

Mater Admirabilis and the Saints

The story of a fresco that became a
place of grace and pilgrimage

“A Day with Mater Admirabilis”

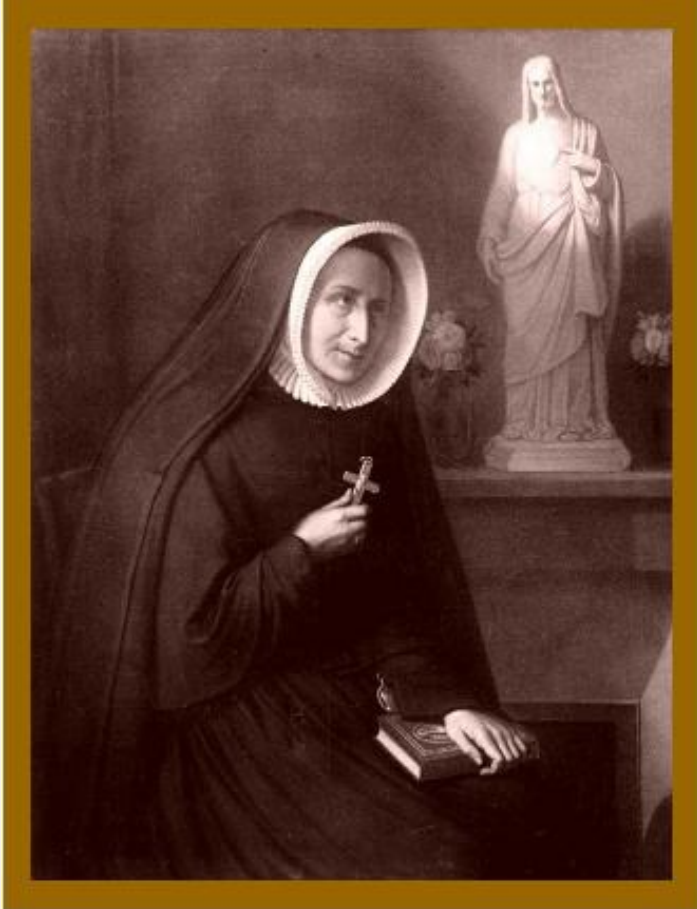
17 October 2026

Julien Béchard



The Society of the Sacred Heart at Trinità dei Monti

A religious and educational house



Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat

1800

Founding of the Society of the Sacred Heart around Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat

1828

Establishment at Trinità dei Monti: community and school

Pauline Perdrau (1815–1895)

A postulant, an artist, a vocation in discernment



Spring 1844

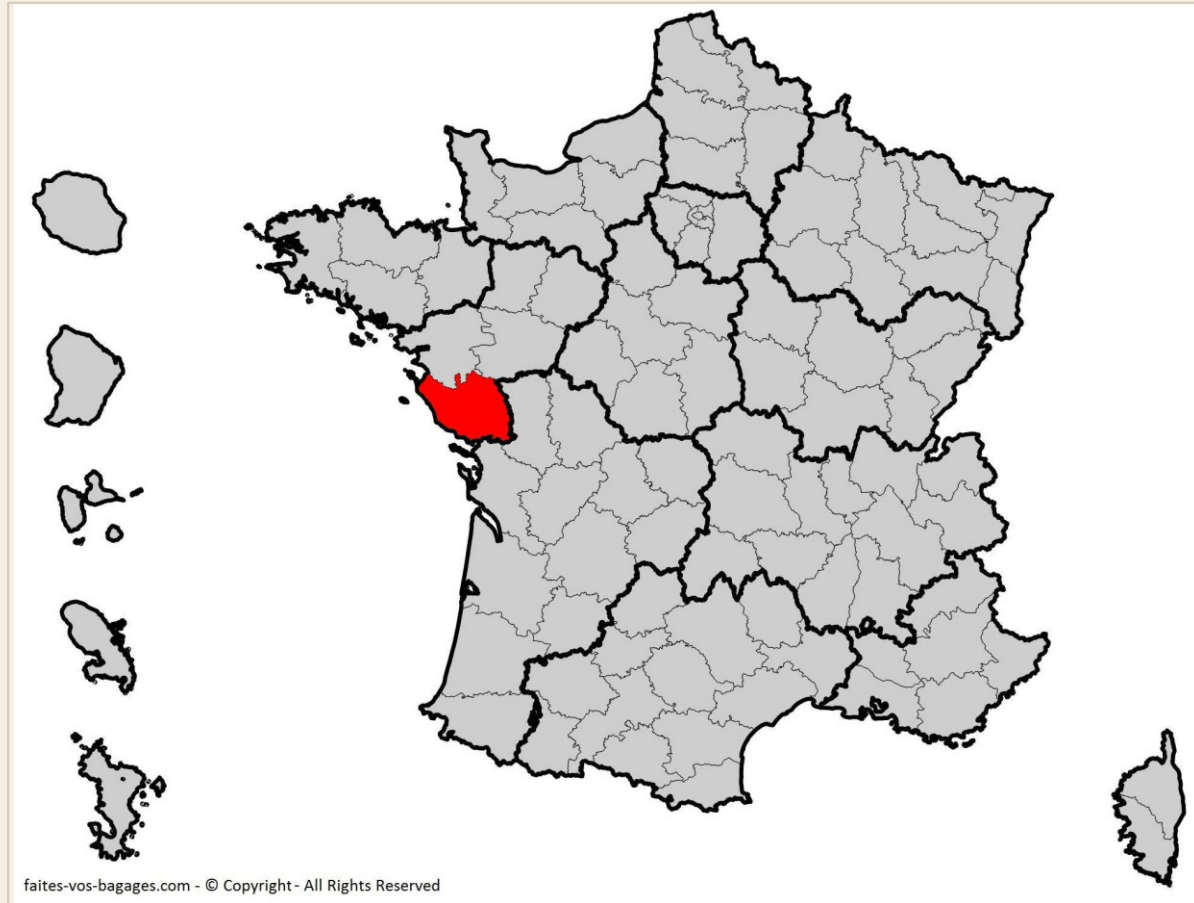
Pauline arrives at Trinità dei Monti at the age of twenty-nine.

She continues her artistic training in Rome, notably with Maximilian Seitz.

She is still only at the beginning of learning the fresco technique.

An image from childhood

The Vendée memory that will give Mater her form



Childhood memory in the Vendée



Mary in the Temple: young, hardworking and silent

1844: “bringing the Blessed Virgin here”

On 1 June, Pauline begins the fresco



“Would you like me to bring the Blessed Virgin here?”

1 June 1844

Start of the fresco work

A fresco that was perhaps meant to disappear

Worrying colours before drying



“a silence, charitable it is true, but discouraging”

Pauline then hides the fresco behind a sheet.

A fortnight later, the tones have lightened.

From the Madonna del Giglio to Mater Admirabilis

A name that takes hold in prayer

Madonna del Giglio



Mater Admirabilis

The name is already in use before the visit of Pius IX.

20 October 1846: Pius IX

The devotion changes scale



**20 October
1846**

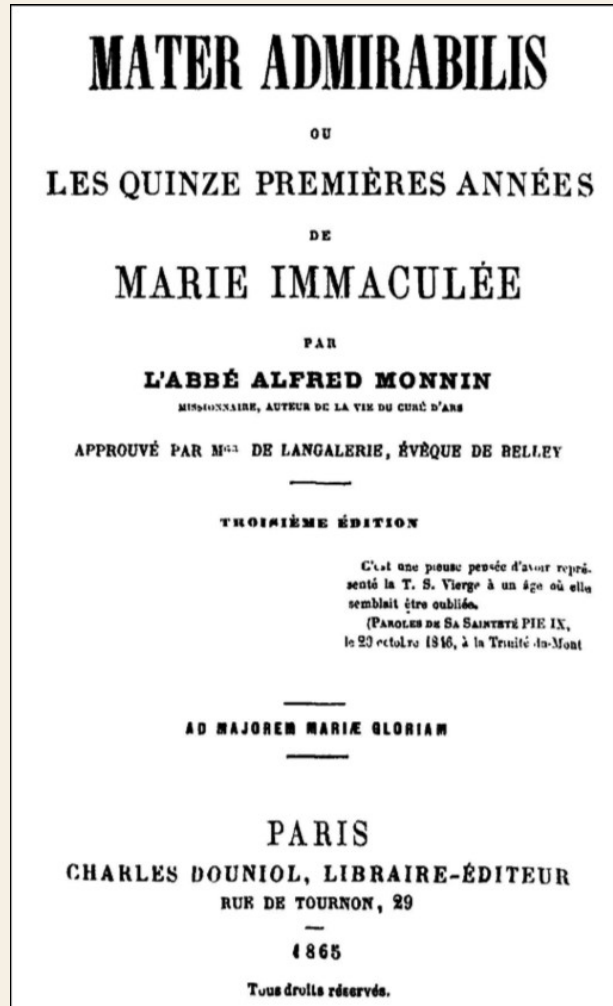
**Pius IX kneels and prays at
length before the fresco.**

« Mater Admirabilis, ora pro nobis »



The “Archives of Mater Admirabilis”

Abbé Alfred Monnin, a source close to the events



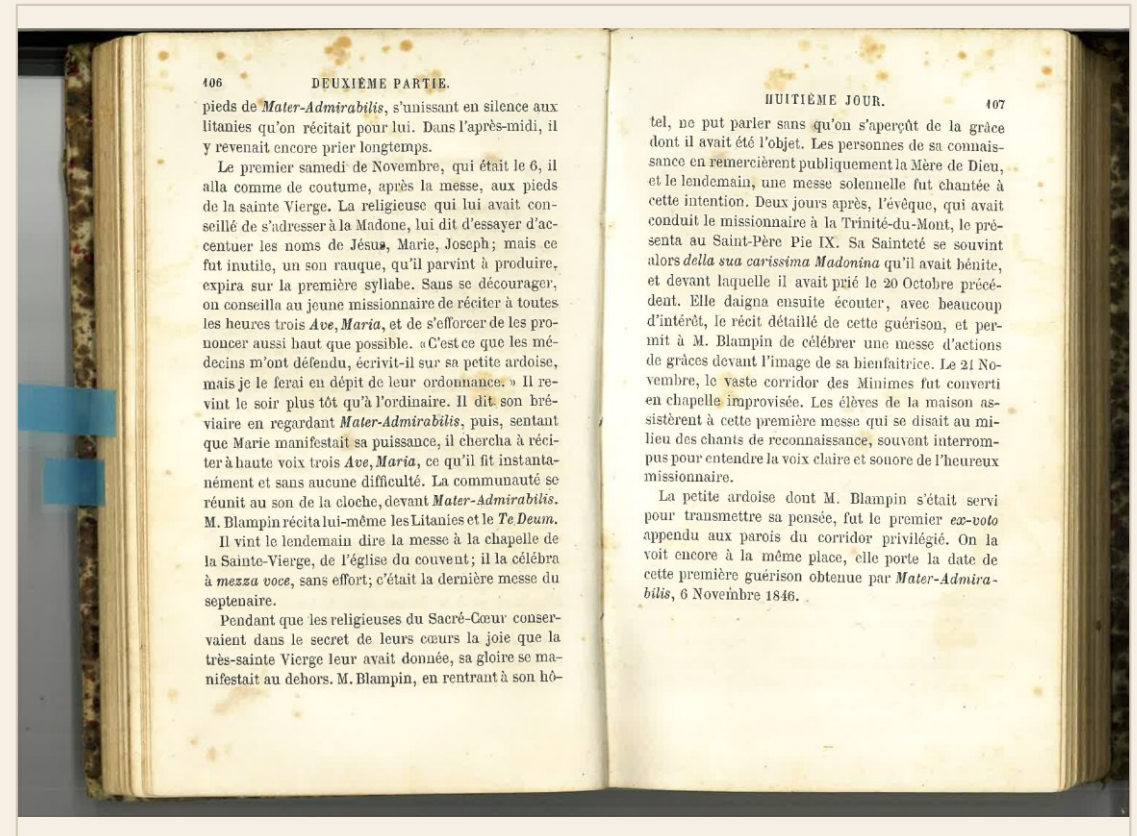
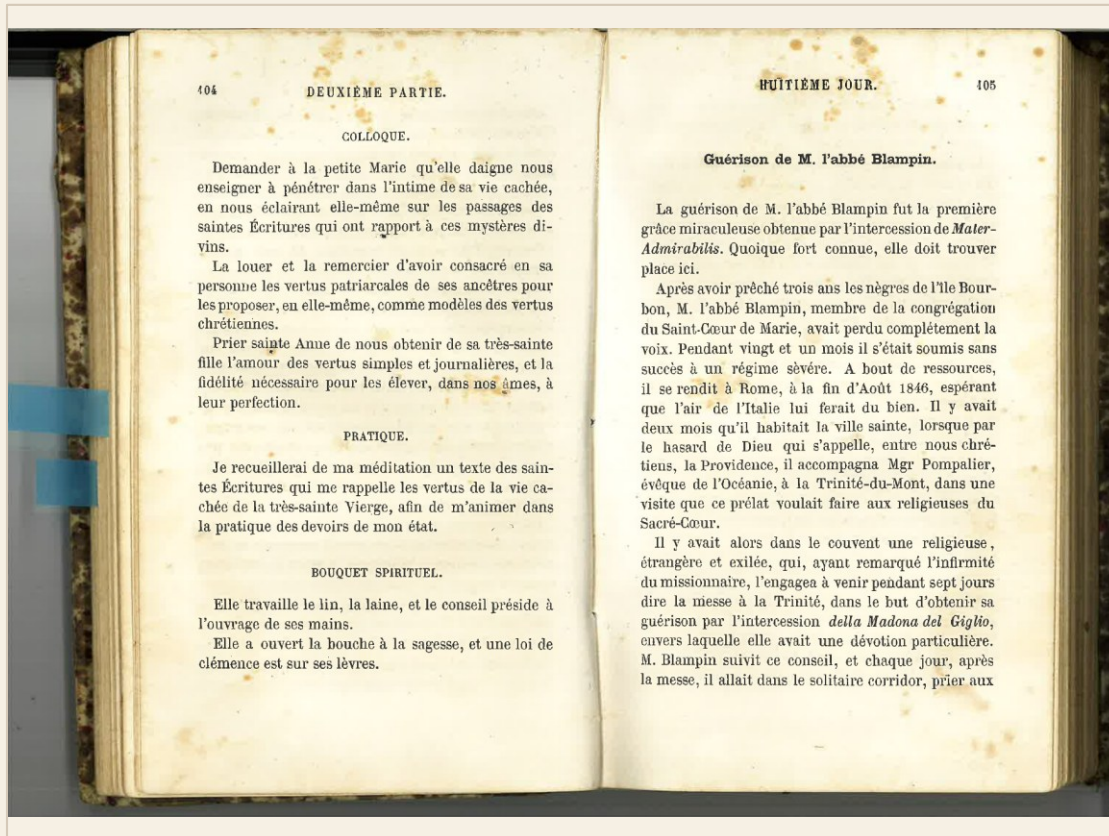
1864

Mater Admirabilis, or the First Fifteen Years of Mary Immaculate

Monnin says he worked from the archives kept at Trinità dei Monti: papal documents, conversions, vocations and healings.

1846: Abbé Blampin and the first ex-voto

The first account of a healing attributed to Mater



6 November 1846

**Monnin presents the slate Blampin used during his loss of voice
as the first ex-voto of Mater Admirabilis.**

1849: the Mater medal

An image that can now be carried



Obverse — Mater Admirabilis



Reverse — Rome, 1849

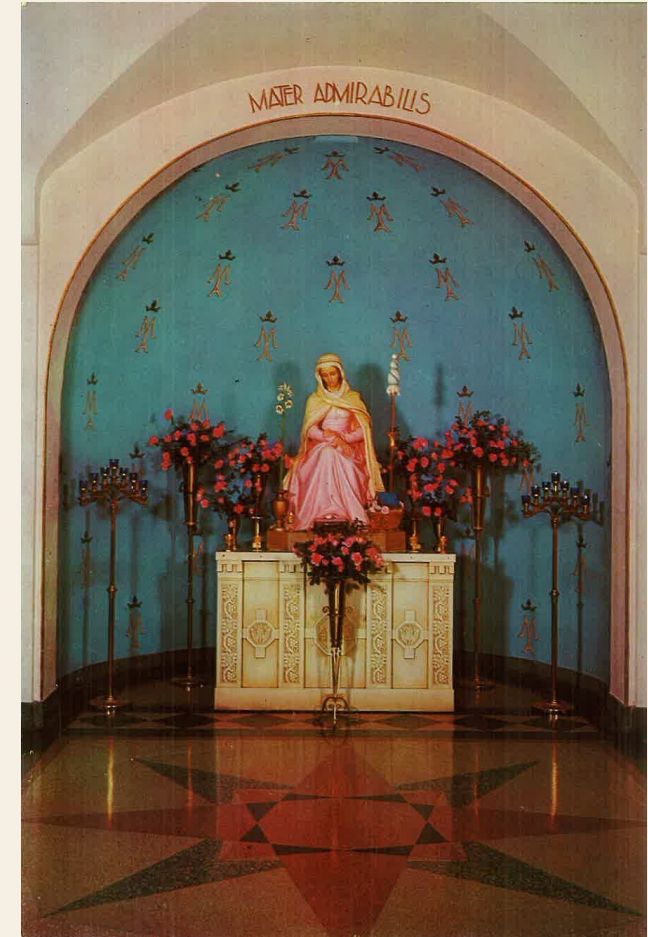
A motionless fresco that begins to travel

Reproductions in the houses of the Sacred Heart



Mater at Layrac, France

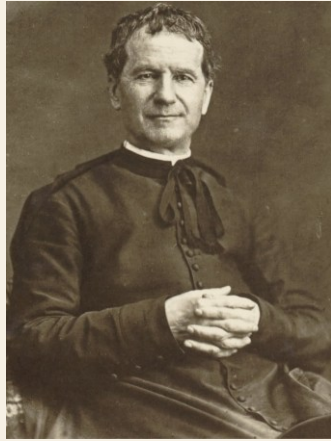
Rome → world



Mater at Villa Duchesne, Saint Louis, USA

Mater Admirabilis and the Saints

Some figures who came to pray before the fresco



Saint John Bosco



Saint Thérèse of Lisieux



Henry Edward Manning



Raphael Merry del Val



Giacomo della Chiesa
(future Benedict XV)

John Paul II: Mater keeps travelling

26 March 2003 — a copy bound for Warsaw



**26 March
2003**

**John Paul II blesses a
life-size reproduction of
Mater Admirabilis
intended for the parish
of Saint Catherine in
Warsaw.**



Conclusion: returning to the empty niche



“And all of this... from an empty niche.”