

A Parishioner from Alexandria-Cornwall Spontaneously Addresses the Congregation

Preamble

On May 22, 2005, at the beginning of the 8:30 a.m. Mass in the parish of the Sacred Heart in Alexandria (Ontario), Father Marcel Larouche read the message from Father Eric Roy announcing, with regret, the departure of the Sons of Mary from the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall. He thanked the Sons of Mary for their valuable contribution in our parishes over the last ten years. The assembly seconded Father Marcel's comments with a warm round of applause. Father Marcel then left to go to another Eucharistic celebration, and Father Luc Beaudette continued with the Mass assisted by the deacon, Claude Brunet. After the final blessing, I implored the Holy Spirit to enlighten me and I decided to spontaneously speak to Father Luc before the congregation.

Address

"Father Luc, could you wait a few min-

utes please? Spontaneously, in all humility and sincerity, it is difficult for me to hold back my reactions at the announcement of your departure, and to let you leave without taking the time to share with you what I feel at the moment."

(Then I addressed myself to the congregation:) "Ladies and Gentlemen, I am speaking to you this morning from a personal point of view and not as a member of the parish's Leadership Committee. My comments are my very own thoughts and I assume full responsibility for the consequences of my actions. Furthermore, if my comments shock the majority of the members of the Leadership Committee, you can be assured that I am prepared to hand in my resignation on the spot at our next meeting.

"Father Luc, I am not a member of your Work, but I have observed your members since their arrival in this diocese, and I have read about your Work. Since your ar-

rival in the diocese, you have sown everywhere around you a love of prayer and love of neighbor. How can we cast the first stone at you? I believe the Church is making a mistake by initiating this inquisition into the Work, and I feel a deep sorrow inside me and a great spiritual disappointment with regard to my Church. A passage from the Bible has kept constantly popping up in my mind since the beginning of this Mass: 'Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing.' (Lk 23:34)

"To live according to one's values exacts much courage; know that you have my complete admiration for refusing to deny your spiritual heritage. I support you in prayer, you, all the members of the Work and particularly its Foundress Marie-Paule Giguère (Mother Paul-Marie). Many thanks for all you have done. Have courage!"

Conclusion

Everything ended with resounding applause, embraces and much emotion.

Nicole Bourgeois, parishioner