

File 2 : Father G. ROBIN and the SPIRITAN EDUCATIONAL MISSION – MAÎTRISE DE MASSABIELLE : from its CREATION to the 1960s

Father Guillaume ROBIN (1899 – 1980) arrives in Guadeloupe in Autumn 1929. He is a priest who belongs to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.

In 1937, he becomes the priest of the first parish of Guadeloupe, “Saint-Pierre et Saint-Paul” in the town of Pointe-à-Pitre.

What is the Congregation of the Fathers of the Holy Spirit ?

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit is a missionary clerical congregation, under the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

It was founded in Paris, in 1703, by Claude POUILLART des PLACES.

The seminary forms and trains poor priests who want to serve in far away and neglected missions.

Father François LIBERMANN (1802 – 1852) is considered as the second founder of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.

Father LIBERMANN asked the missionaries to work on the full and complete development of the people, in all the aspects of life.

1941 is a very IMPORTANT DATE in the story of Massabielle, because it is the difficult time of the Second World War.

Father ROBIN, the priest of Pointe-à-Pitre, is therefore the priest of the church of Massabielle, an annexe of the parish “Saint-Pierre et Saint-Paul”.

In 1941, Father ROBIN creates a little boys' school in order to welcome, at first, children who had nothing to do and who were poor, who had no resources in the neighbourhood.

Initially, it is a simple building.

In addition to the educational teaching, the little school was dedicated to the choral singing lessons.

This important activity is the reason why the school is called / is named "La Maîtrise de Massabielle", because it was situated just next to the church which had the same name.

As months go by, La Maîtrise de Massabielle gets more buildings and more students; it becomes also a boarding school, opened only for boys.

The steps of construction :

1941 : the first floor;

1942 : the second floor;

1943 : the third floor;

1944 : the fourth floor.

And this how, on **November 5th 1943**, a real school made "of stone and cement" officially opened its doors. Father ROBIN is the founder and the Headteacher of the school.

Gradually, Massabielle opens its doors to everybody, boys and girls to become a primary school and then a secondary school.

In 1963, the secondary school had classes up to the Year 10.

The number of pupils and students grows.

From the first Headteacher, Father ROBIN, several others have led La Maîtrise de Massabielle, more particularly Father Henri BAUMLIN in 1966, who also belonged to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.

Father Henri BAUMLIN (1928 – 2010) devoted himself to the Spiritan educative mission. With his good nature and simplicity, he was a man who invested himself a lot.

Translation: Mrs FELICIANNE Marie-Louise.

DOCUMENTS USED to create the file 2 :

- Research work collected by M. Albert SARKIS, accountant in La Maîtrise de Massabielle.
- Students of La Maîtrise, “Short story of Massabielle”, students’ newspaper, *La Totale*, 1994.
- Site : spiritains.france.online.fr (biography of Father G. ROBIN)
- Site : <https://spirianroma.org> (Le guide spiritain pour l’éducation, 2016).
- Archives from the diocese of Guadeloupe, « Massabielle historique », transmitted in November 2022.