

Letter of Father Gabriel Marest, of the Society  
of Jesus, to a Father of the same Society.

From the Illinois Country in  
New France, April 29, 1699.

**M**Y REVEREND FATHER,  
Pax Christi.

I have been nearly a year in this mission. The country here is very different from that about Quebec. The climate is warm, the soil fertile, the people of affable and gentle disposition. The state of religion here is as follows: but few embrace christianity among the men, especially the young men—who live in excessive licentiousness, which renders them utterly averse to virtue, and incapable of listening to their missionaries. Pray God, my Reverend Father, to cast a merciful eye upon them, and to withdraw them from so deplorable a condition. The women and girls, on the contrary, are very well disposed to receive baptism; they are very constant and firm, when once they have received it; they are fervent in prayer, and ask only to be instructed; they frequently approach the sacraments; and, finally, are capable of the highest sanctity. The number of those who embrace our holy religion increases daily to a marked degree—so much so that we have recently been obliged to build a new church, as the first was too small; and, judging from the manner in which this one is filled every day, I think we shall shortly need a third one. Praise be