DIES NATALIS of Fr. Alexis Bachelot sscc

Anniversary of his death and memorial of the first missionaries

† 5 December 1837

Alexis Bachelot was born in 1796, in Saint-Cyr (Orne, France). He made his religious profession in 1813. At 19 he entered Picpus College in Paris. There he followed in the footsteps of his uncle Isaac, cure Launay, who was professed by the name of Brother Hippolyte, on March 25, 1806.

He was a great student, distinguished by a lively intelligence. Fr. Coudrin was delighted with his new "recruit" who was given the name "Alexis", the name by which he was professed nine years later.

He went through a period of uncertainty of his vocation but finally surrendered to God in the religious life of the new community. He did his Novitiate under the direction of his uncle and pronounced his vows on February 2, 1813: aged 17 years old.

Alexis began his career as a teacher in the religious school of Cahors (France). He worked tirelessly and demonstrated his leadership. He went back to Picpus to finish his theological studies and then returned to teaching, this time in Laval. On October 21, 1820 (BP 654), in a message "to brothers in Paris," the Founder appointed him as "Director of Picpus Ecclesiastical House" (ie. the seminary).

On October 17, 1825, the Good Father asked Father Alexis Bachelot, barely 29 years old, to go as a missionary to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). On February 1, 1826, the nuncio in Paris delivered to the Good Father the appointment of Fr Perfect Bachelot as an Apostolic Prefect.

It would take about a year to organize the trip to the new mission. Finally, on September 13, 1826, during an emotional celebration of mission sending, the Good Father "kissed the feet" of the five new missionaries all dressed in white habits. They were Alexis Bachelot (30), Priests Patrick Short (Irish 34) and Abraham Armand (50), choir brother Theodosius Boissier (Auvergnat, 25) and lay brothers Melchor Bondu (from Sarthe, 35) and Leonardo Portal (from Quercy, 28). The small mission team embarked on Bordeaux Comet, on 20 November 1826. The missionaries reached Honolulu on July 7, 1827 after making a stop at Valparaiso (Chile), Quilca and Callao (Peru) and Matzalan (Mexico).

The mission found difficulties with the American Methodists who arrived 10 years earlier and had won the favor of the royal family. Compounded with group internal problem, they had to leave Hawaii and went to California. However his heart remains with the island mission. Six years later they went back to Hawaii, but the problem with the Protestants persisted, and in less than a year time they were once again expelled from the islands. He was ill, and died at sea, on December 5, 1837, at 2 pm. He was 42. He was buried on the Ascension Island (Archipelago of the Carolinas).