WHAT'S IN THE NAME "CHAMINADE"?

By Brother John Samaha, SM

Over the years many have questioned the origin of the name *Chaminade* and if it has a meaning. Thanks to the dedicated research of Marianist scholars like Father Herbert Kramer and Father Joseph Verrier, we have documented information.

Chaminade is an old family name in southern France. From the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries we find records of persons bearing that name in or near Bordeaux. Several were monks, one an abbot, in the monastery of Ste. Croix at Bordeaux. In those old records the name *La Caminada* is the precursor of *Chaminade. Chaminade* became more common in the seventeenth century.

The Meaning of Chaminade

Various historians, archivists, and archaeologists in France have attested to the origin and meaning of the name *Chaminade*, which evolved from *Caminade.* The name means presbytery, rectory or priest's house; because in those times few persons besides the bourgeois and the pastor owned a house with a chimney (*cheminée* in French). Even today in the region around Toulouse, France, the dialect term for rectory is *caminade*.

Many Chaminade Families in Périgueux

Most of the Chaminade families of Blessed William Joseph's native city resided in the cathedral parish of St. Front, where our Marianist Founder was baptized and spent his early years. Mussidan, where he later studied and taught, was also home to many Chaminade families.

The majority of Chaminade bread-winners were craftsmen, such as shoemakers, tailors, gardeners, farmers, laborers. Some worked in the legal profession. Father Chaminade's father was a window glass worker; his grandfather was a stone worker.

Cécile Chaminade - Not a Relative

For a time some thought that the celebrated composer and pianist Cécile Chaminade was a descendant of Father Chaminade's family. But this was found to be erroneous after Father Joseph Verrier pursued the question thoroughly with one of her nieces, Mme. Antoinette Chaminade Lorel, who lived in Monte Carlo.