



Fr Justin Taylor's description of the eve and morning of the Fourvière pledge...

On Monday 22 July, 1816, Feast of Saint Mary Magdalene, in the chapel at Saint-Irénée, Louis-Guillaume Dubourg, bishop of New Orleans, with dimissory letters issued in the name of Cardinal Fesch, now exiled in Rome, conferred priestly ordination on fifty two candidates, including Marcellin Champagnat, Jean-Claude Colin, Jean-Claude Courveille, Étienne Déclas and Étienne Terraillon. They had now arrived at the goal of many years of study and formation.

For Jean-Claude Colin it was the end of a road on which he had embarked with great diffidence and trepidation in 1804. His brother Pierre, already a priest since 1810, was at Saint-Irénée for a few days before his ordination, but had already left on 20 July, a Saturday, to be back in his parish for the Sunday.

The following day, 23 July 1816, the group climbed the steps of the hill that dominates the city to Fourvière (*Forum Vetus*), the site of the Roman and pre-Roman Celtic town of Lugdunum. Here stood a little chapel that was an ancient shrine of Our Lady recently restored as a place of pilgrimage. Today it is overshadowed by the huge basilica built between 1872 and 1884. At the altar before the venerated statue of the Blessed Virgin, Courveille alone celebrated Mass – the other newly ordained were intending to celebrate their first Mass in their parishes. Terraillon, who had the best knowledge of ceremonies, assisted him. All received Holy Communion from Courveille.

During the Mass, the signed act of commitment was placed on the altar under the corporal, thus uniting it with the sacrifice of Christ. The ceremony of 23 July 1816 and the intention that it expressed found a place at the beginning of the *Summarium Regularum Societatis Mariae* of 1833 and has a similar place in the present Constitutions of the Society of Mary (n. 2).

Jean-Claude Colin, Reluctant Founder, 1790-1875'. Chapter 3: 'The Society of Mary, (1813-1816)'