the Brothers. They eat together and help with the work if they see that the Brother cannot cope. (\ldots) But generally speaking, we are regarded here as domestic servants and treated worse than servants in paid employment in France. The Maoris see with their own eyes how we are treated and call us names as *tau reka reka*, *ponunga*, *kuki*, man of no worth, slave, cook. (\ldots) It happens that Father goes to visit a European. He expects the Brother to row the boat. When we arrive, Father goes in and is received respectfully. The Brother, dog-tired after four or five hours rowing, has to sit on the beach, without shelter.'\textsuperscript{45}

Shortly later, Father Jean Forest, sent by Colin to Oceania as an official visitator, had to report: ‘Brother Justin is not happy. He says that when he left France he had been promised to be a catechist and now he is just a cook. (\ldots) The Fathers, he says, treat him as a valet, which in several mission stations is true enough.’\textsuperscript{46} That some priests were worse than the

\textsuperscript{44} Clisby, *Contribution*, 115.
\textsuperscript{45} Claude-Marie Bertrand to Colin, LRO 2, Doc 234, 2, 11 and 12.
\textsuperscript{46} Forest to Colin, 26 March 1843, LRO 2, Doc 247, 14.
Bishop is clear from Brother Florentin who wished that the priests would treat the Brothers as well as the Bishop. ‘He loves the Brothers’.47

The Revolution had preached liberté, égalité, fraternité but the clergy was still too busy denouncing the errors of the modern time to see that it was a time full of promises for the common people. Marcellin Champagnat was the son of a Jacobin, the party of the Revolution. Profound indignation at the injustices and the humiliations of the Ancien Régime had moved the lower classes of France, including Marcellin’s father, to revolt.48 His ideals had taken root in the soul of the young Marcellin. Still a boy, he walked out of school when a teacher slapped another boy unjustly; he never went back.49 He had a deep faith in what disadvantaged people were capable of. He started a teaching congregation with often illiterate peasant boys. The vast numbers of young men that flocked to the Hermitage and the requests for his Brothers to start schools in parishes and villages all over France, prove that Champagnat knew how to get the best out of them. They never forgot his respect for them, his consideration and his encouragement, as is clear from all their letters. With little educational background himself, Marcellin had gone through the seminaries of the time, he knew what many of his fellow priests were like. He loved his Brothers too much to expose them to the prevailing clericalism of the priests. He knew better than proclaim his convictions too loudly, but they were evidently strong enough to send as few of them to Oceania as he could get away with.

All the time, Champagnat’s commitment to the Society as a whole, and to the priests’ branch, remained undiminished. An early witness, Brother Sylvestre, who had joined the Brothers in 1831 and lived with Marcellin in the Hermitage, recounts that some Brothers resented Champagnat’s attachment to the priests’ branch: ‘Providence had assigned him to found the Brothers and asked nothing else of him’. Champagnat answered there was ‘no reason to be jealous. God wants both the Fathers and the Brothers, and He will pour His blessings over them to the extent that they foster the union between them’.50

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47. LRO 2, Doc 132.
48. Farrell, Achievement, 10–12.
49. Farrell, Achievement, 25.
50. Sylvestre, Mémoires, 169.
The hour to reap has come

Rev 4, 15

Travelling

Fourteen men on the way

As already mentioned, the Mary Grey sailed on 8 December 1840 from London. Father Antoine Séon tried to turn the ship into a little monastery. Bishop Griffiths had allowed them to reserve the Blessed Sacrament on board ship. Séon was happy to turn his cabin into a chapel where people could come and pray.¹

Everyone got a little job. Perret was to keep the accounts and Dausse took care of the sick. Yvert kept the diary and Roulleaux looked after books and stationery. The austere Borjon who prided himself that he had not paid any attention to either Paris or London,² was the Novice Master and gave conferences on theology. Séon himself, Garin and Rozet gave talks on liturgy. On request of the Captain, singing classes were held on deck. When Colin got Séon’s letter he took delight in telling the Belley communities all about it.³

The ship carried sixteen passengers, fourteen Marists and two non-Catholic English laymen. One of them already spoke French and both profited of the professional training of Yvert as a language teacher. Yvert also gave French lessons to the Captain and several officers. The two Englishmen taught the Frenchmen English. Séon had worried how to keep the

¹. CS 1, Doc 226, 16.
². Léon Dubois, ‘Le Révérend père Borjon’ in Maurey, Physionomies, 4.
³. FA, Doc 210, 4.
Brothers occupied but, as it worked out, they were very keen to take part in the English lessons and those who needed it improved their—mostly limited—reading and writing skills. Dillon had donated a copy of his book on the search for *La Pérouse*. It will have initiated them into the Pacific world.

They had a lucky start by getting through the English Channel in three days and they got off lightly when Neptune visited the ship on the Equator. Shortly afterwards they escaped with only a little discomfort from a food poisoning on board, and Perret found the mental consequences of seasickness worse than the upset stomach. They had reasonable weather all the way to the Cape, no particularly bad days and not too hot either, at least according to Borjon; but he was a hardened optimist and suffered little of seasickness. From the beginning Rozet was afraid of the sea and he spent a good deal of the voyage on his bunk. Roulleaux was moody and at times impossible. Séon got the impression he wanted to provoke the Superior into sending him back to France from Cape Town.

During the later part of the trip both Perret and Dausse suffered of persistent stomach pains and fever. When on 22 February 1841 the *Mary Grey* docked in Cape Town the two were in a poor shape and in consultation with the local doctor they decided not to continue the voyage. The Bishop, Mgr Griffith, OP, offered them hospitality and it took them a few months to recover. The doctor found them both unsuited for the harsh conditions of mission life and Dausse decided to abandon his missionary dream. Perret stayed behind, unsure of his future.

On arrival in Cape Town it was not clear for some days whether Roulleaux would remain with the group or return to France but his friend Yvert helped him over the crisis and he stayed on. On 27 February the *Mary Grey* sailed, with only twelve missionaries on board. As from 1 March Rozet joined the exercises of the Novitiate. The company became more and more enthusiastic about their English classes that by now took most of their time: a travelling academy, as Séon called it. They had rough weather in the Indian Ocean and Séon challenged the sea by throwing medals at it, which made for some hilarity on board. They celebrated Holy Week and Easter on an altar decorated with the feathers of albatrosses caught on deck. Rozet did the meditation on Good Friday.

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4. CS 1, Doc 226, 19.
5. Dillon had published in 1829 *Narrative and Successful Result of a Voyage in the South Seas* and in 1830 a French version *Voyages aux îles de la Mer du Sud, en 1827 et 1828*. 
After passing through Bass Strait, in view of the Australian coast, they got caught in a violent easterly wind that drove the ship towards the shore. It approached the surf at a frightening speed and only at the last moment the crew managed to turn the ship around and tack into the storm. Yvert kept his cool and when, at the height of the danger, the ship’s bell chimed midnight, he announced that this day at least they were not going to die.

Roulleaux became a little more amenable to community living but in the end Séon had to tell Colin that Roulleaux and Rozet were both quite immature men. Borjon was a tower of strength at all times and Yvert proved to be a flexible and caring community man. He faithfully followed the exercises of the Novitiate. Séon won most hearts by his unselfish leadership, but he had to tell Colin not to send such large groups again.6 Too big to handle! Even Séon could not please everyone. Rozet, never inclined to look on the sunny side of things, later wrote to Colin: ‘I was disgusted. What a discomfort, what a boredom! And why? All because of that Superior you put over us!’7

On 7 May the Mary Grey sailed into Sydney Harbour and Séon filled two pages in admiration of the harbour and the country around it. In the absence of Bishop Polding the Benedictine community warmly received the Marist guests in their house even though twelve was more than they had beds for. After a solemn reception in the Cathedral on Sunday the French Catholics crowded around them. Joubert, a French businessman in town who did things for Pompallier, passed them a message from the Bishop urging the missionaries not to stay in Sydney longer than strictly necessary.

The Benedictines told the Marists they could easily get a house of their own in or near Sydney and that Pompallier had already received a fine block of land to build a college.8 In reporting to Colin Séon had his reservations. It looked too ambitious to him and he did not recommend it.

On the advice of the Benedictines they did not wear the soutane when going into town, except, of course, the self-willed Rozet. With the authorisation of Colin and as arranged in London, Séon took up £400 stg from

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7. Séon reported in three long letters: 8 March 1841 from Cape Town APM 1404/29048; 21 May 1841 from Sydney, APM OG 031.5; and 8 July from New Zealand, LRO 1, Doc 102. Roulleaux to Colin, 10 August 1841, LRO 1, Doc 108, 1–3. Rozet to Colin, 28 May 1841, CS 1, page 370, note 1.
8. They may have been referring to the offer of Therry (cf above p 226), although, as far as we know, it had not been followed up.
Cooper’s agent in Sydney to pay for the fares to New Zealand, £10 per person.9

On 1 June the twelve left Sydney on the *Earl Durham*, a much bigger ship than the *Mary Grey*. Now there were with 30 to 35 other passengers of all nationalities, plus 200 sheep and a few horses: not the sort of monastery they had become used to on the *Mary Grey*! Leaving Sydney Harbour a huge swell had everybody rushing to the side. For a couple of days they were surrounded by threatening waterspouts, then they wallowed on a windless sea until strong winds took over and pushed them along at ten knots. On Tuesday 15 June 1841 the *Earl Durham* sailed into the Bay of Islands.10

What they saw is described by Ullathorne, secretary to Bishop Polding who had visited the place together with Polding in December: ‘The town consisted of a native *Pah*, a British settlement and a French mission. (. . . ) The Bishop’s residence was built of wood, and a little wooden church stood adjoining, bright all over with green paint. But, small as it was, it had its own Confessional font and every appointment complete.’ Above the mission fluttered the white flag with the Marian monogram which Ullathorne, a former naval officer, thought rather funny.11

Pompallier had been away when Polding called but when the new missionaries arrived he was back home. He was at his best. He received them with great charm and at table they hung on his lips as he told them of the mission and its achievements. Putting his first impressions on paper, Séon assured Colin that there was nothing to make him think the priests were unhappy with Pompallier. There was a joyful spirit (’*nous sommes bien gais*’) and Maxime Petit raised a laugh by telling them that after eating eighteen times potatoes with pork you knew it was Sunday.12

Next day they were cheerfully hammering away at a new store house for their luggage and for the cases of mission goods they had brought along.

As to the two men they had left behind in Cape Town, they took their time recovering as guests at the Bishop’s residence. Dausse returned to France and in October 1841 Colin could tell Perret that Dausse was back

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9. Pompallier later wrote he had received 6,800 francs (£272) from Séon, LRO 1, Doc 116, 6.
10. Garin regaled his former students at Meximieux with sixteen pages (38 printed pages in LRO) on this last part of the voyage. LRO 1, Doc 99.
12. LRO 1, Doc 102, 1 and 5.
and restored to health. Perret took a bit longer and when Bishop Griffith jokingly remarked it was more honourable to die on the way to the missions than on the way back, Perret summoned up his courage and he got on an American ship, the *Hannibal*, for Sydney. He arrived 25 June 1841 in Sydney, where he was grateful to find letters from both Colin and Pompallier. He reached New Zealand on 13 September.

The New Zealand mission in 1841

On 19 March, when Pompallier returned home, he had been away for six months (from 20 September 1840). After an exploratory missionary tour in the Otago area he had paid a visit to Port Nicholson in December-January. In February 1841 he sailed north, leaving Tripe in Akaroa and taking Pezant with him. Comte went along as far as Port Cooper, on the north side of the Banks Peninsula where he would contact the Maoris of the area and from where he would make his way back to Akaroa on foot. Pompallier continued to the Mahia Peninsula where he had befriended the local chief Tohi. After some useful days of pastoral work among the Catholic adherents in the area they stopped in Tauranga where the Bishop decided that Pezant should replace Viard. Before taking up his appointment Pezant went with Pompallier to the Bay of Islands which they reached on 19 March. In May Pezant returned and settled in Tauranga and Viard became a secretary and companion of the Bishop on his travels.

On his arrival Pompallier found that during his absence Bishop Polding of Sydney had visited Kororareka with Ullathorne. The visit of an English Catholic bishop had done much to remove the impression, propagated by the Protestant ministers, that ‘the Catholic religion was not the religion of Englishmen’.

Also during his absence James Hall, a Scottish Protestant settler on Pohnpei, in Micronesia, had come to the Bay of Islands. From Father Maigret’s six months’ stay in 1838 he knew that Bishop Pompallier considered their island part of his mission and had even planned to settle there. It seems there were about eight European settlers on Pohnpei and they had sent Hall, although not a Catholic, to ask for priests. Pompallier took his request seriously and promised to return him to Pohnpei as soon as pos-

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13. CS 1, Doc 306, 2.
14. From Sydney, Perret to Colin, 3 August 1841, fourth letter, APM OG 031.5. LRO 2, Doc 163, 1.
15. LRO 7, Doc 954, 3.
sible with priests. Hall stayed at the mission and was received into the Church. 17

Also waiting for Pompallier was the letter Colin had written on 22 April 1840. As told above, Colin wrote this letter when, after a year without a sign of life, he received a letter from Pompallier sent via Sydney on 28 August 1839 in which he had told Colin of other letters sent via French whalers even though he knew they would go hunting first. Colin had reacted curtly by asking him to use the London route and promising to do the same. 18 Not a word about new missionaries or about money! Precisely this letter lay waiting in Kororareka when Pompallier was already for eight months out of cash through the purchase of the Sancta Maria, and ten months after the arrival of the Pezant and Tripe on the Aube. All that time there had been no word from France, and no money. 19

In the absence of the Bishop, Épalle had opened the letter and written to Colin: ‘My God, I am shattered by your letter of 22 April. No missionaries, no money! I dread the moment that Monseigneur will get home and see it’ 20 He was right. The letter lay on Pompallier’s desk for a few weeks, perhaps he read it a few times, put it aside a few times, but on 17 May 1841 Monseigneur blazed up: 21

My Very Reverend Father

The delay of your letters, the delay in sending missionaries and the delay in passing to me the allocations of the Propagation of the Faith is a real disaster for this mission. It is bringing this mission to ruin and nothing causes me greater distress. All the perils I have run, the fatigue of my apostolic work, my anxious concern to protect my flock from the onslaught of heresy and of Satan, have not affected me as much

17. LRO 1, page 668, note 24. Wiltgen, Founding, 276–7. In 1842 Pompallier appointed Servant and Roulleaux to Pohnpei, but he changed the appointment when there was an opportunity to reopen the mission on Futuna.
18. CS 1, Doc 154.
19. Colin had written on 18 July 1840, but in spite of his entreaties and promises to use the London–Sydney route, he again had entrusted his letter to a whaler leaving for a fishing expedition. CS 1, Doc 185, 1. The letter was of the same date as the one to Maxime Petit (therefore most likely with the same ship) that reached New Zealand on 8 August 1841, exactly thirteen months later and after the arrival of group five!
20. 26 January 1841, LRO 1, Doc 85, 2.
21. LRO 1, Doc 91. Numbers in brackets refer to the paragraphs in LRO.
as the terrible ordeal of being deprived of the help that Providence has provided in the Church to support this vast and precious undertaking that has been entrusted to me. Whatever reasons you have, the lack of action on my requests is fatal [1].

Pompallier then lists the things he has asked for: printing presses, books, pictures, and especially funds. He is paying ten percent on 20,000 francs debt at the bank of Kororareka. He faces foreclosure and the forced sale of the mission properties. The decision in Lyon, he writes, not to send us reinforcements and to keep back our allocations puts our very lives in danger. On this tone he goes on for fifteen closely written pages.

He laments the estrangement of his missionaries and their lack of what he calls *cordial docility*. He cannot think of any reason for it except a conspiracy of the Society against him and a sort of Protestantism or Pelagianism. Does he not simply exercise the authority given him by the Pope with the special graces of the episcopacy? The men do not openly disobey, but their heart is not in it [13]. He accuses Colin of having first appointed him religious Superior only to undermine his authority by all sorts of instructions of which he is not even told. To uphold his authority he has had to threaten some with dismissal. The older men do not hesitate to share their negative attitudes with the newcomers [20].

At times Pompallier turns downright insulting, as when he puts the question if it is necessary to appoint a Provincial in New Zealand. He thinks not, provided the Superior General trusts the Vicar Apostolic to do what the Vicar Apostolic now trusts the Superior General to do, namely obey the Pope in accepting that it is the Vicar Apostolic and nobody else who is entrusted with the mission. If the Superior General wants to appoint a Provincial he can do so, provided this Provincial has no other task than guarding over the religious rule and over the religious perfection of his subjects. To have two authorities run the mission would destroy the trust, the docility and the holy affection that these infant people, as our

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22. There was no such decision. On the contrary, a large group was already in Australia and it found there a letter from Pompallier, telling them not to stay in Sydney longer than necessary. Most likely nobody had bothered to notify Pompallier that a group would be coming and he had written to Sydney ‘on spec’ care of Joubert. If Séon had written from London in early November, his letter should have been in New Zealand in May but we cannot be sure. There is no mention of it.

23. 18 pages print in LRO.
sauvages are, have in the order of salvation for the Bishops whom the Holy Father will always send them [34].

He wants Colin to forward this letter to Propaganda to let them judge for themselves and correct him if needed [43]. His three years in this mission have been three years of suffering, caused however more by the poor support from France and the mentality of his collaborators than by the heretics, unbelief or Satan!

Since for a year Épalle had been the sounding board for Pompallier’s complaints against the Society. Between him and Pompallier there never had been anything unpleasant. Now Pompallier called him in around midnight and for three hours he ranted and read the whole letter out. He wanted everyone in the mission to know but Épalle held him back. It would make things worse: ‘Everybody is very attached to the Superior General and the Society. They would not want to hear it!’ Épalle was told to mail the letter and he secretly slipped in a note to Colin, expressing his profound sadness at the way things were going.24

Reshuffling again

On 15 June the twelve new missionaries reached the Bay of Islands. They brought among other things the so long expected printing press and in Yvert the mission got a man who knew how to use it. A few days later Pompallier acknowledged their arrival in a letter that shows no trace of the anger in his former one; on the contrary: ‘We have received your letters with joy’. He expressed his disappointment at the loss of money through the bankruptcy, but without blaming anyone.25

Pompallier informed Colin in a casual way that instead of borrowing money at 10% to 15% interest, he got money from the bank at Kororareka on credit notes against the Marist Fathers in Lyon. He sent Colin three credit notes for a total of £1200 stg (30,000 francs) and told him to cover them from the allocations for 1841. If that was not possible Colin should take out loans in France where the interest rates were notably lower than in New Zealand. ‘He leaves us no other option’, he explained later to Épalle.26

It had been clear to Épalle for some time that something had to be done. In consultation with Baty he decided to go to France to sort out

24. LRO 1, Doc 92.
25. LRO 1, Doc 100.
things. He put it to Pompallier who did not object because in any case, he said, you have been deceived into thinking (something Epalle had told him) that you could go to the mission and still depend on the Superior General instead of on the Pope in the person of the Vicar Apostolic he has appointed.27

On 8 July Epalle wrote again. With twelve new missionaries on hand, the plans had changed. The Bishop had decided to go to Europe himself. He would make a tour of two months around the mission on the Sancta Maria, take the new missionaries to their stations and visit Akaroa. He would then return to the Bay of Islands, load supplies for Wallis and Futuna, visit the islands and sail on the Sancta Maria to Valparaiso where he would sell it and board a ship for Europe. If for some reason he had to change plans again and cancel his voyage, Épalle could go instead.

Épalle was to replace him during his long absence. At the thought of being in charge of the mission for an undetermined but very long period, the poor Épalle saw himself literally losing weight. Pompallier gave him three days to consider. With a heavy heart he accepted. He now found himself in the position of being the Pro-Vicar for the whole mission, Rector of Kororareka, Procurator, Novice Master for Henry Garnett and Rozet, who had asked to enter the Society, and professor of theology for Roulleaux and Brother Pierre Marie Pérénon.28

On 2 July, François-Joseph Roulleaux-Dubignon was ordained a priest in the little church of Kororareka, the first ordination in New Zealand, and on 23 July Pompallier left on the Sancta Maria for the planned tour around the mission. Roulleaux was to go to the Hokianga and round off his theology studies. Garin would stay at Kororareka as Provincial with Épalle and Yvert. The Fathers Baty, Borjon, Rozet, Séon and Viard and the Brothers Justin and Euloge sailed with the Bishop.

The party marvelled at the enthusiastic reception that Pompallier received at all places where he landed. He everywhere baptised, confirmed and blessed marriages with the dignity and ceremonial that so impressed the Maoris. On 31 July they reached Auckland, now the seat of the British Government and a town of some 1500 people of whom 200 were Catholics, mainly Irish soldiers. They were met with goodwill and respect by the Catholics as well as Governor Hobson. Arrangements were made to start building a church on a site the Bishop had already obtained on his former visit. On 17 August they visited Pezant at Tauranga from where he sent

27. LRO 1, Doc 92.
28. LRO 1, Doc 103.
Séon with Baty to Matamata for a foundation among two Catholic tribes who were at war with each other. Pompallier went by ship to Maketu where, on 22 August, he landed Borjon and Justin to staff the station already partly built by the local *kainga* (village people). He then returned to Tauranga and walked with Viard to Rotorua while Baty went on foot with Rozet to Opotiki where Rozet would settle with a young French sailor as a companion. When Baty came back to Tauranga, the ship continued and dropped him at the Mahia Peninsula ‘to work there for a few months and then make his way to Auckland.’

**Holding the fort**

Back in the Bay of Islands, the faithful Épalle was holding the fort. He wrote three times in succession to assure Colin that things had calmed down. Henry Garnett had started his Novitiate. Épalle confirmed what Séon had already written: the Bishop had given the newcomers a gracious and pleasant reception and they had accepted their assignments in the right spirit. Things were under control.

The Bishop had authorised Épalle to get money from the bank on promissory notes against the Marist Fathers in Lyon. Épalle had done so already on 3 August for an amount of £349.6.7. Reflecting on the longer term, Épalle advised Colin to open a house of the Society both in England and in New Zealand.

In September the other man at the Bay, Father Garin, also wrote to the Superior General. He had been appointed Provincial against his wishes. Before leaving, the Bishop had spent two full days writing a new set of rules defining in great detail what each missionary had to do every moment of the day and how they should deport themselves (no beards, no tonsure). The Provincial had no other task than executing the Bishop’s orders. Garin was resigned to comply.

In reaction to Colin’s admonition of 17 July 1840 that Marists should never be put anywhere alone Garin writes: if at times somebody is put by himself, do not think it is a matter of unbalanced zeal on the part of the Bishop. The pastoral situation simply demands it. He is less convincing when he explains why the Bishop does not allow the Brothers to wear their

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30. Dated 8 July (LRO 1, Doc 103), 31 July (LRO 1, Doc 104) and 3 August (LRO 1, Doc 106).
In March 1842 Garin wrote to Father Comte in Akaroa to remind him that all letters to Europe had first to be sent unsealed to the Bay of Islands to be seen by the Bishop, with the exception of letters to the Superior General, on condition they dealt exclusively with spiritual direction.32 Pompallier knew how to surround himself with loyal supporters!

In France

Jean-Claude Colin: My limited ability

The departure of fourteen missionaries in December 1840 had given Colin an emotional uplift. He was proud of what indeed was a major achievement. In one go the number of Marist missionaries jumped from twenty-one to thirty-five. However, the hustle and bustle of getting them together and on their way, the special attention for the three laymen, and, on top of it all, the failure of the bank in London had taken their toll. In spite of the help he had received from his new assistant Maitrepierre and from Poipin, Colin felt exhausted. When on New Year’s day he answered the good wishes of his former community in Belley, he admitted that he was not able to cope with the mounting problems: ‘You know my limited ability’.33 Ten days later he wrote to Lagniet, the Rector of the Minor Seminary of Belley: ‘I don’t know when I can come and see you. I would very much like

31. LRO 1, Doc 111, 11 and 13. Today’s reader is tempted to think that this confusion would have been a good reason to do the opposite and allow the Brothers their religious habit. It did not occur to the obedient Garin!
32. LRO 2, Doc 136, 4.
33. CS 1, Doc 233,1: ‘mon peu d’aptitude.’
to, but every day something else happens that stops me from leaving Lyon. And I am practically alone here.34

In February and again in April 1841 Colin got information from Peter Dillon on the extremely confused situation on Tongatapu Island where one party resisted the claims of Taufa‘ahau of being the only King of Tonga and his attempts to impose Methodism on all the islands. The resistance party had expelled the Methodist missionaries and then appealed for help from France. Dillon saw an opening for the French mission.35 It led Colin to reflect again on the need for another Vicariate.

From the beginning of the Oceania missions it had been clear that sooner or later the vast territories entrusted to the Society of Mary and put under the authority of one Vicar Apostolic would sooner or later have to be divided into several jurisdictions. Already in 1837, writing from Sydney, Pompallier himself had explained to Colin that his mission would fall into two parts if he did not succeed in making regular visits to the men he had dropped on the two small islands of Wallis and Futuna.36 On receiving the first letters from New Zealand, Colin had commented in October 1838 publicly that he would be the first one to ask Rome to divide the vast mission of Pompallier and appoint other Bishops.37

Colin did not react immediately to Dillon whose proposal to buy a 120 ton ship and send it to Tonga with a group of missionaries was as far-fetched as his request to the French Government to proclaim a French Protectorate over Tonga. But it must have made Colin stare at the map of the South-West Pacific on his desk. Writing to the Directors of the Propagation of the Faith on 2 March 1841, he added at the end: ‘If divine Providence gave us the men, we could consider asking the Holy See to erect another Apostolic Vicariate for Samoa, Tonga and Fiji.’38

The main purpose of his letter was to share with the Propagation how the accounts of the Procure stood after the crash of Wright’s in November. The mission Procure had practically no money left and bills were still coming in. A detailed statement went to Bishop Pompallier.39

34. CS 1, Doc 237, 4. Both Poupinel and Maitrepierre often took part in preaching missions.
36. LRO 1, Doc 22, 7.
37. CS 1, Doc 52, 6.
38. CS 1, Doc 246, 8.
39. CS 1, Docs 245 and 246 (2 March 1841).
Ten days later Colin got a shock. He received a letter from Maxime Petit (postmark: Lyon 12 March 1841) containing the two other sealed letters, one from Catherin Servant dated 26 April 1840, and one from Petit himself dated 27 April 1840, all sent with an English whaling ship. These were the two frank and forceful letters they wrote in the Bishop’s absence to expose his disastrous mismanagement of the mission finances and the unacceptable way he often treated his religious subjects.40

Twelve days later, on 24 March 1841, Colin got another shock. He received the letter of 23 November 1840 that Tripe had sent from Akaroa on a British ship without submitting it to the Bishop for approval. Written independently from Servant and Petit, Tripe complains of the extreme penury in which the Bishop had left the missionaries in Akaroa and he accuses Pompallier of treating his missionaries harshly and rudely.41

The letters confirmed what Colin had already begun to suspect: all was not well in Oceania and he had not been told the whole truth!

**Overreacting?**

Among many other things Servant’s letter pointed out that Pompallier had neglected the tropical islands and had left the four missionaries on Wallis and Futuna to their own devices. They had been visited only once, by the men of the second band, on their own initiative, in May 1839, an action for which the Bishop had subsequently rebuked them. More recently, even with a big ship at his disposal, the Bishop had not gone to visit the islands but had sent Chevron and Attale. In the letter now on Colin’s table, Servant urged the Superior General to consider the erection of a second vicariate for the tropical islands of Polynesia.42

Four days later two separate budgets were submitted to the Propagation of the Faith, one for New Zealand, one for the tropical mission.43 In the covering letter Colin explains why the present Oceania mission must be divided. He not only refers to mail recently received but disregarding his solemn promise to protect the confidentiality of their letters, he names the writers: Petit, Servant and Tripe.44 Moreover, Colin hereby jumps ahead of the decision on a new Apostolic Vicariate without having

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40. LRO 1, Docs 55 and 56 enclosed in Doc 57.
41. LRO 1, Doc 78, postmark Lyon 22 March 1841.
42. LRO 1, Doc 55, 12.
43. CS 1, Doc 254.
44. CS 1, Doc 253, 8.
consulted its Ordinary and before taking up the matter with the competent authorities in Rome! All of that he does in a letter that cannot fail to become public knowledge. ‘If you could provide the means to pursue this project immediately, you would render an immense service to the mission of Central Oceania, indeed to religion itself.’\(^{45}\) The always so cautious Colin must have been in a sort of panic. The breach of confidentiality served no purpose but gravely embarrassed the writers once Pompallier found out, as was bound to happen sooner or later. Premature talk of dividing the Vicariate risked provoking resistance from the incumbent Vicar Apostolic.

Colin worked on the documents till two in the morning, signed them and rushed off to Belley.\(^ {46}\) During his stay of nearly two weeks in the Marist community he visited the Seminary and the Sisters. Everywhere he spoke openly of the new Vicariate, he mentioned the plight of the Brothers in Oceania and he told people he was tempted to take a ship to the Pacific.\(^ {47}\)

At a loss what to do

In April the Marist administration heard that the French Navy was about to send the corvette *Allier* directly to New Zealand under Captain du Bouzet: a splendid opportunity to get mail and money to the mission in New Zealand. They knew that Pompallier had spent nearly all of the money received through Tripe and Pezant (a year earlier, July 1840) on buying the *Sancta Maria*. They knew that Séon could reach New Zealand at any time (in fact he arrived 15 June) with at most the 10,000 francs he was authorised to draw from Cooper’s agent in Sydney minus the fares from Sydney to New Zealand. Even though it got the Procure into debt, they somehow found 10,000 francs to send with Captain du Bouzet.

However, before the money was handed over, the headhouse received the visit of Captain Joseph Ratau, who had spent some time in the Bay of Islands.\(^ {18}\) He presented them with a promissory note from Pompallier for 10,000 francs, signed on 3 September 1840. They paid him off on 17 May after which they were unable to find more money before the departure of the *Allier*.\(^ {49}\) Poupinel had written already a detailed financial report. An

\(^{45}\) CS 1, Doc 253, 10.

\(^{46}\) OM 2, page 236, note 3.

\(^{47}\) FS, Doc 39, 22. CS 1, Doc 255.

\(^{48}\) CS 1, doc. 259. Postmark Lyon, 7 May 1841.

\(^{49}\) Anonymous, *Comptes-Rendus des recettes et emplois des sommes allouées aux missions étrangères confiées à la Société de Marie* (APM 512.01), 6.
explanation was quickly added of why Captain du Bouzet was not carrying any money for the mission. Fortunately, they added, the Propagation of the Faith will soon be able to give us an advance on the financial year 1841.\footnote{50. A first draft in CS 1, Doc 262. Of the final version on why no money was sent, we have no copy or summary, but Pompallier quotes from it to Épalle on 15 November 1841 (APM 1487/21201). See below.}

The central administration of the Society now realised that it was up against a notorious spender who systematically resorted to borrowing large sums in New Zealand on promissory notes against the Society in France without even telling them.\footnote{51. Pompallier had borrowed a modest 1100 francs from Captain Bernard in March 1839, but that was before he had received any allocations. The loan from Captain Ratau was the first of a regular flow.} The Bishop based his financial needs in part on one thousand francs a year for the maintenance of each missionary.\footnote{52. Pompallier to Colin 14 May 1840, LRO 1, Doc 59, 31. Sent by the \textit{Pallas} this letter reached Colin on 28 September 1840 (Cf CS 1, Doc 200). Colin took over Pompallier’s figures in the budget submitted to the Propagation in March 1841 (CS 1, Doc 254).} Colin and the Propagation took over his figures, but Pompaller’s projects, the interest on his debts and his mismanagement swallowed it all up. As a result the missionaries were left destitute, living off the land, sometimes reduced to begging, while the Society in France became liable to cover at any moment debts over which it had no control or oversight at all.

### Taking matters to Rome

Bishop Pompallier had given up waiting for the Society of Mary. Unknown to Colin he had written to Cardinal Fransoni to find him more personnel and specifically English speaking priests for the rapidly growing immigrant population of New Zealand. Although Colin’s letter of 21 December 1840 was received in Propaganda on 2 January, the Cardinal apparently did not know in April 1841 that fourteen missionaries had sailed recently. Fransoni informed Colin of Pompallier’s request and urged him to send a large number of missionaries as quickly as possible, taking into account the need for English speakers. If the Society did not have any missionaries, he wrote, why not approach the Cardinal Archbishop of Lyon?\footnote{53. Louis-Jacques-Maurice de Bonald had been appointed Archbishop of Lyon in December 1839, had taken possession of the See in July 1840 and had been made a Cardinal in Rome on 1 March 1841. When the two cardinals met on that occasion, de...}
played open cards. He wrote to Pompallier but sent his answer via Colin as the Superior of the Congregation to which the mission was entrusted, with the request to forward it to New Zealand. It reached Lyon just in time for Colin to hand the letter to Captain du Bouzet, leaving for New Zealand on the *Allier*.

Acknowledging the Cardinal’s letter on 20 May gave Colin an opportunity to put the proposal of dividing the Apostolic Vicariate to the competent authority. He tells the Cardinal that he had just sent fourteen men to Oceania, and that thereby the small and young Society had managed to send in less than five years thirty-nine religious among whom were nineteen priests. Moreover he is preparing another group. The needs of the mission in the tropical islands and the difficulty of visiting them from New Zealand warranted, Colin argued, establishing a new Apostolic Vicariate for Wallis, Futuna, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. In support he enclosed the last letter from Bataillon.\(^5^4\) With these pieces in hand Fransoni not only had a plan of action but also a possible candidate for the position of Vicar Apostolic. Nothing indicates that Colin had in mind putting Bataillon forward by enclosing his letter, but it surely had this effect.

Colin already gives the proposed circumscription a name: Vicariate of Central Oceania and he goes a step further. If the Holy See were to agree to his proposal, it could choose one of the three missionaries in those islands to be the Vicar Apostolic or, in order to avoid risk and long delays, choose someone still in Europe now, in which case the new Bishop could attract more missionary vocations before leaving. While pointing out how difficult it was for Pompallier to visit the islands, Colin carefully avoids blaming him or even hinting at the other reasons for his proposal and for the urgency, namely his difficulties with the Bishop and the strained relations between the Bishop and the majority of his missionaries.\(^5^5\)

It so happened that Father Étienne Séon was planning a pilgrimage to Rome with a friend of his (a donation from a benefactress). Colin entrusted them with the task of presenting his letter in person to Fransoni, the Prefect of Propaganda, hoping they would get a first reaction on the spot. He also wrote to Cardinal Castracane, of the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars, asking him to support the request.\(^5^6\)

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Bonald must have shown interest in the Oceania missions and a willingness to support them.

\(^5^4\) Most likely a copy of Bataillon’s letter of 12 May 1840, LRO 1, Doc 38.

\(^5^5\) CS 1, Doc 263.

\(^5^6\) CS 1, Doc 264.
During the audiences the two Marists had in Rome, both Cardinals reacted in a favourable way to the suggestion of a second Vicariate. After their return Colin could put the proposal to Pompallier (6 June 1841) without waiting for an official answer. By quoting the two Roman authorities (and throwing in a little flattery) he hoped to forestall a negative reaction:

I have informed the Cardinal of the success you have obtained in New Zealand, and of the results of Father Bataillon’s work in Wallis. I took the opportunity to explain to him simply the advantage of having an Apostolic Vicariate for the island groups of Fiji, Tonga, Samoa and the neighbouring islands. The Cardinal thought the erection of such a Vicariate would indeed be most opportune. He is writing to consult Your Excellency on the matter. I think, Monseigneur, that putting this project into execution would greatly advance the cause of the Faith in those large and populous islands. You know more than anyone else how beneficial the presence of a Bishop is for the local people, and even for the heretics. The episcopacy is a source of grace for the conversion of people. Moreover, I am convinced it would be an excellent means to attract more missionaries and to obtain more support for your mission. Several people who are interested in the mission, support the idea and, as you understand, Monseigneur, it is all in your interest. Your present responsibilities are immense and would be lightened. Your solicitudes would be spread less widely and thus be more effective for the people entrusted to your care.57

In June Colin was back in Belley and again he spoke freely to the community: ‘We are thinking that for the good of the Polynesia mission a Vicariate Apostolic should be created for the Wallis islands. God must make known to us the one he has chosen.’ In such moments Colin takes off into visionary futures: ‘In ten years there will be four or five bishops in Western Oceania!’58

In fact, on 12 June 1841 Fransoni wrote to Pompallier asking him to express his views on an eventual division of his jurisdiction. He invited

57. CS 1, Doc 271, 3.
58. FS, Doc 39, 21. CS 1, Doc 268, 8.
him to propose one of his missionaries to be put at the head of the new Vicariate and asked for a prompt reply. The Cardinal passed his letter to Colin with the request to forward it. In the covering letter Fransoni explained that he would like to have the Bishop’s consent before proceeding, adding with curial self-confidence that he ‘had no doubt the Bishop would agree with pleasure to the proposed division’.59

One thing it meant was that Colin had to get another group of missionaries together in a hurry. There were ten novices, three were too old, three had volunteered. He jokingly spoke of emptying the houses in France.60 There were a few senior Marists, by now seasoned Superiors, who had volunteered several times for the missions. One of them, Antoine Séon, Colin had released to lead the last, large group of fourteen.

Now Colin picked another trusted man, Jean Forest. Born in 1804 in a village near Saint-Chamond, Jean Forest did his first studies at the Institute that later became a famous Marist college. He entered the Major Seminary of Saint-Irénée in 1827 and became a priest in 1830. A year later he joined the Marists and preached parish missions, a few times together with Pompallier. They became friends. In 1836 he applied for Oceania but was kept back. When Pompallier was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Western Oceania, Forest took his place in Lyon. He lived in Puylata, was Master of Novices and preached missions.61

When Gilbert Roudaire, a diocesan priest of Clermont, applied to enter the Novitiate, Colin suggested that he do some recruiting among his friends in the Diocese.62 A few prospective missionaries presented themselves but they expressed a preference for Africa and Colin generously recommended them to the Superior General of the Holy Spirit Fathers, using the opportunity to enquire confidentially about the Apostolic Prefect of Senegal, Jérôme Mareille, who, he had heard, was looking for another mission.63

Between February and August 1841 Colin received no less than three letters from Peter Dillon, who must have had a good contact in Tongatapu.64 Dillon knew that one faction on that island had broken with the Wesleyan ministers. As mentioned above, he saw a splendid opportunity, not

59. Quoted in Wiltgen, Founding, 228 and Jaspers, Erschliessung, 231.
60. CS 1, Doc 268, 7.
62. CS 1, Doc 274.
63. CS 1, Doc 279. Nothing came of it.
64. On 16 April (CS 1, Doc 257), 10 June (CS 1, Doc 272) and 21 August. APM 511.422.
only for the Catholic mission to establish itself there, but for the French Government to push back the British influence and even to take possession of the island. He went as far as suggesting to Colin to withdraw his men from New Zealand (now British anyway) and send them to the islands of Polynesia instead.

On 6 July Colin firmly rejected that suggestion: ‘the missionaries, dear Captain, would never agree to leave New Zealand where there are so many souls to save.’ Dillon was putting Colin in an awkward situation! The Superior General had his own reasons by now to look towards the Polynesian islands, but those reasons he could not reveal to Peter Dillon. At the same time he might need Dillon’s help without becoming embroiled in Dillon’s political and personal ambitions. He wrote that indeed he was thinking of a large group in autumn, perhaps sending them straight to the new mission of Central Oceania.65 He enquired twice from Cooper if there could be direct transport to Tonga or Wallis, no doubt to avoid them being way-laid by Pompallier.66

During the summer months Colin succeeded in assigning two other priests to Oceania. Euloge-Marie Reignier was born in 1811 in the west of France and became a priest in his diocese, Nantes. He read about the Society of Mary and its missions in the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith and in January 1841 he entered the Marist Novitiate with the intention of going as a missionary to Oceania. He was assigned accordingly and made his profession on 25 September 1841.67

Basile-Jérôme Grange was born in 1807. He grew up an orphan, did not attend school and could not read or write until he was eighteen. He wanted to be a missionary and his parish priest helped him through his studies. He was ordained a priest in his Diocese Grenoble and immediately entered the Marist Novitiate. He was assigned to join the band of Forest and made his profession together with Reignier.68

Jean Lampila was what in later years would be called a late vocation. Born in Mazamet (Tarn), in 1808, he served as a sergeant in the French army and did service in Greece. At 31 years of age he entered the Marist

65. CS 1, Doc 277. Colin’s careful wording has led Dillon’s biographer Davidson (Dillon, 300) to think mistakenly that Colin’s interest in the Polynesian islands was the result of Dillon’s intervention. Colin did indeed pass Dillon’s suggestions to Marshall Soult in Paris but his mind was on the unacceptable treatment his missionaries got from their Bishop in New Zealand and the neglect of his men on Wallis and Futuna.
66. Colin to Cooper, 16 June 1841 (CS 1, Doc 273) and 6 July 1841 (CS 1, Doc 278).
67. Greiler, Biographical Notes, 143.
68. Greiler, Biographical Notes, 94–5.
Novitiate in Belley and began his studies at the same time. He applied for Oceania and Colin appointed him in the understanding that he would continue his studies on board ship and in New Zealand where he could be ordained in due time. He also was professed on 25 September.69

Colin found a suitable Brother in Luc Macé, born in 1813 in the west of France (Anjou). It seems he did very well at school and people encouraged him to study for the priesthood. He refused and entered the Society of Mary around 1840 as a Coadjutor Brother in Belley. He made his profession on condition he could go to Oceania. Colin who sometimes refused men who entered on this condition, apparently did not object this time.70

Colin found a second Brother in Jean (Déodat) Villemagne, born in 1814 in Saint-Étienne. He joined the Marist Brothers in the Hermitage in 1839. He made his temporary profession 10 October 1839 and his perpetual profession on 10 October 1841, on the eve of his departure.71

On 15 September Colin was able to announce to the Government in Paris that six missionaries were on the point of leaving for ‘the islands of Oceania’ (not New Zealand!), although he also made mention of ‘service to the French people living in those parts of the world,’ in other words, Akaroa. He mentioned only the three priests by name and asked for a subsidy.72 He got nothing.

On 19 March 1841 Colin had received a letter from three Sisters of Saint Joseph in a village close to the Hermitage, Saint-Martin en Coailleux where Louis Rozet had been a curate. On their feastday they volunteered by letter of their Superior, Sister Colette, to go to Oceania. Even if the situation in Oceania had been less confused than it was at that moment, Colin would probably not have considered it. One must hope he sent them a letter of appreciation for their zeal. In any case, Rozet wrote them a charming letter from Opotiki in October 1841.73

**Time for a successor?**

In the meantime Colin had come to the decision to resign on the occasion of the coming retreat in September. His ideal had always been wholehearted obedience and loyalty to the Bishops. It was with obedience that

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72. CS 1, Doc 290.
73. CS 1, Doc 250. LRO 1, Doc 112.
he had won over the Bishops of Belley and Lyon when both wanted to keep the Society of Mary under their own Diocesan control. Obedience had purified his own motivations and hence he had urged unquestioning obedience on his missionaries. In spite of long established practice he had made Pompallier their religious Superior. Now he saw his vision failing. His prescription did not work. The men in Oceania were suffering and a conflict looked unavoidable. The stress, especially of the last year, had aged Colin visibly. His hair had gone white, his face wrinkled by fatigue and he looked seventy instead of the fifty-two he was. He was looking for a way out.

Moreover, his former mentor Jean Cholleton who as Vicar General under Archbishop de Pins had played a crucial role in the acceptance of the Oceania missions, had resigned from the Archdiocese and joined the Society of Mary when Louis de Bonald became Archbishop of Lyon. He was due to make his profession at the retreat. Colin had always said Cholleton should be the superior general. This was his chance. He made sure Cholleton (even though still a novice) was on the list of eligibles.

With the same rashness that marked him during the summer months of 1841, Colin spent four days in Belley burning important documents of the past.

Colin felt so sure he would be able to hand over to a successor at the retreat that he asked the four priests in Verdelais, the Fathers Chanut, Convers, Balmet and Rocher, who were dispensed from attending the retreat because of the long distance, to send in their written votes for the election of his successor. They did.

On Tuesday 21 September the Marists gathered in the Minor Seminary in Belley. The Marist house, the Capucinière, was too small to accommodate the participants: about forty priests, fifteen Brothers, fifteen scholastics and some students.

On Tuesday evening four scholastics were received as aspirantes probati. A meeting was held of all the professed to vote on the admission to vows and on Saturday 25 September one Brother and ten priests made their perpetual profession. Among them were Jérôme Grange, Euloge Reignier, Jean Lampila and Luc Macé, all four on the point of leaving for Oceania.

74. CS 1, page 476, note 1. Quote from MM 1, 329m, dated March 1842.
75. CS 1, Doc 283, 6.
76. OM 1, page 27–8.
77. CS 1, Doc 283.
The report of the retreat\textsuperscript{78} gives us a peaceful picture of pious exercises under the direction of the retreat master, Father Claude Dussurgey. There were conferences by Father Colin (two a day), by Maitrepierre, Cholleton and Favre (professor of theology). Bishop Devie visited the retreat on Monday, gave a conference and presided at the closing Mass on Tuesday. The retreat ended with a solemn ceremony of farewell. The missionaries signed their names on the ribbon that Peter Chanel had put in a golden heart on the statue of Our Lady of Fourvière. Chanel will surely have been mentioned on the occasion, not suspecting he had, five months earlier, already sealed this commitment with his blood!

All the time, behind the peaceful scene, tensions mounted (une triste anxiété). Colin spoke of his decision to resign, first to one, then two, then three and finally to a dozen or fourteen of the senior Marists. They were appalled. While recognising his physical limitations, they did in no way admit what Maitrepierre, not without a touch of mockery, called his ‘alleged inadequacy’. It took the determined efforts during several days, of all of them, and the persuasive powers of Bishop Devie, his confessor, to talk Colin out of it. Just before the end of the retreat he relented and agreed to stay on, begging those in the know to keep his attempt a secret. Nobody else knew of the threat that for a few days had hung over the Society.

On the closing day Father Colin called all the professed Marists together and told them of his desire to withdraw to Belley for a few months, to work on the Rule. The deal was that Jean-Claude Colin would stay on as Superior General but take a long break in Belley, the place where he felt more at home and among his old friends. There he could work on the Rule in a relaxed atmosphere. The senior appointments were confirmed or made in view of allowing Colin to be free of the daily worries of the administration. Cholleton became Superior of the Novitiate that was about to be transferred from Puylata to la Favorite. Terraillon was appointed Superior in Puylata. Pierre Colin became ‘Provincial’ of the Marist Sisters and Poupinel remained Procurator for Oceania. Father Maitrepierre was the Provincial Visitor, in fact the day-to-day manager, in Colin’s words: ‘He will take my place for everything.’\textsuperscript{79} Whether Colin was in fact able to let someone else run things, and have administrative procedures do their work, remains to be seen.

\textsuperscript{78} CS 1, Doc 291.
\textsuperscript{79} CS 1, Doc 309, 3.
After the retreat

After the retreat Colin returned immediately to Lyon and instead of packing his bags for Belley as agreed, he stayed in Puylata for nearly two months. He wrote to the confreres in Verdelais to explain what had happened: ‘The moment of Providence had not come for me’. He assured them that their votes had been destroyed unopened. Maitrepierre also wrote to Verdelais and told them of the arrangements made to ensure that Father Colin, while staying on as Superior General, would get a period of rest during which he could work on the Rule. His own function Maitrepierre described as ‘always the travelling salesman’.

Colin had Gilbert Roudaire, then a novice in la Favorite, write letters in his name to Vaimua and Niuliki, the Kings of Wallis and Futuna. Roudaire wrote in what he called the appropriate style for the country (of which he knew nothing!), in fact pieces of condescending paternalism (in the familiar tu!). Of the one to Vaimua there is no further mention. The one to Niuliki was never delivered. By the time it reached Oceania both Chanel and Niuliki were dead.

There were other letters Colin insisted on writing himself. Having heard that Perret had been unable to continue the voyage with the rest of the group, he made sure there would be a letter waiting for him at the Bay of Islands.

‘Many times I am with you in spirit. How I suffer, of the pains you have, and perhaps even of those you don’t have! It is not all roses at the Bay of Islands. Help Bishop Pompallier with your good counsels. The resources of the Propagation are not large enough for the needs of the mission. One will have to cut expenses. If not, the mission will get nowhere. Write to me as soon as you can.’

Another man he wanted to thank personally was Maxime Petit whose letters had opened Colin’s eyes for the real situation in New Zealand. Colin is sending Forest as an official Visitor and he asks Petit to help arranging things with the confreres. Keep writing to me in confidence. Your other

80. CS 1, Doc 293, 1.
81. CS 1, Doc 296, 9.
82. CS 1, Doc 294, 6. The letter to Niuliki has been preserved, CS 1, Doc 295.
83. CS 1, Doc 306.
letter has been published in the Annals. People have pity on you and your potatoes! (In the published letter Petit had described himself as tracking though the bush, carrying a large bag of potatoes).  

‘Remain united with God. See Him all the time in your heart. He is your strength, your light, your nourishment. With Him, fear nothing. Nothing is so close to heaven as working for the salvation of souls. This earthly life is nothing. It belongs to God, more than that it is our own.’

He also wrote a gracious letter to Mgr. Bonamie, the Superior General of the Picpus Fathers, acknowledging that their missionaries had been the ‘models of the Marists and the men who opened for us the doors of Oceania’. He saw off Forest and Grange leaving for London and had Poupinel write letters of recommendation for them to Bishop Thomas Griffiths, the Vicar Apostolic of London and to Cooper.

What to do about Oceania?

The discussions in the wings of the prayerful retreat confronted the twelve or so senior Marists not only with a Superior General on the verge of a breakdown but, on the other side of the world, with a mission in trouble. Colin preferred to leave New Zealand alone for the time being and send a new team straight to the Polynesian islands to open a new vicariate. However, in the consultations, with Forest present, sober counsels prevailed. In any case, nothing could be done before Rome took an official decision and Cardinal Fransoni had made it clear he would not move before hearing from Bishop Pompallier.

They came to the decision to send the new group to New Zealand all the same and make Forest an official Visitator on behalf of the Superior General, his alter ego. There would be an appropriate letter to the missionaries and one to the Bishop. When, on 5 October, Forest left with Grange for Paris, the letters were not yet ready.

The circular, the personal letter for Pompallier and the letters for individual missionaries were, in the light of the letters from Servant, Petit and Tripe, already delicate enough, but a few days after Forest and Grange had left, Colin and his team received Pompallier’s angry letter of 17 May

84. Cf CS 1, page 506, note 1.
85. CS 1, Doc 307. Presumably Colin wrote to Servant as well.
86. CS 1, Doc 297, 3.
87. CS 1, Docs 298 and 300.
88. Cf CS 1, Doc 304, 1.
1841, the one that had brought tears in Épalle’s eyes. Colin and his staff must have been thoroughly shaken by his violent language. The first men of the next band of missionaries were on their way, the rest were packing their bags. Pompallier’s letter can only have aggravated Colin’s apprehensions but it was not possible to change the course set out. Moreover, there were only a few days left to formulate reactions. The letter to the missionaries reveals the depth of Colin’s sadness and anxiety:

May the grace and mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the protection of Mary our mother, be with you and accompany you everywhere.

We do not lose sight of you, our dear and honoured confreres. You are present to our minds every hour of the day. Our heart suffers of the ills you suffer, perhaps even of the ones you do not suffer. My heart suffers because I do not see you, because I cannot hear of your pains, your sadness, your consolations. It suffers because I cannot share your work, your worries, and your uncounted deprivations. In order to come to your aid, and because it is our duty, we send you one of the most senior men of the Society, Father Forest, as a Visitator, an alter ego. His age, his experience, his tested virtue, his deep knowledge of the spirit and the ways of the Society are an assurance that his visit and his love for you will bear much fruit.’

‘Having called upon the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary and consulted our council we have asked Father Forest to take upon him the following task:

1. To work in good consultation with the Bishop and with the Religious Superior whom the Bishop has appointed.
2. To visit all the priests and brothers of the Society and to listen to everything they have to say about their work, their problems, the way they see their work.

89. LRO 1, Doc 91, cf above page 310.
90. CS 1, Doc 301.
91. It looks as if the following description of the mandate is not written by Colin. Perhaps Forest himself?
3. To see with the Bishop and all of you if it is possible and advisable to open a Marist house in the Bay of Islands as a residence for the Religious Superior and for the Procurator who has to look after your needs; a house that later perhaps could become a College.

4. As the resources of the Propagation of the Faith are limited, he should look with you into the possibilities of providing in the long term for your needs from local resources.

5. Is it thinkable to ask from the British Government a living allowance now that New Zealand has become a British colony?

6. Are there things that can be obtained locally to avoid the very heavy expenses of sending so many mission goods from Europe?

Together with the Bishop and all of you, Father Forest will put together a report in detail that we can submit to Propaganda in Rome and that can help us come to the assistance of your mission.

As you see, it is not our intention to invest Father Forest with any authority. We only want to know your situation and come to your aid to the best of our ability so as to enable you to work for the Kingdom of Jesus and Mary. We do not want in any way to encroach upon the rights and the authority of Monseigneur the Vicar Apostolic.92

Colin.

92. This paragraph could be Colin's again.
Robust letters

The most difficult of course was the letter to Pompallier himself. Maîtrepiere wrote a draft answer,93 Colin even wrote two!94 The three drafts have been preserved, but the two letters actually sent, one by Maîtrepiere dated 20 October, one by Colin on 22 October, have not been traced. Not unlikely there just was no time to make copies or summaries. What they actually wrote we must deduce from the drafts and from Pompallier’s reactions when he read the letter a year later.95

Maîtrepiere challenges the negative judgment Pompallier repeatedly expresses on the missionaries. Before leaving, he writes, they were known for their docility and loyalty, their obedience and commitment. Nobody here believes that they would all have changed so much in so short a time. The Bishop should seriously question his own way of exercising authority. If he rules them with force, he cannot expect to receive the cordial obedience (obéissance cordiale)96 that he seeks.

Maîtrepiere also challenges the rude accusations against Father Colin. He is the most gentle of superiors, loved by all and nobody finds it difficult to obey him. He has excellent relations with the Bishops he has to deal with.

Pompallier’s incessant requests for large numbers of missionaries are just not reasonable. He has received twenty priests in five years. Saint Francis Xavier never had that many.

Father General has the impression that the Bishop would rather not deal any longer with the Society of Mary. The Bishop is invited to find other sources of manpower. The Society has plenty of opportunities elsewhere.

Maîtrepiere reproaches him for having appointed a Provincial without even notifying the Superior General. Restricting the Religious Superiors’ role to the spiritual direction of the religious is unacceptable and against Church law. The same applies to forbidding them to communicate freely with the Superior General.

The financial administration of the Bishop is chaotic and unprofessional. He is unwilling to listen to advice and his lack of accountability

93. CS 1, Doc 302.
94. CS 1, Docs 304 and 305.
95. Pompallier did not get the letters until 26 August 1842, when he returned from visiting Wallis, Futuna and Tonga. He answered in November 1842 (LRO 2, Docs 217–220) and Lyon received his answers in June 1843 (cf CS 2, Doc 80).
96. A favourite expression of Pompallier himself.
seriously affects the willingness of the Directors of the Propagation of the Faith to support his mission. ‘The missionary undertaking is a sacred one, but you still have to cut your coat according to your cloth.’

Colin is just as frank. From the drafts and subsequent reactions Kevin Roach has made the following summary of what must have been Colin’s actual letter.97

He commenced by saying he was not in the habit of replying to letters written in such a manner. The Vicar Apostolic was free to dispense with the services of the Society of Mary. Colin would regard himself dispensed from being Pompallier’s agent in France. In future he would protest against all drafts Pompallier drew on him. It would not be the same for the missionaries working under Pompallier. The Brief of Approbation does not exempt the Society from the jurisdiction of the Bishop and the Society would not wish it. However, it does give the Superior General a power other than knowing, according to the spirit of the Vicar Apostolic’s letter, whether the religious are saying their morning and evening prayers; he rules them. Colin then proceeded to relieve Pompallier of his religious authority over the missionaries that he had accorded him in order to promote greater harmony on the mission, something the missionaries of Picpus had not conceded to the Vicar Apostolic of Eastern Oceania. Colin asked Pompallier to have a more confident attitude toward his missionaries and not to regard them all as incapable. He advised him to ask counsel of his more able priests. To watch over their correspondence was not worthy of a Bishop; he need not concern himself over such minutiae. His priests, not being incorporated into his Vicariate by exeat 98 it was more than imprudence to raise the question of rights. Always to speak of the Holy See and to use unremittingly a language that the Holy See never employs, was a contradiction in ideas. He recommended a good Procurator and a Superior for the religious. Both of these could live at Kororareka and act as counselors. He defied the Bishop to show that either

98. A procedure in Church law by which a religious was allowed to leave the obedience of his superiors and join a diocese.
by word or in writing he had given advice to departing missionaries contrary to the respect and obedience due him. Finally he recommended mildness and humility together with an exercise of authority that was reasonable. ‘The face of your mission would change. Here our courage would be renewed’.

Had Pompallier’s letter of May arrived before the last band of missionaries were on the point of leaving, Colin adds, he would not have sent them. He reminds the Bishop of the fact that the Holy See has committed the missions of Oceania to the Society of Mary. There are plans to open a new Vicariate as the Bishop would know from the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda. The missionaries whom Bishop Pompallier does not want to keep will gladly move to another Vicariate.

With this forceful letter (Pompallier called it a thunderbolt) relations between Bishop Pompallier and the Society of Mary changed radically. At the same time Colin fails again to step effectively into his role as Superior General. Having cancelled the Bishop’s position in the Society, Colin fails to appoint another Religious Superior, or make arrangements for one to be elected by the religious. As a result the Bishop, now formally deprived of any authority in the Society, still is expected to appoint a Religious Superior!

Finally, some time between 20 and 26 November, Colin left Lyon for Belley and with a short interruption in January he stayed there until April 1842, when he received the news of the martyrdom of Peter Chanel.

Apart from one small group of three that left for New Zealand in August 1842, profiting of Government transport, no more missionaries were sent to New Zealand during Colin’s generalate (1836–54).

**The Polynesian Islands**

**Wallis**

In October 1840 the *Lavelua* and his close supporters unleashed another persecution. Bataillon withdrew with a large number of catechumens to Nukuatea Island thereby avoiding an armed confrontation. They sat it out, singing hymns and praying. When it became clear that the converts were not going to be intimidated into returning to the old ways, the ‘persecution’ fizzled out.99

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The large church on Nukuatea remained the central church for a time but as the threat of civil war ebbed away, people started building chapels near their homes, helped by the two Brothers Joseph and later, Attale. In January 1841 there were village churches in Liku, Vailala, Haafuasia and Mua.

For Bataillon it meant he needed pictures and statues. People were very fond of the few colourful pictures he could give them. They knew all about the Protestant churches in Tongan villages that had no statues and pictures. It confirmed their faith: ‘Protestantism is no good; there is nothing to look at!’

The return of Joseph Chevron and Brother Attale from Futuna in November 1840, strengthened Bataillon’s position. The two priests got along well. Chevron worked hard to master the language. Bataillon was all the time giving religious instruction to large numbers of catechumens on different places. In May 1841 he wrote that of the 2300 people on Wallis (he

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100. LRO 1, Doc 119, 9.
Bataillon begged Colin to send plenty of second-hand clothing. Catechumens expected to be dressed from top to toe when they joined! That Pompallier did not visit the islands also meant that neither the allocations, nor the gifts that came with each group reached them. For lack of shoes the missionaries walked barefooted. Bataillon dismissed it as not important, but wounded and infected feet caused a lot of suffering. 

The old Lavelua Vaimua held out for most of the year 1841, but it pushed him towards the margin of his community with less and less power to influence the tide of events. Bataillon only baptised people in danger of death and kept putting off the solemn baptisms for the arrival of the Bishop, even though he judged many people to be ready. He had his catechumens praying the Rosary with home-made beads. They even went to Confession, by way of instruction and spiritual direction. He wrote new songs all the time, mostly on tunes from France, and people delighted in community singing. Chevron commented on the splendid—nearly magical—way the Wallisians developed singing in parts.

For the young people, religious instruction was linked to literacy training which aroused a keen interest. Prayers, catechisms and songs were copied by hand and many youngsters proved fast learners. A printing-press was badly needed. Bataillon made a flag with the picture of the Blessed Virgin with which the Christian chiefs marched around the island. Many people surprised the missionaries by their piety and by the changes that conversion brought about in their lives. As Bataillon wrote to Colin: ‘I can tell you that people in France have quite wrong ideas about these islands and their people.’

The young firebrand Tuugahala for whom the lotu had provided a platform to gain political prominence and who had contributed greatly to win over many people especially of the younger generation, proved more interested in politics than in piety. He mostly hung around with the gang of beachcombers on Wallis, and his life-style remained thoroughly pagan: he kept his four wives. Bataillon was frustrated by his bad example and by his attempts to turn people away from the moral standards that the missionaries were trying to instil. Bataillon noticed increasing disorder and
misconduct among young people. The \textit{lotu} weakened the old order but was not yet strong enough to impose its own norms and values.

Sam Keletaone on the contrary, the Singave chief who had fled from Futuna to Wallis in the war of August 1839, while remaining a close friend of Tuugahala, was an exemplary catechumen. All the time the ancestral instincts of both men remained strong and they had no difficulty winning over the young warriors on the island to the idea of invading Futuna and to impose the transition to the \textit{lotu} by force.

One day, according to Bataillon in a letter to Épalle, a ship called on the way to Futuna and some Wallisian people tried to get a passage to Futuna where, they said, the King let people free to choose their religion. Bataillon confronted the \textit{Lavelua} with the question, did he want all his people to do the same and his island to empty? The King broke down and accepted that from then on people were free to choose their religion.\footnote{Épalle to Colin, LRO 1, Doc 104, 5.}

\section*{Futuna}

After the departure of Father Chevron and Brother Attale (20 November 1840) Chanel goes to see Niuliki to complain of the increased thieving. Niuliki and his entourage express indignation but they do nothing (26.11.40).\footnote{Figures between brackets refer to the dates in the summary that Father Roulleaux-Dubignon made of Chanel’s lost diary for 1840–1. EC, 485–503.} A few weeks later the King asks why the missionaries have not made their usual present to a couple of newly-weds. Marie-Nizier tells him bluntly it is because of the constant stealing and he, the King, doing nothing about it. Niuliki listens in silence (11.12.40).

The King does no longer bring them food as regularly as before. Some days they are really short. Chanel eats dog. Marie-Nizier tries but at the last moment he cannot not get over his revulsion (14.12.40). On 20 December they get two baskets of breadfruit. Two days later there is a feast at Fikavi; the missionaries are not invited but people carrying food home from the traditional distribution share it with them. On Christmas Chanel is too weak to say Midnight Mass. The story goes that Niuliki now wants to send the two away on the first passing ship.

In early January 1841 a young Wallisian woman, a catechumen, who has come across to Futuna on the last ship and is staying with relatives in Singave, spreads the story that Tuugahala is planning to invade Futuna and make Sam Keletaone King (04.01.41). It is not news to Chanel who
knows it from Bataillon’s letter of 3 November. Bataillon had suggested frightening Niuliki with this story into converting.107 Chanel does nothing of the sort, as Marie-Nizier explained much later: ‘It would have compromised the mission into an inextricable situation.’108

In mid-January 1841 three Christian young people come across from Wallis by canoe and land secretly on the uninhabited island of Alofi. If that has nothing to do with the scheming of Tuugahala, the Malo elders cannot be blamed for thinking so. The arrival is soon known of course. Meitala, Niuliki’s son, and his brother-in-law Musumusu go across to Alofi to interrogate and threaten them. Whatever happens or is said, one of the three then comes to the main island and goes to stay with Meitala, who thereby puts himself in a highly ambiguous position (15.01.41). One of the Wallisians, perhaps the same one, comes to see Chanel and tells him about the rapid progress of the lotu on Wallis: four churches have been built on the main island. On Futuna itself, a few old men from the Malo side go around threatening that anyone going over to the lotu better leave the island.

Like Bataillon on Wallis, Chanel has the impression that on Futuna too the social order is crumbling. Elders stop a wild dancing party at Fikavi, whereupon a gang of hotheads gather muskets and put up a roadblock. It takes Niuliki himself to go and talk sense into them. On 15 January Niuliki brings the missionaries cooked taro and crab. The Malo chiefs are divided. Some underline their authority by stopping the Wallisian catechumens in Singave from going to Mass in Poi, which leads Futunan youngsters to take up their defence (17.01.41).

At the end of January a feast is organised but some rebellious young men refuse to attend. Food is brought around to various villages in Tua, but when Chanel goes to Asoa to get his customary share, the King ignores him. Young people bring Chanel some food anyhow.

All through February wild rumours continue to spread. In Singave the story goes that Malo warriors plan to kill all white people and all catechumens on the island. They will wipe every trace of the lotu and if a warship comes to take revenge they will first pretend to submit and then take the ship by surprise. They will not leave a sailor alive! Food supply is irregular and unpredictable but the last days of the month people at Asoa Vele catch

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107. CCC, Doc 17, 8.
108. Not unlikely this is word for word what Chanel had said at the time. Nizier slipped Chanel’s remark into the copy he made on 14 October 1860 for Colin of Bataillon’s letter of 3 November 1840, APM 1555/22253, page 4. Cf Ronzon, Delorme, 68.
a few turtles and when Marie-Nizier goes for their share he comes back with two full baskets. Thomas makes a delicious turtle soup (26.02.41).

In March Niuliki comes twice to Poi for a shave. He brings taro, fish and crab but does not stay to share in the meal. Catechumens also bring food.

On Palm Sunday, 4 April, the Wallisian catechumens sing during Mass. Chanel composes songs for the Holy Week. On Easter Sunday he celebrates a solemn Mass, attended by a good number of people. The King, accompanied by two other men, brings several baskets of food. He also asks for a shave but Marie-Nizier lets him wait until the next day because of the solemnity. Niuliki grumbles but does not insist.

More threats to kill the catechumens and put fire to the missionaries’ house. Nizier attends a marriage feast; the King is present and asks to be shaved. He shows no sign of anger. Another rumour has it that the missionaries will have to move to Tamana, Niuliki’s latest residence, in order to discourage catechumens from frequenting Chanel.

A fateful conversion

During the evening instruction of Sunday after Easter, 18 April 1841, Peter Chanel hears that Meitala, Niuliki’s eldest son, has let it become known his decision is made: he will go over to the lotu. The next day Chanel goes to see him. He finds him in Avaui in the company of several young men. They seem very well disposed. Close to their house live a few American sailors who have jumped ship and been given a place there. In spite of an attack of fever Chanel spends a good part of the day instructing Meitala and his friends. Meitala takes the cross that Chanel wears around his neck and puts it on himself.109

Chanel is ill for a few days. In spite of his fever he gives medical help to Farema, a notorious opponent of the lotu. On Thursday Chanel feels better and goes to see Niuliki. He finds him in deliberation with some elders.110

109. This interesting detail we only know from Épalle who heard it in the Bay of Islands from an unnamed American who arrived there in January 1842. The man claimed to have been on Futuna when all of this happened. The presence of two American sailors in Avaui is attested by Chevron, cf CCC, 244, note 5. Roulleaux mentions an old American named Charles living near the place. Cf EC, page 493, 05.09.40.

110. According to Roulleaux’s summary this is the last entry in Chanel’s diary.
On Monday 26 April Chanel asks Marie-Nizier to visit a sick person in Singave and to see if there are any children in danger of death. You are lucky, Chanel jokes, better than working the garden the whole day! Marie-Nizier stays in Singave until the early morning of Wednesday.111

That same Monday the young men staying with Meitala in Avaui get taboo food and ask the Americans to cook it for them. While they are eating the forbidden food, the mother of Meitala enters and begs her son and his friends not to eat it: ‘Why are you doing such an awful thing?’ Their answer was: ‘You would not understand.’ She leaves in great anger.112

On Tuesday 27, Niuliki himself goes to see Meitala. He tries to persuade him to come back on his ways. Meitala refuses to talk to his father. The young men with him, some of whom also wear little crosses, stick to their decision to accept the lotu. Niuliki returns to Tamana.

The assassination

On Wednesday 28 April 1841 Musumusu leaves early in the morning with a group of young men of his village. They pass the house of the Americans and call out that they are on their way to kill Peter Chanel. They go to the place where Meitala is with his friends. There is a scuffle with some bruises on both sides. One of the catechumens fires a musket. Musumusu withdraws with his gang and goes to Poi. When they enter the house, Chanel sees that Musumusu is bleeding and he starts looking for a bandage. The mob gets into the house and starts looting. Chanel protests. One of the gang knocks Chanel down, somebody stabs a bayonet into his shoulder and goes back to pulling things out of the cases. Chanel sags down and pulls out the bayonet. Musumusu calls the looters to order: ‘We did not come to loot but to kill the white man!’ When they take no notice, he picks up an adze and hits Chanel on the head, cleaving the skull.

As Chanel lies bleeding on the ground and the brains come out of his skull, they pull off his cassock and trousers and walk away, carrying their booty and leaving the bleeding body on the ground.113

111. Marie-Nizier gives a detailed account of these days in the letter of 1 May that he began writing before leaving Futuna. CCC, Doc 58.
112. The failed intervention of Meitala’s mother occurs only in the story that Épalle later picked up from the American. Nizier was in Singave on Monday. He must have heard about it, but does not mention it.
113. Cf Excursus E, at the end of this chapter: ‘How did they come to kill Chanel?’
The sequel

By moving with a trail of young armed thugs first to Avaui then to Poi, Musumusu has aroused alarm and excitement. People rush after them to find out. One of the first ones to get to the scene of the killing is a man named Matala.\footnote{Marie-Nizier says Matala was a Malo. Someone of the same name occurs in the diary as a Singave man to whom Nizier had given religious instruction. Cf EC, page 480, 14.12.39.} He grabs his chance, gets hold of Chanel’s pig, ties its legs and starts dragging it home. On the way he runs into Niuliki who is rushing towards Poi as fast as his vast body will move. Niuliki rebukes him and tells him to return the pig to Poi for the funeral meal. Matala obeys and walks off in anger. He meets Marie-Nizier who is on his way back from Singave. He tells him what has happened and—according to Nizier—just to spite the King, takes Brother to the relative safety of the Singave area.\footnote{CCC, Doc 58, 11.}

When the King reaches Poi, ‘he washes the body of Peter Chanel, rubs it with oil and wraps it in two pieces of tapa. He then buries it near the house.’\footnote{Chevron to family 28 May 1841, CCC, Doc 61, 6. Chevron writes: ‘They say that . . . ’ intimating this is not something he heard from Marie-Nizier. There were many refugees on Wallis, all with their own stories. Chevron’s account suggests he had heard it from several people. Bataillon too had picked it up.} According to several accounts he was helped by his two daughters and his wife.

As Marie-Nizier reaches Singave he is met by women wailing: ‘Petelo is dead! Petelo is dead!’ People crowd around him, crying and wanting to touch him. Very soon all the Europeans people on Futuna gather in Singave, afraid that the killing of Chanel will be followed by an orgy of killing white people. The two Americans at Avaui, afraid of walking through the coastal villages, make it by paddling along the coast in Chanel’s leaky canoe. Their fear is not unfounded, one hostile Wallisian roams around armed with an axe, trying to get near the white men. A gang of young Singave men stay around for their protection. When night falls the Europeans withdraw into the hills taking their muskets, determined to sell their lives dearly. Brother Marie-Nizier and Thomas Boag also sleep in the forest.

The next morning Niuliki comes to Singave. He orders Matala to go and get Marie-Nizier. His Singave friends warn the Brother not to go and Nizier hesitates. In the end he goes. The King cries, embraces him and asks why he did not come to Poi for the funeral. Nizier remains highly suspicious of the King’s intentions and gets away as soon as he can. The
neighbours at Poi also come and ask him to return, but he sends them off with vague promises.

The following days the Singave elders are in two minds. They want to protect Nizier and the other whites until there is an occasion for them to leave. At the same time they are afraid that Malo warriors may invade Singave in force. On 1 May Marie-Nizier starts writing an account of the events for Bishop Pompallier on a piece of paper that he finds in the New Testament he always has in his pocket. Still fearing for his life he gives the paper to Thomas Boag for safe keeping.

On the evening of 10 May the American whaler William Hamilton happens to sail into Singave Bay. When the captain hears what has happened, he offers to take the Europeans to Wallis. In the confusion between those who want to help the white men escape and those who want to stop them, all the Europeans as well as a number of catechumens manage to get on board. Twyning succeeds in getting his Futunan wife and their child on the ship. As soon as all the refugees are on board the sailors hoist the sails and the William Hamilton heads for Wallis.

In Wallis

On board ship Thomas returns the letter Marie-Nizier had begun to write for Bishop Pompallier and Nizier makes a few additions. On 15 May\(^\text{117}\) the William Hamilton reaches Wallis and the news of the murder of Peter Chanel spreads. The Wallisian people are as upset as the missionaries. It takes a great deal of effort on the part of the chiefs to restrain the Tuuga-hala mob from crossing over immediately and taking revenge! In his diary (presumably written at the time) Bataillon says he stopped Tuuga-hala.\(^\text{118}\) Half a year later he wrote that he did not get involved in the argument, neither encouraging nor opposing it, wondering if this ‘bizarre exploit’ \(\text{\textit{une pareille extravagance}}\) could not be the time and the manner that Providence had in mind to win over Futuna!\(^\text{119}\)

By sheer coincidence it happened that just these days some Methodists from Vava’u make another attempt to gain a foothold on Wallis. They land

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117. There must be something wrong with the dates in the documents. The trip seldom took more than two days. Twyning writes they took seven days! CCC, Doc 63, 8–13. Twyning Shipwreck, 141.
118. According to a copy made many years later. After that, Bataillon himself destroyed his diary. CCC, Doc 41.
and approach the Lavelua who, they must have heard, is the only one still holding out against the Catholic religion. They hope that his precarious position could be to their advantage. They meet with Bataillon and Chevron. Although not ready to join the Catholic cause, the King is even less interested in getting involved with the hated Tongan Methodists. He does not allow them to stay on Wallis and on 30 May they leave. Chevron quickly writes down on two pages of paper what has happened on Futuna. Bataillon adds a few lines. Chevron uses the opportunity of the Methodists leaving to get this account away in a letter to his family and to Colin. A few days later Bataillon himself writes to Colin and shortly afterwards to Pompallier. How and when those later letters were dispatched remains unclear. An English version of his letter to the Bishop is published in New Zealand a year later. Marie-Nizier does not send his unfinished letter away. He keeps it.

In December 1841 an American whaler (possibly the same William Hamilton) calls in Wallis before sailing for Europe. Bataillon uses it to get a letter off to Colin in which he repeats the news of the death of Peter Chanel and is able to announce that a couple of months earlier the King of Wallis, the Lavelua Vaimua, and his entourage have finally taken the step and joined the rest of the island in becoming catechumens. He adds that now there are ten churches or chapels, one at each of the island’s main villages. Marie-Nizier sends a new letter to Pompallier. Again, he keeps the original one.

New Zealand

Tauranga

As mentioned above, Pompallier left the Bay of Islands on 23 July 1841 on the Sancta Maria with his faithful companion Philippe Viard and the Fathers Baty, Borjon, Rozet and Séon as well as the Brothers Justin and Euloge. Having dropped all of them at various places, except Viard and

120. Bataillon’s diary gives 26 May for their arrival and 30 for their departure. CCC, Doc 41.
121. Chevron to family, 28 May 1841, LRO 1, Doc 94.
122. Bataillon’s letter to Colin is dated 31 May 1841, LRO 1, Doc 98.
123. CCC, Doc 61. The New Zealand Tablet, 14 May 1842.
124. LRO 1, Doc 119, 3.
125. CCC, Doc 63.
Euloge, he remained a few weeks at anchor for a rest in Tauranga. While there, in September 1841, Pompallier found time to write to Colin. He covered eight pages on the urgency and vast needs of his mission and on the dire consequences if not more men and money are forthcoming immediately. However, his tone is relatively mild:

‘I hear it said that in Lyon I am looked upon as being too optimistic about the progress of the mission.’ What a harmful idea! With a little more faith in the special graces of a missionary Bishop (. . .) one would believe the news that I send and trust my judgment on the state and the needs of the mission. (. . .) After all, I am the only one who can and must know the true state of the mission.’

In that spirit Pompallier also wrote a formal report for Cardinal Fransoni in which he lists the twelve stations where missionaries were appointed, or would be appointed soon, and some sixty outstations or Maori villages where chapels are built and prayers are said, and that were regularly visited by the priests. For each station he indicates by how many mission personnel it is staffed, what buildings there are, and how much money is invested in setting it up. The report mentions the Sancta Maria for ‘a cost of 40.000 francs’. Total investment for all stations is given as 100.620 francs.

For the tropical islands the report says that the priests live in the chiefs’ compounds and that they are much cheaper to maintain. People have not been influenced by European commercial ways and ‘they share their food without charge, just as Providence gives it to them.’

The report breathes the air of ‘a job well done’ and the Bishop had good reasons to be proud of his achievements. They were truly impressive: in only four years he had built this mission from scratch, with very limited financial resources.

Viard stayed with the Bishop on the way to Akaroa. The two got along well. The admiration and the friendship of his former altar-boy was a precious support for Pompallier.

126. Exactly what Servant had written in April 1840, LRO 1, Doc 55, 2.
127. LRO 1, Doc 110, 3.
129. A large part of the very generous contributions of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon had gone into travelling expenses.
Kororareka

On 20 October 1841 the frigate *Héroïne* under Captain Lévêque arrived in the Bay of Islands with fifty sick sailors. Petitjean went on board and anointed several of them. Had the ship visited Vava’u, where the murder of Peter Chanel was known through the Methodist missionaries who had visited Wallis in May, the crew would have known of the murder of Peter Chanel and Petitjean would have heard. But seemingly he did not. We must conclude that the *Héroïne* had not called in Vava’u. Shortly later however Épalle got the news that Peter Chanel had been murdered. How he heard remains unclear. It must have been from one of the many traders or whalers that regularly came into the Bay of Islands. One of them may have come from Vava’u. Feeling that the Bishop whom he expected to return any day, would want to announce the news himself, he kept it to himself and wrote to Pompallier on the off-chance that the Bishop might still be in Akaroa. He gave his letter to Captain Lévêque who, after a few days in the Bay of Islands, sailed for Akaroa.

In October 1841 Henry Williams of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) had tried to get a Catholic Maori chief to accept an anti-Catholic pamphlet. Épalle and Petitjean decided to make a stand and challenged him to a public debate. The British magistrate presided, Petitjean took notes and Servant came across from the Hokianga with a large group of followers. Discussions took place on 26 and 27 October and both sides claimed victory. In any case the two French Marists, only a couple of years in New Zealand, stood their ground speaking in both Maori and English and they were proud of themselves. The Catholic Maoris too felt proud. They paddled off on the rhythm of a spontaneous song: *ka taka te Wiremu*: Williams has been beaten!  

130. Keys, *Pompallier*, 176, has created confusion by saying that the *Héroïne* brought letters announcing the death, suggesting they were letters from Wallis. On the authority of Keys, both Wiltgen (*Founding*, 230) and Simmons (*Pompallier*, 61) say that the *Héroïne* carried a letter from Bataillon. Jore (*L’Océan*, volume 2, 154) claims it was the *Allier* that brought the news to Akaroa. Pompallier says explicitly it was the *Héroïne* and it carried a letter from Épalle. He mentions no other letter in his answer of 15 November. Had there been a letter from the islands then Épalle would have passed it on to Pompallier who, in his answer, would have referred to that one, rather than to Épalle’s own. Conclusion: there was no letter from Wallis. The news must have come by word of mouth, most likely, as said, from Vava’u. To Captain Lavaud Pompallier expresses ignorance and concern about the situation in Wallis, where in fact things were relatively peaceful. A letter from Wallis would have told him.

131. LRO 1, Doc 118, 15–28.
From 14 to 22 November the first Marist retreat was held in the Bay. Present were those stationed at Kororareka, namely the Fathers Épalle and Garin and the Brothers Augustin Drevet with the four newcomers, Basile Monchalin, Pierre-Marie Pérénon, Colomb Poncet and Emery Roudet. Servant and Roulleaux came over for the retreat from the Hokianga while Brother Claude-Marie stayed home. Petitjean who was stationed at Whangaroa but spent a lot of time helping out in Kororareka attended the retreat while Brother Élie Régis looked after Whangaroa in his absence. Perret and Yvert attended as novices. Twelve men in all. Henry Garnett had done a private retreat earlier. All through the retreat Épalle kept silent about the death of Peter Chanel!132

Akaroa

In early October Pompallier and Viard sailed on the *Sancta Maria* into Akaroa Bay. The Bishop’s plan was to stay only for a short visit and return directly to the Bay of Islands. He would then load up mission goods for Wallis and Futuna, take the *Sancta Maria* to the islands and then sail her to Valparaiso where he hoped to sell the ship and with the proceeds make his way to Europe. Viard would accompany him.

However, on arrival in Akaroa Pompallier found that Captain Lavaud was expecting any day a corvette from France to take the place of the *Aube* in support of the French settlement in Akaroa. As the *Aube* was really a supply ship and needed in the Mediterranean, Lavaud expected to have to take her back to France. As a result, Pompallier changed his plans. He asked Lavaud for passage on the *Aube* to France, for himself and for Viard. He also wanted to take two or three young Maoris to France to be educated. As he had no money whatsoever he asked for a free passage, promising to pay on arrival if the Ministry insisted. On 18 October he put his request in writing and Lavaud agreed.133

Because there was no accommodation ashore (Comte, Tripe and Florentin had only two small *raupo*134 huts to live in) Pompallier asked for accommodation on the *Aube*. Lavaud agreed and Pompallier moved with Viard from the *Sancta Maria* to the comfortable staff quarters of the *Aube*.

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132. On 11 December Petitjean wrote a sixteen page letter to Colin (LRO 1, Doc 118). Servant wrote to his family on 17 December (LRO 1, Doc 120) and to Colin on 20 December (LRO 1, Doc 121). Both had been at the retreat, neither of the two mentions the martyrdom of Peter Chanel.


134. Built of a local reed.
where he could work at leisure on his mail. He finished the report to Rome that he had started in Tauranga by adding two parallel columns of considerations under the headings: ‘Reasons for fear’ (Motifs de Crainte) and ‘Reasons for Hope’ (Motifs d’Espérance). Among the reasons for fear he mentioned that the allocations from the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon were not regularly passed on.\footnote{These columns are found only in the copy in the archives of Propaganda Fide, ASCPF Congressi Oceania. Cf Simmons, Pompallier, 64, note 12. Even though the report is dated 15 November, Pompallier must have finished it before he heard of Chanel’s death: no mention of it. Dates were often added to letters on the moment of dispatching.}

On 4 November the Héroïne under Captain Lévêque arrived in Akaroa from the Bay of Islands, followed, a few days later, by the corvette Allier under Captain du Bouzet, coming directly from France. Instructions from the Ministry of the Navy and the Colonies had changed: Lavaud was to stay in New Zealand as station commander on the Allier; du Bouzet was to sail the Aube back to France.\footnote{Jore, L’Océan, volume 1, 95.}

Du Bouzet gave Pompallier a parcel of mail from France. Lévêque handed him Épalle’s letter.\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 115.}

Writing to Colin

Pompallier had just been forced to borrow 400 francs from the quartermaster of the Aube to buy supplies.\footnote{A conjecture on the part of this author. However, given that the long letter to Colin makes no mention of the death of Chanel, no other scenario makes sense. Moreover, as the last sentences suggest, when writing Pompallier still had in mind to go to Europe.} His financial situation was desperate. He can be forgiven for putting the letter that had come from Kororareka aside and opening first the mail from Lyon.\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 115.} Instead of the cheques he expected, there was nothing but a detailed account, and a respectful letter with a reminder to be frugal. No money! Pompallier sat down to vent his frustrations. He must have worked half through the night. Eight pages!\footnote{LRO 1, Doc 116.}

‘I just received from the corvette Allier one of your letters addressed to me, (. . .) the letter from Lyon, 20 May 1841’. He then mentions the circular letter of 21 November 1840, sent on the occasion of the departure of
the fourteen.\textsuperscript{140} However, the first target of Pompallier’s outburst was not the financial let-down. He turned on what he perceived to be distrust of the Lyon administration towards him. ‘If so, I shall be happy to help you getting another Vicar Apostolic in my place!’ Colin’s feelings towards him are not very Catholic (\textit{peu catholiques}) and disloyal towards the Pope, who has appointed him.

What incensed him were most likely the rumours he must have picked up (possibly through Viard\textsuperscript{141}) from the recently arrived missionaries about negative stories doing the round in France. What angered him were what he called the false reports sent to Lyon about him, very likely those of Tripe, Servant and Petit whom Colin had mentioned in letters that were bound to become widely known.

Pompallier denies ever having threatened anyone with excommunication or suspension for a trifle or a lack of politeness, something mentioned by Servant as well as Tripe.\textsuperscript{142} Where he did so, he writes, it was for very serious reasons: a lack of obedience endangering the salvation of souls! However, for the first time in his many letters, he does not exclude that at times he may have been at fault by being quick-tempered in giving reprimands: ‘It gets the better of me when I feel someone is insensitive to my sufferings and does not change after several monitions.’ The basic problem is that some priests do not come here, he writes, ‘with the sentiments that unite the flock and the priests with the episcopal paternity invested in my person.’ He has no doubt these negative attitudes are implanted in them in the Novitiate. ‘It would have been better to put me out of the Society instead of making me their Superior.’

Pompallier tells Colin he has appointed three Pro-Vicars and a Provincial and he is happy to say that since then things have improved although he sees the danger of having ‘a second Bishop moving around this flock and an Archbishop in the person of the Superior General in Lyon.’

Only in between these recriminations does Pompallier gets on to the subject of finance. He claims to be 20,000 francs in debt and deeply resents the monition in the letter of May 1841 to be frugal. ‘We live very frugally indeed, to the point that people here have pity on the thrifty way even the Bishop lives.’

Pompallier’s letter ends with a pitiful cry: ‘May the Lord save the mission that suffers more damage from your administration than from all its

\textsuperscript{140} CS 1, Doc 218.
\textsuperscript{141} Tripe describes Viard’s intermediary role on 18 November 1841, LRO 1, Doc 117, 3.
\textsuperscript{142} Servant in LRO 1, Doc 55, 6 and Tripe in LRO 1, Doc 78, 5.
enemies together. Help me again, Reverend Father, to save it at least until I can get the attention of the Holy See and throw myself at its feet."\textsuperscript{143} With this hint at his imminent departure for Europe, he closes his letter.

Why did he write at all if the letter would go by the same ship he planned to take to Europe? The answer lies probably in the last sentence. He must have had in mind to bypass Lyon and go straight to Rome!

**Distressing news**

Having finished his letter to Colin, Pompallier opened the letter that Captain du Bouzet had brought from Épalle. Chanel killed! The mission on Futuna abandoned! The men on Wallis possibly in danger! With his decision to travel on the *Aube* to Europe, Pompallier had already dropped his plan of visiting Wallis and Futuna. Now he had to come back on his earlier plan. As Bataillon cynically remarked later on: 'It took the death of Chanel to get him to come and visit us'. Other missionaries felt the same.\textsuperscript{144} Pompallier again approached Captain Lavaud for help. As it involved committing a ship under his command, Lavaud wanted the request in writing.\textsuperscript{145}

In the request Pompallier thanks Lavaud for his help and support in New Zealand but he expresses bitterness at Captain Dumont d’Urville for failing to visit Wallis and Futuna with the *Astrolabe* and the *Zélée* after calling at islands as close as Vava’u in October 1838.\textsuperscript{146} Dumont d’Urville had even provided free transport to the intolerant Protestants.\textsuperscript{147} Had not the King of France himself and the French Government instructed the Navy to give protection to the Catholic missionaries? Why did the Navy not show the people of Wallis and Futuna that France cared for the safety of its citizens and that its mighty arm was near? If Dumont d’Urville did

\textsuperscript{143} Cf CS 1, Doc 386, 6.

\textsuperscript{144} Bataillon, 6 January 1842, LRO 2, Doc 125, 13. Comte 5 March 1842, LRO 2, Doc 136, 12.

\textsuperscript{145} The letter is dated 6 November and reprinted in Keys (*Pompallier*, 178–81) from Navy records.

\textsuperscript{146} When they had bombarded Viwa Island in the Fiji group. Cf EC, page 397–8, 11.12.38.

\textsuperscript{147} Pompallier can have heard this from Simonet, the deserted French sailor who had helped him in Vava’u in October 1837. The Tongans arrested him when Dumont d’Urville called, probably on the instigation of the Methodist ministers and handed him over. D’Urville pardoned him and with his knowledge of the islands and of a Polynesian language he gave good service. He was released in New Zealand in May 1840 when Dumont d’Urville called at the Bay of Islands. Pompallier can have met him before leaving for this trip to the South Island. Cf Keys, *Pompallier*, 144–5.
not know of the French missionaries on Wallis and Futuna, why had he
not been told?

In any case, he writes to Lavaud, the murder of Chanel made it nec-
esary to go to the islands himself in the Sancta Maria. The murder of
Chanel could have led to further violence, even on Wallis. That island was
notorious for attacks on visiting ships. ‘I beg you to protect me in this voy-
age’. Lavaud as the senior officer ordered Captain du Bouzet to accompany
the Sancta Maria to Wallis and Futuna on the Allier. Pompallier and Viard
moved back to their own ship.

The plan was to sail on 16 November. The day before, Pompallier gave
his mail to Captain Lavaud for mailing: his Report for Propaganda in
Rome, dated 14 September 1841 and a short version of the Report for the
Propagation of the Faith in Lyon, dated 16 November 1841.\footnote{148} He dated his
letter to Colin 15 November 1841.

At this point one would expect another letter to Father Colin or to the
family of Peter Chanel to inform them of the death. No such letter has
been found and there is no indication that there ever was a letter to that
effect.

\textbf{The Bishop writing to his Pro-Vicar}

That same 15 November Pompallier did write a long letter to Épalle, his
Pro-Vicar in Kororareka.\footnote{149} He thanks Épalle for having passed him the
news about the death of Chanel, ‘the angel of gentleness, whose pure blood
has been shed’. As Épalle had foreseen, Pompallier does not want the news
to get out before he returns from the tropics. Épalle is allowed to inform—
in strict confidence—only the Provincial (Garin) and one or two Marists.
He explains that he is going to the tropical islands under naval protection
to recover the remains of Peter Chanel and to announce a message of
forgiveness and reconciliation. There will be no vengeance by the warship,
but only a warning that another atrocity will not go unpunished. They will
go straight, without stopping in the Bay because that might jeopardise
his naval protection, meaning probably that Lavaud felt uneasy about a
possible objection from the British authorities against a French corvette
using a British port from which to go into action.

\footnote{148. Cf LRO 2, Doc 217, 8.}
\footnote{149. Pompallier to Épalle, 15 November 1841, APM 1487/21201.}
Pompallier expresses his disappointment to Épalle that the Allier did not carry any money but explains—as he would have learned from Poupinel’s letters of 17 and 20 May 1841—that just as Colin was about to give Captain du Bouzet 10,000 francs for the New Zealand mission, Pompallier’s promissory note to Captain Ratau for exactly that same amount had come in and Colin had to honour it.\(^{150}\)

The Bishop shows consideration for the financial plight he leaves his Pro-Vicar in. He authorises Épalle to sign other promissory notes. If necessary he can even sell parts of the Kororareka property. He can also send the Brothers to another station where food is cheaper but he must retain a foothold in the Bay of Islands at all cost.

**Pompallier back to the Polynesian islands**

The *Sancta Maria* left first, on 19 November, carrying Bishop Pompallier with his companion, Father Philippe Viard. The *Allier* followed on 21 November. The *Sancta Maria* and the *Allier* had agreed to meet at Vava’u, the nearest safe port to Wallis. Pompallier had not forgotten that four years earlier the paramount chief Taufa’ahau had refused him permission to leave his missionaries on the island. Now, on a big schooner of his own and with a French warship in support, he went back to set things right. Taufa’ahau himself was not there but du Bouzet warned the local chiefs for the consequences if they ever treated an honest French citizen like that again. He put his threat in writing and announced that a French warship would return in a couple of months to get a written reply from Taufa’ahau. Pompallier left it to du Bouzet to be severe and was all kindness himself, but he later described to Épalle with obvious glee how ‘the Wesleyan ministers quivered with anger at the dignity and the might of France’ and how the local chiefs apologised and promised their friendship for the future.\(^{151}\) After the ships left the chiefs gave the letter to their missionaries who passed it to the Wesleyan headquarters in London. It caused a minor diplomatic tussle between the Foreign Ministers of Britain and France.\(^{152}\)

Pompallier moved to the *Allier* for the next stage and the two ships sailed together to Wallis. On 28 December the *Sancta Maria* sailed into the lagoon, followed the next day by the *Allier* after the sailors had sound-
ed the entry and the anchorage. He found Wallis not only at peace but entirely won over to the lotu. For Bataillon and his four companions the Bishop’s arrival was a great relief.

The Wallisians were delighted with the long-promised arrival of their Bishop, on an impressive ship of their mission, supported by a French man-of-war! They now could hold their own with the hated Tongans! They went all over the ship and counted the guns. The Lavelua Vaimua was received on board with thirteen volleys. He gloried in the splendid uniform that du Bouzet offered him, complete with brass stripes and sword. The islanders won the French hearts with their forceful harmonious singing.

Back in Akaroa Captain Lavaud told Tripe in confidence that he was not happy having had to send the Allier. He was not impressed by Pompallier laying the blame on the French Navy. Why did Pompallier never go himself? Why did he spend several months idle in Akaroa in 1840? Was visiting the islands not the reason for buying the Sancta Maria in the first place? He confided also to Tripe that there were rumours of Pompallier getting a Diocese in France. In fact he had mentioned it to the Bishop, who had shrugged his shoulders: ‘It would have to be offered. Dioceses in France are not easy to get and you cannot just ask for one.’ Was Pompallier secretly hoping for an honourable way out of his difficulties?153

Lavaud took the Aube to the North Island, carrying Pompallier’s letter for Épalle. He called on the British authorities for consultations and remained in the Bay of Islands for a period to assure law and order after a Maori had killed the widowed Mrs. Roberton and her children in Kororareka. Some settlers threatened to take revenge while others again feared subsequent retaliation.154

Back to Futuna

On 6 January 1842 the Bishop sent Viard and Marie-Nizier on the Sancta Maria under cover of the guns of the Allier to Futuna. When the Futunans saw the man-of-war approach, many fled into the hills. Extremely rough seas and north-west winds kept the two vessels cruising in sight of the is-

153. LRO 1, Doc 117, 9. The French Government had a say in the appointment of Bishops and Tripe seemingly got the impression that Pompallier hoped for the Navy to propose him.
154. Keys, Pompallier, 176. Mr. Roberton had been a friend of Pompallier and had sold him a property in the Bay of Islands. He had bought the Reine de Paix but drowned not long afterwards.
land and when they finally could get near, a group of Chanel's supporters came on board of the *Sancta Maria* by canoe.

Viard and Marie-Nizier learned that King Niuliki had died not long after the murder of Chanel, which the whole island saw as a punishment from on high. On order of Captain du Bouzet a senior Singave chief brought the remains of Chanel, respectfully wrapped in mats. The *Allier*’s surgeon did a proper examination and identified the body from what Marie-Nizier could tell him about the way Chanel was killed. Other people brought his cassock, his chalice and a few books. Musumusu stayed away even though he was given the assurance that he would not be arrested.

Du Bouzet delivered an address that Marie-Nizier translated into Futunan. He told the islanders that the French authorities had wanted to punish them very severely but on the insistence of the Bishop no punishment would be inflicted. They were warned however that another atrocity would not go unpunished. The people asked for priests to take Chanel’s place so they could be received into the Church. Viard put the remains on board of the mission schooner and the two ships left, the *Allier* back to Akaroa, Viard on the *Sancta Maria* carrying the remains, straight for the Bay of Islands. The mission ship would come back later to pick up Pompallier. As a result, Pompallier, on Wallis, did not know for months how the visit to Futuna had gone! 155

‘As all our misery came from his delay’, Bataillon wrote, ‘so his visit has made things come right’. 156 Pompallier conferred Baptism and Confirmation on some 2200 Wallisians. Towards the end of his stay, 23 May 1842, he received the last group of 154 converts, among whom was the King and several chiefs who had waited to be baptised together with their King. 157 Back among Polynesian people Pompallier was at his best, as Luzy described him to his family: ‘Forgetful of his rank he sits down among his flock, drinking kava and eating with his fingers from a banana leaf on the ground.’ 158

155. LRO 2, Doc 136, 16.
156. LRO 2, Doc 143, 2.
157. LRO 2, Doc 153, 12.
Excursus E: How did they come to kill Peter Chanel?

The tradition

Léonce Jore, in his monumental history of the French presence in the Pacific Ocean between 1815 and 1848, writes that Peter Chanel was killed in April 1841 'under circumstances that have never been wholly clear'. Good historians, as Jore is, have a good nose for historical oddities, pieces that do not fit nicely into the jigsaw puzzle of history. Unfortunately, what particular piece Jore had in mind with his cryptic remark he does not say but it is a warning that things may not be as they appear at first sight.

A long tradition in the Society of Mary considers Peter Chanel a martyr because he was killed, on 28 April 1841, out of hatred for the Faith, when Meitala, the oldest son of Niuliki, paramount chief (usually referred to as 'King') of Futuna, converted to the lotu (i.e., the Christian religion, in this case, the Catholic Church).

When in April 1842 the news reached Father Colin, Founder and Superior General of the Marist Fathers in France, he immediately sent a circular to the whole Society in which he proclaimed: 'Let us sing a hymn in honour of Mary our mother, the Queen of martyrs. One of her sons, our brother, has been found worthy to shed his blood for the glory of Jesus Christ.'

The official judgment of the Catholic Church, declaring Peter Chanel a Saint and the Protomartyr of Oceania, confirmed the Marist tradition.

2. CS 1, Doc 334. FA, Doc 216.

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'Peter-Louis Chanel, of the Society of Mary, moved by apostolic zeal, left in 1837 with some religious of the same Society for Futuna in Polynesia. After a fruitful ministry as well as much pain, anxieties and the sufferings of persecution he was slain in a cruel killing and crowned with the glory of martyrdom on 28 April 1841. His martyrdom was recognised to be authentic within the criteria of Church law.'

Since the days of Saint Augustine, who was anxious to contain the proliferation of martyr cults in Hippo, the principle is that people are not martyrs because they have been killed, but because they were killed for a particular reason, *martyres non fecit poena sed causa*, and that reason had to be hatred for the faith, *ex odio fidei*.

**A Star Witness**

Marist tradition and the official canonisation go mainly back on the testimony of Peter Chanel’s close friend and companion on Futuna, Brother Marie-Nizier Delorme. Marie-Nizier Delorme was left with Peter Chanel on the island of Futuna in November 1837. He had turned twenty a few months before. For three and a half years they lived together in the hut given them by King Niuliki, first on the south coast of the island, later in Poi, on the north east side. They prayed together, they worked together. They shared the food they received or grew themselves and when, the last half year, they were not given enough food and scoundrels ravaged their gardens, they at times were hungry together. They got along very well, became trusted friends and Chanel allowed him to do all kinds of pastoral and missionary work which at the time was far from common. Nizier understood and spoke fluent Futunan long before Chanel did. He freely moved all over the island, sometimes with Chanel, mostly alone or with his close friend Thomas Boag, a sickly young English sailor who had deserted from an American whaling ship. Both Peter Chanel and Marie-Nizier had friends everywhere and often stayed the night in different hamlets around the island. It would be difficult to imagine a better informed witness.

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5. Epistula 89, Migne, PL 33, 310.
While closely acquainted with the background, Marie-Nizier was not present at the actual murder. What he tells about it he knew from the stories that spread through the Singave villages where he was taken after the event and where he stayed until he could leave, ten days later, on an American whaling ship, the *William Hamilton*.

**Marie-Nizier’s Original Testimony**

The third day after the murder, on 1 May 1841, Marie-Nizier began scribbling his account of what happened on a piece of paper in the little New Testament he always had in his pocket, with the intention of sending it to Bishop Pompallier. Fearing the murderers of Chanel might kill him as well, he entrusted it to his friend Thomas Boag.

Once out of danger on the *William Hamilton* Marie-Nizier got his scribbles back from Thomas. He kept adding things and showed it to several people. A few people took copies. He never sent it away but kept it all his life. After his death, in London on 3 February 1874, it was found among his belongings.8

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7. He was returning to France because of his poor health.
8. French original text in CCC, Doc 58. We follow the English translation and the editing by Clisby, LO 023.
My Lord,

[1] From hour to hour I am only awaiting the moment when I will share Fr Chanel’s happy fate. Please God I may offer and sacrifice for him my blood and my life for the Faith as generously as the worthy provicar apostolic of Western Oceania.

[2] The king, who from the beginning of our stay on his island had been so convincing an actor that we believed him to be our best friend, abandoned us a long time ago. That forced us, but particularly Fr Chanel who could put up with fatigue more courageously than I, to work with our own hands to provide our sustenance. He had left us, so to speak, at the mercy of his subjects and some of them took advantage of this to insult us. Still, there were some others with a little more humanity who came when they could to render us services, even despite a lot of mockery. We took profit of these moments to instruct them. The number of catechumens was growing very slowly, for they were constantly persecuted and menaced with losing everything they possessed, houses, plantations, etc. The king’s eldest son [Meitala] finally came to the decision to embrace the Catholic religion; his example was followed by a small number of other young men who all had good sentiments. How Fr Chanel rejoiced at seeing these young plants shoot up! For almost all the young men were only waiting for the king’s son to convert so they could do the same.

[3] When the king heard of his son’s change of heart, he was really angry. He went himself to ask him to abandon the faith. I have to tell you, My Lord, that up to then the king had been the driving force behind the persecutions directed against the catechumens and ourselves. When people threatened to take all we had and burn our house down, it was beyond doubt that those who made these threats had Niuliki’s authorisation. We always showed ourselves indifferent to these threats, and Fr Chanel did not show any less zeal in instructing his catechumens. The king’s son made no response to his father and none of the other catechumens showed the
least sign of apostasing⁹ and this angered Niuliki so much that he hatched a conspiracy with the chiefs to get rid of the catechumens.

[4] It was on the 27th of April that this took place. On the 28th, a nephew of the king, called Musu-Musu, accompanied by the people of his valley, went in midmorning to the one occupied by the king’s son and the majority of our young converts. You can imagine their designs. There was a clash, with wounded on both sides. After that, Musu-Musu and the people of the two villages went straight to Poi where we were living. The leader of the band went virtually alone to find Fr Chanel to ask him to dress his wound. It was the kiss of Judas! Fr Chanel was unaware of all that had happened that morning and was alone in our house. When the Father opened the door he was clubbed violently on the head and the first blow was followed by a number of others to different parts of the body. Wounded as he was, he went to sit on the floor of the house and began to read while with one hand he wiped away the blood flowing down his face ... There new tortures awaited him. He was stabbed with bayonets...he drew out one himself which had pierced his shoulder to his breast . . . Finally, after these wretches had thus mistreated and tormented him, Musu-Musu, who had been shouting all the time, “Kill the white! Kill the white!” was the only one brutal enough to terminate the temporal life of the man who had only come to bring them life eternal. He grabbed an axe¹⁰ and used it to put an end to Fr Chanel’s transitory sufferings. He cracked the skull so that the forehead fell over the face, but in so doing he procured for him in exchange the martyr’s crown and everlasting glory . . .

[5] All our belongings have been pillaged. I have only a wretched pair of trousers, a shirt, and a blouse. The sheet of paper which I am using to scribble this for you in pencil was luckily in my New Testament which I always carry on me.

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⁹. Read: apostatizing.
[6] The 26th April I had been sent by Fr Chanel to the villages of the Conquered [Lava] about three and a half leagues from our house to visit a sick man and see if I could find any infants to baptise. On the 28th, the day I was due to return, I was on my way back. An hour earlier and I would have mingled my blood with that of my visible guardian angel, my spiritual father, the one who after God was my all on Futuna! But alas, it was not pure enough! . . .

[7] Providence made use of an apparently very insignificant thing to save my life that day. We kept a pig near our house and one of the Conquerors [Maro] took it as booty. He wanted to keep it, and to show he had taken possession he had bound its feet. But the king ordered that the animal should be killed and served as part of the funeral feast. Our fellow, very angry, immediately decided to save me. He came to meet me to warn me of the danger in store for me if I continued on to the village of Poi. After giving me a little summary of the events which had just taken place, he constrained me to retrace my steps, offering to accompany me as far as the valleys of the Conquered where I am now.

[8] The young Englishman Thomas, who came with us from Vava’u, stayed with us all the time. He entered the sheepfold of Jesus Christ in abjuring Protestantism on the eve of All Saints 1840, a very happy date for him. He asks me to confide this letter to him to serve as a guarantee for Your Lordship if he survives me. He has also lost all he had in the looting. He shares my hardships. He prays with me. We have been sleeping in the bush.

Br Marie-Nizier.

On 19 December 1841, on Wallis, Marie-Nizier wrote another letter that he gave to Bishop Pompallier on his arrival in Wallis shortly afterwards.¹¹ Later on Marie-Nizier wrote six letters to Father Colin that have been pre-

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¹¹. CCC, Doc 63.
served. When, in 1867, Antoine Bourdin published the first biography of Peter Chanel, Marie-Nizier sent Colin a forty-four page commentary and in 1869 he wrote a twenty-three page memoir. These later documents mostly repeat what Nizier wrote in this first letter.

On 2 August 1859 Marie-Nizier made a formal deposition before a public notary in answer to specific questions. Question 39 asked if Peter Chanel was killed out of hatred for the Faith. Marie Nizier answered: “I always heard he was killed out of hatred for the Faith. This is what people on the island thought and still think today. This conviction has not changed over the years; it has neither diminished nor grown. I think it is based on solid grounds. All trustworthy Christians on the island share my view.”

Bataillon

On 15 May 1841 the William Hamilton reached Wallis. On board were Brother Marie-Nizier, his friend Thomas Boag, a few Futunan catechumens and the Europeans who had been on Futuna, including John Twynning with his Futunan wife and their small child. They must all have been full of stories on the tragic events on Futuna. Marie-Nizier showed his written account to the Fathers Pierre Bataillon and Joseph Chevron and to Brother Joseph Luzy. Chevron wrote a letter addressed to both his family and the Superior General. Bataillon added a few lines. This letter, dated 28 May 1841, was entrusted to Methodist missionaries who happened to visit Wallis from the Tonga Islands at that time. On 31 May Bataillon reported to Father Colin, a few days later to Bishop Pompallier. Brother Joseph Luzy made an entry in his diary.

In his short letter to Colin, written in haste, Bataillon limited his account of the facts to a few lines, obviously quoting from what Marie-Nizier had told and written. He then added:

12. CCC, Docs 71, 73, 76, 79, 83 and 86.
15. CCC, Doc 84, 12.
16. LRO 1, Doc 94.
17. LRO 1, Doc 98.
18. CCC, Doc 61.
19. CCC, Doc 62.
In all likelihood he would still be alive if Monseigneur had visited him, but, we would not have a martyr now! What a glory for the Society of Mary to count already a martyr. Monseigneur has still not come to visit us. He seems not to think of us any more. His delay is the cause of many evil consequences and I fear both islands may slip out of our hands if he keeps putting it off.20

Chevron

Writing to his parents and to Colin, Joseph Chevron was the first one to recount what he had heard or read from Marie-Nizier with this significant addition: "The King was not far away. People say he washed the body himself, covered it in the local cloth and buried him near the house."21 Chevron seems to imply that he had this detail not from the same source, namely Nizier, but from someone else, presumably one of the others who had fled from Futuna on the William Hamilton. In the final paragraph, addressed to Colin, Father Chevron writes: "I think I must say to you that the delay of the Bishop in coming to the islands seems to be the cause, or at least a contributing factor (occasion) of the death of Peter Chanel. (…) The poor people we are sent to evangelise inspire us with compassion, and their salvation goes us more to heart than our desire for martyrdom, however strong this may be."22

John Poyer Twyning

As son of a seafaring Welsh father, John Twyning had gone to sea at fourteen. In 1826 he qualified as Able Seaman and travelled the world.23 In 1828 he took service on the Minerva, an English whaler sailing from Sydney. With a few comrades he was lucky to survive when their ship was wrecked on Nicholson’s Shoals, near Turtle Island, in the Fiji group. He drifted from island to island like many so-called beachcombers at the time, joined up with a former shipmate John Jones and by 1840 he lived on Futuna, in the Singave area, with a Futunan wife24 who bore him a girl.

20. LRO 1, Doc 98. CCC, Doc 60.
22. LRO 1, Doc 94. CCC, Doc 59.
24. The more usual forms of names are added in [..]. Twyning’s wife was a relative of
Back in England, in 1849, he published an account of his adventures. We quote from the second edition, also of 1849: 25

‘In May, 1841, we had another break out, that nearly proved fatal to all the white men, and was the cause of all of us leaving Horn’s Island [Futuna]. It commenced in a slight quarrel between Newleague [Niuliki] and his son Maitalla [Meitala], when the latter threatened to turn Christian. The taboo of the family of Newleague was that the eldest son should refrain from eating yams until he married and had a son, when he was released from the taboo, but it was laid on the child, who, under the penalty of death, to be inflicted by their gods, (and they firmly believed it would be inflicted in a manner the most fearful) would be compelled to abstain from the forbidden root, unless released by his becoming the father of a male child [page 132].

Maitalla on leaving his father went to the catholic priest, who had resided on the island for the last two years, and asked him, if the breach of this taboo would really be punished with his death. The good priest told him it would not, and endeavoured to convince the young chief of the folly of these idle superstitions. Thus reassured, Maitalla took with him the young men, about a dozen in number, who constantly attended him, cooked a large oven full of yams, and ate their fill, thus setting at nought the authority and vengeance of their gods.

The news of this act soon reached the ears of the king and maddened by the disobedience of his son, and the insult which he conceived his gods had received, he determined to take into his own hands the infliction of the punishment he deemed the act called for. (…) Considering that the catholic priest was the real cause of his son’s breaking his taboo, he ordered him to be put to death, and his house to be plundered. Both these orders were carried into execution; the son was flogged, and the priest suffered death with the calmness and resignation of a martyr.

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When the natives got to the priest's house they found the door shut, and on their knocking for admission the priest himself opened the door as both his servant and his interpreter were then at my house on the south side of the island and so their lives were providentially saved. The natives told the priest that one of the chiefs had hurt himself in the face. And begged him to open the door. No sooner had he opened it, than they rushed tumultuously into the house, and one of them struck the priest a violent blow above the right temple with his club. The poor man, without saying a word in remonstrance, went and seated himself in his chair, and with the blood streaming down his face, took his prayer-book from his pocket, and began to read.

He was not allowed to sit long ere another of the men threw a bayonet, which passed through his left shoulder. He then lifted his eyes from his book, calmly looked on his murderers, with his right hand pulled the bayonet from the wound, and without speaking, resumed his devotions. The natives now began plundering the house, when two of the party who entertained a friendly feeling towards the priest took this opportunity to urge him to make his escape, and went to him and lifted him up to lead him off; but they found he was too weak from the loss of blood to stand.

At this moment Mooso Mooso [Musumusu], the chief of the party came up, and ordered the natives to kill the white man: but being busily engaged in plundering the house they disregarded his order; on which he advanced towards the victim, and struck him a blow on the head with his adze, that killed him immediately.

Twyning was not a Catholic, he is not mentioned by name in the diary of Chanel or in his letters. As far as we know he was not one of the few beachcombers who asked Chanel for religious instruction but evidently he knew a saint and a martyr when he met one!

The nameless American

In January 1842 Father Épalle, then in charge of the mission in Kororareka, in the Bay of Islands, met with an American who claimed to have been on
Futuna at the time of the murder. The man carried a letter from Bataillon.26 On 19 January, Épalle forwarded this letter to Father Colin. In the covering letter Épalle did not want to repeat what Bataillon had already written but only what he had heard from the American:27

[2] Father Chanel was alone for three days, Brother Marie-Nizier was on the other side of the island ( . . . ). On Sunday morning, the angel of peace and tenderness probably offered for the last time the immaculate victim for whom he was to sacrifice his blood in three days time. He went to see the oldest son of the King who was on the point of yielding to God’s grace at work in him. The earth was ready for the divine seed to bring fruit. ‘And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.’28 ( . . . ) The young prince took the little cross that Chanel wore round his neck and hung it on himself as to say he definitively accepted the religion of the crucified Jesus. He then went back to his place close to where the King lived. On Monday morning the fervent catechumen with six natives went to the house of the American who gave us these details. [3] The three from Wallis, already converted by Father Bataillon, also carried a cross around their necks and were for that reason being threatened by the Futunans who did not want strange gods introduced onto their island. The seven carried fruits that were taboo for them and that they therefore could not eat. To mark their contempt for the gods of Futuna they asked the American to cook the food for them. During the meal the mother of the prince entered. She asked her son not to eat the taboo fruit and begged the others not to breach a so sacred rule. They answered that she would not understand their reasons to do so and that it therefore was useless to tell her. She walked out in great anger and went to tell the King what had happened. Tuesday morning the King himself went to the house of the American to look for his son but his son had gone to his

26. Most likely his letter of 31 May 1841, LRO 1, Doc 98. Bataillon described the opportunity of sending this letter as very doubtful which perfectly fits entrusting it to a beachcomber hopping on some ship.
27. LRO 2, Doc 127, 2–4.
own place. (. . .) He was called and a conversation ensued between father and son about the taboo that lasted about an hour. (. . .) Early Wednesday morning (. . .) one of the high chiefs with a dozen men went to the King’s son, walking past the American’s house where he called out that Petelo (that is how they called Peter Chanel) and the young prince had to be done away with. In fact they had no intention to kill the young man, just to beat him up and frighten him. They got him and wounded him on two places but left when they were scared off by one of the catechumens firing a musket. From there the murderers went to the village of the one who would be the victim of their blind fury. [4] You know the rest. ‘As a sheep led to the slaughter or a lamb before its shearer is dumb, (. . .) he was cut off out of the land of the living.’

Having heard of the killing of Father Chanel the young prince with his friends dressed in white robes and went to gain the palm of martyrdom with their missionary, but their friends kept them back.

This account, richly embedded in biblical quotations referring to sacrifice and martyrdom, cannot possibly have been told in this way by the American sailor. Like Marie-Nizier Épalle was writing a page for the martyrology, or preparing a sermon. However, it contains elements that confirm the American’s claim of having been on Futuna and most likely near Poi at the time of the assassination. At least three details are quite plausible but not known from the other narratives, firstly the little cross that Chanel wore and that Meitala took and put on himself; secondly, Meitala asking the Americans to cook the forbidden food for them and thirdly, the mother of Meitala entering the house when they were eating the taboo food and stalking off in great anger.

The young men changing from their tapa cloth into white robes to stride to a martyr’s death, are more likely the fruit of Épalle’s theological fancy than that we must imagine Peter Chanel giving them the book of Revelation to read.

29. Acts: 8, 32 from Isaiah: 53, 7-8
30. It is in the Book of Revelation that we repeatedly meet martyrs in white robes.
We can safely accept that the American who spoke with Épalle in the Bay of Islands in January 1842 was one of the two who, according to Twyning,31 lived at Avaui in April 1841.

Martyrdom

Having heard the witnesses we may be allowed to reflect on the question: why was Peter Chanel killed? Why him, ‘the meekest of men’ as Petitjean called him?32 The answer was evident for the Marists of his time. Chanel was their martyr!

Martyrdom was an important theme for Jean-Claude Colin and his contemporaries. Even though his personal memories can barely have gone back that far, Colin looked upon his parents as martyrs. They had suffered grievously under the Terror (1792–1794) and probably died as a consequence of the ensuing deprivations.33 Jean-Claude’s generation was educated and governed by men who had suffered for their faith under the Revolution. Philibert Gardette, the Rector of his Minor Seminary had suffered deportation; Claude-Marie Bochard, the Vicar General responsible for the Major Seminary, had been imprisoned and the Bishops of Belley and Lyon, Mgr Devie and Mgr de Pins, had lived in hiding for the first years of their priesthood. The parents of Courveille, the initiator of the Marist movement, had risked their lives concealing in their home a famous statue of Our Lady that the Jacobins wanted to destroy.

The promise of Fourvière of 1816 mentions martyrdom as a possibility in the commitment of the future Marists.34 In a prophesy dating back to the very first days of the Society of Mary it was foretold that it would have many martyrs. ‘So much the better’, said Colin, ‘for then we shall have many saints’.35 In his letter of good-bye to the first group leaving for Oceania he expresses jealousy for their holy courage; myself, he adds, ‘my sins make me unworthy of the grace of such an apostolate and of martyrdom’.36

When Peter Chanel hears that one of the early catechumens on Wallis had been severely beaten up, he congratulates Bataillon with having already a

32. LRO 2, Doc 124, 2, alluding to Num: 12, 3: ‘The man Moses was very meek, more than all men that were on the face of the earth’.
34. OM 1, page 223, note 1.
36. CS 1, Doc 4, 1.
martyr among his converts.\textsuperscript{37} On 15 April a catechumen on Futuna says he is afraid he might die in the state of sin if he were killed for his faith before baptism. Chanel reassures him that he would be baptised in his blood.\textsuperscript{38} And when Épalle writes to Colin on 19 January 1842, he opens his letter with the exclamation: ‘A martyr in the Society. What a reason to rejoice! But, unfortunately, it is not me!’\textsuperscript{39} Martyrs and martyrdom were in the air, and the difficulties that the missionaries had with local kings or chiefs were often referred to as persecutions.

The killing of Peter Chanel came quite unexpected. On Monday he sent Marie-Nizier to Singave, joking that it would be easier than working in the garden. Marie-Nizier stayed away until Wednesday morning. Evidently, he was not worried. After the murder, aware of the danger he is in himself, Marie-Nizier grabs at the mental frame-work available, as he scribbles to Pompallier on 1 May: ‘From hour to hour I am only awaiting the moment when I will share Father Chanel’s happy fate (heureux sort). Please God I may offer and sacrifice for him my blood and my life for the faith as generously as the worthy Pro-Vicar of Western Oceania. And the mortal blow he describes as: ‘He [Musumusu] grabbed an adze and used it to put an end to Father Chanel’s transitory sufferings. He cracked the skull so that the forehead fell over the face, but in so doing he procured him in exchange the martyr’s crown and everlasting glory’. It could be a page out of an ancient martyrrology, as the official decree later acknowledged: ‘He fell, hit in front, just like the victims in the past, at the foot of the altar.’\textsuperscript{40}

According to Twyning, Marie-Nizier stayed in Twyning’s house in the Singave area until the arrival of the \textit{William Hamilton}. So did the other white men and the Americans from Avaui. Marie-Nizier would have heard the same stories. Still he did not include all of them in his different accounts, for instance Chanel’s little cross that Meitala took and hung around his own neck. The eating of the taboo food is attested by Twyning as well as by the American but Marie-Nizier left it out. Then there is the failed intervention of Meitala’s mother and her anger when returning to the King. Finally, there is what Chevron heard from other refugees, name-

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\textsuperscript{37} EC, Doc 51, 6. He uses the term \textit{confesseur} which is an ancient Christian term for martyr.
\textsuperscript{38} Baptism of blood for catechumens is a traditional item in the theology of martyrdom.
\textsuperscript{39} LRO 2, Doc 127, 1.
\textsuperscript{40} Decree of 25 November 1888, declaring Peter Chanel a martyr. Antoine Monfat, \textit{Mélanésie}, 55.
\end{flushright}
ly Niuliki washing the dead body and burying it: all items of no relevance to Marie-Nizier’s message that Peter Chanel is our martyr!

Especially the last point, namely Niuliki’s care for Chanel’s body, pointed in the wrong direction. Classical accounts of martyrdom need an idolatrous king full of hatred for the faith. Not a Niuliki, whose beard Nizier had cheerfully shaved a good two weeks earlier and who had personally brought two baskets of food on the same occasion. Not one who washes the body of the martyr and buries it respectfully in tapa cloth. For Marie-Nizier the good King Niuliki of Chanel’s diary has suddenly turned into a deceitful actor. He had been behind everything that went wrong all these years. He had been the great enemy of the lotu all along. What Nizier remarkably refrains from saying is that Niuliki also had ordered the killing!

Brother Marie-Nizier’s perspective determined the way Bataillon and Chevron informed both Pompallier and Colin. Chevron wrote: ‘The good Father Chanel has gone to receive in heaven the beautiful crown of the martyr’. And Bataillon: ‘Brother Marie-Nizier has told us that the reverend and good Father Chanel has been martyred by the natives of Futuna. He had only five or six catechumens, but as others were preparing to convert, and in order to put an end to it all, they went to massacre Father Chanel on 28 April 1841. It really looks (Il y a toute apparence) as if he would still be alive if the Bishop had come for a visit; but we would not have a martyr’.41

On 6 April 1842 the letter of Chevron reached Father Colin. Mayet records:

‘When he received the news of Father Chanel’s death, his heart, sensitive in the extreme, was just as moved and overwhelmed by the loss. It was as if he had been struck by lightning. He went down on his knees, saying to the Lord: «Praise to you! . . . Your holy will be done!» Then when the good father had wept for the loss of his son, his faith filled him with a holy joy. What he saw was no longer the death of his child, but the glory and happiness of the hero of religion, and fired with enthusiasm at seeing already a martyr in the Society, he intoned a hymn of praise to the Queen of Martyrs and

41. CCC, Doc 60.
acquainted the whole Society with the grace that God bestowed upon it permitting the crime of an idolatrous king.  

A clash of cultures?

Where Marie-Nizier and all the accounts that derive from it simply mention the conversion of Meitala as the reason why Chanel was killed, Twynning and the unnamed American mention the violated food taboo. For Twynning it was a slight quarrel between Meitala and his father Niuliki about a food taboo in the family. For the American it was a deliberate act of defiance: ‘The seven [catechumens among whom was Meitala, JS] carried and ate forbidden fruits they were not allowed to touch. To show their contempt for the gods of Futuna they asked the American to cook the food for them.’

Against the background of these assertions a Tongan scholar, Mikaele Pa’unga, has recently challenged the account of Marie-Nizier:

‘Ever since I studied the history of the death of Saint Peter Chanel ( . . .), I was never fully satisfied with the explanations surrounding his death. The reason given namely the conversion of Meitala, son of Futuna’s king Niuliki, as the cause of Chanel’s martyrdom was not serious enough for me to accept. I found the account of his death pietistic. It had a theological interpretation written with the death of Christ as a background. It was hagiographical.

I have always suspected that the degree of violence meant that he must have offended some cultural taboos. There were no other explanations as far as I was concerned that could justify the brutality of the action on the part of the actors. In fact, there was a clash of cultures involved. Peter Chanel broke a cultural taboo which eventually led to his death. ( . . .)’

Mikaele Pa’unga acknowledges that Meitala’s conversion led to a conflict with his father Niuliki, but what turned the conflict into a sufficient reason to kill Chanel was a cultural factor, namely the breaking of a taboo. In Pa’unga’s view Chanel was simply unaware that breaking such a taboo

42. FA, Doc 216.
43. LRO 2, Doc 127, 3.
would in the end lead to the death penalty, as Twyning puts it: ‘Meitalla, on leaving his father went to the Catholic priest (. . .) and asked him if the breach of his taboo would really be punished with his death. The good priest told him it would not and endeavoured to convince the young chief of the folly of the idle superstitions.’ By breaking the taboo, writes Pa’unga,

‘(. . .) Meitala dishonoured his father and relativised the taboo. He brought shame to the family and the whole country. For a Futunan, this was an act of treason of the highest degree, and hence deserved the death punishment. The shame of the son’s actions would forever stay with Niuliki’s family as a curse. The culture of shame is something that a French priest like Chanel would never have understood. His death was therefore a consequence of this clash of cultures.’

Politics?

We now have two answers to the question why Peter Chanel was killed. For the religious order and its members with high ideals of holiness culminating in martyrdom the answer was evident. The anthropologist draws the attention to the culture clash following on the introduction of a western religious world into a Polynesian traditional society. People steeped in theology and spirituality see the world in religious categories, social anthropologists see the same world in terms of cultures and societies.

One world that missionaries were supposed to stay clear off was politics. As a result they not only avoid getting involved in politics, but too often they ignore it. Is it possible that the internal politics of Futuna played a more important role in the drama of Chanel’s murder than has been acknowledged so far?

The political rivalry on Futuna is probably very ancient, and thus deep-rooted. Cornelius Schouten, the first European on record to visit the island in 1616, speaks of two kings who were not on good terms with each other. One of the two lived on Alofi. When the Marists entered the scene, the island’s politics were determined by the rivalry between the people on the eastern half of Futuna, often referred to as Tua (also the owners of Alofi), and those living on the western half, called Singave. As long as people

45. Angleviel, Wallis et Futuna, volume 1, 138.
could remember, the rivalry had time and again led to open war. The winners of the last war were referred to as Malo, meaning victors; the losers were Lava, meaning vanquished. After each outburst of hostilities the main preoccupation of the Lava was how to regain the upper hand, the main Malo concern being how to hold on to their position of superiority. With newcomers on the island the Malo would watch carefully that they did not weaken their position, while the Lava tried to use the strangers to their advantage.46

A complicating factor lay in the relative proximity of Wallis. The Singave people seem to have had closer ties with Wallis than the Tua people and the Wallisians did not hesitate to meddle in Futunan politics. In April 1838 the King of Wallis let Niuliki know that Chanel could always come to Wallis if his presence on Futuna was no longer desired and chiefs on Wallis were heard to use threatening language against Futuna if they would dare to hurt Chanel (25.04.38).47

The missionaries came to Futuna after visiting Wallis which, unknown to them, can already have been given a political meaning at the time. Even before landing they were contacted by a man fishing off-shore, who called himself Sam, the Singave chief Keletaone. His father, Furivao, had been king of Singave (30.07.38) until a few years earlier. Sam would have been the future king of Singave had his father not been pushed aside by a close relative, Vanae, who in 1837 was the paramount chief, or 'King', of the Lava.48

Keletaone had got the nickname Sam as a sailor on a whaling ship on which he had visited Sydney. He spoke broken English, had known Catholic priests in Sydney and invited the Marists to settle on Futuna. He directed them to the village of Alo, on the south coast of Futuna, the residence of Niuliki, the paramount chief of the Tua people, who were the Malo of the moment. As a Lava chief inviting the foreigners to Futuna, Sam spoke out of turn and it took lengthy deliberations among the Malo chiefs before they agreed to the missionaries staying. The presence of two strange white men, in long black robes, unloading boxes, could easily become a disturbing factor in the volatile politics of the island. Niuliki took care to have them settle, not in Singave close to Keletaone who had invited them, but near his own house. That he became their patron and protector was probably part of the deal with the suspicious Malo elders. When Niuliki

46. EC, page 196.
47. Dates in brackets refer to Peter Chanel’s diary (EC, pages 319–483).
moved to Poi, he had the missionaries move with him. And when later he changed to Tamana, some chiefs wanted the missionaries to move there.

From his early years Sam Keletaone was known as a daring warrior and his ambitions were to regain the title of his father as well as turning the tables on the Malo. Within weeks of his arrival the Lava assured Chanel that in case of war his house in Alo (Tua) would be spared (28.01.38)! He also, at least in the beginning, adopted the Singave perspective by considering Keletaone’s father Furivao to be the legitimate King of the whole of Futuna (23.01.38). Chanel was soon alerted to Sam’s political status and ambitions (23.01.38 and 24.01.38). In his diary he notes: ‘Everyone wants peace, except Sam’ (30.01.38).

In November 1837, hearing that there was a second King on the island, Bishop Pompallier had put some gifts aside for the other King. That too had a political meaning, not for the innocent Frenchmen, but surely for their Polynesian hosts. Thomas Boag, whose deceased wife had been from Singave, acted in the beginning as a go-between (26.02.38). When in June 1838 Chanel sent Thomas with some presents to Vanae and Niuliki heard about it (from gossiping women) the King did not hide his displeasure (29.06.38).

In November 1837, when the missionaries came to Futuna the situation was peaceful enough. Still, in Futuna war was never far off. It took no more than a child playfully yelling the war-whoop at night, to have the men grab their arms and rush out of their houses. When the February 1838 cyclone did heavy damage to houses and crops, the Malo blamed the gods of Singave and vice versa!

When Vanae was on a visit to Niuliki to talk about peace, he visited Chanel in Alo and stayed the night. Together with the Singave chiefs in his train he came to look at Chanel saying Mass and he stayed the length of the ritual (27.12.37). From the beginning Sam Keletaone showed a lively interest in the lotu and when visiting Singave, Chanel often stayed the night with Sam (28.04.38, 15.05.38). Chanel, anxious to be impartial, asked Furivao if he could build a house in the Singave area. Very soon Singave people added the final touches to a house for the missionaries in Nuku. It was burned down in the war of August 1839, most likely by the Malo.

The 160 printed pages of diary that we have from Chanel are a testimony of the two Marists impartially visiting people of both areas and making friends on both sides. Very slowly there was a growing interest in the lotu all over the island. When a chiefly young man on the Tua side was
dying he accepted instruction and Chanel could openly baptise him. After
the funeral his father asked for a cross to put on the grave (28.03.39). Still,
Singave was more open to religious change than Tua.

The visit of the six Marists on the Reine de Paix in May 1839, the pres-
ence of Bataillon during six weeks, and the war in August 1839 changed
the climate. The lotu grew in significance. The missionaries gained great
sympathy with their impartial care for the wounded and the dying. Cha-
nel showed his compassion with the Lava, crying openly at their grieving
and their humiliation.

But Chanel did something else too. He was aware of course of the par-
ticular hatred of the Malo chiefs for Sam Keletaone who after the death
of Vanae was the only credible pretender for the kingship of Singave. Just
before the formal surrender of the Lava, Chanel helped his friend to flee to
Wallis on a Sydney ship that had been fishing around Futuna (15.08.39).
The diary does not mention Chanel’s own role but it cannot have endeared
him to the Malo leadership! It put the man the Malo hated most out of
their reach. In Wallis Sam soon joined the growing number of catechu-
mens. The humbled Lava knew that the only warrior who could restore
their dignity was in Wallis, and turning Christian.

In the later part of 1839 Chanel notices growing interest in the lotu all
over Futuna (21.10.39). With the consent of both Niuliki and his wife he
baptises in surplice and stole the king’s dying baby (9.11.39) as well as a
young man of the family who asked for baptism on his death-bed and only
wanted to be assured that there were coconuts in heaven (16.11.39). At
that time no indications of hostility towards the missionaries (cf 18.11.39).

During 1840 every contact with Wallis brought news of the rapid
growth of the lotu there. When in November it becomes known that the
whole of Wallis has gone over except the king and his entourage, resistance
on Futuna stiffens. For the first time Chanel admits in his diary that rela-
tions with the king are not what they used to be. Niuliki is not hostile but
it seems he cannot afford to be seen helping the missionaries. He can only
do so behind the scenes.49

There are no signs of aversion on the part of the population as a whole.
Young people are interested in the lotu but at the same time less inclined
to obey their elders. Others see the conversion of Wallis as a threat, espe-
cially in combination with the schemes of Tuugahala and Sam Keletaone.
Any action on the part of these two would lead to open hostilities between

49. EC, page 484, November 1840, from the Roulleaux summary.
the Malo and the Lava. Niuliki is torn between conflicting trends and desperately tries to keep things from getting out of hand. The Lava elders see their future in the lotu, the Malo chiefs are aroused. Throughout the population there is great sympathy for Father Chanel, but for some people in the Malo leadership he becomes the symbol of social disintegration and political instability.

Just at this moment of high tension Meitala, Niuliki’s son and successor, openly opts for the Christian religion. He defies his father and angers his mother. Niuliki is deeply upset and, in his usual vague and non-committal way, must have agreed to a forceful intervention. Musumusu, one of the Malo hotheads, fed up with Niuliki’s dilly-dallying, takes things in his own hands. As Bataillon puts it, ‘to cut short a development that threatens to get out of hand’, he kills Peter Chanel.50

What happens then shows how important the Malo versus Lava hostility was in the whole affair. Brother Marie-Nizier flees to Singave and is afraid to return to Poi (in Tua!). The other white men gather in Singave. Singave people cover their withdrawal on the ship.

When in January 1842 Captain du Bouzet of the Allier landed in Singave, he described it as ‘a village inhabited by the tribe friendly to Chanel’. Later, the chiefs of what he calls the party of Niuliki, came on board to offer their regret for what had happened and they returned Chanel’s chalice, his cassock, a crucifix etc. They promised among other things to put an end to the discord that had for so long caused bloody conflicts on their island, in other words, they too saw what had happened in the context of the political feud.51 As a military man du Bouzet had no doubt what it was all about!

After visiting the island with Marie-Nizier, Viard got the impression (simplifying things no doubt) that the Lava had been for, and the Malo against Chanel.52 In the investigation done on Futuna by Servant in 1845 it was said that the call for the death of Chanel: ‘ke tamate le lotu, ke puli’ (We must deal with the lotu. It must disappear) came from all corners of the eastern part of the island, in other words from among the Malo.53

50. LRO, Doc 98, 2.
51. LRO 2, Doc 135, 1 and 7.
52. LRO 2, Doc 133. 6.
Conclusions
We shall never know all the details, especially as we have no letter written by Chanel after 19 November 1840. Moreover, the last part of his diary, covering 1840 and 1841, is lost. Father Roulleaux made a summary of it but, like Brother Marie-Nizier, he was intent on setting the scene for the martyrdom. It seems that we nevertheless can reasonably draw the following conclusions.

1. Among the ordinary folk on Futuna, both Malo and Lava, Chanel was loved. Children crowed with pleasure when they saw him coming. That the call for Chanel’s death, as claimed in the investigation of 1845, came from Tua, the eastern part of the island sounds true enough, but to say that it came from all the corners of Tua seems exaggerated. The diary contains too many mentions of friendship and interest in the lotu among the Malo.

2. The assassination of Chanel was an act of the Malo leadership that felt seriously threatened by the growing identification of the lotu with the revanchist aspirations of the Lava leaders in liaison with threatening forces on Wallis led by Tuugahala and Keletaone. At the same time the chiefs saw their influence waning through the introduction of new values and norms, new criteria of prominence and political power. History abounds with examples of a particular, especially a new, religion becoming the rallying cry of subjugated peoples or social classes. When tensions mount, even a minor but highly symbolic act can trigger an outburst of violence.

3. The conversion of Meitala was the spark that ignited the violence. According to Bataillon the hostile chiefs feared this one conversion could have opened the gate to many others all over the island. This confirms that on the whole Futuna did not reject the lotu but on the contrary, was on the point of conversion. Chanel said so several times himself.

4. King Niuliki’s usual tactic was to delay decisions, defuse conflicts, and ignore calls for clear-cut interventions from various sides (including Chanel). In this case the fury of his wife when she felt humiliated by her son cannot have been helpful! Most likely Niuliki tried to keep Musumusu in check with an ambiguous and vague agreement to take action. In his anger he may have been less ambiguous than usual, in any case not ambiguous enough.
5. Marist tradition owes an apology to Niuliki. The logic of martyrdom made him into the required ‘impious king’. In fact he was a remarkably kind person, a true friend of Peter Chanel and Marie-Nizier, but in the end overwhelmed by political turmoil. After the murder Marie-Nizier puts three years of friendliness down to hypocrisy and argues that the King had been an enemy of the *lotu* all the time. That means deleting the whole of Chanel’s diary! There is no reason to doubt Niuliki’s sincerity when he said he too would convert as soon as his people decided to become Christian. After the murder of his dearest friend, Nizier’s harsh judgment is perfectly understandable, but not fair.

6. In an official deposition before a public notary in 1859 Brother Marie-Nizier declares that Chanel was killed on orders of the king, and that the king had said so himself the day after.54 Nizier’s own letters of 1 May and of 19 December 1841 although full of accusations against Niuliki, do not support his later accusation.

7. That Meitala defiantly ‘celebrated’ his conversion in a meal of taboo foods will certainly have aggravated the flagrancy of his act, but Polynesian catechumens often broke food taboos as a symbol of their conversion, on Futuna, on Wallis and in New Zealand.55 As Chanel had noted, taboos were often used by people in positions of power to strengthen their hold on the common people.56 The force of the taboos lay in people’s fears for the divine sanctions. Usually the initiative came from the converts.57

Mikaele Pa’unga is right in saying there was a culture clash. Large-scale religious change always is, by definition. Chanel may well have underestimated the emotional forces that encouraging catechumens to break the taboos could unleash, but the young people themselves would have known very well what their actions meant. Evidently they found the time had come for change! Religions not only provide a framework for stability and cultural coherence. They also are ‘dynamic in conditioning other kinds of behaviour, and plastic in being capable of modification to meet individual and group circumstance,’58 in other words, factors of culture change.

54. CCC, Doc 84, 12. Laracy, *Saint-Making* 450, supports this claim.
55. For New Zealand, cf. LRO 1, Doc 77, 6.
56. Chanel mentioned it in his last letter to Colin, 16 May 1840. EC, Doc 59, 5.
57. For instance EC, page 474, 14.11.39.
8. The young ruffians with Musumusu were interested in plunder, not in murder. In the end Musumusu had to do it himself. Was he personally moved by hatred for the Faith? On 18 September 1839 Chanel had baptised his sick child! In January 1842, after Niuliki had died, Musumusu maintained he had killed Chanel only because the king had told him to.59 Servant who was appointed to Futuna in 1842 wrote after a year on the island: ‘The man who gave the mortal blow to Father Chanel and the other chiefs of Tua were not really enemies of the lotu. They [the Lava] just wanted us [Malo] to be subject to their whims.’60 In other words, power politics.

9. Pompallier was to some extent right in deploring that the French corvettes had not visited Wallis and Futuna after bombarding the Fiji island of Viwa in 1838. It would have made a great impression in Futuna. Chanel himself felt at the time it would have put a restraint on the warlike Futunans (11.11.38). Bataillon felt the same way. The French Navy could have displayed a little more initiative, as its Government had pledged.

10. On 31 May 1841 Bataillon roundly blamed Pompallier: ‘If [Father Chanel] had been visited by Monseigneur, he would have been alive today.’61 And on 15 December he wrote: ‘We have no doubt that the death of the Father Chanel must be attributed to the delay of Monseigneur.’62 Chanel himself was convinced that the island would have converted much quicker, had they been visited by the Bishop.63

Until June 1839 Bishop Pompallier was unable to visit his missionaries in the islands. He had no ship and no money to hire one. He had not yet been able to establish himself in the Bay of Islands where he might have borrowed money, as he did later on. However, after June 1839 he could have gone with the Reine de Paix or later with the Sancta Maria. As Captain Lavaud remarked to Tripe when the murder of Peter Chanel had become known, why did the Bishop spend months on his ship lying idle in

59. LRO 2, Doc 133, 7.
60. LRO 2, Doc 243, 5.
61. LRO 1, Doc 98, 2.
62. LRO 1, Doc 119, 3.
63. EC, Doc 59, 1.
Akaroa, instead of visiting his confreres on the ship he had bought precisely for this purpose?64

It is difficult to imagine anything like a credible excuse.

Peter Chanel himself and the Gospel message he brought got caught in the violent politics of a warlike people and he knew. Beyond his control, he and his message of peace and reconciliation became the symbol of a better future for the oppressed part of the people of Futuna. Thereby it also became a threat to the victors of the tribal wars. Peter Chanel was swept away in the whirlpool of Futunan politics. He and his companion had ample opportunity to leave the island. They never even considered it. They stayed on their outpost. Peter Chanel paid the ultimate price.

A wider vision

Father Colin himself saw in Peter Chanel more than a martyr in the narrow sense of the word. He spoke of three crowns on Chanel’s head: the first one that he left his country, his parents, his friends and an entire lifestyle to follow God’s call; the second that he stayed three or four years with little apparent success and never asked for a change and the third one the ‘glorious crown of martyrdom.’65

The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), while acknowledging and recommending the age-old veneration of martyrs, at the same time developed a new vision on martyrdom, in which the spotlight is no longer on the intention of the perpetrators, ‘out of hatred for the faith’ (ex odio fidei), but on the commitment of the victim:

‘Some Christians have been called from the beginning, and will always be called, to give this greatest testimony of love to all, especially to persecutors. Martyrdom makes the disciple like his master, who willingly accepted death for the salvation of the world, and through it he is conformed to him by the shedding of blood.’66

Whatever the decisive motive that made the killer grab the adze on the floor and smash the skull of Peter Chanel, his three and a half years on

64. LRO 1, Doc 117, 9.
65. FS, Doc 56, 5.
66. Lumen Gentium, 42. Translation Austin Flannery, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (1975), 400.
the island of Futuna, ‘in the poor small hut’ (*la pauvre et petite cabane*), ‘the little hole alongside the ruins of his house’ (*un petit trou à côté des débris de sa maison*) where Bataillon and Baty found him in May 1839,67 his steadily deteriorating health, his terrible toothaches, the deprivations especially of the last half year, and his violent death, surely earn him the title of proto-martyr of Oceania and, if that does not fit into the official definition, let the definition change!

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67. LRO 1, Doc 28, 26 and LRO 1, Doc 32, 1.
Epilogue
The First Five Years 1836 – 1841

On the leadership level the earliest history of the Catholic Church in the Western Pacific has two dominant figures. In France there was Father Jean-Claude Colin, Founder and Superior General of the Society of Mary and the main subject of this book, and in the Pacific we meet Bishop Jean-Baptiste François Pompallier. What counted in the end was how the men in the field overcame the daunting challenges of living among Pacific people in the 1830s and 1840s, and how they presented the beliefs and the values of the Catholic faith. What they could or could not do depended often on how the two leaders directed the play.

They all called themselves Marists, initially a small band of priests from the south-east of France. Mostly of peasant or working-class background they were fired by the ideal of rekindling the Faith in the villages and towns of France where religious practice and convictions had seriously been eroded by the anti-religious sentiments of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. One of them, Marcellin-Joseph-Benoît Champagnat, started the rapidly growing congregation of Marist Teaching Brothers. They joined the priests in the mission effort. Alongside of the priests and the Brothers we find Marist Sisters, founded and led by Jeanne-Marie Chavoin (Mother Saint-Joseph) but they did not enter the mission field in the period under consideration, and Marist laypeople, a few of whom did.

Father Colin

A child that for whatever reason has little social interaction with other children often develops a rich fantasy life in which it shapes a little world of its own. This world provides a vantage point from which it observes the world in which it lives. The child finds there a safe haven to withdraw in
when it cannot cope with the real world. The young Jean-Claude Colin was a bit like that. His dream world he kept to himself. Having lost both parents he often withdrew into the woods of Crest to preach to the fir trees. His inner world was furnished with the religious ideas of his uncle Bastien and the catechism lessons of Sister Marthe. Following his older brother Pierre to the Seminary was a natural thing to do and Jean-Claude saw his future life as ‘a life removed from the world in which Mary, his heavenly mother, would play a major role.’ She filled the empty space left by the mother he could barely remember.

On invitation of a friend in the Major Seminary he joined the little group that an older seminarian, Jean-Claude Courveille, had gathered to form a Society of Mary. It suited the young Colin, as he was called, to join a movement initiated and led by someone else. Colin took over Courveille’s vision of Mary the Support of the Early Church and again in their own age, that they saw as the End of Time. For the early Marists she was the Mother of Mercy, rushing to the aid of a world losing its faith. These themes became the core of Jean-Claude Colin’s own inner world.

In the 1820’s, after his priestly ordination, Colin came to read the mysterious visions of Mary of Agreda (1603–1665) on how Mary lived in the midst of the Apostles. Other ideas he picked up in the spiritual and mystical books he had a taste for. One expression that eventually became typical of Colinian spirituality, ‘hidden and unknown’, ‘ignoti et quasi occulti’, he took from Jean-Joseph Surin (1600-1665). It expressed his ideal so well that he forgot he had read it somewhere, and came to think he had coined it himself or had received it from on high.

All these ideas, let us call them his vision, could easily have remained what they initially were, the inner fantasy world of a withdrawn man. But Jean-Claude Colin’s genius burgeoned in the parish missions of the Bugey hills. He matured into a gifted preacher and gained self-confidence through pastoral experience. The image of the Mother of Mercy inspired him to become on her behalf an instrument of divine mercy for people estranged from the Church through the rigid and demanding Jansenistic

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attitudes of the clergy or through the secularism of what Colin called *les philosophes*. His natural preference for the low-key and unobtrusive approach had become a spiritual theme through Mary Agreda’s descriptions of Mary in the midst of the Apostles. In the Bugey missions he discovered that the same approach in no way hampered the pastoral work but on the contrary opened the way to fruitful ministry in a world that, under the influence of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, rejected the domineering ways of the ancient Church.

This *vision*, these ideas and expressions, are often considered typical ‘Colinian spirituality’ and under the influence of Father Jean Coste (1926–1994) Marists have come to think of them as a coherent and consistent way of life. Undoubtedly Colin’s *vision* was the source of the inner strength and the joyful enthusiasm that made people admire and follow him. It has inspired generations of Marists and it should continue to do so.6

However, his *vision* was not all that prominent once he became Superior General, charged with the governance of the Pacific Missions. It would seem that Colin kept his different worlds apart. How else explain the near absence of the main themes of his *vision* in the letters to and from the missionaries? ‘*Ignoti et quasi occulti*’ (hidden and unknown) does not occur even once in his letters to the missionaries of the time. The missionaries seem not to know them, in any case they never use them, not even when it would have been very appropriate, as when Maxime Petit criticised Pompallier’s obsession for grandeur. Nowhere is there a mention of ‘Mary in the Early Church and at the End of Time’. Only the expression ‘instruments of divine mercy’ occurs a few times.7

Colin’s intensive reading of classical spiritual theology had done more than provide his vision with a lucky phrase or insight. It had forged him into a man of iron self-discipline and robust prayer, a man who had renounced all self-interest, exclusively committed to, as he put it, the interests of Jesus and Mary. His manly self-abandonment filled him with a straightforward simplicity and a holy gaiety that carried other people along. This is what we could call Colin’s *spiritual doctrine*, as distinguished

7. The first one to draw the attention to the near absence of the major so-called Colinian themes in letters to and from the missions was Father Theo Kok who for many years was the archivist of the Pacific missions and General Archivist in Rome from 1986 to 1993. Cf Gaston Lessard, ‘Pierre Chanel était-il mariste?’ in Gaston Lessard (editor), *Saint Pierre Chanel* (Saint-Augustin, 2004), 109.
from his vision. It provides the basic material of the spiritual direction that was the main component of his leadership, at least as far as the Pacific Missions are concerned.⁸

From the same classical sources⁹ he had also adopted a perspective of identification with Christ. The apostolic religious commits himselfs on behalf of Christ. Christ works in and through him. This is what Colin lived himself and what he passed on to the missionaries. His letters say little on the mission itself, no small talk, no news from home, from the Society, the home-country, or whatever. Even when the missionaries beg for news, he leaves that to others. There is little room for administrative matters and emotional needs. Colin is at all times the spiritual director of his followers with the pithy statements that are typical for his style.¹⁰

There is nothing but God alone. Nothing else has any value. Therefore the missionary vocation is so sublime: you break all the bonds of flesh and blood to follow the call and depart into the unknown to bring the torch of the faith to the peoples of Oceania. Nothing can harm you except losing God. Think only of heaven which will soon be your recompense.

If you are entirely turned towards Him, and Him alone, you will be unshakeable in the midst of dangers. Do not rely on yourself, on the contrary, distrust yourself and stand upright in the trust in God alone. Then you will face whatever comes your way neither rashly nor faint-heartedly.

In your ministry you represent Christ. It is on his behalf that you leave. He is sending you and He will be with you on your touring, your travelling, on land and on the sea. If you are hungry, Christ will be hungry with you. He will be persecuted when you are, and rebuffed when you are. He is the One who is received when you are. Know He is near you, sharing your pains, your suffering, your joys. In His intimate

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⁸ Father Justin Taylor has suggested as much in unpublished conferences in La Neylière, 2009. Taylor too disagrees with Jean Coste’s treatment of ‘Colinian spirituality’ as a well-integrated whole.

⁹ Especially the so-called ‘French School’ and Jesuit authors of the same period.

¹⁰ Mostly taken from his first letter to departing missionaries, CS 1, Doc 4 (cf above p 49).
and constant presence you will find your strength and your force, your inner peace and all the light you will need.

Don’t argue with yourself, don’t look inward. Constantly thinking of Him will be the source of your strength and your peace. Be men of prayer and meditation, men of faith and hope, and everything you undertake will succeed. Do not argue or reason among yourselves. Simply obey your Bishop and Superior.

When one prospective missionary could not make up his mind to volunteer and kept running from one advisor to another, Colin wrote to him: ‘Have good courage. Stop consulting and come to a decision yourself! Be warlike, be a man! Do not let fear and melancholy penetrate into your soul.’

The recipients did not resent it. On the contrary, they asked for more and it carried them through the incredible hardships and challenges of the early missions. As one of them put it: ‘As the heart becomes detached of everything, it seems to fill with God.’ When in July 1841 Pompallier had written one of his reproachful letters to Colin, he told his confidant Épalle that he wanted to read it out to all the missionaries. Épalle begged him not to: ‘They are all very attached to the Superior General.’ It was so obviously true that for once Pompallier listened to advice.

It would not do justice to Jean-Claude Colin to say that the apostolate and the missionary vocation were a mere means to holiness. For Colin holiness and effective apostolate are on an equal level, neither is a means to the other. There is no holiness without total commitment to the apostolate and no effective apostolic ministry without holiness. Colin is convinced that the man who is wholeheartedly attached to God, and God alone, will by that very fact be an effective messenger of His word. The persuasive power of the apostle lies in his personal relationship to God. Herein Colin is very close to Louis Lallement (1578 – 1635), a Jesuit spiritual guide whom Colin read avidly:

‘The Jesuit who launches out into the fullness of the mystical life does not then retire into a monastery or hermitage. Rather he gives himself now at last to the apostolate as a true

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instrument of God. Only then is his formation as an apostolic religious complete.\textsuperscript{12}

The picture of Colin would be incomplete\textsuperscript{13} if it did not mention what he himself calls ‘holy gaiety’ (\textit{une sainte gaité}). In his farewell letter to Pompallier he exhorts the Bishop to ‘use all means to preserve among his missionaries, unity, peace and a holy gaiety’. Inner peace and cheerfulness follow when a man is fully detached from all self-interest and is wholly turned to God, and to God alone. Neither vainglory in success, nor despondent in failure, the man of faith is always steady on course, carried along by good cheer because nothing counts but the value that God puts on it. In this spirit Peter Chanel could write on the eve of sailing from Le Havre that they were ‘happy as butterflies’. In this spirit Colin wrote to the ever wavering Perret: ‘Keep up your good humour and everything will be easy.’ Brothers and priests, they all loved him. Their letters show it. It must have been the bright and courageous joyfulness he radiated.

\textbf{Bishop Pompallier}

From the onset the omens for good cooperation between the two protagonists, Jean-Claude Colin and Jean-Baptiste François Pompallier, were not good. Pompallier, the handsome, charming and gifted priest, born in an upper-middle class family, had all the self-assurance of his social background. He found it the most natural thing to take the lead, organise events and write rules for the communities where he lived, all of them things that Colin frowned at. Too presumptuous!

From the time he joined, his Marist confreres appreciated his zeal and commitment, but they were not charmed by his ambitiousness. When they made it clear that they did not want him to be their superior, it did not take him long to move back into Lyon where he lived by himself, in charge of a prestigious school and close to the Archdiocesan centre where he was held in high esteem.

He jumped at the offer to found the new missions in the Western Pacific. The challenge and the promotion fired his imagination, his zeal and his ambitions. The offer was addressed to him personally but also, through

\textsuperscript{12} Cf Justin Taylor, \textit{A Neglected Source}, 409.

\textsuperscript{13} We are indebted to Father François Drouilly who in an unpublished conference in La Neylière in 2010 has drawn our attention to the importance of this character trait of Colin and to the regrettable way it has been neglected in Marist writings.
him, to the fledgling Marist group. However, instead of going to see their superior Jean-Claude Colin in Belley, he went to see the young Marist priests first. Even when he got an enthusiastic response he did not take the coach to Belley but wrote a letter that put Colin before an accomplished fact.

The two were not close, not at ease with each other. Colin had his doubts. Was Pompallier's easy commitment rooted in solid spirituality? How would he act under stress? But Colin had little choice. The young Marists were enthusiastic and the Archbishop of Lyon had already picked Pompallier for promotion.

At the same time Pompallier had his doubts about Colin. He rushed ahead without consulting Colin. Pompallier's misgivings were not entirely unfounded. If the proposal had been put to Jean-Claude Colin first, he might well have turned it down. And in 1836 Colin had as little experience in being an executive Superior as Pompallier in being a Bishop. Would Colin give him the support he would need?

Once on the way Pompallier proved a determined and resourceful leader. He showed all the characteristics of the typical ‘performer’: able, ambitious, anxious for recognition, jealous of his leadership role. Every job was a challenge and there was no room for failure.

The missionary involvement with the Polynesian people brought out the best in him. The dignity and the power of his hierarchical position brought out the worst. Poor relations with his men and financial mismanagement brought the mission to the edge of ruin in five years.

The hands-off manager

Colin's bent to remain non-involved in anything but spiritual direction, became a negative asset when he was called upon to direct the Pacific missions. In an ill-fated attempt to lay the basis for good cooperation with Pompallier, but also because it was the way he had dealt with Bishops until then, he pushed aside two centuries of missionary experience14 and made the Bishop the Religious Superior of his missionaries. No sooner had the Delphine disappeared over the horizon, than, as far as the missions were concerned, Colin withdrew in an attitude of benign neglect and turned his attention elsewhere. Had he gone to Paris for a good talk with Father

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14. A few years later he admitted having been advised against it by other religious, cf. FS, Doc 119, 10.
Coudrin, Superior of the Picpus missionaries in the eastern Pacific, worlds would have opened. But he seemingly could not imagine there was much to be learned or to be done. The thought of the heroic Marists leaving home filled his mind to satisfaction.

On receiving Pompallier’s letter from Santa Cruz, Canary Islands, asking for money, Colin got 8,700 francs from the Propagation of the Faith. Nobody in Lyons had any experience in transferring money to the other side of the world. Coudrin would have known how to get it in time to Valparaiso. Colin did not ask him and handed it with a covering letter to some whaler captain going to the Pacific.

It was not until November 1837, eleven months after the first group had left, that Colin got news from Valparaiso. It then took a reminder from Cardinal Fransoni to get him to line up a second group. Several months were lost in an inept search for a ship. Admittedly, Pompallier’s changes of plans were not much of an incentive to prompt action, but the argument that finally made Colin send the second group on its way, namely to go and look for the first one, had been as good in January 1838 as it was nine months later. When they finally left, September 1838, again for the long detour around Cape Horn, Colin could have sent a fast letter to Sydney, care of Bishop Polding, on the off-chance that Sydney knew where Pompallier was. Pompallier would by such means at least have known that reinforcements were on the way. Colin never thought of it.

One thing and another had as result that Pompallier received the money sent in July 1837 only in March 1839, and that he never knew of reinforcements, men and funds, until they actually arrived, in June 1839 (and again in June 1841). For a year and a half Pompallier had to survive with two companions, penniless, in a remote corner of New Zealand. The feeling of being abandoned in a dead-end situation, threw him in a despondency that he never wholly recovered of. It turned him into a bitter man, blaming everybody, unable to listen to advice, unable to delegate, unable to see his own shortcomings. If Colin’s neglect was benign in intent, the net result was not.

Colin was a man of faith. For him that meant he saw Providence at work in whatever happened. The project of the Pacific mission was not his doing. The enthusiastic response of the young priests showed that it came from on high. Providence would provide the men and the finances. Colin never picked anyone for the mission. He waited for men to volunteer. If the Lord wanted someone to go to the missions, the Lord would put the desire into his heart. The Superior’s only role was to discern if the call was
genuine. Colin stuck to this policy under heavy pressure from Pompallier and Cardinal Fransoni to send more missionaries. But not all that many volunteers presented themselves. Those who did were mostly diocesan priests whose only interest in the Society of Mary was to join the Pacific missions. As a consequence Colin was at times hard put to get a group together. He could not avoid lowering the bar and often he had to shorten the period of religious training. Some left after only a few months of Novitiate, some had to do their Novitiate on board ship. The Superiors of the fifth and sixth group, Antoine Séon and Jean Forest, both complained of the lack of religious training of the men in their bands. Another Superior General would perhaps have concluded that Providence expected a policy of active recruiting. But for Colin that would have meant ‘running faster than Providence’.15

**Finances**

The new mission was entirely dependent on money from France. Pompallier started the project on about 70,000 francs, £2,800 stg. Most of it came from a lay association in Lyon, ‘The Propagation of the Faith’. Had he made enquiries and calculated the costs, the group of eight men could have travelled via London to New Zealand for no more than £640.16 He would have had more than £2,000 to fit out the missionaries and start the mission. In fact he went the other way, round Cape Horn and Chile. When he reached Valparaiso he had only 22,000 francs, £880, in his pocket and the Pacific still to cross.17 From Chile he paid the fares for Hawaii but lost a good deal of that money when he changed his plans. In Tahiti he did not have enough to pay for the hiring of the *Raiatea* and left on the last leg for New Zealand with a debt of some £160.

Between 1836 and 1841 the Propagation of the Faith donated roughly £10,000. Of that money Pompallier received in New Zealand about £3,000, cash in hand. The rest went into fitting out the missionaries, travelling costs, paying a half share in the *Reine de Paix*, and losses through the bankruptcy in London. His only other large receipt was selling the *Reine de Paix*. He spent £2,000 on land (mostly beyond requirements) and buildings in Kororareka and £1,600 for the purchase and fitting out of the *Sancta Maria*. In the first months of 1840 Pompallier paid more than

17. LRO 1, Doc 7, 6.
£200 to send Chevron and Attale to Wallis and Futuna and £100 to hire a ship for his own missionary tour. No wonder the Procure in Lyon had to pay in 1841 alone about £2,000 on promissory notes that Pompallier had issued against the Marist administration in Lyon, not counting the £300 for the Marist share of the Reine de Paix and the loss through the bankruptcy in London.¹⁸ Soon, borrowing money became the easy way out.

Even with good management it would have been difficult to make both ends meet. Unfortunately Pompallier had not inherited his family’s talents for financial management and this was compounded by a grand manner that led him into many bad deals. His obsession to put up a big show led to unnecessary expenses. Especially selling the handy little schooner Reine de Paix that Baty had bought together with the Picpus missionaries and buying the 120 ton Sancta Maria was a disaster. To make things worse, Pompallier insisted on handling the finances of the mission himself to the smallest detail. Business people despised him and some robbed him.

The net result was that the missionaries on Wallis and Futuna received practically nothing, and those in New Zealand precious little of the allocations from the Propagation of the Faith that were meant for their upkeep. When Catherin Servant and Maxime Petit finally complained, they were within their rights. The missionaries lived in abject poverty and were at times forced to beg from the mostly Protestant settlers. The work suffered. The Fathers complained they often were confined to their stations, unable even to hire a few men to row their boat.¹⁹

**Correspondence**

Right from the beginning of the mission both sides, those leaving for the Pacific, and those staying in France, spoke of the crucial importance of keeping in contact by frequent correspondence. The Superior General impressed on his men that they should write as frequently as possible and tell him, frankly and openly, the good and the bad, the successes and the failures, whatever went right and whatever went wrong. On the countries and the peoples they met he wanted information suitable for publication in the bulletin of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon. The missionaries responded generously and wrote frequent and informative letters, some of which are valuable ethnographical documents.

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¹⁸. Cf CS 2, Doc 19, 9.
¹⁹. LRO 2, Doc 127, 7.
Another reason Colin had for insisting on frequent letters lay in his fear for the moral dangers from the alleged nudity among Pacific people. When in early 1838 Colin met with Father Caret, a Picpus missionary back from the Pacific, he enquired about it. Ascetical tradition had it that one resisted temptations by confiding in a spiritual director, so Colin wanted them to write to him about it. Some did, with remarkable candour and humility. But unlike Colin, most missionaries had grown up in normal families and did not suffer of his prudishness. They mostly disregarded his entreaties never to go out alone and when the letters from the missionaries did not say much about these dangers, his enquiries became more insistent. Father Servant remarked in a post-script: ‘There could indeed be some moral danger in the unaffected simple ways of the local people, but I think that there is less danger here than in civilised countries.’ When later on Colin repeated his request to a missionary in Melanesia, the laconic answer was: ‘In the Solomon Islands unmarried women wear no clothes, and married ones very little. But don’t worry. There are special graces for missionaries!’ Their reassurances never quite put Colin’s mind at ease and his constant reminders irritated and amused them.

Colin’s single-minded focus on moral and spiritual issues meant he paid scant attention to practical matters. The urgings from the Bishop and the priests to have new missionaries learn English before departing went unheeded. Only in 1840 was anything effective done about a printing press. The suggestions of Maxime Petit on how to improve on administrative arrangements were not followed up and information on travelling and material needs was often not passed around or given to the next group leaving.

The missionaries were anxious to get news from the home country and the Society but Colin did not understand how important this could be for men living on isolated places so far away. Some Marists in France took the initiative to write, but it took a generation before anyone thought of writing regular newsbulletins for the missionaries.

More serious was Colin’s failure to write regularly to the Bishop. When new groups left, Colin often did not think of informing Pompallier, even though relatively fast mail was available. It added unnecessarily to the Bishop’s frustrations. When Victor Poupinel was appointed mission sec-

retary in 1839, he immediately took the initiative of writing frequently to Pompallier. After less than a year he was stopped.

Whatever Colin's shortcomings, Pompallier was not much better. After his contradictory messages from Valparaiso and Tahiti, the obvious thing would have been to send a fast letter to Colin the moment he reached Australia. He did write but did not bother to use the simple and fast way via London to get the letter away. Sometimes there were long periods without any letter, at other times he wrote two or three long letters in one month. Superior and Bishop blamed each other, but neither of them wrote regularly and neither used consistently the sure and fast way through London and Sydney.

The already haphazard correspondence between the missionaries and the Superior General lost further value by the insistence of Pompallier that all letters mentioning anything more than matters of spiritual direction be submitted to his censorship. It meant that the missionaries were discouraged from writing and that for several years Colin only heard the propaganda that the Bishop wanted to get out. Once or twice, when challenged, Pompallier conceded that the rule should not apply to letters for the Superior General. Still, the mission regulations remained in force.

It was however the sort of letters Pompallier wrote, especially in the last two years of the period under consideration, that destroyed the trust between the two men. Often, he writes during the night, for hours on end, getting worked up as he goes on, page after page, repeating himself, over and again, sinking into pathetic exhibitions of self-pity and megalomania. As some nightly devil gets hold of him, his episcopal dignity rises to dazzling heights, he expresses disdain for his collaborators and blames the Society of Mary for encouraging disobedience among his men. He accuses the Society of holding back his subsidies and demands in imperious tones unreasonable numbers of men. He bitterly complains of his financial destitution, without the slightest admission that perhaps he was part of the problem. Especially two letters in 1841 are downright insulting. When finally Colin broke off collaboration, Pompallier showed surprise that anyone could have interpreted his letters the way they did.

A structural weakness

By their vow of poverty religious bind themselves to contribute all earnings to, or work unpaid for, their community and the Superiors accept the sacred duty to provide for their material needs. Between 1622 and 1968
Catholic missions were nearly always and everywhere administered by two authorities working in tandem: a Bishop responsible for the running of the mission and a religious Superior looking after the missionaries. By appointing Bishop Pompallier to be their religious Superior, Colin broke with that tradition. He did that not just for the first beginnings of the mission, which would have been fair enough, but as a permanent fixture. He thereby entrusted Pompallier with the material care of his religious subjects. It could not have been in worse hands. When Colin discovered that his men were in fact not being cared for in any reasonable way, he was appalled but still, he took no effective action.

Worse, as the story of these first five years shows, taking care of the missionaries entailed more than providing them with a living allowance. The New Zealand mission needed a reliable safety net for men who became the dupe of the Bishop’s moods and outbursts. Where was the Society of Mary when Brother Michel Colombon was dismissed and chased off without any support, regardless of what he may have been guilty of (if he was guilty of anything at all)? Where was the Society when after a humiliating time on board ship Brother Amon Duperron decided religious life was not for him? Where was the Society when it became clear to the Marists in New Zealand that Bishop Pompallier had lost interest in Wallis and Futuna? There was nobody with the authority or the means to step in.

Maxime Petit suggested to Colin to redress the structural weakness by appointing a Provincial and channeling through him the living allowances of the missionaries donated by the good people in Lyon. Instead Colin sent a Visitator with no other mandate than to report on a situation that was already sufficiently known.

In an ill-fated convergence but for very different reasons, the two leaders held to a similar misinterpretation of the role of a religious Superior. For Bishop Pompallier religious missionaries were in fact the clergy of his Vicariate, entirely subject to him. The Superior was to be concerned solely with their spiritual welfare; or, as Maitrepierre mockingly put it, seeing to it that they said their evening prayers. He even stopped the missionaries from writing to Colin on anything but their spiritual life. Father Colin squarely rejected this interpretation in theory, but in practice he was all the time doing just that.

From 1830 to 1836, when the Society of Mary was approved, spiritual inspiration and direction had been all that was possible and could be ex-
expected from Colin. The Marists were diocesan priests, under the authority of their respective Bishops. However, once the Society became autonomous and had accepted the responsibility for the Pacific Missions, Colin’s role should have changed. Unfortunately, at least with regards to the missions, and for the first five years, he remained the founder, the spiritual director, exactly what Pompallier wanted! He did not turn into the sort of Superior General that the mission needed and he did not provide the hands-on management that the missionaries asked for.

In his letter of 21 October 1841 the Superior General probably cancelled Pompallier’s mandate as religious Superior23 but he did not appoint a Provincial, nor did he provide for an election or whatever. Now the missionaries were without any legitimate superior. The so-called Provincial appointed by Pompallier continued in office as before, the Bishop’s spokesman.

A personal weakness

The structural weakness in the mission was compounded by Pompallier’s inability to get along with his missionaries. He always wanted to be addressed formally, Monseigneur, and spoken of as ‘His Grace’ (Sa Grandeur). He blew up when the Picpus Fathers in Valparaiso addressed him informally as they used to do with their own Bishop. He could be moody and unpleasant, telling people off for the smallest things. As a result they tended to avoid him. They were a happy group among themselves, which made him feel left out. It lead to reproaches of ganging up on him, cliquishness (esprit de corps). Nothing they did was ever right, initiatives were pushed aside, achievements belittled. Overly friendly to outsiders, he was often unbearable at home.

When new missionaries arrived, most of whom had not known him before, he sometimes told them off, as he did with the second group (for visiting Wallis and Futuna), and the third (for staying ‘too long’ in Sydney). At other times he was jovial and regaled them with his stories. Father Tripe whom he had treated badly in the beginning, praised him later for his kindness. Especially to the Brothers he could be harsh and humiliating, as, it must be added, were several of the priests! On other occasions, he was very kind.

23. Colin’s draft letter in CS 1, Doc 305, 6. What his actual letter (not traced) precisely said we shall probably never know but a year later the situation was still confused: LRO 2, Doc 228.2.
Fortunately there were a few men from whom the Bishop got what he called ‘union d’esprit et de sentiment’, ‘unity of mind and heart’. There was Jean-Baptiste Épalle who pleased him from the beginning and whom he first appointed ‘Provincial’ and later Pro-Vicar. Épalle could write to Colin that there had never been any unpleasantness between the Bishop and himself. Another one was Antoine Garin who also did well in Pompallier’s eyes. He succeeded Épalle as ‘Provincial’. And then there was Philippe Viard, his former altar-boy, who remained an uncritical admirer and fan of Pompallier’s, so much so that the Bishop planned to take him to Europe as a companion. That the different ways these three related to the Bishop did not lead to tensions with the other men, is a credit to all of them.

When uncensored and damaging news finally reached Colin, in mid 1841, he overreacted and decided to stop sending missionaries to New Zealand. In fact, despite the Bishop’s moods and foibles, the situation in New Zealand was not unlivable. Only the Bishop’s favourites, Épalle, Garin and Viard, lived close to him, the other men were far away. Caught up in their work, they would see him only once or twice a year. They had grown used to him and he did not upset them all that much any more. Apart from the utter poverty, things had settled into a tolerable modus vivendi. Three weeks after his arrival in Kororareka, Séon wrote to Colin: ‘The priests do not seem to be discontented with the Bishop and I notice no signs of discord’.

By not appointing a Provincial with the full powers of a Major Superior, the Superior General put himself into a position of having to take action from the other side of the world and, due to the tyranny of distance, always and only on the basis of much-dated information. Pompallier’s unfortunate letters arriving many moths after the particular moment that triggered them, could only warp Colin’s assessments further. Cooperation between the Society of Mary and the Vicar Apostolic of Western Oceania broke down and Colin could not think of another solution than to stop sending more missionaries. The breakdown had a good effect as well; it turned Marist attention to the rest of the Pacific.

24. To Épalle, 15 November 1841, APM 1487/21201
25. Baty, LRO 1, Doc 113, 1.
26. LRO 1, Doc 102, 1.
Great missionaries all the same

Pompallier’s ‘handsome stature and demeanor, his intelligence, his fluency of expression and quick grasp of language, his beautiful celebration of liturgy, his intuitive sense of diplomacy and politics, his finesse, and his comprehension of customs, (. . .) all of this (. . .) catapulted him past huge handicaps to a position of competitive viability with the Protestants.’ Moreover, ‘the chiefly elements of Catholic worship, (. . .) the statues, bells, medals and miracles, and especially the sacred nature of the episcopate: the purple, the ring, the mitre, the crozier, the pectoral cross, and the benevolent distribution of largesse’ made him an instant personification of the Catholic Church. Pikopo (the Maori pronunciation of ‘bishop’) became equivalent to ‘Catholic’. Converts and adherents called themselves Pikopo. 27

In spite of their difficulties with him, the missionaries invariably confirm the picture Pompallier himself gives of his mission tours in a letter to Louis Querbes, the parish priest of his home parish in Vourles:

‘The most distinguished chiefs are the ones coming forward and proffering themselves to accompany me far off into their forests. One carries the altar, another the chest of altar vessels; others take charge of food and supplies for the party of people often numbering twenty-strong. Sometimes I can’t help laughing at the thought of myself alone in these vastnesses with this band of former cannibals, all of them poorly clad, tattooed and always armed with their wooden spears or else European arms. You might think I was leading a band of brigands; yet, I was never the slightest bit afraid in their company, they are the flock of Jesus Christ following their divine shepherd in the person of his minister. (. . .) If there is a stream to cross, the highest ranking chief argues his pre-eminent claim to the honour of carrying me on his shoulders, and normally he is obeyed.’ 28

28. Colin quoting to Cholleton from Pompallier’s letter. CS 1, doc. 173. English in Munro, page 76.
When in July–August 1841 the new missionaries of the fifth group travelled with Pompallier on the *Sancta Maria* to be taken to their stations, they marvelled at the enthusiastic reception he got everywhere.²⁹

In spite of the physical hardships involved, Pompallier loved every bit of it. He saw it as his privilege personally to make the first contacts, make friends with the chiefs, give the first instructions and prepare the way for his priests. He would not send a missionary to begin a station unless he knew there was a genuine opening. Apart from the South Island where the mission followed the establishment of the French colony, Pompallier could truthfully assure Colin that he was not sending his men anywhere unless he had personally prepared the way.

It explains how he saw his priests. They were to extend what he called his ‘episcopal paternity’ and be his alter ego among the flock. If they lacked ‘unity of spirit and feelings with the Bishop’, they would ‘replace in people’s hearts the affections that God has laid there’.³⁰ Those affections were true enough. Captain Gaston de Roquemaurel who visited the Bay of Islands under Dumont d’Urville observed: ‘The New Zealanders love our Bishop. Because to them he is good, humane, generous, they perhaps believe in the goodness of God who sent them this holy apostle.’³¹ A whaling captain who had visited the Bay of Islands told a shipping agent in Le Havre: ‘I can add what Monseigneur will not tell you; he is not only beloved but adored by the natives, liked and held in esteem by the English and Americans.’ The underlining is in the original.³²

If Colin had followed advice and appointed a financially independent Provincial in a house of his own on the other side of the Bay, taking care of the missionaries, Pompallier would have fumed at first, but in the end he would have got used to it. He might even have come to appreciate the advantages of shared responsibilities. It could have protected him from the excesses of his imperiousness and provided an environment for his extraordinary pastoral gifts to come to full fruition.

In spite of a difficult Bishop and clumsy administration on the part of the Society of Mary, the missionaries marched on. Landlubbers as they were, the rigours of travelling for many months in the cramped conditions of small sailing ships did not get them down. Wherever they landed, they went to meet the unknown people they found there, open-minded, non-

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³⁰. Pompallier to Épalle, 15 November 1841, APM 1487/21201.
³¹. Quoted in Munro, 73.
³². CS 1, Doc 165, 4.
judgmental, full of zeal and ready for anything. They shared the harsh conditions of the Polynesian people in what for Europeans was utter poverty. They took it all in good humour and with unflagging idealism.

On the whole, life in the Pacific was not as dangerous as people thought initially. In the first five years the mission lost only two men: Claude Bret, through an illness he picked up on Tenerife, and Peter Chanel through violence. He was killed by a Polynesian chief on the island of Futuna, and is rightly venerated as proto-martyr of Oceania, but certainly not because the Christian message ran into massive and violent resistance. There was a growing sympathy for the Faith on Futuna, especially among the younger people, which led to tensions. The introduction of novel religious convictions and moral values meant a clash of cultures. But it is the contention of this book that the mission was unwillingly drawn into a whirlpool not of its own making. It became a pivotal piece in a centuries-old political struggle that was not of a religious nature.

In the beginning of the mission, Bishop Pompallier had expressed concern about the missionaries’ spirituality. The experienced missionaries of the Foreign Missions in Paris asked themselves the same thing. Were they not too unworldly? Would their piety be able to cope with the reality of mission life? He need not have worried. Whatever can be said of Colin’s management, the spiritual formation of the missionaries was splendid. The Marists coped very well indeed, not only in standing upright under extreme conditions, but also in relating in a positive and fruitful way to the peoples of Polynesia.

Conclusion

That is how the first five years of the Catholic Church in the Western Pacific ended: the Polynesian island of Uvea (Wallis) converted but Futuna abandoned temporarily after the killing of Peter Chanel. Significant progress on the North Island of New Zealand but Bishop Pompallier on the point of leaving for Rome, at his wit’s end how to avoid bankruptcy. In France, Father Colin falls back on his principle: ‘Either the Bishop respects their rule or the religious withdraw’. Cooperation with Bishop Pompallier seemed impossible. In August 1842 Father Colin send the last three missionaries to New Zealand. After that he will send no more Marists to New Zealand. The Society would redirect its missionary effort to the new Vicariate of Central Oceania.

33. FS, Doc 141, 13.
Appendix

The Real Heroes

First, what happened to Bishop Pompallier after the period dealt with in this book? In 1842 his vast Vicariate was divided when the islands of Polynesia were cut off and became the Apostolic Vicariate of Central Oceania under Bishop Bataillon. Later on Melanesia was cut off as well. Pompallier went to Europe in 1846 and in 1848 Wellington became a separate Diocese under Bishop Viard. Pompallier stayed on as Bishop of Auckland. He returned to France in 1868, he resigned and retired to Puteaux (Seine) where he died in 1871. His remains were returned to New Zealand in 2001 and reinterred in 2002 under the altar at St Mary’s, Motuti in the Hokianga area, where he had begun his ministry in 1838.

The real heroes of the story are the missionaries who volunteered for the unknown and daunting mission of the Western Pacific. They did not expect ever to return to their home country and see their parents and families again. Imbued with Colin’s spiritual formation, they gaily abandoned everything for the sake of the Gospel, trusting in God alone.

Of the first band, Claude Bret died and was buried at sea and Peter Chanel was martyred in 1841 on Futuna Island. His remains were transferred to New Zealand, then to France and Rome. In 1954 Peter Chanel was canonised a Saint and acclaimed Protomartyr of Oceania. His remains were eventually returned to Futuna. They are venerated in Poi where he lived and was killed in 1841.

Peter Chanel’s companion, Brother Marie-Nizier Delorme, returned to Futuna in 1842 and stayed there for 26 years. After two more years in Samoa and eight in Sydney he asked to be allowed to return to France. The long voyage was too much for his weakened health. He died shortly after arriving in London, in 1874. His tomb is in Whitechapel.

Pierre Bataillon (1810–1877) converted Wallis Island and baptised the last converts in 1842. The next year he became the first Vicar Apostolic of the new Vicariate of Central Oceania. Under his direction the mission
spread to Samoa, Fiji and Tonga. He was invited to attend the First Vatican Council but for reasons of health he declined. He died in Wallis in 1877 and is buried in Mua.

His companion, Brother **Joseph Luzy**, stayed in Wallis until 1851 and was then transferred to Sydney for health reasons where he stayed for another 22 years. He died there in 1873 and is buried in Villa Maria, Hunter’s Hill.

**Catherin Servant** was Bishop Pompallier’s companion during the difficult year and a half on the isolated Hokianga River in New Zealand. After the Bishop moved to the Bay of Islands he stayed on and became an expert in Maori customs and language. After the death of Peter Chanel he volunteered to take Chanel’s place. He received the people of Futuna into the Church and was their pastor for thirteen years. After two years in Samoa (Tutuila) he returned to Futuna and died there shortly afterwards in 1860.

Brother **Michel Colombon** who passed through the same difficult period on the Hokianga with Pompallier and Servant, was dismissed by Pompallier and lived as a layman, always faithful to his vows. In his latter days he was known as ‘Jimmy the gardener’. He died and was buried in 1877 in Reefton, New Zealand.

**Claude Baty** led the second band round Cape Horn via Valparaiso, Tahiti, Wallis and Futuna. In New Zealand he was the first priest in the newly founded capital of Auckland. After ten years he had to withdraw to Sydney because of tuberculosis. In the hope that the good climate of Île des Pins (New Caldonia) would benefit him he went there in 1850, but died soon after arrival.

**Jean-Baptiste Épalle** of the same band worked for a short time in Whangaroa but won the trust of Pompallier and became his Pro-Vicar. He returned to France to report on the mission and was chosen to be the Vicar Apostolic of Melanesia and Micronesia. He led the first group of missionaries to the Solomon Islands where he was killed in the first contact with the people of Isabel Island in 1845.

Of the same group was **Maxime Petit** who, after a short period at headquarters managing the Procure, was the first priest to settle in the Kaipara area of the North Island. He then worked for several years in the Hokianga area. He returned to France for reasons of health and died in Toulon in 1858.

Of the three Brothers in the same group, **Élie-Régis Marin** was involved in building new mission stations in Whangaroa, Whakatane, Ota-
ki, Wanganui and Waitara. He was a great farmer, planted fruit trees and vineyards everywhere but was also active as a catechist. He died in 1872.

Brother Florentin Françon, after some years at Akaroa on the South Island and in Auckland was for many years with the pioneers in Hawke’s Bay and the founders of Meeanee. In 1876 he took his retirement in Villa Maria Sydney where he worked the gardens. He died in Sydney in 1903, at the age of 88.

The third Brother was Marie-Augustin Drevet. After a few years in New Zealand he went to Wallis where he built several churches and was known for digging fresh water wells. In 1855 he returned to France and left religious life.

Father Jean-Baptiste Petitjean (1811–1876) led the third group to the Pacific, the first one to travel via London and Sydney. Working in various places in New Zealand he became an impressive Maori scholar and speaker. He founded the first Catholic school in Auckland and then spent most of his apostolic life in Wellington.

Father Jean-Baptiste Comte was sent to found the first mission on the South Island, in Akaroa. In 1844 he began working in Wellington from where he went back to France in 1855 and returned to the diocesan priesthood.

After a short stay as the first priest in Tauranga, Father Philippe Viard (1809–1872) stayed with Bishop Pompallier as his travel companion and secretary. He went with the Bishop to Wallis and brought the remains of Peter Chanel back to New Zealand. After the departure of Father Épalle for Europe, he took his place as Pro-Vicar. He was consecrated a Bishop in 1846 as Coadjutor of Pompallier and became Apostolic Administrator of Wellington when the Vicariate of New Zealand was divided into the Dioceses of Auckland and Wellington. He became Bishop of Wellington in 1860 and attended the First Vatican Council in 1870, returned to New Zealand in 1871 and died 2 June 1872. He is buried in the Catholic Cathedral in Wellington.

Joseph Chevron was the first missionary to go to Tonga in 1842. He stayed there for 42 years and is rightly known as the ‘Apostle of Tonga’. He died there in 1884.

Brother Attale Grimaud went with Father Chevron to Tonga and died there five years later in 1847.

Father Jean Pezant led the fourth group to Oceania, travelling on a naval ship. He worked in Akaroa, Waikato (Tauranga) and Rangiaowhia
until he went to Wanganui and later to Blenheim and Picton. He died in New Zealand in 1880.

Father Jean-André Tripe worked in Akaroa but returned to France after three years and rejoined the diocesan clergy of his home Diocese.

Brother Claude Bertrand served in various mission stations but especially in Nelson where he stayed for more than 40 years and died in 1893.

Brother Amon Duperron left the mission on arrival in New Zealand and died in a hunting accident a few months later.

Antoine Séon led the fifth, large group leaving in December 1840 and worked in various missions in the North as well as the South Island where he made missionary tours in Canterbury and Otago. He died at Meeanee Flat in 1878.

Michel Borjon founded the mission at Maketu. In 1842 he was appointed to Wellington but perished on the way to his new appointment in a shipwreck with his companion Brother Deodat Villemagne (from the sixth group).

Antoine Garin got along exceptionally well with Bishop Pompallier and was Provincial for some years. He worked among the Maori people of the north until 1848 when he was appointed to Howick near Auckland and from 1850 to his death in 1884 he was the ‘Apostle of Nelson’.

Joseph Roulleaux was ordained a priest in New Zealand after his arrival and sent the next year to Futuna where he worked for ten years. Two very difficult years in Fiji ruined his health and he returned to France where he died in 1876.

Louis Rozet went to Oceania as a diocesan priest. He worked under Bishop Pompallier and later Bishop Viard in Wellington. In 1853 he was sent on business to Europe. He entered the Society of Mary in 1854 and stayed in France where he died in 1884.

Brother Euloge Chabany stayed for several years in Rotorua after which he worked in the South Island, and from 1858 in Wanganui where he was killed in the Maori war of the Hau-Haus in 1864. He was buried in the same mass grave as the warriors.

Brother Justin Perret started the mission of Maketu with Father Borjon after which he worked in Opotiki and Tauranga. In 1857 he was repatriated to France because of a progressive mental illness. He died in 1871.

Father Colin encouraged Brother Pierre-Marie Pérénon to pursue studies for the priesthood in Oceania. He did so but his poor health stopped him from reaching his ideal. He got along well with Bishop Pom-
pallier and travelled with him to Europe in 1846. He was Director of several Marist Brothers’ schools in France and he died in 1873.

Brother **Colomb Poncet** proved to be unsuitable for the missions and for religious life. He returned to France in 1845 after which he returned to secular life.

Brother **Emery Roudet** was a tailor by profession and as such of great service in the New Zealand mission. He learnt the printing trade as well. He suffered in the Maori war in 1845. He returned to France in 1852 and died in 1882.

Brother **Basile Monchalin** worked mostly in Kororareka until 1851 when he was stationed in Ahuriri, Hawke’s Bay, where he built an impressive herd of cattle and a flourishing farm. He died there after 47 years, in 1898.

**Benjamin Dausse** who left as a layman for the missions found that his health would not stand up to the travelling and the work. He left the group in Cape Town and returned to France. The second layman, **Louis Perret**, reached the mission but was very upset by the financial and material chaos. He found there was no need for his services as an architect and he returned to France.

The third lay-missionary, **Jean-François Yvert** became a great missionary. He assembled the printing machine that he had brought to New Zealand in forty-two crates and together with the Brothers he produced 30,000 volumes in eight years. He opened a place to train teachers, the first one in New Zealand. After 1859 he moved to Wellington. He remained a layman but lived as a Brother in the religious community. He died in Wellington in 1867.

Father **Jean Forest** led the sixth group in November 1841 and came as an official Visitor on behalf of Father Colin. He worked mainly among the European settlers, first in Auckland and then in Napier where he stayed for 25 years until his death in 1884.

Father **Jérôme Grange** was sent to Tonga with Father Chevron but his health forced him to go to Sydney after three years. He was involved in the beginning of the mission in New Caledonia and wounded in the attack on Balade that killed Brother Blaise Marmoilon. He returned to France and was a chaplain to the Marist Brothers until his death in 1852.

Father **Euloge Reignier** worked in various places until he went to Meeanee in 1851 where he stayed until his death in 1888. He is known as the ‘Apostle of Hawke’s Bay’.
Father Jean Lampila went to Oceania as a seminarian and was ordained in Hokianga six months after his arrival. He served in several missions and parishes, such as Wanganui, New Plymouth and the Lower Hutt. In 1888 he returned to France and was a chaplain in his home town. He died in 1897.

Brother Déodat Villemagne was the last Marist Brother from the Hermitage before the superiors stopped sending Brothers for three years. He died at sea with Father Borjon.

Brother Luc Macé worked as a carpenter and builder in many places. Among other things he built the house for Bishop Pompallier in Koro-rareka. In 1854, when in Lower Hutt, he stepped out of religious life and seems to have gone to Australia.

In all there were forty-two men that Jean-Claude Colin sent out as Superior General in the first five years that we have considered in this book. He recognised the call from on high in their hearts and took the responsibility of judging that call genuine. As he said himself, he saw them 'march like the apostles to the conquest of souls. The apostles had left all things, they relied on nothing human but on the grace and the strength of their good Master. Yes, and with that as their only help, they changed the world.'

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>atua muri</td>
<td>Futuna</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>charms, small offerings to ancestral spirits to obtain favours</td>
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<tr>
<td>farani</td>
<td>Futuna</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>French</td>
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<td>kainga</td>
<td>Maori</td>
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<td></td>
<td>family group</td>
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<td>kava</td>
<td>Polynesia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>beverage from roots of a sort of pepper shrub</td>
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<tr>
<td>lava</td>
<td>Futuna</td>
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<td>vanquished</td>
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<td>lavelua</td>
<td>Wallis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>title of the paramount chief of the island</td>
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<td>lotu</td>
<td>Polynesia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>religion</td>
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<tr>
<td>lotu papalangi</td>
<td>Polynesia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>white man's religion, ie Christianity</td>
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<tr>
<td>malo</td>
<td>Futuna</td>
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<td></td>
<td>victorious</td>
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<tr>
<td>malié</td>
<td>Futuna</td>
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<td>hurrah!</td>
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<tr>
<td>mana</td>
<td>Polynesia</td>
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<td>special power due to protection by ancestral spirits</td>
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<td>pah</td>
<td>Maori</td>
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<td>fortified village</td>
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<td>papalangi</td>
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<td>white man, European</td>
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<td>tapa</td>
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<td>cloth made from bark of a tree</td>
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<td>tapu</td>
<td>Polynesia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>taboo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uvea</td>
<td>Polynesia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Indigenous name for Wallis Island</td>
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Index of Persons

In this Index no mention is made of the main actors, Father Jean-Claude Colin and Bishop François Pompallier. Authors referred to in footnotes are only entered in this Index if their views are discussed or commented upon.

Religious are indicated with
(fms) Marist Brothers,
(mep) *Missions Étrangères de Paris* (Foreign Missions of Paris).
(osb) Benedictines
(sm) Marists (priests or sisters),
(ss.cc) Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (Picpus)

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