

**A MODERN MARTYR:  
THÉOPHANE VÉNARD  
(BLESSED), PP. 1-230**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649051380

A Modern Martyr: Théophile Vénard (Blessed), pp. 1-230 by Jean Théophile Vénard & James A. Walsh

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Cover @ 2017

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*J. Ch. Vénard*  
m.s.

# A MODERN MARTYR

THEOPHANE VÉNARD

(BLESSED)



REVISED AND ANNOTATED BY THE

VERY REV. JAMES A. WALSH, M. AP.

CATHOLIC FOREIGN MISSION SOCIETY  
OF AMERICA

MARYKNOLL

NEW YORK

Imprimatur:

✠ John Cardinal Farley

Archbishop of New York

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"The world martyrs the Church, and the Church subdues the world. The words of our Divine Lord are always verified, 'I come not to send peace upon earth, but a sword.' The age of martyrs, as of miracles, never ceases. Martyrdom is a perpetual note upon the Mystical Body, which has the Stigmata of Jesus ever fresh upon it."—*Cardinal Wiseman.*

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Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America  
Maryknoll, N. Y.  
Printed in the United States of America

200806-234

### **Dedication**

This edition of Blessed Theophane Vénard's life is dedicated to the Catholic youth of America in the hope and belief that among them many will be found to follow Christ the whole way into the wilderness for the souls that He has died to save.





## PREFACE.

In the city of Paris on the 5th day of June, 1852, two young men were ordained to the priesthood. One, born in Ireland twenty-three years before, was appointed almost immediately to the chair of Fundamental Dogma in the Seminary of St. Sulpice at Paris. Nineteen years later, during the revolt of the Communists, this priest, from his prison cell in the Conciergerie, defied his persecutors and narrowly escaped massacre. Afterwards, in 1884, he came to America and, until his death in 1900, gave to the clergy of the United States the ripened fruit of his broad and cultured mind.

The other young man, a native of France, was ordained for the foreign missions of Eastern Asia, and four months later sailed for Tong-king, at the south-east extremity of China, where, after seven years of apostolic labor, he was beheaded for the faith.

These two young men were John Baptist Hogan, the late honored superior of St. John's Seminary in Boston, and Jean Theophane Vénard, now Blessed, the subject of these letters.

To Father Hogan, his early guide in the spiritual life, the editor of this volume is indebted for a first acquaintance with the story of Theophane Vénard, whose letters, read in Seminary days at Brighton, have always been a treasured memory.

In the summer of 1903, while at the Paris Seminary for Foreign Missions, he learned that Theophane's youngest brother, Eusebius, was still living, and at once arranged to visit him.

He found Eusebius a venerable priest, curé of the

## Preface

little village of Assai, in the diocese of Poitiers. With this visit began a cordial friendship, which became more intimate through subsequent correspondence and two later sojourns in the province of Deux-Sèvres.

In Assai and at St. Loup, the martyr's birthplace, a few miles away, were secured most of the photographs and extra data that appear in this volume.

A few weeks after his first visit to Assai the writer called, in London, upon the late Lady Herbert of Lea, to whom English-speaking Catholics are indebted for the discovery of the charming letters which make up this life. When Lady Herbert learned of the writer's intention to publish these letters anew, she expressed the hope that her former work, which had long been out of print, might be of some service.

Lady Herbert's kindness was accepted and many of the letters which appeared in the earlier translation were embodied substantially in this new life.

CATHOLIC FOREIGN MISSION SEMINARY, MARYKNOLL, N. Y.  
Feast of the Presentation, November 21, 1913.