

Marianist Founders  
&  
Marianist Martyrs



### **Blessed William Joseph Chaminade (1761-1850)**

William Joseph Chaminade was the second youngest of fifteen children of Blaise Chaminade and Catherine Bethone. Born in 1761 in Perigueux, sixty miles northeast of Bordeaux, he went at the age of ten to the College of Mussidan, where one of his brothers was a professor. First as a student, then as teacher, steward, and chaplain, he remained at the college for twenty years. The turmoil that marked the beginnings of the French Revolution forced him to leave. Undaunted by rising political tension and religious persecution, Chaminade redoubled his efforts to continue his ministry. In the first wave of the forced exile of religious and priests from France, Chaminade remained. Defying authorities, he went underground disguised as a tinker or needle peddler and continued to bring to the church of Bordeaux his compassion and ministry. It was during this period of the revolution that Chaminade met Marie Thèrèse Charlotte de Lamourous.

In 1797, he came out of hiding to exercise his ministry openly. But a sudden shift in the political situation caught him off guard. He was falsely accused of having returned from exile without permission and was forced to leave France. Taking refuge in Spain, he spent three years in Saragossa praying at the shrine of Our Lady of the Pillar, sharing life with thousands of exiles and planning for an unknown but hoped for return to France.

With the end of the revolution in 1800, he returned to Bordeaux. Appointed administrator of the badly devastated Diocese of Bazas, he managed to restore it to some semblance of normalcy within two years. At the time, he began in Bordeaux a work that would occupy him for the next fifty years.

Chaminade gathered together a number of young men and women, many of whom he had known before and during the years of persecution and formed a "community" of mutual

support and Christian outreach that attracted people from all sectors of society and parts of the city. He first worked in limited and temporary quarters, but in 1804 he established the permanent headquarters for his sodality in the former chapel of the Madelonnette Sisters. The site became the center of the Sodality of the Madeleine. It remains today in the hands of the Marianists and is a vital urban church in Bordeaux.

Chaminade's concept of the Sociality was to gather all Christians-men and women, young and old, lay and clerical, rich and poor-into a unique community of Christ's followers unafraid to be known as such, committed to living and sharing their faith and dedicated to supporting one another in living the Gospel to the fullest. The enterprise was placed under the patronage and protection of Mary.

As his insights developed, he came to see the Sociality as the Marianist family, dedicated to sharing her mission of bringing Christ into the contemporary world. It was characterized by a deep sense of the equality of all Christians, regardless of state of life; by energizing a spirit of independence; by effective concern for individual spiritual growth; and the desire, in Chaminade's words, of "presenting to the world the amazing and attractive reality of a people of saints." Side by side with him in this endeavor were Adele de Batz de Trenquelléon and Marie Thérèse de Lamourous.

In 1816, together with Venerable Adele de Batz de Trenquelléon, he founded at Agen the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, and the following year, at Bordeaux, the Society of Mary (Marianists).

The two institutes developed rapidly in France and in 1839 received the decretum laudis from Pope Gregory XVI. Since teaching was a primary need at the time, both institutes dedicated themselves to primary schools, secondary schools, trade schools and normal schools (teacher training). They taught to educate and form their students in the faith.

During the years after 1830, Chaminade gave priority to drafting the Constitutions and wrote important circulars on consecration-covenant with Mary and on Marianist religious life. The Society of Mary continued to grow in France, then in Switzerland (1839) and the United States (1849).

The last ten years of Chaminade's life were difficult. He faced these difficulties with confidence in Mary, faithful to his conscience and to the Church, filled with faith and charity. He died peacefully in Bordeaux on January 22, 1850.

*Further information can be found in Vincent Gizard, S.M. Blessed William Joseph Chaminade: Founder of the Marianist Family. Dayton, Ohio: North American Center for Marianist Studies, 2000.*



### **Blessed Adele de Batz de Trenquelléon (1789-1828)**

Like Marie Thérèse, Adele was of noble birth; unlike Marie Thérèse, she was of a wealthy and aristocratic family. Her father, the Baron de Trenquelléon, was an officer in the king's royal guard. When Adele was two-and-a-half years old, he voluntarily went into exile to support the anti-revolutionary movement. In 1797, the Baroness and her two children were forced into exile by the same law that entrapped Blessed Chaminade. After six years of separation, the Baron was able to join his family.

Shortly after the return of the family to Trenquelléon, some fifteen miles west of the city of Agen, Adele embarked on a twofold career of spiritual growth. When she was not yet thirteen, she pestered her brother's tutor to give her a personal Rule of Life to prepare herself for the Carmelite vocation she so ardently desired to follow. By the time she was fifteen, she and a small group of friends had formed an association of prayer and support to promote their own spiritual growth and to prepare themselves for a good death. Given the health hazards of the time and the ever-present possibility of renewed anti-Catholic persecution, it was not unusual for even young girls to think seriously of their death. This spiritual union spread rapidly and soon counted some two hundred young women scattered over an area the size of the state of Ohio.

By 1810, a number of young women, like a number of the young men and women of the Sodality of the Madeleine were looking for some form of religious life. By 1814, their plans had taken clear shape. After the abdication of Napoleon and the death of her father, Adele was able to move freely and openly and put her plan into motion. Under Chaminade's guidance and with the encouragement of Bishop Jacoupy of Agen, she and her companions

in 1816 inaugurated their community living: the Daughters of Mary. Like the Sodality, the community saw itself as called to give its members mutual support, to engage in Christian outreach to the world, and to carry Mary's mission of giving birth to Christ in every age. They integrated remarkably well the characteristics of the contemplative life of the Carmelites and the active missionary thrust of the Sodality.

After the foundation of the religious community, the Sodality continued to be a primary concern for the foundress. Though Church Law of the time required that women religious be cloistered, each of the five convents founded during her brief twelve years in religious life was the center of a Sodality for Young Women, a Married Women's Sodality, and a Third Order Secular, which carried on the community's mission beyond the walls of the enclosure. For years, she looked forward to the day when a Third Order Regular could be founded, so that the mission of the Sisters might reach those neglected rural areas with which she had been so familiar. Only in 1836, eight years after her death, was this dream realized. The Daughters of Mary and the thriving Third Order Regular were combined in 1918, when church law redefined them both as "religious institutes."

*For additional information see Joseph Stefanelli. S.M. Adele. Aristocrat for the Poor. Dayton. Ohio: North American Center for Marianist Studies. 1999.*



### **Venerable Marie Thérèse Charlotte de Lamourous (1754-1836)**

Marie Thérèse, the eldest of eleven children, was of a noble, but relatively poor family. Her father, a lawyer, apparently was not skilled at being a business manager and had to sell various parcels of family property in order to make ends meet. All that remained for Marie Thérèse's inheritance was a portion of her mother's estate, a country home and farm at Pian in Medoc, twelve miles northwest of Bordeaux.

Born and raised in Barsac, she moved to Bordeaux with her family when she was twelve. Very close to her mother-they related almost as equals-she became head of the family at her mother's death in 1785. When nobles were forced out of the port cities in 1794, she retired to the family estate at Pian. The pastor at the local church was a constitutional cleric, so she refused to attend services. But she remained on good terms with the man and was instrumental in having him renounce his civil oath.

With his departure, the parish church was abandoned. Marie Thérèse filled this void, and she became the heart and soul of the parish community for the next six years. She gathered the parishioners for prayer, religious instruction, family counseling, and secret Masses celebrated by disguised and fugitive priests. For all practical purposes, she was the "pastor" of the flock and was dearly beloved by all. When the revolution was over and priests could function in the open again, she had a hard time persuading "her" parishioners to go to the church again instead of coming to her.

She kept in touch with Chaminade during his three-year exile, 1797-1800. On his return she worked with him to develop the Sodality. But her major work after 1800 was breathing life back into a badly needed service in Bordeaux: providing a place to live and an opportunity to change for the prostitutes who wished to redirect their lives.

Such work had begun before the revolution by two of her friends. When calm was restored, one of them, Jeanne Germaine de Pichon, took it up again. When she approached Chaminade to ask for Marie Thérèse's help, his response was negative. He had counted on Marie Thérèse for his work with the Sodality and was unwilling to let her spend energy on something else. On second thought, however, he left the decision up to her. She, at first, would not hear of it. But, after a couple of visits to the house where the prostitutes had been sheltered, Marie Thérèse changed her mind.

Even though she had been in poor health since her birth almost fifty years earlier, she approached her work with incredible energy, determination, compassion, and creativity. When the number of prostitutes proved too large for several different rented locales, she made a leap of faith. Without funds, but with great confidence in God, she purchased at auction a former convent, named it Maison de la Misericorde (the House of Mercy), and took in as many prostitutes as it could hold, eventually up to four hundred at a time. The only condition for entry was that the women wished to change their way of life. They came freely; they stayed freely. Despite overwhelming obstacles and difficulties, the work prospered. Through the years until Marie Thérèse's death, Chaminade was at her side with his encouragement, fundraising, spiritual guidance, and friendship.

It would be impossible to exaggerate the impact Marie Thérèse had on the work of the Misericorde and as co-founder with Chaminade of the Marianist Family. Confined to her bed for most of the last ten years of her life, Marie Thérèse continued to guide with her same loving heart. On September 14, 1836, she raised her eyes to heaven and peacefully died. The official process for her canonization began in 1911. On December 21, 1989, the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints decreed that she had practiced heroic virtue during her lifetime.

*For further details see Joseph Stefanelli, S.M. Marie Thérèse De Lamourous. Dayton, Ohio: North American Center for Marianist Studies, 2001.*



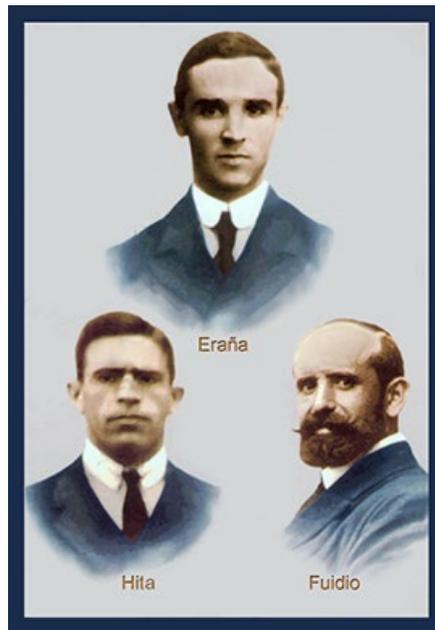
**Blessed Father Jakob Gapp, S.M. 1897-1943**

Jakob Gapp was born on July 6, 1897, in Wattens (Tyrol, Austria), and professed his first vows in the Society of Mary in 1921. He was ordained a priest in Fribourg (Switzerland) in 1930. In the following years he worked as a religion teacher and spiritual director and performed his priestly duties in various Marianist institutions in Austria. He had a special concern for the poor and unemployed.

Faithful to the teachings of the Church, he proclaimed the incompatibility of the principles of National Socialism with Christianity and beginning in 1938 was consequently persecuted. In 1939, at the wish of his superiors, he fled to France and then to Spain. There, in these countries, he also preached the truth about how the Church was being persecuted by the Nazis. On November 9, 1942, at the Spanish French border in Hendaye, he was kidnapped by the Gestapo, arrested, and brought to Berlin.

During the interrogation, he remained unshaken in his defense of the Church and of the faith. He was subsequently condemned to death, and on August 13, 1943, was beheaded in the Plötzensee prison in Berlin. His remains were never released for burial because the Nazis feared that Jakob Gapp might be honored as a martyr. On November 24, 1996, he was beatified by Pope John Paul II in Rome, Italy.

*For additional information, please see the following: Levit, S.M., Josef. Blessed Jakob, Marianist. Dayton, Ohio: North American Center for Marianist Studies, 1998.*



**Blessed Brother Carlos Erana, S.M.**  
**Blessed Brother Jesus Hita, S.M.**  
**Blessed Brother Fidel Fuidio, S.M.**

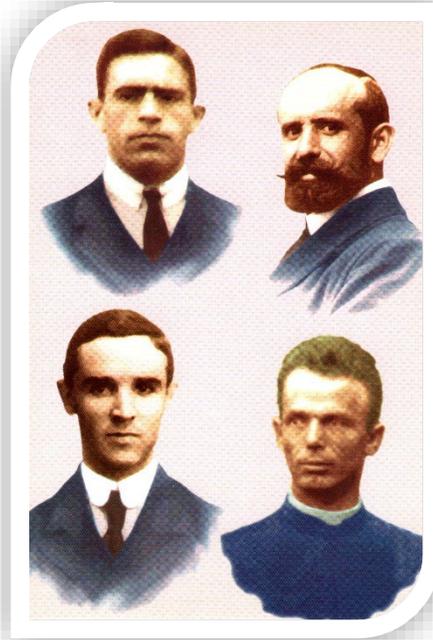
Brother Carlos Erana was born in Aozaraza-Arechavaleta, Spain, on November 2, 1884. He professed vows in the Society of Mary in 1903. He dedicated his whole life to the Christian education of children. He was Director in the Marianist schools in Ciudad Real, Tetuan (Morocco), and Madrid. When the religious persecution began, he moved to Ciudad Real, where he had earlier worked so hard on behalf of the very poor. This time, however, he was imprisoned, and on September 18, 1936, he was shot because he was a religious educator.

Brother Jesus Hita was born in Calahorra, Spain, on April 17, 1900. He made his religious profession as a Marianist in 1918. He was dedicated to teaching, devoting himself to the Christian education of youth. During the religious persecution he lived for two months in the home of a pious family. He prepared himself for martyrdom and was martyred on September 25, 1936.

Brother Fidel Fuidio was born in Yecorn, Spain, on April 24, 1880. He dedicated himself to the service of God in the Society of Mary in 1897. He was an excellent educator and easily gained the trust of the young. He gave his student an eagerness for research. He spent three months in Ciudad Real in painful captivity, which he endured with great faith and fortitude. He was shot on October 17, 1936.

These three Marianists were beatified by Pope John Paul II on Oct. 1, 1995.

*For additional information, please see the following: Ortega, S.M., Emilio. The Blesseds Carlos, Jesus, Fidel, Marianists. Dayton, Ohio. North American Center for Marianist Studies. 1999.*



**Blessed Brother Florencio Cejudo, S.M.**

**Blessed Brother Sabino Erraski, S.M.**

**Blessed Father Miguel Garay, S.M.**

**Blessed Brother Joaquín Salazar, S.M.**

Brother Florencio was born on May 10, 1909. He professed his first vows in the Society of Mary in 1926. He obtained his university degree and was sent to teach at Marianist schools where he was greatly admired by his students. Like his brothers, as the Civil War in Spain broke out, he was forced to seek refuge with a family. He was martyred for his faith in Madrid, Spain, on September 14, 1936.

Brother Sabino was born on December 29, 1911. He made his first profession in the Society of Mary in 1928. He taught in Marianist schools in Spain. He was known for his kind smile and his intense life of faith. When the Civil War broke out and the religious persecution was declared, he sought refuge in the home of a sympathetic family. He was arrested and ultimately shot in the presence of his fellow Marianists on September 14, 1936.

Father Miguel was born on February 17, 1885. He professed first vows in the Society of Mary in 1903 and was ordained a priest in 1915. He devoted himself as a teacher and chaplain at various Marianist schools in Spain. Father Miguel was known as a very dedicated teacher and was respected by his students. When the religious persecution broke out at the time of the Civil War, Father Miguel continued to minister while in hiding. On July 28, 1936, he was arrested and shot by one of revolutionary militias.

Brother Joaquin was born on April 16, 1910. He professed his first vows in the Society of Mary in 1928. Having completed his university degree, he served as a teacher at Marianist schools and was dedicated to his profession as a teacher. Following the military uprising and subsequent revolution in Spain in 1936, he took refuge in the house of a family friend. He was soon arrested and on September 14, 1936, he was shot in the company of his fellow Marianist brothers Sabino and Florencio.

On November 6, 2007, these four members of the Society of Mary were beatified by Pope Benedict XVI.