

31 July

Anniversary of François Rion, priest

*F*rançois Rion was the godfather of the Good Father. This brother of Marie Rion, mother of the founder, was born in 1752 in Coussay-les-Bois. He was ordained a priest on June 26, 1779 and assigned as parochial vicar at Crémille, 8 miles from his home village.

The religious education that the founder received in the family was given very early by his godfather. He took him to his parish to prepare him for his first communion, taught him first the basic of Latin letters, which helped the Good Father to enter the Châtelleraut school.

He spent his holidays with his godfather, who in December 1781 was transferred to St. Phêle-de-Maille, 18 kilometers from Coussay, also as vicar. The parish priest was Abbot **André Hubert Fournet** (a future saint), a good friend of François, who was ordained a year before him. Certainly the environment of that presbytery strongly influenced the vocation the Good Father.

When the oath to obey the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was required of all church officials, both priests, and André Hubert Fournet and François Rion, did it, probably so as not to abandon their flock. However, they retracted when they knew of the papal Brief condemning the oath. At that time the Good Father was ordained deacon and, as we know, later in Paris as a priest.

When the founder left la Motte d'Usseau (20 October 1792), Abbot Fournet has taken refuge in Spain and his godfather, François Rion, was at Coussay, free. But the persecution raged. Abbot Rion managed to take refuge with the help of **Abraham Coudrin** in early 1793. He was finally arrested on September 23, 1793 and died on July 31, 1794, on the pontoons of Rochefort (Aix island).

From a letter of Saint André Fournet to the Good Father

"I always remember the gifts of God in you. The martyr and good priest M. Rion somehow surely enters in this ocean of predilections, of graces, of favors of which you have been flooded."

(20 November 1833)