

## File 1 – CAVE – NDL CHURCH - PARISH

**1915** : We are at the time of the First World War.

Reverend Father Jules LEVASSEUR, who was the priest of the town of Pointe-à-Pitre, had a pious wish : place “the good Virgin of Lourdes” on the hill called “Morne à cail” and there, as if it was in France in its town of origin, “everybody would be able to come and visit it. From that point, it would bless Pointe-à-Pitre”.

“...and this is how on Sunday, **January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1916**, a huge rock (the first stone) was formally consecrated and blessed by Reverend Father LEVASSEUR, priest of Pointe-à-Pitre”.

In four months, next to this first stone, others were gathered.

On Sunday, **May 7<sup>th</sup> 1916** : His Lordship Bishop GENOUD inaugurated formally the Cave and blessed the gracious statue of “Notre Dame de Lourdes”.

Then, through the property and by a steep flight of stairs, a small religious procession was organized and people sang “Ave Maria de La Pointe”, created by Father BIORET.

## File 1 BIS – CHAPEL – CHURCH – PARISH

**In 1922**, it was the creation of the association “Notre Dame de Lourdes”.

The objective of the association was to develop the devotion to the Virgin of Massabielle and therefore to build a chapel to reach this objective.

So, “on **February 11<sup>th</sup> 1924**, Reverend Father LEVASSEUR announced the opening of the building site of a chapel”.

On **July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1924**, the first stone was laid. In 1925, 1926 and 1927, the building of the structure made of steel was raised.

Unfortunately, on **September 12<sup>th</sup> 1928**, the hurricane destroyed the chapel.

In **1937**, Father Guillaume ROBIN understood the necessity to provide the town of Pointe-à-Pitre with a second place of worship.

Father Guillaume ROBIN announced the choice made for the building site : build the church on the hill called “Morne à Cail”, on the site of the former chapel destroyed by the hurricane.

On **February 11<sup>th</sup> 1938**, Reverend Father ROBIN celebrated the first Mass inside the new church. It was a moment of great delight for all the believers from the various parts of the island.

On **May 6<sup>th</sup> 1951**, the three bells ordered were consecrated : Catherine (630 Kg), Odile (468 Kg) and Bernadette (284 Kg).

In **February 1949**, the church was erected as an independent parish and received its first priest, Father Aloyse SCHWEITZER.

## **File 1 TER – CHURCH – PARISH (On the parvis of the church)**

The architectural characteristics of the church : stonework and steel structure.

The church is characterized by its gothic architecture : the objective is to allow daylight to fully enter inside the building. It is a church made of cement, shaped as a Latin cross.

The front of the church has a neogothic style.

The religious building respects the Latin cross shaped plan.

The central nave is cut by the shorter transept which allows the visitor to distinguish the choir from the nave.

As soon as you walk inside the church, the visitor is in the main nave, limited by two rows of columns or arcades / arches. We can find an aisle on each side of the nave.

The nave is wide and bright, thanks to the windows which used to be made of stained-glass.

The transept, the part situated between the choir and the nave, is not very prominent ; it doesn't go beyond the side aisles line / row.

The Choir is the most sacred space. In the middle, there is the altar.

Today, the choir is used by the clergy.

It is under the management of the Dominicans that a chapel is consecrated to "Saint Martin-de-Porrès", the first black Saint.

There is one special characteristic : the tiled floor has got geometrical designs.

**Translation:** Mrs FELICIANNE Marie-Louise.

DOCUMENTS USED to create the information files 1 :

- Father Camille FABRE, *De clochers en clochers*, 1978.
- Research work collected by Brother Michel, a layman from the Congregation of the Spiritans of Massabielle's parish.