

Witness in Favor of the Army of Mary
to His Eminence Cardinal Marc Ouellet

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His Eminence Cardinal Marc Ouellet
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What Is the Army of Mary for Us?

Your Eminence:

Today, I am 54 years old, but let me speak to you of the time when I was 28, that is to say, the years 1978-79. My faith at that time was quite “passive” even though, like my wife, I was born of parents who were very Catholic and very fervent. At that time America was going through a period of major changes. “Peace and Love” was on all lips, and the young were clamoring for their liberty: the liberty to do what they wanted without anyone’s permission, liberty of speech, liberty of act, liberty of morals and, of course, liberty in regard to faith.

The Church was in the process of a great reorganization, in the wake of Vatican II. It was believed that this reform would help bring the faithful back to the Church, but it is obvious that there is not very much left to draw the young (and the not-so-young) to church. The Prince of this world “jeers” and rubs his hands in glee on seeing how his strategy is working – and look at the results today.

In the spring of 1978, we had two children, and my wife, who had remained more pious than me, tried as best she could to pass on to them the values she had received. We went to Mass every Sunday, and, in spite of my spiritual tepidity, some prayers had succeeded in not slipping from our memory, and we recited them on occasion, and this, very often, on her initiative.

On this particular day the telephone rang at home; it was my father-in-law, a man who had undergone many trials with an unshakeable faith. He was coaxing us to attend a solemn Mass organized under the auspices of the Army of Mary, at which he and my mother-in-law along with other members would be received into the Militia of Jesus Christ.

We agreed to go, even though we were wondering what this movement could be. Personally, I agreed simply out of respect for my in-laws, for I found no interest in being present. I must tell you, Your Eminence, that at that time I was a linesman for Bell Canada. My fellow workers were not bad types, but their vocabulary was made up more of cursing and blasphemy than of respect or charity. It happened that I also would at times indulge in that “vocabulary”, and in that work milieu, religion,

Mass and prayers were, for many of them, pretty ridiculous.

The ceremony took place in St. Pius X church in Quebec City. On our arrival our attention was gripped by beautiful organ music that rang out through the church. We had difficulty finding a place to sit, so crowded was it with people. I saw that the men were dressed in a white alb, while the women wore a long white dress with a sky-blue belt at the waist. I felt very ill at ease in that throng and I maintained a cold attitude in order to make it clear to my wife that nothing in that place impressed me. After the word of welcome the choir had us listen to some great selections that impressed me. Being a lover a classical music, it was at that moment that I was astonished, even carried away, by those clear voices, simple, yet non-professional, but so fervent and pacifying. Then the future members entered, each carrying over their left arm the mantle of the Militia of Jesus Christ which they would wear once received. Having let myself be carried away somewhat by the music, and remarking the emotion on the face of my wife who looked at me with eyes a little reddened, I at once put on my face of marble and I whispered in her ear, "You'll never see me with that mantle on my back."

The ceremony continued, always serving us that sacred musical repertory, the beauty, warmth and depth of which surprised me. And for the first time, I noticed in both the congregation and the choir a certain number of people of my age. Little by little I let drop that cold attitude, for suddenly I liked what I saw and relished what I heard, and I became more "participating". Today, 26 years later, I believe I can say without error that the Blessed Virgin used that music to come and get me.

Subsequently, our motivation was such that we decided to get information about the Army of Mary and its foundress, Mrs. Marie-Paule Giguère. We learned about her life, written on the order from Heaven and published in fifteen volumes entitled *Life of Love*. On a number of occasions we were to have the good fortune and happiness of meeting this mystic who quite disarmed us by her simplicity and great availability. The more we looked into it, the more we discovered about this extraordinary work. Soon our family was to grow, making way for four fine children whom we would henceforth bring up within the work of the Army of Mary, drawing from it, both for them and for us, the parents, a teaching of great richness.

What does the Army of Mary ask of its members? First, to work their interior reform in order to open the soul to grace; the recitation of the rosary each day is recommended, even the fifteen decades if possible; receive the sacrament of Penance regularly; attend Mass as often as possible in order to nourish the soul on the Eucharist; we are asked to practice respect and charity in regard to our neighbor under all circumstances, the example being given us so easily by the foundress, the men and women religious belonging to the Work, as well as all those close to her.

We belong to the works associated with and born of the Army of Mary, namely, the Family of the Sons and Daughters of Mary and the Oblate-Patriots destined to effect social reform, we, our children, their spouses and our grandchildren presently numbering four.

Your Eminence, the Army of Mary saved not only my faith but also that of my wife and my children, and it still continues to do so today. We consider ourselves to be the most privileged of people. We thank Providence for having permitted us to know this Army directed by Heaven through

the instrumentality of its mystic foundress who has so many important messages to deliver in our time to the men and women who are willing to listen to her.

If in these lines some words appear offensive, Your Eminence, please excuse me for them; they were truly not intended to be such. See, rather, in these lines a sort of disappointment vis-à-vis a clergy that could have – much better than the poor man that I am – understood and accepted this celestial work.

Please accept, Your Eminence, the expression of our best wishes and the assurance of our prayers in Mary Immaculate and her beloved Son.

Raymond and Henriette Michaud
Beauport, Qc

cc: To whom it may concern