



OUR FOUNDER TODAY



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The Jubilee of Mercy with Bishop deBrésillac

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; He comforts us in all our affliction, to enable us to comfort those who are in distress, with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

“It is mercy I want, not sacrifice. For, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” Mt 9:13

These few words, and many other similar ones, may have had great influence on the spirit and the missionary vision of our founder, over 150 years before the Church, through Pope Francis, declared the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

For our revered Founder, the Servant of God, Marion deBrésillac, mercy is the way God is with us. Recognizing in his own person **“failure of too much openness to everyone,”** which has **“been the cause of real faults, for which I ask pardon...”** deBrésillac expresses his absolute trust in God, to whom he says, treat us **“in your mercy.”** God has mercy as part of His being. Mercy is not an attribute, a way of qualifying God; it is in God and God is in his mercy, and he always acts towards its creation mercifully. Thus, continues our Founder **“Let us ... no regrets; on the contrary, let us hope that God will consider the grace obedience he gave us to observe and forgive us the mistakes we have made since”**¹

For our Founder, the Gospel the Lord goes **“goes as far as his mercy will carry it”**² in the love of Christ (cf. 2 Thes 3:5). The missionary activity – *Ad Gentes* – especially to the most abandoned is lived in mercy. And it is the same experience of the mercy of God that comforts us, that allows us to live, to hold on to mission in a spirit of *Ad Vitam* **“amid trials and pains, that pleases God to sow our lives ...”**³ for **“God grants us His mercy, in order to sustain us in our weakness by filling them with consolation and joy”** especially in the **“middle of pains that have become our daily food...”**⁴.

The experience of the mercy of God is a source of the spiritual and apostolic optimism of our Founder and all missionaries who Brésillac refers to as **“... instruments of his [God’s] mercy.”**⁵

It is possible to say that for our founder, mercy is fully dynamic. It is a way to encounter God, to be recognized as loved by God, to encounter those whom God sends us as witnesses to all nations.

In this year of the great jubilee of God's mercy, in addition to all that the Church proposes to us, we, as SMA missionaries can draw from this spiritual heritage passed on to us by our founder the strength to better live this time of grace and continue to always be missionaries **“from the bottom of our heart”**

P. Basile Soyoye

¹ Cf. Souvenirs of 12 years of Mission.

² Letter to his cousin Louis, Nantes, 8 April 1842.

³ Letter to Mgr. Clement B. July 1852.

⁴ Letter to the Parish MEP seminary Rector. Coimbatore, 4 July 1852.

⁵ Letter to M. Jean-Marie Leroux, missionnaire apostolique. Coimbatore, 5 August 1847.