

Who was Father Jean Coste?

Father Jean Coste was a French Marist priest and a scholar of international standing. He was born in Clermont-Ferrand, Oct 8, 1926, and died in Rome, Aug 12, 1994.

As a distinguished medievalist his research and studies included Medieval Topography at the University La Sapienza, Rome, and the process of Pope Boniface VIII at Ecole Française ("Boniface VIII en procès. Articles of accusation et des témoins Deposition - 1303-1311", a work of more than a thousand pages published posthumously in 1995).

As archivist in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, he reorganized the entire Archive, tracking and translating ancient unpublished documents relevant to the history and topography of Rome.

Jean Coste arrived in Rome in 1953 just two years after his ordination. In the fall of 1956 he chose to carry out his pastoral work on the fringes in the villages of Torre Angela, Tor Bella Monaca and Village Breda.

In this mission, which lasted for more than two decades, Fr Coste was not only involved with the care of souls, but encouraged lively cultural activities and archaeological study especially amongst young people in the area.

A group of young pioneers, led by Father Jean Coste, made significant archaeological discoveries, including some dating from the late second century B.C.. Another was the epitaph belonging to the mausoleum of Publio Valerio Prisco second century A.D., found in the estate Due Torri, in the locality Giardinetti, and illustrated by Professor Attilio Degrassi in the Acts of Accademia dei Lincei.

Research over the years brought Jean Coste to publish interesting studies – very much appreciated by the academic world - as well as the compilation of an important archive staff of maps, photographs, archaeological sites cards until then unknown, slides, and research material on ancient unpublished documents. All this he put at the disposal of historians, researchers, students and local history buffs.

Fr Coste was also a key historian of the Congregation of the Marist Fathers (Society of Mary) to which he belonged, and biographer of their founder.

The dedication of this award to Father Jean Coste is therefore a recognition of his lengthy research and in memory of a great teacher and humble, charismatic priest, who, in addition to the love for the history and archaeology, knew how to transfuse in his students respect for others and intellectual honesty.