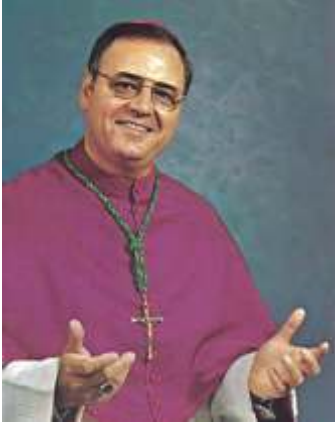


# A DAUNTLESS DEFENDER: His Excellency Bishop Eugène P. LaRocque

(Excerpts of texts put together by Sister Chantal BUYSE)



His Exc. Bishop P. LaRocque

## A PRUDENT, HONEST AND JUDICIOUS BISHOP

Bishop LaRocque has known the Sons and Daughters of Mary since 1987 when he had gone to Rome where he had made their acquaintance and also through the arrival in his diocese of a priest affiliated to the Family of the Sons and Daughters of Mary. Other visits took place in Italy on several occasions, to meet with the priests, Brothers and Sisters, in order to observe them more closely.

In 1995, he visited several residences of the Sons and Daughters of Mary in Quebec, in order to become better acquainted with the people and the places. At that time, he met the Superiors, as well as the Foundress, Mother Paul-Marie, four of her five children and her mother, Mrs. Laura Bégin-Giguère. Therefore, it was with great respect of the most elementary and most charitable proprieties that he decided to open his heart by allowing the Community of the Sons and Daughters of Mary to exercise its apostolate in his diocese.

"You can expect to carry the cross," Mother Paul-Marie had warned him at the time, explaining that it would be a matter of "opposition, scorn, calumny and vengeance". In fact, immediately afterwards, ecclesiastical authorities joined forces against Bishop LaRocque, as well as there being a general outcry among certain of his priests and lay people.

In 1996, the ordination of

Mr. & Mrs. van Nooten refer, in their letter, to the positive action of His Exc. Most Rev. Eugène P. LaRocque, Bishop emeritus of Alexandria-Cornwall who opened the door of his diocese to the Daughters of Mary (1993) and to the Sons of Mary (1996). What was his attitude?

four Sons of Mary was planned to take place at Cornwall by His Excellency Bishop Eugène P. LaRocque, with the approval and in the presence of His Exc. Bishop Paul Michael Boyle, Apostolic Vicar of Mandeville in Jamaica, where the Sons and Daughters of Mary were also working. A campaign of demolition was at once set on foot with the aim of preventing that ordination ceremony. What an ignoble assault! And yet the ordination ceremony took place in joy, peace and beauty.

Another ordination was scheduled, again at Cornwall, for June 1997. The adversaries worked more furiously than ever. On March 24, 1997, the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life informed Father Pierre Matropietro, then the Superior General of the Sons of Mary, that His Exc. Bishop Gilles Cazabon, O.M.I., then the bishop of Timmins in Ontario, had been appointed Pontifical Commissioner for the Sons of Mary.

The adversaries knew that in acting in this way they would succeed in blocking the ordination, for the appointment of a

Commissioner suspended, by that very fact, the authority of Their Excellencies Bishops LaRocque and Boyle, the only ones who had knowledge of the Community of the Sons and Daughters of Mary, having had them for several years, in addition, under their episcopal jurisdiction. This new appointment imposed by Rome was found to be rather strange given the fact that the problems did not come from within the Community, but from outside it.

So the ordination of Father Stéphane Gamache was cancelled a short time before the date set, creating a scandal among the faithful. Subsequently, the authorities attempted on numerous occasions to wash their hands of a situation which had become uncomfortable, imputing all the responsibility for the postponement of the ordinations, which had been announced and prepared long in advance, to Father Pierre Matropietro.

## ANOTHER DOOR OPENS

In 1997 His Excellency, Bishop Colin Campbell, Bishop of Antigonish in Nova Scotia, a maritime province, asked to have Sons of Mary for his diocese, and they opened a mission there at the end of June 1998. He too had met the directors and had come to visit the different residences of the Sons and Daughters of Mary in Quebec and had asked, besides, to meet Mother Paul-Marie.

Having subsequently learned that four Sons of Mary, including Father Stéphane Gamache, would be ready to be ordained in 1999 (three to the priesthood and one to the diaconate), His Excellency, well aware of the situation, opened the

doors for them and also opened his heart. Everything was prepared with great discretion, in silence and peace, in this place where the dandelion of calumnies had not been sown. And the ordination took place on August 14, 1999.

But our adversaries were not vanquished and they continued to maintain their rebellious and provocative attitudes. Shortly thereafter, open warfare was declared upon Bishop Campbell while the battle against Bishop LaRocque reached new heights through an odious campaign of denigration against him personally that was spread over the "Internet" network. The innocence of the accused was very quickly proven and, happily, Bishop LaRocque was exonerated from all blame.

## A DOCTRINAL NOTE

On August 15, 2001, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCC) used the occasion of the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary to banish from the Church the Army of Mary, a Work given by Heaven.

This Doctrinal Note was adopted by 93 bishops for and 2 against. Who were the two opposed to it? His Exc. Bishop Eugène P. LaRocque, Bishop of Alexandria-Cornwall in Ontario and His Exc. Bishop Colin Campbell, Bishop of Antigonish in Nova Scotia who, after having observed the Work and the Sons of Mary for several years did not hesitate to call for their aid. A letter on the subject, addressed to His Eminence Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, then the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, dated July 9, 2001, bears witness to Bishop LaRocque's



His Exc. P. M. Boyle



His Exc. C. Campbell



His Exc. G. Cazabon



H. Em. Card. J. Ratzinger



Ordination on June 23, 1996 - Cornwall, Ontario



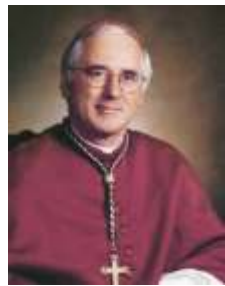
Ordination on August 14, 1999 - Arichat, Nova Scotia

remarkable honesty... A letter which, once again, did not receive an answer. Before the imminence of the publication of the Doctrinal Note, Bishop LaRocque informed his priests of the injustice of the bishops in his bulletin *Inter Nos* (p. 21).

Bishop Colin Campbell retired in 2002 for health reasons while Bishop Eugène P. LaRocque, having reached that year the canonical age of retirement, handed in his letter of resignation according to the norms of Canon Law. The rapidity with which his resignation was accepted and his replacement appointed was offensive.

#### A NEW COMMISSIONER

From the very beginning of his mandate as Pontifical Commissioner, His Exc. Bishop Gilles Cazabon, accumulated blunders..., to such a point that in May 2003, a new letter from Rome announced that he was being replaced by His Exc. Bishop Terrence Prendergast, S.J., Archbishop of Halifax. Once again,



His Exc. Bishop  
T. Prendergast

this new appointment proved that the problems were not internal to the Community of the Sons of Mary. Although a religious authority had already confided to Father Pierre ten years earlier that the Sons of Mary would have been justified to rebel, once again, Mother Paul-Marie asked that patience be exercised and that openness and a warm welcome be given to the new Commissioner. This request was repeated, subsequently, even if, at the end of the first meeting which took place in July 2003, proof had been given us that the Commissioner's mandate was already very clearly defined...

#### FULFILLMENT OF THE LORD'S WORDS

Thus the Lord's words to Marie-Paule are being fulfilled: "THE CHURCH IS PARALYZED BECAUSE OF THE PETTINESS OF BISHOPS" (*Life of Love*, vol. IX, chap. 43, p. 198, 1974), and those of Mary at Akita in Japan: "CARDINALS OPPOSED TO CARDINALS, BISHOPS RANGING THEMSELVES AGAINST OTHER BISHOPS" (Shimura Tatsuya, *La Vierge Marie pleure au Japon (Akita)*, Switzerland, Éditions du Parvis, 1985, pp. 44-45). It should be noted that the statue of the Virgin representing the Lady of All Peoples wept 101 times between 1975 and 1981. In 1975, through the intermediary of the press, radio and television, the 115 million Japanese all heard about the extraordinary phenomena of the "Virgin of Akita". Many even saw them on their television screens. The authenticity of the events was rec-



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### INTER NOS

#### ENTRE NOUS !

Vol. XVI – no. 3 – July 26th, 2001

Chers confrères dans le sacerdoce,

Vous n'êtes pas sans savoir que la CECC a demandé aux évêques du Canada de voter sur la Déclaration doctrinale contre l'Armée de Marie, qui est maintenant à Rome pour le *recognitio*.

En dépit de mes efforts, aucun dialogue avec les accusé(e)s n'a eu lieu, soit au niveau diocésain, national ou de la Curie. J'y vois une injustice flagrante (même l'Inquisition permettait aux accusés de se défendre).

Je dois maintenant me préparer pour l'inévitable; je partage avec vous ce que je me propose de faire: après la Déclaration, puisque l'évêque est responsable de la saine doctrine dans son diocèse, je demanderai aux membres laïcs, aux religieuses et aux prêtres de faire Profession de foi; puisque je ne peux ni imposer ni nier des révélations privées, j'insisterai qu'en public ils n'enseignent que ce que l'Église catholique enseigne (ce que les prêtres ont toujours fait, d'ailleurs). Oui, les accusations sont sérieuses, mais la justice la plus élémentaire exige qu'on entende les accusé(e)s. Entre-temps on essaiera d'être aussi juste que possible ici, en notre Église locale !

† Eugène P. LaRocque  
Évêque d'Alexandria-Cornwall

ognized by the local bishop in 1984.

#### GAMALIEL'S ATTITUDE

The attitude of a bishop, one open to the ascetical and mystical ways, His Exc. Bishop Eugène P. LaRocque, Bishop of Alexandria-Cornwall, reminds us of Gamaliel's attitude. More than that, Bishop LaRocque was the only bishop who, for years before receiving them, studied the Sons and Daughters of Mary, asking questions about the Work's writings, not to find fault, but in order to have a just understanding of the other's thinking. He was also the only bishop capable of giving information, even to Pope John Paul II, with justice and full knowledge of the case, even if he did not understand everything – and this is only normal, for that is what walk-

#### BETWEEN US !

Vol. XVI – no. 3 – July 26th, 2001

Dear Brothers:

As many of you are aware the CCCB has asked the Bishops of Canada to vote on a Doctrinal Declaration against the Army of Mary, which is now in Rome for *recognitio*.

In spite of my efforts no dialogue with those accused has occurred, either on the Diocesan, National or Curia level. I believe this is an injustice (even the Inquisition allowed the accused to answer their accusers).

I must now prepare for the inevitable; I share with you what I propose to do after the Declaration, since the Bishop is responsible for the purity of doctrine in his Diocese. I shall ask the lay members, the Sisters and Priests of the Army of Mary in our Diocese to make a Profession of faith; since I can neither force them to accept or deny private revelations, I shall insist that publicly they must teach only what the Church teaches (which is what the Priests have always done).

Yes, the accusations are serious, but basic social justice requires that the accused be given a hearing. Until then, we shall try to be as just as possible in our local Church!

† Eugène P. LaRocque  
Bishop of Alexandria-Cornwall

ing in pure faith is.

Just as Mary and Joseph did not understand when Jesus had to take care of His Father's business, so also Bishop LaRocque was not able to understand everything, but he adopted the praiseworthy position of not warring on God's Work, contemplating, rather, the fruit he saw ripening in his diocese, supported by the majority of his diocesan faithful, for they also saw the fruit, and knowing how to defend the cause of the Sons and Daughters of Mary, even in the media, when they were attacked.

#### Sister Chantal Buyse

(Based on texts written by Mother Paul-Marie and published in issues no. 123, 136, 147 and 158 of *Le Royaume*.)