



Excerpts from ***Jean-Claude Colin, Reluctant Founder***,
Ch 29, *'Mission accomplished'*

'During the night of 13-14 November, Eugène (*Fr Colin's nephew*) kept watch. About 11:30 the next morning, it was thought that the end had come, and the community assembled for the prayers of commendation of the dying and the application of the plenary indulgence *in articulo mortis*. But the end was not yet. Fr. Girard watched by the deathbed through the night of 14-15 November.

'Around 7 o'clock on the morning of 15 November, Colin's confessor renewed the absolution. He seemed to be entering his agony. A bell summoned the community. Jeantin began the litanies for the dying. Suddenly, about 7:40, the dying man closed his mouth and stopped breathing. There were cries of: 'He's dead, he's dead.' Jeantin turned the pages of his ritual to the prayers for the departed soul. But Colin's breathing returned. Jeantin paused. For an instant Colin's chin moved, then stopped. They finished the prayers.

'The superior general was notified by telegram, a father went into Lyons to order a lead-lined coffin, and Jeantin saw to the legal formalities. The... body was laid out in priestly vestments and brought down to the chapel. Eugène was struck by the peaceful smile on his uncle's face. On the following days Masses were said in the presence of the corpse.

'On 17 November the superior general announced the founder's death to the Society... A photograph was taken of the dead man lying in state... On the morning of 18 November, Jean-Claude Colin's body was taken to the parish church for the Office of the Dead; Victor Poupinel officiated and Julien Favre gave the solemn absolution. The body was taken back to the chapel at La Neylière, which was then locked. The following evening, the founder's body was sealed in the coffin. There was no odour.

'The Requiem Mass was celebrated at 9 o'clock on 27 November. Marists and other priests took part. Again it was Poupinel who celebrated the Mass, and Favre who gave the final absolution. Then Jean-Claude Colin was laid to rest in the grounds of La Neylière.

'In October 1879, he was reinterred in a newly built chapel. On his tombstone is the invocation: "Father, pray for your sons." '