

# The world upside down

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On the 15<sup>th</sup> August, **Marc Sauv **, the president of the Independent Commission on Sexual Abuses in the Church (CIASE) in France, once again came to the shrine of Lourdes as a pilgrim and a man of faith.



The first time Marc Sauv  was in Lourdes, he was 12 years old.

What impressed him most then and still impresses him about this sanctuary-city is that the sick take first place.

The whole city is designed for them, the entrances, the streets, the liturgy, the hospitality. In addition, numerous volunteers, many of them young people, take care of the sick, placing themselves at their disposal. They are the ones who bring the sick to Mary's feet, just as the sick were brought to her Son Jesus, so that they could be healed. Lourdes is a "concrete realisation of the Gospel", concluded Marc.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2023 in Paris, our four brothers, **Ladislav Radigue, Fr zal Tardieu, Marcellin Rouchouze** and **Polycarpe Tuffier**, along with Father **Henri Planchat** of the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians) will all be declared Blessed. Our brothers knew, from the day of their religious profession, that as children of the Sacred Hearts, they were called to give their lives in service of their brothers and sisters. Therein lies their and our *raison d' tre* and deepest joy. Even in the long hours of prison, incommunicado, but united to Jesus and to the brothers and sisters, Polycarpe Tuffier wrote: "My God, how the days in Mazas [the prison] favour meditations on the Passion of Our Lord! They were shepherds at the service of the people."

Their centre was in Jesus and in those He had entrusted to them. Father Planchat devoted much of his ministry to the care of orphans and young apprentices, who worked 8 to 12 hours a day, without families to care for them and without the possibility of schooling. During his stay in Arras, he collaborated with Father Henri Halluin (1820-1895) in the social education of children and orphans. After hearing of Father Planchat's execution, Father Halluin wrote on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1871 to Father Varax, Vicar General of his Order:

"One would have called it an exaggeration, but the fruits have shown that he was right... He brought together in him all that he should do, today more than ever, a priest useful to the people, an apostle in every sense of the word, his feet were not tied to the ground, nor his hands to money nor his head to his shoulders". Henri Planchat and our own brothers made their own the "folly of the crucified Jesus" by whose loving to the end they discovered the strength and wisdom of God (cf. 1 Cor 1:22-25).

### **What if we dared to build a world upside down?**

Lourdes and the dedicated lives of our brother martyrs, show us that it is possible to live the beauty of the Gospel. There are no better or worse times. What counts is how much we let the words of Jesus resonate in us, his self-giving out of love of all that we celebrate in every Eucharist and his putting this love into practice for so many brothers and sisters with whom we walk. May each one of us, in our religious and pastoral communities, with the lay men and women with whom we live our faith, dare to make our lives gain an ever greater Gospel flavour. Let us ask for this grace using the words of our brother Esteban Gumucio ssc:

"And now, to risk turning everything upside down: the greatest to serve the least, the rich made poor to clothe the naked, bread to be shared, and each one to stop settling for what one was, so as to become much better. And my boat and your boat, keel to the sky, mast to the water and a world transformed into a home for all and you and I and all brothers".

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