

"I Will Put Enmity Between You and the Woman..."

(Gn 3:15)

On May 16, at a meeting with the Sons of Mary working in the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, in the presence of Father Eric Roy, Superior General, His Exc. Bishop Paul-André Durocher told the confreres present of his intention to terminate their pastoral service in the diocese on June 30, 2005, in the eventuality that they would not accept to sign, within six days, the commitment of fidelity, without any modifications or chance to appeal, which he had prepared for them. The confreres concerned could not, in all conscience, accept this document without betraying or denying the Work they stem from and, by this very fact, without themselves condemning their Foundress to whom, after God, they owe all the ideal of their consecration, their universal charism of charity for the Church and for souls, and their Marian spirituality.

Following this meeting of May 16, that is to say, on May 19, Father Eric Roy as well as Fathers Luc Beaudette, Daniel Gauthier and Gilles Devaux addressed a letter to Bishop Durocher, clearly explaining to him the reasons why it was morally impossible for them to sign such a commitment and they indicated, at the same time, that, having taken note of his decision, they intended to leave the diocese at the latest on June 30, 2005, after ten years of pastoral service.

In the days that followed, Father Eric Roy called Bishop Durocher in order to discuss with him the possibility of not prolonging unduly the presence of the Sons of Mary in the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, given the very delicate situation for the confreres involved, and to avoid all useless tensions and uncomfortable situations. But the local bishop, for his part, insisted that Fathers Luc, Daniel and Gilles should remain at their postings until the deadline of June 30, 2005, using as a pretext the fact that he had major pastoral changes to make that would come into effect on that date especially in the Anglophone parishes.

That was strange reasoning on the part of a prelate who, while outlawing as "heretics" three Sons of Mary – although he himself acknowledged never having heard any preaching on their part which could justify such an accusation – was not only prepared to overlook the "danger for the faith" these latter could present, on the condition they made a tiny little profession of faith and especially a very important renunciation; but he still wanted to use these same "potential heretics" in order to fill the pastoral holes because it would be more convenient for him. In such a situation, one can be allowed to seriously wonder about the real solicitude of this pastor for his sheepfold which he continues to entrust to the good care of servants who are supposedly "bad". Let us sincerely hope, for the good of his diocesan faithful, that the opposite in true, especially as far as he is concerned.

Whatever the case may be and in spite of a situation which had now exploded, the Sons of Mary accepted to continue their pastoral service until the date of June 30, imposed by Bishop Durocher, while at the same time informing their parishioners, in all justice and charity, of the situation they would face in the near future.

Following the first announcements communicated to the main persons affected by the pastoral ministry of the Sons of Mary in the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, Bishop Durocher suddenly did an about-face and communicated with Father Gilles Devaux to inform him that, after consultation, it was better for the good of all concerned that the Sons of Mary advance their departure date to June 1, 2005.

Father Gilles, surprised, asked the Bishop if he had informed Father Eric, but he replied that he had not because he did not have Father Eric's telephone number, even though normally Father Eric is the one who should have been contacted first, given that, formerly, it was the Community which had been welcomed in the diocese and was now being expelled from it.

Without wishing to condemn Bishop Durocher for this sad page of history which has come to an end and which, whether we want it or not, will be added to the annals of an episcopal conference which bears a heavy responsibility in the outcome of the situation, it is nevertheless surprising to see just to what extent he was able to make use of the Sons of Mary to the very end, for the sole purpose of his personal requirements. In this circumstance, his pastoral concern for the spiritual welfare of the faithful in his diocese was equalled only by his concern for the Sons of Mary priests whom he got rid of by wrongly and unjustly flouting their human and sacerdotal dignity, without even having the minimal decency of waiting for these latter to leave the diocese before beginning to spread his venomous campaign of filth in the media, treating them as common heretics.

At the end of ten years of selfless pastoral service by the Sons of Mary in the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, we would be well advised to seriously question ourselves, all of us, in order to discover whose cause all these contorsions to the truth and this malevolent contempt on the part of the local Ordinary could well serve... that of the old serpent in Genesis or that of the dove nestled in the crack of the rock.

At the point we have now reached, given the extent of the scandal provoked by an obstinate rejection, worthy of the rebellious angels, of a Handmaid and a Work of God, only one choice remains and that is to enter, after the example and in the wake of the Woman, into the final combat with a view to the definitive victory of good over evil.

June 3, 2005

Father Pierre Mastropietro