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Marianist Origins for October

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Marianist Origins for October

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Monday October 9, 2023

By Henry Handley

Marianists credit founder Father William Joseph Chaminade's time in Spain with his vision for the Marianist family. After fleeing religious suppression in France, Chaminade sought refuge in Zaragoza, Spain, and arrived on Oct. 11, 1797. The following morning, he would have been swept up with crowds of people celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of the Pillar.

A Marian feast day with national importance in Spain, the Feast of Our Lady of the Pillar originated some 700 years earlier: According to legend, Mary appeared to the apostle James in present-day Zaragoza, Spain, atop a column, assuring him that his evangelization efforts would succeed. The shrine of Nuestra Señora del Pilar, Our Lady of the Pillar, became a place for pilgrims — and for three years, Chaminade — to pray and reflect in Zaragoza.

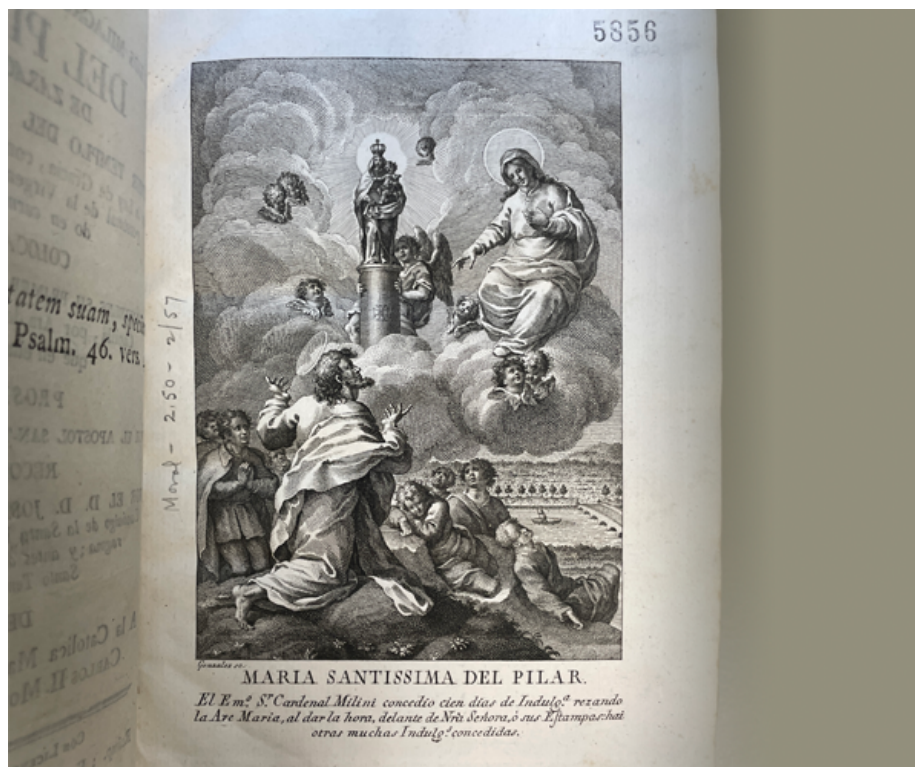
Coming to a Catholic city with a long history of devotion to the Marian title Nuestra Señora del Pilar, Chaminade would have seen numerous devotional texts and images printed and sold. The Marian Library holds several books contemporary to Chaminade's time in

Zaragoza, including:

- Josef Felix de Amada, *Compendio de los Milagros de Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Zaragoza*.
Zaragoza: Mariano Miedes, 1796
Published one year before Chaminade's arrival, this book contains reprints of a collection of miraculous stories associated with Our Lady of the Pillar and the construction of the shrine.
- Antonio Arbiol y Diez, *Espiritual Novenario a la Reyna de los Angeles María Santísima del Pilar de Zaragoza*.
Zaragoza: Pedro Carreras, 1720
The Marian Library has numerous editions of nine-day novena pamphlets, from this example to Nuestra Señora del Pilar, printed in Zaragoza during its author's lifetime, to novenas printed in Spain and the Americas into the 19th and 20th centuries. Many novenas are available digitally in UD's institutional repository, eCommons. Since March 2019, they have been downloaded more than 43,000 times.

Even more than to Chaminade, these books connect to the Marianists whose vocations contributed to the Marian Library and the 80 years of fulfilling its larger mission to preserve and share materials on Mary from around the world.

— Henry Handley is an assistant professor and collections librarian in the Marian Library at the University of Dayton.



Brother Benito Moral, S.M., gave this copy of “Compendio de los Milagros de Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Zaragoza” to the Marian Library in 1957, as a penciled note in the inner margin of this engraving indicates.