

# "... IN THE TROUBLED WATERS OF THE INCOMPREHENSION OF MYSTICAL WAYS..."

*by Father Pierre MASTROPIETRO*

Having been informed long before of the obscure machinations which, in August 2001, led to the publication of the Doctrinal Note by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) with regard to the Army of Mary and before the imminence of the publication of that Note, Mother Paul-Marie wrote a letter to His Excellency Bishop Eugène P. LaRocque, on July 3, 2001, to express her thoughts to him. Here is a short excerpt from this letter:

*"... You have set yourself apart from a collegiality which,*

*perhaps, is navigating, unfortunately, in the troubled waters of the incomprehension of mystical ways, especially given the fact that every Work of God, always new, is brought forth at a time of decadence of the priesthood, which is why God acts by passing through the little ones to realize the plan He has to save His Church.*

*"We are prepared to accept the verdict of the Canadian episcopate – even if there are ramifications all the way to*

Rome —; however, this verdict will not be the verdict of the Church of Christ who will be able to defend the Work of His Mother when the time comes....”

**COMMENTS OF A PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE IN THE LIGHT OF EVENTS**

These few thoughts from the Foundress of the Work of the Army of Mary, as powerful and surprising as they might have seemed at the time, take on, today, a particular significance in the light of events which confirm their authenticity and, by that very fact, render homage to the uprightness and merit of Bishop LaRocque who, at the end of his term of pastoral responsibility as bishop, and, in spite of the opposing influence and voices of almost an entire episcopal conference leagued against a Work of God, was able to continue searching in all things and above all for the light of the Truth concerning the same Work by remaining attentive and open to “God’s ways which are not our ways”.

So many facts not revealed to date would merit being made known today to render justice to history and to show just to what extent Mother Paul-Marie’s prediction to Bishop LaRocque in 1995, namely, “you can expect to carry the cross,” has turned out to be very well founded.

While leaving it up to the Lord Himself, at His hour and in the manner He wills, to shed light on all events and people, it is necessary to mention here some of the many facts which bear witness to the great pastoral solicitude of Bishop LaRocque with regard to the lowliest sheep among all the sheep in his diocese, these former being considered by many as having “strayed” because they are members of the Family of the Sons and Daughters of Mary.

**BISHOP LAROCQUE AND THE VERY DELICATE SUBJECT OF THE ARMY OF MARY**

Succinctly, it is only fitting to specify here that three times – first in 1995, then in 1996, and finally in 2001 – Bishop LaRocque wrote to His Eminence Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, then the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the very delicate subject of the Army of Mary, mentioning to him his deep concern over the fact that the norms set out by his own dicastery were not even being respected by the CCCB.

In his concern to see that social justice be done, the Ordinary of Alexandria-Cornwall denounced, at the time, the lack of dialogue as much on the part of His Eminence Cardinal Vachon as that of his successor, Archbishop Couture, thus bringing out just to what extent this erroneous way of proceeding exposed the Church to quite serious accusations and which, as a consequence, made the Church the only one really responsible for the wounds inflicted upon its unity...

**THE WITNESS OF HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND HIS AVAILABILITY**

On more than one occasion before leaving the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, Bishop LaRocque attempted to put forward, as much before His Eminence Cardinal Ratzinger as before his confreres of the Canadian episcopate, the witness of his own personal and direct experience concerning the eight years of service of the three Daughters of Mary working in his bishopric, as well as the five years of ministry of the four Sons of Mary priests involved in pastoral service in his diocese, but this was to no avail.

So many times Bishop LaRocque also informed the ecclesiastical authorities in Rome and in Canada that he was at their disposal to intervene as a mediator, to work in concert with the Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Quebec and the Pontifical Commissioner who was Bishop Gilles Cazabon, O.M.I., at the time, but this offer was always refused.

**PROCESS OF CONSULTATION WITH A VIEW TO THE PUBLICATION OF THE DOCTRINAL NOTE OF AUGUST 2001**

Throughout the entire process of consultation which led, in the end, to the publication of the Doctrinal Note of August 2001, those responsible in the CCCB assigned to the dossier of the Army of Mary avoided consulting with Bishop LaRocque who, better than anyone, in fact, could have given them a more objective and positive version of the facts and events concerning the Work and the Community. Bishop LaRocque himself had to insist with the permanent Council so that he might be granted ten minutes to present, in all honesty, his thoughts to his confrere bishops.

More than that, while the draft document leading to the Doctrinal Note was already circulating among certain bishops of the Canadian episcopate, Bishop LaRocque had asked the President of the CCCB to also be given a copy of the aforesaid document, to which demand the President at first seemed to acquiesce and then he categorically refused. Without wishing to make any judgment whatsoever on the deep motives which prompted this refusal, it is nevertheless quite obvious that a

certain uneasiness, tinted with the colors of a divided kingdom, predominated within the ecclesial panorama of that episcopal Conference.

**A GREAT CONCERN FOR LOVE OF AND FIDELITY TO THE CHURCH, WITH THE WISDOM OF A SUPERNATURAL REGARD**

Whatever the case may be, and always with a great concern for love of and fidelity to the Church, Bishop LaRocque before the inevitable and now imminent publication of the Doctrinal Note by the CCCB, shared with his confrere bishops his intention to ask that the lay members, as well as the Sisters and priests of the Community, make a profession of faith, reminding them that he could not personally impose or deny private revelations. He emphasized the concern with which he would insist that the persons involved would continue, as in the past, to teach in public only that which the Catholic Church teaches.

It must be specified that Bishop LaRocque, while always demonstrating a great pastoral solicitude and a very keen sense of social justice, never officially made any comment with regard to the accusations brought against the writings of the Work as such. He was well aware that certain accusations were serious and that these latter, whether or not they were founded, would need to be addressed sooner or later. Nonetheless, it was with the wisdom of the supernatural regard of Gamaliel that he was able, while waiting for the day when everything would become clearer and be enlightened by the light of God, to look at the tangible truth of the fruit, of the abundant, blessed and good fruit of the Army of Mary in the day-to-day life of its members.

**BISHOP LAROCQUE’S THINKING WITH REGARD TO THE ARMY OF MARY**

It was this same supernatural regard which permitted Bishop LaRocque, at the end of his mandate as Bishop of Alexandria-Cornwall, to sum up, more or less in these words, his thinking to the effect that the Church will one day have to open its doors to the Army of Mary. According to him, the members of the Army of Mary are, in a certain way, more Catholic than some bishops, in teaching *Humanae Vitae* and in trying to live a responsible and generous paternity, without forgetting that among its members there are the Oblate-Patriots who encourage, in a special way, lay people to deepen their knowledge of and put into practice the Church’s social doctrine.

And in spite of certain personal questions that were absolutely normal and legitimate with regard to this or that writing of a mystical nature within the Work, Bishop LaRocque has remained, to this day, a pastor with an attentive, open and kindly heart, convinced that there is an unjust treatment of these people who love the Church and who would like to serve it by bringing out the value of family life.

**THE UPRIGHTNESS OF HEART AND MIND, AND THE “CROSS TO BE CARRIED”**

This uprightness of heart and mind which Bishop LaRocque practised in favor of the Work of the Army of Mary was admittedly not and is still not exempt of the “cross to be carried”, quite the contrary... In fact, for the bishop of Alexandria-Cornwall, today a bishop emeritus, this long personal journey of several years to discern the validity of this Work “in the Church and for the Church” was marked in many ways by the cross, adversity and opposition.

We need only think here of the little attention paid to or consideration given him by certain authorities throughout all the unsuccessful attempts he made to set up a sincere dialogue in due form between the parties involved; or one or other of the defamatory media campaigns against him not only by attacking him in his legitimate authority of pastor of a diocese, but also and more particularly by ridiculing his human and priestly dignity, by falsely challenging his moral integrity. These trials permitted by God, in whatever form they may have taken, are the tangible proof of the authenticity of Mother Paul-Marie’s prophetic words to Bishop LaRocque: “You can expect to carry the cross.”

**FALSE ACCUSATIONS ON THE PART OF A HIGH-LEVEL AUTHORITY**

Speaking of the crosses of the bishop emeritus of the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, it is hard to remain silent with regard to the false and unjust accusations of which he himself was a victim at the end of his mandate on the part of a high-level Roman authority. This authority reproached him with having accepted verbally to collaborate with the Pontifical Commissioner at the time, Bishop Gilles Cazabon, O.M.I, but not in the facts.

For Bishop LaRocque, given that he had personally accepted, at the express request of the Holy See and Bishop Cazabon, to immediately and unconditionally put a stop to all arrangements being made for the presbyteral ordination of

Father Stéphane Gamache, – at a point when all the preparations in view of the ordination had already been completed for a long time – such a disavowal on the part of a high-level authority was equivalent to casting serious doubt on his honesty and his sincere desire to cooperate in the mandate of the Pontifical Commissioner, something he always did.

**A THIRST, AN IDEAL, A WITNESS...**

The false accusations that tarnished Bishop LaRocque's reputation never, for all that, altered his love of and fidelity to the Church. His thirst for justice, so often put to the test during those times of great adversity, never gave way to discouragement or even less to a loss of ideal in the search for the truth in charity. This pastor with an ecumenical heart believed, to the very end, in the reconciliation desired by Christ not only with separated brethren but also and in a very special way between brothers and sisters in the faith. For this heroic witness of humility, faith, courage and fidelity before the cross accepted and offered in an incessantly renewed love, we can only express to him today our very deep gratitude and assure him of our filial prayer, confident that the Lord who knows what is in the heart of each one will know how to reward, in a superabundance of graces and blessings, this good and faithful servant according to His promise:

*"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill."* (Mt 5:6)

In closing, the silent but so very eloquent witness of Bishop LaRocque, besides being a source of inspiration for us, Sons and Daughters of Mary, is above all an invitation to live well that hour that is coming in which, in order to accomplish fully the will of the Father and glorify Him, we, in turn, will have to keep watch and pray, with the Son, in order not to fall into temptation..., in the hope that we too will be able, with His grace, to have the courage and strength to drink with love of the same cup that He drank from, no longer in the Garden of Olives, but in Rome where everything must now be accomplished, as the recent letter of June 17, 2005, from the present Pontifical Commissioner indicates, a letter that was sent to us on the feast of Saint Louis de Gonzague, a young Jesuit religious who died before reaching the priesthood.

**IN THE WAKE OF THE BARQUE, FOLLOWING PETER...**

In the wake of the barque of an episcopal conference which, for so many years, has been navigating in the troubled internal waters of the incomprehension of mystical ways, it is becoming increasingly clear that the twelve years of mandates of the Apostolic Visitors and Pontifical Commissioners will have only contributed to the hardening of the territorial attitude of an episcopal conference which, for a large part, is already closed and turned in on itself, incapable of pulling away from its spiritual shore because it is caught up in its own rational nets, even though it is always called upon, following Peter, to put out into deep water, according to the very exhortation of Jesus: *"Put out into deep water and lower the nets..."* (Lk 5:4)

**LETTER FROM HIS EXCELLENCY  
ARCHBISHOP TERRENCE PRENDERGAST, S.J.**

Halifax, June 17, 2005

Rev. Father Pierre Mastropietro, O.F.F.M.  
Spiri-Maria  
626 route du Sanctuaire  
Lac-Etchemin, QC G0R 1S0

Dear Father Mastropietro:

Your letter of June 9 sent by e-mail and also by regular mail was received on June 10 and 15 respectively. Through a note on the web site of the Army of Mary, I understood that this note and Father Eric Roy's letter constitute Mrs. Marie-Paule Giguère's reply to the second letter I sent her on June 4. I regret her choice of remaining silent and the *de facto* refusal of my requests to the Sons of Mary that are the result of this silence and of your letters.

On my next visit to Rome I will present to the authorities of the Congregation for the Institutes of the Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life a report of our relations and our correspondence over the last months for their evaluation and for any action which the Congregation, in collaboration with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, might judge appropriate.

May I ask you to join me in prayer so that, in this matter, we seek only the will and glory of the Lord, and that we may have the courage to accomplish it?

Yours in Christ,

**Terrence Prendergast, S.J.**  
**Archbishop of Halifax**  
**Pontifical Commissioner**

If it is true, as the saying goes, "that all roads lead to Rome", it is no less true that, at the end of twelve years of mandates which have been as regrettable as they have been fruitless or unsuccessful, Rome is turning out to be just as much the point of departure as the point of arrival: it all began at the Vatican and all is also now being accomplished at the Vatican...

**ARCHBISHOP PRENDERGAST..., DE FACTO...**

In his recent letter, Archbishop Prendergast accuses Mother Paul-Marie of having chosen to remain silent and of refusing *de facto* the demands he made in the two preceding letters. If His Excellency only knew... – just like if others, in the time of Jesus, had known – he might not have thought it so urgent to have recourse to Rome, so that it, in turn, might draw conclusions based on his own erroneous ones. Whatever the case may be, after all these events have passed, history will most certainly bring back to the memory of the generations to come the sad reality of a pastor whose heart and regard closed to other horizons will have given more importance to the legal action of a Congregation with regard to a dossier condemned in advance than to the supernatural action of God for a cause which is His Cause and through which He continues to found His renewed Church...

Lac-Etchemin, June 22, 2005 **Fr. Pierre Mastropietro**

**NEW ITEMS FOR SALE**

**– "The Angels of the Priesthood"**

During the recent triduum of prayer held at Spiri-Maria last May, under the theme "The Eucharist and the Angels of the Priesthood", this pamphlet and holy picture were offered to the participants:

- Pamphlet with prayer for priests;
- holy picture with children's prayer;
- reproductions of the angels and cross used during the triduum

Handmade, the little angels are molded of a solid and resistant plastic, in their natural white color. The little cross is made of transparent plexiglass, has rays engraved on the front, and is mounted on a frosted base.

**– Videocassettes and DVDs**

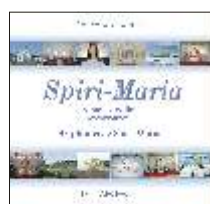
Reproduction on videocassette or DVD of the day of prayer



held on Sunday, May 29, 2005, under the theme of "The Eucharist and the Angels of the Priesthood".

Two videocassettes are available, the first includes the ceremony, morning conferences and Mass on Sunday, May 29, and the second includes the ceremony and afternoon conferences held on Sunday, as well as the special ceremony which took place on Saturday, May 28. These are available in French only.

Reproduced on DVD are the ceremonies, morning and afternoon conferences and Mass of Sunday, May 29, 2005, as well as the special ceremony held on May 28, 2005. They are sold in a set of 3 DVDs, and they have **both a French and English sound track.**



**– Spiri-Maria Screen Saver**

The Sons of Mary present a screen saver program for your computer, illustrating with 35 different pictures the Eucharistic and Marian Center Spiri-Maria. Please note that this program has been set up to be used with Windows only.

All items are available through your local Army of Mary Marian bookstore or Le Rosier d'Or.

