

The first
Conference
of the
Society



Emmanuel Bailly (1794 – 1861)

The first President-General and Spiritual Advisor

Emmanuel Bailly was born in the Pas de Calais Department in the north of France. He soon settled in Paris and worked there as a journalist, editor and publisher. He and his wife, Sidonie, had six children, two of whom entered religious life. Throughout his life he acted as a mentor and spiritual guide to young people whom he met during the course of his work. He founded the Conference of History where students could meet to discuss and debate a wide range of issues. It was here that Frederic and his companions were challenged: “What is your Church doing now? Show us your works and we will believe you.”

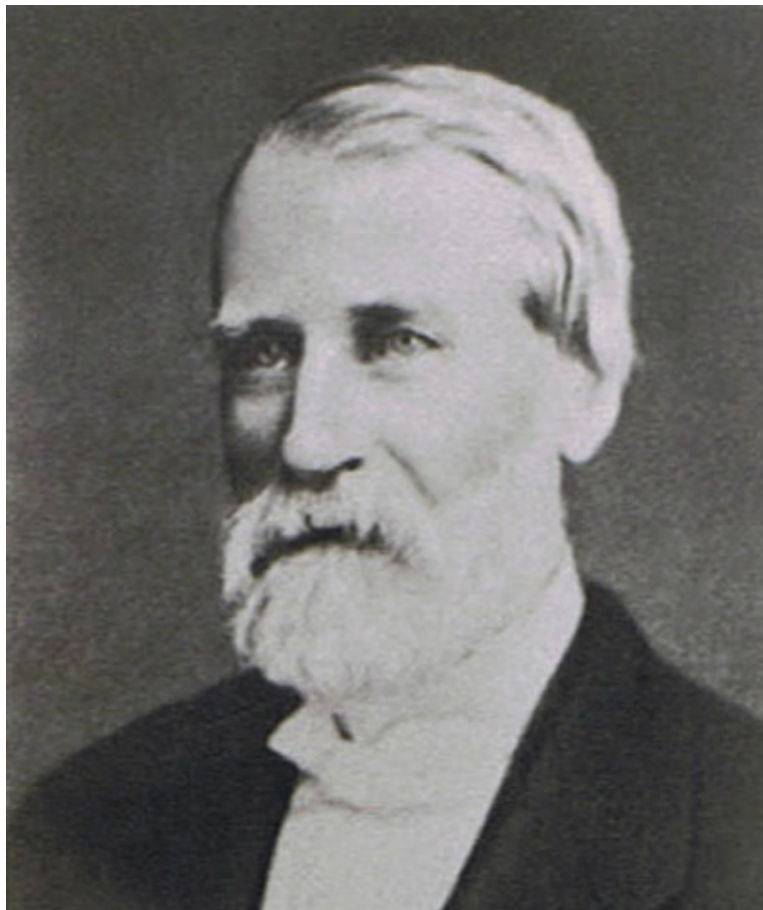
It was therefore quite natural that Ozanam and his friends should go to Bailly in order to talk about their plans for doing charitable work. Bailly provided them with a meeting place, he encouraged them to define their ideas and agreed to guide their efforts by becoming their Spiritual Advisor. Having a great love for St Vincent de Paul, and being familiar with his writings, he linked the Conference of Charity to the great Vincentian spiritual family by sending the young men to Sr Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity for guidance. In 1844 Bailly retired as the Society’s President General but he remained a member of the Council until the end of his life in 1861.



Auguste Le Taillandier (1811 – 1886)

The one who received the first inspiration.

Auguste Le Taillandier was born in Rouen (Normandy). He belonged to a family of tradespeople, who had been living in that region since the 17th century. He and his family moved to Paris so that he could continue his legal studies. He there met Ozanam, becoming one of his friends. He joined the Conference of History, however, he was not as animated in the discussions as his companions. In 1833 he told Frederic that he thought that the discussions were leading nowhere and that it would be better to join together in some charitable work, instead of discussions about history literature and philosophy. So, he was the one who received the first inspiration. Le Taillandier was actively involved in the Conference of Charity, in addition to other charitable works, such as giving religious instruction to apprentices and making visits to prisoners and former prisoners. He then returned to his home town of Rouen, married and had five children. He became regional director of one of France's oldest and most distinguished insurance companies. He founded a Conference in Rouen and became its president.



Paul Lamache (1810 – 1892)

The passionate defender of justice.

Paul Lamache was born at Saint-Pierre-Eglise in Normandy. He belonged to an ancient family of landowners and administrators, on the fringe of Norman nobility. He settled in Paris to study law. In 1832 he met Ozanam and joined him in the Conference of History where he took an active part in debates. He became one of the founders of the Charity Conference. After completing his studies he married. He wrote many articles for various reviews, in which he participated in the great debates of that age. He was strongly against slavery and wrote and distributed a brochure outlining these principles, including those promulgated by Pope Gregory XVI. He became equally involved in the support of the freedom of education. He was successively appointed Rector of the Departmental Academy in the Cotes-du-Nord (Brittany); Professor of Roman Law at the University of Strasbourg; Professor of Administrative Law in Bordeaux and then in Grenoble.



Francois Lallier (1814 – 1886)

The one who formulated the first version of The Rule.

Francois Lallier was born in Burgundy. He made Ozanam's acquaintance at the Law Faculty and was to remain until Ozanam's death - one of his closest friends. Ozanam chose him as the godfather of his daughter, Marie. He was one of the keenest participants in the Conference of History's debates. He was actively involved in all of the steps taken to found the Society: with Bailly first of all, and then with the Archbishop of Paris. In 1835 he was entrusted by Bailly with the formulation of the first Rule of the Society. He was an excellent lawyer, renowned for his precise use of language and he applied himself avidly to such work. In 1837 he was appointed the Society's Secretary-General and signed circulars which form an important part of our Vincentian tradition. In 1839, after stepping down from Council-General, he married and returned to live in his native town and there he worked as a magistrate.



Jules Devaux (1811 – 1880)

The first Conference Treasurer.

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Felix Clave (1811 – 1880)

The least known of the Society founders.

Felix Clave, a native of Toulouse, settled in Paris about 1831. It is unknown what kind of studies he undertook but he was cultured and frequented a social milieu somewhat above that into which he had been born. He associated himself with Ozanam's friends and was a member of the delegation which approached Bailly, as well as taking part in the Conference of Charity's meetings. He himself founded a Conference in the district of Paris where he lived. Then he left to work in Algeria and tried to found a Conference there but was unsuccessful. In 1839 he left Algeria and went to Mexico, where his brother-in-law was living. Clave returned to France, married and published several works, among which was a collection of poetry. Eventually, he became unwell and his wife had to commit him to an asylum. He died, at the age of 42, two months after Ozanam.



M. Felix Clave.