“HE WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD”

Celebrating
Father Jacques-François Dujarié
TIME LINE FOR FATHER DUJARIÉ

1767 December 9 – Birth and Baptism of Jacques-François Dujarié

1787 Attends the seminary at Angers

1791 Seminarians at Angers forced to disperse

1792-1795 Lives in hiding at several locations

1795 December 26 – Ordination at Paris

1803 Appointed pastor of Saint Pierre Church at Ruillé

1806 Founds the Sisters of Providence and builds La Petite Providence

1818 Diocesan retreat at which Dujarié is asked to found a group of brothers

1820 Founds the Brothers of St. Joseph

1821 Lays the cornerstone for La Grande Providence for the Sisters

1827 Plans to found a group of diocesan missionary priests

1831 Pact of Fidelity among the Brothers of St. Joseph

1835 Fr. Basile Moreau founds the Auxiliary Priests

1835 Moreau is appointed superior of the Brothers

1836 Retires to Notre Dame de Sainte Croix at Le Mans

1837 Fundamental Pact uniting the Brothers of St. Joseph and Auxiliary Priests

1838 February 17 – Death of Fr. Dujarié
“He Went About Doing Good”

Celebrating Father Jacques-François Dujarié
25 July 2017

Feast of St. James
Patronal Feast of Jacques-François Dujarié
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“While we have time, let us do good.”
Celebrating Father Jacques-François Dujarié

“He went about doing good”

In 2017 we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of Father Jacques-François Dujarié. He is situated at those first roots of what eventually evolved into the educational heritage of the Family of Holy Cross.

In Saint Peter’s Church, where he was pastor from 1803 to 1836, there is a plaque in his honor which concludes with a one-sentence biblical summary of his life and work – “He went about doing good.” Such a simple sentence for such extensive accomplishments. Even before the foundation of the Sisters of Providence and the Brothers of St. Joseph, Dujarié had a reputation for being courageous in the face of extraordinary difficulties and even life-threatening dangers.

Born on December 9, 1767 of middle class landowners, Jacques considered the call to commit himself to the service of the church very early in life. His consideration of and formation for priesthood developed during the darkest moments of the French Revolution when losing one’s head by the guillotine was a real and regular possibility. Dujarié remains faithful even when his seminary formation is interrupted and he goes into hiding. Finally, by 1795, he can complete his studies and within just seven days in December, he is ordained a sub-deacon (12/19), deacon (12/20), and priest (12/26) in secret. Not even his parents were informed of the precise location or invited to attend for fear that they could be followed by government agents.

Secrecy marks his early priestly ministry; moving constantly, hiding with families, sleeping in cellars and barns, working as a weaver, disguising himself as a lemonade vendor, protecting his identity while still arranging to communicate with and respond to those who needed sacramental and pastoral services. All this was dangerous, not only for him but for the families that protected and housed him. He had a special
gift for building bridges between the people and the practice of their faith, and between priests who had taken an oath in response to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy (1790) and their desire to renounce that oath and return to ministry in the church.

With the Concordat between Napoleon and Pope Pius VII in 1801, some level of normalcy returned to life in France after so many years of turbulence. But the social and ecclesial landscape was desolate. In 1803, Father Dujarié is appointed pastor of Saint Peter’s Church in the small village of Ruillé-sur-Loir. The parochial, pastoral, and educational needs of the people came sharply into focus. Father Dujarié responds. He renovates the church, establishes a home visitation system, and gathers a group of women to assist him with the education of the girls. Over time since their foundation in 1806, these women evolved into the Sisters of Providence who continue to serve in Ruillé and around the world today, ministering in education, health care, and among the poor and elderly.

During a diocesan priests’ retreat in 1818 which Father Dujarié attended, the bishop called for the foundation of a group of educators. Dujarié volunteers. This group was to be especially attentive to boys whose education had been neglected over several years. Though the project could not begin immediately because of Dujarié’s continuing work with the parish and the Sisters, by July 1820 a young man arrived in Ruillé. Others came, some left, others came, many stayed. In October, a twenty-year old, André Mottais, arrived to become part of the growing group. Dujarié quickly realized André’s ability for leadership and sent him to the Christian Brothers, first in Le Mans, then in Paris, for basic instruction and training in pedagogy and in religious life. Such were the simple beginnings of the community known initially as the Brothers of Ruillé and then, after choosing a patron, the Brothers of St. Joseph; today, the Brothers of Holy Cross.
Though Jacques Dujarié was not formally trained as an educator, he worked to see that the Brothers received a basic preparation in primary subjects and educational methods so they could serve as catechists in the rural areas. Much of his correspondence is with government officials regarding the assignments of the Brothers and the formal authorizations needed to teach. He knows the Brothers well, their strengths and weaknesses, their blessings and burdens.

Father Dujarié continued to minister in Ruillé until 1835 when he resigned as superior of the Brothers, placing them under the leadership of a younger diocesan priest, Basile Moreau. In October 1836, at Moreau’s invitation, he moved to Sainte Croix on the outskirts of Le Mans to be near the Brothers during his final years. He died at Sainte Croix on February 17, 1838. In 1873, after Father Moreau’s death, his remains were moved to the mother house of the Sisters of Providence in Ruillé at their request and interred in the main chapel.

Shortly after Dujarié’s death, Father Moreau wrote a brief biography, celebrating the life and accomplishments of this remarkable pastor and founder. Moreau writes,

“Jacques-François Dujarié was among those men whose lives reveal one of the most striking characteristics of the workings of Providence. In all ages, indeed, Providence has seemed to delight in humbling the great and the proud of this world by choosing as its instruments those who to all outward appearances are the weakest and most unknown.”

Even as Moreau realized, those “outward appearances” can be misleading. Jacques Dujarié passed on a rich legacy that has endured. The caliber of his life and ministry reveals those qualities that constitute his greatness.
First, Jacques Dujarié had an extraordinary inner strength, determination, and depth of commitment. These guided him to pursue his desire for priesthood and his commitment to church service at a time when such a pursuit could end in arrest and execution. These same qualities gave him an uncompromising passion for truth and justice. He is a man of fidelity to the commitments he makes and the responsibilities he takes even when he encounters lack of cooperation and direct confrontation.

Second, Father Dujarié is a mediator for those who are hindered or hesitant in reaching their goals. For priests who wanted to return to regular participation and practice in the ministerial life of the church and for the people who wanted a restoration of pastoral and sacramental services, he became a means of reconciliation, a bridge-builder, to make all that possible. He is a man of mercy and compassion, understanding the weaknesses of others. He is a man of advocacy for the people’s rights that have been discounted or discarded by circumstances.

Third, Jacques Dujarié is a leader, above all, by his example of integrity and concern for others. His care for and interest in the Sisters of Providence and the Brothers of St. Joseph were not always universally appreciated. He felt keenly the diminishments of aging and declining health. Nevertheless, he maintains a dignity and humility that are unafraid to confront his own weaknesses and to acknowledge his dependence on God.

Fourth, Father Dujarié is a true pastor, he cares for the people and for the communities he founded. He was selfless and generous with his time and possessions. His charity, concern, and courtesy were acclaimed by the people, the Brothers and Sisters, and the civil authorities even during his life time. He knew and embraced the crosses of opposition and even rejection so others could have a new life and a taste
of resurrection.

However unknown Father Dujarié may have been and may yet be, he is worthy of being celebrated and remembered simply because “he went about doing good.” He did what Jesus did. And that is sufficient to serve as an incentive for our vocation as educators, an indication for our ministry every day, and an inspiration for our entire life. Let us pray with Father Dujarié:

“Lord, you have said: ‘Let the little children come to me.’ You have inspired me with the desire to bring them to you, be pleased to bless my vocation, to assist me in my work and to clothe me with the spirit of strength, charity, and humility. May nothing turn me aside from your service. May I fulfill with zeal the duties to which I have committed myself and may I be among those to whom you have promised eternal life because of their fidelity to the end. Amen.”

(Prayer composed for Brothers in education)

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. Which aspects of Father Dujarié’s life and ministry are a particular inspiration for your life and ministry?

2. In which ways do you identify with Dujarié’s experience?

Brother Joel Giallanza, C.S.C.
Associate Executive Director
Holy Cross Institute at St. Edward’s University
Austin, Texas
United States of America
“He Went About Doing Good…”

Joseph Teaching Jesus to Write
Le Mans, France
Father Dujarié... An Example for Teachers
Pioneer—Role-Model—Enabler

As we reflect on the impact that Holy Cross religious have had on us, we usually do not think about Father Dujarié – after all, he was not a “Holy Cross” religious. He is not remembered among the legendary foundational Holy Cross education leaders – our founder Father Moreau, Brother Vincent Pieau who was the Holy Cross Patriarch in the United States, and Brother André Mottais who played a key role in the transition of the Brothers of St. Joseph into the Brothers of Holy Cross. Yet, as Holy Cross educators, we find the traits that make us successful teachers modeled by Father Dujarié.

Patience and Persistence

It was not an easy time in history to become a priest in France. Dujarié began studying in the Sulpician seminary in Angers when the French Revolution began in 1789. He returned to Rennes in March 1790 after the seminary disbanded and began moving from village to village in disguise to assist priests who remained loyal to the Roman Catholic Church. He resumed his studies for the priesthood in secret in July 1795 under the tutelage of Rev. Jacquet de la Haye, the Pastor in Ruillé-sur-Loir who had a profound influence on Dujarié in his formation.

Jacques Dujarié was secretly ordained a priest in Paris in what by today’s standards would be described as an “express” process: He received the sub-diaconate on December 19, 1795; the next day the diaconate; and was ordained a priest on December 26. Afterward he returned to Ruillé to work alongside Father de la Haye through the end of the Revolution in 1799. Some say Dujarié molded himself into the character of de la Haye which one Church official described as “a fiery man, crafty, going regularly to exercise his ministry where he is called and even where he is not called, seeking out all means of making proselytes.” Father Dujarié celebrated his first Mass in the middle of the night in a cellar outside Ruillé-sur-Loir – he would celebrate many Masses this way, forced
by the Revolution to become an “underground priest.”

During this time, Church property was being seized, priests were being arrested and executed, and religious communities were being expelled from France. An agreement in 1801 between Napoleon and Rome resulted in the slow reemergence of religious institutions in France. So began Dujarié’s work as a pioneer in the Church now faced with the daunting task of rebuilding. The needs were great, as the Revolution had confiscated Church property and effectively shuttered most of the Church’s schools and social institutions. Many priests and religious had been exiled or even executed. In January 1803, Dujarié was appointed pastor of the parish in Ruillé-sur-Loir, and he worked zealously to tend to the many needs of his flock in the diocese.

Pause to Reflect

In discerning our ministry as teachers, many of us found a need for patience and persistence. Thankfully we never found our lives to be endangered in this process, but for many the path to becoming Holy Cross educators was neither clearly defined nor direct. Sometimes the seed was definitely planted in our hearts and the ministry had to germinate in our minds. The lucky ones sensed the direction toward being an educator early enough to include the necessary training in their journey through the higher education process. However for some of us the realization of that ministry required us to go back for training to complete qualifications and certifications, seldom an ‘express’ process, to enable us to follow our hearts to become effective Holy Cross educators.

Sacrifice and Suffering

Dujarié zealously served underground at night as he assisted priests before his ordination and in his first few years as a priest. At times he even posed as a peddler to go out through the countryside tending the people. Both the faithful and he lived at great risk in doing so. Severe punishment awaited the person caught hiding a priest or receiving the sacraments. His commitment to church service could have resulted in arrest and even execution. In his concern for protecting the
families to whom he ministered as well as his own safety, he often slept in very damp and cramped conditions in barns and haylofts – these took their toll on his health, especially in his later years.

The French Revolution dismantled the Catholic Church and left a spiritual and educational void. Men like Father Moreau and Father Dujarié made it their mission to fill that void, first separately and then together. In the rebuilding process of restoring Catholic ministry and schooling opportunities for the children in the diocese, resources were usually very limited and he often encountered a lack of cooperation and even direct confrontation. Yet, Father Dujarié was committed to this work at all costs – personal, physical and emotional. Through his personal sacrifice and suffering, Dujarié served as a role model to all – the Brothers of St. Joseph, the Sisters of Providence, his parishioners and the restored Church in France.

Pause to Reflect
As true Holy Cross educators, we understand sacrifice and suffering. Everything we do is focused on what is best for the students we serve – “it’s not all about us.” We give freely of our time and talent to teach students “everything they need to know.” We humbly treasure the intrinsic over material things. We suffer through the pains that our students experience and celebrate their successes.

Collegiality and Adaptability

Father Dujarié realized his personal limitations and need to focus on his spiritual and sacramental duties as a priest. However, he was also committed to enable the education process of the children in France. He understood that there needed to be a community of men and women to meet these needs. In 1806 he formed a group of pious women in his parish, who become the Sisters of Providence, to educate the youth and tend to the sick. Two years later he built the “Little Providence” as the home for the Sisters. The first Sisters made their profession of perpetual vows in 1820. The Sisters of Providence were formally
approved by the Church as a congregation in 1831. In 1818 Dujarié was approached by the bishop and fellow priests at a diocesan retreat to found a group of teaching brothers to provide education in rural parishes. In September 1820 he established the Brothers of St. Joseph when he received the first three young men into the community. The Brothers grew quickly as many pastors sought their assistance.

Father Dujarié realized that this fast-growing group of Brothers was still tenuous, and he sought to assemble a group of diocesan priests to work with them and give cohesion to this structure. By now, his health was failing, and so Father Dujarié, with the bishop’s consent, selected Rev. Basile Moreau to continue his work. Moreau moved the Brothers to Sainte-Croix, a neighborhood of Le Mans, in 1835. Two years later in the Fundamental Act of Union, the Brothers of St. Joseph were formally united with Father Moreau’s group of Auxiliary Priests, thus creating the Congregation of Holy Cross.

*Pause to Reflect:*

Lay teachers may not live in community like our religious colleagues, but community is important to us as teachers to indeed become Holy Cross educators. While we may possess the knowledge, skills and methods to effectively teach independently, we lose a lot by isolating ourselves... it’s a disservice to ourselves, but more importantly, it’s a disservice to the students. If, indeed, we are to teach our students “everything they need to know,” we must have a united front employing a uniform set of expectations as appropriate in our individual academic areas. Holy Cross educators do not teach subjects – we teach students. Collaboration not only strengthens us individually and collectively, it is necessary for us to model “Building Respect” and “Being Family.” We cannot form the heart of our students if we are isolating ourselves from our colleagues.

The challenge for the seasoned teacher is to be adaptable. Times change; students change; effective teaching methods change. The only things that should not change are our Holy Cross values.

Rev. Jacques-François Dujarié was a key figure in the
foundation of the Congregation of Holy Cross. His heroic determination to serve the material and spiritual needs of the poor in France helped to lay the groundwork for the mission of Holy Cross throughout the world.

“We consider … his lively faith, which sustained him in the midst of so many trying circumstances without allowing him to be frightened by the prospect of persecution; his unshakable confidence in God’s merciful Providence, which impelled him to undertake two important foundations with hardly any human means; and his spirit of love, which suggested to him pious projects for the glory of his divine master, the sanctification of His flock, and the salvation of youth by the founding of truly Christian schools.”

(“Sketch of the Life and Works of M. L’Abbé Jacques-François Dujarié, Pastor of Ruillé-sur-Loir” by Blessed Basil Moreau, 1838)

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. How does the life and work of Father Jacques Dujarié resonate with the duties and daily routines of a Holy Cross Educator?

2. In which ways can you model Father Dujarié to your students and colleagues?

3. Do you teach your students or enable them to learn? Do you teach subjects or students? How do you experience the difference?

Mr. Terry McGaha
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“He Went About Doing Good…”

Dujarié’s Contribution
to Holy Cross And Holy Cross Ministries Today

As we approach the 250th anniversary of the birth of the Very Rev. Jacques-François Dujarié, our hearts are filled with joy. We stand at this threshold to acknowledge the historical event of the birth of the man whose life will be forever remembered because it has significant connections with the Brothers of Holy Cross. We acknowledge the fact that we owe a debt of gratitude to God for the gift of the life of this humble priest of Ruillé. In our African tradition, we are made aware that we are intimately connected with the Supreme Being, God the Creator; with our ancestors (all those who have gone before us); with those who are living presently, and even with the unborn. In a similar vein, in our Christian spirituality and faith, we believe in the Communion of the Saints. We believe the same is true for Holy Cross today. We are intimately connected, in an unbroken chain, to those who have gone before us; those who came before us; those of us presently in the Congregation and those who will come after us. Thus, it is right and fitting that we commemorate and celebrate the life of Very Rev. Father Jacques Dujarié, a special child of God, who is our father, and our ancestor in the faith. His legacy has been passed on through succeeding generations to us, who have been mandated to continue the mission and vision, and pass them on to those who are yet to be born.

Holy Cross has grown and blossomed over the years, but where would we be without the vision and efforts of Father Jacques Dujarié? He started the Brothers of St. Joseph and worked with them to the point where they were ready to assume responsibility for their lives. I believe Father Dujarié, by entrusting this group of men to the patronage of St. Joseph, was prophetic in as much as he expected the Brothers to take on the life and character of their Patron; to be men of few words, but men of vision, dreams, and action. This heritage of imitating and resembling our special patron, St. Joseph, further empowers us to reflect the tender and compassionate
face of God and the Church to the People of God. This seems to be the hallmark of the Holy Cross Brothers wherever they are found on the five continents of our world today. This is the legacy of Father Dujarié, being lived in Ghana, West Africa.

People who have encountered Holy Cross Brothers know us to be men who are not afraid to be at the vanguard of exploring new territories and are willing to take up the challenge to make a difference in the lives of God’s people. Our life invites others to be their truest selves as we witness to the role of the laity in the Church.

Reflecting on Father Dujarié as a person with vision and also imbued with a humble spirit to be very much aware of his own human limitations, we acknowledge the challenge of our mission. He knew the limits of his own abilities to carry on the task alone, and sought help from others so that the mission would be carried forward. This is yet another heritage from our father in the faith. People, with whom and for whom we minister, feel at home in our communities because we are ready to collaborate with them in building the Kingdom of God in our world. We live, pray and work together as hopeful signs of the Kingdom. We uphold a corporate image of Holy Cross; visible to people that we are Holy Cross and do things as a family projecting unity and oneness. At the same time, we work assiduously to engage in on-going dialogue with the local bishop and also with the faithful wherever we minister to create a more just and humane society. We continue to draw on the inspiration and humility of Father Dujarié in realizing that we stand to gain much more if we focus on collaborative ministry. Thus, we have embraced the extended family of Holy Cross that will always include all those persons of goodwill who are desirous to engage in ministry for the coming of the Kingdom.

The pioneering inspiration and vision of Father Dujarié, who gathered a group of men together to respond to the
needs of the people of God, at a time in France when the youth could easily be described, in the words of Scripture, “as sheep without a shepherd,” has been a heritage for the mission and vision of our Brothers over the past sixty years. The inspiration of Father Dujarié features in our ministries here as we respond to the needs of the times, especially in the field of Christian education and formation through schools. The situation in Ghana is calling for us to take a prophetic stance in answering to the needs of the emerging generation. The education situation in the country is in need of serious revitalization to help prepare the emerging generation to take their rightful place in society and in the Church. We need a strong Catholic presence in the school system to counteract the moral decadence that is prevailing in the country. The heritage we have from Father Jacques Dujarié inspires us to take the bold steps in responding to this need of our times. At this stage in the history of Holy Cross in Ghana, we are in the process of establishing Saint Brother André Senior High School for this very purpose.

We have acknowledged our indebtedness to Father Jacques Dujarié by naming the Pre-Novitiate formation house, and our original District House, in his honor. Furthermore, every time we gather as a District in Chapter, the name of Father Dujarié is featured prominently in our discussion groups.

The mission and ministry of the Brothers of Holy Cross in Ghana have been marked in no small way by the courage, concern, dynamism and creativity of Father Dujarié. We rejoice; our hearts are filled with gratitude; and we want to celebrate Father Jacques Dujarié’s 250th anniversary of birth. We stand on the shoulders of our father founder and those Brothers he gathered together around him. They read the signs of the time in order to respond to the needs of the young people so that they would live their faith to the full. It is very clear that this hallmark of reading the signs of the times and responding to them has been an integral part of our charism as Holy Cross religious. It enjoins us to review
the effectiveness of our ministry wherever our mission sends us. Furthermore, we stand on the shoulders of the stalwart missionaries who braced themselves to follow the footsteps of their ancestors in Holy Cross and dared to come to Africa for a second attempt of reaching out to the people of God, by preparing the future generations of Holy Cross religious for God and for the Church.

Brother Michael Amakyi, C.S.C.
District Superior – District of West Africa
Ghana, West Africa

“Lord,
may nothing
turn me aside
from your
service.”
In the post-Revolutionary era, people in France experienced severe political, socio-economic, cultural and ecclesial instability, conflict, and vulnerability. The French Revolution had a lasting impact and left deep wounds in the lives of people, particularly in the areas of education and the practice of Catholic faith. Educating children and nurturing their faith formation became crucial needs during that time throughout France. A proper education and a solid formation in faith were rarely provided. Jacques-François Dujarié was ordained a priest during this critical time and the prevailing situation was of great concern to him. He was among those who courageously assumed the responsibilities associated with educating children. Observing the social situation and the people’s needs, Dujarié was urged to act, to help people toward a better life. The task was difficult and challenging. He realized the immensity of the need and engaged local and enthusiastic young people to assist him in the task of education. His life is marked by generosity, heroism, suffering, and compassion for children growing up in ignorance.

In response to these needs within church and society, Father Dujarié founded the Brothers of St. Joseph in 1820. Eventually, because of his gradually failing health, he initiated the transition of his responsibilities for the Brothers to Father Basile Moreau. A new community emerged in the form of the Congregation of Holy Cross (1837), comprising brothers, priests, and sisters, based on the model of the Holy Family. Under Moreau’s leadership, this new community continued providing elementary education and expanded to include secondary education, and pastoral care for the people struggling to live in a devastated society.

Dujarié’s response to all this was marked by compassion. He was zealous and caring in his efforts to teach the children
reading and writing, and to offer them a basic catechesis. He inculcated this same zeal and care in the Brothers for their mission. He believed that the Brothers as well as the other educators needed training and formation to develop teaching competencies and moral virtues. He did what he could to provide opportunities that would prepare them to do their jobs efficiently and effectively. Father Dujarié was attentive to the spiritual life of the Brothers. Even with their busy schedule, they maintained their spiritual growth and strengthened their spiritual life; the Brothers regularly, and sometimes daily, participated in the Mass and other church devotions. These spiritual exercises reinforced their apostolic commitment. By his life and teachings, Father Dujarié instilled in the Brothers the spirit of sacrifice and acceptance of suffering, humility, charity, a genuine piety, availability, and the courage to take up challenging tasks.

As the Brothers became part of the Congregation of Holy Cross, Father Moreau expanded the mission, sending missionaries beyond Europe, to Africa, the United States and Canada, Bengal (now Bangladesh). Wherever the members went, they responded to the needs of the people and accepted the difficulties entailed in doing that. In all the places that Holy Cross found itself, the mission was difficult and challenging; nevertheless, the mission was accepted and the people were served. Taking risks, accepting challenges, and enduring the difficulties in ministering to God’s people are characteristics and virtues of Holy Cross that can trace their roots to Father Dujarié. Even today, Holy Cross around the world is committed to education, various kinds of missions, and the pastoral care of people. Holy Cross educates people for life; academic excellence and communicating values and morals are high priorities. And all is done without forgetting the spiritual needs of the people.

As a member of the Congregation of Holy Cross, I have lived and walked in the path of virtues held by the community. I have worked with the members in their ministries and
institutions. I have met Holy Cross people in different places around the world, spoken with them, shared their experiences, and seen their ministries. I have observed their commitment to and zeal for education. This commitment and zeal is always in response to local needs. In a similar way, I have observed zeal in the pastoral ministries associated with Holy Cross.

As I reflected on the legacy and virtues of our founders, I realized that the vision of Father Dujarié, with the Brothers of St. Joseph, is fulfilled in the Congregation of Holy Cross. That legacy and those virtues have remained, even until today. Depending upon the contexts, the needs of time and place, no doubt the vision of Father Dujarié and the process of implementing it has had to change. But the seeds that he planted within the Brothers of St. Joseph in nineteenth-century France have continued to produce abundant crops around the world regardless of the nation, culture, ethnicity, and society in which they are harvested.

Brother Leo J. Pereira, C.S.C.
Principal
St. Placid’s School
Chittagong, Bangladesh

“Always walk ahead, until you are in possession of the glory of God.”
Fosse-Garnier farm - cellar
in which Dujarié celebrated his first Mass in secret, 1795

Church of Saint Pierre
parish at which Dujarié was pastor, 1803-1836
“He Went About Doing Good...”

La Petite Providence -
first house of the Sisters of Providence, 1806

La Grande Providence
mother house of the Sisters of Providence
Le Grand Saint Joseph
former residence of the Brothers of Saint Joseph

École Saint Joseph, original school conducted by the Sisters of Providence and the Brothers of Saint Joseph
“He Went About Doing Good...”

Ruillé - Portrait of Father Dujarié as pastor - in mother house chapel of the Sisters of Providence
A Man Of Hope And Service To The Most Needy

Jacques-François Dujarié was a man who cultivated and lived a profound intimacy with God and because of this was able to go forward even when confronted with realities that challenged him to give up his vocation, goals and dreams. The challenges faced were many, principally due to the conflict in France between the Catholic Church and the State. During the height of the French Revolution, which caused great antipathy toward priests and religious, Dujarié remained strong and convinced of his vocational call to serve the most needy as a true shepherd; one who cares for and cherishes his flock even in times of adversity and persecution.

In the first years of his ministry Dujarié served clandestinely under the risk of being expelled from the country, tortured or executed. He continued firm in his desire to serve God and the most abandoned. The love of God which nourished his heart gave him courage to go forward without giving up or turning back. For many years he continued in that path, a man whose heart was filled with hope and trust in God even with all the challenges and storms that his future life would bring.

Without doubt the hope that filled his life was the fruit of hours of prayer before his Lord Jesus Christ. We can affirm that this legacy of Dujarié helped him to realize the call that God had given him. His availability and audacity in serving the neediest, even in the midst of religious persecution and division within the Church between the priests who followed the French State and those who followed the Holy See, were heroic gestures.

His readiness to serve and respond to the material and spiritual needs of the most vulnerable gave Dujarié a generous and hope-filled heart, open to receive all those to whom he was sent. It is important to note that these two aspects of Dujarié influenced the first Brothers of St. Joseph and soon
“He Went About Doing Good...”

became the basic qualities characterizing the missionaries of the Congregation of Holy Cross even until today: to serve everyone with generosity and to share the hope that encourages going forward toward better days.

As Dujarié was always open and available to let go of self in order to encounter others, so today, Pope Francis, through his writings, reflections and prophetic actions, has promoted a new missionary spirit within the Catholic Church. Most importantly, Francis has motivated us to be in a permanent state of willingness to encounter those most in need of God’s presence, those who are marginalized by the capitalistic and individualistic society of today. In his time, Dujarié manifested this spirit of encounter and of readiness to meet others, those on the margins of society, especially children and youth without basic rights, education, and Christian formation.

In response to those needs, Dujarié, with his courageous and visionary spirit, founded and cultivated a group of generous and committed men through Christian formation and education. They were known as the Brothers of St. Joseph who eventually became the Brothers of Holy Cross. They were founded with the call and responsibility to instruct, teach and form youth according to Gospel values. Dujarié was greatly concerned that, besides being instructed for life in society, young people should also receive a Christian formation. This same value continues to inform all members and collaborators of the Congregation of Holy Cross who are called to the ministry of giving an integral formation to today’s youth so they can be good citizens and faithful followers of Christ.

Education and Christian formation of children and youth were among the greatest concerns for Dujarié as God’s minister. From this we can understand that, for Dujarié as well as for the Brothers of St. Joseph, education was one of the most important, if not the only, means through which
a person could obtain his or her freedom in the oppressive political system caused by the French Revolution. This is a great gift for Holy Cross given the charism of our educational heritage, because we can offer so many people who are caught up in oppressive and inhumane situations the possibility of gaining freedom and a dignified life as God’s children.

Dujarié’s teaching about the importance of education and Christian formation in the lives of youth inspires us to be mindful that education contributes to the maturation process which affirms the person as a citizen. Christian formation brings distinctive values to society, helping to promote a more human world where persons can relate with dignity and equality as sons and daughters of the same Father.

However, it is relevant to emphasize that not every type of education produces the same effect. There are educational models which promote oppression and manipulate persons. Considering this reality, Holy Cross needs always to focus on offering a quality education based on Christian principles where the dignity of each person is upheld and justice is promoted for the common good.

Society today constantly challenges us to respond to the most diverse necessities. As the process of globalization has brought about significant societal changes, the Church also confronts great change. Of course, quality education continues to be an important response to the enormous problems faced by society. For this reason and inspired by Dujarié, we are called to include in our systems of education and Christian formation those who are immersed in subhuman worlds of social and religious inequalities. We are called to divest ourselves of whatever holds us back from truly meeting others, from encountering those whom society has abandoned. It is to them that the Lord has sent us, nourished by His love, to educate and form in the faith.

In and for France, Dujarié knew how to respond to the
spiritual and educational necessities of a violent, unequal, intolerant and challenging world. We also must let ourselves be penetrated by his vision and integrative spirit, carrying hope and concrete attitudes that contribute to the building up of a society which nourishes a culture of inclusion. In such a society difference is not a motive for violence but, through education and Christian formation, an efficacious means of cultivating an inclusive culture.

In living his vocation and response to God’s call, Dujarié was concerned to answer not only the spiritual necessities of his flock, but also the many other needs of the people of his time. As religious or as collaborators of Holy Cross, we must learn to see the whole person in our ministries. We need to keep in mind the teachings of Dujarié and seek to serve those to whom the Lord sends us by contemplating and responding to their most urgent needs.

It was his confidence in Divine Providence that made Dujarié a man of hope, one who did not limit his efforts, but served the people with zeal and a spirit of generosity. Today, as we bring his memory to life, we are also called to nourish within our hearts this great trust in God and let ourselves be guided by the witness of his discipleship. We believe that through zeal and generosity we can renew society, bring about a new missionary fervor that supports the desire to let go of our own needs in order to encounter others, respond to their needs, and build a more fraternal world of solidarity as did Dujarié, those many years ago in France.

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Walking With Jacques-François Dujarié
Founder Of The Brothers Of St. Joseph

This year, 2017, marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of M. L’Abbé Jacques-François Dujarié, Founder of the Sisters of Providence and the Brothers of St. Joseph. In 2020, the Congregation of Holy Cross will mark the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Brothers of St. Joseph, today called the Brothers of Holy Cross. Both celebrations invite us to reflect on the life of this holy and humble man and honor his presence and influence in our history and ministry.

Upon Father Dujarié’s death in 1838, Father Moreau announced the news to the Brothers of St. Joseph with these words:

“It is true that he, who sows in tears, reaps in joy. Everything leads us to believe that this noble soul [Father Dujarié], who did and suffered so much for the glory of God, has found in the bosom of divine mercy the reward of all his labors. We cannot think otherwise when we consider his long career of seventy-one years, so full of good works; his lively faith, which sustained him in the midst of so many trying circumstances without allowing him to be frightened by the prospect of persecution; his unshakable confidence in God’s merciful Providence, which impelled him to undertake two important foundations with hardly any human means; and his spirit of love, which suggested to him pious projects for the glory of his divine master, the sanctification of His flock, and the salvation of youth by the founding of truly Christian schools.” (February 19, 1838)

This brief announcement summarizes in a few words the type of man and priest Father Dujarié was, as well as his zeal to do God’s will. Father Moreau later published a longer
document, a hagiographical sketch of the life and work of Father Dujarié, an important document for Father Moreau knew Father Dujarié.

Father Moreau emphasized Father Dujarié’s great desire to fulfill his vocation as a priest during the dangerous times of the post-Revolution. He began his seminary studies during the Reign of Terror, at great risk to his life. He began his ministry in hiding. Father Dujarié disguised himself as a shepherd and later as a lemonade seller. (The) “long leisure hours of his simple life he sanctified by prayer and meditation, all the while longing for the time when he should be allowed to labor without hindrance to bring back to the fold other sheep infinitely more precious, and to guide them to the pastures of the Prince of Shepherds.” (Father Basile Moreau, Sketch of the Life and Works of M. L’Abbé Jacques-François Dujarié, Pastor of Ruillé-sur-Loir)

Father Dujarié was a holy man. He was a man of prayer and simplicity, devoted to poverty. He expressed his vocation in this way: “I am a priest to be father to the orphan, the consolation of the widow, the support of the poor and the friend of the suffering.” (as quoted in The Curé of Ruillé, Brother Ephrem O’Dwyer, C.S.C.) He instructed his parishioners in ways commensurate with their own experience:

“his sermons are remarkable for simplicity and unction of style and clear persuasiveness of exposition. They show quite convincingly his insight into the needs of his listeners and his ability to reach them on their own level” (Moreau).

Father Dujarié’s “ardent zeal filled him with the desire to rid his country of even the slightest traces of the recent revolution. To this end he conceived of the idea of renovating society by the Christianization of youth” (Moreau).
Father Dujarié was attentive to the needs of his people. In a broader sense, he was attentive to the needs of society and the Church. He had no plan to found a religious congregation of sisters, but wanted to provide for his people. He expressed a need for assistance for his parishioners. One generous young woman came; others soon followed. It was a successful project and housed at the Petite Providence. In the mind and heart of Father Dujarié, all was the act of Divine Providence.

The Brothers of St. Joseph developed in the same way. Those first young men were gathered together to fulfill the needs of society and the Church. Father Dujarié burned with zeal to serve. Unlike the Brothers of Christian Schools who required communities to have three members, he sent his brothers out in ones, twos and threes, whatever a village could afford. It was not always prudent. He provided a basic and at times an inadequate formation. He left it all in the hands of God’s Providence.

It is easy to see how these humble beginnings laid the foundation for what would eventually become the Congregation of Holy Cross, the priests and brothers. Their ethos and drive for mission had its seeds in what Father Dujarié provided by his humble example, his holiness and his simplicity. He saw what was lacking and sought to provide what was needed. He relied on Divine Providence. He sought to be obedient to God’s will. His kindness and gentleness were appreciated. He wanted to provide for better times.

In a letter written in 1827 to one of the early Brothers of St. Joseph, Brother Marie-Joseph, the Founder wrote: “Never look back. Always walk ahead until you are in possession of the glory of God.” In the almost two hundred years since the days of Father Dujarié, the Brothers of St. Joseph, now called the Brothers of Holy Cross, traveled far from the small villages of western France. They have literally “walked”
the globe and have brought with them the spirit and desire of that humble and simple man “to renovate society” and “to Christianize youth” by establishing schools, colleges and universities, orphanages and care homes, educational centers and technical schools in cities large and small, in areas devoid of basic services, in jungles and the “bush,” all responding to the needs of the people that God called them to serve.

Father Dujarié did not leave an instruction booklet on how to conduct schools as St. John Baptist de la Salle did for his brothers or as Blessed Basile Moreau did. He left his Brothers of St. Joseph the example of his desire to be father to the orphan, consoler and comforter of those who suffer, the good provider of those in need, and friend and companion to all who are suffering. He left an example of “accompanying” to his brothers. And they, over the next two hundred years, provided in diverse and creative ways for the young people God gave them to care for.

While Father Dujarié may not have been the best administrator or provided the most extensive formation, he encouraged his brothers to keep walking ahead, to continue in spite of difficulties. His kindness, gentleness and his willingness and desire to serve more than made up for these frailties. His response, always out of the desire of his heart, perhaps gave his brothers a certain freedom in their responses to the needs that they saw among their students and families. How did his simplicity, generosity, devotion, holiness, concern, and care affect his band of brothers? Today the examples are many:

• In South America, in the Amazon region on the banks of the Amazon River, young people are provided an exceptional education and make mission trips to villages deep in the jungle to serve as catechists. There is a large program for street children that provide them with a safe place for games and sports and opportunities for remedial learning.
• In Haiti and East and West Africa, schools provide the skills needed in some simple surroundings. However, young people are often given the skills that will help them support their families and villages. They are taught to provide for those who are less fortunate and to work to renovate society.

• In Bangladesh and India, thousands of young people, are taught in the Holy Cross tradition. Very few of them are Christian. Most are either Moslem or Hindu. They appreciate the schools and the work of the brothers and value their experience. They appreciate the values that are taught. Many of these educational ventures are undertaken in out of the way places.

• The brothers realize that there is a generosity of spirit that characterizes these schools. The schools exist to help the young people to become responsible and to renovate society. The response of the brothers has been to provide what is needed. A great example has been the development of a school in the state of Karnataka in the south-west of India. It started as a place to provide some technical skills for students who were unable to continue in an academic setting. It has now developed into a school, providing both academic and technical studies to young people who would not necessarily qualify for entrance to other schools. Without it, they would be left by the wayside.

• In the United States, in Quebec and in France, some twenty educational institutions serving all strata of society provide opportunities to imitate Father Dujarié and “to be father to the orphan, the consolation of the widow, the support of the poor and the friend of the suffering.” In addition to exceptional academic programs and broad athletic
and social programs, students are active in providing what is needed for those who have little.

The imprint of the Founder of the Brothers of St. Joseph, who had a vision of brothers who were at the service of church and society, who were at the service of young people in need, and who were laboring to renovate society is very real. The vocation of brother from those early times has developed. It has evolved from an ecclesiastical category to a true vocation, to be brother. It defines a relationship that is treasured by the people who serve and are served. What was first seen as a way to live the gospel call, has broadened to be a means to preach the gospel in a tangible way through words and deeds. The patronage of St. Joseph is in particular very apt. Joseph, called to be protector, teacher, father to Jesus, is a model for the brother. Over these almost two hundred years, every Brother of Holy Cross has a story or experience of being in relationship with others to share.

Today, the spirit of M. L’Abbé Jacques-François Dujarié lives in and informs the schools founded by his brothers. We celebrate this gift to the Church and society. May the inheritors of this legacy and charism continue to walk ahead. May they accompany the many thousands of young people placed in our care. May his simple and humble gift grow and develop continually until “the glory of God is fully possessed.”

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Brothers of St. Joseph to Brothers of Holy Cross

In the years I served at St. Francis High School in Mountain View, California, I would often come home from school and spend about half an hour conversing with Brother Julian Beaudry. He was one of the elders of the congregation at the time having made his first vows in 1922 when Father Gilbert Français was the Superior General.

I clearly recall one conversation we had which took place after I read the draft translation of “Christian Education” by Father Basile Moreau. I told him how meaningful it was to me to be able finally to read some of the words of Father Moreau on education since as founder he really got Holy Cross education started. Brother Julian looked at me and said: “I don’t know why you should be so excited about this. Father Moreau isn’t your founder; Father Dujarie is and you should be looking to him!”

I found that very curious. I had been a religious of Holy Cross for nearly 25 years, and while I knew the name of Father Dujarie, that was as far as my education about him and the Brothers of St. Joseph had taken me. It is only in recent years that this statement of Brother Julian has haunted me as we approach the 200th anniversary of the Brothers of St. Joseph. What brought us from being the Brothers of St. Joseph to the Brothers from Holy Cross? As is true in Holy Cross today, I believe that this movement is best expressed in relationships built and in the resolution and evolution of seemingly competing values. We owe a great deal of thanks to Brother George Klawitter, C.S.C., for his translation and publication of some letters and his research into the early history of the Brothers, especially that of Brother Andre Mottais. These have helped me understand a great deal. Father Jacques Dujarie lived his commitment to the Church through great hardship and difficulties; his life was often in jeopardy as revolution and anti-religious fervor ran rampant through society. He seemed to come through all of this with
special recognition as one especially committed to the care of people and as one doing God’s work among the people. It was clear that in his life, he had a focus on his mission and ministry above all else, but always with people in mind.

At the time he was called to organize the Brothers of St. Joseph, Father Dujarie was already a busy man, occupied with the affairs of his parish in Ruille and the efforts of the Sisters of Providence. Among the first men to accept a call to the Brothers of St. Joseph was Brother Andre Mottais who remained with the Brothers of St. Joseph and the Brothers of Holy Cross until his death. Early on Father Dujarie realized that the development of the Brothers would not be an easy task. He would have to find a way to give them some basic formation and education as well as satisfy the government’s bureaucratic regulations for the assignment and supervision of the Brothers as teachers. There were many different pressures and needs drawing him in different directions.

He sent Brother Andre to learn about the life of a religious brother from several sources. While the Brothers of St. Joseph over time built a strong sense of mission and ministry which they learned from Father Dujarie, they also developed a realization that if this project of the Brothers of St. Joseph would survive, they needed to build stability and find a rule of life. Gradually through their annual retreat and the conversations some of the Brothers had with Father Basile Moreau as their spiritual director, they found in Father Moreau a man with a willingness to help them find the stability and rule they were seeking.

Even though Father Dujarie expressed concern about whether the Brothers of St. Joseph were ready to consider religious vows, those who had persevered obviously had developed into committed and strong “religions.” It was, after all, Brother Andre Mottais and Brother Vincent Pieau who Father Moreau chose to be part of the first international efforts of the new Association of Holy Cross. Both of them had taken
Brothers of St. Joseph to Brothers of Holy Cross

a major role in the administration of the school in Ruille; both had a clear and strong sense of mission from Father Dujarie and a sense of religious life from Father Moreau. The transition from being the Brothers of St. Joseph to the Brothers from Holy Cross seemed to be a natural transition. The focus on mission continued, but the Brothers also found through Holy Cross the stability that came with a rule of life and common expectations. The role of Father Dujarie, Brother Andre Mottais and other early members of the Brothers of St. Joseph in the development of Holy Cross should not be underestimated.

If I could speak with Brother Julian Beaudry now I would tell him that I truly acknowledge Father Jaques Dujarie as the first founder of the Brothers. But I also recognize that Father Dujarie cannot be considered without also acknowledging Brother Andre Mottais and Blessed Basile Moreau. The religious of Holy Cross have had a remarkable evolution. Certainly some men who have influenced this evolution in the United States include Father Edward Sorin, Brother Vincent Pieau, Father Gilbert Francais, Brother Ephrem O’Dwyer, Brother William Mang. The same is true of Holy Cross throughout other parts of the world.

We call ourselves today the Brothers of Holy Cross. But we are built on the effort of Father Dujarie in calling a group of men together to work in the rural parishes of central France. Without the experiences and hardships and dedication of those men to serving people, the story of Holy Cross might be very different than it is. Let us celebrate Father Jacques Dujarie and the Brothers of St. Joseph for what their efforts have become in our own lives.

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“He Went About Doing Good...”

“Prepare yourselves to profit by the very special graces which will be offered to you during these days.”
“I am among you to be the consolation of the widow, the father of the orphan, the support of the poor, the friend of those who suffer.”

(Jacques Dujarié – 1803)