

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION IN THE THICK OF THE STRUGGLE

This year, we are celebrating in the Church the 150th anniversary of the Virgin Mary's apparitions at Lourdes. Now, the Lourdes apparitions are closely bound in with the messages of the Lady of All Peoples. Here is what Raoul Auclair, that great prophet and Marian author – today, Saint Raoul-Marie –, wrote concerning Lourdes: "She came there to unveil to us the fulness of her mystery as it is, unfathomable, ineffable. 'I AM,' she said, 'I AM THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.'" (*La Dame de Tous les Peuples, Ouverture à l'intelligence des messages*, p. 9) Powerful words that do not cease surprising and, unfortunately, arousing the opposition of certain human and not the lowest, intelligences. In effect, the Virgin of Lourdes did not just say, "I was conceived immaculate," but very clearly, "I AM the Immaculate Conception." That affirmation leads us directly into the heart of the Marian mystery. The Lady of All Peoples insists also on the fundamental tie that exists between the Lourdes apparitions and those of Amsterdam:

"Because she is Co-Redemptrix, Mary is also Mediatrix and also Advocate. And she is that not only because she is the Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ, but – and listen carefully – because she is the Immaculate Conception" (49th apparition).

And it is She Herself, the Immaculate, who is engaged in the final struggle, concerning which She predicted that it would all end with the triumph of her Heart!

We are all awaiting, with the highest hope, that triumph of Mary, but it will not come without struggles or combats... And it is with her little Army – her "little army of Gideon" – that She will vanquish the Evil One and his pernicious spirit that have invaded the entire world. Our army could seem ridiculously small in the face of the spirit of evil that is so powerful... How can we even think of attacking such a malicious and such a domineering Enemy?... Those questions can cross our minds as we become more aware of the importance of that combat to be fought in following the Co-Redemptrix, and of the primordial role the Work and all its members must play in this regard. However, let us not be put out by the gravity of the situation nor by the multiplicity of the possible courses of action, but let us choose, rather, to admire once again the manner in which God has always realized His plan of love and which He is realizing once again today "in this time which is our time".

THE DIVINE PLAN THAT IS ACTUALIZING IN THE HISTORY OF HUMANITY

Holy Scripture and the history of the Church provide us with numerous examples that enlighten and inform in regard to the manner in which God proceeds for the actualization of His plan. It is a plan that respects the liberty of men, and it is only **when these latter are well disposed** that it is possible for them to see the marvels accomplished

An Apocalyptic Struggle with a View to a Dazzling Victory

by Father Eric ROY



The Immaculate Conception

by God. Here are some examples that clearly illustrate the manner in which God acts:

– The Combat Between David and Goliath

That combat, at once spectacular and memorable, shows us the fear of the people of God faced with the enemy. But God had prepared and formed David from his young years; he had that pure heart, that unshakable faith that came to him from God, and he was not afraid to confront Goliath, a formidable enemy from the human point of view. To anyone casting a superficial regard on the scene, David is just a young lad, but for the one considering that event with a supernatural regard, David reveals himself as the instrument chosen by God to vanquish the enemy who had dared defy God and His chosen people. And so it was because of his confidence and fidelity that God permitted David to participate in the actualization of His divine plan and of the history of salvation.

– Gideon's Army

In a situation that would normally have necessitated several thousands of soldiers to defeat the enemy, God willed to make use of only three hundred fighters in order to achieve victory!

But the people and the soldiers had to obey what God asked of them through Gideon. Humanly speaking, it was absolute nonsense to want to fight the enemy with weapons such as empty jars, torches and horns... And yet it was thus that Gideon's little army was victorious! What Sacred Scripture teaches us by this episode is that victory will always be that of God and not of men. But to assure them victory, God always asks of them unconditional obedience to His Word.

– The Choice of Apostles for the Church

When Christ began His public life in conformity with the Father's will, He chose His Apostles, not from among the priests of the time or the learned men, but rather from among the simple and the little. Was it very reasonable to choose twelve ordinary men in order to establish the Church? Humanly speaking, from the beginning, the operation was doomed to failure, all the more so since at the end of His life Jesus was crucified. But no, for all is possible to God! And such was the divine plan that He willed to manifest through love for humanity.

The Apostles, those chosen first ones, left everything in order to follow Jesus before even knowing or understanding... Like the whole of their people they were anxiously awaiting the Messiah. At the call of Jesus, they felt in the depths of their being, in their heart and soul, that He was the one they were awaiting. They believed and they saw! They saw in Him the Divinity, a new authority, a new message: Love – an intrusion of the divine upon men's space and time. It is thanks to them if, today, we have the inestimable treasure of the faith. Could the Apostles have explained, of themselves, how Jesus had brought back to life Lazarus and the daughter of Jairus? How all of those miracles were worked? How they were able to be in the presence of Christ living again, risen? No, they could not have humanly explained it. But they believed in them. They believed that it all came from the divine Omnipotence. Who could have predicted that the faith of twelve Apostles and a few hundred disciples was going to cross more than twenty centuries in a tumultuous history filled with snares? Nobody!

– The History of the Church Over the Centuries

In the course of the Church's history, how could God have asked a Joan of Arc, a Catherine of Siena, and so many other men or women to intervene in His name in order to show the route to be followed and to proclaim with vigor, even to the highest Church authorities, that such was His will? We have to recognize this constant: God employs little ones, He employs those who fear Him, that is to say, those disposed to believe in His Omnipotence. To realize His plan, God always chooses the best disposed men and women who accept everything in simplicity without confronting Him, in objection, a thousand and one human considerations.

LESSONS TO BE DRAWN

By these examples and numerous others that could be recounted, Sacred History and the history of the Church show us that with God all is possible and that it is, above all, thanks to their spirit of openness and owing to their uprightness that the simple, the little ones, have been able to believe and then see the marvels of God. In our present times, just as in the time of the Apostles, many people, among those who are good and have peace of soul, are going to hear of the Army of Mary, of its Foundress and of the excommunication, and, without knowing anything about it, are going to feel that it is a good Work. Due to their openness and the peace that dwells in them, they will want to know more, they will come to the Work, they are going to believe and they are going to see.... Blessed are they whose soul is at peace and are well disposed! But ill-fated are those whose soul is not at peace – and that goes also for the high authorities, as in Christ's time – and who, not understanding, combat and judge without knowing!... Yes, ill-fated are they, for they will not be able to see!

All is possible to God – the Lord's plans hold good for ever, the intentions of His heart from age to age (Ps 33:11) – and it is through the confidence and holiness of those who are called that God is able to realize His divine will and bring His Salvation to the world. God's ways are not our ways... They are so astonishing! It could be said that sometimes the paradox is such that, humanly speaking, everything is utter folly and headed for failure; but, in fact, the victory of God's plan always emerges more dazzling and glorious. Yes, all for His greatest glory!

OUR ROLE IN THE BATTLE OF THE END

It is the same for us as it was for those who have had to actualize one or other part of the divine plan: the trials with which we are faced ought not to terrify us or even make us hesitate...

True enough, everything is not always easy or always evident, but this brief survey of history should encourage us to always have confidence by constantly abandoning ourselves in faith, knowing that God is with His Work and that He chooses the little ones that we are, as the Lady of All Peoples emphatically states:

"This I repeat: 'The Son, for His undertakings, always chooses what is little and simple.'" (31st apparition)

That is the way we will be able to march with our head held high, amid adversity and the battles. Impossible to think of glorifying ourselves or of conquering the enemy solely by means of our own strength. No, it is necessary quite simply to remain in that open attitude of the child who has total and even blind confidence in its father or mother. For us, in this struggle of the end, let us be able to thank God for having called us to be a part of this Marian Army and for having given us **the grace to believe** in order to see and understand what the Triune God and Mary Immaculate want for our time. It is also because we have had the **grace to persevere** in continuing to believe that all is possible to God, that we are now in the combat of the end, that combat prophesied in the Apocalypse. There is no question of being proud of ourselves, but rather of remaining attentive to the signs of the times that do not mislead. Let us remain confident in Love as we redouble our efforts in our march towards holiness. Our daily consecration clearly commits us to this.

Oh Mary! you who are as powerful as an army in battle array, I enlist with confidence as a knight under your banner so as to serve you and extend your reign about me...

In 1997, Mother Paul-Marie wrote in the booklet *God's Ways Are Not Our Ways*, which is still of great pertinence today:

"God has traced out the road of the small number that has remained

faithful during the passage. The lessons of eternity are never lost; they bring forth fruit and flowers for days of happiness. And soon that fruit and those flowers will also be all those converts – and we are of them from day to day –, those new converts, fashioned of humility, open to the divine designs and welcomed with so much joy into the light and love.

"The Army of Mary, given to the Church and smitten by the Church, will give to its full capacity, not through human strength but by the power, too long pent up, of a good God who has not been able to work openly with His servants and handmaids because some religious authorities have excluded that Army from churches which have since become empty, and because it has been so violently attacked by religious communities." (pp. 83-84)

This apocalyptic struggle was foretold a long time ago, and it is in this final struggle that we find ourselves.

"And now it is to the apostles of this time that I speak: 'Be accommodating. Be lenient. Be kind to men. Judge and condemn in the manner of the Lord Jesus Christ. Understand, then, the time you are living in; understand, then, in what kind of struggle you are engaged.'

"Bear in mind that it is the Spirit who is giving combat.

"This is the time of the Spirit.

"The struggle is difficult, it is hard; but, on the condition that you all collaborate, the True Spirit will triumph." (43rd apparition)

With confidence, let us continue the struggle within the spiritual combat that is raging everywhere, knowing that God and the Lady are with us and that they give us the graces necessary to confront evil. May the Lady of All Peoples be our Mediatrix and our Advocate.

January 26, 2008

Father Eric Roy, O.F.F.M.

Cardinal Albert Decourtray

HE MADE OF LOVE HIS ONLY CREDO

A MAN OF PRAYER

In 1994, His Eminence Cardinal Albert Decourtray, Archbishop of Lyons and Primate of the Gauls, gave his approval to the prayer of the Lady of All Peoples at a time when a number of the clergy, particularly in our country, were strenuously opposing that prayer, which the Army of Mary was propagating. If Cardinal Decourtray seems to have perceived its mystical importance for our time, we might suppose that it was because he himself was a man of prayer, as he so declared to a journalist: *"In this very busy life, I stoutly hold*

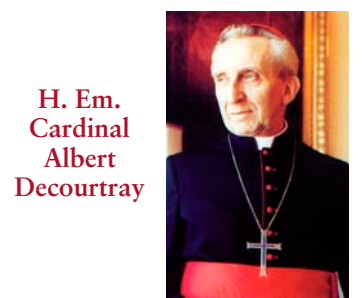
to two segments of time. First, that of prayer. About two hours a day: the Eucharist, office, mental prayer, the rosary, visit to the Blessed Sacrament. These I absolutely hold to, even if I have to get up very early." (S-224)

The Cardinal admitted that the Eucharist and Mary were the two poles in his life, that the Eucharist even held the "central place" in drawing him closer to the Virgin, in even bringing him to a "communion with Mary":

It is the moment when the whole of my life gathers itself together in a communion with the fiat of

Christ. It is the hour when the "I place my life in your hands" that I often say, is realized in a privileged fashion, that active abandonment of which I have spoken to you a number of times. It is there also that my communion with Mary is deeply rooted, she whose fiat responds to the fiat of her Son. I come to the Eucharist and I leave the Eucharist in that disposition." (S-279)

The Cardinal readily speaks of his "familiarity with Mary" (S-220), adding that, with the years, she took more and more place in his



H. Em. Cardinal Albert Decourtray

daily life: *"The older I get, the more important she is to me,"* he confided. (D-174) Consequently, for the Knights of Mary that we are, it proves particularly interesting to see that Cardinal Decourtray proposes Mary as the model of holiness as much for the men as for the women of our

time: "She is the model of women, of the woman, but also of men! True enough, Mary was never an apostle. She never celebrated the Eucharist. She was nothing in the hierarchy. But she was everything in holiness." (D-174) The Cardinal made of his life a life of prayer, and his devotion was that of the little and the humble, as he was not afraid to reveal to a journalist: "... it happens that I stop to recite a decade of the rosary while looking at the landscape, the flowers, the birds... I give thanks to God for life." (S-218)

In regard to humility, our Foundress has already said that the highest degree of that virtue is simplicity. On this subject, the Cardinal said that when he was asked to choose for himself a motto on the occasion of his appointment as Primate of the Gauls (the highest honorary title in the Church in France), one single motto came to his mind: " 'In simplicitate' [in simplicity] thrust itself upon me at that very moment..." he recalled. (S-271)

One day, Pope John Paul II exclaimed, on seeing him, "You are the voice of the voiceless!" (D-161) In that regard, the Army of Mary is deeply indebted to him. At the request of a young French lady, the Cardinal gave his approval to the prayer of the Lady of All Peoples at a time when the Work had been formally prohibited from publicly reciting it, in Quebec at least.

It is all the same astonishing to realize the following: among the great "reverses" suffered by the Army of Mary, the latest and not the least has come from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and consists of the decree of excommunication issued in 2007. What is astonishing in all of this is that, in 1984, Pope John Paul II appointed Cardinal Decourtray a member of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and, ten years later, in 1994, and shortly before his death, this latter granted his imprimatur to the Lady's prayer. It was as if Heaven used him to wash away, in part at least and in advance, this "error", this sad "blunder" of the dicastery to which Cardinal Decourtray had belonged.

THE TRUE CHURCH MUST EXPERIENCE "REFUSALS"

Cardinal Decourtray main-



tained that the Church faithful to Christ must take the "via dolorosa" of its Founder in order to develop and survive. "The Church that is faithful to Christ must expect refusals; its Master warned it of this." (S-112) Now, this pious Cardinal knew very well that every Work of God is always fought, as he stated: "Even what is later acknowledged to be a work of the Spirit, often arouses, at the time, misunderstanding and resistance. You have only to think of Saint Francis of Assisi or even Saint Thomas Aquinas!" (S-190) And when a journalist asked him what he thought of any act of authoritarianism in the Church, he replied straight out:

It all depends on how the authority is manifested. The Church has sometimes gone too far and has had to repent. In Lyons, Father de Lubac had been deprived of his right to teach. The Church suspected two of his books of not being in conformity with the true faith. Some years later, the Pope [John Paul II] appointed him cardinal. (D-76)

He acknowledged that the Church of Peter has committed errors in the past. And what did he think when the rejection went as far as excommunication? He stated positively: "No one is outside the Church who doesn't want to be." (D-75) If this declaration from Cardinal Decourtray can be relied on, the Knights of Mary can sleep peacefully. In the logic of his reasoning, the Cardinal also liked to recall that in the preamble of the old Code of Canon Law an essential principle was set down: "Sa-

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*Lord Jesus Christ,
 Son of the Father,
 send now your Spirit
 over the earth.
 Let the Holy Spirit live
 in the hearts of all peoples,
 that they may be preserved
 from corruption,
 disaster and war.
 May the Lady
 of All Peoples,
 who once was Mary,
 be our Advocate! Amen.*

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+ H. Em. Cardinal Albert Decourtray
 Archbishop of Lyons and Primate
 of the Gauls, March 25, 1994

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lus populi suprema lex – The supreme law is the salvation of people." (S-255) and that principle should, without a doubt, be applicable to the ministry and apostolate of our Sons of Mary priests.

LEARNING TO LOVE

As one of the journalists mentioned, Cardinal Decourtray made of love his only Credo: "I am on the side of the law, but also of love," he said. (D-163) This devoted Cardinal who had to fight a terrible cancer of the throat, learned to sublimate suffering. He maintained that it is necessary "to make of any life of suffering a life of love." (S-208) For he knew not only physical suffering but also moral suffering which is often more difficult to bear than the other.

When he was appointed Archbishop of Lyons and Primate of the Gauls, he was aware that with that position would also come the cross. Adulated by some but detested by others who sent him insulting letters, he declared that, faced with adversity, "I had to learn to love without being loved" (D-116), hence a love that went as far as to be heroic. Did not Tertullian say, "When one takes vengeance on one's enemies by doing them good, one takes vengeance in a divine manner"?

NEW ITEMS FOR SALE

Conferences by
 Sister Jeanne d'Arc

23. "Life of Love": The Way to Follow
24. Towards Our Sublime Destiny
25. The Army of Mary Traverses the Times

HIS PROPHETIC VISION OF THE CHURCH'S TRIUMPH

Having made his own this principle of Saint Thomas Aquinas, "The man who does what it is in his duty to do, God does not refuse His grace," (S-187) and having granted the imprimatur to the prayer of the Lady of All Peoples, Heaven doubtless permitted that the Cardinal, before his death in 1994, have a glimpse of the Church's rebirth, as he gives us to understand in this exhortation: "Be more attentive; that which is being reborn in the Church is scarcely visible..." (D-197) So he was urging the faithful to watch out for the indications of a rebirth of the Church, that great hope concealed from eyes, the seals of which would be in the process of opening.

Did his great Marian devotion give him a presentiment of the victory of Good over Evil? Did he glimpse the triumph of the Woman of the Apocalypse, She who was to crush the serpent's head? That would seem to be indicated by the following statement set in the present tense: "The devil is there, but he is retreating." (D-87) This observation resembles, in reality, a mystical intuition. They are words uttered with a quiet assurance impregnated with his love for the Virgin whom he held as his model, because for him "No one ever loved God and others as Mary did." (D-174)

Jeannine T. Blanchette

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– I have just renewed my subscription to the paper *Le Royaume*. I am rereading the first volume of Raoul Auclair's *L'Apocalypse*. That is really what we are now living – how extraordinary! – , and all of that is thanks to the paper. All the articles help us discover wonderful things. Thank you so much to all those who collaborate with articles for the paper.

United in prayer,
Thérèse Gauvreau