



Interview with Fr. Efrem

Brief presentation to contextualize your coming to the general house and put your work in the context of the reality of our archives.

I am at the end of twenty days spent in the general curia. Soon I will return to Pont-Château to experience Christmas with my community. My presence here was born within the project of arrangement of the archives of our congregation sites here at the general house. For a year now Miss Noortje Lambrichts of the Kadok of Leuven (BE) has been working, above all inventing the abundant material. Immediately we saw the need for material help to scan a series of documents chosen from among the thousands that are now classified. I had made myself available for this kind of work.

1. What your work consisted in

My work consisted mainly in scanning these selected documents I mentioned above, by means of a professional and particular scanner. My job was mainly to place the document on a particular plate and then with the mouse or a pedal take the photo of the document itself after adjusting the measurements, the light and so on.

2. Some discovery

The work was certainly monotonous but I do not hide from you the emotion in having in your hands the manuscripts of St. Louis. There was not much time but I often stopped to reread certain passages of the founder which have accompanied me in recent years. A special emotion in seeing the little hearts or monograms of Jesus and Mary that separate the various strophes of the Canticles. What a surprise then to see the original design that accompanies the Canticle 127: I did not think about it and it suddenly fell under my eyes. I then scanned several editions of the Constitutions of our congregation. For more than two days I worked on manuscripts (especially homilies) by Father Gabriel Deshayes.

3. What usefulness for the congregation

I think there are several useful things for the congregation. We will have the opportunity to come closer to the manuscripts of the founder without touching them, although not very far. Seeing how it emphasizes a word, seeing how it writes the other word in larger characters helps us to know the context of an expression. Furthermore, the very detailed inventory that is being created of the material we possess will give us the possibility of other studies, considerations. Furthermore, history is always a teacher of life. Unfortunately we tend to forget, but our little story was built by little-big men.

4. What remains to be done

The global project is expected over two years. The first one is finished. Regarding the work of inventory and classification, it proceeded well and according to the time set. For the work of digitizing the material, everything depends on the technical operators. I hope further to be able to give some more of my time for material work.

5. A message / advice for the confreres

An advice, which is above all a wish that I express, is that we continue (or recover) to draw up in our communities the "Chronicle" of community life. Moreover, when a confrere ends his march among us, the superior of the community or a confrere in charge should gather some personal document and object, photos and the memory will be preserved in the archives.