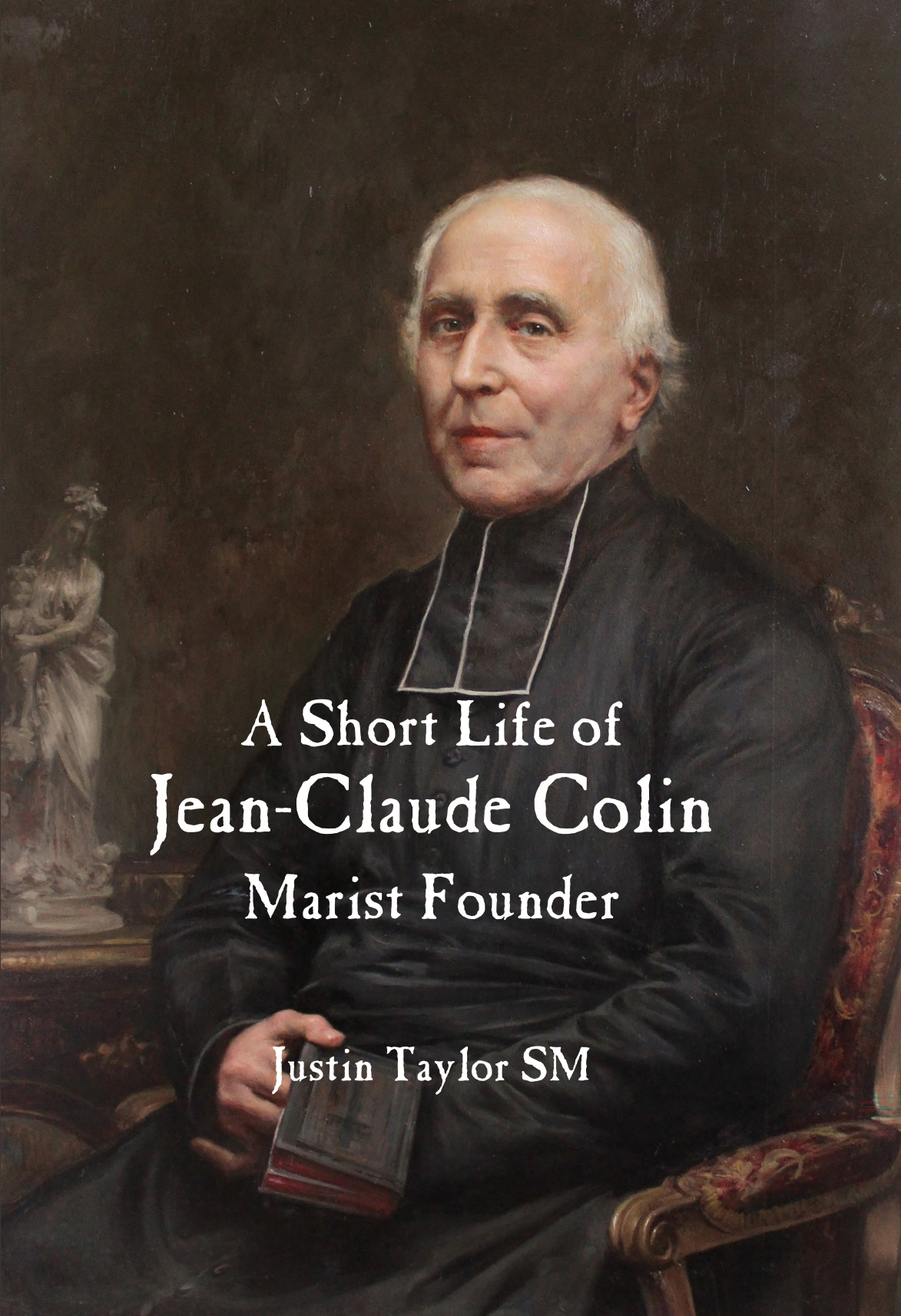


A Short Life of Jean-Claude Colin Marist Founder

Justin Taylor SM

Father Justin Taylor is an outstanding scholar. In recent years he has brought his prodigious scholarship to his research into the life and times of one French priest, Father Jean-Claude Colin (1790–1875). This resulted in a magnificent book, written in English, entitled "Jean-Claude Colin. Reluctant Founder". It is a long book, carefully crafted, beautifully written and invaluable in helping us understand the story and the context of the life of the Venerable Jean-Claude Colin and of the Religious Congregation that he founded. It is a pleasure to read.

Now Father Taylor has produced a new edition of this book which is considerably condensed. This version is to be published in several languages. We hope that this will make the inspiring life of the Venerable Jean-Claude Colin more widely known. Ideally, it will lead the reader to seek out the longer version of the story as well.

Father Taylor tells us the story of the post-Revolution French environment into which Father Jean-Claude was born and the response that he and his companions were to make in forming a Religious Congregation called the Society of Mary, or Marists.

The structures of the Catholic church had been torn apart by the French Revolution. Father Jean-Claude and his companions went into the remote mountains of the Bugey, in central France, and gave the people hope and encouragement by visiting them, listening to them and celebrating the Sacraments among them while preaching parish missions. The country was in constant political, economic and religious crisis. Father Jean-Claude and his companions responded by working to educate young people in secular and religious knowledge in schools and seminaries. The European world was opening its horizons by exploring a wider world. Jean-Claude and his companions organized missions into the furthest reaches of the Pacific, about as far from France as it was possible to go. All the while Father Jean-Claude and his companions were forming a family of Religious Congregations that thrived in his own time and continues to thrive today.

The story of all that was achieved by Fr Jean-Claude Colin and his companions, both men and women, was guided by a simple, profound and accessible spirituality which looked to Mary as their guide on how to live and serve in their turbulent world. That spirituality continues to be the greatest gift that Marists offer the church and the world of our time. Father Justin Taylor's writings make this beautiful spirituality accessible to everyone.

We are grateful to Father Justin Taylor for offering us the opportunity to re-examine the story and offering us an insight into the extraordinary holiness and Gospel-based enthusiasm of Father Jean-Claude Colin. It is both a fascinating history for its own time and an inspiring story for our time.

John Larsen sm
Superior General of the Society of Mary
Feast of the Holy Name of Mary. September 12, 2021

A Short Life of Jean-Claude Colin, Marist Founder

Justin Taylor sm



Portrait of Jean-Claude Colin by Antoine Tollet (1857–1953)
from photographs taken at the General Chapter of 1866.

A Short Life of Jean-Claude Colin, Marist Founder

Adapted from *Jean-Claude Colin, Reluctant Founder*

Justin Taylor sm

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