

**BERNARD MARTIAL and  
PHILIPPINE DUCHESNE:  
TWO MISSIONARIES to LOUISIANA**

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Father Bertrand (Bernard) Martial, a priest from Bordeaux, France, served under bishops in four dioceses on two continents and was closely connected with important events in the dioceses of Bordeaux, Bardstown, New Orleans, St. Louis, and Detroit, as well activities in France and Italy. There are at least 83 documents in the files of the Propaganda Fide in Rome that are related to him in some way. I have located close to 250 letters from, to, or about him written during the years 1817 to 1835.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "B. Martial", with a horizontal line underneath.

He influenced the selection of one bishop in the United States and the rejection of another, and was himself considered for the Sees of New Orleans and Vincennes. He founded schools in Bordeaux, Baton Rouge and New Orleans. He escorted a future saint on her voyage to New Orleans and St. Louis. He was associated with three communities of religious women: the Religious of the Sacred Heart in St. Louis, Missouri, the Ursulines in New Orleans, Louisiana, and the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky.

### 1. FATHER BERNARD MARTIAL

Born in Bordeaux, France about 1770, Bertrand Martial studied for the priesthood, first, in France, and then in Italy when the French Revolution forced the closing of Catholic seminaries. A death notice in the Paris journal, *l'Ami de la religion et du roi*, gave some details of his life before he came to Louisiana.

The death of Father Martial, in New Orleans, has stirred fitting remorse in Bordeaux, where he lived for some time, and where he rendered services that will not be forgotten. It appeared in a small notice in the Newspaper of Guyenne; it is from M. Rey, the boarding school master, who was for six years the collaborator of Fr. Martial. This worthy ecclesiastic, it says, was born in Bordeaux, in 1770, of not very well-off parents. He left France at the time of the revolution, though he had not yet received holy orders. He completed his theological studies in Rome, and having been ordained a priest in 1794, he entered as the tutor for an important family into a position in the Church, in Forli. He often visited Italy with his pupil, and the visits were beneficial. When peace had been made with the Church, it allowed him to return to France about the time of the concordat. His ability carried him into teaching in the company two other noted clergymen, Frs. Giraudeau and Larrouy. He established a boarding school in Bordeaux that in a short time acquired, a fame which it deserved. This establishment was on Rue Permentade, and the public officials brought honor to Bordeaux, by the distinguished doctors, lawyers, and merchants trained in this school. They preserve fond memories of their years with their teacher, and M. Rey is passing on their sadness. (*L'Ami*, 74, [1834], pp. 103-104)

Father Martial had met one of the future Bishops of New Orleans in May 1817 when Father Antoine Blanc stayed at the former's home in Bordeaux for over a month before Blanc left for Louisiana. Father Blanc

had traveled to Bordeaux to meet Fathers Benedict Richard and Michael Portier, both of whom would be associated with Father Martial in Louisiana. **(Notre Dame Calendar, V-4-c)**

Bishop William Louis Valentine Dubourg, the first bishop of Louisiana, had several other occasions during which he might have met Father Martial during the bishop's visit to Bordeaux, between May and July 1816 and again in the spring and summer of 1817.

Bishop Dubourg returned to America by way of Bardstown, then to St. Louis. This news and also Father Martial's intention to establish a school in St. Louis was reported in France when he sent this information to the editors of l'Ami.

The vicar general of the bishop of Louisiana wrote us that he has finally arrived in his diocese. We had announced the departure of M. Dubourg, from Baltimore before. He (Dubourg) reached Bardstown, 2 December 1817, after a boat trip of eleven days on the Ohio River, and met M. Flaget, the bishop of Kentucky .....

They very much want to have a college formed under his direction, and want for this establishment a venerable ecclesiastic of Bordeaux, Fr. Martial, who has left lately to join him. The bishop also thinks of having a small seminary; and the members of a new parish, mostly composed of very zealous American Catholics, has already given him the ground in the countryside. **(L'Ami 1818 pp. 110 - 112)**

## 2. PHILIPPINE DUCHESNE

Father Martial's trip to American would be notable for his traveling companions and the events that took place while at sea.

One of the first responsibilities that Bishop DuBourg assigned to Father Martial was to escort Mother Rose Philippine Duchesne and five members of the Society of the Sacred Heart who had volunteered to begin a new mission at the request of the Bishop. He wrote on 6 June 1817 to Mother Duchesne's superior, Mother Madeleine Sophie Barat, that their mission will be made easier by "the acquisition of an excellent ecclesiastic from Bordeaux, a friend of your brother (M. l'abbé Martial rue permentade) who plans to travel to our new colony in the spring of next year."

grâces et facilités par l'acquisition que j'ai faite d'un  
excellente ecclésiastique de Bordeaux, ami de Monsieur votre  
frère M. l'abbé Martial (rue permentade) qui se propose  
de se joindre à votre colonie, au printemps de l'année  
prochaine. Il veut bien ...

**(StLAA)**

DuBourg continues, saying that Martial is taking on the job of agent general for Dubourg's whole mission in France and will furnish them with all the information the sisters will need, and will be acting on Dubourg's behalf. Martial has his complete confidence. If they would meet him in Bordeaux, Martial had agreed to accompany them on their voyage to New Orleans. On 29 August 1817 Mother Duchesne wrote to her cousin, Josephine Perier (Madame Jacques-Fortunat de Savoy-Rollin), about the kinds of things Father Martial wanted to take with him to Bishop DuBourg.

The vicar general [of Bishop DuBourg], who is remaining in Bordeaux as agent for the mission, writes to our Mother General, begging her to procure material, muslin, linen, galloon, all that can be used to make vestments and all that can impress the savages in the pomp of liturgical ceremonies. **(Callan, Duchesne, p. 200)**

The group of religious women soon learned that it was time to go to Bordeaux and Philippine Duchesne wrote from Paris to Mother Marie Prevost, superior of the convent at Amiens, on 16 February 1818. "M. Martial, vicar general of bishop of Louisiana, announced that he would sail for America with some seminarians in February, the season favorable for navigation, and that the bishop expected the nuns to join the party. They must reach Bordeaux for embarkation the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month, and that was but ten or twelve days off." **(Callan, *Society*, p. 34-35)**

Philippine Duchesne also wrote to Mother Barat on 28 February about Father Martial and some reasons why he agreed to Bishop DuBourg's request. She refers to the opinion of her Jesuit brother, Father Louis Barat, who was about eleven years older than Sophie Barat.

Mr. Barat thinks highly of Fr. Martial and also of a young ecclesiastic whom he would like to send to Mgr. DuBourg .... Fr. Martial cannot get the salary owed him; his pupils leave him because he is leaving; I find him much changed and he admits he is suffering. **(de Charry, #89.)**

When Father Martial set out for Louisiana, he had, besides the six women religious, Francis Xavier Evremont Harrissart, a clerical student, who would continue on to St. Louis and be ordained a priest on 29 September 1818 in St. Louis by Bishop DuBourg.

Some insight into how Martial had his way of doing things is seen in this excerpt from a 16 March letter of Sister Catherine Lamarreto to Mother Marie Prévost describing the time spent while waiting to begin their voyage.

This was Tuesday of Holy Week. They served us a nice meal without meat, and afterwards we went to the church for confession to M. Martial, the reverend gentleman with whom we are traveling to St. Louis. But instead of hearing our confessions, he put us to work with some village girls who were trying to arrange the repository. ... Confessions were postponed to the following day. **(Callan, *Society*, p. 40)**

After arriving at Bordeaux and boarding their ship, the *Rebecca*, they were delayed leaving port for several days, and Mother Duchesne wrote to Mother Thérèse Maillucheu on 2 March 1818 about her concern for Father Martial. "Father Martial, the vicar general, will be the only priest on board, and if he is ill - and even now he is not very well - we shall be deprived of Mass." **(Callan p. 222)**

Perhaps his physical condition affect how he treated the religious, for, although she gave no specific details, Mother Duchesne wrote on 5 March 1818 to Josephine Perier regarding Father Martial's feelings about caring for these religious women. "The vicar-general with whom we are traveling is not very happy about this arrangement; we add so much to his responsibility." **(Callan, p. 223)** When the time for them to sail arrived, Duchesne wrote in her Journal, "Monsieur Martial, vicar general of Mgr. DuBourg, and Monsieur Evremont boarded the vessel with the religious on Holy Thursday, March 19, a day consecrated to St. Joseph." **(Journal of Mother Duchesne)** They would not arrive in New Orleans until May 25.

### 3. SAILING to AMERICA

Information about their difficult two months voyage comes from the letters of Mother Duchesne, her *Journal*, accounts of her life, and from the *Journal* of Madames Octavie Bertold and Eugenie Audé, members of the Society. Early in the voyage, there were signs that there would be difficulties. On Easter Sunday, Mother Duchesne wrote in her *Journal* that "Father Martial was sick, it was impossible to have Mass." The first time they celebrated Mass was March 28, more than a week later.

"For a week the Rebecca was tossed on the Bay of Biscay. As it neared the Azores another storm rose. The captain suggested casting lots in order to discover the Jonas. He had been assured before sailing that if he took aboard these nuns, a priest, Abbe Martial, and a student for the priesthood, Mr. Evremont Harrissart, his ship would most certainly be wrecked." **(Journal of Bertold and Audé)**

The suspicions of the captain and crew made them cautious about their religious duties.

The Abbe Martial said Mass and gave them Holy Communion whenever the weather and sea sickness did not stop them. The good priest had begun giving them a little exhortation on deck every evening "*a demi vox*"; but was obliged to give it up, for fear of provoking improper comments from the crew. Confession became more difficult and Communion rarer. **(Baunard, p. 199)**

And soon their opportunities for Mass became fewer because of the reactions of the others on the ship.

April 16. Monsieur Martial, who had been giving instructions to the little community, decided that hereafter they would go to Holy Communion less frequently, because of the criticism of the passengers, many of whom though Protestant attended Mass. Every evening, however, he said prayers aloud with them and several other people on deck. **(Journal of Bertold and Audé)**

Callan tells how the sisters spent their time during the voyage.

... there were pleasant days on deck and they could think more coherently, pray more peacefully, listen more attentively to Father Martial's little spiritual talks and to the English lessons they found so difficult. They chatted with subdued gaiety - Father Martial was very firm about its being subdued .... **(Callan, p. 224)**

Mother Duchesne wrote about storms, rain, headwinds and calms, heat, a fire, a pirate ship (corsaire), an eclipse of the moon and a comet they observed for several nights. Below decks they endured the smell of rotting food and wine from busted casks. When Father Martial felt well, he celebrated Mass at four or four-thirty in the morning. Mother Duchesne wrote in her first letter to Mother Barat on 16 May 1818. "As for Father Martial, we did not see him at all those days, for he was very ill." **(Callan, p. 229)** On some quiet evenings, they stayed on deck with him nearby until nine o'clock. In spite of these many difficulties, Father Martial must have tried to encourage Mother Duchesne and her group not to be discouraged, for she continued in her letter of 16 May 1818.

I am thoroughly convinced now that the people who have been to Louisiana generally speak only of what is attractive, lest they should discourage anyone from going there, and that is Father Martial's line of conduct. But I owe you the truth, and I shall not hide from you either the perils of the sea or my own cowardice. **(Callan, p. 228)**

Father Martial describes the impression which the sisters made upon him in the letter he wrote to Mother Barat on 23 June 1818.

Je laisse a la bonne mere Duchesne la narration du voyage, ecrivait le grand vicaire de Mgr Dubourg, par ce moyen vous apprendez bien au juste, ey avec toutes leurs circonstances, nos craintes et nos joies passees et presentes; je me reserve .... **(Cahier, Vol 1p., 290)**

I leave to good Mother Duchesne the telling of the tale of our voyage; you will get from her a very correct account. I reserve to myself the right to tell you what is in my heart with regard to the interior life of your religious. I shall begin by reproaching Monseigneur Du Bourg and you for having humiliated me for seventy days by putting under my guidance women whose virtue surpasses my power of expression. You will both have to answer to God for having chosen for them a director whose capacity and virtue were in no way proportioned to the souls confided to him. You can rejoice, however, in having furnished me with means for a renewal of interior spirit by the example I witnessed daily, for I feel obliged to tell you that not one of your Sisters was ever guilty of the least shortcomings. I had only to moderate their zeal - and this for my own sake: the contrast between my easygoing ways and their constantly increasing fervor would have been too noticeable. **(Callan, p. 230)**

#### 4. In NEW ORLEANS

On 29 May 1818, after sailing up the Mississippi River, and while still twenty miles below New Orleans, the ship anchored, and "Father Martial said Mass and preached." (**Baunard, pp. 202-03**). The five religious renewed their vows at the Mass said by Fr. Martial, who also preached a sermon. (**Journal of Mother Duchesne**) Mothers Octavie and Eugenie described the events of the evening in their journal. "Fr. Martial had sent a letter to the Ursuline religious announcing our arrival. Two priests who were at the convent when the letter was opened did not wait to hear it through, but went off immediately to engage the carriages, which came for us with a cordial invitation from the Ursulines to hasten the pleasure they participated in welcoming us." (**Journal of Audé and Berthold, p. 6**) The sisters left the ship and joined Father Martial in the two carriages which took them the rest of the way to the city. It was about two-thirty in the morning when they reached the city.

Roger Baudier, the historian of the Catholic Church in Louisiana described Father Martial's earliest efforts in New Orleans.

Father Martial, capable and of a winning disposition, immediately caught popular fancy, as well as the admiration of the Ursulines who wished him to remain as their chaplain. Meanwhile, Father Martial, noting with sadness the distressing conditions in the city and the neglect of the religious education of children, at once organized catechism classes. (**Baudier, p. 278**)

Mother Duchesne wrote in her journal that they "listen to the missionary with the fervour of the first Christians gathered around St. Peter; and when the canon signaled the time to retire, they expressed their regrets of not being able to spend the night in these holy activities." (**Baunard, p. 209**)

We have our first hint of Father Martial's intention of opening a school in St. Louis, as Bishop DuBourg was expecting him to do and was one of the reasons for recruiting him, from a priest in St. Louis, Father Leo Deys. He wrote to then Father Joseph Rosati that, "We are awaiting the arrival of Fr. Martial with his students this coming spring." (**StLAA**) Father Deys was one of the teachers at the College of St. Louis.

Mother Duchesne's letter of 7 June 1818 to Mother Barat wrote of his intentions to go to St. Louis. She described the families and children in New Orleans.

I have never met more manner and charm than these Creoles possess. On the plantations the education of the girls may be somewhat neglected, but among the Americans in the cities much care is expended on it. I saw a ten-year-old girl today whose schooling will be completed when she is twelve. To keep her busy at her books they are teaching her Latin. Her brother, now twelve years old, speaks French and English, writes these and also Latin, and is studying Greek. He is going to St. Louis with Fr. Martial .... (**Callan, p. 241**)

When, and even whether or not Father Martial would leave New Orleans seemed to have been up in the air. Mother Duchesne wrote to Mother Barat on 7 June 1818, that, "we may have to remain here a good while longer, so Father Martial has gone to the country for two weeks." (**Callan, p. 241**) Bishop DuBourg wrote to Duchesne to explain about the delays in their coming to St. Louis and some changes in the arrangements once they arrived. He also referred to "... your worthy guide, M. Martial, who is my best friend, ...." (**Callan, Society, p. 46**)

Father Martial probably served some of the rural parishes during this time. After learning the he would not be going to St Louis right away, she wrote on 24 June 1818 to Mother Madeleine Sophie that, "Father Martial is remaining in New Orleans longer than we are." (**Callan, p. 246**) This would have suited the Ursulines fine, for Mother Duchesne wrote to Father Louis Barat, S. J. on 21 June 1818, that the Ursuline sisters "want to retain Father Martial, too, and I like that for their sake for they have become very dear to me. He listens to all this with only one ear, but he works willingly with the religious." (**Callan, p. 247**)

No doubt that Father Martial was well liked by the Ursuline sisters as might be shown from his involvement with them. In a 22 June 1818 letter to Mother Barat, Mother Duchesne wrote from the Ursuline convent in New Orleans, "Yesterday St. Aloysius Gonzaga was chosen as patron of the noviceship here; the

little seminary is also to be under his protection. Father Martial, who is much liked here, preached at the ceremony." **(Erskine, p. 145-146)**

On 9 July 1818, she again wrote of Father Martial's desire to go to St. Louis. When she asked him to write to her superior, he told her that he would not complain about her. Some of her uncomfortableness with Father Martial may be hinted at here.

Father Martial wants to leave for St. Louis at once. I asked him to write you a line, but he may not do so, as he did not relish the idea. He said that he had no complaint to make of us, and that if he wrote in our praise you would easily see that we had asked him to do so. He reproved me for having told you any unpleasant impressions, saying that it is a mistake to put on paper and to send such a distance opinions likely to be changed by a contrary impression. I am sorry for anything unfavorable that I may have said and I beg you to subtract what may be due only to my rigorous temperament. He has been very kind to us. **(Erskine, p. 150)**

Duchesne described why she preferred going to confession to another priest rather than Father Martial.

Father Martial has been very kind to us and has continued to direct us fervently in the confessional. I have skipped him, however, three or four times and taken advantage of the presence of an Italian priest [Father Moni], who is much like Father Perreau. He is a man of deep piety who loves the Society of Jesus. His soul is great and noble, like the family to which he belongs. He has taken a very kind interest in us. **(Callan, p. 249-50)**

Father Louis Leopold Moni, whom Philippine Duchesne describes as "a Benedictine from Florence," was at St. John the Baptist church in Edgard and Father Perreau was the Superior of St. Nicholas du Chardonnet Seminary in Paris, France. As an almoner of the King, Moni was able to bring gifts for the first chapel of the Sacred Heart in America. She continued her 9 July letter writing about Father Martial's popularity, and of her own wishes to educate the girls in the city.

One thing excites my jealousy, and that is to see Father Martial already overworked while we remain idle. There is so much to do in New Orleans, for the city is growing fast, and we have seen twenty steamers pass in two days. The mulatto, Creole, Negro and American boys flock after Father Martial, who has three classes in catechism every day. It would be the same for the girls. **(Erskine, p. 152)**

It was not unusual for instructions to be given to slaves in New Orleans since the second article of the *Code Noir* or Black Code decreed that slaveholders must have them instructed and baptized in the Catholic religion. "Some Catholic curates made serious attempts to evangelize the slave population. Father Martial had considerable success with colored boys in New Orleans in 1818." **(Taylor, p. 140)**

## 5. ST. LOUIS

Martial did eventually begin his travel to St. Louis. In July of 1818 Father Martial was at Bois Brule (St. Mary of the Barrens Seminary in Perry County, south of St. Louis) for a conference with Bishop DuBourg. Father Felix DeAndreis, C.M., the superior of the Seminary, wrote from St. Louis to Father Rosati at St. Thomas Seminary in Kentucky on 11 July 1818,

We are waiting here from day to day the arrival of M. L'Abbe [Bertrand] Martial with several Nuns called Jesuitesses (the ladies of the Sacred Heart); the priest will remain here for the direction of an Academy, and the Nuns will go to St. Charles where all is ready for their receipt. **(Letter 52. Autograph letter, English and French, Archives of the General Curia, Rome; De Andreis collection, Volume I, Part II, #26.)**

On 22 August 1818, Philippine Duchesne and her companions reached St. Louis.

From the Journal of the House for the Religious of the Sacred Heart at St. Charles, Missouri, we learn that Bishop DuBourg, "came at the end of August (the 25<sup>th</sup>) 1818 just after having celebrated High Mass with great pomp in his cathedral. Fathers Martial and De La Croix accompanied him." (**Erskine, p. 204**) The "Diary of the little house: Florissant of the Sacred Heart of Missouri," recorded that Bishop DuBourg celebrated the feast of St. Louis (August 29) in Saint Charles. Fathers Martial and De La Croix were with him. (**de Charry, #117**)

A few days later, on August 30, the three clergymen were at the sisters' school in St. Charles and distributed prizes to the students. (**Callan, p. 305**) On 15 February 1819, Mother Duchesne wrote Mother Barat that she had received a four-month-old letter (November 1818) from Father Martial telling her that he was coming to St. Louis. (**Callan, p. 287**) Later that same month Father Leo Deys wrote from St. Louis to Father Rosati on 27 February that, "we are awaiting the arrival of Fr. Martial with his students this next spring. (**StLAA**) It seems that the plan was for Martial to bring boys from New Orleans when he began a school in St. Louis.

A priest who later became the confessor to Mother Duchesne and her community was the subject of a letter from Father Martial on 1 May 1819 to Father Rosati recommending "young Mr. Saulnier" for admission to the Mission. A native of Bordeaux like Father Martial, he would be ordained by Bishop DuBourg in 1822 and serve as his vicar general in St. Louis. Martial had references in a letter to Edmond Saulnier in New Orleans and several letters to him. Duchesne wrote that he had refused her absolution several times because of her strict discipline with the sisters, and that he knows little of French or English.

Father Martial and Bishop DuBourg went to New Orleans during the summer of 1819, and returned to St. Louis by the end of July. Philippine Duchesne wrote to Mother Barat on 27 September 1819.

Father Martial came to see us at Saint Charles from New Orleans. He told us of the arrival of the piano and the packet of silks, etc., with the invoice of the contents, and the carriage which was more than 1,000 francs. (de Charry, # 116)

After less than a year in St. Louis, Father Martial, along with two newly ordained priests, Fathers Evremont Harrissart and A. Millet, left for New Orleans on 8 October 1819 (**SLCHR, Vol. 3, p. 321**) and was listed in the *Registre* of Profession at the Ursuline Convent as a "missionary priest."

In a 10 October 1819 letter to Mother Thérèse, Duchesne explained that she could get a letter off faster because "of the return of Father Martial to give you news." (**Erskine, p. 212**) Unfortunately her letter would not reach its destination until the following year. In November, Father Martial wanted to return to New Orleans, but was delayed by the conditions on the river as we learn from Duchesne's letter of 28 November 1819 to Mother Barat.

I wrote to you on 28 September and also to several Mothers and Sisters. These letters have been much delayed for I gave them to Fr. Martial on his departure from St. Louis, but his steamboat gave up several times between here and St. Genevieve; even though it is afloat again it will not continue the journey until the spring for there is not enough water in the river. (de Charry, #120)

## 6 FATHER MARTIAL - A BISHOP?

Bishop DuBourg needed to tend to the church both in St. Louis and in New Orleans, so he was considering several priests as possible assistants to him. He wrote on 4 March 1820 to Cardinal Francisco Fontana of the Propaganda Fide, that the only three priests whom he could consider for the office of coadjutor bishop were Fathers Louis Sibourd, Joseph Rosati, and Bernard Martial. The latter was praised by DuBourg.

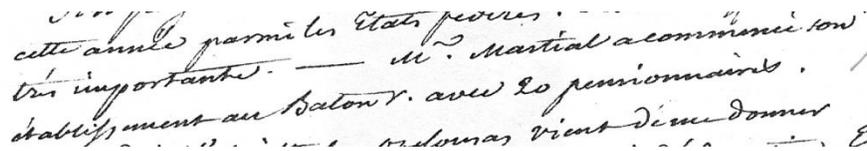
For I have only three priests whom I should consider for this office. The first is Rev. Louis Sibourd. .... The second is the Rev. Bertrand Martial, a priest from Bordeaux, who came to this diocese two years ago; his suavity of manners, his remarkable mind and his genuine piety have endeared him at once both to the people and to myself; to his exertions is due

the return of New Orleans to better sentiments. He is, I think, nine years my junior. The third is the Rev. Joseph Rosati .... (SLCHR, Vol. 2, p.48)

DuBourg was afraid that Martial's school was "necessary above all others," and would crumble if he was taken away. Although Bishop Dubourg had considered appointing Father Martial as bishop, he did not want to lose one of his most qualified priests.

Later, Father Martial, heard a rumor that he may be nominated to the see of Vincennes, Indiana. He wrote to Father G. Evangelisti of the Vatican Secretariat of State on 28 August 1829 from Bardstown requesting him to prevent such a nomination and suggested Father Antoine Blanc of Louisiana. (#1237 Fols. 166 rv and 167 rv). The rumor had also traveled to St. Louis for Philippine Duchesne wrote a letter of 1 February 1830 with news that, "Father Martial has been named, it is said, Bishop of Poste Vincennes, in the state of Indiana, near Ohio. I am sure he will ask for us, as he broached the matter with me a thousand times this year, as he cannot get used to English." (de Charry, Part II, #262) But this appointment never happened.

Another reference in a letter of Bishop DuBourg to Father Rosati at St. Mary of the Barrens, near Perryville, Missouri, on 29 February 1820, says that Father Martial has begun a school (établissement) in Baton Rouge with 20 "pensionnaires." (StLAA)



cette année parmi les États peuples. ---  
très importants. --- M. Martial a commencé son  
établissement au Baton Rouge avec 20 pensionnaires.  
Monsieur Rosati vient de me donner

(DuBourg to Rosati, StLAA)

Mother Duchesne misplaced the city's location in her letter to the novices in Grenoble on 1 March 1820, writing that "He (Bishop DuBourg) told us that Fr. Martial" had begun his college in Baton Rouge, "a little town of the state of Mississippi 87 leagues from New Orleans." She described it as "a Sodom, but there it does even as well as the one at New Orleans, motivating the few Catholics to ask for a visit of their bishop. Mgr. (DuBourg) goes at their invitation and to return to visit his 4<sup>th</sup> College begun on grounds of 400 square meters given by a rich widow that also built the house; it is a gift to the mission of 200,000 pounds and all recently." (Paisant, p. 301) Father Martial's school in Baton Rouge probably lasted less than a year.

## 7. NEW ORLEANS SCHOOL

After closing his school in Baton Rouge, Bishop DuBourg told Father Martial to stay in New Orleans and near the end of 1819, he opened his school for boys. *The Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Louisiana* locates the "New Orleans college ... on the corner of Bayou road and Claude street, to which was attached an academy on the levee near the United States barracks, under the direction of Rev. Bertrand Martial, of the Catholic clergy." (Vol. 3, p. 182)

In 1822, one of many yellow fever epidemics swept through New Orleans, killing thousands in only a few weeks. Father Martial was among those members of the clergy who ministered to the sick and dying. (Baudier, p. 279) The previous references by Mother Duchesne to his being ill on their voyage to Louisiana may have been a condition he struggled with throughout his life.

Between July and October 1822, Mother Duchesne had traveled to New Orleans, perhaps seeing Father Martial, for she wrote in a letter of 4 January 1823 to Mother Barat that "Father Martial carries on his work with a firm hand..." (Callan, p. 374) She also complained about the children in St. Louis who "are taken to balls, shows, speeches, have bad books in their hands, live in idleness." She probably would have had the same complaint about the children in New Orleans.

The building which Martial was using for his school was owned by the Ursuline sisters. His stay there would be brief as the sisters needed to move from their convent in the French Quarter to that newer location and evicted Fr. Martial.

Paxton also wrote "Martial Bertrand, Rev vic. gen. principal of the academy Levee bel. Oliver's rum distillery." And the description of the school states that,

"There is a very respectable academy on the Levée, 2 miles below town, under the direction of the Rev. Bertrand Martial and several other gentleman attached to the Catholic Clergy, where 60 boys received the benefit of their united labours." (p. 16)

Father Martial took some "orphans" to St. Mary of the Barrens near Perryville, Missouri, which began a series of letter and some criticism from Bishop DuBourg. After Father Martial closed his school, he wrote on 24 May 1823 to Bishop Rosati that "all the students were dispersed" except "deux cher orphelins, victims de la plus affreuse méchanceté" (horrible wickedness). He wrote that one of them had made his first communion and the other is prepared. He is confident that Bishop Rosati will be happy to have them. If the bishop has need of classical books, he could send them along with the two poor orphans. On 9 July 1823, Father Martial again wrote to Father Rosati about sending the two orphans, along with the case of books and a chalice given by Madame Duchesne.

*Je vous transmets une Caisse de livres Classiques et  
une boîte, renfermant le beau Calice dont Madame  
la Duchesse d'Angoulême nous a fait présent, ce  
sera une compensation aux peines et frais d'Éduca-  
tion de ces deux pauvres Enfants. Nous remercieray*

SLAA

In April 1826 Bishop Flaget of Bardstown sent Father Martial to Europe to raise funds for his diocese. He was successful in this and returned to New Orleans in September 1828. He served at several parishes in and outside of New Orleans and finally as chaplain for the Ursulines.

Father Martial was among those who succumbed to yellow fever and he died at the Ursuline Convent on 31 July 1832 at the age of 62.

On 11 October 1832 Philippine Duchesne wrote to Henriette Ducis in Paris that "death has not touched our three houses since we arrived. Fr. Martial, our fellow traveller has just died at New Orleans." (de Charry #285)

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