

J.M.J.C.

ENCOURAGEMENT OFFERED BY CHAMINADE TO CHEVAUX

These are excerpts from a letter written by Blessed William Joseph Chaminade in Bordeaux to Father John Chevaux at Saint Remy dated February 7, 1834.

“It seems that your arms fall helpless when you see the young men who surround you and who have the same mission as you, full of good will but lacking in experience. Where did you learn the twelve apostles and the seventy-two disciples drew upon their experience before working at the great undertaking that had been assigned to them? They had good will, that is true, and that is all they had. The disciples of our Lord had no more aptitude than the apostles. They knew, as the apostles knew, their insufficiency only too well; but also like them, they had entire confidence in Him for the mission He had given.

“Oh, how much we have degenerated! Where then is our faith, our faith in Jesus Christ? I have no intention here, my dear son, of humiliating you or your collaborators, but to awaken you from the kind of stupor into which you have fallen and to recall to you what you all are by your entrance into the Society of Mary. You are real missionaries.

“The education of youth, whatever form it may take, is certainly not the end you must have proposed to yourselves in consecrating yourselves entirely to God under the protection of the august Mary. Teaching is but a means we use to fulfill our mission, to introduce everywhere, so to say, the spirit of faith and of religion and to multiply Christians.”

“You are all missionaries. Fulfill your mission! Real missionaries must in no way count on themselves alone, on their talents or their industry. Rather they must put all their confidence in the grace of their mission and also in the protection of the Blessed Virgin, who is working at this undertaking for which she was elevated to the Divine Motherhood.

“All must be well penetrated with the importance of the salvation of souls redeemed by the price of the blood of Jesus Christ. The principal end which all must propose to themselves, in all their efforts, but particularly in their spiritual exercises, must be the salvation of the pupils, the amendment of their failings and their progress in virtue. The work is common to all, and each one is jointly responsible, in a certain measure, for the entire thing.”