

SYLVIE PAYEUR-RAYNAULD'S
COMMENTS ON
BISHOP PAUL-ANDRÉ DUROCHER'S
PASTORAL LETTER



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**The Situation of the Sons of Mary...
and of Their Pontifical Commissioners**

he Vatican Curia is a massive organization and, in large part, Pope John Paul II had handed over the reins of its management to the Prefects of the different Roman Congregations in order to consecrate himself to his mission of evangelization as he travelled the world. Pope John Paul II was sympathetic to the cause of the Sons of Mary, he himself having intervened in their favor in 1985 so that they could continue their theological studies at the Pontifical University of the Angelicum after the Archbishop of Quebec, His Eminence, Cardinal Louis-Albert Vachon, had attempted to close this path to them. Therefore, it is abusive to claim that it was the Holy Father, personally, who appointed a Pontifical Commissioner for the Sons of Mary. Bishop Cazabon and his successor, Archbishop Prendergast, received their mandates from the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CIVCSVA). And the adversaries of the Marian Work inundated that Congregation (as they did other Roman Congregations, in fact) with false information on this Work and its Foundress.

Father Pierre Mastropietro, who was the Superior General of the Sons of Mary for a number of years, explained many times in our paper *Le Royaume* the irrelevancy of the appointment of a Pontifical Commissioner for the Sons of Mary. This position was created to exercise an unjustified control over this young Community faithful to the Church and to its doctrine.

Bishop Durocher's Concerns over Certain Statements by Marc Bosquart

From the first years of the founding of the Army of Mary, at a time when the Foundress' mystical life was not yet known, a battle was already constantly being waged against this Marian Work and it had repercussions all the way to the Vatican without anyone ever specifying what it was that this Work and Marie-Paule were to be reproached with.

Then, in 1979 and 1980, the French edition of *Life of Love* was published. In certain milieus, some seized the opportunity to condemn the Work and its Foundress by quoting sentences from *Life of Love* out of their context, and interpreting them in different ways. However, next to those who scoffed at the work of *Life of Love* or became indignant over its contents, there were some serious theologians who spoke in favor of these writings.

- On a visit to Quebec City, **Father Marie-Michel Philipon**, O.P., an expert at the Council and the postulator for the cause for beatification of Conchita of Mexico, read Marie-Paule's first volumes and insisted that she continue writing, stating that he had not found any "false mysticism" in these writings.



- **Father Marie-Dominique Philippe**, O.P., a theologian and philosopher with an international reputation, told Marie-Paule many times with reference to passages from *Life of Love*: "It is absolutely theological, but very few theologians today will understand it. The mystics have a language; they give it to us. Then, it is up to the theologians, but the real theologians who do not resist the action of the Holy Spirit in souls, to explain everything that the mystic himself does not always understand."

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- **Father Lionel Mélançon**, charged by His Excellency Bishop van Lierde, the Pope's sacristan, to read *Life of Love* and give him his impressions, wrote a long commentary that was published in 1983, entitled: *Life of Love: I Read, I Believed!*



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- **Bishop Emery Kabongo**, Pope John Paul II's private secretary who had become Marie-Paule's spiritual director, said to her: "*Life of Love* could convert the entire world... even the bishops!"
- Other theologians could also be named.

Why not consider the testimonial of these theologians versed in the mystical life rather than listening solely to the discordant voices of those who condemn *Life of Love*?

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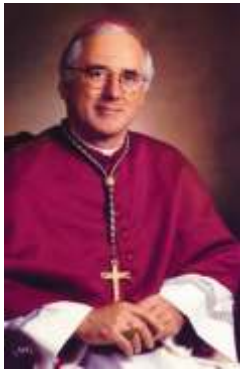


Marc Bosquart was described as a "theologian of the heart" by Father Mélançon. But theology is always "perfectible"; it develops as the knowledge theologians have of God develops, as they penetrate His mystery in increasingly greater depth. Even the greatest theologians, such as a **Saint Thomas Aquinas** for example, do not claim to hold all the truth with regard to God, the



final truth, for no one can claim to have grasped fully, as Saint Paul says, “the breadth and length and height and depth” of God (Eph 3:18). Man’s intelligence is limited while God is infinite...

Theology abounds in controversies and opposing tendencies and it is constantly evolving. Thus, for centuries the concept of the Immaculate Conception was fought against in the Church before it was finally accepted; however, such upheavals in theology do not take place and are not resolved in a few years or even in a few dozen years.



That is why we cannot give assent to **Archbishop Prendergast’s** request to “stop, for the time being, all public manifestations to the Lady of All Peoples until a more opportune time when the question of Marc Bosquart’s writings will have been clarified.... This moratorium is provisional but required, in order to understand well the problems." "Provisional” here can signify many years and the Work cannot be paralyzed.

If the religious authorities choose to judge the Army of Mary and its Foundress on the statements of persons who have not studied this Work in depth, paying no attention to the opposite opinions of those who took time to seriously study the question with good will, they act with much imprudence.

If the religious authorities choose to judge the Army of Mary and its Foundress on the writings of Marc Bosquart, that too is unjust. Mother Paul-Marie cannot be held responsible for the writings of another person in her regard.

It is absolutely absurd to judge a mystic based on the writings and statements of those who have simply read her works. Over and above the writings of Mother Paul-Marie, one must also consider the whole person she is with her astonishing charisms which bear witness to God’s action in her, her never-failing charity in spite of all the human pettiness, and the fruits of her apostolic activity.

Bishop Durocher and the Doctrinal Note

Bishop Durocher urges his diocesan faithful to “follow the directives of the bishops of Canada in their Doctrinal Note”, a document that is biased and unjust, however, unworthy of the members in authority in the Church. And he concludes his message by encouraging them to pray for the directors of the Army of Mary and for the Sons of Mary.

- Bishop Durocher encourages them to pray for the directors of the Army of Mary so these latter “may soon engage in the process that will lead to the clarification of these doctrinal ambiguities and open the door to a canonical solution as far as the status of the Sons of Mary is concerned”.

Is it up to the directors of the Army of Mary to engage in such a process? And is it not a bit late to urge them to do so when all the decisions to destroy this Work have already been taken in high places? As for the canonical status of the Sons of Mary, can it be granted only over the ruins of the Army of Mary?

The Army of Mary follows the divine orders which its Foundress receives and heroically executes. The Army of Mary cannot disobey the divine orders simply to acquiesce to the demands of certain bishops without being guilty of an even more serious infidelity towards the Lord. The Army of Mary's obedience to God will bring down upon it the condemnation of men.

- Finally, Bishop Durocher encourages the faithful to pray for the Sons of Mary so that the Lord may “keep them faithful to His will while waiting for this problematic situation to be resolved in the peace and unity of the faith”.

It is all well and good to wish someone peace and unity in the faith, but in order to be peacemakers, certain rules need to be respected and especially we must bow to the divine will, without which peace cannot be established on a solid and truthful foundation.

And what of the “unity of the faith” if this faith were to contradict the revelations of God? The unity of men against God?

The most beautiful prayer is still the request that each one of us may always remain faithful to God's plan, in order never to tarnish it.

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