

SAINT JOSEPH and our history 1865–1904

Our Congregation has always had a great devotion and confidence in St. Joseph. A statue in Salvador-Bahia is well known and much loved by our Sisters in Brazil.

“According to what has been passed on to us, Mother Saint Joseph Bouvaret very much wanted a statue of Saint Joseph carrying the Child Jesus in his arms for the College of the Blessed Sacrament, which she had just founded in Saint-Lô in 1865. Unfortunately, at the time it looked as though her dream would be scuppered as she didn't have enough money to pay for it. However, her wish did come true in a way that could be best described as “miraculous”. The story goes that it was St Joseph himself who bought the statue to fulfil Mother Saint Joseph's dream! According to the information of the Sister who was the doorkeeper, a venerable old man came to the door of the College and put down the statue, simply telling her that it was paid for. Then he disappeared! Because of “Combes law “ 1904, the Sisters were expelled and the College closed. The statue of St. Joseph was taken to the Mother-House which was then in Romans. The Sisters who were going to start a foundation in Brazil, 1904-1905, took the statue with them where it is honoured with special devotion. It is now located in one of the Houses in the Region. St. Joseph pray for us”.



The Sisters who were expelled from Saint-Lô offered to go to Brazil. In October 1904, Sr. M. David and 7 Sisters reconstituted the Community of Saint Lô in Nazaré-Bahia and started another college. Most certainly St Joseph would accompany their mission.



N° 09–10 -2021



Because the Covid 19 pandemic continues to spread, the return to school in Europe, Africa and the resumption of education in Brazil is a major challenge at this time. Obviously, irresponsible behaviour as well as selfish uncontrolled parties have not helped. The comment one often hears in relation to the tragedy of so many avoidable Covid deaths as well as the latest atrocities in Afghanistan is: “*this behaviour is hardly human, it's worse than animals*”. It disturbed Peter Vigne to see people allow evil passions dominate their lives leading them to what is morally unacceptable for themselves, their families and ultimately for society. A call to seek what is “GOOD”.

It's sheer folly!

“It is pitiful to see how the body, servant of the soul and those weak subjects of human reason, the passions, attack it with such disrespect and revolt against the soul, their Sovereign Ruler. Those who yield to the blind unreasoning impulses of their passions can be best described as more senseless than Reasonable!

***We hardly give that kind of abuse a second thought!**. On the contrary we have become so confused and insensitive that it seems perfectly normal and justifiable to yield to selfishness and pride.*

*My God, pity this poor Sovereign Ruler, our soul! See this gracious Monarch, so despised, insulted and rejected; **we don't even care!***

*She has very little control or influence over her estates, by that I mean “the body”. All her subjects work for themselves, so much so that if she asks for submission they rise up in revolt against her. She is reduced to such a pitiful state, that far from being the mistress she has become the servant, and a servant who is abused by **what is lowest in man, his passions.***



P.B.L 1-243

Peter Vigne

Afghanistan

Today, the very word “Afghanistan” evokes images of suffering, pain and compassion for the Afghan people. The following extract from the book “We have shared the bread and the salt” by Serge de Beaurecueil, a Dominican who lived for 20 years in Kabul, is a call to prayer.

“At night, when my people sleep, barefoot, squatting in the back of my little chapel, I make myself their intercessor. Like Abraham, like Jacob, like Moses, like Jesus. A sandalwood incense stick spreads its perfume, symbol of all those who feel burn out today from hard work, suffering and loneliness....

And I am here, overwhelmed by all the faults of my people, afflicted with all their sorrows, bearing the weight of their hopes..... All those who have fallen asleep today thinking they will only meet a Judge, I **present them to their Saviour** and I lead them to the fullness of the eternal Wedding Feast. All the little ones born today, I consecrate them **children of God**. All the prayers said today in homes or in mosques, I **transform them into “Our Father”**.....My heart is but a crucible where the refiner's fire, the fire of the love of Christ, purifies and changes every alloy to gold. I pray this night in the name of and with every Afghan who, moved by the Spirit, cries out “ABBA” Father. (Romans 8 verse 15)

8 September: Nativity of Our Lady; anniversary of Vows of our Founding Sisters.

3 October: Anniversary of the Beatification of Peter Vigne in 2004.

Give thanks to the Lord. May He continue to send workers into his vineyard.

UNCOMPROMISING and to the POINT

Peter Vigne doesn't mince his words! As part of the society of his time, he is in touch with reality and knows what is going on: good, bad and destructive. He knows the consequences and sufferings caused by the choices people make. Obviously, it is as a missionary priest that he writes, for the people he met, believers and non-believers alike during the many missions he preached.

The text is honest and forthright, written in the expressions of the epoch, but still valid today, even if it makes us feel slightly uncomfortable. Peter Vigne calls us to watch over our desires, to react to what leads neither to personal good, nor to the good of others. He calls us to tame **"our earthly passions"** ... "passions" that can be linked to power, sensuality, possessions, pride, selfishness ...; these ultimately result in **"that kind of abuse"** of our true and innermost self: the soul.

You can see how confused and numbed we have become in today's world, evident in the decline of moral and ethical behaviour. We should always keep in mind Peter Vigne's affirmation : **« a person is of infinite value »**. He was totally convinced of the dignity of each person and wanted everyone to be treated with care and respect. He was **« passionate »** for Jesus Christ and for those to whom he was sent.

A Reflection for everyone to continue ! B.R.

WHAT DOES THE CATECHISM SAY?

Feelings or passions are emotions or movements of the sensitive appetite that incline us to act or not to act in regard to something felt or imagined to be good or evil. CCC1763

Passions are morally good when they contribute to a good action, evil in the opposite case. The upright will orders the movements of the senses it appropriates to the good and to beatitude; an evil will succumbs to disordered passions and exacerbates them.

Emotions and feelings can be taken up into the virtues or perverted by the vices. CCC 1768

When it is a matter of the moral norms prohibiting intrinsic evil, there are no privileges or exceptions for anyone. It makes no difference whether one is the master of the world or the "poorest of the poor" on the face of the earth. Before the demands of morality we are all absolutely equal.

John Paul II Veritatis Spl. 96

Think of your own history when you pray, and there you will find much mercy. This will also increase your awareness that the Lord is ever mindful of you; he never forgets you. So it makes sense to **ask him to shed light on the smallest details of your life**, for he sees them all.

Pope Francis Gaudete et exultate 153



This old shoe shares a memory



They say I'm the only shoe that remains of all those worn by Peter Vigne and here I am, a well worn one at that. As you can see from my appearance I have been cut and recut many times without respect for what I represent. Despite that, I am here on behalf of all those who accompanied him on his countless journeys during his 46 years as a missionary priest! From 1694 to 1700, we didn't suffer too much, we stayed in the parish of Saint-Agrève, which was the young curate's first "appointment". It was good and we had no complaints, but we could tell he wanted to walk more, after all we are walking shoes! Peter wanted to carry the Good News of Christ to distant horizons....

In 1700 we were with the Vincentian priests. During his two years of "formation" we didn't move much. Then, for four years we were his companions during his first missions. In 1706 my predecessors travelled as far as Toulouse ... it was serious, Peter was thinking about his future. Finally, to be faithful to God's call he would become a full-time missionary. Pity us! Obviously we were going to follow him everywhere, or rather carry him, and later, his confessional, which did not suit our soles, but that's what we were there for!...



We soon had to face the rough and rugged maintain paths. We barely noticed them in the Summer as we listened to Peter singing loudly to his heart's content as he walked. *"Jesus, may our hands and eyes, be always raised to Heaven, our heritage forever. May we always remember it as we journey this way making it a daily passing place"* What about Winter? It was something else with snow, wind and rain...and his feet were constantly freezing, even though we did our best. Father Vigne never complained but stamped us heavily on the ground to keep his feet warm. Ouch!! It hurt. On arrival at the place of mission he usually lodged with a parishioner....and there near the fireside we could finally dry off and warm up.

It was a great blessing that we were so discreet....he spent hours in the Confessional and he heard all manner of things never to be repeated, as you know. But with a warm heart he welcomed everything *"with patience and gentle charity"*. He was so happy to impart God's forgiveness, while we of course, kept quiet and still!

In churches and chapels he kept us on our knees in adoration before the One whom he loved above all: Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Sometimes we heard him quietly say: *"My Redeemer/ wishes to live in my heart....His wants to remain with us....Like a Pelican He nourishes us with his Blood/ See how he loves us!"*

Of course, given the amount of wear and tear, I have had a lot of predecessors. In 1724, when he visited the Priests of the Blessed Sacrament in Valence he received *"one pair of shoes and two second hand pairs"*. In 1728 he was given *"a pair of shoes, a second hand pair and yet another that I left him"*. It was by means of compensation for the Masses he celebrated for them. He was wearing us out so much!

Finally there was Boucieu. We were at home there, happy to be with the Sisters and sure that we would be doing the Stations of the Cross, the Calvary journey once again!

B.R.