

# UNESCO INTERNATIONAL MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

## NOMINATION FORM

### 1.0 Title of item or collection being proposed

The archival collections on the Bienheureux Père Jacques Désiré Laval - The Apostle of Mauritius.

### 2.0 Summary (max 200 words)

“The archival collections on the Bienheureux Père Jacques Désiré Laval - The Apostle of Mauritius”, (locally known as Père Laval) consist of original documents under the custody of the National Archives Department, the National Library and Les Archives Spiritaines de Ste. Croix. The documents deal with an exceptional being, who indubitably represents a unifying figure in the history of Mauritius. Père Laval dedicated his time to the poor and the newly liberated enslaved people as well as the population at large. He evangelized, advised, and helped the emancipated slaves to overcome their misery through spirituality. The collection provides considerable information on a man who singlehandedly through his spiritual prowess, compassion and dedication became a soul saviour for the Mauritian population.

The unique documents, which are both from primary and secondary sourced materials, provide an overall insight into the sacrosanct mission of Père Laval during his stay in Mauritius and following his death. They consist of letters written and/or signed by Père Laval, official correspondences, reports, newspaper articles, books, minutes of proceedings, blue books, ordinances, government gazettes, maps, lithographs, first day cover and stamps which highlight the life, contribution and accomplishments of Père Laval. He was beatified on 29 April 1979 by Pope Jean Paul II. La Congrégation des Pères du Saint Esprit (in Rome) is currently working on his canonization.

A chronology of the life of Père Laval is at **Annex 1**.

### **3.0 Nominator contact details**

#### **3.1 Name of nominator (person or organisation)**

- Dr. (Mrs.) N. Luckheenarain, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage
- Mrs. H. Ramkalawan, Acting Director, National Archives Department
- Mrs. T.K. Ramnauth, Director, National Library
- Père Bernard Hym, Vice-Postulateur de la Cause de Canonisation du Père Laval, Diocèse de Port Louis (Centre Père Laval)

#### **3.2 Relationship to the nominated material**

1. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage. The National Archives Department falls under the legal and administrative purview of the above-mentioned Ministry.
- The National Archives Department and the National Library are the custodians of the documentary heritage proposed for inscription.
  - The museum of Centre Père Laval is the custodian of the Death Certificate of Bienheureux Père Jacques Désiré Laval.

#### **3.3 Address**

- (a) Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Renganaden Seeneevassen Building  
Cnr. Pope Hennessy and Maillard Streets, Port Louis  
Republic of Mauritius
- (b) National Archives Department  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, DBM Complex  
Coromandel  
Republic of Mauritius
- (c) National Library  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Fon Sing Building  
Edith Cavell Street  
Port Louis  
Republic of Mauritius
- (d) Centre Père Laval  
Ste Croix, 11706  
Port Louis  
Republic of Mauritius

**3.4 Telephone/3.5 Email:**

(a) Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage

**Telephone:** + 230 212 5848  
**Facsimile:** +230 212 9366  
**Email:** [psartsandculture@govmu.org](mailto:psartsandculture@govmu.org)

(b) National Archives Department

**Telephone:** +230 233 2950  
**Facsimile:** +230 233 4299  
**Email:** [arc@govmu.org](mailto:arc@govmu.org)

(c) National Library

**Telephone:** +230 211 9891  
**Facsimile:** +230 210 7117  
**Email:** [natlib@intnet.mu](mailto:natlib@intnet.mu)


(d) Centre Père Laval

**Telephone:** +230 242 2129  
**Facsimile:** +230 216 7995  
**Email:** [hymbernard@gmail.com](mailto:hymbernard@gmail.com)

**3.6 Co-nominators(s), if any**

**4.0 Declaration of Authority**

I certify that I have the authority to nominate the item, or items, described in this document to the Memory of the World Register.

Signature: 

Full name and position: Dr. (Mrs.) N. Luckheenarain, Permanent Secretary

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021

**5.0 Legal information**

**5.1 Name of owner (person or organisation)**

- a. National Archives Department  
DBM Complex  
Coromandel  
Republic of Mauritius



- b. National Library  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Fon Sing Building  
Edith Cavell Street  
Port Louis  
Republic of Mauritius
- c. Prime Minister's Office  
Civil Status Division  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Emmanuel Anquetil Building  
Port Louis  
Republic of Mauritius

**5.2 Address:** As per Section 3.4/3.5

**5.3 Telephone:** As per Section 3.4/3.5

**Email:** As per Section 3.4/3.5

**5.4 Name and contact details of custodian IF DIFFERENT from the owner**

The custodian of the Death Certificate of Bienheureux Père Jacques Désiré Laval is the museum of Centre Père Laval. The contact details are as follows:

Père Bernard Hym  
Centre 5.7Père Laval  
Ste Croix, 11706  
Port Louis  
Republic of Mauritius

**Telephone:** +230 242 2129  
**Facsimile:** +230 216 7995  
**Email:** [hymbernard@gmail.com](mailto:hymbernard@gmail.com)

**5.5 Legal status**

- The National Archives Department has full ownership of all the records being submitted by the institution through statutory powers vested by the National Archives Act No. 22 of 1999 and Government Notice No. 28 of 2002.
- The National Library has full ownership of all the records being submitted by the institution through statutory powers vested by the National Library Act No. 32 of 1996.
- The Civil Status Division of the Prime Minister's Office has full ownership of the Death Certificate being submitted through statutory powers vested by the Civil Status Act No. 23 of 1981.

**5.6 Copyright status**

- The National Archives Department holds copyright over all the documents in its custody.
- The National Library holds copyright over all the documents in its custody.
- Copyright status does not arise in respect of a Death Certificate.

### **5.7 Accessibility (note any restrictions, including cultural restrictions)**

(i) Access to this collection of records is granted by the National Archives Department, subject to restrictions and conditions stipulated in Section 13 of the National Archives Act No. 22 of 1999 and Government Notice No. 28 of 2002. Access is restricted to documents which are undergoing conservation and restoration.

To ensure access to an increasing number of documents while at the same time enabling their preservation, the National Archives Department has initiated a digitisation project. The project consists of several phases. Phase 1 of the project has been completed and around 530,000 images have been digitized. Moreover, an in-house scanning exercise is being undertaken by officers of the department in view of preserving the whole collection on Père Laval. The digitised documents will be uploaded on the Electronic Archives System for online access and will thus, enable access to a wider audience, whilst the others are physically available for consultation.

(ii) Access to this collection of records is granted by the National Library and the latter has started to digitise records in its custody.

(iii) The original Death Certificate of Père Laval is displayed in the Museum of Centre Père Laval and is accessible to the public **(Refer to Annex 3 – Image 5)**.

## **6.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage**

### **6.1 Name and identification details of the items/collection being nominated**

The archival collections on the Bienheureux Père Jacques Désiré Laval - The Apostle of Mauritius, which are being proposed for inscription include numerous documents for the period 1841 – 2020. These selected documents are presently housed at:

- (i) The National Archives Department, Coromandel.
- (ii) The National Library, Port Louis.
- (iii) The Museum of Centre Père Laval, Ste. Croix.

### **6.2 Type of document**

The documents provide an overall insight into the sacrosanct mission of Père Laval during his stay in Mauritius and following his death. They consist of letters written and/or signed by Père Laval, official correspondences, reports, newspaper articles, books, minutes of proceedings, Blue Books, ordinances, Government Gazettes, maps, lithographs, first day cover and stamps which highlight the life, contribution and accomplishments of Père Laval.

### **6.3 Catalogue or registration details**

The National Archives Department classifies documents in Main Groups, Series and bound Volumes. While the Main Group contains several Series, each Series comprises several Volumes and each volume has several pages. The classification system used at the National Archives Department is in alpha-numerical order.

The records proposed for nomination consist of manuscripts and printed/typed materials. A summary of the catalogue related to the collection of the National Archives Department and details of each document including a brief description of its content have been provided hereunder.

The National Library classifies newspapers chronologically and by title and these are bound in hard cover, in several volumes. Books are classified as per Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC). The collection of documents on Père Laval found at the National Library is at **Annex 2**.

### **Manuscript Documents**

<b>Series / Department</b>	<b>Years Covered</b>	<b>Description</b>
HA: Miscellaneous Papers	1839 - 1845	<p><b>Papers relative to the conquest of Mauritius and to administrative matters.</b></p> <p>These documents regroup information pertaining to the appointment of Reverend Jacques Désiré Laval to the Roman Catholic Clergy.</p> <p>It also consist of an approval given to Abbé Laval regarding his application for leave of absence and an estimate of expenses for year 1844 of the Roman Catholic Church Establishment where reference is made to the estimated salary of Reverend Laval.</p>
RA: Colonial Agent	1841	<p><b>Secretariat Records – Colonial Agent</b></p> <p>Records of the colonial agent includes letters sent and received by the Colonial Agent of Mauritius based in London. These documents contain information relative to secretarial decisions, policies and legislations of the colony.</p> <p>Reference is made to the ship <i>Tanjore</i> for the conveyance of Reverend Collier Roman Catholic Vicar Apostolic and other clergymen including Jacques Désiré Laval.</p>
RA: Ecclesiastical	1841 - 1865	<p><b>Secretariat Records – Ecclesiastical department</b></p> <p>This series comprises letters sent and received from the Institution and synods of the Roman Catholic Clergy particularly from and to the bishop, clergymen and other individuals from the clergy.</p> <p>Reference is made to the arrival of Jacques Désiré Laval. It also includes a document pertaining to the character of Reverend Laval and his appointment as chaplain to the prisons. In several other records, various documents also contain his signature.</p>
SA: Circular Despatches received	1841 – 1856	<p><b>Circular Despatches</b></p> <p>Despatches received from Secretary of State in chronological order.</p> <p>The Colonial Despatches are the complete correspondences (letters, reports, and documents) exchanged between the British Colonial Office in London and the Colonial Governor in Mauritius.</p>

		Information regarding the Roman Catholic Clergy are found. Reference is made to Jacques Désiré Laval.
SD: Circular Despatches Sent	1841-1865	<p><b>Circular Despatches</b></p> <p>Despatches sent from Secretary of State in chronological order.</p> <p>The Colonial Despatches are the complete correspondences (letters, reports, and documents) exchanged between the British Colonial Office in London and the Colonial Governor in Mauritius.</p> <p>Amongst these documents, one includes: a despatch sent by Governor Barkly to Secretary of State concerning the salaries of Roman Catholic priests including that of vice Reverend. Jacques Désiré Laval.</p>
Z7B: Local Correspondence: Letters sent	1841 – 1865	<p><b>Customs Department – Copies of Letters sent to Local Agencies</b></p> <p>Letters from the Customs Department. These letters include a report on a letter addressed to the Colonial Secretary by Reverend Laval requesting remission of duties on certain articles imported by the Roman Catholic Church of Port Louis.</p>
W1 – Minutes of Proceedings of Municipalities	1971	<p>Municipalities records – This group comprises records of present local government agencies and in particular includes one certified copy of the minutes of proceedings of the Municipality and of every Town Council deposited by the Town Clerk.</p> <p>Documents of Municipal proceedings include information regarding the Beatification du Père J.D. Laval (Dossier 326/78).</p>

**Printed Documents**

<b>Series / Department</b>	<b>Years Covered</b>	<b>Description</b>
B6 – Blue Books	1842-1855	<p><b>Official Publications- Bluebooks.</b></p> <p>Colonial Blue Books are yearly collections containing reports of the Civil Establishment, of the Colonial Revenue and Expenditure, and, of statistical data from the colony of Mauritius.</p> <p>This series contain listings of the Roman Catholic Clergy Establishment of Mauritius where reference is made to the posting of Reverend Jacques Désiré Laval to the Roman Catholic Church.</p>

B3A- Ordinance	1860	<p><b>Official Publications – Ordinances.</b></p> <p>Ordinances are legal decrees and enactments set forth by a governmental authority. They form part of the legal deposits as per the National Archives Act.</p> <p>This record is the official ordinance put forward by the colonial government defining the grounds for naturalization of the Reverend Jacques Désiré Laval.</p>
B5 – Government Gazette	1860	<p><b>Official Publications – Government Gazettes.</b></p> <p>A gazette is an official publication for the purpose of notifying the actions and decisions of the government. Notices published in Government Gazettes cover all aspects of government concern and regulation. Acts, regulations and other subordinate legislations are notified in all gazettes. They form part of the legal deposits as per the National Archives Act.</p> <p>The Government Gazette of 1860 contains the government notification on the naturalization of Reverend Jacques Désiré Laval.</p>
B4A – Publications of Legislative Assembly and former councils of Government issued by Council Office	1860	<p><b>Publications of Legislative Assembly and former councils of Government issued by Council Office. – Minutes of the Legislative council</b></p> <p>These documents pertain to the official record, in minute form of the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly. These include the notations on the debates conducted, the initial notices for bills and motions, progress made on bills, amendments to bills, sessional papers tabled, petitions presented, recorded votes and statements and rulings made by the Speaker and other presiding officers.</p> <p>These records contain the first and second reading of the draft submission of the Ordinance of 1860 regarding the Naturalization of Reverend Jacques Désiré Laval.</p> <p>They form part of the legal deposits as per the National Archives Act.</p>
DA 65	1979	<p><b>Special Materials</b> <b>Stamps</b></p> <p>Ceremony of Beatification of Père Jacques Désiré Laval to be held in Rome on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 1979.</p>
HF/10		<p><b>Special Materials</b> <b>Lithograph</b></p> <p>Jacques Désiré Laval (1803 – 1864) [Copy sent by Reverend Joseph Michel].</p>



### **Manuscript Documents :**

1. **RA 653** – 2 June 1841 – Colonial Agent General- Reporting payments made by him on account of the Catholic Clergy and transmitting a priced invoice of stationery sent out last year (mention of the ship *Tanjore* for the conveyance of Reverend Collier, Roman Catholic Vicar Apostolic, and Reverend Rovey).
2. **RA 654** – No. 8176 – 24.09.1841 – Mentions the arrival of four clergymen among whom Reverend Jacques Désiré Laval.
3. **RA 654** – No. 8742 – 09.10.1841 – Proposes that the Revd. Messrs. Larkan, Giles and Laval be placed on the Establishment and talks about the character of Revd. Mr. Laval and his wishes to employ him in attending the prison to the emancipated blacks.
4. **RA 654** – No. 9896 – 10.11.1841 – Vicar Apostolic Allen Collier requesting that clergymen Larkan, Giles and Laval be borne on the same rate of salary as their predecessors.
5. **RA 654** – 27.01.1842 – Vicar Apostolic Allen Collier giving a report of new appointments during last quarter (mentioning Revd. Laval's name).
6. **RA 654** – No. 103 - 06.01.1843 – Vicar Apostolic Allen Collier reporting appointment of Abbé Laval as Chaplain to the prison.
7. **HA 97** – No. 50 - 29.05.1843 – Reference is made to Père Laval –Vicar Apostolic – Estimate of the probable expense of the Roman Catholic Establishment of the year 1844.
8. **SA 38** – No. 322 – 03.04.1845 – Enclosed information regarding the Clergy. Reference is made to Jacques Désiré Laval.
9. **HA 97** - No. 685 - 20.01.1845 – Reverend Abbé Laval – Duplicate of registers of marriage.
10. **HA 97** – No. 972 – 25.01.1845 - Date of First Appointment under colonial government of each Roman Catholic Clergyman. It makes mention of Reverend Jacques Désiré Laval.
11. **HA 97** – No. 4 - 09.10.1845– Forwarding and recommending an application from the Abbé Laval for leave of absence for a month.
12. **RA 1271** - 10.06.1850 - Signature of Jacques Désiré Laval underneath document forwarded regarding refusal to obey temporal authority in spiritual matters.
13. **RA 1083** - No. 21 – 31.12.1850: Signature of Jacques Désiré Laval underneath document forwarded as certificate of the clergymen of Port Louis to the effect that no marriage has been celebrated in their church without the civil commissioner certificate.
14. **Z7B 18** – No. 5 – 05.02.1856 – Report on a letter addressed to the Colonial Secretary on 29.01.1856 by the Reverend J. Laval requesting remission of the duties of certain articles imported per Lucie Joslin Master for deeper use of the Roman Catholic Church of Port Louis.

15. **RA 1468** – No. 2170 - 05.05.1858 – Père Laval requesting certain church ornaments to be landed duty free.
16. **RA 1468** - No. 2846 - 14.06.1858 - Revd. Mazery for Revd. Laval - Soliciting the remission of the duty on three cases of church ornaments per 'Union'.
17. **RA 1468** - No. 3178 - 03.07.1858 - Père Laval requesting authority to land 3 cases containing church ornaments duty free.
18. **RA 1468** - No. 5796 - 19 November 1858 - J. Laval R. C Missionary - For authority to land ten cases containing organ for the R.C. Church at St. Croix free of duty.
19. **RA 1468** - No. 6401 - 22 December 1858 - Rev. Abbé Laval - requesting that certain church ornaments may be landed duty free.
20. **RA 1526** – No. 630 - 05.02.1859 – Père Laval requesting permission to land a marble altar free of duty for the Catholic church of Ste. Croix.
21. **RA 1563** – No. 2736 - 29.06.1860 – Application from five Clergymen, including Abbé Laval, for British naturalization.
22. **RA 1563** – No. 2737 - 30.06.1860 – Abbé Laval asking to be discharged from his duties due to illness.
23. **RA 1732** – No. 2493 – 03.06.1864 – List of Priests salaried by Government and now in Mauritius, and appointed for the Roman Catholic Dept. (Abbé Laval appears on the list).
24. **RA 1732** – No. 4084 – 14.09.1864 – Roman Catholic Bishop announces the death of Revd. J. Laval which took place on Friday 09 September 1864 and mutations in consequence.
25. **SD 76** – No. 8 – 05.01.1865 – Governor Barkly to Secretary of State: on the salaries of these Roman Catholic priests – Abbé Beaud vice Revd. J. Laval.
26. **W1/4/70** – 26 March 1979 - Minutes of proceedings of the Municipal Council town of Port Louis Commission du Bien Être Social – No. 309 - Béatification du Père J.D. Laval, page 56.
27. **W1/5/79**- 9 Mai 1979- Minutes of proceedings of the Municipal Council Town of Port Louis, Commission du Bien Être Social, No. 421 – Messe à l'occasion de la Béatification du Père J.D. Laval à Marie Reine de la Paix, page 73.
28. **11 September 1864** - Death Certificate of Jacques Désiré Laval which occurred on 09 September 1864 (original kept at the Museum of Centre Père Laval, Ste. Croix).

**Printed Documents:**

1. **B6 – Mauritius Bluebook 1842** – Roman Catholic Clergy Establishment – Schedule of fees on Requisites – Reference is made to Jacques Laval – Pg. 92.
2. **B6 – Mauritius Bluebook 1846** – Roman Catholic Clergy Establishment – Reference is made to Jacques Laval – Date of appointment: 18.11.1841.
3. **B3A – Ordinance No. 43 of 1860** – 03.08.1860 - An ordinance for the naturalization of the Reverend the Abbé Jacques Désiré Laval.

4. **B5 – Mauritius Government Gazette** – Ordinance No. 43 of 1860 – An ordinance for the naturalization of the Reverend the Abbé Jacques Désiré Laval. – Documents re: Naturalization of Jacques Désiré Laval is both in French and English.
5. **B4B – Minutes of proceedings of Council of Government** – No. 15 of 1860 - 04.06.1860 – 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of the draft of ordinances for the naturalization of the Reverend Jacques Désiré Laval.
6. **B4B – Minute of proceedings of Council of Government – No. 16 of 1860** – 13.06.1860 - Reading of the draft of ordinances for the naturalization of Reverend Jacques Désiré Laval.
7. **B4B – Minute of proceedings of Council of Government – No. 17 of 1860** – 27.06.1860 – 3<sup>rd</sup> reading of the draft of ordinances for the naturalization of the Jean Abbé Jacques Désiré Laval.

#### **Special Materials**

1. **DA 65** – Stamps - Ceremony of Beatification of Père Jacques Désiré Laval to be held in Rome on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 1979.
2. **HF/10** – Lithograph Jacques Désiré Laval (1803 – 1864) – Copy sent by Reverend Joseph Michel.

#### 6.4 Visual documentation (if available and appropriate)

1. **RA 654** – No. 103 - 06.01.1843 – Vicar Apostolic Allen Collier reporting appointment of Abbé Laval as Chaplain to the prison.
2. **RA 1083** - No. 21 - 31.12.1850 - The Senior Roman Catholic Clergyman forwarding a certificate of the clergymen of Port Louis to the effect that no marriage has been celebrated in their church without the Civil Commissary's certificate.
3. **RA 1468** - No. 5796 – 19.11.1858 - J. Laval R. C Missionary - For authority to land ten cases containing organ for the R.C. Church at St. Croix free of duty.
4. **RA 1563** – No. 2736 - 29.06.1860 – Application from five Clergymen, including Abbé Laval, for British naturalization.
5. **11 September 1864** - Death Certificate of Jacques Désiré Laval which occurred on 09 September 1864 (original kept at the Museum of Centre Père Laval, Ste. Croix).
6. **DA 65** – Stamps - Ceremony of Beatification of Père Jacques Désiré Laval to be held in Rome on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 1979.
7. **HF/10** – Lithograph Jacques Désiré Laval (1803 – 1864) – Copy sent by Reverend Joseph Michel.
8. **B3A – Ordinance No. 43 of 1860** – 03.08.1860 - An ordinance for the naturalization of the Reverend the Abbe Jacques Désiré Laval.

The images are at **Annex 3**

#### 6.5 History/provenance

- **The National Archives Department**

The history of Mauritius has been marked by several occupations and settlements: the most prominent ones include the Dutch (1598 – 1710), French (1715 – 1810) and British (1810 – 1968). When Dutch left the island, they took with them all their records. In 1968, Mauritius got its independence.

Jacques Désiré Laval reached Mauritius in September 1841 when the island was still a British colony. The records proposed for nomination have been mostly generated during the British period, many of which have been safeguarded by several successive institutions of the country. They cover the period 1841 to 2020 and are currently housed at the National Archives Department and the National Library.

- **The National Library**

The newspaper and rare book collection (forming part of the Mauritiana Collection) of the National Library consists of newspapers and documents transferred from the National Archives Department, the former Mauritius Institute Public Library (as stipulated in the National Library Act No. 32 of 1996), and donations from La Sentinelle Newspaper Company, the Port Louis Municipal Library and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute Library. Those newspapers, which form part of the body of records were mostly obtained from legal deposits, donations or by purchase and cover the period 1841 to 2020.

- **Civil Status Division, Prime Minister's Office**

The Civil Status Division is the government institution which issues death certificates. In 2020, the original Death Certificate of Père Jacques Désiré Laval was handed over by the Honourable Pravin Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, to the Diocese of Port Louis. The document is presently exhibited in the museum of Centre Père Laval.

## 6.6 Bibliography

Père Laval, being a famous personality, many publications have been produced on him. A list of publications is found hereunder:

1. Arekion, Jérôme. 1937. *Père Laval : des dates de sa vie (1803-1864)*. Port-Louis: The Standard Printing Establishment.
2. Christian, Philippe A. (n.d.). *A l'ombre de la croix : Vie et œuvre du Bienheureux Père Laval*. Port-Louis: La Sentinelle Ltée.
3. Delaplace, Francois. (n.d.). *Le P. Jacques - Désire Laval : Âpotre de l'Île Maurice (1830-1864)*. Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne.
4. Dinan, Monique. 2014. *Sur les pas du Bienheureux Père Laval : Les Spiritains en mission à Maurice et Rodrigues*. Port-Louis: Diocèse de Port-Louis.
5. Diocèse de Port-Louis. 1980. *Béatification du Père Jacques - Désire Laval, 29 Avril 1979*. Port-Louis: Diocèse de Port-Louis.
6. Hym, Père Bernard. 2016. *Coeur à coeur avec le Père Laval, arrivé à Maurice le 14 septembre 1841 à travers ses écrits*. Port-Louis : Diocèse de Port-Louis.
7. Hym, Père Bernard. 2014. *Plus qu'un récit, voici le cheminement d'un homme, le Bienheureux Père Jacques Désiré Laval, (1803-1864) au service de son Dieu et de ses frères : Mort il y a 150 ans, Père Laval est toujours à l'oeuvre*. Port-Louis: Diocèse de Port-Louis.
8. Michel, Joseph. 1976. *Le Père Jacques Laval Le Saint de l'Île Maurice 1803 – 1864*. Paris: Editions Beauchesne.
9. Nagapen, Amédée. 1992. *La naturalisation du Père J.D. Laval et des missionnaires spiritains*. Port-Louis: Diocèse de Port-Louis.
10. Nagapen, Amédée. 1979. *Les Chapelles du Père Laval : Port-Louis et ses environs*. Port-Louis : Diocèse de Port-Louis.

**Annex 4** consist of other publications related to Père Laval written by several authors.

**6.7 Names, qualifications and contact details of up to three *independent* people or organisations with expert knowledge about values and provenance of the nominated material.**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Contact details(email)</b>
1. Père Bernard Hym CSSp	Vice-Postulateur de la Cause de Canonisation du Père Laval Archiviste des Spiritains à Maurice Historien de la vie et de l'œuvre du Père Laval depuis 1994 Centre Père Laval, Sainte-Croix 11706	<a href="mailto:hymbernard@gmail.com">hymbernard@gmail.com</a>
Dr. Lindsay Edouard FRCOG	Retraité ex-haut fonctionnaire des Nations Unies et OMS Historien de la vie et de l'œuvre du Père Laval depuis 2013 Centre Père Laval, Sainte-Croix 11706	<a href="mailto:soranae@gmail.com">soranae@gmail.com</a>
Père Paul Coulomb CSSp	Archiviste Général des Spiritains Séminaire des Missions 12, rue du Père Mazurié 94550 Chevilly-Larue (France)	<a href="mailto:archives.generales@spiritains.org">archives.generales@spiritains.org</a>

## 7.0 Assessment against the selection criteria

### 7.1 Primary criteria - significance value to the world. Comment on one or more of the following significance criteria.

*Not all the criteria will apply to your documentary heritage. Choose only those criteria that are relevant to your nomination.*

#### 7.1.1 Historic significance

The documents are about Père Laval, an exceptional being, who represents a unifying figure and who has worked for the well-being of the Mauritian people. He was a French Roman Catholic priest and a professed member from the *Spiritans* who has served in the missions in Mauritius between 1841 and 1864. Also known as the "Apostle of Mauritius", Jacques Désiré Laval, has worked assiduously in educating and helping the poor and ill persons, who were mostly former slaves. His skills in medicine made him an eminent figure in the region, and he stood alongside those who were afflicted during times of epidemics.

Born in 1803 in Croth, Normandie, France, Jacques Désiré Laval came from a large family of six children. He graduated in Latin Language and Rhetoric in 1825 at the age of 22. From 1830 to 1835, he practiced as a doctor in Normandie. During that time, he had an accident and after surviving that trauma, he sensed a call from God and decided to put himself at the service of the poor and thereafter entered the seminary in Paris. In 1838, he became priest and practiced for two years in Pinterville. Père Laval wanted to further serve and be close to the poor people. In January 1841, following the intervention of Mgr. Collier with Mgr. Salmon de Châtellier, Bishop of Evreux (France), Père Laval was authorized to depart for Mauritius. He boarded the Ship *Tanjore* from London on 2 June 1841 and arrived in Port Louis on 14 September 1841, as the first Spiritan in Mauritius.

During his 23 years at the service of the Mauritian people, he accomplished remarkable deeds: he evangelized, provided guidance, gave religious instructions and baptised nearly 67,000 former slaves and newly emancipated slaves. In January 1842, Père Laval was appointed prison chaplain. He visited and counselled the prisoners.

Although he was referred to as the "bête noire de la bourgeoisie", Père Laval devoted his life and worked ardently for the poor. His passion and perseverance further led to the construction of chapels and churches all over the island, for example: St Coeur de Marie at Petite Rivière, Saint Sauveur at Bambous and Notre Dame de la Délivrande at Long Mountain (whereby the crucifix he had brought with him from France, can be seen). He also conducted masses for the local population, celebrated several first communions and marriages.

It was during one of the masses in 1857 that Père Laval suffered from his first heart stroke. This was followed by several strokes and from thereon he suffered from other health problems. On 9 September 1864, at the age of 61, Père Laval passed away. It is estimated that a procession of 40,000 people carried his coffin to Sainte Croix where he chose to be buried.

The remnants of Père Laval lie in a stone coffin in the vault underneath his effigy or sarcophagus. The vaults were erected on three occasions, that is, in 1870, 1965 and 2014. The latest one was built with a higher roof to accommodate Jesus Christ on the cross as Père Laval had wished his

body to be placed underneath the Cross. This structure is more spacious and can receive a higher number of visitors to his shrine. The process of beatification of Père Laval started in the year 1893. On 29 April 1979, Père Laval was beatified following a miracle attributed to his intercession by Pope John Paul. In October 1989, Pope Jean Paul II visited the shrine of Père Laval.

The year 2014 marked the 150 years of the death anniversary of Père Laval. To commemorate the anniversary, a Rs. 8 stamp was issued. Père Laval is considered the « *Apôtre de l'unité de tous les Mauriciens* ». 157 years after his death, devotees still believe in him. People of all faith around the island and from abroad give testimonies of gratitude on physical, moral, spiritual and relational recoveries.

#### **7.1.2 Form and style**

- The documents which are in the custody of the National Archives are in manuscripts and printed format.
- The documents which are in the custody of the National Library are in printed format.
- The Death Certificate of Père Jacques Désiré Laval which is in the custody of the Museum of Centre Père Laval, Ste. Croix, is in manuscript format.



### 7.1.3 Social, community or spiritual significance

Père Laval remains a renowned divine figure for all Mauritians, irrespective of their religion. The remnants of the priest rest in a massive modern stone vault and is widely respected by Mauritians of all ethnic groups. Thus, thousands of Mauritians converge to his vault to commemorate his death anniversary through a pilgrimage during the night of 08 to 09 September each year. While some go in groups or with their family, others prefer to undertake the pilgrimage alone with great devotion. Many sick people also participate in the pilgrimage, either by car or other means of transport. The objective is to pay tribute to this exceptional being who, many decades later, is still present in the hearts of all Mauritians.

During the pilgrimage, devotees converge on foot towards the vault of Père Laval praying internally, praising him through songs whilst others carry a cross on their shoulders. While some will walk as a token of appreciation in quest for a grace, others will do so in the belief of obtaining a cure by the grace of Père Laval. The devotees usually queue up at the vault where they offer flowers and light candles before praying. Flowers and handkerchiefs are also placed on his effigy by the worshipers. Many believers bring back flowers and handkerchiefs laid at the vault which thereafter will be used to heal a wound, to cure an illness or to soothe a pain as a sign of their staunch belief. The fervor and veneration can be felt intensely during this particular time of the year. Moreover, messages of gratitude and thankfulness are displayed inside the vault by people who have been cured from illnesses.

At other times of the year, the vault is fairly quiet, though exceptionally on Fridays a mass is held at 11 hours and a collective prayer takes place at 13 hours which attracts many people. A small museum found at Centre Père Laval exhibits Père Laval's robe, some personal belongings, letters, busts and photographs.

Each year, several months before September, the Government sets up the Pilgrimage National Task Force comprising several stakeholders, with a view to ensure the success of the pilgrimage. Late night transport facilities are provided by the National Land and Transport Authority, while other organisations look after cleanliness and safety measures.

Père Laval's fame is not restricted to Mauritius. His renowned reputation has undoubtedly transcended borders. Each year in the month of September pilgrims come from countries like South Africa, Italy, Reunion Island, Australia, France and Rodrigues Island to offer prayers to him and to commemorate his death anniversary.

**7.2 Comparative criteria. Comment on one or more of the following comparative criteria:**

**7.2.1 Rarity**

Père Laval is a renowned figure in Mauritius and the documents pertaining to him are original and rare. These documents have been produced by various governmental departments, and other legally empowered individuals in the conduct of their day-to-day business. They are authentic single copies comprising a unique collection which attests the way of life and several happenings during the British period.

**7.2.2 Integrity, completeness, condition**

Most of the records in the collection of the National Archives Department and the National Library are well preserved and accessible to the general public in their original state or in digital copies. These documents have been arranged according to the archival principles of original order and of provenance. The documents have been preserved using techniques designed to protect their integrity and prolong their life span. However, documents which are undergoing restoration/conservation are not accessible for consultation.

Both the National Archives Department and the National Library have started the digitisation process of documents and up to now some 730,000 documents from the overall archives collection have been digitised. This active programme to digitise as many records as possible, will further ensure these documents' continuing existence and accessibility.

**7.3 Statement of significance**

The documents proposed for nomination relate to an important personality of the country. They are very significant in demonstrating the fruitful works accomplished by Père Laval during his stay in Mauritius and the state of affairs of the country during that time.

Born on 18th September 1803, in a lavish family in Normandie, France, Jacques Désiré Laval came from a country where there was no shortage of opportunities to achieve greatness in all avenues of life. He studied medicine and during the few years of practice from 1830 to 1835, he treated the poor persons free of charge. Following an accident, he realized that the complete wellbeing of an individual depends on both his physical and spiritual state. Therefore, he decided to devote himself completely at the service of the poor, the sick, the miserable and thus, joined priesthood.

Upon his arrival in 1841, on board of ship Tanjore, Père Laval noticed that the island was undergoing a transitional phase. The country at that period was under the British rule and was inhabited by people from different continents namely Europe, Africa, and Asia, all engaged in its development. The slavery system perpetuated by the French colonials was recently abolished in 1835 and was subsequently followed by the Indentured Labour system with the recruitment of people of Indian origin on a contract basis to work in the sugarcane fields. The newly emancipated slaves though "freed" were still serving as apprentices, with their previous owners or other well-off individuals. The treatment inflicted upon

them was lamentable: rationed food and inadequate clothing, poor housing, limited or no access to health care, very low salary and unjustified salary cut amongst others. The poor quality of life under long hours of harsh labour, cruel treatment, malnutrition, diseases like tuberculosis, leprosy, dysentery, cholera, fever, malaria became prevalent and resulted to a high rate of mortality among the workers and their families.

Père Laval devoted himself fully to the cause of the poor, and the emancipated enslaved people. He stayed near the Cathedral in Port-Louis, learnt the local dialect- Patois Creole and spent considerable amount of his time outside among “Les Noirs”. He undertook his mission for the recognition of the human being as a respected individual, the upliftment of the body and soul while guiding the persons spiritually on the right path to God. Though alone in his mission from 1841 to 1845, he was always present to the needy at all times.

Overburdened with the heavy task, he requested help from France. In the 1840s, Spiritan priests were delegated to shoulder him and they attended to the needy people throughout the island. Due to the high prevalence of various diseases and epidemics which worsened with the arrivals of Indian laborers, his presence was more so important as he provided the last sacrament to the dying persons. Deaths during the cholera epidemic in 1854 were widespread and on the rise. Père Laval's priority was by all means the welfare of the people. Under his guidance, Mère Marie Augustine, founder of the Congregation des Soeurs de Charité de Notre-Dame-du- Bon-et-Perpétuel-Secours, opened a hospital and a school in Pamplémousses.

*“D’être parmi les plus démunis des démunis”* was indeed Père Laval’s mission. The latter encouraged The Sisters of the Congregation des Soeurs de Charité and of The Notre Dame de Bon et Perpétuel Secours to set up a dispensary in Long Mountain next to their convent. It eventually became a well-established hospital.

Père Laval’s relentless input earned him the trust and respect of the “Noirs”, and gradually of those who had initially resented his very presence and actions. He was much sought everywhere. His actions gave the “Noirs” a sense of belonging to humanity with rights to a religious faith and to attend church on equal footing with others. This created a bond of brotherhood among themselves although they came from different homelands. Père Laval’s *Mission des Noirs* bore its fruits. He himself led a very simple and modest life with the bare minimum. He shared his food and belongings with the needy but appealed for donations including food from the well-to-do to be offered to the miserable. Many people voluntarily came forward offering help in kind or in cash. In an act of thanksgiving to The Lord, Mr. Zamor, a freed slave, built the first Christian Chapel in Vallée de Prêtres on his own plot of land which he had previously bought from Mr. Eugène Leclézio. Père Laval named the Chapel as Sainte-Croix. By 1849, this chapel was considered too small to accommodate the increasing number of followers. Mr. Zamor and his family offered to make additional constructions. From Sainte-Croix, Père Laval continued his mission in Port-Louis and the upper regions.

Père Laval, the French catholic priest, working in a colony administered by British of Anglican faith found himself in an ambiguous position. Though the right to religious freedom was granted to all inhabitants in 1810, the British did not seem to appreciate the conversion to Catholicism. The risk of being sent back to France was looming. He often mentioned that he was destined to spend the rest

of his days in « Maurice ». The British authorities replied to his application : « *Le 3 août 1860, L'Ordonnance No. 43 of 1860 statue que le Père Jacques Désiré Laval est naturalisé Mauricien* ».

Père Laval continued his activities with unflinching enthusiasm, but his health took a toll which made matters difficult for him and raised concern among the other priests. Despite his doctors' advice, he refused to go back to France and continued to work with unflinching zeal. He continued to receive people till his last hours of breath. On the 8th September 1864 news of his serious ill health spread around, a huge crowd gathered outside his residence praying silently. Père Laval agreed to receive them imploring that he still had a few words for his devotees. He passed away peacefully on the 9th September 1864 at Port-Louis. The nation mourned the demise of this exceptional person. His body was kept for two days to give the opportunity to the ever-growing crowd of all religious faith, social group, ages, abilities from all corners of the island, to pay their last respects and have their rosary beads, handkerchief, medal, cross or other objects blessed by Père Laval.

On 11<sup>th</sup> September 1864, he was buried as per his own wishes, at the foot of the cross in front of Sainte-Croix Church erected on the same site of the Chapel built by Zamor, the Indian freed slave. Père Laval lived for the people. He contributed for the improvement for the health care and quality of the population. In view of the above, the nomination of the archival collections on the Bienheureux Père Jacques Désiré Laval is of great significance for the Republic of Mauritius.

## 8.0 Consultation with Stakeholders

All concerned parties were consulted and the nomination form was finalised incorporating all their views and comments.

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Task</b>
11 September 2020	All Ministers – Cabinet Meeting	Discussion was held at Cabinet level on the possibility of nominating the Death Certificate of Père Laval on the Memory of the World Register.
20 January 2021	Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage National Archives Department National Heritage Fund	To look into the possibility of nominating the Death Certificate of Père Laval.
20 August 2021	Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage National Archives Department National Library National Heritage Fund	A working session was held to work on the project.
03 September 2021	Cabinet meeting	Cabinet took note that Nomination Cycle 2022/2023 for the Memory of the World International Register has been

		opened since August 2021.
16 September 2021	Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage National Archives Department National Library National Heritage Fund Centre Père Laval	To gather ideas from the stakeholders and to work out a timeline for the preparation of the Nomination Form.
29 September 2021	National Archives Department Centre Père Laval	To make an assessment of records found at Centre Père Laval.
07 October 2021	Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage National Archives Department National Library	To discuss on the preparation of the Nomination Form.
03 November 2021	National Archives Department, Mauritius Film Development Corporation (MFDC)	Discuss on the mounting of a documentary on Père Laval.
05 November 2021	Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage National Archives Department National Library	Working session.
08 November 2021	Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage National Archives Department National Library Centre Père Laval MFDC Government Information System NATCOM	Consultative meeting.
09 November 2021	National Archives Department National Library Government Information System	To make an assessment of records found at Centre Père Laval.
11 November 2021	National Archives Department National Library Centre Père Laval National Heritage Fund	To make an assessment of records found at Centre Père Laval.
12 November 2021	Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage National Archives Department National Library Centre Père Laval National Heritage Fund	To review and finalise the nomination form.

## 9.0 Risk assessment

### 9.1 Detail the nature and scope of threats to the nominated material

The safety and well-being of these records are of prime importance to the Government of Mauritius. The National Archives Department and the National Library are responsible for safeguarding the historical documents of Mauritius.

(i) Both the National Archives Department and the National Library lack the necessary infrastructure and equipment for the purpose of storing and preserving archival records. The documentary heritage is exposed to continuous and gradual deterioration in the buildings which they presently occupy.

For the time being the National Archives Department's collections are housed in a building located in an industrial zone, which is, in itself, a major threat for these records. The different activities carried out by the industrial enterprises that surround the National Archives Department constitute potential dangers to the holdings and records in its custody.

The conditions that prevail inside this building make it difficult for the Department to meet many of the exigencies for the preservation of the documents. The absence of air conditioning or other forms of climate control system poses a significant threat to documents in relation to temperature and humidity. The archives are also affected by the termites due to absence of ideal preservation environment, although pest control is regularly carried out. Within these difficult conditions, several measures are being undertaken to mitigate and minimize the negative impacts to the maximum. These are detailed out in the following sections of the form.

(ii) The National Library has a serious storage problem. The space rented is not sufficient for the storage of the documents. Documents and records are not being kept as per the norms. In addition, with its present location, the operations of the National Library are exposed to all natural hazards such as pollution, heat, dust and noise. All the print and non-print materials deposited at the National Library, are housed in an environment where their preservation and conservation cannot be assured. Already, some collection (e.g. newspapers dating since 1770) are in very poor conditions. Several restaurants are located on the ground floor of the building.

The Government of the Republic of Mauritius has initiated a project for the construction of a purpose-built complex of international standard to house two key institutions, namely the National Archives Department and the National Library in order to enable them to fulfill their historical and cultural roles, that is, to collect, preserve, make accessible the collective memory of the country, for the benefit of the present and future generations, and for research purposes.

## 10.0 Preservation and access management plan

### 10.1 Describe, or attach as a scanned document, any existing plans. If no plans exist, provide details about proposed conservation, storage and access strategies.

Due to its age and fragility of paper type, the collection is under threat of deterioration. A Conservation Plan is elaborated by the National Archives Department. This plan is regularly updated to ensure timely action for the preservation of these documents. This plan incorporated a preservation assessment of the collection to ensure its longevity and the undertakings for preventive conservation.

## **Digitization Process**

### **National Archives Department**

The National Archives Department embarked on the digitisation project since 2009. The objectives were:

- (i) to digitize all documents in the department,
- (ii) to render them more accessible to the public.

In June 2013, The National Archives Department inaugurated an Electronic Archives System to host the digitised version of the records. As such, these documents are made available to the public through the web. It is ongoing project which contributes significantly:

- (i) to reduce handling of the original records,
- (ii) to prolong the life-span of the originals,
- (iii) to ensure accessibility in another format.

For the National Archives Department, the usability and accessibility of its records are of prime concern. In order to ensure that these records remain secure and accessible, a number of steps have been taken including digitization.

Preservation Assessment of the records is conducted on a weekly basis and appropriate measures are taken with regards to their preservation.

1. **Preventive conservation** - In the absence of an appropriate air-conditioning system, measures have been taken to have all the records well aerated to keep humidity and heat under control. The records are housed in acid-free boxes to protect them from light, heat and dust. Insects and rodents are subject to pest control on a monthly basis. Regular cleaning of stack areas, records, and shelves is also effected. In addition, there are regulations regarding the handling and use of records by the public. These regulations have been displayed in the Search Rooms.
2. **Restorative conservation** – Damaged records are treated in the Restoration Unit and are housed in a strong room with temperature and relative humidity controls.
3. **Content preservation** – Digitisation of part of these records is one of the main tools to ensure that these records remain secure and accessible. In order to safeguard the original content of the records, only the digitised version is accessed by the public.
- 4.

### **National Library**

The National Library has embarked on the digitisation process this year to enhance access and improve preservation of the library materials at the National Library. The National Library has recently acquired an A0 Scanner and Data Management System (DMS) to achieve this long-awaited project. All the staffs of the National Library have been trained to use the scanner. Phase 1 of the scanning project has already been started with the old newspapers dated 18th and 19th century. Digitizing the historical documents through digital scanning will result in uploading the digitized records in a

Document Management System (DMS) and creating a life-long repository of historical documents. By digitizing library collections, information will be accessible to all instead of a group of researchers and will allow users to search for collections rapidly and comprehensively from anywhere at any time.

In line with one of its statutory objectives, the National Library has embarked on a programme to preserve for present and future generations, the documentary heritage of Mauritius. A binding section was set up in 2000 to repair and maintain books, newspapers, periodicals, Government Gazettes, annual reports, debates of the National Assembly and other printed materials. Soon the National Library will start digitizing documents (press cuttings and books) on Père Laval.

In 2002, the National Library acquired a microfilm camera and a reader-printer with a view to preserve the content of old Mauritian newspapers and rare documents on a regular basis. Moreover, its preservation policy also includes the control of temperature, humidity and light on a systematic basis to ensure the storage of library materials under optimal environmental conditions. Dusting and Pest control is also carried out on a regular basis so as to further protect the library materials. One of the methods of preservation is also freezing of old documents which the National Library has implemented.

### **Centre Père Laval**

The National Archives Department is providing its expertise, through regular assessments, to preserve the document.

## **11.0 Any other information that may support the nomination**

### **11.1 Note below or attach scanned documents as appropriate.**

As at date, two Popes have visited the vault of Père Laval - Pope Jean Paul II in October 1989 and Pope Francis in September 2019. The visit of Pope Francis coincided with the 155<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Père Laval.

A Postulator from Rome and the Vice Postulator, Père Bernard Hym of Diocèse de Port Louis are preparing for the canonization of Père Laval. This is a long process and to that effect, the Centre Père Laval is collecting and examining more than 600 testimonies. The testimonies are from sick people who have prayed in front of the vault of Père Laval and who have been cured. The aim behind such an initiative is to look for a miracle that will allow the canonization of Père Laval to be completed. It should be reckoned as an inexplicable cure noted by a doctor and by science. This is undeniably a fair and truthful recognition for all the devotees who pray in front of the vault all through the year to obtain his blessings and graces.

**Additional scanned documents, including suitable reproduction quality photographs identified to illustrate the documentary heritage (300dpi, jpg format, full-colour preferred)**

A documentary film has been produced on the life of Père Laval. This has been attached.