

Section 6

FR. CHEVALIER'S WAY OF LIVING A DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

(continued)

Being in charge of the St.Cyr parish in Issoudun, with more than 13000 inhabitants, Fr. Chevalier engaged himself in a great variety of pastoral activities. He looked after the parish-schools, gave catechesis to groups of adults and children, visited the sick, and attended to the needs of the many visitors at his presbytery, more specifically the poor. At the same time, being the General Superior, he administered the MSC Congregation, and after the Congregation was spread abroad, visited the communities in foreign countries. He founded the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and brought together diocesan priests and lay people in a Third Order of the Sacred Heart, while accompanying them as a spiritual director. Later on, he became the spiritual founder of the MSC Sisters in Germany.

He spent his free time (late at night?) in reading and meditating on the Devotion of the Sacred Heart. Continuously, he tried to deepen his understanding of the meaning of the Devotion, resulting in two substantial volumes about the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Besides that, he wrote many other books and pamphlets, and it has been said, that when in Issoudun, he wrote an average of 10 letters a day!

So, Fr. Chevalier practiced the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus by *wholeheartedly* engaging himself in the occupations of his daily life, and by his way of associating with his confreres, parishioners and the other people he met. We may say, his spirituality was practical and down to earth.

However, we should not put him on a pedestal. He was an ordinary man with ordinary talents. He had flaws in his character, and he certainly made mistakes in carrying out his leadership functions. However, what made him special was his total commitment to the cause of Jesus, whom he called "the Sacred Heart". He devoted himself without reserve to the spreading of the

Devotion to the Sacred Heart, so that Jesus, the Sacred Heart, would be known and loved, everywhere.

A reflective moment

*For Fr. Chevalier,
practicing the 'Devotion to the Sacred Heart' meant
"devoting his whole life and all his works to the Sacred Heart of Jesus".
He did this by carrying out his daily obligations
with love and dedication to the people around him
and to those entrusted to his care,
both in the Congregations and in the Parish*

To read more

In this on-line course, it is not our intention to present a complete biography on Fr. Chevalier. For further reading about Fr. Chevalier and his works, we refer to:

E.J.Cuskelly MSC, "Jules Chevalier, Man with a Mission" (1975): a biography, describing the life, personality and works of Fr. Chevalier, his mission and his struggles.

Jean Tostain MSC, "Jules Chevalier. Who is he?" (1996): A short introduction to the life of Fr. Chevalier, covering the earlier part of his life and works.

Hans Kwakman MSC, "Jules Chevalier's Charism and the Identity of the Chevalier Family" (2011) explores the special Gift of the Spirit of Fr. Chevalier that he passed down to his spiritual sons and daughters of the Chevalier Family.

