

COMMITMENT BRINGS COURAGE

Posted on [May 23, 2012](#) by [franksantucci](#)

Two months earlier, Eugene had accepted to do the parish mission in the town of Barjols because he recognized its urgency:

More than fifty pastors are asking insistently for a mission... However, I am inclined to give you preference. It seems to me that our duty is to rush to where there is the most urgent need. They asked for us at Marseilles; we could expect consolation there, whereas at Barjols we must await only contradictions and difficulty...

Letter to the Pastor of Barjols, 20 August 1818, O.W. XIII, n. 14

Barjols was the main town of its district and was sometimes referred to as the “leather capital of France” because of its numerous tanneries and industry. It was known for the anti-religious sentiments of those who were in charge. The six Missionaries, who expected “contradictions and difficulties,” set out from Aix full of the apostolic enthusiasm and courage of their newly-made oblation. On arriving at Barjols, instead of finding hostility, they were overwhelmed by the warmth of the welcome they received.

Our reception seemed like a triumphant march. Vespers had finished when we arrived; the whole population rushed pell-mell to meet us before the procession started. The principal townspeople, the mayor and his assistants in full regalia followed the clergy. When we arrived at the church, we found it crammed and as many people remained outside as there were inside

Letter to Henri Tempier, 10 November 1818, O.W. VI n. 32

The “contradictions and difficulties” on the part of the authorities were to come, but the ordinary people were starved of spiritual nourishment and responded warmly to the presence and message of the Missionaries.

“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.” Nelson Mandela

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