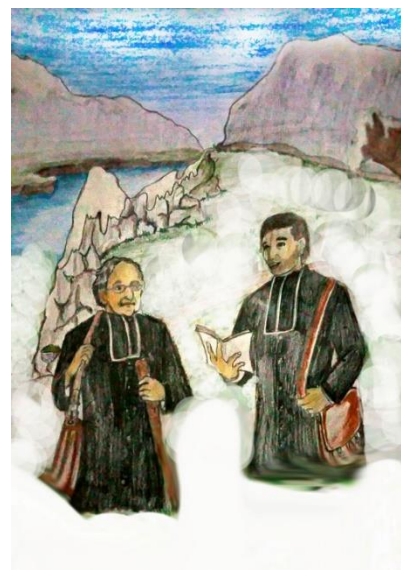


From Fr Justin Taylor's *Jean-Claude Colin, Reluctant Founder, 1790-1875* Ch 7 ('The Society of Mary begins (1823-1825)'), pp 229-230.

Jean-Claude Colin and Étienne Déclas preached their first mission at La Balme between 9 and 29 January 1825. This little village, with a population that numbered 434 in 1832, is situated about 2 km. above Cerdon on the road from Lyons to Geneva. The missionaries could each get to La Balme from Cerdon by the path of La Tière, which seems to have been part of the same ancient road as that of La Coria. Colin liked to recall the spectacle of Déclas stumbling up the steep track every morning reciting his breviary. At the time that concerns us, the parish was attached to the neighbouring parish of Ceignes. The presbytery was in a good condition and the church in a very good state, with a confessional and pulpit.

Pierre Colin gave the bishop a fairly detailed idea of how his brother and their companion conducted the 'retreat', as he called it. They gave two instructions every day, one in the morning, the other in the evening, with a catechism class after the midday meal. (It appears that, at this period, the only catechism class was at Ceignes, and the children of La Balme did not go there.) Pierre had gone



up to La Balme twice at the time of writing and could testify, having spoken with the people, of their enthusiasm for the retreat and their regular attendance. From the fourth and fifth days, there was a general 'commotion (*ébranlement*)' for confession, and nearly everyone presented themselves in the confessional, including some already who had not been for a long time.