

OBJECTIVE

To recall, on weekly basis, some thoughts, sayings of the Servant of God, Bishop Joseph Marie Melchior de Marion Brésillac, Founder of the Society of African Missions (SMA), the Venerable Fr. Augustin Planque, First Superior General of the SMA, the first generations of SMA missionaries and significant events in the history of the Society.



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PULICATION

Retrospect

A DATE IN THE HISTORY OF THE SMA IN NIGERIA

The beginning of the Catholic Church in the Kingdom of OYO

In the year 1884, two missionaries from the Society of African Missions (SMA), Fathers Théodore Holley and Jean-Baptiste Chausse, undertook a significant journey into the interior of the country, specifically to the Yoruba Land. Departing from Lagos, they visited several towns including Abeokuta, Ibadan, Ogbomosh, Oyo, Iseyin, Ado, and Eruwa.

Upon their arrival in Oyo, they received a warm reception from the Alafin, the King of Oyo, who personally extended an invitation for the Catholic Mission to establish its presence in his kingdom. The King demonstrated his commitment by allocating a substantial parcel of land for the mission and ensuring its security at his own expense.

Recognizing the King's determination, Father Chausse sought authorization from Father Augustin Planque, the Superior General of the Society of African Missions in Lyon, France, to commence the mission in the Oyo Kingdom. After patiently awaiting approval, authorization was granted in 1886. Consequently, on March 1st of that year, Fathers Jean-Baptiste Chausse and Camille Bel, accompanied by three Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles—Sisters Véronique, Monique, and Marie—departed Lagos for Abeokuta, where they established the inaugural foundation of the sisters in Egba land.

Subsequently, Fathers Chausse, Bel, and Venessy traveled to Oyo on horseback. They were met with a royal welcome from the Alafin's envoys, who ceremoniously escorted them to the King's palace. This marked the commencement of 139 years of active presence of the Catholic Church in Oyo. To God be the glory.

(Cf. Patrick Gantly, Histoire de la Société des Missions Africaines (SMA) 1856-1907. Tome, 2004, pp 455-465)



Fr. Holley



Mgr. Chausse



Fr. Bell