

4 March

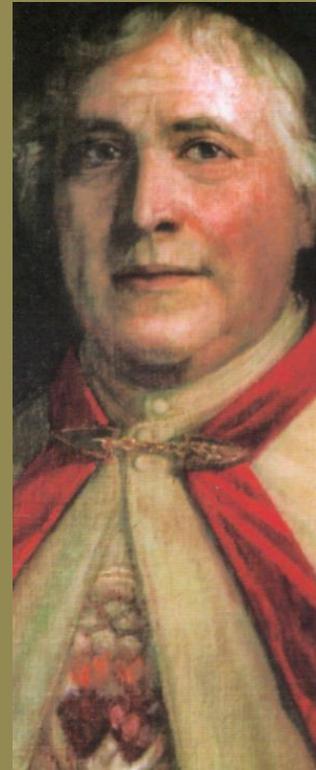
## Priestly Ordination of the GOOD FATHER

Nothing could stop Pierre in his progression towards priestly ordination. He knew in whom he had placed his trust and he sensed what this would cost him.

During the autumn of 1791, he met, in Poitiers, Father Dancel de Bruneval to whom Mgr de Saint Aulaire had confided the diocese before emigrating to Switzerland. He obtained the letters of autorisation which would enable him to receive ordination from the hands of any bishop in communion with Rome.

*"The difficulty was to find one"*, remarks Father Hilarion in his memoirs. At the end of 1791 (or in the early days of 1792), Pierre learned that Mgr. de Bonal, the Bishop of Clermont, was staying in hiding in Paris. ...He arrived there in February 1792. *"On his journey"*, states the writer, *"he found all kinds of help, horses for his journey and honest people who paid his expenses, and it did not cost him anything"*. Underground channels and networks were no doubt already in action.

March 4th 1792, the second Sunday of Lent, was for Pierre "the happiest day of his life". And yet, for the thirty or so ordinands standing before Mgr de Bonal, there was no crowd or cathedral, only the smell of old books and the cramped library of the Irish College, a few steps from the Pantheon. The College chapel, which benefited from extraterritoriality, was still open. Every day there were Masses, offices, Benedictions of the Blessed Sacrament celebrated by priests who had not taken the oath of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. This intense liturgical activity and the need for discretion explains the ordination in the library. There is no detailed description of the ceremony. Pierre Coudrin was reluctant to confide his secrets. Later he would state that he had *"become a priest with the intention of suffering everything, of sacrificing myself for God and if necessary of dying in his service."*



This is enough to enable us to imagine the attitude with which he followed the retreat preached in the following days by a disciple of Father de Clorivière, Father François-Georges Cormaux.

Shortly afterwards, the new priest returned to Coussay-les-Bois with this simple certificate in his pocket: *"I certify that M. Pierre Coudrin, of the diocese of Poitiers, is a priest. De Floirac, Vicar General"* (of Paris).<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Taken from the book by Bernard Couronne "A Man with a Heart Aflame," p.16. (Translated into English by Lorna Brockett)