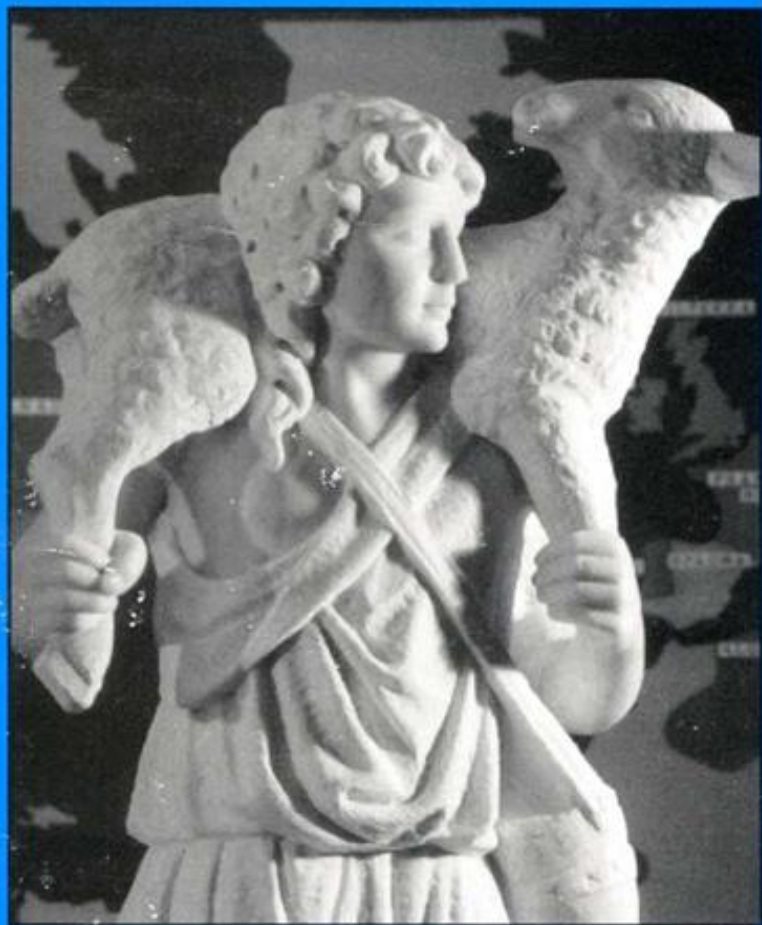


Ode to Gratitude



Early Esteemed Collaborators
of the Congregation of Good Shepherd

Ode To Gratitude

Early Benefactors and Collaborators

Congregation of the Good Shepherd

Cincinnati Province, Sisters of the Good Shepherd
2849 Fischer Place
Cincinnati, Ohio 45211
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God bless one and all!

And may all be to the glory of our Shepherd Lord and the good of souls!

Rose Virginie Warnig, RGS
Cincinnati
May, 1996

***"If my Ode to Gratitude is always on my lips,
I will enjoy new graces, for
God loves and blesses grateful hearts."***

- St. Mary Euphrasia

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De Notre
Monastere D'Angers

etablie le 31 juillet de l'année 1829.



Antoine D'Art Philippe Petit à Angers 1979

DEDICATION and INTRODUCTION

This book is an effort to put into writing something special about each one of the spiritual and temporal benefactors of the Good Shepherd Congregation, in its beginnings, whom Saint Mary Euphrasia mentions by name as worthy of our eternal gratitude. We are happy to be able to offer it to you in the hope thereby to honor their memory as well as the deep gratitude of Saint Mary Euphrasia towards each one. We hope you will enjoy reading about these great producers and stimulators of services to the poor and suffering of the 18th-19th Centuries, and come to know a little more about the "magnificent heart" of the foundress, Saint Mary Euphrasia Pelletier (1796-1868). It is said she had "the heart of a mother and the soul of a saint".

Each Good Shepherd Community around the world has its own roster of Benefactors and temporal Co-founders whom we would wish to honor at this point with our gratitude, in the spirit of our Foundress. There are also Volunteers, Associates, Companions, Teachers, Co-workers, who collaborate with Good Shepherd, each in his or her personal capacity and calling. To these too we wish to express, through this book, our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation. Would Good Shepherd Centers be able to continue services to God's needy ones without all these generous persons? And how many popes, bishops, priests and laity have personally sustained Good Shepherd mission in the many ways possible to each one, only God knows!

Saint Mary Euphrasia's gratitude did not end with her life, but continues in eternity. All those persons who have cooperated, or now cooperate in any way, in the welfare of the Congregation had and have a special place in her heart and prayer. We too, members of the Good Shepherd Congregation, hold as a sacred legacy Mary Euphrasia's oft repeated injunction to remember daily in prayer all, both living and deceased, who have done good for us

in any way. We have been lovingly faithful to her desire all down these many years, and we will continue to follow her teaching and impressive example!

We wish you well and hope you will enjoy reading about your worthy ancestors in Good Shepherd services.!

Saint Mary Euphrasia's conference on Gratitude rightly begins by recalling the gratitude we owe to God for the sequel of miracles which brought the Good Shepherd Congregation into existence. She adds, "Because God is pleased to multiply them (miracles), we seem to grow accustomed to them".¹

She reminds us, "You have a heart created to love and to be grateful, therefore let the expression of your joy and gratitude for the great grace of your vocation ascend to God. Love your vocation. Desire to have a thousand lives to offer to the Lord and return him love for love.... Great and noble thoughts are the fruits of gratitude. Its simplest definition is, "Gratitude is the memory of the heart".² Gratitude takes three forms: a feeling in the heart, an expression in words, and giving in return.

Saint Mary Euphrasia's gratitude to God was spontaneous and tender, "You are the children of miracles! Yes, the existence of our institute is a chain of miracles. To God alone is due our preservation and prosperity." Her enthusiasm mounts as St. M. Euphrasia continues to enumerate the many reasons we have to be thankful. She cannot understand indifference or failure to express our gratitude. "I cannot recall to your memory all the claims Our Lord has on our gratitude but these are so many facts which are miraculous: first of all, our existence, secondly, our approval by Rome, and thirdly, the rapid increase of our Houses. God willed the work and wished to do it Himself. We may say that in our foundation three miracles of God are visible."³

"Who could count the benefits the Lord has showered on us and they are continuing every day! We should thank God unceasingly. Our hearts should melt with love and gratitude to Him... How unfortunate it would be if we were not perfectly acquainted with all that concerns the congregation of which we are members!"⁴

"For a long time now, I myself can meditate only on the graces God has been pleased to shower on our congregation. And may we not reflect on the individual care His Paternal Goodness bestows on each one of us? A canticle of thanksgiving should resound constantly from our lips and hearts. God loves and blesses grateful hearts. Therefore let our gratitude be a hymn ascending from all our tribes for the glory of God".⁵

We read in Pasquier' s biography of Mary Euphrasia that she was the soul of gratitude, yet she could never show her gratitude to her own satisfaction. She felt that true gratitude is but a participation in the eternal act of thanksgiving which Christ Jesus and His Saints offer to God for all His benefits. She considered gratitude a sacred and agreeable duty. The great gratitude she felt towards the founders and benefactors of the congregation overflowed from her heart when she spoke to her sisters.

Once a week when writing to Count de Neuville, a great benefactor of the institute and co-founder of the Good Shepherd with her, Mary Euphrasia considered it better to miss part of the common prayer of the Office with the sisters rather than fail in her duty of gratitude to him.⁶

This gives us some idea of how greatly she valued gratitude, for St Mary Euphrasia was very assiduous in her presence at the common prayers.

Busy as she was by day and often by night in the early years of the foundation at Angers, Mary Euphrasia always fulfilled the duties

of hospitality and gratitude with exquisite delicacy. She always won the esteem of her visitors and benefactors who recognized the hand of God in her work. Every gift to her institute touched her sensitive and grateful heart. Gratitude was so natural to her that every token of kindly feeling toward her sisters or the institute moved her deeply as if done to her personally.

One of her biographers, R.P. Georges, CJM, assures us that gratitude in Mary Euphrasia's "magnificent soul had become a demanding need." Like St Teresa, whom she quotes in her Conferences, gratitude was less a virtue she practiced than a natural trait or instinct in her. What happened was that as she multiplied her responses to her "natural instinct by multiplying her 'thank you's', she also multiplied generous benefactors to her charitable works".⁷

Among these benefactors are several of whom Mary Euphrasia happily recalled the names and unlimited generosity. We find them in her Conferences where she sings her Ode to gratitude! To these she feels the members of her congregation owe eternal gratitude.

Mary Euphrasia invites her sisters, after God, the Blessed Virgin and the Church who have covered the congregation with blessings, never to forget the name of Saint John Eudes, Father and Protector. A hymn of gratitude should rise unceasingly to heaven, to thank God for having inspired him with such great zeal for the salvation of souls, for whom he founded the Order of Our Lady of Charity. St Mary Euphrasia was one of its members before founding the Good Shepherd Congregation with a central administration.⁸

"You will never forget that the signal favor of the erection of our generalate was granted by Pope Gregory XVI who dispatched the Decree of its erection to us in 1835. You will ever remember that the holy Cardinal Odescalchi was then given us as our Protector at Rome, and when he entered the Society of Jesus, Cardinal

Delia Porta succeeded him, and after him Cardinal Patrizi.

"Let the name of Pope Pius IX, who gave us so many proofs of his kindness, ever live in your memory. You will always utter this venerated and blessed name with respectful gratitude. And could you ever forget Monsignor Charles Montault, Bishop of Angers, who interested himself not only in the foundation of this House, but who worked indefatigably for the erection of the generalate? You are aware also that we owe much to Father Vaures, French Penitentiary at Rome, who used every means in his power for the same end.

"Would it be possible that you should be ignorant of all that concerns our institute, and that were you questioned upon it you would find it embarrassing to reply? No, a thousand times, no! I could not believe it for a moment. We shall write in our Annals the benefits we have received from Rome.

"We shall also write in their pages the name of Count Augustin le Roy de la Potherie de Neuville, who sold his ancestral castle and made himself poor to establish this House of Angers. His revered name ought to be written on every door of the House, on every tree of our grounds. What tongue could ever tell all his generosity towards us? The stream of his benefits never ceased to flow. He reduced himself to live so poorly that, when he was ill, his friends were moved to tears when they visited him. Well, this man, generous to so heroic a degree, always said he had done nothing. To him you owe your happiness, your expectations. In a word, you are indebted to him for everything. He lodged us, fed us, sending us provisions every week and paid for our bread and meat, etc.. And this is not all. A chapel was needed, and the Count de Neuville it was who first spoke of undertaking the work.

"I recognized in the following instance that he was a man of God. We wanted an ordinary sized chapel for about forty religious.

'Madame,' he said to me with an inspired air, 'know that this work is by no means an ordinary one. It will grow and multiply, and there will be more than two hundred religious here.' The next day he sent us a sum sufficient to pay for the foundations of the chapel".⁹

"The prioress of one of our Houses in Rome obtained for the Count and for several others of his family, according to his choice, a plenary indulgence at the hour of death. 'I have never experienced so much consolation in my life,' said this kind Father. 'Who could have inspired this beautiful thought to a woman, to a religious?' The answer was easy: the religious had been inspired by gratitude."¹⁰

"We will write in the list of our benefactors our two Sisters, Assistants General, Mary Chantal of Jesus Cesbron de la Roche, and Mary Teresa of Jesus de Couespel. If ever there were grateful souls in our congregation they were these two, although they were themselves amongst our greatest benefactors. 'Oh' both said to me, 'we never received a greater favor in this world than that which you did us in accepting us among you.' And yet, their fine natural gifts and large fortunes made them looked upon as very happy in the world. You know their munificence in our regard, how much they assisted us. The nobility of their sentiments corresponded to that of their birth. Can it be possible that in the course of time the remembrance of these revered names should be effaced among us? No! I cannot think so!"¹¹

"My dear Sisters, all this must be preserved in writing. I cannot recommend to all our communities too strongly, to have their Annals kept with care. Gratitude to God obliges you to write them." Did Jesus not say, 'Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost?' The annual circulars, also, will serve as a continuation of our history: they will be a new hymn, perpetually rising to the glory of God from our religious families. How

unfortunate it is not to be perfectly acquainted with all that concerns the congregation to which we belong.... In truth, it is very important that, after the study of our religion and of our constitutions, we apply ourselves to the study of all that relates to our congregation.... It would grieve me if any one of you were to show ignorance about it"¹²

"A family has its noble and pious traditions and history which each member glories in perpetuating. The children have it at heart to preserve untarnished the good name of their family and it would seem that the virtues of the parents are reproduced in their offspring. This family pride encourages them to make it a point of honor to keep in the right path".¹³ We seem to hear her saying, 'Keep the story alive for our future generations.'

"Pray much for your benefactors whether spiritual or temporal. Beg our dear Lord to give them all they need and all they desire!"
¹⁴ One way in which Mary Euphrasia showed her gratitude to our greatest benefactor, Count deNeuville, was as follows: "Louis, one of his servants, had become very infirm, and they were thinking of placing him in a hospice. When Mary Euphrasia heard of this, she said to the Count: 'No! my good Father, he shall not go to the hospice. He has served you so faithfully, and been too devoted to the Good Shepherd for that. We have a room all ready for him outside our enclosure. He will only have a step to go to reach the church, and he will also see his good master more frequently.' Tears came to the eyes of Count de Neuville, as he expressed his pleasure at this arrangement."¹⁵

Mary Euphrasia often said that gratitude was for her a sacred duty. She always reminded us of other benefactors to whom we owe eternal gratitude, the Bishops around the world who seconded and invited her to their dioceses; especially the "Holy Bishop Benedict Joseph Flaget of Louisville, who prays that he may not die before he sees you in his diocese. He also is poor, he has

nothing to offer you except souls to save".¹⁶ Our gratitude, like that of St M. Euphrasia, goes also to the Parish Priests at Angers who aided her in the early years and the Laity at London who persevered in getting the sisters to England.

St. M. Euphrasia mentions also the Jesuits who, "since their establishment in Angers have always been our extraordinary confessors. Fathers Barthes, Gloriot, Fouillot, Chaignon and other eminent members of the Society have assured me that the spirit of union and zeal which reigns in the Congregation is one of the fruits of this first spiritual direction...One of my consolations is that we were able to render some little service to these good Fathers upon their arrival in Angers. Notwithstanding our poverty, we still find means of giving them pleasure from time to time." ¹⁷

These and all the temporal founders and benefactors of the different Houses of the congregation acquired a special claim to Mary Euphrasia's gratitude, a place in her heart. They had a large share in her prayers and remembrance. Under all circumstances it was a happiness to her to be able to testify the gratitude she felt.

Grateful all her life, in her last illness Mary Euphrasia continually thanked everyone for their services, no matter how insignificant they might have seemed, and which they themselves esteemed a personal grace to be able to render. She received everyone who wished to visit her, and in spite of her intense suffering, was more concerned about them and thanked them for their concern for her. "We were touched by her tender gratitude with which she thanked us for our prayers, our tears, the little attentions we showed her, and the letters which arrived from all parts. Her heart overflowed when receiving marks of special benevolence from Pope Pius IX, the Cardinal Protector, Archbishops and bishops around the world, Dom Gueranger, etc." ¹⁸

Her gratitude of heart did not permit her to refrain from receiving

at her bedside, a few hours before her death, a friend and a benefactress of the Good Shepherd House at Cholet. She received them with great cordiality and expressed her happiness to be able to thank them once again! As a pledge of her eternal gratitude she gave each one a small crucifix. Truly, love and gratitude in her were stronger than death itself.

The virtue of gratitude was so predominant in Mary Euphrasia that it caused her to say, "Gratitude is a martyrdom to me". We have already said that gratitude was characteristic of her. Indeed, Saint Mary Euphrasia, never allowed an opportunity to pass without giving proofs of it. As Father Nouwen writes in LIFE OF THE BELOVED, "Gratitude begets gratitude just as love begets love."

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Saint Mary Euphrasia closes her teaching on Gratitude with these words:

"Never forget the benefits you receive. Be grateful to your benefactors, to your Mother-House. Be grateful to the Blessed Virgin, be grateful to God...

"I would that all I have just said were written in letters of gold. However, I give it to you. It is your portion, your inheritance. Engrave it on your hearts, repeat it to future generations, take it with you to your missions, remind each other of it in far-off lands. Let its remembrance be your consolation, your hope, and thus your gratitude will be lasting. You will love your vocation, crying out day by day with joy and happiness, We are the children of miracles!"²⁰

- Rose Virginia Warnig, R.G.S.

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Count Augustin le Roy de la Potherie de Neuville



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ONE

Augustine de Neuville, born February 2, 1779, was the fourth and only surviving son of Count Pierre Le Roy de la Potherie Lord of Neuville, and Countess Marie Innocente-Jeanne Baptiste de Lentivy. They were of the ancient nobility of Angers, capital of the Anjou region, of gallo-roman origin. Situated in the North-West Angers is one of the most ancient cities in France. It has many interesting monuments, landmarks of past history, and ancient notable buildings. There are still ruins of a Roman amphitheater. The Cathedral of St. Maurice is of 1225. Beneath the sanctuary are the tombs of Rene', King of Anjou and his wife, a princess of Lorraine.

The region of Anjou, was at that time, a part of the domain of Henry II of England. During the Middle Ages, Angers was a flourishing monastic city with six great monasteries: St. Aubin founded by King Childbert; St. Serge, by Clovis II; St. Mien, St. Nicholas and Ronceray by Count Fulk de Nerra; and All Saints, of the 12th century.

Angers is also noted for its University which had its beginnings in the monastic schools attached to the above-named Abbeys. In 1229 many students from England attended its lectures and a long list of illustrious names are on its honor rolls. The Angers people are conscious of their past history and proud of it even today. They are of a refined intellectual culture. This is the rich Christian heritage into which our Count Augustine was born and lived.

The De Neuville family was well-known in the region. They were exiled and their estates confiscated in 1793 due to the French Revolution. So complete was their spoliation that they even lacked the necessities of life. However, when they returned to their home town around 1810, they found their fortune and estates almost intact. Their Manor and possessions in St. Domingo, however, were completely destroyed.¹ Count Pierre Le Roy de la Potherie

Lord ofNeuville soon died, leaving his widow with one son, our Count Augustine. We know only the names and dates of birth of the other three boys, Louis brn March 9,1771, Peter born April 22,1772, and Cyr born July 15,1774.² However, we read in a letter of Count Augustine to St. Mary Euphrasia, dated September 5,1834, these words: "Enclosed are 5 frs as an offering to our Lady of Fourvieres. Have you had the kindness to have the Mass offered for my sister?" No name is metioned.

The Countess devoted herself to charitable works among which the care of prostitutes, whom she assisted privately. She desired to see a Good Shepherd Institute, founded in 1640 and discontinued during the revolution, re-opened to its special guests. However, she died November 26,1827 before her plan could be realized. She left 30,000 Francs for it and charged her son to bring her great desire to fulfillment.

TWO

Count Augustine had been sent at an early age to the Jesuit Boarding School at Liege in Belgium. When this school was obliged to close during the revolution, the Jesuits took refuge in England at Stonyhurst, a residence belonging to Count Thomas Weld. Count Augustine and eleven other students were the first to join them there in 1794. They were therefore called the "twelve Apostles." Count Thomas Weld of Lulworth Castle in Dorsetshire, was a former Jesuit student. He later gave Stonyhurst Hall to the Jesuits. Incidentally, two of his sisters joined the Sisters of the Good Shepherd: Sister St. Ignatius who became Superior at London, and her sister, Sister Good Shepherd. Stonyhurst is still one of the most renowned and most prosperous college in England.

Young De Neuville was a tall graceful boy of fifteen when he went to Stonyhurst. He wore the cheerful, becoming school uniform which consisted of buff knee-breeches, a blue swallow-tail coat,

blight red waist-coat, and blue stockings. He also donned a cap of leather and fur which could be worn in seven different ways and put to many uses.

As one of the first students at Stonyhurst College, Count Augustine de Neuville contributed to give it a high tone. In 1795, the year after he came there, he was elected Secretary to the Congregation of the Blessed Virgin. He always had great reverence for the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, under whose care he had been molded in piety. He often spoke of their goodness to him in the hard days of his exile, when he was left penniless and could pay nothing for his education or other expenses. He greatly admired their learning. His library was rich with works of the Jesuits, in French, Greek, Latin, German, Italian and English. He wrote and spoke all these languages fluently, but English, he said, was the language he preferred even to his own French. His letters to the first English sisters of the Good Shepherd were in English and often as a P.S. he would add some verses of his poetry.

Count Augustine left Stonyhurst in August 1797 at nineteen years of age. He spent some time in traveling and then settled down in retirement at home, dividing his time between prayer, study and charitable works, and assisting in the management of his family's vast fortune. In regard to his spiritual life, he wore a hair-shirt, spent long hours in meditation, practised severe bodily austerities, and made the Vow of Chastity at 21 years of age. He followed the liturgical life of the Church, Mass and Vespers daily, and spiritual reading from the Fathers of the Church and Sacred Scripture.

Although Count Augustine de Neuville had always lived a very innocent life, he loved to speak of himself as a sinner and at one period of his life, he thought of retiring to the Trappists to do penance for his sins. He was told this was not his vocation so he had to content himself by giving the monks generous alms from his inheritance. He also generously helped the Trappistines of Notre

Dame-de-la-Garde. He was a man of extraordinary refinement and distinction.

From his childhood, Count de Neuville had a great devotion to Mary. He had learned during his years in exile at Stonyhurst, to see God in all human events, and he felt himself as nothing more than an instrument in the hands of Our Mother of Mercy. When only a child, he had consecrated himself to her and chose her to be the inspiration of his life, companion in labors, and comforter in every sorrow. At midnight each day, he recited the Office of the Immaculate Conception in her honor.³

THREE

When his mother died in 1827, Count Augustine de Neuville, at forty-eight years of age found himself owner of vast lands and of a considerable fortune as well as imbued with his mother's zeal and piety. In February 1828, he went to the Bishop of Angers, Monsignor Montault to offer him his mother's bequest and request to re-found the Good Shepherd. The Bishop was very interested but decided to defer the request on account of political unrest. The Count was very disappointed. Shortly after this, a young woman from Angers, living in Caen with the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge, wrote a letter to the Bishop of Angers requesting him to establish a refuge in his diocese for persons like herself, who desired to come back to God. These two events made a deep impression on the Bishop. At the same time, the parish-priests of the diocese urged him to move towards accomplishing the Countess' dying wish.

The Bishop charged Father Breton to find a person who could reorganize the Good Shepherd. He, therefore tried to interest a pious lady who lived in the city, Mrs. Filien, to develop the project, but she assured him only religious accustomed to this kind of service would be capable of taking it on. Father Breton then turned to

Countess d'Andigne at Paris asking her to find someone for the difficult task. Countess d'Andigne immediately responded that only Mother Euphrasia at Tours would be capable of this, why look for somebody in Paris. Father Breton immediately went to Tours to see Mother Euphrasia and her institute. Fully satisfied with everything he saw there, he asked her to take on the project at Angers. She was delighted. But the community, just recovering from the horrors of the revolution and their own disbandment over years, they had come together again only a few years earlier, would not hear of it, much less agree to it.

No one, of course, knew of Mother Euphrasia's request to one of her first young contemplatives on her death-bed. Mother Euphrasia asked the sister to obtain from God a sign that her own desires to serve many more needy girls and women, were from him and not the effect of her own imagination. Mary Euphrasia, of course, saw in the request of Father Breton a sign from God, obtained through her little contemplative and knew immediately the project would succeed.

Father Breton then obtained a letter from the Bishop of Angers to the Archbishop of Tours who brought the community to a favorable decision. Mother Euphrasia and Sister Victoires left Tours for Angers with Father Breton. They arrived at Angers towards midnight and lodged in rooms the parish-priest had prepared for them.

The next day, May 20, 1829, Count de Neuville and Father Breton took the sisters to inspect the house intended for them. They toured the land known as the Tournemine with the old, dilapidated cotton factory. This was Mary Euphrasia's first meeting with the Count who would be her life-long friend, counsellor, benefactor, and indeed co-founder. He was fifty years of age, she thirty-three.

The first thought had been to buy back the old convent of the

Good Shepherd disestablished by the Revolution, but the owner would not give it up. Mary Euphrasia also felt it inappropriate to evict the six families who lived there. It was a large building of the 17th Century, in St. Nicholas Street, near the Church of the Trinity. The house was badly damaged and would have been unsuited for the ministry St. Mary Euphrasia envisioned.

The work done there previously, that is, since 1640, has been described in these words: "Here uncloistered nuns received young women who, having been shut up in the convent of the Penitents, desired to lead a better life."⁴ Margaret Deshaies, called Sister Teresa, who headed this Good Shepherd, was known and admired for her charity and zeal. She was known also to have predicted many positive things about the future of this ministry in Angers, which seemed to refer to the Good Shepherd way of life and service. Count Augustine Lord of Neuville knew of this also.

Toumemine was situated near the meadows bordering the Maine River, just outside the town, under the shadow of the Church of St. James. When Mary Euphrasia first visited it, it was still operating as a cotton-weaving factory but was bankrupt. She saw that it had great potential for the future if it could be repaired.

After greeting the Bishop, Father Breton and Count de Neuville, Mary Euphrasia and her companion returned to Tours where she referred all to the community and to the chaplain, Father Aileron, who upheld her fully in the projected foundation. On May 29, 1829, the community voted unanimously to accept the foundation.

Four days later, June 3, Mary Euphrasia returned to Angers with five sisters and Countess d'Andigne, the latter's maid and a penitent from Tours. On June 6th, the vigil of Pentecost, they entered their new home. They decided to maintain the Angers title: Good Shepherd. Countess d'Andigne was the first contributor of funds for the new home, after Count de Neuville who had paid for

the initial purchase on May 22, 1829. She was to be an associate greatly esteemed by him and by the Sisters.

Father Breton campaigned all through the city for funds to put the house in order. Count de Neuville, meeting Father Breton one day, said: "I thought you looked upon me as one of your good parishioners. What have I done to make you change your opinion? I hear you are asking everywhere for money to rebuild the house of refuge, and you leave me out." - "Not at all, responded Father Breton. It is on the contrary only because I am sure of you. I am keeping you for the end, because you are the best part of the bargain." - "Fine," replied the Count. "I want to have my share in building the house of the Good Shepherd because it is the work my dear mother longed for more than any other. She would have rejoiced could she have seen the plan before her death."⁵

The first Mass was celebrated in an improvised oratory on the feast of Corpus Christi. Count de Neuville had given all that was needed for the sacristy of the small chapel. He assisted at the first Mass together with Countess D'Andigne.

FOUR

Count de Neuville had given 38,000 francs towards the purchase of the establishment by which he became the co-founder. From the time of his initial involvement with the Good Shepherd the bulk of his resources went to it. It was the "work of his heart" and by degrees he gave nearly his whole fortune to it. Until his death he was the friend and support of the house, especially after Mary Euphrasia's return to Angers as superior in 1831. Three days after her arrival they renewed their collaborative friendship. He became not merely the temporal founder of the Good Shepherd, but in a sense a spiritual founder, second only to Mary Euphrasia, for he contributed to its foundations around the world.

Count de Neuville was an enlightened man. He saw and appreciated Mary Euphrasia's singleness of purpose, her intense longing to give God glory and assist young disadvantaged people in the human, social and spiritual dimensions of life. These, in fact, were his own ambitions and aims. He desired, therefore, to unite himself as far as possible, to her great work, determined to support it, to live for it, and even if necessary to die for it. He always firmly upheld it before everyone.

He began by obtaining a regular chaplain, Father Perche¹ for whose salary he made himself responsible. He sent weekly supplies of meat, flour and vegetables to the food department. He contributed to the ever growing needs of the formation of candidates, as well as of the girls and women. When buildings were added to the existing ones, the Count bore the greater part of the expense.

Besides his material generosity, Count de Neuville was a wise counselor, sympathetic and understanding in times of trial and interested in all the concerns of his dear Good Shepherd. In this way, he vied with Mary Euphrasia who was ever ready to pour herself out in the service of others and who never expected a return. She was filled with gratitude to the Count and felt the Sisters could never do enough for this friend of "God's work." She knew he liked to share in the joys and sorrows of the community and such events as the arrival of a new candidate, or a young girl, or the visit of a bishop to the convent. She therefore kept him abreast of news. He took a keen interest in all that concerned the formation of the Sisters for their mission.

As co-founder, the Count had the "right of entrance" whenever he wished. But he never took advantage of this. He would accept no mark of distinction at the Good Shepherd. When Mother Euphrasia wanted to engrave the De Neuville Coat-of-arms on the convent walls, he wrote to her very distressed asking her not to do so. His humility equalled his devotion to Mary. On entering

the Good Shepherd he would always, first of all, greet Mary. "Let the Knight of Mary first greet his Lady and Queen," he would say. He would then pray before the Blessed Sacrament.

Very early in the organization of the Angers house, the Count requested Mary Euphrasio to organize a community of Sisters of St. Magdalen as she had at Tours, now our Contemplatives of the Good Shepherd. She established this community on his feast day, August 28, 1832. He bought a house and garden adjacent to the convent for them and furnished it.

In 1832 he offered to build a church for the household, which was sorely needed as the population was continually growing. He himself laid the first stone. It was signed by himself, Countess d'Andigne, Countess de la Potherie, Countess de Villebois, Count Goutard de Cande, and Count de Boutigny - all belonged to noble French families who were benefactors of the Good Shepherd. Count de Neuville enlightened Mother Euphrasia about the size of the church she was to build. "Madam," he said, "Yours is no ordinary work. It will increase, you will have more than three hundred religious here." The church was thus built larger than she had anticipated and was dedicated to Mary's Assumption. (We sometimes read it was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of Mary.) Count de Neuville and Countess d'Andigne vied with each other in supplying the sacred vessels and all that was necessary for the church.

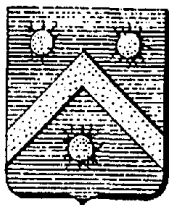
Mary Euphrasia told her sisters that the "Count sent us the sum of money necessary for the foundations of the chapel. To build this chapel and establish this house (at Angers) he sold his ancestral castle. His generosity to us and to other good works is without end. He thus came to live very poorly himself and when he became ill those who visited him were moved to tears at his modest surroundings."⁶

In her letters, Mary Euphrasia wrote about the constant generosity of Count de Neuville whom she called "our founder" and Countess d'Andigne "our mother."

Besides providing for the Church, the Count also sent food daily from his own farms to the ever expanding community. On big feast days he would always send something to add to the rejoicing. Mary Euphrasia's gratitude excited his generosity. Every week he provided milk for the contemplatives and for the penitents. He visited the Good Shepherd community every Thursday and always brought gifts with him. The sisters called him "our good father." Even the sisters' library was a project of his. Each day he sent his servant Louis to find out what the community needed. At his Thursday visit the Count would always ask if any candidates or penitents had arrived. He would then send beds and blankets for the newcomers, and medicine or some nourishing food for the sick.

The whole household celebrated his feast day, August 28, with great rejoicing. On one such occasion the sisters processed around the community room carrying banners on some of which were painted the bust of De Neuville with the words "He feeds us" and on others, the bust of Mary Euphrasia, with the words "She teaches us." Mary Euphrasia had written a poem in his honor to which the sisters had prepared music and sung for him. The Count greatly enjoyed these original manifestations of gratitude and cheer.

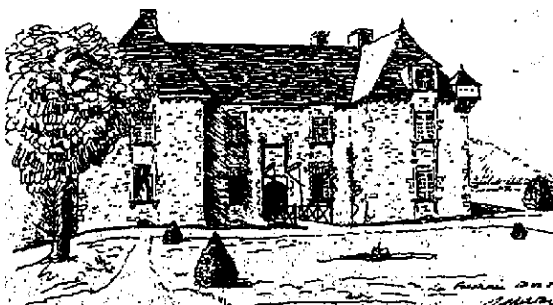
While awaiting the response of the approval of the generalate and thus of the congregation, the Count with Countess d'Andigne and other friends and associates, would gather to pray with the sisters. When approval arrived, the small children explained the reason for all the rejoicing was that "Mr. Decree and Mr. Generalate have arrived from Rome!" The Count was greatly amused by their innocent participation.



HISTOIRE

Le chateau de la Fresnaye a St-Aubin-de-Luigne

belonged to the Legras family since 1500. In 1593 they completely reconstructed it. The architecture was considered very classical except for the marks of its military history: the drawbridge opening immediately into the dwelling area instead of an inner court, and the sentinel boxes on both sides for a broader vision all around it.



In 1631 the Fresnaye passed; to other hands. In 1749 to the Louis-Andre Lantivy family. Marie Innocente their daughter married Pierre Leroy de la Potherie de Neuville, father of Count Augustine.

After the revolution and the death of his father, the Count found the Fresnaye intact. He sold it shortly after the death of his mother in 1827.

In 1970 the Fresnaye Castle was almost completely destroyed by fire, but in 1978 two admirers of its history and style, Doctor and Mrs. Chauvet, bought the poor ruins and after a few years they had reconstructed the castle as we see it today.

The Count was always interested in all the news of the foundations, and since he contributed to each foundation even in foreign countries, Mary Euphrasia would ask the sisters to write to him now and again, out of gratitude, telling him consoling events happening there.⁷ He took comfort in these. Mother Euphrasia always wanted the benefactors to know the fruit of their generosity and sacrifices. She considered those who collaborated in any way, members of our Good Shepherd family.⁸

FIVE

Mother Euphrasia and Count de Neuville were counsellors to each other. The Count sought Mary Euphrasia's counsel in his troubles and spiritual needs. He would eagerly and humbly listen to her pious exhortations and ask prayers of the community for his intentions. In one of his letters to her we read: "I hope to go to your vespers on Monday, then in spiritual direction, during which you have not yet made me afraid, as you sometimes do your novices." He thus humorously gave her some practical advice also.⁹ Mary Euphrasia would ask his counsel especially in social and business matters and concerning candidates. He advised her to let the prospective candidates know immediately that the Good Shepherd way of life is not an easy one. It calls for sacrifice. If they are looking for a quiet prayer-filled life, he would say, tell them to go to Carmel or to the Visitation. At the Good Shepherd they must learn sacrifice and to work for others and pray at the same time. However, there are blessings also, he would add.¹⁰

He suggested to Mary Euphrasia that she needed "a central house to coordinate her various foundations." She had already been thinking of this. He confirmed her in it. He was a business man in his own right. When, in spite of the opposition, the Order was approved by the Church with a central administration, which was quite new for that time he congratulated her for bringing it to be, saying, "Yours is now truly a congregation for the future and for

the world."¹¹ He wrote her on December 26, 1836 - "How good of you to write to me when so overwhelmed with work and trouble! But I am so grateful. Your letter gave me great comfort. I was depressed and felt tempted to complain, but I thought of your strength of soul, I was encouraged, for you always keep your peace even in the midst of turmoil."

The Count was enthusiastic when Bishop Flaget, in 1841, invited Good Shepherd sisters to the New World. His diocese of Louisville, a city since 1733 and officially established in 1780, comprised a huge territory which now has at least thirty dioceses.¹² The Count wanted to be a part of this foundation. He provided the sacred vessels and other articles for the future chapel and many valuable books. At the departure of the five sisters for this new mission on October 10, 1842, he gave another 100 pounds. He then joined the community in a prayerful good-bye. The sisters processed into chapel singing the biblical, "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who carry good news of salvation and proclaim the reign of God and its peace." (Is 52,7) They then proceeded to kneel and kiss the feet of the missionaries. They were very touched to see the Count do likewise, as he unobtrusively joined them and placed five francs at each sister's feet! He was now giving of the riches of his poverty for this was just one year before his death.

Count de Neuville gradually absorbed the spirit of the congregation from Mary Euphrasia and her apostolic zeal. He became its protector and benefactor, in fact its co-founder. He was concerned always about both the spiritual and material welfare of the congregation. He suggested Father Perche' to Mary Euphrasia as Chaplain. This priest spoke English and was a decided help to the English speaking novices. When there was question of opening the contemplative community, the Count himself wrote to the superior at Tours requesting three sisters to begin the foundation. And he paid all their traveling expenses. Count de

Neuville was one day offering his usual greeting to Mary before her statue: "Allow Our Lady's Knight to salute His Lady." He then whispered to her in a low voice: "Your servant has nothing left to give the daughters of Your Heart! Oh! you who are rich, pour down upon them a shower of gold and spiritual blessings!"

The Count gradually reduced his own wants to the barest necessities. He lived an austere life of poverty and penance. Mary Euphrasia found in him not only a temporal benefactor but a spiritual collaborator whose heart vibrated to every spiritual joy or difficulty at the Good Shepherd. Their hearts were united in the great work of saving souls for God, which both considered "God's own work."

Both appreciated silence, recollection and union with God. (However Mary Euphrasia was often deprived of these loves of hers by many occupations her foundations forced upon her. She was nevertheless a mystic.) She always praised God, for He alone was working wonders in Good Shepherd through her sisters and benefactors. Her hospitality and gratitude were simply exquisite. Both Mary Euphrasia and Count de Neuville used scriptural words and symbols to express their devotional sentiments. His thoughts and expressions quietly took on the spirit of the foundress and her congregation. They had many spiritual dialogues together.

To Mary Euphrasia, the Count wrote: "The lovely walk yesterday did me good. You have the grace to while away weariness and all ills of life. You are so intimately touched by God's creation, and your lovely gardens raised my heart to Him. Your joy is so pure that like St. Paul, even in your tribulations you are in ecstasy..."

Again, "During prayer my thoughts often go to the Good Shepherd, the penitents so full of fervor, the sisters scattering their perfume of virtues around them. Truly, I thought, this is the fruit of

our good Mary Euphrasia's selflessness, and of her boundless confidence in the goodness of Mary. You do not ask: Where shall we find bread, but open your arms to gather in all the unfortunate. Brava! Your sisters meet trials as Frenchmen meet fire."

Again. "My soul is like a dry, stony field producing no fruit except when visited by beneficent rains, like your words. They are filled with such unction, they bring holy and touching thoughts to my soul..." 13

Each day that the Count did not go to the convent, he would send his faithful Louis with gifts of food or money and to get news of the mother-house and of the foundations. A year before his death he wrote: "I thank you for letting me have a share in the showers of grace that rain upon your Institute..."14

He also was a friend and admirer of Countess d'Andigne. He considered himself a "fellow-laborer" with her in the work of the Good Shepherd. He thanked her for her noble and generous support of the house "in which our sweet Savior and his beloved Mother find their delight."15

He had carefully preserved all the letters Mary Euphrasia had written to him and would re-read them to rouse himself to greater love for God and his neighbor. He burned them during his last illness at her special request.

SIX

He had sold his home and large establishment at the Chateau de la Fresnais of his forefathers, at St. Aubin. He had devoted his life to good works and lived gospel poverty. COUNT AUGUSTINE LE ROY DE LA POTHERIE DE NEUVILLE died peacefully December 3, 1843, in his house that spoke not

only of simplicity, but of poverty and detachment. Just before dying, he exclaimed: "How happy I am. I have founded the Good Shepherd. I am in peace!" He had lost all fear of death which had seemed to haunt him at previous intervals.¹⁶

Mary Euphrasia was desolate at his death. "Our good father is dead," she wrote. Mary Euphrasia had wanted to bury him in the chapel of the Immaculate Conception she had built near the Contemplative's convent. There were no private cemeteries in France so she had to get permission from the French Government. She had sent to get the Count's measurements during his last illness in order to provide the coffin and necessities for the burial in the Chapel. The French Government, however, refused permission. Our Count was, therefore, buried in the general cemetery of Angers. The sisters are still searching for his tomb. They have found that of Sister Cesbron de la Roche who died close to his date of death, but they have not found his.

The Count had written his last letter to Mary Euphrasia for her feast, March 13, 1843. "Saint Euphrasia your patroness, carried heavy stones during thirty days, and for the past seven years you have not ceased to transport living stones from which you raise spiritual temples on all sides, in which Our Savior takes His delight. You are beloved by God and mankind, and I trust my salvation to you. And if some day, thanks to your powerful prayers, I find myself transported to that mountain where we shall see what we now believe, I shall be better able to express my respect and my gratitude."¹⁷

With his death began, what we may call, "the crisis period in Mary Euphrasia's life" -1843-1848." Her great friends and benefactors died in that period and the 1848 revolution destroyed nine of her institutions. Mary Euphrasia called every generous person who offered any kind of assistance to her congregation, "another Count de Neuville" and considered them sent to her directly by the Count!

One of Mary Euphrasia's historian's wrote: "The Count was the worthy confidant of the projects of Mother Pelletier, and exercised on the spiritual direction of the convent a real though hidden influence, as is shown by his correspondence with Mother Euphrasia. She wrote to him every day and he (Count de Neuville) answered by letters in which supernatural views with clear and practical advice are expressed with charming wit."¹⁸

Our Good Shepherd Bulletins from 1918 to 1920 published more than eighty of the hundreds of letters Count de Neuville wrote to our foundress. Even though only a small part of his correspondence, nevertheless they give us a glimpse of the saintly character of this great Christian gentleman and his devotion to the ministry of the Good Shepherd and the Good Shepherd vocation.

They also show how God worked miracles through fourteen years of friendship and cooperation in His designs by Mary Euphrasia and Count Augustine de Neuville. In one of his early letters, the Count wrote: "As I am united in heart and mind with you and your dear community, your troubles are also mine. I hope that the Good Shepherd will come to the assistance of his Fold and that he will not abandon his sheep. Up to the present Divine Providence has protected this establishment; we can then have confidence that It will continue to do so." And he continued: "This is the feast of the Conversion of St. Augustine, a memorable day for me, for it was on this day, three years ago, that I determined, after many combats, to purchase Tournemine and enter on a career which I have since pursued as well as I could. Never have I regretted that determination." (May 5, 1833)

You may wish, someday, to search for these Bulletins of the past and feast on some of the gems and treasures you will find there. They will also enlighten you on how Augustine de Neuville and Mary Euphrasia - the urbane gentleman of Anjou and the energetic daughter of La Vendée - as well as many other lay collaborators

could enter into such a fruitful cooperation for God's glory and the salvation of souls. An example of what can happen also today! And is happening!

Saint Mary Euphrasia taught that "Gratitude is the memory of the heart." Desiring to express her gratitude to the co-founder of the Good Shepherd, Count Augustine de Neuville, in a permanent manner, she asked his family members to write a life or Memoir of the Count which she would have published. Countess de Quatrebarbes, his cousin, replied she did not think this possible because Count de Neuville had lived such a retired, secluded life. And she added: "Besides, what greater monument to his name could be created than the Good Shepherd Institute!"²⁰

- Rose Virginia Warnig, R.G.S.

Le Roy de la Potherie de Neuville Family Tree

Coat-of-Arms:

Blue Background, gold chevron and three stars.

This ancient lineage of the Anjou region, non-existent today, originated in Normandy at the beginning of the 14th century through Peter Le Roy lord of Bacquerville. From the close of the 15th century the title has been "LE ROY DE LA POTHERIE." We therefore follow the life cycle of the "Le Roy de la Potherie" from the 14th century to the death of Count Augustin le Roy de la Potherie lord de Neuville in 1779, and on to the branch of the lords of Challain with which it ended in 1799.

I - PIERRE Le Roy, lord of Bacquerville, la Potherie and other places, is quoted in 1483,1487,1502and1515. Pierre had his will notarized September 6,1516 and died around October 1522. He left two sons, Peter and James. The name of his wife is unknown.

II - PIERRE Le Roy, lord of Bacquerville, registered "noble" together with his brother James in October 1522 through Letters Patent of Francis I (December 19,1522) at Rouen. His wife's name is unknown. He left a son.

III - John Le Roy, lord of Bacquerville, was still living in 1567. He had one daughter, Jeanne. She passed the title of lordship of Bacquerville to the family du Chassis by her marriage with Girard, lord of Chassis in 1576.

II bis - JAMES Le Roy inherited the title de la Potherie at his father's death in 1515 through the equal division of the property. James was still very young when he received Letters Patent from the King attesting his nobility on December 19,1522. While residing at Blois, at age 38 he married Isabeau de Baillon, daughter of Peter, lord of Neron and of Claude de Montdoulcet, and had three children:

- 1 - Marie, who married James Menoust, lord of Gardes
- 2 - Isabeau, who married John Bonvallet
- 3 - Claude, see below

III bis-CLAUDE Le Roy born 1551 died 1596/97. He married Charlotte Pynon, daughter of Nicholas and Catherine du Moulinet, still living in 1626. (See Act by notaries Francois Bergen and Guy Nyman, at Blois, Septembers, 1577). They had six children.

- 1 - Claude, who became a Cistercian Monk, born around 1578, died July 26, 1613

2 -James, lord of the Martiniere (born 15 80, died before January 26,1626).

3.- CHARLES (see below)

4 - Robert, lord of Gageville, died 1623.

5 - Peter, lord of Chaudemanche, priest, prior at Seez, still living in 1643.

6 - Elizabeth or Isabeau bom 1588 and died 1637, married Aristarque called Pierre Tardieu April 22,1608.

7 - NICHOLAS (see below)

IV bis - CHARLES Le Roy, lord of La Potherie (born about 1582, died after 1634), Counselor the the Parliament at Paris (August 7,1609);

1) married June 18,1610 to Renee du Tronchay, daughter of Nicholas lord of Ballalde'andofReneeLeBret. They had six children. (She died before September 23,1628)

2) married Frances Frezon, widow of Peter of Creil, November 11,1630. She died July 19,1646 at St. Andrew of the Arts.

1 - Charles lord of Nancy, born about 1611, died November 22,1653.

2 - Claude, 1613 -December 18,1673: Married 1) Marie of Creil, daughter of Peter and Frances Frezon, before July 12,1661 2) Married Marie Parlier Ocotober 29,1664, who remarried on November 26,1687, Charles Armand Diane L'Evesque, lord of Bois-Pouvreau;

3 - Frances, religious at the Abbey of Malnoue 4-Pierre, (died after 1651)

5 - Renee, religious at the Abbey of Tresor 6-ROBERT (see below)

V - ROBERT Le Roy de la Potherie (1623-1692) Married according to Morannes, Febrouary 13,1651, Anne de Mouessy, daughter of Peter and Louise du Mets, who had four children:

1 - Charles who died young

2 - Robert

3-Pierre (see below)

PIERRE Le Roy, lord of La Potherie (1660-1727) was the first lord of Challain in the Anjou region, he therefore took the title "La Potherie-Challain," then "Challain la Potherie" after the revolution (the date of acquisition by Peter Le Roy was 1702).

He married Madeleine Frances Boylesne at St Michael du Tertre at Angers, June 9,1692. SHe was the daughter of Louis and Perrine Le Chat who had six children:

- 1 - Madeleine-Frances who died young.
- 2 - Peter-Louis Cyr who died young, married Frances-Pauline-Renee Le Pretre de Chateaugiron, daughter of James-Rene and Louise-Jeanne de Robien, May 28, 1731.
- 3 - Perrine Frances who married at St. Michael of Angers highland, on September 21, 1728, Charles Francis Joseph Boylesve, son of Charles - Joseph and of Louise Frances Grimaudet.
- 4-PIERRE (see below)
- 5- Anne(1701 -January 17,1779) religious of Calvary under the name of Sister St. Julia.
- 6-URBAN (see below)

VII - PIERRE Le Roy, lord of La Potherie (born around 1698) 1 - according to notary act of Drouault at Angers, married Marie Antoinette de Roye, daughter of Rene and of Marie Ernault, who died early.
 2 - Married at St Maurille of Angers, September 10, 1736, Genevieve Catherine Petit, daughter of Stephen and Genevieve Petit. There was one son:

VIII - PIERRE Le Roy lord of the Potherie (October 21, 1737) Married October 4, 1769, Marie Innocente-Jeanne Baptiste de Lantivy, daughter of Louis-Andre' and of Marie-MARtha Henriette de Millon. There were four sons.

- 1 - Louis (born March 9, 1771)
- 2 - Pierre (born April 22, 1772) 3-Cyr(born July 15, 1774)
- 4 - AUGUSTIN (born November 11, 1779)

VII bis - URBAN le ROY de la Potherie. lord of Challain (Born at St. Michael highland of Angers, November 20, 1702, died at Challain December 20, 1768. Registered by Drouault, notary at Angers, as married at St. Michel of Angers to Anne Catherine-Marguerite Renne Cupif, daughter of Simon and Marguerite Pichard, widow of James Gouraud de l'Epinay: there were two children:

- 1 - Frances born at St. Michel highlands of Angers October 6, 1734, died at Angers July 10, 1809. She returned from exile June 20, 1801 (See "Angers Historique", Jan-Feb. 1908, p. 405). Married November 6, 1758 to Charles-Louis Boylesve de Soucelles
- 2 - Louis, see below

VIII bis - Loius Le Roy de la Potherie, lord of Challain, born at St. Michel highland November 3,173 6, died at Challain June 14,1774, married at St-Peter of Angers, July 21, 1761, to Jeanne Frances Menage, daughter de Jean-Baptiste, lord of la Mariniere, and of Frances Le Marie'. There were four children:

1-LOUIS, see below

2 - Marie, born December 13, 1763, married at St. Maurille of ANGERS, October 21,1783 to Hyacinth-Charles-Rene marquis de QUATREB ARBES, son of Hyacinth-Rene and of Marie-Anne Debonnaire.

3 - Pauline, born at St. Maurille of Angers, July 29,1765, died at Angers March 12,1845. Married at St. Maurille of Angers April 7,1788 to Pierre-Francois and Marie del Villebois, son of Peter-Francis Gabriel and Marie Jeanne Phillippe Bardet des Glorieux.

4 - Peter, born at Challain October 3,1771.

IX - Louis Le Roy la Potherie, lord of Challain up to the Revolution, (born at St. Peter of Angers April 22,1762, died at Paris in the VII arrt, i.e. January 31, 1847). Married at Angers the 5th month of the Republican Calendar (January 28 to February 18), 11th year, to Madeleine Louise Therese Poulain of La Marsaulais, daughter of Charles-Jean and Rose-Theresa Le Jeune de Grandmaison (born at St. Maurice of Angers September 11,1772, died at Angers October 18,1806). They had two children:

1 - Louis-Charles, born at Angers 1808 died at Epinal June 26,1825.

2 - Louise-Ida (born at Angers 1808 died August 2, 1884). Married at Soucelles November 7, 1826 to Francis Denis-Henry Albert de la Rochefoucault Bayers, son of John and Denise-Catherine Mauroy, born in exile at Doubno in Volynie, (European Russia), March 20,1799. 20

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Charles Montault-des-Isles
(1735-1839)



Bishop of Angers
from 1802-1839
Episcopal Coat of Arms
based on his family
coat of arms.

II

Bishop Charles Montault-Des-Isles

(1755-1839)

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CHARLES MONTAULT-DES-ISLES, BISHOP

1755-1839

ONE

Charles Montault- des- Isles was consecrated Bishop of Angers April 14,1802, and took possession of his diocese June 6,1802. The new bishop encountered many weighty situations, the region recovering as it was from a bloody revolution. Among these was the plight of young girls and women, many of whom had lost parents or husbands during the war and who, without home or employment, had drifted into prostitution as a way of survival. However, the bishop was not the only one concerned about these members of his flock.

For, the widow of the de Neuville family, Countess Marie Innocent de Lentivy de Neuville, also shared this anxiety and wanted to reopen a local facility for the care of young women and girls which had once had the title of "Good Shepherd". It had been destroyed by the revolution in 1793. While awaiting fulfillment of this desire, the countess did her best to assist women in distress. She comforted and counseled them and opened her purse and, even on occasion, her home to them, so great was her charity. She often spoke to her son about how she wanted to help these women. Her son, Count Augustine, had taken over management of the family's holdings after their return from exile. But the Countess died (1826) before realizing her project. Count Augustine, true son of such a beneficent mother, not only shared her compassion but felt it his duty to accomplish his mother's resolve. He consequently presented to the bishop 30,000 francs toward achieving his mother's intent.

In addition to the de Neuville family's eagerness in this regard, Priests of the diocese were likewise anxious to find a solution to the spiritual and material needs of these women. Through a

prominent lay woman of the region, Mme d'Andigne, then in Paris, the bishop learned of Sister Euphrasia Pelletier, religious of Our Lady of Charity, who directed at Tours the very kind of service he desired for his diocese. Satisfied that Mother Euphrasia was the person for the task, he requested her to come to help initiate the work in Angers.

This was done, and the ministry begun in Angers on July 31, 1829. Eventually Sister Euphrasia was named permanently for the Angers mission, in 1831 taking it up as her life work. In spite of material difficulties and poverty, and with the help of Count de Neuville and the industry of all involved, soon over 800 children, girls and women were lodged, fed clothed, and educated at the Good Shepherd of Angers, while learning of God's love. Bishop Montault would never withdraw from the sisters the deep and sincere regard which he had for them.

Rather quickly, Bishop Montault and Sister Euphrasia received requests from bishops across France and elsewhere for sisters and foundations. Difficulty in meeting these requests because of restrictions inherent in the framework of the Order of Our Lady of Charity helped inspire Sister Euphrasia with the idea of a centralized administration. This idea, rejected by her own Order, nevertheless made good sense to her bishop. He worked for almost a year on it, proposing a group of sisters be formed to carry on the ministry under central administration and free to operate anywhere in France. Rome was to expand this to "anywhere in the world." This entailed separation of the house of Angers from the other houses of the Order, whose members opposed the project of a central administration. In this, he had to face much and great opposition from many influential people. Always Bishop Montault worked on the project with prudence, moderation and humility, and asked the three bishops of other French dioceses, who had Sisters of the Good Shepherd (The sisters had taken this title in 1829) founded from Angers, to do the same.

Bishop Montault understood the advantage of a centralized administration to enable expansion of the Sisters' ministry to poor and disadvantaged girls and women. He also discerned in it a work of Divine Providence. On her part, Mary Euphrasia was thankful to God for having given her a wise and kind friend to counsel and support her in her task. The bishop strongly upheld and defended her through all the inevitable criticisms and negative judgments passed on her and on the project, especially by the Tours community and some other bishops. He even went on his knees before the Archbishop of Tours in her defense; his humility won the day.

The project was studied at Rome by a select commission of counselors to the Pope himself. While deliberations were carried on, 13 letters of accusation and dissent from bishops and from Mary Euphrasia's former sisters of several convents had arrived. But Bishop Montault's letter to the Pope eventually removed all hesitation on the part of Church authorities in Rome. In his letter he stated the reasons for advocating a generalate with a precision, a lucidity, a force surprising in one who had already passed 80 years of toil and struggle.¹

In only three months time, that is on January 8, 1835, a favorable answer was decreed and sent to the Bishop of Angers for the Sisters. As soon as the bishop received the good news he sent his vicar, Monsignor Regnier, to communicate it to the sisters. Bishop Montault later received a papal brief confirming the Good Shepherd Congregation with a centralized administration, April 3, 1835. Bishop Montault was delighted because he foresaw all the good that would come from this innovation. It was considered a novelty; up to that date each religious community of women was autonomous and separate, making it extremely difficult for a given Order to expand its ministry and its spirit.

Bishop Montault was graced to witness the blessings of his

generous efforts for the foundation and extension of the Good Shepherd. Until the end of his life he continued to follow its almost miraculous expansion in Europe and across the world, his wise and prudent interest in it increasing all the while. Hardly a week passed without communication between the bishop and Sister Euphrasia or the chaplain of the convent, during which the bishop's interest extended even to minor details of the new congregation. In fact, no bishop visited the city of Angers without being taken by Bishop Montault to the Good Shepherd. He loved to speak to everyone about the great good done wherever Mary Euphrasia sent her sisters.

Can we wonder that among those Mary Euphrasia names as worthy of our eternal gratitude, she asks us, "Could you ever forget Monsignor Charles Montault, Bishop of Angers, who interested himself not only in the foundation of this House, but who worked indefatigably for the erection of the Generalate? Great and noble thoughts are the fruit of the sentiment of gratitude."²

A glimpse of the fine calligraphy of 1834.

À Sa Sainteté notre très Saint Père le Pape Grégoire XVI

*Les religieuses de Notre-Dame de Charité du bon Pasteur,
à Angers, Poitiers, Grenoble et Metz,
convinces que, réunies en congrégation, elles auraient plus de
moyens pour arriver au but de leur institution que si leurs
maisons demeuraient isolées et indépendantes, comme le portent
leurs constitutions actuelles;
qu'un noviciat commun contribuerait à maintenir le même esprit
dans les différentes communautés, renforcerait l'union
entre elles et mettrait à même de pourvoir plus facilement et plus
facilement aux besoins de toutes;
que la soumission à une autorité supérieure (par laquelle)
l'ordre serait dirigé, serait un moyen de conservation
et de force pour l'institut et qu'elle en faciliterait
singulièrement le développement et la propagation;*

TRANSLATION

TO HIS HOLINESS POPE GREGORY XVI

1. The religious of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, established at Angers, Poitiers, Grenoble and Metz, convinced that united in a congregation they would have greater means to fulfill the purpose of their institution than if they remain isolated and independent, as is stipulated in their present constitutions;
2. that a common novitiate would contribute to maintain the same spirit in the various communities, strengthen unity among, them, and permit them to provide more easily and more surely for the needs of all;
3. that having one superior by whom all are coordinated, would be the means of Preserving and of strengthening the institute and would facilitate in a special way its development and propagation;

7^o Les Dites Religieuses De Notre Dame De Charité consentent à prendre le nom De Notre Dame Du Bon Pasteur, à porter un croissant bleu au lieu De la croix blanche, et à servir avec une médaille Du Bon Pasteur au sein d'argent, laquelle portera l'effigie. Les changements feroient contribuer à obtenir plus facilement l'autorisation De Sa Sainteté. En tout ce qui n'est pas contraire aux dispositions de l'original la constitution De religieuses De Notre Dame De Charité continueront d'être fidèlement observées par la dite Congrégation Du Bon Pasteur.

Les maisons, ainsi réunies en Congrégation, continueront religieusement avec celles qui demeureront isolées et indépendantes. la rapport de charité mutuelle, qui se doit entre tous les membres de la même famille.

Les Dites Religieuses humblement protestent aux pieds De Sa Sainteté le Supplient très instamment de vouloir bien en outre leur accorder Sa bénédiction apostolique avec l'effigie de saint Joseph De Nazareth Marie De Conception etc. etc. de la figure de la Vierge Marie Immaculée.

Et M. De la Roche Foulquier conseiller
Secrétaire Général de la ville de Paris de la Roche Foulquier
S^r etc. de la République Française.

Mu et approuvé et certifié Les Dites Religieuses
par nous Cécile D'Angoy 30 Décembre 1824

A. Wanda Loug D'Angoy

TRANSLATION (con't)

7. The above named religious of Our Lady of Charity agree to take the name of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd, to wear a blue cord instead of the white one and they desire to add the figure of the Good Shepherd to the silver heart which they already wear, if these changes can contribute to obtain more easily the authorization of the Holy See. In all that is not contrary to the above agreements, the constitutions of the religious of Our Lady of Charity will continue to be faithfully observed by the said Congregation of the Good Shepherd.

The houses, thus united in Congregation, will maintain mutual charitable relations with those which continue isolated and independent, as daughters of the same Father.

The above named members humbly and earnestly request also that you give them your apostolic blessing.

Signed: Sister M. of St Philip Neri Mercier, Counselor

Sister M. St John of the Cross David, Counselor

Sister M. of the Good Shepherd Potherie, Counselor

Sister M. Chantal of Jesus Cesbron de la Roche, Assistant

Sr M. of St Euphrasia Pelletier, Superior

Examined and approved and signatures certified authentic by us, Bishop of Angers, December 30, 1834

Signed: Charles Bishop of Angers.

TWO

Charles Montault des Isles was born in 1755 to Pierre Montault des Isles and Elizabeth de Rambault. His father died leaving his widow to care for six children, three boys and three girls. A loved and good mother, she educated them carefully and religiously. She was remembered especially for her great charity; she gave her entire life for her family and for the poor.

As a young man Charles studied at the college of the Oratorians at Saumur. Here he had the reputation of a happy disposition, excellent conduct, and success in his studies. It made him happy each year to bring good marks to his mother. He was especially successful in philosophy. He continued his studies in law at Poitiers and received his licentiate in 1776 at the age of 20, after which he returned home for a few days only. He then went to Paris to enlist among lawyers and to work as principal clerk in the law office of a friend of the family. In spite of the dissipation and deprivations of the times, Charles continued his life of study and piety without succumbing to the prevalent follies and trends of the age.

Charles wisely chose a learned and pious spiritual director and continued regular participation in the sacraments and other religious

exercises at the parish of Saint Sulpice. While still in Paris, he experienced the call of the Lord to the priesthood. In the meantime, his mother had been busy seeking a partner worthy of him and his family. She was awaiting his return to Loudun to conclude negotiations when she received a letter from him announcing his firm resolve to abandon the bar and work for the Church. He returned home to explain his projects to the whole family, which he did with such great simplicity, serenity, and conviction that his family concluded they could not oppose his decision. With tears and regrets his mother gave her consent, which greatly astonished the people of Loudun.

Charles returned to Paris to put his affairs in order and then entered the Seminary of St. Sulpice to begin theological studies. After a year he received the tonsure. For some unknown reason he was then sent to Poitiers to continue theology. He was revered at the seminary on account of his way of life and vast learning. On April 19, 1783 Charles was ordained priest, and celebrated his first Mass in the presence of his family and the people of Poitiers. Shortly afterwards, he was assigned as vice-pastor to the parish of his home town, St Pierre-du-Marche, in Loudun.

For seven years Charles Montault priest of God, found delight in praying, preaching, evangelizing, welcoming with the compassion of Jesus those who approached him in the confessional or otherwise, visiting the poor, the sick, the handicapped, reconciling fathers with their children and children with their parents. His visits home were short and few for his time was taken up with service to God's people. At the death of the pastor, Charles was offered the role of pastor in this same parish of his home-town. However, his bishop was not able to convince him to accept it.

THREE

France was in political turmoil and the Church with it. The National

Assembly ignored the Pope as head of the Church. The new regime Of government, according to the new Constitution, had decreed November 27,1790, that all ecclesiastics were public functionaries and were therefore obliged to swear allegiance to the civil constitution within fifteen days after its publication. This became effective in the diocese of Angers on December 31,1790. There was disagreement among the clerics and bishops wherever this decree created a schism and therefore a rupture with the universal Church. Moreover, they questioned if this would cause them to remain outside the social regeneration inaugurated by the Revolution? There was division among them: some signed the oath, some emigrated to other countries, others staunchly refused to sign. Still others refused to sign and went into hiding. These were hunted and many paid with their lives. The same happened to religious and monks, who were deprived of their monasteries.

Moreover, the role of electing bishops, their council and parish priests legally reverted to a local electoral body composed of laity of whatever religion. This constitution was clearly opposed to the freedom of the Church, was schismatic and heretical. The French episcopate tried in every way to stop the execution of the decree and to inform the people of their best interests. But nothing could stop the march of these philosophies of the 18th Century prepared by Jansenists and other Church opponents.

The French episcopate, however, gave the world a worthy response. Rather than consent to the oath exacted by the civil constitution, rather than lie to their conscience and to their faith, of 135 bishops 131 chose exile without a moment's hesitation. The Assembly got to work immediately, appointing bishops and ousting legitimate ones who had remained on.

At this time the Diocese of Angers counted 473 parish priests, 407 associate pastors, 600 chaplains of institutions, 218 canons,

338 religious men living in 40 monasteries and over 500 religious women; that is altogether 2500 "church people", 65% of Angers' inhabitants. History states that 1/3 of the clerics and religious men signed allegiance to the new constitution. Those who did not sign were officially removed from their diocese or parish and replaced by those who had signed, that is, constitutional priests and bishops.³

People were divided: some accepted the oath of allegiance; others opposed it. The removal of clerics who refused to sign created at first an unexpectedly savage behavior towards those who replaced them. Women and children kicked the newcomers and threatened to pull out their eyes, threw stones and mud at them, spitting on them, and mocking them. They were considered impure. One Father Peyre, elected pastor at May, was surprised to see two women follow him as he entered the church and who with a wet cloth washed away the trace of his footprints, "in order to purify the sacred floor of his polluting presence!"⁴

Upon hearing mothers say of their children that they would rather cut off their tongue and their arms than permit them to go to Mass celebrated by a constitutional priest, the National Guard got busy in suppressing these manifestations. People then began making night processions to various sanctuaries of Our Lady during which they expressed their frustration by singing hymns and pious songs. They were always accompanied by the National Guard. Gradually the hymns and songs and banners changed to national flags and popular songs. In a few months the cult became patriotic and completely secular.

The attitude of the governing body towards the non-conformist clerics soon became one of repression. In April, 1791, chapels of religious communities were closed to the public because most of the faithful were frequenting these. In June several ecclesiastics were banished from Angers, 498 others were locked in the

seminary in miserable conditions, and 23 0 were deported to Spain on two boats, the Didon and the Francais. All were considered "disturbers of the peace", or "tigers without a heart". However, these were probably the lucky ones who escaped a more cruel treatment.⁵

In 1794 clerics began to return to Angers in small numbers. Most of them were back by 1800-1802. Their parishioners had continued to claim them. Twenty had died, and quite a number had emigrated to the United States and to England. Some of these had taken the oath and then abjured.

Of the 125 elderly and ill ecclesiastics not deported but left locked up in Angers, 60 were sent to Nantes and perished by drowning. The suppression of those who had refused to take the oath and of those who had abjured was without pity after July 1792, also those who had dealings with the "Vendean brigands" who were seeking the re-establishment of the royal family. All, if and when caught, went immediately to death.⁶

In spite of continuous priest-hunting and spies and insecurity, about 130 succeeded in openly carrying on their ministry. Many had to remain hidden and rarely if ever were able to appear in their parishes. The revolutionary storm had not destroyed the religious spirit of the people of Angers, for both the faithful and the clergy risked their lives to keep the faith alive.

Many ecclesiastics had felt that by accepting the Oath they could create an alliance between the Gospel and the Revolution. Very soon in 1795 they understood it would be a very slow and painful process. Even years before the revolution, anticlericalism had been brewing. According to the history of the diocese of Angers, the more numerous the clerics, the greater the endowment of the diocese, and the richer the parishes and parish priests. Angers was considered very rich. This opulence in the Church of France

was being contested already thirty years before the revolution. It caused envy among the people and divisions among the clergy, for some dioceses were less fortunate than others.⁷

Is it any wonder St M. Euphrasia many times admonished her sisters to live in simplicity and frugality in regard to temporalities? The foundress also explained the situation of the French clergy to her young sisters and the difference between signers and non-signers. In spite of public processions at Easter, Rogations and Corpus Christi, at which the majority of city officials participated, the on-going persecution continued and called for more prudence and hiding. Fifteen priests who would not submit to the second new oath of hatred for the royal family were arrested, two were executed and two died in deportation. Others were freed only by the coup of 1800.

FOUR

This was the situation in France as we return to Charles Montault, who had retired to his home in Loudun. He anguished over conditions in the Church and the effects of the schism, with anxiety and terror. He had immediately suspended his ministry, which he would not have done had he taken the oath required of ecclesiastics. He had even tried to follow his bishop to Paris and share his exile. Charles Montault was preparing to emigrate. However, his mother, whom he loved and who loved him begged him every day on her knees not to leave home. This would kill her. His brother too who was deputy at the legislative Assembly of la Vienne and had enthusiastically embraced the civil and religious reforms, worked on Charles' mind and heart, telling him he could be a great help in mitigating the excessive changes taking place. His brother obtained him membership in the Directory of la Vienne where Charles was well known for his good judgment and moderation even during his ministry at Loudun. Charles' whole family and all his friends pressed him into accepting his brother's plan. They suggested he

forget Germany and go to Poitiers to join the deliberations of a group, which welcomed him wholeheartedly. These gloated over his installation as a triumph for the present and a guarantee of peace for the future. When he accepted his new role, Charles considered he was doing a good service to the citizens who depended on him. He believed sincerely in the reconstruction promised by the new regime and like many other clerics did not realize all the consequences of the oath.

His administration however embraced both civil and religious aspects. Therefore, in spite of himself he was involved in church affairs which he had hoped to avoid. At the same time, most priests were leaving France, so religion would go with them. He felt the only way to hold on to it was not to quench the still smoking embers and to continue to preach to the people and exercise also his priestly ministry as before. In such extreme circumstances he felt his conscience could make some sacrifices for the tranquillity of the country. This was common reasoning among constitutional clergy.

The general hostility to the Pope was fierce. The Church had no liberty of action, or voice. Pope Pius VI's voice was never listened to by the constitutional church. Little by little Montault declared himself for the constitution, in spite of the fact that it reduced the clergy to a deplorable servility.

On September 30, 1791, the Assembly elected Charles Montault bishop of the diocese of Poitiers. He accepted. All those who had known and admired Father Charles Montault were greatly and painfully surprised. He who would not accept the parish at Laudun had accepted the bishopric of Poitiers! The diocese of Poitiers accepted its second constitutional bishop on October 23, 1791. However, before going into exile the legitimate Bishop, Martial-Louis de Beaupoil de St-Aulaire, placed his powers in the hands of five vicars-general who would not leave the country. They

carried on their ministry from their hiding place, directed priests who remained faithful and watched over the Catholic faith, in great danger to their lives. After Charles Montault took his office no one could prevent them from protesting against this scandalous intrusion. They had hoped he would not succumb. However, Montault presented himself to the constitutional Bishop of Bourges, who instituted him and then sent two other constitutional bishops to the cathedral on October 23 to consecrate him Bishop of Poitiers, "thus spreading the schism".⁸

The five vicars wrote and published a document against Montault and his actions and asked the legitimate bishop, Mgr de Beaupoil, "to pronounce against Montault the censures he judged apt to punish the culpable and arrest the scandals of this intrusion".(Poitiers, Oct.29,1791). Charles Montault must have seen the document for it was diffused everywhere. One can imagine how he suffered while reading it, for he was very sensitive and tenderhearted. He had made an irresponsible decision under all aspects. However, he remained a very short time in his role of constitutional bishop of Poitiers. He promptly recanted and for 50 years shed many tears over his fault, tears as sincere and copious as those of Peter, head of the Apostles.⁹

Shortly after leaving the constitutional episcopate, Montault was appointed president of the Directory of the department of la Vienne of which he had been only a member. He tried hard to go against the torrent of new ideas, a step which had been fatal to many other constitutional priests. He was denounced to Paris by one of his co-workers and made prisoner in his own house, together with his vicars. One of these succeeded at night in sliding from a back-window into the garden and escaped to the countryside. The next day in some secret way he informed his bishop of his success and advised him to follow suit. The following evening he threw a rope in the window of Montault, who was very sensitive to this generous gesture. He did not accept it, however, for fear

he would endanger the life of his friend. He never tried to escape; he left his future in the hands of the Lord.¹⁰

FIVE

History perhaps has not given us anyone who paid for his fault more generously than Charles Montault. In spite of the great services he had given to Poitiers during his administration, the new authorities at Poitiers considered that the bishop was too free in his palace and too comfortable, so they gave orders he be transferred to a former Visitation Convent transformed into a prison. During the seven months Montault was there he was treated more brutally than any of the other prisoners. His natural nobility of manners and the fact that he was a bishop infuriated his tormenters. Montault did not need long meditations or reflections in order to decide to retract his oath. As we read in Ps 50, his sin was always before him! He looked only for occasions to show his repentance to everyone.

In this same prison were two ecclesiastics whose crime, like that of many others, was fidelity to their principles and to their conscience. These were Father Proust, pastor of Clisse' near Parthenay, and Father Meynier, pastor of the diocese of Poitiers. Montault considered their presence a gift of God. He questioned them and congratulated them for their fidelity for which they were suffering. They could hardly believe he was being sincere. But Montault continued to seek them out and to speak with them until he finally gained their confidence. He then told them of his plan to retract the oath he had taken.

He intended to send it to all city officials and wished to publish it from the roof-tops of the diocese of Poitiers. Proust and Meynier admired his courage. He had, however, opened his heart and confessed his faults to one of them for sacramental absolution. This priest therefore counseled him to more moderation in

expressing his repentance because in their situation too great openness would only encourage the boldness of the wicked and stir up more hatred and persecution against Catholics faithful to their religion. They told him he would do well to write his retraction, sign it and quietly send some copies of it to the Vicar-Generals of the diocese and perhaps to someone to whom he especially desired to communicate his act of abjuration. He humbly followed their advice.

Shortly afterwards Montault was taken to Paris. He knew that several faithful ones had proceeded him and gave their lives on the guillotine. However he remained calm and resigned and at peace with his conscience. He was offered a place on the postal wagon which travelled at night, but he refused this comfort and chose that normal for prisoners, the slow charette which took longer and went only by day. He wanted more time and opportunity to do penance, he said. En route he learned the counter-revolution was operating well. He arrived at Paris the day after the death of Robespierre. If Montault would have arrived 24 hours earlier, they would have gained another victim!

The news of Montault's departure to Paris was heart-breaking for his family and especially for his mother. Knowing of his retraction in the prison at Poitiers, which gave joy to the Catholics of the diocese, diminished somewhat their pain but could not dispel their fears. Madam Montault whose health was impaired by all the shocking news she received, desired to go to Paris to plead for her son but her daughter offered to go in her place. She left her husband and her own two daughters and swore she would not return without Charles. It would be difficult to explain all she did to obtain her brother's release. On his arrival in Paris he had been imprisoned in the Force prison. It was there his sister found him. Aware of the awful treatment he pleaded he was enduring in this prison, she needed that he be transferred to the Conciergerie prison where several of his companions were detained and where she could see him more often. This was done.

In this prison Montault met a Sulpician, Father Emery, today remembered as a scientist of France and admired for piety and heroic priestly fortitude. He and Montault prayed the breviary together, meditated together, had spiritual reading together, and shared ascetic and theological communications. Father Emery was extremely devoted to the concerns of the Church and congratulated Montault for the retraction of his errors at a time when this alone would suffice to bring capital punishment upon him. Later, Montault often spoke of his conversations with Emery from whom he had received prudent counsels, precious enlightenment, and an energy of character which he never lost. He said he would have sacrificed everything a thousand times rather than betray his conscience again.

During this time, and for six months Montault's sister, Madame Blonde', knocked on many doors and sought all the help and recommendations she could possibly obtain. Finally, she had the immense consolation of telling Montault that she had obtained his liberty. The doors of the Conciergerie would soon open for him. Both were moved to tears of joy. As soon as his deliverance was signed, brother and sister hastened to Loudun. However, they did not find their mother there! She had died of grief. Montault did not return to his priestly ministry but lived withdrawn and gave much time to study, prayer and good works. For many years he was criticized and calumniated by the righteous and wooed by constitutional bishops and clergy and his co-workers of former days. But he continued in his solitude. One voice raised in his honor was by an enthusiastic who said: "Never have we seen such a saint heretic like Montault!" Another, "The citizen Montault elevated in 1791 to the bishopric of Poitiers, lived the virtues and the zeal of the bishops of the primitive church."¹¹

Finally, with Napoleon Bonaparte, First Consul, now master of France, a Concordat with Pope Pius VII was signed July 15, 1801,

thanks to Henri Bemier and Cardinal Consalvi. On April 10, 1802, Bonaparte chose for Bishop of Angers Charles Montault who had been constitutional bishop of la Vienne. Since 1800 his name had been on the list of possible bishops. He had been reconciled with the Church in July and relieved of all censures by the Papal Legate. He was then 47 years of age. On April 14, 1802 he received "Canonical Institution" by Cardinal Caprarato whom he gave a personal letter for Pius VII. Charles Montault was the first of the constitutional bishops to retract his errors and to express his regrets and repentance personally to the Pope.

Before accepting and entering his diocese as bishop, Montault conferred with Father Emery who had helped him in captivity. This good friend convinced Montault he could do great good in Angers, and should accept his appointment, which he had neither solicited nor ambited. Montault was then able to silence his hesitations. This lawyer, enlisted at the Bar of Paris before receiving Holy Orders, was in reality a scrupulous, gentle and peaceful man. He had decided to emigrate, but yielded to the supplications of his mother who was worried about the future of her elder son, Peter.

SIX

The First Consul, Napoleon, decided to inaugurate the Concordat, which had been ratified by the parliament, with a grand military parade in the presence of a great gathering of people. However, he also planned this to be followed by the Liturgy of the Eucharist in thanksgiving, to be celebrated at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris at which all newly appointed bishops and church dignitaries were present. Witnessing the new bishops from various dioceses of France process towards the altar re-enforced a hope blossoming in the hearts of the faithful for a return to the Faith so rudely shaken by previous disastrous events.

Bishop Charles Montault des Isles was present. Impelled by his desire to get to work, he nevertheless hastened back to Loudun where he withdrew to prepare himself for his new functions with a whole months' retreat of prayer and reflection. He was expected at Angers on the 28 of April. When announcing this, the JOURNAL of Angers added, "The new Bishop is preceded by his high reputation and he will fully justify it. His honesty, his just intentions, the tenderness of his charity, the nature of his piety which is marked by unction and deeply touching, is known to all. Everything about him promises the greatest success in his administration. Everything guarantees him the esteem and veneration of his people."¹²

Bishop Montault was greeted by people of the towns he passed through on his way to Angers, even those of the villages on the right bank of the Loire river, all in their festive attire. He stopped that night at the Prefecture where his brother was Prefect. The next day he was received by city officials and his priests. On Sunday, June 6, 1802, Bishop Montault took possession of his diocese with all the canonical formalities required. He presided at the solemn liturgical celebration in the cathedral with all its revolutionary scars. The clergy, and military and civil representatives participated together with the people of the diocese. This marked Bishop Montault's official possession of the Diocese of Angers.

Bishop Montault soon learned the sad state of his diocese. No other diocese of France had suffered a like material destruction. Of the 18 parish churches one only remained standing, that of the Holy Trinity. It had been transformed into a club house. The cathedral had been preserved also for the same reason. The civil war and the republican flame had reduced to cinders all other churches, presbyteries and buildings used for church purposes.

Bishop Montault was a man of great faith. He firmly believed that nothing is impossible to God and that the diocese of Angers was

in His merciful care. He also had faith in his priest collaborators and in the faithful who had been so sorely tried. Both the spiritual and the material had to be rebuilt. They would accomplish it together, slowly but surely. He communicated his faith and zeal for God's glory and the good of the diocese to all those who cooperated with him in the great effort of re-creation. Angers gradually returned to its former legendary fresh beauty. Bishop Montault's lively faith in God and in people's good will was matched by a deep humility. It was part of his character but it also grew in him through the memory of his fall. Can we not call it a FELIX GULP A? Indeed, all his life long his episcopacy at Poitiers burdened his heart. His compunction was sincere and open. One could detect it also in his pastoral letters and other writings in some of which he indirectly condemned his fault by the frank, affectionate and filial way with which he wrote of the Pope. Thus in announcing to his diocese the opening of the Jubilee year which Pope Pius VII had promulgated for France after the Concordat, the bishop wrote: 'It is a great consolation to me to be able to announce to you these days of grace and mercy. I like to remind you of St Paul's saying: At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you. See, now is the acceptable time. See, now is the day of salvation.'"(2, Cor 6,2). 13

Bishop Montault had a tender and deep love for Jesus Crucified. He fasted every Friday in honor of the Passion of Jesus and his was not only a fast from food. However, few of those who lived with the bishop noticed the many austerities he practiced for these remained hidden under his habitual simplicity. During his last illness, besides the crucifix which the bishop always wore on his breast, he asked that the big crucifix which was usually over his prie-dieu be hung at the foot of his bed. From there he could look incessantly on it and tell Jesus of his love. One can say without doubt that Bishop Montault breathed his last in the arms of his crucified Lord.

It was charity, however, that shone forth from the bishop's eyes, heart and hands. He must have imbibed this from his mother for as a child he did not keep anything for himself but shared even his toys with his playmates. During his college days when his monthly personal allowance arrived he was very happy for he would be able to help those of his class and school who were needy. As a lawyer at the parliament in Paris he unexpectedly met a poor woman who was being taken to prison. Her cries and tears caught his attention. He questioned her and learned that she was going to prison for her debts and would leave her four orphan children without any help. He felt the woman must have appealed to Divine Providence. Charles Montault immediately paid what he had to her jailers and promised to pay the rest in her place. During his seminary years, Charles was a model of charity in helping the poor.

While constitutional bishop at Poitiers his great charity was known to all and he exercised it every day and many times a day. Even though his faith may have paled at this time, his charity grew. We have proof he helped many religious men and women during the distressing times through which they were living. He provided them with secret funds, or advised them they had been betrayed and should seek a safer hiding place. As bishop he was head of the administration of his civic department. A day had been fixed for review of the denunciations people brought against others. The eve of this day Montault with one of his trusted vicars sworn to secrecy, went late at night to the council room and reviewed the complaints. Setting aside the compromising ones they lit what they called "a joyful fire" which consumed them. The next day Montault went again to the council room at the appointed hour and presided scrupulously over the examination of the most serious denunciation. Who knows how many lives were saved through this strategy!

In 1792 the prisons at Poitiers were filled with prisoners. For most, their crime name was their religion. The council of the department

was deciding to send some of the prisoners to Limoges, which had been done before. On these journeys through villages the people often rushed out with knives to do their own brand of justice. Montault shuddered at the thought of another such barbarous event and strongly opposed it. The majority assured him they would take necessary measures to assure a safe passage. But Montault did not trust them and searched for all the good reasons the law provided to avoid bloodshed. No one listened to him. He therefore arose with a holy anger and declared his resignation. He then prepared to leave the council hall. The council members, abashed by the president's strength of will, begged him to remain. They changed their decision!

Several families of Poitou while in exile wrote to Montault asking him to protect their properties from auction sale. When these properties were put up for sale he bought them with his own money, and as soon as the families returned, he gave the properties over to the legitimate owners. The people he helped often laid before him huge sums of money which he never accepted. If they insisted, he accepted only if they would agree that he give their offering to a work of charity.

Bishop Montault was most generous to those who worked with him in the diocese of Angers. His constant attention to their needs was delicate and unobtrusive. The parents of one of his secretaries came on foot to visit with their son. He presented them to the Bishop who put his palace and his table at their disposition. When he learned of the day of their departure he insisted they not go on foot. He put his carriage and driver at their disposal for the over 40 kilometers of road they had done on foot.

The Bishop always spoke with his domestics with great affability and listened patiently and concerned, when they spoke about their sufferings and troubles. Whenever he could, he put an end to these. When sickness visited them he never failed to visit them at

their homes. In 1834 when his driver fell and broke his leg the Bishop kept him in the presbytery and cared for him. He went every day for two months to see him and inquire about his health. At times he would read something spiritual to him, or tell him an inspiring story.

There are many written stories about the gracious charity of Bishop Montault with his priests and his people. Often he gave alms to the poor secretly or paid their rent regularly at Christmas. Also he often sent books and pamphlets or catechisms to his parish priests for children or their families. There is hardly a family at Angers that has not several books given them by the Bishop and which they now keep as relics. He was greatly loved and admired by his people.

In 1830 the consul general of the department discontinued the supplementary sum which Bishop Montault had received under the Empire and the Restoration. At the same time all the bishops received a cut of 5000 francs in their allotment. Bishop Montault's one luxury was to be able to share with the poor. Now he was receiving 10.000 francs less each year. However, he never complained. To a person who compassionated the Bishop about his salary being cut in half, he responded, "but our revenues are still better than those of St Paul."- "What were St Paul's"? asked the person. "We read about them in the second letter to the Corinthians. Just listen." And Bishop Montault read the long list of sufferings inflicted on St Paul as enumerated in 2 Corinthians 6,3-10. The bishop added, "You should not compassionate us but our poor".¹⁴

Bishop Montault was always concerned about the well-being of the clergy of his diocese and was most generous to them. He even regulated the hours of his dinner in order to accommodate their visits with him so they could dine together. One of the last benefits he both planned and realized for them was a retirement fund for the ecclesiastics of the Diocese of Angers.

However kind and thoughtful he was for them, some among them shunned him and seemed never to trust him. However, even today there hangs at the bishopric a portrait of Bishop Montault-des-Isles under which one reads, HE WAS BELOVED BY GOD AND BY HUMANITY.

SEVEN

On January 1, 1839 Bishop Montault began his 85th year. The clergy of the diocese gathered around him as usual for the New Year greetings. All felt he had a presentiment he would not end the year on earth. He began his address with the words of St Paul (Phillip. 1, 21 -24): "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but it may be that to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you". The bishop's commentary on these words of Paul was so full of unction, spirit and energy that his listeners were touched to the core and knew they would never forget them. He seemed to be announcing his death with the same assurance one speaks of a planned trip.¹⁵ Monsignor Herce, Bishop of Angers, often came to Angers at this period to help Bishop Montault, now nearing his ninetieth year and rapidly declining. He also went to the Good Shepherd with offers of help. At this time he appeared heaven-sent for since the institutes had begun to send colonies abroad postulants of many nationalities had flocked to the novitiate. Monsignor Herce's knowledge of languages was a boon. He soon became also confessor to the community.

From the month of May on the Bishop's health declined, however he continued to take part in the office at the cathedral in spite of his doctor's advice to the contrary. On May 2 he went to the

country house of the seminary to bless a statue of the Blessed Virgin in the new chapel. He gave a homily on devotion to the Mother of God, then after the ceremony of blessing he gathered the seminarians and addressed each one with gentle and kind words, natural to him. Back in the presbytery his failing strength was very evident.

One day when Mgr Mainguy, chaplain at the Good Shepherd, went to see the Bishop he found him in his drawing-room trying to walk up and down the apartment. "Tell Mary Euphrasia," he said, "that I am endeavoring to get up my strength in order that I may come and pay her a visit." After a few days he was actually on his way to the convent. The sisters received him at the entrance. They eagerly brought there an armchair and quickly gathered around him in the entrance hall. He said to them, "I feel that my end is near, so I wished to see you once more. My dear sisters, when you hear the passing-bell pray for me so that I may soon be admitted to Paradise. You will be the gainers for once I am in heaven I assure you I will intercede for you before God." He gave his blessing to the community. He detained Mary Euphrasia for some time longer in order that she might give him full details about her various foundations. He then said, "Truly this work is of God. I perceive it more clearly than I have ever done before. I consider myself most fortunate in having been selected by God to aid in establishing it." Mary Euphrasia was profoundly moved and her heart full of gratitude for all the goodness and kindness received from Bishop Montault. She was very touched by the effort he had made to come to visit his Good Shepherd community. She painfully realized it would be his last.¹⁶

Mary Euphrasia also knew his great sorrow had been his inability to celebrate the Eucharist during his last days. She appreciated his having the consolation of receiving from Pope Gregory XVI a Portrait accompanied by comforting words of praise and endearment.

The Good Shepherd Institute had ever been a source of consolation to him. He loved to watch its development both at the mother-house and in the foundations. When he could no longer come so frequently to the convent Mary Euphrasia would ask the chaplain, Mgr Mainguy, to report its progress to him. On the eve of his death Bishop Montault told him to expose the Blessed Sacrament in the convent church and to ask the community to pray that he might obtain mercy from God. That same evening he signed approval of the Rule for the Consecrated Women of the Good Shepherd. A moment or two before he breathed his last, he recommended the care of his beloved Good Shepherd Institute to Mgr Regnier. We read in his biography: "Therefore, the Good Shepherd Home may proudly realize that it received the last words from the pen and from the heart of this holy Bishop."¹⁷

Bishop Montault was a faithful friend and devoted benefactor of the Good Shepherd. The foundation at Macon, France, on June 21, 1839, was the nineteenth and last foundation made under his wise guidance and concern. "Before he died the bishop saw the work he had so much at heart spread far and wide. How he loved the Good Shepherd! He saw in it the crown of his episcopate. Having supported it with intrepid fidelity in its initial difficulties, he continued to extend to it his most tender solicitude in the days of its constant progress. Never once did his advice run counter to the welfare of the institute, for he had never used his authority to interfere, to repress, or to stifle initiative. He judged everything by the standard of the good of souls. In his utter unselfishness, he allowed Mary Euphrasia full scope to exercise her own talent for expansion. He was a true Good Shepherd in his love and care for the 'lambs and sheep' of the Institute."¹⁸

EIGHT

Bishop Montault des-Isles died very peacefully July 29, 1839 at 3:00 PM. He was surrounded by clergy and faithful who had also

freely visited at his bedside earlier in the month. He had wished his bedroom door left open for them. All remembered that just two days earlier a small child had left her mother's side and going to his bedside had placed her two tiny hands on his right hand, squeezing it while saying aloud, "Oh, Monsignor, I am praying with all my heart to the Good God for you!" Everyone was touched to tears. For the Bishop it was a life giving gift. He opened his eyes and smiled and lovingly turned to her as he said, "I want to bless you". All the by-standers fell to their knees and bowed their heads to receive also his last blessing given to a child.¹⁹

During his last hours Bishop Montault's lips moved in prayer, his fingers held his rosary, his eyes fastened on the cross of our Savior, his lips fixed lovingly to it. Even when his mind no longer directed his movements he continued to trace this sacred sign on his forehead and on his heart until his head drooped and he drew his last breath into the arms of his Lord and Saviour. It was a painful moment for all those present, and all remained silent as though stupefied. Then amidst sighs and tears, the clergy began the psalms and ritual prayers for the dying. The great bell of the cathedral announced the Bishop's passing, and all the bells of the parishes of the city took up the toll for the good Bishop who had led the diocese for almost forty years with great wisdom.²⁰

His loss was a new and real sorrow for Mary Euphrasia. She bitterly mourned for him alone as well as with all her sisters. Bishop Montault was irreplaceable. She had a Solemn Requiem Mass celebrated for him in the chapel. This was one of many offered for him and in thanksgiving for him. She requested all the members of her congregation to do the same.

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Pope Gregory XVI

(1765-1846)



Pope Gregory XVI, Bartolomeo Alberto Cappellari (1831-1846) belonged to the Order of the Camaldolese Monks. When elected Pope, he chose to couple his personal arms with those of his religious Order. To the left: the two doves drinking from a chalice are part of the Order's arms. To the right: the ecclesiastical hat and the three stars recall the Pope's family, the Cappellari.

III

Pope Gregory XVI (1765-1846)

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POPE GREGORY XVI

(1765-1846)

ONE

The Pope who was so favorable to Saint Mary Euphrasia and who officially approved the Congregation of the Good Shepherd of Angers with a centralized administration - a novelty for the times - was Pope Gregory XVI. Mary Euphrasia reminded her sisters of this in several of her conferences. In one she said:

"Gratitude is the memory of the heart!... You will never forget, my dear daughters, that the signal favor of the erection of the generalate of the Good Shepherd was granted by our Holy Father, Pope Gregory XVI, who dispatched the decree of its erection to us in 1835."¹

When Gregory XVI was told by the commission studying her and her bishop's request for approval, that all the members "were of one heart and voice in favor of the Congregation of the Good Shepherd", the Pope replied, "And I also give it my heart and my voice."² In her Conferences, we also read what "precious audiences"³ she had with Gregory XVI, and in her letters, how through him she had seen the mission of her congregation as never before. Mary Euphrasia had conceived a much wider and more comprehensive vision of what her congregation was and was called to be in the future. Besides, her vision had become world-wide, her zeal could truly embrace the world as her heart had desired since her youth. Her own courage was strengthened and while in Rome she felt a great weight had been lifted and a new world opened up before her. She felt infinitely richer having experienced a Church which understood and appreciated her mission and a Pope who not only loved her congregation but declared "Now, indeed, I can support your institute!"⁴

In a talk to her sisters Mary Euphrasia exclaimed, "What precious audiences with His Holiness, Pope Gregory XVI! What abundant blessings we obtained for the whole congregation. Oh how greatly the head of the church loves our congregation how dear you are to his heart, my dear daughters! ..5. And, could we be more honored than by hearing the sovereign pontiff himself say to us, 'I wish you to found in America...?'"⁶

Gregory XVI called, Mary Euphrasia to Rome twice, the first visit was June 15, 1838. Arriving the previous day, she and her companions attended the papal Mass in St Peter's Basilica. She was in the first row and Father Vaures pointed her out to the Pope as the procession accompanied him to the altar. The Pope stopped, smiled and placed his hand gently on her head in blessing.⁷ She said she felt as if Christ himself had blessed her. At the audience the next day, she was astonished at the Pope's simplicity and benevolence and his knowledge of Good Shepherd. He was interested in all that touched the welfare of the congregation. After they left his presence, Pope Gregory said to Cardinal Odescalchi, "I think the good Mother really took me for the good God himself!"⁸

Pope Gregory invited Mary Euphrasia to Rome again in April 1843. She experienced the same kindness, benevolence and concern, and at the same time was greatly impressed by a sense of holiness that surrounded the Pope's presence. It was at this audience that he told Mary Euphrasia he considered the "Order of the Good Shepherd the most precious gem in his crown".⁹ He told her to come again to see him before she left Rome - he was now too old to be walking the streets of Rome as he did after her first visit. (He had returned her visit of 1838 by a personal visit to her at Holy Cross convent - an expression of Roman courtesy). Mary Euphrasia was overwhelmed by so much goodness.

From Gregory XVI Mary Euphrasia had received considerable

gifts for her congregation: approval with a centralized administration for greater expansion- the title of Good Shepherd,- and Angers, its title of Mother-House. In giving the care of the institute to Cardinal della Porta after Cardinal Odescalchi joined the Jesuits, Pope Gregory XVI told him, "I give you charge of looking after it in details, but I myself will be its protector".¹⁰ Can we doubt the great sense of gratitude and veneration Mary Euphrasia had for Pope Gregory XVI, indeed for the Vicars of Christ, all of whom have esteemed her and the mission of her institute?"

TWO

Pope Gregory XVI was born at Belluno, province of Treviso, State of Venice, September 18, 1765. In baptism he received the name of Bartholomew Albert. He was educated at the Monastery of San Michele on the Island of Murano, Venice. Quite young he joined this Camaldolese community in 1783 and took the name of Mauro. Fra Mauro Cappellari continued his studies of philosophy and theology and in 1795 accompanied the procurator general of the Order to Rome. In 1814 while Dom Mauro held the chair of philosophy for the nobles directed by a group of former monks who had been dispossessed of their monastery by the French Revolution, his superior called him to Rome for the task of recovering for the order their monastery of San Gregorio-al-Celio and the Hospice of San Romualdo. Both 'had been confiscated by the revolutionaries. Duke Giovanni Torlonia had later purchased both properties in order to prevent the profanation of the church. He returned ownership to Don Mauro Cappellari in 1814.

Soon after returning to Rome, he was appointed consultor to the Congregation for Extraordinary Affairs, and Pope Pius VII offered him a bishopric which out of humility he did not accept. Again in 1820 the Pope offered him the bishopric of Tivoli which was directly under the Pope. But again, he very politely refused. He wanted to remain a poor monk.¹

Prior to that, in 1814, Dom Mauro was appointed Procurator General of his order and in 1823 his superior general, Cardinal Zurla, chose him for vicar general. This was a very heavy responsibility, for these were difficult times for the Camaldolese Order. The monks were rallying from an avalanche of annihilating suppressions. Besides being consultor to the Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, Dom Mauro was soon entrusted with several other roles by Pius VII: Consultor to the Holy Office (now called Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith), and to Propaganda Fide, Examiner of the Bishops, and member of the commission for the Revision of the Oriental Liturgical Books. In 1824 Pope Leo XII confided the canonical visitation of the Universities at Perugia, Macerata, Fermo and Camerino to Dom Mauro. Pope Leo demonstrated the same esteem and benevolence towards him as had Pope Pius VII, who had died in 1823.

Pope Leo visited the monastery of St Gregorio-al-Celio November 9, 1823. There, Cardinal Zurla formally presented Dom Mauro to him. Two years later the Pope created him Cardinal in the Consistory of March 21, 1825, published on March 13, 1826 in these words: "Happily conspicuous for innocence and dignity, rich in knowledge, especially in sacred learning and having carried on so many and continual labors for the apostolic see, I have thought it well to award the rank of Cardinal to Dom Mauro Cappellari... We have decided to confer high ecclesiastical roles on those who are outstanding for their piety and doctrine and, not for other motives."² As Cardinal, Dom Mauro changed nothing in his way of life, he continued as usual at San Gregorio and also when he moved his residence to the Propaganda Fide apartment allotted to him.³ He wore his monastic habit and often cleaned his own apartment as he had done at the abbey.

On October 2, Pope Leo XII assigned him the titled Church of St Callixtus and the rank of bishop. He was already consultor to

various congregations of the Roman Curia and was now appointed Prefect of that of the Propagation of the Faith. His authority and leadership as a result extended to all the missions of the world. Pope Leo XII was followed by Pope Pius VIII who died November 30,1830.³

THREE

On December 14, the Conclave opened at the Quirinal Palace. It lasted fifty days. On February 2,1831, at 11:00 AM, Cardinal Mauro Cappellari was elected Pope. Late the previous evening his superior general Cardinal Zurla, had gone to his room and ordered him, through his vow of obedience, to accept the decision of the cardinals. He obeyed, becoming Pope because of his vow of obedience. His election was announced from the balcony of the Quirinal and the name he chose was Gregory XVI, in honor of Gregory the Great who championed the freedom of the church in the Middle Ages. Since he had never been ordained bishop this was conferred on him February 6, by Cardinal Pacca, Dean of the College of Cardinals.¹

Gregory XVI had an exceptionally robust constitution. From youth he had become accustomed to an austere and frugal life. Hence, as Pope he maintained his monastic simplicity, easily adapting himself to the monotony and solitude of the papacy. He continued to sleep five hours on a simple corn-husk mattress as in his monastery, rising early. He refused to choose a personal papal doctor and allocated the annual sum budgeted for this to charity. He was rich only in books and objects of art which he kept for a time to please the donors, then passed them to the museums for everyone to enjoy. He did not enrich his family although he loved them tenderly. When elected Pope he begged them not to travel to Rome to see him, but to continue to live good simple lives. Even his will he was very modest towards them.

Gregory XVI had a majestic physique, slight color in his cheeks, and a broad forehead which seemed to denote intelligence and tranquillity. Cardinal Wiseman wrote, "When conversing with Gregory XVI he became alive, his face became luminous, his eyes shone with lively interest, and quite simply his great intelligence and vast knowledge erupted in a free flow of words full of elegance. In this way he revealed his true humanity, his confidential attitudes, his simplicity and familiarity. His was ajovial, happy, exuberant temperament, always ready with pleasantries and jokes. He was affable and approachable to the great and the humble alike, granted audiences to whoever asked for them.... Whoever spoke with him was happily surprised by his simplicity and affability, enlightened conversation and prodigious memory. He spoke Italian, French, Spanish and Greek, besides Latin.²

Louis Veuillot speaks of his audience with Gregory XVI the day after his conversion: "We had an audience with the Holy Father. ... Father Vaures... escorted us to the papal apartments. There it is not luxury one admires. I was very impressed on seeing those simple rooms adorned only with historical paintings, and carpets and furnishings which showed more than their age. After several minutes, a door opened and we entered a small room where Gregory XVI was standing.... Gregory XVI is a venerable elderly man, tall and strong. His face radiates a paternal goodness. He welcomed us with exquisite love. After a few words, Father Vaures drew his Holiness' attention to me saying that I was a convert of Rome. Then, and this is what I want to say, the benevolence on the face of this great elderly Pope turned into an ineffable expression of tenderness and of joy. He congratulated me, gave me some good advice, suggested some readings to me, and when we knelt to receive his blessing I felt on my face a paternal caress from that right hand that blesses the whole world. His goodness to me did not make me proud. Indeed, even now what penetrates me right to the heart, is a joy so touching, that it revealed the father of so many millions of the faithful, on hearing that this immense

family had acquired another obscure little son."³

Comforted and encouraged by Gregory XVI's expression and blessing that "obscure little son" became a zealous journalist and acute catholic disputant of the 19th Century, an indefatigable defender of the Papacy.

Pope Gregory XVI further promoted the study of Christian antiquities, not merely to advance the story of art but to affirm catholic doctrine, as did the frescoes, graffiti, and sculptures discovered in the catacombs. He understood the importance of the study of ancient cultural accomplishments, especially the Etruscan and the Egyptian. He gathered "fragments" of these cultures and founded the Vatican Gregorian Etruscan Museum. He founded the Gregorian Egyptian Museum. He restored the Lateran palace which for years had been abandoned, and founded the Gregorian Lateran Museum. (Incidentally, it is here the classic boy Good Shepherd marble statue of the 3rd century can be seen). He collected a vast array of ancient articles, Christian and non-Christian, of historical and artistic value. When Mary Euphrasia was in Rome, the Pope told her and her sisters to visit the catacombs, cathedrals, historical museums and monuments of the city. They would find in them spiritual and human enrichment and should enjoy them to the full. How thoughtful of Pope Gregory to offer this gift to her for her congregation, for Mary Euphrasia shared her experience with us through her conferences and colloquies.

FOUR

In the exercise of temporal power which was an aspect of the papal responsibilities of his times, Pope Gregory XVI, from the first day of his pontificate, faced problems stemming from the French Revolution of 1830, an explosion of liberalism which pitted the political world against traditional values. Belgium, Poland,

Ireland as well as Italy were in a state of agitation. Through Lamennais and his followers even church leaders became involved. During the conclave proceeding his election, cardinals had received menacing and threatening letters. In this contrasting atmosphere several national rulers manifested hostility by formally rejecting certain cardinals. Messengers were even sent to several among them in order to sound out their objections or acceptance. It was especially for this reason that the conclave dragged on for fifty days. Even the support-staff sent an ultimatum to the College of Cardinals in the name of the Roman people, telling them to elect a Pope before February 22 or they would proclaim a Republic. This gives evidence of the tenseness of the general situation the new Pope faced.

According to Giuseppe De Luca, few Popes have had a pontificate as great and active and fruitful as that of Gregory XVI. However, he had many enemies and few, even among Catholics of his time, upheld him - not as Gregory XVI - but as head of a temporal power. They felt he, as Pope, was against the national unification of the Italian people. Whoever would have been elected Pope at that time would have been judged negatively.'

Not only in Italy, but in Belgium, Poland, Ireland, Spain, Portugal and Switzerland, people were confused. The liberal movement was fanned by nationalism and patriotism, proclaiming the right of peoples to self determination. Catholics on the other hand sought liberation from the oppression of autocratic rulers whose intent was to harness the Church. The liberal states with Lamennais established principles to guarantee spiritual autonomy from the Pope. In this confused and dramatic situation the new Pope found himself surrounded by various groups and peoples and ideologies all calling themselves "liberals" but clamoring for different and conflicting currents of liberties.

Gregory XVI in his role as head of a temporal power had to take

a precise stand amidst the chaos between governments created by the revolution and the absolutists who had failed to enjoy the popular enthusiasm they had demonstrated towards other popes, and in better times. He was of a modest and reserved character and did not appreciate the noise of applause.

FIVE

In spite of the troubled times, Gregory's XVI's great interest and care for the development of the arts and humanities was extraordinary. He had a profound understanding of history, that is, of the changes which take place in institutions and forms of governments, in ways of living—and he realized that, through it all, what endures is an earnest search for learning and the attraction of all that is beautiful. His pursuit and defense of the arts and humanities was a work of peace. As Pope he gave evidence of the depth and breadth of the vast culture he had absorbed at San Michele. He was publicly admired for his vast knowledge. His homilies and apostolic letters have become models, precious records of the history of the church of the 19th century.'

Gregory XVI loved the monuments of ancient Rome and cared for them, removing from them their super-structures so they could be studied and admired by all. He engineered excavations in several areas of the ancient city so that all could better know and appreciate its true topography and ancient cultural monuments. After fire destroyed the Basilica of St Paul, he took over its reconstruction recently begun by Leo XII. He wanted it carried out quickly and that it reflect as much as possible the ancient basilica of the 4th century. By 1840 the main part of the basilica was in order. Pope Gregory blessed it and the papal altar. The refinishing work continued until his death but he had provided everything needed to make it the splendid basilica of St Paul it has remained until this day, including the precious alabaster pillars he had received from the viceroy of Egypt, and slabs of malachite given him by Czar Nicholas I of Russia.

Gregory XVI re-organized the Vatican picture gallery and added many Byzantine and other works from primitive Italian art schools. He also endowed the Vatican Library. Whatever he received of artistic, ancient or modern, precious or of scientific interest, he sent to museums and libraries so that everyone could enjoy them, be enlightened and enlivened by them. He set up scholarships and rewards to stimulate artists in developing their gifts and talents. He encouraged a search for the body of Raphael buried somewhere in the Pantheon and when found had the remains placed in a marble tomb in the Church of the Minerva in order to honor him for the artistic gifts he had left to posterity.

Gregory XVI had great interest and concern for the universities and endowed them with the faculties and sciences they needed. He was interested in progress and provided for it. His openness to whatever could better humanity led him to foster and support many types of learning and cultures. He ordered the names of Copernicus, Keplero and Galileo erased from the index for he was convinced that they could not be atheists. As Pope, Mauro Cappellari did not lose his love for books and "whenever he could, he endowed seminaries and centers of learning, univerisities and schools with the books he received as gifts or had acquired them.

SIX

Although the political and cultural activity of Pope Gregory XVI was prodigious, it pales before his religious and spiritual efforts. His spiritual leadership was marked by a sense of paternity, defense of the doctrine of the Catholic Church, and the propagation of the faith around the world. He was a missionary Pope. He worked to end slavery and oppression in Europe and North America. To some rulers who in spite of all asked to approve slavery in their countries, he responded, "I cannot in

conscience approve, and conscience is not afraid of cannons." He made his own the cause of the oppressed and repeatedly and publicly admonished their rulers. In 1845 he received Nicholas I, Czar of Russia and fearlessly but respectfully spoke out against his despotic efforts to separate Russian Catholics from Rome and take over Poland. Even his political opponents admired him for this.

Pope Gregory XVI was not intimidated by any difficulty or swayed by any ruler in his defense of the rights of the church. He faced the theories of "liberalism", the secularization of states, and attempts to destroy church unity threatened by the ultra-nationalistic clergy. On many occasions Gregory XVI demonstrated a strength of character and firmness similar to that of his great namesake Gregory VII.

He was attentive to any propaganda that could undermine the truths of faith. He was careful to point out theories and currents of thought which were dangerous but he also fostered good relations with governments and established diplomatic relations with many, creating a mutually respectful atmosphere even among non-catholic rulers. He also fostered the practical living of the Faith. He encouraged research and studies on the Immaculate Conception of Mary and had liturgical celebrations in honor of this mystery. He encouraged those who desired to see this dogma proclaimed. Saint Mary Euphrasia was one of them. She had great devotion to the Immaculate Conception of Mary and had a statue erected in her honor long before the proclamation of the dogma. The Pope prepared the way for his successor Pope Pius IX to proclaim this dogma. Through the zeal and tact of Pope Gregory XVI the Roman liturgy was restored in France and brought the clergy of this "eldest daughter of the Church", influenced by gallicanism, closer to the Holy See.

His papacy was blessed with many new religious institutes. He

approved eighteen for men and ninety-three for women. Most of these were for charitable, social and missionary ministries. Among these was the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, founded by Frederick Ozanam, and as already said, the Congregation of the Good Shepherd of Angers. He re-organized many dioceses, patriarchates, archdioceses, and created eighty cardinals among whom were several younger men.

Gregory XVI was gifted with a fine instinctive perception. Cardinal Gamberini, the Secretary of State once said, "We prepare reports drawn up after much serious study but this holy pope just glances through them and immediately adds so many pertinent and wonderful observations that we remain spellbound. One cannot help recognizing his wisdom, practical knowledge and understanding."⁴ The Sisters of the Good Shepherd recall his wisdom in solving the thorny question of the memorandums against Mary Euphrasia and against her inspiration of a centralized administration. "How many are the letters written against Mary Euphrasia?" the Pope asked. "There are thirteen letters, your Holiness." "And what has she said in her own defense?" "Not a single word." "Then the truth is on her side," replied Gregory XVI.⁵

SEVEN

The dominant note in Gregory's XVTs active and fruitful pontificate is his missionary zeal. As Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide, he was remarkable for his missionary activity. He who had lived a secluded life in a monastery might have been considered unprepared to tackle the immense problems facing Propaganda Fide: in the re-organization of all that the revolutions and the suppression of religious institutes had suddenly interrupted, with great damage and even destruction of what had been patiently built up over many years. As Cardinal Prefect, Mauro Cappellari was, instead, a most zealous, indefatigable and knowledgeable

leader in recreating a vast complex of missionary works which as Pope, he followed up with even greater energy. According to historians, he initiated the period of missionary fervor which continues to our day.

The spreading of the Faith was one of his greatest but also his most loved concerns. He drew consolation from this apostolic activity. The ancient religious orders gradually took on new life after their suppression, new institutes with a specific missionary character were being born and multiplied and began to spread over all the continents, thus keeping before the Pope's attention the vast and growing needs of the missions. By 1845, 125 missionary bishops had been named, 36 apostolic vicariates and 15 new dioceses organized.¹

Mary Euphrasia had certainly experienced the enlightenment and stimulus of the Pope's love and concern for spreading the good news of God's love. In one of her letters after her visit to the Pope, she wrote, "Here in Rome we have found in our Pope, the Head of the Church ... the true light of our Good Shepherd mission. Only here is the greatness of our mission understood. Only here have I been able to uncover my thoughts. What great consolations I have received! Here in Rome my heart found its flame, its force and its champions. Truly, our mission has been revitalized."² Her own apostolic zeal was fanned into flame by his approval, as we read in her Conferences, "Now that we have obtained the favour of the establishment of a generalate for our institute, with the fullest blessing of the Head of the Church, the worthy successor of St. Peter, who desires to see our houses multiply throughout the universe, you will go forth to erect your tents from one end of the world to the other. One town, one foundation should not satisfy your zeal. It must embrace the whole world."³

Through Gregory XVI Catholicism developed in Oceania, the Far

East, India, Ethiopia, Algiers, in the Americas and other countries. Most of these countries appreciated Gregory XVI's concern for them and even the various tribes of Native Americans sent letters and hand-made gifts to him to express their veneration and gratitude for their missionaries. A sample, translated from the Algonquian language by Moroni, is touching:⁴

"My father, your Algonquian and Nipsilingan sons greet you respectfully and send you the enclosed necklace. It will speak to you and it says this to you, 'While I lived wandering in the woods I knew only my knife, my bow and arrow. I did not know who was the Great Being, or his name. I ignored all this yet without knowing, I believed in Him in my inmost heart. You, Vicar of Christ Jesus, leader of all the faithful, yes, you have taught us to know Him. You have sent us the man dressed in black, you said to him: 'Go and look for the Indian, he too is my son, fly to help him, introduce him to the house of prayer, teach him that Mary watches over him as her son, tell him to honor her as his mother. Feed him with the heavenly bread which is the Body of Christ, open to him the gate of heaven.' I have listened to the man in black whom you sent to me and this is what I want to tell you: You are my Father, I will never know any other. Should my descendents forget and leave you, show them this necklace and they will immediately return to you. I pray every day for you. Please give me in return your blessing."

Gregory XVI was greatly consoled and animated by the rapid and vast spreading of the faith in North America. He devoted great care to this country especially to the hierarchy to which the bishops, clergy and faithful responded positively. He expressed his appreciation of the response he received from the United States in these words: "In no country am I more Pope (Father) than in the United States of America."⁵

In his story of the missions, Henrion concludes with a solemn

tribute to Pope Gregory XVI: "It will be to the eternal glory of Gregory XVI to have made the propagation of the faith the principal concern of his laborious pontificate. We can say that from his mouth the strong wind that filled the cenacle on Pentecost, blew again over the Christian world, awakening many vocations, urging the priesthood and religious orders towards heroic enterprises that confound the apathy and indifference of our times. To bring light to the far away peoples of our earth, separated from each other by the difference of languages, will finally be one, by a new miracle of the language of unity in faith. This was the constant concern of Gregory XVI ... we do not doubt that Divine Providence by igniting so many fires of charity through Gregory, desires to warm up our old churches which are growing cold."⁶

The grave and serious questions regarding the papal states, which were of his time, led him to long for the quiet and tranquility of his monastery. In a conversation with his personal secretary, while pointing out the camaldolese monastery at Fonte Avellana, he sighed, "Oh, how willingly I would go there as sacristan!" When he travelled around the papal states or on his vacation he loved to stay at the monasteries of his order and enjoy some hours of simple living as a monk.

"Pope Gregory XVI had a profound piety and was a man of contemplation and prayer. He meditated and read the classic ascetic books twice a day no matter what kind of day it was. Daily and continuously I witnessed his frequent, devout aspirations of mystic theology, and in his fervent celebration of Holy Mass, with me or alone - I served him for 20 years - he would freely shed tears of devotion. At the Elevation he seemed to be in ecstasy."⁷

EIGHT

Pope Gregory XVI diligently carried on his usual activities until twelve days before his death. The feast of the Ascension, May 2, 1846, he celebrated a solemn Mass at St. John Lateran and gave what would be his last public blessing to the people from the balcony of the basilica. That evening he felt sick but paid little attention to it because he had promised to preside at the papal Mass in the Church of St. Philip Neri on that saint's feast day, May 26th. However, a build-up of fluid in his lungs prevented him from keeping his promise. The night of May 31 - June 1 he became very ill. At 7:00 AM June 1st a consultation was held, but the Pope had already lost consciousness. He died at 9:30 AM. It was Pentecost Monday, 1846. He was 81 years of age, 8 months and 14 days. His pontificate had lasted 15 years, 3 months and 29 days.

Very few were present at his peaceful death: Father Augustine Proia, under-sacristan of the Vatican who administered the sacrament, had him recite the Creed and gave him absolution, Father Francis Vaures OFM Conv., penitentiary of St. Peter's Basilica, Monsignor Augustine Borgia; his faithful personal secretary Moroni, and the Cardinal Secretary of State, Lambruschini, who recited the prayers for the dying. The Pope's confessor, Cardinal Ambrose Bianchi, a Camaldolese was called but was celebrating Mass. He immediately came to the Pope's bedside as soon as he had finished but Gregory XVI had expired. Other cardinals had been advised also and came but it was too late. The brief illness of the Pope had not been made public and no one expected so sudden a death.¹

Pope Gregory XVI was the second last temporal papal sovereign. All the fifteen years of his pontificate were marked by revolutions, conspiracies, and underground subversive activities of various sects. He energetically resisted them. He has been judged harshly

by some and praised by others for his resistance. Some say that any reigning pontiff in his situation would have done the same, "for one cannot expect that a legitimate sovereign just abandon his State nor that a State commit suicide."² At the same time, it is recognized that the persecuted political government of Gregory XVI was marked by healthy modern innovations, in spite of the difficult times. Recent research and studies are uncovering his vast and wise governmental activities.

Gregory XVI's accomplishments as spiritual leader of the Church are admirable and more evident. His successor, Pope Pius IX, at the beginning of his pontificate declared, "future generations will certainly admire his glorious deeds written in letters of gold in the history of the Church. "Pope Pius XII, praising his merits, hoped, "with ardent desire that just recognition and praise be given to such a great man and his name be duly honored."³

Mary Euphrasia taught that to Pope Gregory XVI and to his counselors we owe eternal gratitude. She called these "Our Champions," for to them we owe our existence, the possibility to live our universal vision and zeal, and our missionary spirit threatened in our birthing. We treasure her teaching in our hearts, together with the encouragement, the true light and flame of our Good Shepherd mission which Gregory XVI re-ignited in the heart of our foundress. She continues to rekindle it in us - for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Truly, "Gratitude is the memory of the heart!"

- Rose Virginie Warnig, RGS

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Carlo Cardinal Odescalchi
(1785-1841)



Ancestral Coat of Arms of the Odescalchi family, used by the cardinal's uncle, Pope Innocent XI.



Coat of Arms of Society of Jesus. The cardinal joined the Jesuits in 1838, three years before his death.

IV

Carlo Cardinal Odescalchi (1785-1841)

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Cardinal Carlo Odescalchi (1785-1841)

ONE

In the early 1940' s I visited the palace of the Odescalchi family, opposite the ancient church of the Holy Apostles in Rome. I remember the palace as a building with stately halls, frescoed rooms, mirrors set in the walls, 18th century silk hangings. It also had a beautiful chapel where Mass was celebrated for the family. Over 200 years ago the little boy Carlo Odescalchi had attended Mass there at his mother's side, the virtuous Catherine Giustiniani. In this chapel Carlo chose Aloysius Gonzaga as a special model.

I also visited the Odescalchi Castle several times with the young girls I used to accompany on summer vacations at Santa Marinella after World War II. This castle is located on the Mediterranean Sea about halfway between Rome and Santa Severa. The young Carlo Odescalchi and his family would have passed their summers at this enchanted spot. In the 1960's I returned to find an abandoned building. I was saddened. To me this remained a precious spot because of its connection with Carlo Odescalchi, who was held in such high esteem and gratitude by Saint Mary Euphrasia

But Saint Mary Euphrasia's first contact with Cardinal Odescalchi was not sad. Rather, it was full of a daring hope. She did not know this man, but was searching for someone, somewhere who might help her. She had heard from Father Jules Morel that the Cardinal was the person closest to the Pope in Rome, that he was an ecclesiastic thoroughly acquainted with Roman usages and, consequently, the best guide she could have. This man, she had been told, had spent his life defending Roman doctrines and causing them to be loved, and his learning and loyalty to the Pope had resulted in his appointment as Consultor.

Was it a coincidence or act of Providence, that Mary Euphrasia should write him, as she did on August 15, 1833, at the very time he, on his part, was anguishing over the needs of his people, praying for the most abandoned ones? She had become convinced that for God's glory the houses she had established should multiply in order to spread their ministries to more who needed the special care of the Good Shepherd.

That letter was to establish the basis for the Congregation of the Good Shepherd of Angers. In turn it resulted in Good Shepherd homes in Rome and later throughout Italy and the world.

The letter happened this way. One day while Mary Euphrasia was praying Vespers with the sisters, she experienced a strong inner urge to write to the, to her, unknown Cardinal Odiscalchi and lay before him her plan of a central administration, a generalate. She went to her office and on her knees wrote a long letter. It was humble and simple. It began with Mary's words, "I am the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word", and concluded with a profession of submission, "I desire nothing but God's greater glory. If the Sovereign Pontiff or Your Eminence perceives that there are obstacles to the erection of a generalate, I humbly submit myself."¹

Shortly after writing this letter, Mary Euphrasia was visited by the vicar general of the Diocese of Angers. He came to tell her to go easy and not push the cause of the generalate until times were less stormy. "But I have just written to Rome", she replied. "O, what madness! Do you not realize women have no say in Roman affairs? Your letter will go from office to office and will then be returned to you dogeared and tattered with a note telling you politely to mind your own business."

However, things did not turn out as the Vicar General had predicted, even though days passed and no answer was immediately received. In the meantime Mary Euphrasia had some intimations that she recognized later as a coming from God.

Her Book of Conferences for January 23, 1858 read in part: "Sometime after I had written to the Cardinal Vicar, an extraordinary thing happened to me. One night I had just fallen asleep, much more quietly than usual, when it seemed to me I saw a prelate whom I did not know. He was dressed like a Cardinal. His countenance was gentle and holy. He said to me, 'Fear nothing, my dear daughter. Your work will be approved. God has chosen me to be its Protector.' After these words he disappeared, leaving me full of trust, filled with confidence and consolation."²

On October 28, 1834, Cardinal Odescalchi responded to Mary Euphrasia with an encouraging and consoling letter. "...Until your request is submitted to the decision of the Holy See I cannot give you any official reply. But in the meantime I can with complete confidence assure you that your desires will obtain satisfaction. As I see it, all that you are asking for is a Pontifical Brief establishing your Order. Now, in general, all institutes of Charity are approved, and your Institute will be no exception. My only anxiety is that you say you are having opposition among the clergy. But all this will be settled if the Bishop of Angers, who, as you assure me, is genuinely in favor of the plan, will write in your defence to the Holy Father. His letter will end all opposition. Please take steps to see that I have his letter before the end of November. I shall await it before submitting your request to the Congregation and to the Holy Father, after which I promise you that all will be settled in a short time." This letter was shown to the Bishop who lost no time in drawing up a petition which he sent to Gregory XVI.³

Mary Euphrasia's dream experience had a sequel: "I was greatly astonished later when, on going to Rome, I saw for the first time

the prelate whom I had seen in my dream was Cardinal Odescalchi, our venerated Protector. Having told him about my dream, he said with great seriousness, 'That is extraordinary. Let me tell you what happened to me in regard to you. For some time I had been seeking an institute of women religious who would take care of these poor women. There are several of these institutes of men religious for boys but for young girls and women I knew of none. I prayed fervently to the Lord to hear my request, when one day, after celebrating the Eucharist for this intention and turning to our Blessed Lady also, your letter arrived!"⁴

Moved by this interior light the Cardinal espoused the cause of Mother Pelletier. With great affection he encouraged her intent, offered his collaboration and counseled her in the process to follow so as to obtain her goal. From that moment Cardinal Odescalchi, seconded by Father Anthony Kohlmann S. 1, and Father Francis Vaures OFM Conv., became the cornerstone of the new Institute. With his help it was approved by the Holy See in unheard of swiftness, and Cardinal Odescalchi became its first Protector.

Those accustomed to the cautious and slow deliberations which usually characterize Roman decisions were amazed that so experienced a Prince of the Church could guarantee a rapid and favorable verdict even before the Sacred Congregation had been appraised of the question. But more than human causes were at work. Cardinal Odescalchi was a deeply spiritual man, as well as a wise and prudent administrator.. He saw above and beyond files and reports. He received extraordinary graces from God.

He had the same passion for the salvation of souls as Mother Euphrasia and was deeply humble and charitable. As prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, he had both strongly encouraged the restoration of ancient orders and favored the foundation of new institutes. As Cardinal Vicar of Rome he was particularly concerned about the reform of morals, and hence the

mission of the Good Shepherd Congregation went straight to his heart.

He had accepted the title of cardinal against his will, as a burden rather than an honor. His physical appearance left no doubt about that. He was detached, and with a reflective gaze into an invisible world. There is no doubt that with his keen intelligence and vast knowledge of Church affairs, he carefully weighed all of Mother Euphrasia's arguments. But the opening words of her letter, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord be it done to me according to your word", were already enough to gain victory for her in the judgment of one so quick to sense the supernatural as was Cardinal Odescalchi.⁵

As for Mary Euphrasia, in Cardinal Odescalchi she found the wise counselor she had asked God to send her, and whom she had seen while in prayer. She had difficulty overcoming her emotion the first time she met him. From that moment the Cardinal was father and protector to the Good Shepherd. He pointed out to her God's guidance in everything connected with her congregation. He said, "In fact, why did you address yourself to me without knowing me? And without knowing I was judge of the penitents? Why did the Holy Father charge me with all your affairs? Why did he appoint me without any knowledge of mine, to be your Protector? Why did your Bishop view my appointment with pleasure? Many similar coincidences prove that it was God's Will and that this work is His!"⁶

At the same, time, Mary Euphrasia was re-assured and encouraged at the words of the holy Cardinal Odescalchi! She pondered and kept them in her mind and heart. All his counsels and spiritual direction were written on her heart. His letters were hung on the wall in her room. She read and re-read them so as to follow his teaching faithfully. This is the veneration Mary Euphrasia had for him and which she nurtured in her daughters who continue to venerate his memory with gratitude and affection.⁷

TWO

Cardinalal Odescalchi was born in Rome March 5, 1785, in the historic palace of his ancestors. His parents were Prince Balthasar Odescalchi and Princess Catherine Giustiniani, who was considered a model Christian mother and spouse. She lived only for her family, and had nine sons of whom Carlo was the fifth. Carlo's father was an author and scientist as well as a poet and Duke of Ceri.

At 13 years of age Carlo desired to enter the Jesuits, but was advised to join the diocesan priesthood. On March 5, 1797 he received minor orders and chose as his patron his saintly ancestor, the Venerable (now Saint) Innocent XI, whose relics rest in Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome.

In 1798 during war between France and the Roman Republic, to which Prince Odescalchi would not ascribe, the whole family took refuge in Hungary where they owned lands and possessions endowed to them by the Emperor Leopold I in 1697.

Early in 1800 the family returned to Rome, and en route, at Venice, met the newly elected Pope Pius VII. Once back in Rome, Carlo again took up his studies and obtained his degree in Law. In 1803 Pope Pius VII appointed him to his secretariat and sent him as personal legate to present the cardinal's hat to the Bishop of Olmutz, Anthony Theodore Colloredo.

On December 31, 1808, Carlo was ordained priest and celebrated his first Mass in the family chapel dedicated to St Anthony of Padua, in the Basilica of the Holy Apostles. His parents and relatives and a great throng of friends were present. All vied in celebrating with the newly ordained priest, through original songs and verses composed and printed for the occasion. One poet's

words reminded those present that Pope Innocent XI, glory of the Odescalchi family, was taking part in the liturgy, glowing with joy: "See how he looks lovingly on you! See how he holds out his arms to you! To you, yet so young, who have chosen to follow in his foot-steps!"

Prince Balthasar also composed and published a poem for the occasion - "The day when my son was ordained a priest of God" contrasting the anguish of war which keeps hearts in trepidation to the sweet mystery of that double sacrifice which fills the soul with peace and serenity.⁸

Carlo Odescalchi's learning, culture and piety far more than his high rank, signaled him out. He felt called to work for the poor and the destitute. He dressed simply and poorly always without any mark of distinction. At the time Father Carlo had to replace many priests who had been exiled from Rome by Napoleon. The Popes often sent Carlo Odescalchi on delicate missions which he conducted with great prudence. He was sent to General Nugent in 1815, to the Count of Vienna in 1819, to carry the Cardinal's Hat to the brother of the Emperor, Cardinal Rudolph of Austria. In 1814 he accepted some offices from Pope Pius VII but spent most of his time preaching missions around Italy, together with the future Pope Pius IX and Blessed Vincenzo Strambi.

In 1820 Carlo was appointed Canon of St. Peter's Basilica, and in 1823 Pope Pius VII told him to prepare for the cardinal's hat. He was very preoccupied by this news. For in 1814 Carlo had asked to be admitted among the Jesuits at S. Andrea al Quirinale. The Pope, instead, wanted him to remain a secular priest. In 1817 the then Jesuit provincial of Italy, Father Louis Fortes had sent him a letter "accepting him at a more favorable date."⁹

Moreover, Pope Pius VII, who admired Father Carlo's holiness and prudence appointed him Archbishop of Ferrara and

announced him Cardinal Priest at the Consistory of March 10, 1823. He therefore lost his chance of joining the Jesuits. From his letters we realize how costly this was to him. He was then 38 years of age. Vincenzo Maria Strambi, however, prophesied that one day Cardinal Odescalchi would be able to join the Jesuits who would count this illustrious and venerated Prince of the Church one of its most devoted members.¹⁰

The death of Pope Pius VII and the ensuing Conclave, retarded Cardinal Odescalchi's entrance into his diocese of Ferrara until December 23, 1823. As soon as he arrived he made every effort to restore ecclesiastical discipline and began the visitation of his diocese. For over three years in this city he was an apostle of goodness and charity until Pope Gregory XVI freed him from this responsibility in 1825, recalling him to Rome. He immediately took up again preaching and spiritual direction until Pope Gregory XVI appointed him Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. He reorganized this important ministry and turned his attention to the expansion of religious institutions. Gaetano Moroni (cf. our article on Pope Gregory XVI) witnessed that Pope Cappellari tenderly loved Carlo Odescalchi and often had him in his company during vacations at Castelvetro and Civitavecchia.

In 1832 the Pope named Carlo Archpriest of the Lateran Basilica and in 1833, appointed him Bishop of Sabina and Vice Chancellor of the Church of Rome. Cardinal Carlo resigned these and the role of Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars when the Pope appointed him his Vicar for the City of Rome on November 22, 1834.¹¹

THREE

Cardinal Odescalchi's zeal and austerity of life were immediately noted by the Romans who compared him with his predecessor the Camaldolese Cardinal Zurla: "That one, blessed be his soul!

He knew how to close an eye at opportune times. But this new vicar opens both eyes as widely as possible!" The one thing Romans always did and got by with, was this way of describing their feelings about their rulers and leaders. They would print them or write them and deposit them at the base of a marble statue of Pasquino at the entrance to the Piazza Navona. From here they usually found their place in the daily newspaper together with a response which was also picked up from the base of this same statue.

The moral and social life of Rome at the time of Cardinal Odescalchi left much to be desired. He himself described this in a conference with the Roman clergy. Among other things he said: "From the HOLY City, Rome has been brutally changed into a filthy wasteland: prostitution is so wide-spread that it has no confines. The sanctity of marriage is violated everywhere, its sacred bonds, blessed and joined by the priest, are broken. Obscenity in public places respects no age."

The proclaimed Restoration did not improve this situation. Decadence in fact became more and more generalized, more pronounced.' 'Even when a stranger's hand held the future of Rome - and the Pope was exiled from the Vatican - our country was poor in spiritual resources but was more rich in virtue than it is today.."

In his task of Vicar of Rome, this sad situation anguished the Cardinal. He together with the civil authority had to pass judgment on cases concerning public and private morality. Certainly, the new Vicar's personal austerity, his efforts to cancel many abuses and curtail the excessive days of the carnival festivals, or his efforts to restore the sanctity of the priesthood and of Christian life, did not enhance his popularity nor his welcome at the Curia. However, comforted by his faith and by the charity of Gaspare del Bufalo, Vincent Pallotti, Mother Madeleine Sophie Barat, Anna Maria

Taigi, and Mother Euphrasia Pelletier, he was encouraged to move ahead in the moral restoration of the people.¹¹

To accomplish this restoration, the Cardinal needed shelters and places of re-learning, orderly yet compassionate, where Christian means of education were the arms of compassion and justice. There were a few of these. One was founded by a venerated Carmelite, Dominic of Jesus and Mary, for the redemption of women given to prostitution. It was called Holy Cross alia Scaletta on the Via Lungara. But at this time it was anything but what it had been in the 1600' s. A dozen poor women, under the guidance of one of them, lived in ignorance and idleness in the midst of filth and disorder."¹² But Divine Providence was watching over these struggling ones.

The Cardinal had put his personal weight behind Mary Euphrasia's cause for a general administration for her congregation. As soon as he had been appointed their Protector in 1835, he had proposed to Pope Gregory XVI that they be asked to come to Rome to provide for women in need of hospitality and moral care. The Pope was willing and the Cardinal persevering. He frequently mentioned the matter to Mary Euphrasia.

When Bishop Flaget visited Rome in 1835, the bishop met with Cardinal Odescalchi. Their conversations turned to Mary Euphrasia. The Cardinal listened with interest to this firsthand information from a reliable witness. All he heard confirmed his desire to have Good Shepherd Sisters in Rome.

In November he wrote to Mary Euphrasia, "Msgr. Flaget has great qualities. I esteem him highly. We often speak together of the Daughters of the Good Shepherd. We hope the day is not far distant when we shall have one of your convents in Rome. Such is my desire. It is one that must be prayed for daily before the Altar that its accomplishments may be obtained, and you too must pray

for this important intention. God willed that I should be your Protector, and I adore His Will. But with all my heart I pray to Him to make me of real use to your community. Meantime, go where God calls you. Go seeking only the glory of God and the good of souls. Restore to poor women the peace they have lost, and, doing this great work, you will win your eternal crown. A thousand blessings. Your affectionate Protector, C. Cardinal Odescalchi."

A little later he wrote, "My desires are becoming intensified. We must have you in Rome. Msgr. Flaget whose holiness is undoubted, is one with us. He is ready to brave all the obstacles that may come up against it." And again in March 1838, "I have again spoken to His Holiness about this foundation in Rome and he quite agrees to it. In a few days I hope to write to you at greater length about this.."¹²

In 1837 at the terrible outbreak of cholera throughout the City, Odescalchi's great compassionate heart and heroic courage were visible to all. Two years earlier he had called attention to a few cases and invited all to prayer, penance and conversion.

The whole Good Shepherd household at Angers organized days of prayer and penance for the cessation of the plague. Cardinal Odescalchi worked indefatigably and heroically in his attention to cholera patients, assisting them personally in hospitals and improvised shelters, supplying their needs and bringing them the comfort of the Sacraments. He was fearless in his care and solicitude in this dangerous situation, putting his own life at risk. He encouraged doctors and nurses to visit the sick and He found help for those orphaned by the plague with the assistance of Pallotti and Del Bufalo and the young Princess Guendolina Catherine Borghese who was personally and financially active in the Association Pro Orphans which they founded.¹³

Odescalchi was also concerned about his Sisters of the Good Shepherd. Having heard that they had prayed and offered penance asking God for the end of the plague, he wrote them in his role of Protector, "My dear Sisters, I forbid you to repeat this in the future. Your way of life is already sufficiently rigid, and if your health has not already suffered in this instance it is because God has given a special grace for the occasion. Add nothing to the austerities of your Rule. Keep your strength for the greater glory of God and the good of souls. Remember it is for this end you have vowed yourselves." 14

The Cardinal wrote again to Mary Euphrasia in November in regard to his proposal to her to send sisters to Rome: "Come, my dear daughter, with several of your sisters, come take possession of the house destined only for you. Fly to the help of so many unfortunate souls who groan under a yoke of iron and who for a long time have been begging for your motherly care. Come also to console my heart. I want to receive you myself in the monastery I have had prepared according to your rules and constitutions. Come, then, my dear daughters, do not fear any obstacles. Fear sin only! Come destroy its reign by living your vow of Zeal. How great is the mission reserved for you in Italy! Arm yourselves with courage. Since God is for you, who can be against you?" 15

On account of the plague, not until June of 1838 was it possible for Mary Euphrasia to travel to Rome with her five Sisters in response to this invitation of the Cardinal. He had invited them with the Pope's approval. The day after their arrival they went to St Peter's Basilica in carriages sent by Cardinal Odescalchi. In a letter to her Sisters during this visit, Mary Euphrasia wrote, "Our Cardinal Protector came yesterday and I conversed with him for over an hour. I received so many graces and lights from him that I consider this day one of the most precious of my life. He said, 'When you chose me for your Protector, you did not know that I have the role of supreme judge of penitents. It is not permitted in

this country for a young girl, and more so a married woman, to frequent houses of ill repute. If they do so and are seen, a father or husband has the right to bring them to me, and I have the duty to condemn them to a certain time of detention. You can imagine how I anguish when I send them to houses where I am not sure they are more secure than before. Now, my dear Sisters of the Good Shepherd will be here. I will have this anguish no more. This is a great consolation to me. O, yes, I feel by the affection I bear you, that I am your spiritual father and it is time for me to fulfill my obligations as your Protector, which are intimately connected with those of father. You do not need to depend on anyone else. I will do whatever is needed to give you the freedom to carry on your functions and in the exercise of the great good you will be doing here. I will support you in everything."¹⁶

The Cardinal told them to visit churches, sanctuaries and catacombs while in Rome. He provided that they be present at impressive pontifical functions in St Peter's and at audiences with the Pope. The Cardinal also introduced the Sisters to many leading women in Rome, who all proved to be friends of the convent at the Via Lungara. He introduced them to Cardinal Lambruschini, Secretary of State, and to Officials whom he felt could be helpful to them in the future. Mary Euphrasia told her Sisters in Angers, "During our stay in the City of Rome, we had many consolations, perhaps the greatest being the words of Cardinal Odescalchi, 'I remember your congregation daily in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Of the 22 Offices I hold from the Pope the one I esteem the most is that of being the Protector of your Order' - and those words of the Sovereign Pontiff, 'I consider your congregation the brightest jewel in my crown'." ¹⁷ The Sisters established themselves in Rome June 5, 1838.

Cardinal Odescalchi planned for the Good Shepherd Sisters an extensive ministry in Rome itself. When he invited Mary Euphrasia to Rome in 1838 he offered her the Institute of Holy Cross.

Through the zeal and competence of the Sisters they very soon changed the whole aspect of this institute. They gained the admiration of the whole city. This proved to be one of the few sources of true consolation for Cardinal Odescalchi in his very arduous pastoral ministry.¹⁸

FOUR

Cardinal Odescalchi was always known for his gentleness and holiness, his acute intelligence and sound practical judgment. His personal life-style and efforts proved his intent was to raise the quality of human and spiritual life of Romans in general. As a simple priest he had used his powers of mind and government in the service of the Church. He used his appointment to a position of greater authority by caring for the needs of religious orders. As Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, he presented to Pope Gregory XVI and obtained his approval of decrees re-establishing the Benedictine and Dominican Orders of France. He had traveled through the Papal States on Apostolic missions, accompanied by the young Abbe Mastai-Ferretti, later Pope Pius IX, and he had preached retreats in Rome, labors which made him long for a community similar to that of Mary Euphrasia, whose aim and object was the service and care of the most abandoned of Christ's flock. But he was especially concerned about the exploited and marginalized. Is it any wonder he took Mary Euphrasia's request to heart?

He was also known for his great charity and service to the poor. When he heard of a distressing situation or illness and want, he often gave his own household linen to the sufferers. He visited the sick personally. Therefore, in November 1839, when he renounced his 22 offices and rank of Cardinal with the intention of joining the Jesuits, there was general consternation in the whole City of Rome. His numerous friends did not weep for his loss as

bitterly as did the poor. His departure was a great loss to the Good Shepherd also. On leaving Rome the previous year to return to Angers, Mary Euphrasia had felt she was leaving there the true superior of her Order, who was to resolve her difficulties and clear up her doubts. No one grieved for their Protector and friend so deeply as Mother Euphrasia and no one had so much cause for sorrow. She regarded the Cardinal as the real founder of her apostolic institute and felt that God had spoken to her through his lips. Cardinal Odescalchi used to call Mary Euphrasia, "The beloved daughter of Holy Church."¹⁹

In the course of his journey to Verona, Cardinal Odescalchi wrote from Florence a touching letter to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Rome. He bade them an affectionate farewell and told them he had recommended them to the Pope in a special manner, and that the Pope had promised them absolute independence in the government of their house, and had further said he would appoint them a suitable Protector. The new Vicar of Rome replacing Odescalchi, was appointed shortly afterwards to this office also. During his journey northward, Odescalchi continued his work of preaching and evangelization of that most neglected portion of Christ's flock, whose rescue is also the work of Mary Euphrasia Pelletier and the Good Shepherd Congregation.²⁰

FIVE

However, his decision was not a sudden one. Even while Cardinal Odescalchi carried on his intense activity during the plague, he did not forget his vocation to the Jesuits which he had experienced since childhood - a desire he had not been able to realize. Once the devastating plague had subsided, Cardinal Odescalchi withdrew for two courses of spiritual exercises. He then sought counsel from several knowledgeable and holy priests, after which he decided to speak of his desire to Pope Gregory XVI. The Pope was so surprised he asked for time to think and pray and consult

over it. The Pope asked the Cardinals to examine the case." All decided a personal good should be subordinate to the public welfare in which Cardinal Odescalchi had given proof of prudent and active zeal. Therefore not one of us can in any sense accede to his desire which would deprive the college of Cardinals of this jewel among whom he was first and foremost in responsibility of office and clarity of virtues."²¹ The Pope would not act according to their recommendations.

There was also great clamor of emotion in Rome. Everyone was openly expressing deep consternation. "The Pope wept and all the cardinals at the consistory were deeply moved when he announced, "Our venerated brother Carlo, of the holy Roman Church, Cardinal Odescalchi, Bishop of Sabina and our Vicar General in Rome, has asked us to renounce the cardinalate, and other ecclesiastical offices, and to become again a private citizen in order to join the Society of Jesus. Since his motivation and reasons which he gave personally and in writing seemed right and just, we agreed to his desires". The Secretary then read a letter from the Cardinal, dated November 21, 1838, in which the latter explained the reasons which led him to take these steps, - Moved as he was by a voice from heaven which for some time had invited him to embrace the nudity and ignominy of the Cross -. He then asked the Pope to accept the hat, mitre and symbol of the Knights of Malta of whom he was Protector and Grand Prior."²²

Is it any wonder people of Rome were deeply moved by this news? A Capuchin, Father Joachim, summarized the reactions of Romans in a letter to one of his confreres, Jerome of Vicenza, "The relatives of this hero of the gospel are all in tears. The poor of the city are deprived of their benefactor, and the whole of Rome feels itself an orphan having lost him who fulfilled the role of father and pastor. All agree, and rightly so, that our nephews and nieces will venerate on the altars our always beloved co-citizen Cardinal Carlo Odescalchi". Cardinal Polidori, in sending his brother Jesuit

the acts of the consistory in which Gregory XVI officially accepted the renouncement of the cardinalate, wrote, "Here are the Acts of the canonization of my former, and now your, Carlo Odescalchi." From the Vatican to the local Cafes, in the humble as well as the noble dwellings, one voice was heard, "Our gentle and most zealous Cardinal Vicar has disappeared!" After expressing their personal astonishment and pain, there arose a chorus of praise of the gentle and humble Cardinal which was repeated also abroad, far and wide.²³

Before departing from Rome, Cardinal Odescalchi had left a sealed letter not to be opened until after his departure. In this letter he left the whole of his fortune to charitable institutions and certain annuities to his household servants. Out of the money thus placed at his disposal, Pope Gregory XVI sent a considerable sum to the Good Shepherd convent.

On his trip north the Cardinal, who had not yet received the Pope's official acceptance of his renunciation, was received with all possible honors at Modena by the Grand Duke Francis IV. No one could explain the motives of this trip of the Vicar of Rome, motives told only to the rector of the College of St Bartholomew where he was staying while en route to Verona. As soon as the Papal letter arrived and was given to Cardinal Odescalchi, he threw away his biretta and exclaimed, "Lord, you have released me of my bonds! He then quickly removed his Cardinal's insignia His elderly chamberlain cried out, "What are you doing, Eminence?" and when Odescalchi responded, "I am no longer cardinal, dear Joseph, I am a Jesuit", the faithful Joseph kept saying, "What has he done! At this age you become a monk, you who are a cardinal, the Vicar, what have you done, what have you done?" Carlo Odescalchi embraced him and assured him he had provided for his future, and told him how happy he was to be "free of the weight of the cardinalate which had tired him out and worn out his mind and heart and strength."²⁴

In this way, Cardinal Carlo Odescalchi became Father Carlo Odescalchi of the Society of Jesus. He did his novitiate and pronounced his solemn vows at Verona February 2, 1840. He had been relieved of ten months of novitiate and admitted immediately to solemn profession. Cardinal Odescalchi had done a great act of detachment. He was accustomed to riches, servants, honors, high positions. Now, he found himself among humble religious, poor, mortified, obedient to his superiors like any other novice. However he would accept nothing different from the others and adapted himself in everything to the common life, including cleaning and keeping his own room in order.

After his profession he was sent to preach by word and example in many cities of Northern Italy. He was called on over and over for his gift of preaching but also for his holiness. These continual missions of preaching, which he carried on with admirable zeal, took toll of his strength, hi the summer of 1840 he was very weak, but as soon as he felt better he continued his mission. However he soon had to give up and went to Modena to recuperate. But to no avail. His health was broken. He lived his new life briefly. He died, 56 years old at Modena, August 17 1841. He was immediately venerated as an elect of God.²⁵

SIX

Cardinal Odescalchi's Cause for Beatification was initiated in 1927 with the canonical recognition of his body in the church of St Bartholomew. Documentation for the ordinary process was gathered at Modena and sent to Rome in 1927-1928. A Jesuit priest, Pietro Pirri, wrote a "LIFE OF THE SERVANT OF GOD CARLO ODESCALCHI (1785-1841): Former Cardinal of the Church and Vicar of Rome, Who died as a Religious of the Society of Jesus". It was printed in 1935, at Isola dei Liri, by Macioce e Pisani.

In his Conclusion, the author writes, "we have placed the Cause of the servant of God, Carlo Odescalchi, under the guidance of Our Lady of Sorrows, whom Carlo Odescalchi particularly loved and to whom he was very devoted. We confide also in the bright line of Blesseds and Saints - Pignatelli, Strambi, Del Bufalo, Mother Barat, Madame Taigi, Mother Pelletier, Vincenzo Pallotti, and others - who were united with him in holy friendship here on earth, that they may intercede for his glorification. Also let all who admired his integrity and consider him one of the great glories of the clergy and of the Roman nobility, offer the precious weight of their prayers for this intention."

-Rose Virginie Warnig, RGS

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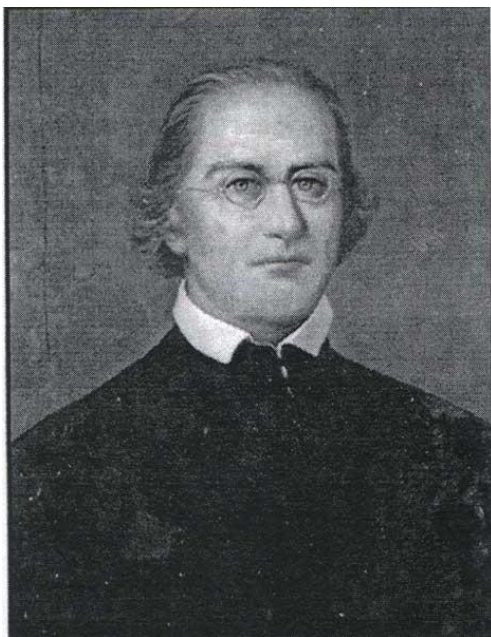
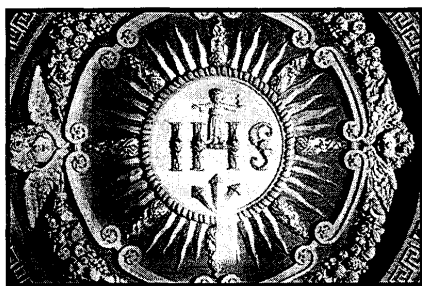


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Anthony Kohlmann, S.J.
(1771-1836)



Jesuit Symbol

Anthony Kohlmann, S.J.

(1771-1836)

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V

Rev. Anthony Kohlmann, S.J.
(1771-1836)

ONE

It was 1836. In Angers, France, Mother Mary Euphrasia Pelletier was superintending new construction in Angers at the Good Shepherd Generalate, which had been established just a year earlier. Already she was dreaming of founding a house in Rome for her girls. She thanked God for faithful and powerful friends like Cardinal Odescalchi and Jesuit Father Anthony Kohlmann, who, she was sure, would use their influence in Rome to help her with the project.

A knock on the door brought her back to reality, and she reached for support when she heard the terrible news: "Mother, Father Kohlmann is dead." Sorrow overwhelmed her: grief for the good man whom she felt God had sent to help her, and regret that the foundation in Rome would be deprived of his loyal support and negotiating skills. Tears rolled down her face as she remembered how on his own initiative he suggested to the Pope that the Good Shepherd Generalate be founded to benefit the whole world rather than France alone. In a conference to the Good Shepherd Sisters at Angers she said "He (Fr. Kohlmann) told us that never was there a more unanimous suffrage, than when the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars approved of the establishment of the Generalate. Thirteen letters had been written against us, yet notwithstanding the unfavorable impression these might have produced in the minds of the Cardinals assembled to deliberate on the question, not one refused it his vote. We had petitioned that the Generalate should embrace all the Houses which we should found in France. On hearing this, Father Kohlmann of the Society of Jesus, rose, and turning to Cardinal Odescalchi, Vicar of His Holiness, said, "I humbly beg your

Eminence to substitute the word France for that of universe." "Then you wish to create another Society of Jesus?" replied the Cardinal. "You are right," Father Kohlmann answered. "Truly it will be universal," rejoined his Eminence, "hi fact such a work cannot be otherwise." "Holy Father, we are all one in heart and voice in favor of the Congregation of the Good Shepherd." To this Pope Gregory XVI added: "And I also give it my heart and my voice"¹

Mother Euphrasia thought back to the letter she had first written to Cardinal Odescalchi in 1834. She had been waiting for an answer from Rome regarding her inspiration to establish the Generalate, realizing that with a central novitiate she would be able to found many more houses where sisters might be sent to minister to girls in need. She asked God to confirm her idea by sending her an abundance of vocations, and this occurred! The sisters in Angers were thrilled at the concept of the Generalate and with Bishop Montault's help, the Constitution now provided that new houses might be founded from Angers while waiting for approval from Rome for more widespread expansion.

In the meantime some of the Refuges (presently autonomous) objected to this centralization of government, accusing Mary Euphrasia of ambition and vanity. The Superior at Tours, as well as Tours Archbishop deMontblanc, also objected, the latter demanding to see Mother Euphrasia personally, in an effort to force her to leave Angers and return to Tours, along with other Tours sisters now in Angers. Such a move would effectively destroy Angers as the focus of the Generalate. At her insistence, Mother Foundress met Archbishop deMontblanc only in the presence of Angers Bishop Montault, who carried the day by his abject humility before the Archbishop of Tours for the cause of the Good Shepherd.

Applicants to the community multiplied, and although Rome had said that the project was favorably regarded by the Holy Father

and would be presented at the next meeting of the Cardinals, Mary Euphrasia heard nothing for a very long time. As vocations continued to flourish, houses were founded in Le Mans (Feb. 19, 1833), Poitiers (Nov. 1833) and Grenoble (Dec. 26, 1833). Mary Euphrasia was re-elected Superior of Angers, but objection to the Generalate continued to mount at Le Mans, where the Bishop encouraged opposition, and this was also the case in Tours and Caen. To Mary Euphrasia's great sorrow, Le Mans asserted its separation from Angers, and under the influence of the Archbishop twelve prelates wrote to Rome against the Generalate.

Determined to obtain official approval for the Generalate, Mary Euphrasia decided on August 15, 1834, to write a letter herself to Rome, addressing it to the prelate nearest the Pope, namely Cardinal Odescalchi, and she headed her missive with the words of Mary: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." When the Cardinal received her letter, it was like an answer to prayer, for he had prayed only that morning that through the intercession of Our Lady he might find a community to take care of troubled girls in Rome. He wrote to Mary Euphrasia, telling her about the opposition of the clergy to the Generalate and suggested that she ask Bishop Montault to write to Rome in her behalf.

Then Odescalchi gave Mary Euphrasia's letter to the Consultor of the Sacred Congregation, Anthony Kohlmann, SJ, who would prepare the papers for presentation to the prelates. In the letter Mary Euphrasia had not mentioned any of her opponents, and when Fr. Kohlmann finished reading it, he laid his hand on the letter and declared: "The truth is here." This dictum was unanimously approved and accepted by the Sacred Congregation.² In a personal letter to Mary Euphrasia Kohlmann wrote "I cannot tell you how this great idea, which the all-good God has put into your beautiful soul, of extending, so far as it may depend on you, this great work to all parts of the world, has laid hold of me. I cannot sufficiently admire and bless Divine Providence in the

choice of the great souls called to carry out this holy work, (including) M. de la Potherie de Neuville. Oh, what beautiful crowns God has prepared for you and them. Rejoice in the Lord, and consider the approval as a certainty. Meantime, recommend everything to our Good Shepherd and His most holy Mother, that the blessing of both Son and Mother may descend upon this beautiful work, which is destined, it seems to me, to give God so great glory, and to snatch from hell so many souls."³

Father Kohlmann suggested in this same letter that it would be well to add "Angers" to the official title of the Good Shepherd, in order that all the foundations might thus have an unmistakable indication of their origin and Motherhouse, and of the submission and dependence due to the latter. The title was therefore, to be: "The daughters of the Good Shepherd of Angers."⁴

Father Kohlmann continues, "In the second place, you wish to have the Bishop of Angers as Superior General. First, it is impossible to overestimate the inconvenience of having two generals of equal or unequal authority in a religious order. Second, your actual bishop is in perfect harmony with you, but will it be the same with all his successors? And, if not, imagine the distress of a Superioress-general in litigation with a Superior-general who was her Bishop!

"The Superioress-general, assisted by her counselors, should have perfect liberty in the government of the order and the distribution of subjects. Believe me that, by such an arrangement (as you have suggested), you will make a rod for your own back. In addition, for religious orders who aim at extension, there is no better Superior-general than the Sovereign Pontiff, for these orders prosper best under the immediate jurisdiction and protection of the Holy See. The religious of the Sacred Heart put themselves under this immediate jurisdiction of the Holy See, and they have good reason to congratulate themselves on it."⁵

At the time the Decree was signed, Father Kohlmann wrote to Bishop Montault saying that not only would the Sisters of the Good Shepherd have their Decree, but would, in all probability, be summoned to Rome to make a foundation.

Although the Decree establishing the Generalate had been issued in Rome on January 9, 1835, it had not been promulgated. The opponents of Mary Euphrasia were determined to have it annulled before it reached Angers, sending letters to Rome to that effect, even asking that Tours be considered the seat of the congregation. The Pope was very disturbed, and, influenced by the opposition, he ordered that the Brief approving the Generalate be postponed.

Cardinal deGregorio, however, pointed out to the Pope that all these objections had already been examined. He pleaded, "Holy Father, we believe that this Brief should not be withheld. In our opinion we hold that Mother St. Euphrasia is a woman of abounding charity. Although violently attacked, even calumniated, she has not uttered one word of protest or denunciation. On the contrary, she has excused her adversaries by saying that undoubtedly their motives are pure and their actions consistent with their convictions."⁶

The Pontiff was deeply impressed. "How many letters are there against the Mother Superior of Angers?" he asked. "Thirteen, Most Holy Father." "And she says nothing at all in reply to her accusers?" "Nothing, Your Holiness." "Then," Pope Gregory spoke with finality, "the truth is on her side." Accordingly he authorized Cardinal Gregorio to dispatch the Apostolic Brief to Angers immediately. This was done on April 3, 1835.⁷

Fr. Kohlmann considered the prompt conclusion to this matter

nothing short of a miracle and wrote to Mary Euphrasia, "It seems to me that this work is exclusively the work of the Most High. I see only miracles in it: miracle in that apostolic spirit that the good God has communicated to so many chosen souls and which persuades them to consecrate themselves to this beautiful undertaking.. .Miracle in the rapidity of the propagation of this establishment; miracle especially in the speed with which this affair has been dispatched in Rome. What ordinarily would take two or three years before being terminated, Providence concluded in the space of two or three months, notwithstanding the powerful opposition that you had to surmount In all this so many motives to forge ahead with a great heart and with complete confidence in Him to whom the work exclusively belongs."8

TWO

After receiving the news of Fr. Kohlmann's death, Mother Euphrasia reflected that this priest had the courage and insight of his own brave mother. She remembered stories she had heard about the French Revolution, the effects of which had influenced her own life profoundly.

Father John Adam, the local pastor in the small Alsatian town of Kayzersberg, had refused to take the schismatic oath of the clergy renouncing any connection with the Vatican, and although he had been deported from France, somehow he managed to slip back in, undetected. Or so he thought. Unfortunately, the civil authorities discovered his hiding place in a farmhouse, and they physically dragged him back for trial to Kayzersberg.

As soon as Mrs. Kohlmann, courageous Catholic mother that she was, discovered the police bearing down on their prey, she raced throughout the town alerting all her women friends, who apparently were ready to go at a moment's notice, and they furiously bore down upon the police squad and attacked them unmercifully

until the prisoner was released from their custody. Triumphantly Mrs. Kohlmann and the liberated priest led the procession of successful women back to the rectory in victory.¹

Such was the mother of Anthony Kohlmann, born in Kaysersberg on June 28, 1771. In 1780, when Anthony was nine, his father died, leaving his wife with five children under eighteen. At the age of 21, Anthony left home for the College of St. Michael in Fribourg, Switzerland to study for the priesthood as his older brother had done earlier.

Shortly after Anthony was ordained in 1796, a group of priests called the Society of the Sacred Heart, passed through Switzerland. They had wanted to become Jesuits, but in 1773 the Bourbon Courts in France pressured the Pope to sign the decree that virtually wiped out the Society of Jesus in Europe. The Sacred Heart priests (formerly students of St. Sulpice in Paris) still hoping to join the Jesuits some day, were driven out of Paris, and for a while lived in an old house of the Jesuits in Louvain. However, when the Revolution reached Belgium, they decided to establish themselves in Germany. It is at this point that they were traveling through Switzerland on their way to Italy in order to receive from the Pope approbation for their Society.

Anthony was inspired to join them, but since Italy was at war, they decided to go to Germany first. It wasn't long before Anthony was assigned to teaching German to the Fathers in Goggingen. The priests were forced to move to Hagenbrunn, however, when the Napoleonic wars moved into Austria. Fr. Kohlmann pronounced his Vows in the Society at the age of 26, in November 1797, after the birth of St. Mary Euphrasia at Noirmoutier, an island off the west coast of France. (Her parents had been deported from Soullans and brought from the mainland by the French revolutionaries. For three months they were imprisoned in St. Philbert's, one of the two churches on the Island

transformed into prisons, and after that time were forced to remain on the Island.) In 1799, when Anthony was 28, an epidemic broke out and raged through Hagenbrunn, and now Fr. Kohlmann found himself nursing the sick day and night. Completely unmindful of his own needs, he earned the everlasting gratitude of the survivors by his care and concern for their recovery.

In the meantime, unknown to the Fathers of the Sacred Heart, another group, which also intended to join the Jesuits when they were restored, sprang up in Italy, calling themselves the Fathers of the Faith. Nicholas Paccanari, though not ordained himself, convinced a number of priests to join him, and they moved quickly through the chain of command to the Pope for approval. They succeeded in convincing him that the two groups should be combined.

The first inkling that the Sacred Heart priests had of the situation was a letter from Paccanari announcing that he was their superior! Incredibly, Paccanari managed to get himself elected General and then proceeded to suppress the Fathers of the Sacred Heart! It is thought that Paccanari was not waiting for the Jesuits to be restored at all, since he carried on independently and broke up the group faithful to the original ideal. Although Anthony was still waiting and hoping to become a Jesuit, it seems that he decided to stay on with the group and was sent to Italy as a military chaplain to tend to the casualties of war there. Once again he wore himself out ministering to the sick and the wounded.

In Pavia and Padua the hospitals were filled with soldiers suffering from typhus. Deplorable hygienic conditions prevailed, and in the absence of appropriate accommodations, the men were piled on top of one another, feverish, and prey to all types of contagion and infection. At night the priests heard their confessions, but the stench, filth and vermin precluded any sleep for these valiant ministers. Fr. Kohlmann was able to bring sacraments to almost

every Catholic patient and was successful in converting several hundred more to the faith.

THREE

Fortunately for his health he was recalled from Italy and missioned to Austria to administer a new seminary at Dillingen in Bavaria. He was also assigned as professor of theology there and named Master of Novices. Much in demand at the college level, Kohlmann was assigned two years later to a new college in Berlin. When he was subsequently missioned to Holland, he met in Amsterdam Fr. Adam Beckers, a priest who would change his life. Fr. Beckers informed Anthony that he had just referred a local boy, John Roothan (who would one day become the General of the Society of Jesus), to the newly opened novitiate of the Jesuits in White Russia. Frederick the Great of Prussia and Catherine II of Russia had felt no obligation to be bound by the edict suppressing the Jesuits in Europe, and Pius VII recognized the Society of Jesus there. Kohlmann and his associates were astounded to hear that the Jesuits were accepting candidates and petitioned the General of the Society of Jesus to admit them as a group.

The Jesuit General, however, advised them to apply separately, which Father Kohlmann did, but in the meantime he left for London, where he had been assigned to take charge of Kensington College. While he was in England, he received word that he had been accepted into the Society of Jesus; and in March 1805, when Fr. Kohlmann was 34, he received approval to proceed to Russia, where he was to begin his novitiate in Dunabourg.

His joy knew no bounds when he entered the Society of Jesus, and he declared: "My great wish is to see all my friends sharing my happiness!" The words would prove to be prophetic regarding the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, whom he would see as "another Society of Jesus" in years to come and actually become

the cause of their spreading throughout the world.

The time requirements of the novitiate were waived for Fr. Kohlmann, and after he was in Dunabourg for only a year, the General assigned him to America. He and Father Peter Epinette set out from Hamburg, and after a four-month journey, they were warmly welcomed to Baltimore by Bishop Carroll on November 4, 1806. They reported to the Jesuit headquarters in Georgetown and in no time Fr. Kohlmann was made Assistant to the Master of Novices, although he was still only a novice in the Society himself! The Jesuits saw him as ideal for communicating to the ten American novices the old society's spirit and customs that he had learned so well in Russia. Of course he would teach some philosophy in the college, too!

The English he had learned in London was great help to him. The Bishop sent him to Virginia and Maryland to visit the scattered Catholics throughout the region, and when he returned, he gave a mission to a German parish in Philadelphia, after which he proceeded to visit all the German settlements in Pennsylvania.

At that time Archbishop Carroll was overwhelmed with work, being responsible for sees in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Bardstown, Kentucky. Around this time Luke Concanen, O.P. was consecrated in Rome as bishop of New York, but since he was unable to return to the United States during the War of 1812, he asked Archbishop Carroll to appoint a vicar general for the New York diocese, with full powers of administration. Of course Fr. Kohlmann was named, and he took up his duties in October 1808.

Fr. Benedict Fenwick, S.J., who eventually became bishop of Boston, and four Jesuit scholastics accompanied the new vicar general, Fr. Kohlmann, to New York City, where he was now responsible for all of New York, including Long Island and part of

New Jersey. Fourteen thousand destitute Irish Catholics comprised the largest portion of his flock and were located at the lower tip of Manhattan Island.

New York was struggling through a depression caused by the War of 1812. Jefferson's embargo, which caused the rotting of 500 ships in the harbor, and business failures amounting to five million dollars, left Kohlmann's flock impoverished, and thousands out of work. Concerned, also, for the spiritual needs of his people, he realized that one church couldn't possibly accommodate them all, and with his usual foresight, he determined to build a cathedral on Canal Street, between Broadway and the Bowery Road. The cornerstone was laid in 1809. This would accomplish two goals with one stroke: the new cathedral would be a fitting church ready for the return of Bishop Concanen from Italy (where he was still waiting for the embargo to lift so that he could come and claim his see) and in the meantime, Fr. Fenwick and Fr. Kohlmann would minister to the overcrowded St. Peter's on Barclay Street. By naming the new cathedral St. Patrick's, he tried to make it easier for his Irish flock to bear the financial burden of the new church.

Busy from morning till night they heard confessions, instructed converts, visited the sick, offered daily Mass and communicated hundreds. They monitored the common schools, raised money for the poor, held three catechism classes every Sunday and on the same day preached three sermons, one in English, French, and German.

Once they were called to the bedside of the famous Thomas Paine, dying in a New York shack. The author of Common Sense had been involved in both the American and the French Revolutions, narrowly escaping the guillotine before returning to America to die in poverty and despair, hating God and the Jesuits alike. It was said that Paine was interested only in being restored to health

physically, not spiritually. Fathers Kohlmann and Fenwick tried to help Paine repent his errors in attacking the existence of God and the truth of Revelation, but he only made fun of the priests, to the disgust of all who heard him.²

Kohlmann's work with the scholastics led to his purchase of real estate for \$11,000. On the property he built a school called the New York Literary Institution, which grew in importance and prestige as the years went by.

FOUR

To Anthony Kohlmann credit is due for the landmark decision in 1828 incorporating into the Revised Statutes of the State of New York the decision that any priest whose knowledge of a case was obtained in the confessional is exempted from testifying as witness. Father Kohlmann, to whom had been confessed the sin of larceny, had agreed to return for the penitent the stolen goods to the parishioner who had sustained the loss, one James Keating. Keating was willing to drop the matter until the police demanded the name of the agent, namely, Fr. Kohlmann. and from him they tried to extract the name of the thief. Two Protestant lawyers acted as his counsel, and Kohlmann was acquitted. The Judge, DeWitt Clinton, declared "Father Kohlmann and his associates are protected by the laws and Constitutions of this country, in the full and free exercise of their religion, and this court can never countenance or authorize the application of insult to their faith or of torture to their consciences."³ In time 29 states, five U.S. territories and the Philippine Republic adopted the enactments exempting any priest whose knowledge was obtained in the confessional from testifying as a witness.

In April 1812 he founded a school for girls in the same neighborhood as the New York Literary Institution. One can only speculate to what extent the influence of his mother's strong character

motivated him to provide for the education of young women to prepare for their role in life. Fr. Kohlmann sent to Cork, Ireland for the Ursuline nuns, and on April 7, 1812 Mother Mary Anne Pagan, Sisters Frances de Chantal Walsh and Sister Mary Paul Baldwin from Blackrock Convent in Cork arrived in New York and soon established not only a flourishing academy, but a school to educate poor girls as well.

Anthony Kohlmann served as administrator of the New York L.I. diocese for several years, but in 1813 a hard cross was waiting for Fr. Kohlmann when Fr. Grassi, Superior at Georgetown University initiated proceedings to dissolve the successful New York Literary Institution, saying they didn't have enough Jesuits to continue staffing it. Fr. Kohlmann felt strongly that keeping the school would insure the firm establishment of Jesuit education in New York, which he considered of greater importance to the Society than all the other states put together. He even felt that Georgetown College should be in New York, but if a choice had to be made, the New York facility should stay.

An appeal to the Jesuit General was considered to be hopeless, since he hadn't been pleased when Kohlmann, contrary to Jesuit tradition, took the position of Vicar General of New York, a post for which he had not asked, which he could not sub-delegate and from which no competent authority in America could relieve him. When the Pope finally named John Connolly to take over the see on the death of Bishop Concanen in Italy, Kohlmann was free and recalled to Maryland. He was immediately named Master of Novices at White Marsh, then in 1817, superior of all the Jesuits in America, in addition to being rector at Georgetown.

Succeeding Benedict Fenwick, S. J., he served as tenth president of Georgetown University during the years 1818-1820. Remembered as one of the most remarkable men connected with the Church in this century, "he was a profound theologian, an able

controversialist, eloquent in the pulpit in German, French, and English, which he spoke perfectly - a man of energy and labor."4 Somehow he found time to write two important theological books, which were best sellers in his day, and which attracted attention in Europe.

The Roman College was restored in 1824 to the Jesuits, who began recalling their most capable theologians from all over the world to teach on the faculty there and at the Gregorian University. After spending nearly twenty years in the American mission, Anthony Kohlmann was recalled, also, to assume the chair of theology at the Gregorian University. One of his students became the future Pope Leo XIII.

FIVE

For many years in Europe, Anthony Kohlmann continued his apostolic labors in behalf of the Church with his customary enthusiasm and zeal. Eventually the stresses of his exhausting life began to take their toll on Father Kohlmann. Although he was assigned to the professed house for a rest, he spent most of his time in the confessional in the Church of the Gesu. There he was sought out by German, English and American penitents living in Rome. Mother Euphrasia remembered his popularity at the Gesu. In time the Pope made him Consultor to the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, and it was to him that her famous letter to Cardinal Odescalchi was referred, so that Father Kohlmann could prepare the papers on the Good Shepherd cause for the Cardinals to study.

SIX

During the Lenten season of 1836, Fr. Kohlmann overexerted himself and contracted pneumonia, which ended his brilliant,

apostolic career. He died on April 10, 1836, one year after the establishment of the Good Shepherd Congregation.

SEVEN

Still stunned by the news of his death, Mary Euphrasias thought gratefully of the letter she had received from him, written to her at the same time she received the news of the approval of her Congregation. "This work," he had said, "seems to me to be exclusively the work of the Most High. I see nothing but miracles in it!"⁵ She smiled through her tears as she recalled the now-famous comment of Cardinal Odescalchi: "Father Kohlmann, you wish to make the Good Shepherds a second Society of Jesus?" Father Kohlmann gave him a smiling bow and said: "Thou hast said it." The Kohlmann amendment, as they called it, filled her with unspeakable joy, as she could now send her sisters to the ends of the earth to reclaim girls and women and their families from every country for the Good Shepherd.

Mother Foundress roused herself from her precious reminiscences, knowing that the hard task of breaking the news to the sisters must be done. Forever would St. Mary Euphrasia and her daughters associate the founding of the congregation with the memory of Anthony Kohlmann, S. J., who insured from the very beginning that her zeal to embrace the whole world would become a reality.

- Mary Eileen Foley, RGS

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ONE

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TWO

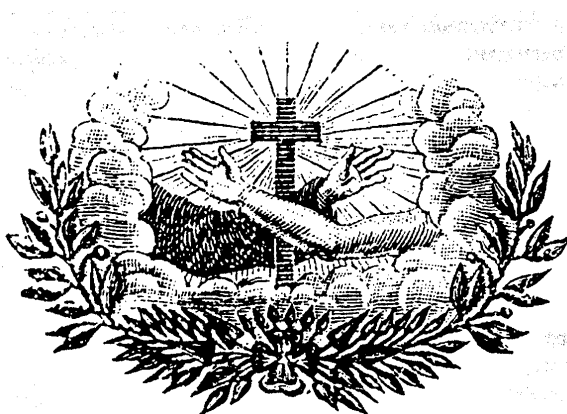
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VI

Rev. Francis Vaures OFM Conv. (1805-1857)

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Symbol of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual

Rev. Francis Vaures OFM Conv.
(1805-1857)

In her deep sense of gratitude, Saint Mary Euphrasia was careful that time and daily occupations should never erase from grateful memory any one of those persons who had so willingly and successfully assisted her in the unfolding process of Rome's approval of the Good Shepherd Congregation with a centralized leadership which would open it to world expansion, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. There were two who did much ground work and in a rather hidden way. One was Father Anthony Kohlmann of whom the previous article has given some insights. One who worked very closely with him was Father Francis Vaures, Conventual Franciscan.

These two eminent religious, well versed in the smallest details of Roman procedure, placed at the service of the Mary Euphrasia at Angers, their influence which was considerable, their savoir-faire and the immense prestige of their knowledge and virtue. To them, more than to anyone else, is due the honor of having contributed to the success of this difficult cause to which both had a holy admiration¹.

Saint Mary Euphrasia wrote in a letter of March 4, 1855, "Father Vaures is to be remembered forever in our Order. Through him, Mary miraculously saved us." And in her conferences we read, "You are aware also that we owe much to Father Vaures, French Penitentiary at St Peter's in Rome, who used every means in his power to bring about the erection of our congregation with a generalate. We shall write in our Annals the benefits we have received from the Church in Rome"².

It was in this way Mary Euphrasia was to recall his memory to her sisters, urging them to always remember this friend, along with others who had aided her in getting the Institute underway.

ONE

Father Vaures was held in high esteem in Roman circles. In Angers the Countess D'Andigne considered him a personal friend. One occasion when he visited her in Angers, she arranged a meeting between him and Mary Euphrasia, and asked him to interest himself in the latter's concern. She assured him the sisters were worthy of all he could do for them. As a result Father Vaures had examined, both as a theologian and canonist, Mary Euphrasia's project of a general government which was not customary for women religious at that time.

After doing so, he stated emphatically that a central government would be of immense advantage to the Good Shepherd Order; in fact, that it was essential to its development. Moreover, it seemed natural to him that Angers, which was founding new houses, would logically be at the head of the group.

Thereafter, he was to remain a firm friend and supported Mary Euphrasia's inspiration and request wholeheartedly at Rome. Father Vaures became so enthusiastic about Mary Euphrasia's project of a generalate that in one day he went six times from the Vatican to the Quirinal Palace in reference to it. He also kept Mary Euphrasia and his friend madame D'Andigne informed of all the circumstances attending the course of this project. He diligently followed the process of eventual approval and through Father Kohlmann knew of the Pope's signing of the awaited decree of approval. He immediately notified the Bishop of Angers, Montault-des-Isles. He wrote the bishop on January 17, 1835: "I am sending you Father Kohlmann's letter, it will console your Lordship and those poor sisters who have had to suffer so much. You will see that not only are they being granted the solemn brief for which they asked, but there is also talk of their being called to Rome! 3

This wonderful news produced among the sisters a real explosion of joy and gratitude too deep for them to express in words. They were so overwhelmed with happiness they could hardly contain their joy and gratitude to God. Mary Euphrasia humbly mused that the Lord had raised her out of her humiliation for the sake of the mission he had given her.

In 1838 Mary Euphrasia traveled to Rome. Father Vaures, notified in the early morning of her arrival, in turn notified Cardinal Odescalchi, who arranged with him to accompany the sisters to the solemn services at St Peter's Basilica. After the services Pope Gregory was walking down the center aisle where the sisters were in the front row, thanks to Father Vaures, who there and then presented them to the Pope as he drew near. The Pope stopped and showed joy at seeing them. He then placed his hands on Mary Euphrasia's head and blessed her tenderly. She said she felt Christ himself had blessed her.

Father Vaures then suggested they visit with their Cardinal Protector Odescalchi and he escorted them into the Cardinal's presence. Father Vaures told Mary Euphrasia the Cardinal was in no hurry at this time, therefore she could speak leisurely with him about whatever she wished. Mary Euphrasia said later she had received from the Cardinal an understanding of the extent of her divine mission: "Here only was I able to fully disclose my thoughts. What divine consolations I have received." Father Vaures had chosen the right moment.

It was Father Vaures who addressed a petition to Pope Gregory in which he described the unhappy situation of the women prisoners at Holy Cross convent in Rome. He expressed the advantage they would gain should they be confided to the care and teaching of Mary Euphrasia's sisters. He added that it would be easy to call some of these sisters to Rome since the generalate was producing such abundant fruit, recognized even by those who at

the outset had firmly opposed it. The Pope then empowered Cardinal Odescalchi to make arrangements for the sisters' foundation at Rome. Thus in the spring of 1838 Mary Euphrasia with her faithful companion, Madame D'Andigne and the five sisters for the Roman mission, journeyed to Rome. The Cardinal had written to Mary Euphrasia that he would be at Holy Cross convent to receive them! 4

Father Vaures made sure they would have a private audience with the Pope and brought the invitation personally to Mary Euphrasia. On the appointed day he himself accompanied them to Cardinal Odescalchi who presented them to Gregory XVI. "On that day, said Mary Euphrasia, our congregation was planted deeper in the bosom of the Catholic Church".5 Father Vaures was always attentive to whatever he could do to facilitate Mary Euphrasia's visit to the Pope and the Cardinal, and also to other high ranking lay people especially among the nobility who could be helpful to her in her Roman mission.

Father Vaures also accompanied the sisters to visit another womens' prison at St Michael's. He had been touched by Mary Euphrasia's compassion when visiting with the women at Holy Cross, as well as by her reverence before the Pope. When they found themselves before the 200 prisoners at St Michael's Mary Euphrasia and her sisters were touched to tears and would have embraced them all in their love and compassion. It was Father Vaures' turn to be touched when he heard the women in chorus call out to the sisters, "White Sisters, please do stay with us to love us and make us happy!"

Who but Father Vaures could have suggested to Pope Gregory XVI Mary Euphrasia's desire to have a relic of a virgin and martyr from the Catacombs for her community in Angers? On the tomb was engraved: "Acapes, in pace!", and a vial containing some of the martyr's blood stood nearby. This precious relic had impressed

Mary Euphrasia when they visited the Catacombs. The Pope responded, "It is only right that the body of Saint Charity be given to the sisters who do so much charity." He gave orders that it be sent to the mother-house at Angers. Several miraculous cures were obtained through Saint Charity's intercession. The father of a French missionary in Chile who was blind and disabled regained his sight and physical powers while praying before these precious relics in 1839, shortly after they arrived at the convent. Two of the sisters of the community also were cured in a miraculous manner while praying before the saint.

Father Vaures had been educated at the Seminary at Nantes. He knew and understood the Vendean temperament. As interpreter for the distinguished French visitors to whom the Pope gave audience he was often in the Pope's presence and used these opportunities to speak to the Pope of the Good Shepherd for he considered Mother Euphrasia's project and mission to be for the greater good of the Church. He and Mary Euphrasia kept up a touching correspondence. He executed her commissions in Rome and he dispatched the copies of the new Constitutions of 1835 from Rome to Angers in March 1837. He was always ready to be of any service possible to her institute. He came quite often to Angers to visit his friends there.

He often spoke to Mother Euphrasia of the great good the French Sisters could do in Rome if established there. It was through him that Mary Euphrasia's connection with Cardinal Odescalchi began. At his suggestion she asked the Pope to appoint the Cardinal Vicar Odescalchi Protector of the Institute, and it was he who, acting as her agent, in relation to Cardinal Odescalchi and with her authority, kept constantly before the Cardinal the interests of the institute. Mary Euphrasia used to say, "At Rome, near the Pope, are our best friends!" These relations with Rome, besides being very favorable to the extension of the Good Shepherd, also marked it with something of the universality of the Church.⁶

At one of his visits to Angers, Father Vaures presented Mary Euphrasia a document signed by the Pope, and gave her news of the soon to be foundation at Rome. Fifteen days later he returned to Angers and presided over a Clothing ceremony. He then returned to Rome, 'where his duties brought him near the Pope whom he saw at least twice daily.⁷ He had made himself defender of the cause of the Good Shepherd, therefore he informed the Pope of the change of mind of the Archbishop of Tours. The Pope responded, "Let us thank God. I always hoped he would see things in their true light. Should you be writing to the Bishop of Angers, tell him how glad I am to hear this news. God's blessing will continue to rest on the Sisters of the Good Shepherd at Angers".⁸

TWO

In the Good Shepherd Vow Book at Philadelphia, dating from 1849-1850 we find some interesting details about the erection of the Good Shepherd Congregation with a centralized leadership in which Father Vaures was very active. We also find information concerning his early life and his other activities in his own Order of Friars Minor Conventual. These last two are especially valuable for no other mention could be found of his early and personal life.

The narrative in the Vow Book of Philadelphia is said to have been written in 1849.... "The princes of the Church whilest approving the idea of a superior general and being disposed to aid it, did not conceal the fact that its approbation would meet with many difficulties.

"It was now that God, who loves to choose weak instruments, selected to accomplish this so much thwarted work, the Rev. Father Vaures, living in Rome, and whose history is sufficiently interesting to be related here.

"Born in Auvergne in 1805 of a poor family, Fr Vaures was early destined by his parents to lead the life of the Auvergnese, who monopolize a certain calling in the whole west of France, and every year brought him to Nantes in the humble capacity of a chimney sweeper. He was not long in attracting the attention of the Abbe Angebault, then Canon in the Cathedral of Nantes, now (1849) Bishop of Angers, who placed him in the Minor Seminary.

"After finishing there a course of brilliant studies, young Vaures entered the high seminary, where he attained the order of deacon. Feeling himself called upon to visit Rome he left the diocese of Nantes. Arrived at Rome he entered the Order of Franciscans, among the Conventual Minors, where he received the Order of Priesthood in 1828. His good qualities soon gained him powerful protectors, amongst others, the Rev. Fr Orioli, himself a Franciscan who was elevated to the Cardinalate and died in February 1849, and the Cardinal Cappellari, of the Order of Camaldolese.

"When Cardinal Cappellari was raised to the pontifical throne under the name of Gregory XVI he did not forget his protegee, nor cease to give him marks of his esteem and confidence. Father Vaures, having been sent to Ireland by Gregory XVI on a mission to some Irish Bishops, wished on his return to visit some old friends at Nantes, and in so doing he passed through Angers. Some mutual friends availed themselves of this occasion to introduce him to the Good Shepherd at Angers, and the Superior informed him of her plans and the obstacles opposed to them. Father Vaures soon understood the importance of the design and promised to use his influence to insure its success. It was agreed that, instead of asking a Bull, the registry of which in the Conseil d'Etat in France would occasion delay and difficulties, he would ask for a Brief which would not require all the formality practised by a numerous and jealous police towards Papal Bulls.

"On his return to Rome Father Vaures, faithful to his promise, presented the affair to the Sovereign Pontiff. The question was submitted to the Congregation of Regulars, who made a favorable report, and some months after, in 1835, Mother Euphrasia received from Rome a Pontifical Brief authorizing a Superior General, and the house of Angers was erected into the Mother-house of all the houses it would found itself, or that its daughters might found, that they should and do recognize for their Superior General, the Superior of the House of Angers.

"The success which crowned this undertaking clearly shows the particular providence of God... By the Brief of Gregory XVI the house of Angers was erected into a mother house... and in virtue of the Brief it was entirely separated from the ancient houses, who now found their independence guaranteed, and were at liberty to remain in the isolated position in which they had always been. The name of Good Shepherd being more popular, and besides authorized by the Brief, the houses founded by the Monastery of Angers are everywhere known as the Houses of the Good Shepherd.

"When the Sovereign Pontiff confirmed the erection of the Generalate, there was but one house at Poitiers, and another being established at Grenoble. But the happy influence of the Pope's powerful protection was not long in being felt. The limits of our notice will not allow us to enter into detail of the different houses established within sixteen years."⁸

From the General Archives of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual in Rome (*Regestrum Procurae Generales*), we learn that Father Vaures was appointed Penitentiary in St. Peter's Basilica for the French language on July 8, 1830. He was elected Commissioner General for the Friars of the Province of Bologna in 1833 and the following year, Consultor to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, and of Indulgences. On April 13, 1834, he was declared

Doctor and given the Chair of Professor of Theology. In 1837 Father Vaures went to the Friars' convent at Montelupone. He was appointed titular provincial of Denmark in 1844. Father Vaures left the College of the Penitentiary of St. Peter's on May 15, 1847 and lived in the Friars' convent at Santi Apostoli, Rome.

On December 6, 1850, Father Vaures was appointed Father Minister of this convent and was for several years its President. Father Vaures died there August 28, 1857.⁹

Father Vaures had many various and important responsibilities in the Church. Besides these he had generously worked for the concerns of the Good Shepherd, especially the Brief approving the Congregation with a central administration. He often visited the convent at Angers and brought messages to Mary Euphrasia from the Pope. He also had a role in the Good Shepherd foundation at Rome. He was always received with the warmest welcome and gratitude. He visited the whole complex at Angers and became acquainted with its organization for which he expressed the greatest admiration.

Father Vaures was most devoted to the learned and saintly Pope Gregory XVI. He was one of the few present at the Pope's death June 1, 1846.

The foundation of the Good Shepherd in Rome (the first out of France) which Mary Euphrasia gladly accomplished, was her heart's thanksgiving to those in Rome from whom she had received so much and to whom she told her Sisters to be eternally grateful. Father Francis Vaures is one of those Mary Euphrasia mentions by name, and the mention is worth repeating:

"You are aware I am sure, my dear Sisters, that we owe much to Father Francis Vaures, French Penitentiary at Rome, who used every means in his power to bring about the erection of the generalate. Would it be possible, my dear daughters, that you

should be ignorant of all that concerns our holy institute, and that were you questioned upon it you would find it embarrassing to reply? Oh NO! a thousand times NO! I could not believe it for a moment. We shall write in our Annals the benefits we have received from the Church in Rome."¹⁰

At this point I remain in awe and wonder at the Providence of God so subtle, at work in each life for the good He envisions: and that we can trace back to Abbe Angebault, later Bishop of Angers, the early preparation of young Vaures for his life mission which included his services to Good Shepherd.

-Rose Virginie Warnig RGS

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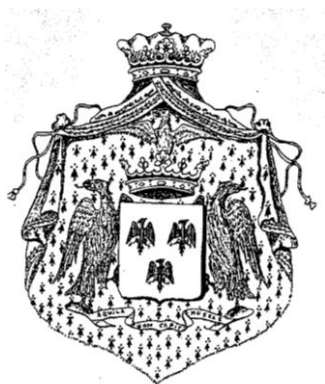
Countess Genevieve D'Andigne
de Villequier
(1761-1846)

VII

Countess Genevieve D'Andigne de Villequier (1761-1846)

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**Madame la Comtesse Genevieve
D'Andigne de Villaquier
(1761-1846)**

ONE

To whom, more than to any other human person, do the Good Shepherd Sisters owe the gift of Mary Euphrasia Pelletier as their foundress. None other than to the person of Countess Genevieve D'Andigne'. The countess had met young Sister Euphrasia at Tours in the 1820' s while visiting her friend, Sister St. Hypolite, superior of the Tours community of Our Lady of Charity. Her keen perception of human nature caused her to recognize the competence of Mary Euphrasia for filling the role of superior of the community in 1825 when Mother Hypolite completed her term. This led to a group of the Tours Sisters going to Angers and the eventual foundation of the Good Shepherd Congregation under Mary Euphrasia's inspiration and guidance.

All of this was brought about by connection with Madame D'Andigne' Villaquier. The lady who was a widow from her 33rd year of age, belonged to a family which a historian of the 16th century calls the 'Great D'Andigne race", one of the oldest of Anjou and more identified with the district than any other that exists. It traced its descent to the 14th century. But before that there were D' Andignes among the Crusaders and Count Theodore Quatrebarbes who delighted in tracing the lineage of old Angeois families, was fond of saying that a branch had remained and spread in Palestine, still existed there, and was known as the "D'Andigne of the Holy Land."¹

The countess would often recall the qualities in Mother Euphrasia which especially charmed her — her noble soul, her zeal, her refinement, her attentiveness to the elderly sisters, her wit. Their

bond of friendship went deep. All this led to the attachment to and numerous benefactions of the countess to the new foundation in Angers and to its foundress. And the fondness was mutual. In the book of her Conferences, St Mary Euphrasia, in speaking of her benefactors, declared, "And our good mother, the Countess D'Andigne', our worthy and pious benefactress. Oh, what did she not do for us!"² Among her secular benefactors and co-founders, certainly the countess has second place.

Countess Genevieve D'Andigne' was born September 1, 1761, at Angers. When she was 22 years of age, in 1783, she married Charles Jean Knight D'Andigne'. In 1791 he was made Knight of St Louis and retired in 1792. He died at Fort Royal May 25, 1795.

So, the countess was left a widow when she was 34. But she was well provided for financially, once she was able to recover some of her immense fortune. Her early widowhood only seemed to strengthen the traits which were to characterize her life -faith, fortitude and benevolence. Her special response to the Gospel message was in her total availability to the poor. To those in need, her heart and her purse were always open. For example, she would subsidize tenant farmers and she enabled many impoverished young men to realize their vocation to the priesthood. Until her death, July 8, 1846, she gave her time, talent and possessions to charity and to other good works.

The countess' charity to the works of the Foundress of the Good Shepherd seemed inexhaustible. She aided Mary Euphrasia through her gifts, her benefactions, and became her companion and financial backer in her extensive travels, and through her relationships with influential persons, unraveled difficulties or spread knowledge about the Good Shepherd Congregation, which she defended always.

But to return to the beginning of the Angers foundation. The

countess, a young 68, full of life and activity, accompanied Mary Euphrasia and the first sisters from Tours to Angers. She had recommended the Sisters to the Bishop and thought it only right that she should sponsor their arrival and see that they were properly received in her native diocese.

They left Tours on June 9, 1829. The trip took three days in extreme heat and dust, and their driver stopped at every inn, becoming hopelessly intoxicated. The frightening trip finally ended at midnight when they reached the outskirts of Angers. Because of the hour, Madame D'Andigne' stopped the carriage at the Hospice for Deaf Mutes, whose directress she knew, and the weary travelers had a restful remainder of the night.

TWO

Early the next morning they moved on to Angers. The countess presented them to the Bishop. They then met Count de Neuville for the first time and explored the Tournemine property which was to become the House of the Good Shepherd.

When Count de Neuville decided to build the Chapel for the Sisters, Madame D'Andigne' was the first of several noble ladies to sign the document of the blessing and placing of the Corner Stone, together with Count de Neuville the principal donor who had laid it. This ceremony was celebrated at a great feast organized by the community. Bishop Montault-des-Isles graciously presided accompanied by all the friends of the House.

From then on, Madame D'Andigne' and Count de Neuville emulated one another in generosity and services to the fledgling Congregation of the Good Shepherd. Count de Neuville admired the countess greatly and respected her as his coworker.

For the first Eucharistic Liturgy, Madame D'Andigne' assisted in

the preparation of the temporary chapel. She and the count provided the vestments, sacred vessels and all that was necessary to equip this simple dwelling for the Blessed Sacrament. A month later she gave candlesticks, a crucifix, a carpet for the sanctuary and a lamp for the altar. The count had preceded with a silver Monstrance, a handsome Missal and richly framed altar cards.⁴

And so it went all the remaining years of Madame D'Andigne's life. In 1831 when the question arose about founding the Contemplative Sisters, whom Mary Euphrasia was desirous of establishing, the countess contributed 5000 frs. Hearing of this, Count de Neuville quickly bought a house and some land bordering on the convent grounds. He and the countess seemed to vie with each other in good works for the new foundation.

In 1833 Countess D'Andigne' asked to be accepted as a boarder at the Good Shepherd. She wished to spend her last years in the convent close to Mary Euphrasia, whose natural and spiritual gifts she had perceived for many years. For a long time the countess had been a friend and benefactor. She now edified the community by her life style: rising at dawn as the Sisters did, attending the Office in choir, taking care of, at her own expense, the gardens and orchard, which she planted with many kinds of fruit trees, and arranging crops in the vegetable garden so that the house was well supplied with successive types of fresh vegetables in all seasons.

The countess also provided clothing for 21 orphans each year and paid for their maintenance if they wished to stay longer than usual in the house.⁵ The countess was also interested in the process carried on at Rome for the approval of the Good Shepherd Congregation. She wrote to her friend Father Vaures, asking him to interest himself in this question. He kept the countess and the Sisters informed of the progress being made until the Pope's Brief of approval arrived in 1835.

This generous friend provided for the erection of the chapel in honor of the Immaculate Conception on the grounds near the Contemplative Sisters' house. She united the chapel with the main convent by a long avenue of shady linden trees. These refreshed pilgrim-visitors, especially in spring and summer. This chapel was furnished with a beautiful statue of Mary. It was to be here that Mary Euphrasia would be buried, along with five subsequent superiors general.

The countess often accompanied the foundress on her travels to visit her other houses. Mary Euphrasia often became ill while traveling; a companion was an asset. Their first journey covered Saumur and St. Florent, both yet to be founded. These were two ancient abbeys half destroyed by the revolution. Mary Euphrasia was always greatly consoled to be able to rekindle a sanctuary lamp before the Blessed Sacrament in some abandoned monastery.

The travelers then proceeded to Metz, at the northeast border of Germany, and to Grenoble. They visited the shrine of Our Lady of Fourvieres, a place of pilgrimage, near their route. They went on to Poitiers. Enroute the coach was going along a dangerous road at night. Mary Euphrasia descended from it and made the long ascent to Puy-de-Dome on foot. They stopped at Poitiers where Sister Stanislaus was superior, and were there consoled by the quiet, fruitful signs of life everywhere, engendered by a spirit of union, of harmony and peace. From Poitiers, they returned to St Florent and to Angers, where they were joyfully welcomed home. This had been Mary Euphrasia's first long tour of visits to her communities, visits recommended by the first Good Shepherd constitutions of 1835.

Madame D'Andigne' also accompanied Mary Euphrasia to Rome in April 1838, together with five sisters who would form a new community at Holy Cross convent, which the Pope was giving them. The countess was now 72 years of age, an advanced age

then, but felt it her duty to go with them. She was a seasoned traveler and a helpful companion. Further, she paid all the expenses of the trip, a relief to Mother Euphrasia's purse and mind.

The travelers lodged one night at the house of Pauline Marie Jaricot, foundress of the work for the Propagation of the Faith and of the living rosary. Continuing their journey, they stopped at many Marian shrines and visited some Good Shepherd houses along the way. People on hearing who was visiting during the various stopovers spread the word, and Mary Euphrasia received requests for many more foundations.

On May 28 the travelers reached Marseilles. Here they left the carriage and boarded a ship that would take them to Leghorn and on to Civitavecchia, at that time the most important Mediterranean port of the Papal States. From there they took a coach on Monday to Rome, some thirty miles distant. It was at this part of their journey that Mary Euphrasia and the countess saw a shepherd with white and black sheep grazing on the hillside. The saint's zeal was kindled. From her childhood she had yearned to work for black children and their mothers. The countess was impressed by this new aspect of Mary Euphrasia's zeal.

Soon after this experience, which neither ever forgot, they all heard the cry, "Here is Rome!" The coach stopped, and they could see the great cupola of St. Peter's Basilica in the distance. Mary Euphrasia descended and kissed the ground, "impregnated", she said, "with the blood of many martyrs".⁶

Countess D'Andigne' was the only one in the little group who knew a few words of Italian, but this did not help much to convince the guards at that night hour when the city gates were closed and they were considered possible spies. However, she finally managed to get all the travelers beyond the closed gate to a convent for the night, after many words and gestures.

The Sisters remained in Rome and began to organize Santa Croce House, which was at that time a prison for women. The countess could not help but notice a new buoyancy and eagerness in Mary Euphrasia before whom a whole new world had opened and a new understanding of the extent of her mission. Mary Euphrasia had just shared her realization with the countess and the sisters as they enjoyed together the evening breeze from the Janiculum in the orange garden behind their house. "God has given me two missions", she told them, among other things, "one is to multiply services for women and children and the other to foster vocations to the consecrated life." Thus they were all enriched by Mary Euphrasia's experience.⁷

On July 4 the two sat side by side in the carriage taking them away from Rome, filled with fresh memories, new horizons, new love, and increased zeal to embrace the whole world.

They were not able to transport the precious relic which Pope Gregory XVI had given leave to Mary Euphrasia to take away—the body of Saint Agapes, Virgin and Martyr, — from the Catacombs of Saint Calixtus at Rome. Madame D'Andigne' had ordered a silver reliquary for the holy body at her own expense. However, this was still unfinished at their departure for France. When it did arrive it was delivered to the Bishop who had it placed in the Cathedral! Some correspondence by Madame D'Andigne' and Count de Neuville between Angers and Rome, finally solved the problem. The deed of property and authentication of the Relic arrived at the Good Shepherd on January 12, 1839. The precious relic was delivered to the Good Shepherd at midnight!

In 1842 when Mary Euphrasia accepted an invitation to send sisters to the United States, again both Countess D'Andigne' and Count de Neuville were ready to participate in this new foundation. In fact they got the whole city interested in it. De Neuville, as usual, gave financial help, and the countess joyfully provided

sacred vessels and furnishings for the chapel. She also added rugs and blankets for the sisters. Both were enthusiastic about this new, faraway mission and felt they could not do enough for it. And through the years both were excited when any news arrived from America. They treated this foundation as a personal concern.

Both Saint Mary Euphrasia and the community had been happy when the countess came to live with them as their special boarder on November 21, 1833. The annals of the Motherhouse state, "The Blessed Virgin brought us the noble Countess D' Andigne'. We received her as a precious gift from heaven. We had prayed so much for this intention. This noble lady remained with us as a boarder, and her kindness was such that we loved her like a mother. Our confidence in her was boundless. She was a support to our community, not only by her numberless benefactions but also by her sound advice and vast experience, She was ever attached to our Institute and its works." The countess believed her age did not permit her to join as a religious. However, for many years she assisted at the Office and had her own prie-dieu in the choir.

Persons who had known Madame D'Andigne' as a young woman said she was remarkably beautiful. Her graceful bearing and exquisite manners were characteristic of the old French nobility. But her gifts of mind and heart were even more marked—high minded and discerning, with a depth of knowledge especially in what pertained to God, solid judgment, enlightened piety, generosity accompanied by humility and discretion, and a real talent for temporal administration.

THREE

The longer Madame D'Andigne' knew Mother Euphrasia, the more she loved her. She considered her a saint and wanted to assist her in every way. Together with Count de Neuville, Madame

D'Andigne' worked to establish the Generalate, and that meant the foundation of the Congregation of the Good Shepherd. By her virtuous influence and her social rank in Anjou she won the sympathy of all for the Good Shepherd. Many who were prejudiced against the house were disarmed by this noble woman. Mary Euphrasia's letters often underlined the continual solicitude of the countess and her very feminine aptitude for detecting unspoken needs and meeting them.

FOUR

Madame D'Andigne' was for Mary Euphrasia, above all, a real friend. What a marvelous gift is a friend who sustains, consoles and encourages one in the pursuit of an ideal. Holy Scripture says such a friend is 'an inestimable treasure". Saint Mary Euphrasia, whose life was full of crosses, was truly privileged in this and other friendships.

In 1846, at 85 years of age, the countess was mostly confined to her apartment, but could follow the recitation of the Office and the singing of the sisters, which especially delighted her. She considered herself very privileged. That winter, 1846, was very hard on her and often kept her in bed.

When summer arrived and the garden the countess had so faithfully cared for was at its best in lacey green leaves, and the linden walk shady and perfumed, Countess Genevieve d'Andigne' quietly died the death of the just, July 8, 1846 at the age of 85. Her funeral Mass was offered in the convent chapel with her family present. The three chaplains accompanied her body to its last resting place.

Mary Euphrasia grieved deeply at the passing of her dear friend who had lovingly accompanied her like a mother in her travels and staunchly defended and upheld her in her difficulties and counseled her wisely many times. The sisters and all the women

and children also grieved at her departure. They too had lost a generous and kindly friend and benefactor, and one whom they loved.

One reason why the Sisters decided to maintain the ancient title, "Good Shepherd" for their foundation in Angers, was to honor the people of Angers who revered this title. Countess D'Andigne' was rightfully proud of being a native of Angers: Genevieve Pays du Veau, Widow D'Andigne, was buried in the Cemetery of Brain-sur-d'Anthion, Department Maine-et-Loire, Angers. May she rest in peace!

-Rose Virginie Warnig, RGS

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XII

Sister Marie Chantal of Jesus Cesbron la Roche (1782-1847)

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*Symbol of the Congregation
of the Good Shepherd*

Sister Marie Chantal of Jesus Cesbron la Roche

ONE

The Annals of the Good Shepherd of Angers dated 1829-1837 note that a widow, Madame Cesbron La Roche, born Milcent and baptized Josephine, had for many years felt drawn to religious life. Many family affairs had impeded her from joining the Sisters Hospitaliers of Beaufort with whom she often visited.¹

Josephine was the daughter of Mr. Milcent, who had been a constitutional deputy, Mayor of Angers, and President of the Chamber. His daughter had suffered greatly from much division and distress in the family, for neither her mother nor her aunt could accept the father's revolutionary principles.

Josephine passed her childhood and early adolescence as a virtuous young girl. Her most difficult years began with her sixteenth birthday when she married Count Cesbron La Roche to please her family and without any attraction to him. However, despite her repugnance, Josephine carried out her married duties in the spirit of St. Paul's counsels and was highly regarded by those who knew or contacted her. When she was 22 she was left a widow with only one child, a daughter, and her elderly and infirm mother, for whom she cared for several years.

After her mother's death and her daughter's splendid wedding, Madame Cesbron La Roche's yearnings turned to the peace and solitude of consecration to God, a feeling she had had in her heart since her youth. However, her daughter died quite suddenly, confiding to her mother's tender care her own two small children. Madame La Roche looked after them until they were mature and

independent enough to provide for themselves.²

Finally, Madame Cesbron La Roche was free to follow her spiritual attraction. She had provided for all the family and business affairs for which she felt responsible and was now able to say good-bye to her dear ones. Now her one desire was to fulfill the call she had experienced in her heart over many years. She had heard much about Mary Euphrasia Pelletier and the Good Shepherd, and in a spirit of joy went to visit her for the first time. Because of her age (she was 49 years old) she wondered if there would be hope for her.

TWO

Madame Cesbron La Roche's first meeting and interview with Mother Euphrasia was a moving experience. She humbly asked to be admitted to the congregation in spite of her "advanced age." Mother Euphrasia spoke to her with such depth about the sublime vocation she was asking to follow that Madame Cesbron was touched in her inmost heart. All her doubts vanished. She had often puzzled in the past over her frustration about being unable to follow her wishes to enter the Sisters of Beaufort. Now, filled with peace and joy, she realized that the Lord willed her to serve him in the Good Shepherd, to which she now felt so strongly drawn.

On her part, Mary Euphrasia sensed that this widow's maturity, her life experience, her social connections in Angers and abroad, and in a special way her deep piety and administrative gifts, were riches the Lord was offering the congregation for the benefit of the ministry he confided to the Institute. Full of peace and joy, Madame Cesbron La Roche immediately deposited her dowry and a sum for the community needs. She also offered some magnificent vestments for the sacristy.

Sister Cesbron La Roche was given the religious habit of the

Order on February 23, 1832, and received the name of Marie Chantal of Jesus. She had had just enough time to become acquainted with the community. From the beginning she identified herself with the congregation and placed her income, her property and all the belongings of a spacious well ordered house into the hands of Mother Euphrasia to dispose of as she pleased.

The Annals say of Sister Chantal that she proved herself a "model novice". She appeared united with God and motivated by zeal for His interests. She was very prayerful, charitable and ready to serve others. She was blessed with an enlightened and sure judgment, courageous and unassuming. As one can readily imagine, such a sister was a wonderful support to the foundress. She was not negatively influenced by the crosses and open persecutions against the congregation, which were many at that time. Mother Euphrasia found in her a ready helper in all her difficulties and plans.

It is interesting as well as amusing to us today, to read in the huge BOOK OF BENEFACTORS (1829-1848) the list of benefices received from Madame Cesbron LaRoche:

"Our very dear Sister Madame La Roche, now called Marie Chantal of Jesus, worthy benefactress of this House of the Good Shepherd of Angers, has enriched our sacristy with a splendid chasuble embroidered in gold costing at least frs 600, together with six candle holders and a vase of flowers. At her entry we received from her for the needs of our house, the sum of frs 2000 and since then a total of frs 2752 without counting her pension.

"This beloved Sister brought with her many provisions which the community has already consumed. We also receive wheat from her farms and other produce. Again, we received three barrels of wine, 2069 bottles of wine and 828 empty bottles.

"We also received 50 pounds of thread, 102 dolls (not dressed), 125 sheets, 40 table cloths, 47 dozen napkins, 10 cushions, 200 towels, 70 kitchen aprons, some metal water pitchers for our dining room and 5 dozen drinking cups."³

The day after her clothing, Sister Chantal was appointed procurator, that is, she was put in charge of the temporal affairs of the House. In this appointment she quickly distinguished herself. Having governed for over forty years in her own household, she proved to be a humble obedient novice. She loved and lived poverty and displayed admirable dependence on the one in authority. One day a poor woman to whom she used to give alms every week at home, came to the parlor asking for her usual gift. Not wanting to send her away empty handed, Sister Chantal went to find Mary Euphrasia and request permission to continue to give an alms to the poor woman. She repeated this act of dependence many times during her office of procurator.

Sister Marie Chantal of Jesus pronounced her vows on February 28, 1833. Bishop Montault-des-Isles presided at this ceremony as he had at her clothing. Many persons came to participate in the community's and her own happiness and thanksgiving. Sister Chantal's vocation to the Good Shepherd had a great repercussion in Angers and in the whole region. Her decision aroused many other vocations at that time. She was one of Mary Euphrasia's most devoted and affectionate followers.

Mary Euphrasia used to call three of her early sisters the "Pillars of the Institute". They were the ever faithful Sister Stanislaus, Sister Terese de Couespel and Sister Chantal La Roche. At the same time, in Mother Euphrasia's Conferences we read: "If ever there were grateful souls in our congregation, they were our two virtuous Sisters Assistants General, Mary Chantal of Jesus and Mary Teresa of Jesus de Couespel, although they were themselves among our greatest benefactors. 'O Mother', both said to me, 'we never

received a greater favor in this world than that which you did for us in accepting us as your daughters!' And yet, their fine natural gifts and large fortunes made them looked upon as very happy in the world. You know their generosity in our regard, how much they assisted us, and you also saw at the same time, their simplicity, obedience and self-denying zeal. This was the outcome of their humble, grateful souls; they knew how to appreciate the great benefit of their vocation, and looked on themselves as the last of all. The nobility of their sentiments corresponded to that of their birth."⁴

The following paragraphs, taken in essence from the Annals of the House of Angers, illustrate the esteem in which Sister Chantal of Jesus was held by her sisters.

THREE

Sister Chantal La Roche was a very spiritual interior soul, a very prayerful person, one could call her a contemplative. Her distinction and exquisiteness of manner alone remained of her former life for, on account of her humility, it would have been impossible to recognize the former brilliant social leader.

The sisters had promised Mother Euphrasia to pray, and they had prayed for a year to Our Lady to obtain Sister Marie Chantal's vocation among them. After Sister was fully incorporated through her vows, they prayed in thanksgiving to God for another year for His great gift of her to them. She had inspired them as a model of all virtues. She loved prayer, she loved her work, she loved her vows. She was faithful and had a happy spirit of community. They found her always even of temperament, and full of zeal for God's glory in souls. Her love for her vocation was great and they admired her precious fidelity to the foundress. Mary Euphrasia knew she could always count on Sister Marie Chantal for small as well as for difficult tasks.

Sister Marie Chantal was a shining example to the sisters and especially to the newcomers. Through her they were encouraged in the way of life they had chosen and not disturbed by its sacrifices. The older professed called her the "living Rule". Sister Marie Chantal presided over the spiritual exercises held in common. She was always the first to be present at the choir office which she loved in a special way.

Her obedience was complete and she would never accept any particular attention. The vow of poverty was dear to her and she used always the most simple of everything, be it food or clothing, and never disposed of anything without asking the required permission.

Sister Marie Chantal was instinctively drawn to prayer and recollection. Every day she prayed the "exercise in preparation for death" and meditated on a page of the constitutions of the Congregation. Often when the sisters had left the chapel Sister Marie Chantal was still there on her knees.

The sisters noted that during the last year of her life Sister Marie Chantal's fervor in prayer and in her pious exercises, as well as in her service, was conspicuously doubled. During her last retreat she seemed like an angel, her face radiated peace and joy.

Sister had a great love for the choir office. It is extraordinary that the last community exercise before her death was the Office of Matins. Fifteen minutes after this, Sister Marie Chantal would suffer a cerebral hemorrhage.

FOUR

On March 7, 1833, Sister Marie Chantal Cesbron La Roche was elected Counselor General, replacing Sister Genevieve who wished to return to Tours.⁵ With this responsibility Sister Marie

Chantal became a partner with Saint Mary Euphrasia in the efforts for the approval of the congregation with a centralized government. This was needed in order to promote the expansion of Good Shepherd ministry and mission across the world, together with unity of spirit and purpose among the members and the houses, even with the exchange of sisters.

Among the many difficulties which arose around this request for a generalate, or centralized government, Sister Marie Chantal was very active in writing and enlightening various influential people about its true scope. She was a well known figure in Anjou and much respected for her great talent and virtue. Her words and letters therefore spoke for themselves even to the officials in Rome who were charged with the study of the question.

Saint Mary Euphrasia wrote one letter to Rome concerning a general government, which would naturally imply a new Congregation in the Church. She wrote it to Cardinal Odescalchi whom she was told was the "top" authority after the Pope. But that one letter told him who she was, what she desired and her motivations. That was enough from a foundress. Sister Cesbron La Roche in turn helped her by writing many letters to different persons in Rome and other cities for she had many connections due to her social standing in Angers.

When Saint Mary Euphrasia was slandered and persecuted as ambitious and novelty seeking on account of her request for a general government of the institute composed of houses founded by the Angers House, Sister Cesbron La Roche wrote not one but a series of eloquent letters, addressing them to various dignitaries in Rome. Cardinal De Gregorio responded to her, acknowledging her letter to him, and raised the courage of the community. He wrote he had great hopes of success but that some time must be allowed to pass before the Holy Father would give his final decision.

Sister Cesbron La Roche also addressed Father Vaures OFM Conv., and Father Kohlmann S.J., a saintly priest and consultor of several of the Sacred Congregations. He had become deeply convinced of the justice and reasonableness of Mary Euphrasia's request for a general government. Both of these had examined the question as theologians and doctors well versed in Canon Law. With their responses they greatly encouraged the foundress and the sisters.

It also seemed to them that Angers, which was founding the new houses, would logically be at the head of the group. They supported wholeheartedly Mary Euphrasia's request.⁶

The foundress kept herself in the background having stated very clearly all that was necessary in the case. And as she continued to be vilified and her project fought against, Sister Cesbron La Roche continued with her correspondence. Cardinal De Gregorio at one time thought she was the foundress and congratulated her on the good her convents were bound to do! At the last sitting of the council Cardinal Odescalchi read Mary Euphrasia's letter to all those present. It was striking in its clearness, its simplicity, its humble submission and the charity which had no blame for her adversaries.

Sister Chantal Cesbron La Roche rejoiced with the foundress at the result of their efforts to enlighten the members of the council, the Cardinal and the Pope who were unanimous concerning the justice of the request presented to them. In fact when the speaker announced their resolution, "Most Holy Father," he said, "there is but one heart and voice amongst us in favor of the Congregation of the Good Shepherd." Gregory XVI smiled and said, "I also give it my heart and my voice."⁷ Tradition has it that at that very moment the great church bell at Angers gave three vibrant rings which floated through the air. No one had pulled the rope!

Sister Cesbron La Roche had been a faithful assistant to Saint

Mary Euphrasia and a competent procurator for all the needs of the 800+ inhabitants of the Mother House compound for over 15 years. During these years her grand-daughter Elizabeth came once a week, usually on a Thursday, thanks to a permission from the bishop. Mary Euphrasia had asked it in gratitude for Sister Chantal's great benefactions as well as being a member of the community. This visit was a great consolation to her.

FIVE

In early 1847 while Mary Euphrasia was in England she was informed that Sister Chantal was very ill. This so grieved her that she was anxious to return to her bed-side with all speed. After several days of intense anxiety Sister recovered and was soon able to continue her faithful services to the institute.

On May 10, 1847, however, Sister Chantal Cesbron La Roche quite suddenly passed to her reward. This brilliant and pious woman had joined the community in her widowhood, bringing there her talents and wealth. She had always supported the foundress especially during the struggle for the generalate. Hers was a continuous, efficient and devoted service of love to the institute.

The evening of her death, Sister had presided at the Office of Matins in the chapel, and after about fifteen minutes she had gone to the sisters' infirmary where she had slept since her first bout with illness earlier that year. She went to bed as usual, but after a few moments she arose and put on her dressing gown. A sister nearby saw her stumbling and took her by the arm just in time to save her from falling. "I am dying!", she cried. Then, "Jesus, Mary, Joseph!" Sister Marie Chantal Cesbron La Roche then died in the sister's arms! The cause, a cerebral hemorrhage.

It was 10:00 PM when Sister Cesbron La Roche went to God. A terrible storm was raging, continuous flashes of lightning lit up this

sorrowful scene as though it were midday.

Soon everyone was gathering in the infirmary, shocked and weeping. Saint Mary Euphrasia was immediately informed and hastened to Sister's bedside. She loved her so tenderly. Finding her already dead she could hardly contain herself. She threw herself on the dead body, called her loudly, begged her to answer. When no response came, Mary Euphrasia, heartbroken, burst into tears and lamentations. She realized the truth. Her beloved Sister, Marie Chantal of Jesus Cesbron La Roche had gone to God forever. Her sobbing tears revealed her deep pain and the grief of a truly spiritual and tender Mother.

"Never will we be able to erase this distressful scene from our memory", wrote the Sister Secretary in the circular letter addressed to the whole Congregation of the Good Shepherd. The letter continued: "The several devoted Chaplains were informed and immediately came to bless and anoint the dear Sister's body. The doctor also came and confirmed the cause of death to have been a cerebral hemorrhage.

The next morning when the great bell tolled the unexpected death, the Sisters and children who lived beyond the convent wondered what the sorrowful tolling could mean. They too, surprised beyond measure, wept bitterly over the passing of the dear Sister whom all loved and revered as one reveres a saint.

The previous day, May 9th, the whole household had joined in solemnizing the month of Our Lady with joy and celebrations. On this day, May 10th, all wept and asked "How can it be?" 'Is it really true that our dear Sister Assistant is no more?' 'What a terrible blow!' Such a loss can be borne only with God's help. Mary Euphrasia, like Our Lady, took her grief to the foot of the cross of Jesus.

As soon as the news of Sister Cesbron La Roche's death reached beyond the convent to the city, all those who knew her came to pay their respects, their regrets, and share their memories of her. They spoke of her charity, her piety, her goodness and readiness to serve. Her two grand-children took care of the funeral which was held in the convent church which she loved greatly. Her burial took place Thursday assisted by many ecclesiastics and families of the city. Many people followed in the procession and all talked of her great virtues.

Over 300 persons from the Good Shepherd accompanied our dear Sister Marie Chantal of Jesus Cesbron La Roche to her last resting place. Her departure left a great void in the hearts of all at the Good Shepherd. Sister was especially mourned by Mother Mary Euphrasia Pelletier who wept and looked for her as one looks for a faithful friend who has gone on a long journey. For truly, faith and hope and charity are ever alive in our hearts even as we embrace the-at-times painful will of our God.

Sister Marie Chantal of Jesus Cesbron La Roche's memory will remain ever fresh in our hearts, and gratitude to her will ever be renewed, for her example is a shining light."⁸

- Rose Virginie Warnig, RGS

LETTER FROM THE GENERALATE TO OUR DEAR SISTERS

In writing to you concerning the sorrowful event which plunged us into deep sorrow, we wish to apply these words of the Prophet to our beloved Sister M. Chantal of Jesus La Roche, First Assistant General of our Congregation whose whole life was given to zealous works for the glory of God and the good of souls: "The Zeal for your house devours me!" (Ps.68)

I would prefer that a more able hand and heart pen for you the admirable virtues that our venerated sister lived and the many services which filled her days. Truly, beloved Sisters, we confess our inaptitude, but our hearts, full of love and gratitude, invite us to a mutual exchange of memories which will remain with us together with a profound veneration and painful regrets for our dear departed Sister.

Our dear Sister Assistant was born at Angers in an eminently Christian and respectable family. She received a fine Christian education. One can say hers was a soul chosen by God and signed with His predilection, and for whom he had special care. Her first years of adolescence passed peacefully in the practise of virtue. At 16 years of age the time of suffering began for her, for in order to please her family she married a gentleman to whom she had no attraction. However, she fulfilled all the duties Saint Paul counsels for married couples. Sister was of great edification to all. At 22 years of age she was left a widow with one daughter. Three things then occupied her life: Prayer, the care and education of her daughter and services for the poor.

This Christian mother, after the brilliant wedding of her daughter, felt she was free to withdraw into the solitude for which she so yearned. However, God called her daughter to Himself and at

death confided her two children to her mother, asking her to be their mother! They became the children of her heart and like St. Jane de Chantal, she taught them to love God from their infancy and to avoid all sinful acts. They became the honor and edification of all who knew them. Arrived at an age when they no longer needed her care but were able to live independently, Madame La Roche thought again of her longing for solitude and consecration to God. She courageously left all and followed the call of the Good Shepherd.

What a beautiful day, what a memorable day was that on which Madame LaRoche joined our congregation. We received rich treasures and she became a friend and collaborator with our foundress. She was then just 50 years of age, but enjoyed very good health and a burning zeal for our mission. We all noticed that from her entrance among us our dear Sister abandoned herself completely to God and dispossessed herself of all her possessions. The day of her Profession she put herself, her will and all her capacities into the hands of our foundress. She became Mother Euphrasia's defender and protector in the disputed question of the generalate. From her novitiate she was zealous for the glory of her Divine Spouse, and zeal for God's house filled her soul with energy.

Mother Euphrasia greatly appreciated her dedication and love of the Congregation. She became the First Assistant General. We at times compared these two souls to David and Jonathan. Her judgement was enlightened and firm, she never lost courage no matter how difficult the task of the problem to solve. She would have given her life for the Congregation.

We are sure her vows remained intact to her last breath. She loved her vocation and continually thanked God for it. How sweet it is to us to give witness to her witness of edification and fidelity! Her obedience was perfect. She left her own will outside the

convent and identified with the intentions of Mother Euphrasia. Her humility was like her obedience, perfect and simple. For herself she used all that was most simple in food, clothing, utensils, whatever.

The year before her death all the virtues we had seen in her life, redoubled. This was very evident during her last retreat. She seemed to be an Angel. A short time before her death we noticed that even her health was stronger, and the very day she died we had been admiring her good health and buoyancy. Sister seemed more energetic, more active and busy in community, preparing different things smiling to the surprise of Mother Euphrasia and the Sisters. How sorry we were to lose her!

As soon as the people of Angers heard of her death they became mourners with us. The funeral was to be on Thursday. Many ecclesiastics and families of Angers were present and grieving. Other people joined us en route to the cemetery and extolled her virtuous life; especially her charity echoed in all hearts. We, her sisters, experienced our hearts filled with grief which penetrated all that had been our joy up to her passing!

We realize that only the Good Lord can sustain us and strengthen us in our loss. While we ask this of the Lord we also pray that her virtues be crowned by Him and lead us to imitate her brilliant example. May Sister La Roche obtain this grace for all who have known and loved her!

**- *The Sisters of the Good Shepherd at Angers*
May 24, 1847**

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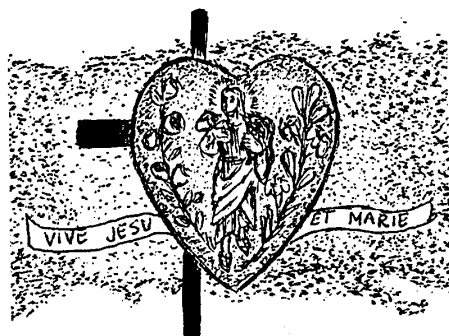
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Teresa de Cousel, RGS

(1799-1848)

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Sister Mary Teresa de Couespel (1799-1848)

ONE

So often in the history of the Church one notices how God makes use of human friendship to cultivate and spread his kingdom. Francis and Clare come to mind, as well as Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, Benedict and Scholastica, even David and Jonathan. We recognize another such friendship when we hear the words of Mary Euphrasia Pelletier describing her dear friend and often sole support in her trials, namely the famous Madame Melanie de Couespel, who later became Sister Teresa of Jesus. Sister Teresa was the model of what Mary Euphrasia believed a Good Shepherd sister should be, and one day she pointed this out in the instructions she gave her daughters on the spirit of their vocation:

I am happy in being able to say to you that our beloved Sister Mary Teresa of Jesus (de Couespel) is a worthy example of what it is to thoroughly understand the spirit of our vocation. We wrote to her to leave Rome, and when she saw our letter, she says she felt as if a voice said to her, 'Go quickly; there may be souls in need of you.'... She is a remarkable person, full of merit, a great benefactress to us, a religious who possesses all sorts of good qualities, and who might take her place at the head of any important work; but, instead....she desires only to have care of the penitents, among whom she finds her delight and consolation.

After considering such an example, will anyone show repugnance at being employed in the classes, or find obedience difficult when it is proposed to them to go and help at one of the foundations ?

Mary Euphrasia entrusted Sister Teresa with important responsibilities from the very beginning of her religious life, sending her

as the Mother General's own emissary of peace to the various houses to pour oil on troubled waters whenever needed.

Sister Teresa once wrote to Mary Euphrasia:

I do not yet know the great projects His Holiness has for this Congregation, but he is always busy about it. (She told Mary Euphrasia that) the Holy Father blesses her and all her flock. 'The Church has founded great hopes on you,' His Holiness says, and added that you are one of the most beautiful rubies of his crown. Oh, yes, Mother, you are the beloved daughter of your Mother, the Church, (letter dated August 18, 1838)

In answer to a letter of Teresa's which she wrote from Rome, Mary Euphrasia said:

I believe that before writing to me, your soul has plunged itself and been immersed in the charity of Jesus Christ. You have ceased to live: it is He who lives in you. May you give this blessed life to your poor sheep; you distribute to them the milk and bread of grace. O God, how happy I am! Continue, my dear daughter, to instruct the Roman tribes in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Oh, give many, many children to our Holy Mother, the Church, (letter dated September 11, 1838.)

TWO

Melanie Paulmier, who today in America would be termed an "army brat," was born in Angers, France in 1799 the wife of a French army officer, a wealthy, well-known Breton nobleman, who had once been Mayor of Angers. She was educated by a Daughter of Calvary, a religious who had been protected by the Paulmier family during the French Revolution. Like so many biographies of women of that era, the next event noted is her marriage to Colonel M. Claude Eleonore de Couespel, also an

officer in the French army. A charming woman, Madame de Couespel was popular with everyone she met as she traveled with her husband from one garrison to another in the French colonies. An intelligent, vivacious army wife, she possessed a warmth that attracted people to her in great numbers.

When Melanie's father died, her sister received a bequest in his will but not Melanie. So outraged was Melanie's husband, Claude, that he challenged his brother-in-law to a duel over the legacy. Melanie rushed between the swords of the combatants and succeeded in avoiding bloodshed. After Claude retired from the army, he became seriously ill and, to his regret, forced into retirement in Angers, where Melanie nursed him for two years with great courage and affection.

While in Angers she often visited the Monastery of the Good Shepherd, established as a Generalate in 1835, with the authority to send sisters anywhere in the world. The sisters would minister to girls and women who had been abandoned or exploited and were now powerless to help themselves.

The first Mother General, St. Mary Euphrasia, and the talented Melanie, became fast friends. Melanie was very impressed by Mother Euphrasia's passionate love for the Good Shepherd, a love which drove her to seek the "lost sheep," whom she recognized in young women caught in unfortunate circumstances—women who never had a chance to make something of themselves. Her great heart reached out to these suffering persons, longing to set them free to live happy, fulfilling lives.

Melanie proved to be a great benefactor to the Good Shepherd cause, often providing financial help for the support of the many foundations Mary Euphrasia was establishing in the cities of Europe. Mother Euphrasia responded to Melanie's devotion with sincere affection, guiding her in spiritual reading and in the exercise of various spiritual practices, and encouraging her to

patience and submission to the will of God. She was really forming Madame de Couespel to the religious life, so much so that at one point Melanie declared: "If I should ever lose my husband, this is the place to which I would wish to come!"²

THREE

Despite two years of devoted care, when the gentleness of his wife calmed his somewhat arrogant nature, Monsieur de Couespel died in the arms of the loving Melanie, who had prayed with him and helped him to accept his death peacefully as a prelude to eternal life. After the funeral, Melanie went for solace to Mary Euphrasia, who threw open the doors of the monastery to her friend so that Melanie could grieve and be comforted in the atmosphere of prayer and recollection there. Melanie described her feelings:

When the enclosure-door closed upon me, I cannot express the feeling that came over me. My heart sought nothing but God, needed nothing but God, desired nothing but God. Something told me I should find Him in the place I was in, and by degrees my poor heart grew calm. The thought that this haven which had been opened to me was a world between heaven and earth bound me to it, and I promised God interiorly that I would never leave it, and begged Him to grant me the grace to be received there.

Not realizing what was going through Madame de Couespel's mind, Mother Foundress became even more aware of Melanie's remarkable qualities of moral strength and sincerity, and couldn't help but visualize her in the precious work of shepherding. She implored the Lord to send Melanie to join her in the work of rehabilitating the neglected, who now seemed to be reaching out to her from all parts of the world. She longed to see in the service of the Master the cultured Melanie's rich gifts of intelligence, firm

will and energy for good. With the loving audacity that seems to be characteristic of the saints, Mary Euphrasia prayed:

On the first Friday of this year, 1836, in honor of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I, Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia Pelletier, Superioress General, vow, in presence of our sisters of the Chapter, to say every day for a year the Stabat the Sub Tuum. ant three times the Invocation to St. Joseph, if the Blessed Virgin should obtain for us the entrance into our Congregation of Mme. de Couespel.

In the meantime, Melanie, now a childless widow, decided to leave the monastery to set her affairs in order. In the Annals is recorded a story, attributed to Melanie herself, that once she made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Notre Dame du Chene, asking Our Lady to bless her marriage with children. She dreamed later that Our Lady laid her hand gently on Melanie's head saying: "I promise you, my daughter, that one day you will have a big family, but the time has not yet come." Years later Mary Euphrasia would write to her in Rome: "Oh, give many, many children to our Holy Mother the Church" (Cf. above, letter of September 11, 1838.)

Melanie resumed her normal life, involving herself once again with her old associates, the society women and army men she had known before her husband's death. But somehow it wasn't the same, and troubled, she sought counsel from French Bishop Benedict Flaget, recently returned from the American mission in Kentucky to recover his health in his native land. A man with a reputation for holiness, Bishop Flaget sensed that she had a vocation, but Melanie was disturbed because she felt herself responsible for debts that her husband, a Royalist, had incurred in the attempted restoration of 1830.

When Flaget's friend, Mary Euphrasia, heard about the obstacles, she immediately took on all the debts herself, over-joyed that her

prayers had been answered. Melanie entered the community on February 7, 1836, generously handing over to the monastery her entire wealth in furniture, linen, silver and household goods. She humbly began life as a postulant, never presuming upon her friendship with Mother General at any time, always waiting to be called. Mary Euphrasia, however, declared that the entrance of Melanie de Couespel to the Good Shepherd community was one of the greatest joys of her life.⁴

Since she was so well known in Angers society, and because of Bishop Flaget's widespread reputation for holiness, it is not surprising that on March 10, 1836, the entire city came to Melanie's Clothing ceremony; there wasn't an empty seat in the church. Even Bishop Flaget, who performed the ceremony, admitted that he was deeply touched as he called her by her new name: Sister Teresa of Jesus, the name which Mary Euphrasia gave her and which Mother Foundress had once desired for herself. After this ceremony, Teresa was entrusted with the responsibility of Econome (buyer and business manager) for the monastery.

In the spring of 1836 Mother Euphrasia asked Bishop Flaget to accompany Angers' Bishop Charles Montault to Saumur to establish the enclosure at St. Florent. It was a day of great happiness for Mary Euphrasia to have her good friend, Bishop Flaget, perform with Bishop Montault, and together they blessed the monastery and grilles on April 25. It was doubly joyful for the Mother Foundress to be accompanied on this happy day by the faithful Countess d'Andigne and her beloved Teresa of Jesus de Couespel. Teresa possessed that wonderful balance of silence, humility, and recollection, combined with a moral courage that would one day support and defend Mother Euphrasia against the enemies of her work.

FOUR

In 1837 Teresa received a dispensation from one year of novitiate, and in September of that year she was sent to replace the superior at Bordeaux, a house that was failing due to lack of cooperation on the part of the bishop.

In 1838, the entire city flocked once more to the Motherhouse where Monsignor Montault officiated at the profession of one who had been a brilliant member of its society. The choir grating was thrown open for the occasion, and ladies were admitted into the enclosure! Her biographer declares that Mary Euphrasia "pressed her new daughter to her heart" with an affection that surpassed any worldly affection.⁵ Teresa is described as having a perfectly oval face, narrowing toward the chin, a countenance just approaching maturity, still suffused with the bloom of youth. Her eyes were large and full of expression. Her lovely face was bright and charming, and her pleasant mouth was sensitive and suggestive of wit

Mary Euphrasia chose Sister Teresa as Secretary General and initiated her into the direction and general administration of the Good Shepherd enterprise, now rapidly spreading to all countries in the world. Sister Teresa provided Mary Euphrasia with faithful, exact, and dedicated service, accompanied by loving personal attention to all Mary Euphrasia's needs. Remarking that Sister Teresa understood well the spirit of the Good Shepherd vocation, Mary Euphrasia declared that persons will be converted by a religious who leaves all for God and who is forgetful of self.⁶

She observed that no one can see what takes place in another's soul, and she felt that Sr. Mary Teresa of Jesus understood very well this hidden quality of conversion.

On April 18, 1838, Mother Foundress set out for Rome with Sister

Teresa and several sisters to make a foundation. On their way they made several stops, at which time Sr. Teresa and a companion made a side trip to Bourg to examine a proposal to establish a house there. Missing coach connections at the junction point of Macon, they stayed overnight at the Hospice of the Sisters of Providence. There they met the leader of a local group, Fr. Larcher, who questioned Sr. Teresa searchingly. Satisfied with her answers, he then enthusiastically recommended that she petition her Mother General in behalf of a home in Macon. As a result the house at Bourges was founded in 1838 and in Macon on June 21, 1839 (Cf. Boardman, pp. 147, 271).

In Rome they were asked to take over a house of detention for twelve girls who had been referred to the Cardinal Protector because they had formerly "frequented houses of sin." The house was in a disorderly state, and the girls completely unmotivated; Cardinal Odescalchi felt that they were in worse circumstances than those they had left. In no time Mother Foundress won the confidence of the girls by small kindnesses, better meals, and an incentive to work, by setting them the example, and helping them to restore the house to cleanliness and order. In addition to Santa Croce, the sisters transformed a prison in Rome, making it a worthwhile place and a house of prayer.

While in Rome they visited the basilica of St. Peter's, and Mother Euphrasia said later: "I felt urged to promise God to give my life, if necessary, for each one of our foundations."⁷ She discovered later that Sr. Mary Teresa of Jesus, who had been named the superior of Rome, had made the same vow at the same moment as Mother Euphrasia. Pope Gregory XVI was so pleased with their work in Rome that he declared: "These French sisters, true missionaries of the Church, with the high-spirited courage of their nation, will kill themselves with work!"⁸

On the 4th of July, 1838, Mother Foundress and Mme. d'Andigne

bade farewell to Sister Teresa and her associates. Mother Euphrasia said: "Good-bye, my daughters. Although time and space separate us, our love bridges the gap. We came hither to win souls for God. For that purpose you remain. I depart, confident that you will draw down many graces on our work."⁹

After six months in Rome, however, Sister Teresa became ill because of the climate, and Mother Foundress recalled her to Angers. Sister Teresa responded: "When I received your letter asking me to leave Rome, it seems that I heard an inner voice say: 'Start without delay; think of the souls to be gained who await your coming!'"¹⁰

She also added, prophetically it turned out, that it might be a little while before she reached Angers. Sure enough, when at Mother Euphrasia's suggestion that she stop at Nice on her way to the Motherhouse to call upon the Bishop Monsignor Dominic Galvano was reluctant to let her go, asking her to open a house in Nice. Although Mother Euphrasia was disappointed that her friend's journey home was interrupted, she declared that she could place Sister Teresa with confidence in any important work, but admired Teresa even more because she preferred to work directly with the women in need, where she found her true happiness and consolation.

FIVE

While Sister Teresa was in Nice, having opened the house on March 12, 1839, Bishop Flaget stopped by on his way back to the American mission. He was returning to Kentucky to take the reins back from his Coadjutor, French native, Monsignor Guy Ignatius. Flaget wrote to Mother Foundress asking her to appoint Teresa as Superioress in Nice, as a favor to the Bishop there and also to the Governor of the town, both of whom desired her presence in that city.

Despite the poverty in Nice, the sisters were happy. Sister Teresa was very much loved, and under her care the house flourished. She remained there three years, until her health forced her return to Angers. Early in 1841, Monsignor Courtonan and a Navy chaplain, Fr. Marina, requested a house in Toulon, a great port with much traffic and unhealthy social conditions. It was decided to send Teresa de Couespel, "who on account of her husband had always lived in army circles, would be the best person to send to the great fortified town."¹²

SIX

In February 1842 Mother Teresa was sent to Italy, where she was involved in negotiations for founding the house in Geneva. While Mother Teresa was still at Nice, where she was establishing a convent, and where her presence seemed most necessary, Bishop Angebault asked for her return to Angers, and on March 20, 1842 Mother Euphrasia wrote to her:

This time hesitation is out of the question; you must return to France. (Nice at that time belonged to Piedmont.) His Excellency, our superior, has written to tell me that he is giving you a formal order to return. It is evident that there is nothing else to do. Rather than that our bishop should complain to Rome, you and I, my daughter, must submit ourselves. We must be silent and adore. You must come back. Should we do otherwise, we would be offending God.

From the outset, the relationship between Mother Euphrasia and the new Bishop was strained. He felt that his jurisdiction included the Generalate, despite the fact that the scope of the Generalate extended beyond the boundaries of his diocese. By extension, his dislike included Mary Euphrasia's friend, Teresa de Couespel. Teresa returned from Nice as ordered, and just as Mary Euphrasia often sent Teresa to represent her in the various foundations, so in

time she sent her to Paris, where a house had been opened for twenty-nine children recently released from prison. She wrote to Mother Foundress on June 14, 1842:

"It is just two days since we parted. My tender Mother, I am still looking for you everywhere. I cannot get accustomed to not seeing you, although we had you for only three days. On our way back from the diligence, your farewell lingered in my heart with a sadness which I could not overcome. When I got back to the Community, I found our sisters like ourselves. We went to dinner sad at heart." 16

The foundation in Paris was overwhelmed with difficulties, and although her wisdom and skill brought order to the house, Teresa's health broke down once again under the strain, and she returned to Angers in late August.

Negotiations for the American mission had begun with Cardinal Patrizi in January of 1842. In that year Sister Teresa of Jesus had taken part in negotiations for Geneva, and the house was established June 2, 1842 and Lyons on June 28, 1842. When the missionaries left for America in October of 1842, Teresa was not among them. In 1843 she was sent to Turin and finally recalled to the Motherhouse to be Second Assistant, and in that office became the courageous defender of the Rules and Constitutions of her order. In the spring of 1844 she accompanied Mary Euphrasia to England. They remained in Hammersmith ten days, and Mother Euphrasia spoke to the children the one English sentence she had memorized: "The more I see you, the more I love you, my dear children." They were delighted.

One may wonder why Mother Euphrasia kept Teresa of Jesus in France. Sr. Mary Teresa's poor health may have been too precarious to risk in America; also she was of great value as Mother Foundress's ambassador to the fledgling houses rapidly

being established in the various countries in Europe. Sister Teresa was Mary Euphrasia's support and mainstay throughout her difficulties with Bishop Guillaume Angebault, who in March 1842 had succeeded Bishop Paysant as Bishop of Angers.

Still not favorably disposed to the Good Shepherd sisters, particularly the Mother General, Bishop Angebault wrote to Mother Foundress on November 21, 1842 expressing the desire that the Holy Father suppress article 32 of the Constitution regarding the Cardinal Protector; namely, to have it eliminated in favor of Angebault being their superior. He said: "If the Bishop (himself) has not the full rights of Superior, my intention is to remain aloof."¹⁷ No matter how often or how clearly the Roman Congregation explained his status to him, he could never be made to see it clearly, nor could he be persuaded to remain entirely within his bounds as ecclesiastical superior. On January 10 he wrote to Rome, trying to have the Cardinal Protector's role over the sisters abrogated and his own elevated to that of full superior, thus suppressing Article 32 and 33 of the Good Shepherd Constitutions. Mother Foundress asserted the need of a Cardinal Protector, since her Congregation was worldwide, not a local bishop whose authority was restricted to his own diocese.

In a letter dated February 25, 1845, Mother Foundress writes about the troubles with the bishop to Teresa, who, it seems, is in Munich at this time:

"We knew that you would not be insensible to the persecutions we are undergoing and that you would fully appreciate the importance of the points at stake. Fear nothing. By the grace of God, who is our Helper, not a single point will be yielded. This must be known, and it is probably one of the reasons why we have been subjected to the incessant vexations wherewith we are visited.

We suffer these vexations without wearying. We will never allow so much as a dot or title to be altered in our Rules and Constitutions or in our holy Customs. When it was seen that nothing would sunder our unity, letters were written to several bishops in whose diocese we have foundations. Some of these bishops are now corresponding directly with Angers, one especially, and truly we have been betrayed by him and by our sisters. The Convent in his diocese is the only one that gives trouble by its disloyal spirit, but the Bishop of Angers will have it that there are many others like-minded and that it is in order to maintain union that he wishes to place a Superior over us. We cannot prevent his placing over us an ecclesiastic to whom he delegates his own powers, but his jurisdiction cannot extend beyond his own diocese. He has no right to appoint a Superior General. Rome alone has this power of appointing a Superior General who will represent the Cardinal Protector.

It would be dangerous at present to write to His Excellency, the Bishop to protest against the injury he is doing the Congregation in representing all of its members as participators in the spirit of rebellion and insubordination, which is really confined to one place and to a few individuals. The spirit of pride has led those individuals astray, and they are led by the same spirit still. But with a little patience they will see the right. If one were to make any protest now against their conduct, the Bishop would be sure to publish his reasons, and our sisters would be disgraced." (emphasis added)

It seems that in the spring of 1845 Teresa of Jesus de Couespel is back in Angers and writes a letter to the bishop, asking him not to seek to change the statutes of the Good Shepherd. Outraged, he demands of Mother Foundress to banish Sr. Teresa from Angers within the space of five days. Otherwise, he will not give permission for the approaching ceremony of clothing and profession. He objects to the fact that the sisters are subject to their Cardinal Protector in Rome and not to him.

Appealing to Rome, he is told that he is allowed to name the confessor and to appoint his own personal representative otherwise; everything else regarding the Good Shepherd remains the same. Bishop Angebault stayed away from the Good Shepherd for six weeks, then named Fr. Augustine Joubert as his Vicar General.

In the meantime Teresa of Jesus wrote to Mary Euphrasia, telling her to ask the Bishop of Angers not to use the word "to banish" or "to expel" in regard to her, for the experts in Paris had informed Teresa that a religious could not be expelled from her convent of profession except for a grievous crime and only after due process. Teresa declared that no one could close the Motherhouse to her and that she intended to return there any time business or community affairs required it. Teresa added that although she knew her rights, she would wait, and not assert them in order not to exacerbate Mother Euphrasia's already difficult situation. Forbidden by Bishop Angebault to ever return to the Motherhouse, she departed for Angers with the intention of consoling Mary Euphrasia. The latter, for prudence and obedience, spoke with her for only a few minutes in the parlor. Sister de Couespel, her loved daughter, was not even admitted within the enclosure, and she sorrowfully departed like an exile.

On May 12, 1845 Cardinal Patrizi wrote to Mother Foundress in response to the accusations put forward by Bishop Angebault and assured her: "No change will be made in anything that concerns the powers of the Superior General or of the Cardinal Protector."⁴

Mary Euphrasia wrote the following touching letter to Mother Mary of St. John of the Cross, presently in Munich, after Bishop Angebault demanded the departure from Angers of Sr. Mary Teresa.

"Except that I am not in prison, I am suffering every sort of sorrow without any support or aid. The bishop has just banished our dear Sister Mary of St. Teresa of Jesus from his diocese because of her loyalty to Rome. He wished to expel me also. The tears of the Council, however prevented him."

At this time Mary Euphrasia missioned her friend, Teresa, to Amiens, a house nearly failing due to extreme poverty and poor relations with the bishop. On July 23, 1845 Mother Euphrasia writes to Sister Teresa:

"How I do hope that your work may be saved! I dare to tell you this: do not give up. The Bishop of Amiens will never refuse the sacraments to poor religious. Fr. Joubert has suffered cruelly as a results of the manner in which the bishop of Amiens has been acting."

At Amiens Sister Teresa immediately set about clearing the debt incurred by the purchase of the convent, La Blamont, and after much suffering, the house finally prospered.

One day in 1845, Teresa was grieved by news of the suffering endured by Mary Euphrasia as a result of Bishop Angebault's opposition, which was fueled by false reports from one of the sisters, namely, Sister Mary of the Passion. Although Teresa had been forbidden by Bishop Angebault to ever return to the Motherhouse, she departed for Angers with the intention of consoling Mary Euphrasia. The latter, a stickler for obedience, spoke to her for her health failed again, and in 1846, taking advantage of the fact that Fr. Joubert was acting in the bishop's place, Mary Euphrasia recalled Mary Teresa to Angers. She would also be a much-needed support to St. Mary Euphrasia. Sister Teresa never returned to La Blamont in Amiens permanently, although Mother Foundress offered to have her go back the next year to settle some difficulty at that convent.

On May 10, 1847 Mary Euphrasia's First Assistant died, Mary of St. Chantal (Cesbron la Roche), whose friendship the Foundress cherished almost as much as that of Teresa of Jesus de Couespel. The virtue of gratitude was a priority with Mary Euphrasia, and she praised these two sisters in her instructions to the sisters.

At the death of Mary of St. Chantal, Mary Euphrasia wished to nominate Teresa of Jesus as the Assistant General, but the bishop would not allow it. It was a great cross for both, and Teresa's health, never very robust, began to fail and offered little resistance to serious illness later.

The year 1848 was a harrowing one for the Sisters. During the revolution of that year, many of the convents were destroyed. The sisters had to disguise themselves in order to escape. Every day sisters expelled from their convents returned to the Motherhouse with the women in their care. Mother Foundress said at one point; "Here we are in Angers, almost four hundred persons without work, without money, without benefactors.... The greatest trial is the opposition of Bishop Angebault, who "speaks ill of us to every bishop that passes through Angers."⁸

SEVEN

Mother Euphrasia had yet to experience her worst trial that year, the death of her beloved Sister Teresa of Jesus. She passed away after great suffering, and both she and Mary Euphrasia knew that she had offered to God the sacrifice of her life for the welfare of the Institute (Cf. Powers, p. 372).

Nine years later, a year before Mother Foundress's own death, she spoke of Sister Teresa in one of her community discourses:

"What shall we say of Madame de Couespel, my dear daughters? She sold her mansion and her property to give money to the

Community, and reduced herself to such destitution that, having gone to found one of her monasteries, she was obliged to hire a soldier's mattress and to use old newspapers as pocket handkerchiefs. But as she greatly loved her vocation, this did not discourage her in the slightest degree."

Teresa of Jesus de Couespel died September 2, 1848, at the Motherhouse, Bishop Angebault having sanctioned her return. This personal loss devastated Mary Euphrasia.

"Ah, my Teresa of Jesus! Treasure of my heart! What a friend she was to us here below! What a life was hers! What a death! Oh, my God, I offer all to Thee." "I go to kiss the door of the room of Sister Teresa of Jesus!"

One of her biographers (Boardman) describes her closeness to Mary Euphrasia as a rare and precious friendship, a happy mother and daughter relationship, where they shared gifts of mind and heart for the good of the Institute. As an unofficial administrative assistant, Teresa had carried out much of the complex business of the daily running of the Institute. On November 11, 1848 Mother Euphrasia wrote:

"My soul is crushed. I weep day and night. Although I am resigned to God's will, I feel, nevertheless, an overwhelming sorrow. I mourn for a daughter of exceptional holiness, affection and loyalty. Could you but realize the support I found in her! I shall never be able to meet her equal in this world."

A letter from Teresa to Mary Euphrasia suggests the mystical character of their relationship:

"I need the light of heaven which resides in you in order to discern. I am penetrated in a lovely way by the important mission which is confided to us. I believe it is much more vast than it seems, even

to the eyes of people who help us advance to its accomplishment. ...To understand it, we need to see things in God... When we see only self and the limited concerns which encircle 'self,' we are not open to great works such as the works of God, and these are accomplished only through death to self. Oh, why do we confine to our poor level that which is so great and exalted. Lord, forgive us! (Letter dated March 25, 1840.)"

The Council Sisters understood that in taking a brave stand for the independence of her Community, Teresa de Couespel had aroused the animosity of other opponents, and as a result, they thought it more prudent to refrain from publishing the story of a life so full of deeds of self devotion to the Institute! 12 They wrote of her:

Our dear Sister Mary Teresa of Jesus shared in all the trials and anxieties of our beloved Mother General. In thought, desire, and action they were entirely at one. We cannot at the moment dwell upon the heroic virtues of our departed sister, nor upon her unbounded generosity towards our Institute since the day she entered...Her memory will ever live among us, and our gratitude to her will be everlasting.13

- Mary Eileen Foley, RGS



*"Ah, my Teresa of Jesus!
Treasure of my heart¹. What a
friend she was to us here
below! What a life was hers!
What a death! Oh, my God, I
offer all to Thee. "*

S.M.E.

Mere Marie Therese de Jexus de Couilspel

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FOOTNOTES

ONE

1 H. Pasquier, Life of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia Pelletier (London: Burns & Gates, Limited, 1893), Vol 1, p. 455.

TWO

1. Gabriel Francis Powers, Redemption (Manila: Good Shepherd Press, 1940), p. 227.

2. H. Pasquier, Life of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia Pelletier. Vol. 1, p. 291.

3. Ibid., p. 290.

4. Powers, Redemption, p. 228.

5. Ibid, p. 237.

6. Cf. Conferences and Instructions of St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier (Angers: Imprimerie-Librairie F. Lecoq, 1907) trans. Ella McMahon (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Bookshop, 1943), p. 28.

7. H. Pasquier, Life of Mother Mary St. Euphrasia. Vol. 1, p. 419.

8. Auguste Saudreau (Msgr.) Graces et Fidelite (Angers: Imprimerie du Bon Pasteur, 1929) trans, into English and adapted by W. J. Doheny, CSC, under the title of The Secret of Sanctity, p. 152.

9. Anne Cawley Boardman, Good Shepherd's Fold (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955), p. 155.

10. Conferences and Instructions, p. 28.

11. Emile Georges, C.J.M.. Saint Mary Euphrasia Pelletier, Foundress of the Congregation of the Good Shepherd of Angers (Paris: P. Lethiellieux, Libraire-Editeur, 1942) trans. Mary Jacinta Morrison, RGS, p. 142.

12. Powers, Redemption, p. 301.

13. Georges. St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier. p. 142.

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14. Ibid, 143.
15. Saudreau, The Secret of Sanctity, p. 85.
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17. Saudreau, The Secret of Sanctity, p. 96-
18. Ibid, p. 172.

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2. Boardman, Good Shepherd's Fold, p. 192.
3. Saudreau, The Secret of Sanctity, p. 198.
4. Ibid, p. 102.
5. Ibid, p. 103.
6. Ibid, p. 101.
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9. Conferences and Instructions, p. 348.
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11. Pasquier, Life of Mother Mary St. Euphrasia, Vol. 2, p. 312. 12.Ibid.
13. A Religious of the Good Shepherd, Blessed Mary Euphrasia Pelletier (London: Burns, Oates, & Washbourne Ltd, 1933), p. 314.
14. NB. In 1917 the Generalate published a booklet of Sister Teresa's letters and life in French. It consists of 320 pages.

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Benedict Joseph Flaget, SS., D.D.
(1763-1850)

1811, APR. 1-8 *F. Benedict J. Flaget*
Bish^r of Bardonia

X

Benedict Joseph Flaget, S.S., D.D.

(1785-1841)

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Benedict Joseph Flaget

ONE

The missionary zeal of Benedict Joseph Flaget was responsible for the planting of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in the New World. As St. Paul says, "we know that God makes all things work together for the good of those who have been called according to God's decree." (Rom. 8:28) Flaget's life story unfolds a new chapter in God's design for the Congregation of the Good Shepherd. Examined retrospectively, 150 years after its founding in Louisville, the loving providence of God is obvious. The circumstances of Flaget's early days, his education, his travels, his difficulties, all prepared him for his role as a great shepherd through whose foresight and faith the family trees of congregations of women religious grew and expanded to all parts of the North American continent. It was his invitation which was directly responsible for the introduction of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd to North America where eight hundred Sisters and Contemplatives of the Good Shepherd have celebrated 150 years of service.

Benedict Joseph Flaget was born in Contournat, a village in the commune of St. Julien, near the town of Billom, France, on November 7, 1763, the youngest of three sons of Antoine Flaget and Anne Chomette. When but two years old, he was left an orphan, and he and his brothers were raised by a maternal aunt to whom he was ever grateful. His experience was no doubt responsible for his love for and empathy with those who were similarly orphaned. Providing for them was one of his priorities and joys as a bishop. When he was confirmed by Bishop DeBonald he took the name of Joseph, patron of youth, especially of orphans. At the age of seventeen, Benedict decided to become a priest.

He was sent to the University of Clermont for two years of study, boarding with two wealthy students whom he tutored to defray his expenses. The Sulpicians were conducting a seminary in Clermont.

Having received a scholarship from his mentor, Bishop DeBonald, he entered "the seminary of the poor students"¹ and eventually made application for admission into the Congregation of Sulpicians. He became a member thereof on November 1, 1783 at the age of twenty.

During his two years in Clermont, he received tonsure, minor orders and the subdiaconate. Since he had not yet attained the required canonical age for ordination for priesthood, he was sent to the seminary at Issy, near Paris, where he continued his studies in preparation for ordination. He remained at Issy for three years and received his priestly ordination in Paris in 1788. The French Revolution was causing considerable uneasiness in the seminary at this time.

After his ordination, Flaget was assigned to the Sulpician seminary at Nantes "in the capacity of treasurer and charged besides with filling in when there was a need of teachers." ² Because the Revolution was current at this time, the seminary was closed on March 19, 1791. The names of eleven men who had refused to recognize the bishop "forced upon them" included the names of David and Flaget.³ The seminarians were dispersed and were given hospitality by some of the people in the town. Flaget, it seems, spent this time in Billom and Contournat with his family.

TWO

The superior general of the Sulpicians in 1790 offered Bishop Carroll five priests to open a seminary in Baltimore. A second

group was sent in January, 1792 among whom were included Etienne Badin, still a seminarian, Benoit Flaget and Jeanne Baptiste David. They arrived in Philadelphia on March 26 and in Baltimore on March 29. From Baltimore, Flaget received his first missionary assignment from Bishop Carroll to Vincennes, a small town of Canadian foundation on the Wabash River, an important military post in the Northwest Territory.

Before leaving Baltimore, Flaget wrote his will, giving his older brother Jean Flaget, power of attorney regarding his present and future property in France, indicating, perhaps, the uncertainty and insecurity of this time.

The journey to Vincennes was difficult, involving overland travel to Pittsburg, then down the Ohio River by flatboat to Louisville, and then through dense forest to Vincennes. He was delayed in Pittsburg for six months because the river was too low. During this time he boarded with an interesting French Huguenot who, it seems, allowed Flaget to celebrate Mass in his room for some Catholics in the village. Flaget was always able to make friends with people he met. He also worked for General Anthony Wayne, known as "Mad Anthony," one of the heroes of the War of Independence.

When the river was high enough for him to continue his journey, he proceeded to Louisville via the Ohio River with a recommendation from General Wayne for an officer stationed in Louisville. This was William Clark who, with Meriwether Lewis, would become famous for leading the first passage of the North American continent all the way to the Pacific Coast between 1803-06. He had charge of the Vincennes area where the Indians were "in one of their last uprisings."⁴ Clark offered Flaget his protection as he was now separated from his Sulpician brothers. The two men developed a friendship. Eventually, Flaget reached Louisville, where he met with Fathers Levadoux and Richard, both sent by

Bishop Carroll to pastorates in the Northwest. He arrived at Vincennes on December 21, 1792.

Flaget's stay in Vincennes (about two and a half years) gave scope to the exercise of his zeal. Many of the fathers of families under his spiritual care were French Canadians married to Indian women who had large families of children. Through the children, Father Flaget was able to reach the parents, working to improve their social condition and succeeding far beyond his hopes.

In 1795 he was called back to Baltimore to act as disciplinarian at Georgetown and to teach French and geography there. In 1797 Flaget became a naturalized American citizen. He had two meetings with George Washington who lived in Mt. Vernon, and had friendly relationships with Georgetown personnel. Benedict Fenwick was one of Flaget's students at Georgetown, and he later recommended Fenwick for the episcopate and had the joy of seeing him named second bishop of Boston in 1825.

Fathers Flaget, Dubourg and Babade, three future bishops, were sent to Havana in 1798 to take charge of a proposed college on the island. Here they did not receive a welcome reception because of an extreme prejudice against French clergy. The priests were not permitted to celebrate Mass or to freely perform their priestly functions. Father Dubourg and Father Babade returned to Baltimore almost immediately, but Father Flaget had contracted yellow fever and was unable to leave the island. He was befriended by Don Nicholas Calvo and his wife, who cared for him during his illness. The Calvos persuaded him, after his recovery, to take charge of the education of their son. Receiving permission from his superior, he agreed to do this on condition that he would be allowed, within three months, to offer Mass, which he had been prohibited from doing by the island officials. A few days before the expiration of three months, after the Archbishop of Havana died, he was granted faculties by the dean of the Cathedral.

While in Havana, he had opportunity to meet Louis Philippe of Orleans, later king of France, and his two brothers who were exiled from France. When the wealthier citizens undertook a collection for the benefit of the exiles, Flaget was asked to do the presentation of this gift, doing so with tact and discretion. Today, paintings given by the king in appreciation for this kindness shown to the exiles may be seen in the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Bardstown. They include such masters as Van Dyck, Murillo and Reubens.

After Don Nicholas Calvo died in May 1801, Flaget was recalled to Baltimore where he returned with twenty-three students for St. Mary's College, the new Sulpician minor seminary founded in 1803. The following seven years were spent on the faculty of St. Mary's.

THREE

The population of the New World was rapidly increasing through the immigration of many seeking opportunities in the promised land. Bishop Carroll's diocese was the whole territory of the United States, and it became apparent that he would need some assistance with the work which was becoming too heavy for him. As early as 1790 he petitioned Rome for a division of his extensive diocese. In 1799 he discussed the matter with his vicar, Father Badin. On December 7, 1800 he was given an auxiliary, Bishop Leonard Neale. In 1802 and in 1806 the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith asked Bishop Carroll to submit suggestions for suitable cities for new sees. Father Badin advised, in a letter dated December 6, 1804, Bardstown, Danville, or Lexington as possible locations for a western diocese. On June 17, 1807 in a letter to the Sacred Congregation, Bishop Carroll recommended Bardstown as the seat of a western diocese and also recommended Benedict Joseph Flaget as its Bishop.⁵ Flaget was in his 44th year.

On April 8, 1808, Pope Pius VII created Baltimore a metropolitan see and named four suffragan sees: Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Bardstown. Flaget was appointed Bishop of Bardstown, the first See west of the Allegheny Mountains, extending over all of the northwest of the then United States, lying between the lakes on the north and the 35th degree of north latitude on the south, and stretching from the Atlantic States on the east to the Mississippi River on the west. It included, besides Kentucky and Tennessee, what is now Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and about half of Arkansas. Eventually ten dioceses would be formed from this vast territory: Cincinnati in 1821; St. Louis in 1826; Detroit in 1833; Vincennes in 1834; Dubuque and Nashville in 1837; Milwaukee, Little Rock and Chicago in 1843; and Cleveland in 1847.

Flaget was resistive to his appointment as bishop and reluctant to accept. He tried desperately and in vain to avoid it and to this end engaged in much consultation, including a trip to France to present the matter to his superior, Father Emery. The Superior General, however, asked him to comply with the Pope's and the Bishop's wishes, and eventually Flaget accepted the appointment. Before leaving France he recruited, with the help of his old friend, Father Levadoux, who was superior of the seminary in Saint Flour, a band of zealous potential missionaries, who came with him to America. At his departure from France, Father Emery presented him with a curious farewell gift, a box of needles and a French cook book. "These needles may be of great service to you in the midst of your natives; and as I greatly mistrust their manner of cooking, take also this book."⁷

He left France on April 10, 1810, embarking from Bordeaux on the American vessel *George Dyer*. The journey was not without anxiety. The vessel was stopped and searched twice by English ships, a practice which led to the War of 1812. After a tedious journey of three months, he arrived in Baltimore in July. As an

immediate preparation for his ordination as Bishop, he made a forty day retreat. His term as bishop was to last forty years.

On November 4, 1810, Flaget was ordained Bishop of Bardstown by Archbishop Carroll at St. Patrick Church, Fell's Point, Baltimore. It had been suggested that he be consecrated in Paris or in Auvergne. But the imperial government wanted to reserve for itself the nomination of French bishops, and Emery told Flaget that his consecration in France would compromise the Sulpicians.⁸

Because the necessary funds for the journey were lacking, he was unable to undertake the trip to his diocese until May 11, 1811. He wrote the Propagation of Faith in France, "I had not a cent at my disposal; the pope and the cardinals, who were dispersed by the revolution, were not able to make me the slightest present; and Archbishop Carroll... was still poorer than myself; for he had debts and I owed nothing."⁹ In a letter to his sister-in-law, dated December 8, 1810, he wrote, "It will not be until springtime that I will go to the possession of my bishopric... once buried in my forests, I will have so much business on hand and so many errands to run that you will receive very few letters from me..."¹⁰

FOUR

When funds were finally obtained, he and his company—the Sulpician John B. David and three seminarians—traveled by stagecoach over the mountains to Pittsburg, where they chartered a flatboat for Louisville. The trip on the Ohio took thirteen days, and they arrived in Louisville on June 4, 1811. At Louisville, Bishop Flaget and his party were welcomed in the name of the clergy by Father Nerinckx, who escorted them to Bardstown and St. Stephen's. He entered Bardstown on June 9, 1811, and his installation ceremonies took place at St. Stephen's chapel.

The bishop lived at St. Stephen's until August, 1812, then for the

next six years or more lived at St. Thomas Seminary at Poplar Neck, about three miles from Bardstown. Finally, after the dedication of the new St. Joseph Cathedral in August 1819, he took up residence in Bardstown.

When Flaget arrived in Bardstown in 1811 there were six priests serving in Kentucky, but only three other priests in the remainder of the whole vast diocese beyond Kentucky. The bishop was involved and active throughout the large western area. He labored extensively in Illinois, St. Louis, the Great Lakes, Canada, Indiana, Tennessee. His office in the early days of his episcopate was the saddle of his horse. During a cholera epidemic, 1832-33, when he was almost 70 years old, he did not hesitate to be among the dying to minister to them. He himself contracted the disease, which almost took his life.

Bardstown, founded in 1780, was an early center in the West and became a substantial town by the second decade of the 19th century. Although it was not the largest municipality in the diocese, it had within it the greatest number of Catholics. Most of the Catholic families lived within a radius of thirty miles of the town. After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 there had been a great westward movement. The nation expanded and developed, and Catholicism kept pace. By 1814 Flaget considered Bardstown superior to New York, Philadelphia and Boston, which had all been formed at the same time.

In 1812, Bishop Flaget outlined three priorities for his administration, namely education, social services, and worship. These were to be achieved respectively through a seminary, communities of religious women, and a cathedral.

Father David had been named superior of the seminary by the Superior General. He was considered a solid theologian.¹¹ Father Badin was the person, however, who prepared the way to

acquiring property for this institution, a gift of the Thomas Howard family. At the end of the summer of 1812, Howard's farm 12 was a seminary and would be, for several years, the residence of the bishop. Until Francis P. Kenrick arrived in 1823, "David was to be in effect the faculty and administration of the institution."¹³ Flaget was ever careful to keep David at the seminary, even when the Sulpicians attempted to recall him for their own seminary elsewhere. Flaget himself found the seminary a source of personal rest and spiritual nourishment.

The first religious women in the diocese were the Sisters of Loretto at the Foot of Cross. This order was begun on April 25, 1812 with three young women—Mary Rhodes, Christina Stuart and Ann Havern. They conducted a school on Hardin's Creek.

The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, led by Teresa Carrico, Elizabeth Wells and Catherine Spalding began in 1812 near to the St. Thomas Farm. In their first generation, the Sisters of Charity grew from three members to 145. In 1822 they moved to a farm north of Bardstown to what was and is their motherhouse.

Later will be described the coming of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd from Angers, France, in 1842, after the transfer of the see from Bardstown to Louisville.

An unusual sequence of events occurred in the 1830's, resulting in Bishop Flaget's resignation, the appointment of John B. David as second Bishop of Bardstown, the resignation of Bishop David in 1833 and the reappointment of Bishop Flaget the same year. Crews offers the following possible explanation.¹⁴

Bishop Flaget, who was nearly 70 years of age, had served for twenty years. He had hoped to have Guy Ignatius Chabrat, the first man he had ordained, as his coadjutor. Bishop David was older than Flaget and had no desire to succeed him to the

Bardstown See. Furthermore, Bishop Kenrick had been consecrated Bishop of Baltimore in 1830 and Bishop Flaget was distressed over the loss of Kenrick to the Bardstown diocese. Flaget tendered his resignation without consulting anyone, saying in a letter to Kenrick, "I did not think they would accept my resignation." But on August 25, 1832 Rome did accept Flaget's resignation and appointed David the new bishop of Bardstown with Chabrat as coadjutor. There was so much opposition to all of this that Flaget wrote to Rome on January 1, 1833 asking to be restored to office. Rome responded positively, but said nothing about Chabrat. Flaget wrote again, stating that he could not continue as Bishop without Chabrat. Chabrat was ordained coadjutor bishop on July 20, 1834.

FIVE

Having a coadjutor made it possible for Bishop Flaget to make a long desired trip to Europe, including his ad limina visit, and to get some rest and time with his family. Consequently, in 1835 he departed for Europe and remained there about four years.

Not much chronological information seems available about this journey. The only letters of Flaget during these four years were addressed to his family and diverse European families, without much reference to Kentucky. A manuscript of St. Sulpice tells that Flaget arrived at Le Havre and went first to Paris and stopped at the seminary of St. Sulpice.¹⁵

His trip abroad did not provide opportunity for rest, however. Gregory XVI commissioned him to preach in the countries of Europe for the Propagation of Faith. Thus, "all the spirituality of the Bishop in the New World would now be repeated as he traversed, at the wish of the Pope, over half of France and the two sides of the Kingdom of Piedmont."¹⁶ His reputation as a worker of miracles, already known in Kentucky,

had preceded him to Nantes. Several prodigies had been witnessed and publicized in Nantes in the autumn of 1835. Medical reports by eight doctors about these cures were addressed to Rome in 1836 and filed with the archives of the Congregation de Causis.¹⁷ His "miracles" were sometimes spoken of off handedly as by Gregory XVI when documents of cures were sent to him. He was reported to have said, "One cannot canonize the Bishop of Bardstown before his death."

On another occasion while Flaget was touring France, the Bishop of Nantes said to him, "I gave you every permission to hear confessions, to preach, to confirm in my diocese, but I have not at all authorized you to perform miracles." Bishop Flaget responded, "Your Excellency, in the day of your consecration you were entrusted with the care of doing great and miraculous things, portenta et mirabilia: and I, when I saw that you did not appear to remember, I said to myself, 'It is indeed necessary that someone begin to do them.'"

Bishop Flaget took literally the powers conferred on him by Bishop Carroll on November 4, 1810, and he would not have been more astonished than Francis Thompson "to meet Jesus walking on the waters of the Thames, of the Loire, or the Mississippi."¹⁸

On December 6 or 7 Flaget arrived in Angers from where he had departed in 1791, seeking refuge with his family before leaving for America. A letter dated December 13, 1835 signed by Flaget states, "Angers, where I have been for six days, rivals Nantes. I lodge with his Excellency the Bishop."¹⁹

An illness kept him at this episcopal residence for several months. When his health improved he performed an ordination on March 19, and on March 24 blessed the chapel of the prison. This peasant from Countournat knew how to adapt to every milieu. During his convalescence he often visited the Good Shepherd convent and became acquainted with the institute, the Sisters and

their work.

Among the many who sought his spiritual direction was a young widow, Melanie DeCouespel, who had thoughts of joining the Good Shepherd. She entered the novitiate on February 7, 1835 and on March 10 received the habit from Bishop Flaget and the name of Sister Mary Theresa de Jesus. His first-hand acquaintance with the Good Shepherd Sisters resulted in his admiration of their work and the hope of some day having a community of them in his see. The Annals of the Good Shepherd Sisters of Angers seven years later, on the occasion of the missioning of the first Sisters to America, have Mary Euphrasia saying, "When Monsignor Flaget visited Angers seven years ago he conversed with me for two hours, explaining the needs of his diocese, in order to know if at some future time he might get assistance from our congregation."²⁰

While Flaget was in Angers, Mary Euphrasia asked him to preside at a reception ceremony at which eleven postulants received the habit, on December 12, 1835. On another visit to the convent he was asked to accompany Bishop Montault who was to "impose cloister" on the Good Shepherd monastery of St. Florent" on April 25, 1836.

He finally arrived in Rome on September 24, 1836 "without anyone knowing exactly by what itinerary." ²¹ He stayed with the Vincentians (Lazarists) of Montecitorio while in Rome. Five days after his arrival, on September 29, he had an audience with Gregory XVI. At the request of the Pope he composed a report of his first twenty-five years as bishop of Bardstown. In one of his conversations with the Pope he spoke to him of the transfer of his episcopal see to Louisville and the reasons for his request of this change.

Bishop Flaget met Cardinal Odescalchi in Rome. This Cardinal

was the Protector of the Good Shepherd Congregation. Having just returned from Angers, Flaget shared with the Cardinal his impressions of the Institute and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. This unsolicited information confirmed in the Cardinal's mind the desire to have a house of the Good Shepherd in Rome.

In further visits with the Pope, as previously mentioned Flaget was requested to make a mission tour for the Propagation of the Faith. This resulted in his staying in Europe for two more years, "submitting to the most carefully planned itineraries which would bring him to make appeals in forty dioceses in France and the Piedmont."²²

It was not until the bishop was on the second circuit of his mission tour in Toulouse that his secretary noted that he did not have an official seal which episcopal correspondence traditionally had affixed. He offered to have a seal prepared for him and asked Flaget about his coat of arms. The bishop replied, "I was born of poor parents. I have never had a coat of arms... I have never occupied myself with such things; the cross and crown of thorns, that is what I need; I am content with that; add then, as you say it: 'In cruce salus'..." and the seal was stamped according to those directions.²³

"What advantages would the diocese of Bardstown gain from that campaign which deprived it so long of the presence of its chief? Practically none, in appearance." He always showed deference to poorer dioceses than his own. "I know too well," he said, "from my own experience, what difficulties and anguish there are in toilsome beginnings. Oh! let them give a large part to the dioceses which have just been created."²⁴

Nor did he succeed in obtaining missionary recruits for his diocese as he had hoped. His recruits were all to serve in the diocese of Cincinnati.".. I shall return to my diocese without any ecclesiastical recruit to console my old age..."

Thus he wrote to his secretary before leaving Paris for America.²⁵

Several times during his travels he became ill and was forced to stop for a time to recover and rest. He had now been away from his diocese for four years and his coadjutor was lamenting his long absence. Besides his health was declining after all this travel. He was now 76 years of age. He wrote to the Pope in February 1839 asking what he was to do at the conclusion of his third circuit. The Pope's response was received on the feast of the Annunciation, advising Flaget to terminate his travels and return to his diocese.

After spending a few days in Lyons, bringing his mission for the Propagation of the Faith to a conclusion, he went to Billom to say farewell to his family. He left Paris in July of 1839 and arrived in New York on August 21, 1839 after fortyfive days at sea and at Bardstown on October 7, 1839. ²⁶

After his homecoming, which was a joyous event for his flock, he began calmly the last truly complete visit of his diocese.²⁷

SIX

Although Bardstown had seemed to be the best location for the See of the West in 1810, developments which occurred after 1811 brought great changes to the West. Money had been appropriated by Congress for the construction of the Cumberland Road. The Road went from Maryland across Pennsylvania and reached Wheeling by 1818. Also in 1811 the big side-wheeler, the New Orleans, left Pittsburg for New Orleans and steamboating on western waters began. And, finally, the defeat of Tecumseh at Tippecanoe Creek on November 7, 1811, brought peace with the Indians to the area.²⁸

La Salle was the first white man to visit the Falls of Ohio, the site upon which Louisville is built. It was sometimes called the "Falls City" from the rapids of the Ohio River above which it stands. Thomas Bullit and a party of men marked off the site in August 1773. Louisville was established by act of the legislature of Virginia on May 1, 1780 on one thousand acres belonging to John Connolly. Fathers Flaget, Levadoux, and Richard met in Louisville and probably said Mass there in 1792.²⁹

By 1837 it was apparent that Louisville would become a large city, surpassing the number of Catholics in Bardstown. It was more centrally located and more accessible and convenient for clergy stationed throughout the state. The time had come, it seemed, to consider moving the seat of the diocese from Bardstown to Louisville. Flaget had already, in 1836, as we have seen, during one of his visits with the Pope, talked about the advisability of making this move to Louisville.

It seems that Flaget was not the only one to request the transfer of the see to Louisville. In a letter written to the Archbishop of Baltimore on March 12, 1840, Flaget said, "the Sovereign Pontiff, in an audience which he gave me, told me that he had received a petition that the see of my diocese be transferred from Bardstown to Louisville."³⁰ The Pope referred the question to the Council of Baltimore which was to be held the following year (1841). The Council agreed to the transfer, and the pontifical rescript authorizing it arrived in Bardstown in early 1841. Flaget went to Louisville on December 23, 1841 and lodged with the Sisters of Charity until his residence was ready for occupancy. He celebrated a pontifical Mass on Christmas Day in St. Louis Church, which would serve temporarily as the cathedral. He moved to his residence on February 1, 1842.

SEVEN

The acquaintance with the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, the third religious foundation of women in the diocese, dated back to the years of Flaget's European travels and his visits to Angers. In his conversations with Sister Euphrasia Pelletier in 1835 and 1836, the matter of founding a house of the Good Shepherd in Rome and in Kentucky had been mentioned. "Once again we see in this episode the Patriarch traveling in the wake of circumstances, that is to say of Providence, a way of movement to which he has always adapted and that he appreciated more and more in proportion as he approaches the end."³¹

It was in September, 1841 that Mary Euphrasia received the letter of August 5 from Bishop Flaget, inviting the Sisters to his diocese. The letter concludes, "I would encourage you to make a trial, with five or six religious, young enough to learn English. They should be filled with the Spirit of him whose name they bear, for most certainly they will have much to suffer; on the other hand they will have an abundant harvest to reap if God blesses their work. The population of Louisville is about twenty-nine thousand, of whom five thousand are Catholics...."³²

On October 3, 1841, Mary Euphrasia responded enthusiastically, "...If you knew what you are in France, what you are in Angers, what you are in our hearts, you would understand, Your Excellency, the happiness that your delightful letter of August 5 has given us. We have given knowledge of it to the Holy Father, for you are the cherished son of his heart, and his soul will rejoice to see us established in your diocese."³³

As for a language barrier, Mary Euphrasia informed Bishop Flaget that Good Shepherd Sisters were now in London and were learning English, and the Mistresses of Novices and several other Sisters spoke and wrote English and German. The Generalate

was flourishing, as her letter further suggests: "The Bishop of Montreal has just made a voyage to Angers to arrange for a foundation in his diocese...he blessed our 150 novices and 300 penitents..."³⁴

However, after this enthusiastic response, Flaget seemed to have second thoughts about the Sisters coming at that time. The transfer from Bardstown to Louisville, his illness on his arrival there, and his preoccupation with the building of a cathedral in Louisville seemed to indicate that the Good Shepherd move was premature. On July 1, 1842 he responded to the letter of Mary Euphrasia (of October 3, 1841) in somewhat evasive terms. Part of his letter is as follows:

Since the reception of your response, several conspicuous persons, both among the Catholics and the Protestants, have assured us that an Order so useful to the good customs but so unknown in this country would meet probably many obstacles on its way, but that with courage and perseverance it would succeed without doubt; that in the beginning few of these lost women, having no knowledge nor "sheepfold" nor shepherdesses, would give themselves to it only with fear and defiance and in a small number, but once that charity and maternal tendencies of the "shepherds" became well known, once especially these unfortunate ones know, indeed, that they would have full liberty to leave the house when it would seem good to them, there is no doubt that the family would always be increasing, to the great contentment of these unfortunate ones and to the great admiration of everyone...³⁵

Flaget states some objections to the Sisters coming at that time, but the letter was so ambiguous that one of his biographers noted that "St. Paul would have had a hard time understanding (Flaget's) meaning if he had had this jumble above, under his eyes." Flaget warns the Sisters that no place has been set aside for them yet and that they will lodge with four U.S. born religious very near the seminary. He does, however, close his letter with an expression of

confidence in Providence. "If the work, as I do not doubt, is according to the heart of God, it will succeed. Courage, send on the colony; we will take every care possible and leave to Providence to do the rest."

Because arrangements had already been made, "leaving the question of resources to Providence," it was decided in Angers not to postpone the departure of the Sisters. On October 16, 1842 five Sisters, ranging in age from 24 to 29, embarked at Le Havre and sailed on the Utica. A company of four Sisters of the Sacred Heart also on this journey made the trip more tolerable. After a month at sea, they arrived in New York on November 17, 1842, and remained with the Sacred Heart Sisters for some days after reaching New York. On November 21 they left for Louisville, traveling in secular clothing because of the tension against Catholics in the country at this time.

The Louisville Good Shepherd Annals state that the Sisters were of five nationalities, "representing to a world torn by conflicting sects a beautiful illustration of Catholic unity." The Sisters and their places of origin were:

Sr. Mary DesAnges Porcher, France
Sr. M. of St. Louis Gonzaga Baligand, Ratisbon, Bavaria
Sr. M. of St. Joseph Looney, Ireland
Sr. M. of St. Reparata Deleuse, Piedmont (now northern Italy)
Sr. M. of St. Marcella Richards, Switzerland

These were the first women religious with a predominantly "social work" emphasis in the United States.

They arrived in Louisville on December 1 and were met by Bishop Flaget's vicar, Reverend Reynolds. He conducted them to the country house of the Bishop who welcomed them joyfully, though he regretted the fact that he had made no preparation for their

accommodation. The Sisters' Annals state that he gave them two of his rooms, reserving one for himself. The Sisters of Loretto supplied them with their meals. A conflicting statement appears in a biography of Mary Euphrasia which states: "The Sisters remained nine months with the Loretto nuns in Portland, who treated them throughout with unvarying kindness...³⁶

A few weeks after their arrival Bishop Flaget wrote, in a letter dated January 17, addressed to the Superior General, Mary Euphrasia:

"They reside on the property of one of our religious houses, and this little community is only one and a quarter mile from Louisville; also, old though I am, I go to see them every week. My niece, who had the happiness of making your acquaintance in Angers, is one of the religious who extends hospitality to your zealous daughters; the arrival of your Sisters was for her and all her companions a true holiday. Every time that I visit them, contentment is general and the communities seem to make only one.

"As the winter this year has begun with happiness, and since heavy snows have lingered on the ground, we have been occupied with this new establishment only in an indirect manner, that is to say, in visiting friends and men of influence in order to give them some exact ideas of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and all their difficult functions. A Protestant who took part in one of these conversations could not keep from saying that the functions of these Sisters were the height of heroism... Toward the months of May and June, I hope that we will have more interesting news to communicate to you.³⁷

"The Louisville Annals have an entry which states, "The good Religious of Loretto could not have welcomed us more amiably. Thanks to their hospitality, we have been provided with every

necessity to remove us from the fatigues of the voyage and to struggle against the cold. Miss (sic) Eulalia Flaget took us to our apartment..."³⁸

In the spring of 1843 Bishop Flaget's coadjutor, Bishop Chabrat, initiated the building of a convent for the Sisters, and on September 8, 1843 they took possession of their new home. It was a three story brick building for the community and another, at the rear separated by a garden, for the "penitents."

For three months after the Sisters took possession of the convent they were subjected to annoying visits of many curious inhabitants and were called upon at all hours to conduct visitors through the building. After three months, Bishop Flaget published a notice that in the future visitors would not be permitted to enter without permission from him.

The first Mass in the convent was said by Bishop Flaget assisted by Rev. Lavialle (later Bishop of Louisville) and Rev. Vital, a French missionary, on September 8, 1843. Father Lavialle was appointed chaplain and confessor of the Sisters. The beginnings of this foundation were difficult, but with the support of the Bishop and his Coadjutor and the kindness of the Loretto Sisters the new foundation began at last. The first penitent was admitted on September 15. "She came from a brothel, her health shattered..."

³⁹

Until the Sisters began to generate some money from their services, they were in very difficult financial straits. Bishop Chabrat suggested that they send their extern Sister to the market square with an empty basket "and you will see people fill it quickly." The Sisters had recourse to this means of support for a long time, until they were able to establish a regular income.⁴⁰

Bishop Flaget wrote the Good Shepherd Sisters in Angers on July 17, 1844 about Bishop Chabrat's eye problems, which prevented him from fulfilling episcopal functions.⁴¹ Chabrat offered his resignation in 1846. The last official act of Bishop Flaget was the ordination of Martin Joseph Spalding as his third coadjutor with future succession on September 10, 1848. Flaget was 85 years of age at that time.

EIGHT

In a letter to his only surviving brother dated December 8, 1844, Flaget refers to his long life, stating that "it appears only as a dream for, recalling two or three deeds which took place when I was no more than four years old, and thinking about what happened to me last week, these two periods seem to touch each other and all the interim is nearly nothing forme...."⁴²

The diocese progressed, and Bishop Flaget's last two years saw the opening of a Jesuit college in 1848, a new orphanage, a fourth parish church built for "German Catholics" and the laying of the cornerstone of a new cathedral.

After Bishop Spalding's installation as coadjutor, Bishop Flaget gradually declined in health. He died February 11, 1850.

Flaget is remembered by his biographers as a man of affable manners, apostolic zeal and unfailing graciousness. In contradistinction to his fellow Europeans Badin and Nerinckx, this bishop was possessed of a more balanced spirituality, sustained not only by prayer, study and sacrifice, but also by close and tender friendships. He had an ability to yield when necessary or even possible. He knew when to speak and when to remain silent. His friend John B. David described him as "a man of gentleness and "inborn dignity."⁴³

Flaget's love for the universal Church was obvious during his mission appeals for the Propagation of the Faith when he considered himself a delegate of the Pope charged with a mission for the Church, to develop a sense of the apostolic responsibility of Catholics of the Old World to spread the Gospel.

Flaget's death occurred ten years before the outbreak of the Civil War. In an essay of conversations he had with Bishop Flaget, Henry Greliche writes of his position on the question of slavery: "What would have to be done to better the lot of the slaves is this: never to separate the man from the women, and children from their parents; that is the only way to initiate among them a family spirit...Insofar as this family spirit does not exist, emancipation will be only one more misfortune, added to the misfortune of their condition..."⁴⁴

A quote from Webb pays him this tribute: "It is a singular fact that Bishop Flaget, throughout his entire life in Kentucky, suffered no malinging of character from any source. He carried in his face the signet of a pure conscience and abenevolent heart...."⁴⁵

When he died he was in the 87th year of his life, the fortieth year of his episcopacy, and the sixty-second of his priesthood. Indeed, "God makes all things work together for the good of those who have been called according to his decree." (Rom. 8:28)

According to Bishop Flaget's own wish, he was interred temporarily within the enclosure of the Good Shepherd monastery. After the Cathedral of the Assumption was constructed, his remains were transferred there. A marble tablet erected by Bishop Spalding in memory of his predecessor adorns the sanctuary wall. An English translation of the Latin inscription is:

Here lies expecting a glorious resurrection, the remains of the Rt. Rev. Benedict Joseph Flaget, first Bishop of Louisville, who was born in France on the 7th of November, 1763; and having been

ordained came here, exiled for the faith, A.D., 1792; was consecrated bishop on the 4th of November, 1810. As he lived, so he died, holily in the Lord, the 11th of February, 1850, full of days and labors undergone for Christ, at the age of 87, and of his episcopate the 40th. His successor, with the help of the faithful people, erected this cathedral as a monument over his ashes. May he sleep in peace."⁴⁶

-MaryKomar,RGS

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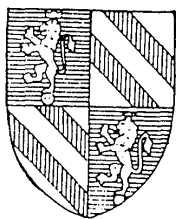
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Cardinal Mastai Ferretti Pope Pius IX



(1792-1878)



XI

Cardinal Mastai Ferretti Pope Pius IX (1792-1878)

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Cardinal Mastai Ferretti / Pope Pius IX

(1792-1878)

With the following words St Mary Euphrasia introduced the future Pope Pius IX to her sisters, 'I am going to read a letter to you, my dear daughters, which I received this morning and which will give you great pleasure. It is written by His Eminence Cardinal Mastai Ferretti, Archbishop of Imola, to tell us of the arrival of our dear sisters in that town:

"Very Reverend Mother General,

"You must have already received from your dear sisters the particulars of their safe arrival at Imola, but I feel that I also should inform you of it, and at the same time express the great consolation I experienced in finding my diocese enriched by the little flock of consecrated virgins, who in a few days will undertake the mission of saving so many lost sheep. I have no doubt that, with the assistance of God's grace, they will lead them to the fold of the Prince of Shepherds, Jesus Christ. Praised forever be the God of mercies! I beg you also to receive the assurance of my deep gratitude.

"It is a consolation that they are with me in my palace. I have reason to thank God, who holds the hearts of us all in His hands. It seems to me that He has placed those of your daughters in His own heart. I shall not fail to assist them in their needs, and assuring you that I shall keep this intention in view, I am happy to remain, with deep esteem,

"Your very affectionate servant, J.M. Cardinal Mastai, Archbishop, Imola, September 14, 1845."¹

ONE

Cardinal John Maria Mastai Ferretti was born in Senigallia May 13, 1792. His early studies at the Scolopian Fathers' College at Volterra led him to Rome in 1809. There he began his studies in philosophy and theology. He had to leave Rome during Napoleon's reign there in 1810 but returned in 1814 to complete his theology at the Collegio Romano. He was ordained priest in 1819. Even at that early date he was admired for his goodness of character and his charity. He began a ministry as spiritual director at the Tata Giovanni hospice.

In 1823 he was appointed secretary to the apostolic nuncio in Chile. His diplomatic career however was of short duration and in 1825 he became canon of the church in Rome of "Holy Mary in Via Lata" and director of the Hospice of St Michael. In 1831 he was consecrated archbishop of Spoleto. There he gave proof of much tact together with kind firmness during the revolution of 1831. In his administrative role he was able to suggest some procedures which lessened conflicts and other suffering among the people.

On February 17, 1832 Pope Gregory XVI appointed him Bishop of Imola, where he was to remain for 14 years. He was considered ahead of his times, as though he were of the year 2000 rather than 1800, this because of the many social activities he organized. Very much ahead of his times ... These activities were amazing in their quantity and variety, as well as their quality. Apostolic concern prompted them, a genuine humanity animated them, and they were carried out with wisdom and after hours of study and planning and much prayer.

As Bishop of Imola he was gifted with a realization of the importance and dignity of the individual person, a belief which was at the heart of his apostolic activities. He understood the needs of the people and how to supply what would help them, an

understanding not shared by most of his contemporaries. He seemed to have flashes of intuitions uncommon to others. He knew well that the material needs of people could condition the spiritual outlook and life of a whole diocese. His priority was often to assuage these needs in order to enliven his mission as bishop and give credibility and efficacy to his activity as pastor of souls. This was a new strategy for his times.

At Imola, one of the most noteworthy centers of the Papal States, Archbishop Mastai Ferretti was able to gain to the faith many among the "radical" elements without capitulating to them. He made himself loved and esteemed by all, no matter where they were on the social scale. He was open and generous towards the needy without distinction. His lively piety, gentleness and good humor drew others to him and revived the hopes of the discouraged. People came to look upon him as a model of both gospel and civil goodness. He was simple to approach, understanding and tolerant. He loved people and they knew it. He was zealous for their welfare and they in turn admired him for his spirit of hospitality and open mindedness.

Because of his position as bishop of a Papal State, Bishop Ferretti was especially anxious when cholera began to spread over Europe in 1835. He not only organized groups of prayer but also used his influence on medical doctors to ferret out cases in need of immediate help and also to call upon, preventively, the populace to urge vaccination. This was difficult because people were suspicious and fearful of the procedure.

Before Salesian oratories were organized, the bishop devised and founded a pious union to care for abandoned street children. Another achievement— Bishop Mastai-Ferretti was the first bishop in the world to organize the "Propagation of the Faith" for the evangelization of nations. He began this in 1839. From his viewpoint social and spiritual revitalization went hand in hand.

A surprising activity was his concern for girl dancers from ballet groups. He defended their civil rights, although he had never been in a theatre. It was the custom that once a year these dancers went to Lugo to join in the annual festival. Because their dancing contributed to the festivities, he used his influence to insure that they earn, rightfully, daily wages in order to live. In this way he helped provide for the human, religious and moral aspects of the lives of these young girls because they did not want to have to turn to prostitution for their livelihood. His zeal for the socially poor derived from his interior life. He lived it in continual tension with the customs of his times.

One could continue to recall many other social projects which were initiated by Bishop Mastai-Ferretti, be they for the poor, prisoners, the sick, abandoned children, or the elderly. All of this was prodigious activity for the welfare of his people. But there is one social project which is particularly appealing to Good Shepherd Sisters.

TWO

Bishop Mastai-Ferretti had a tender heart for the women in the region obliged to prostitute in order to live and rear a family. He prayed and reflected over their condition, sought information about anything being done for them in other areas and about persons involved in this ministry. He hoped to help them, and at the same time to raise the whole specter of public morals.

Since 1833 the Bishop had had in mind a project for the rehabilitation and protection of these women and had tried to interest other bishops of the region in their situation. He proposed a center where young women prostitutes (who were very numerous) could be given an education and prepared to earn a decent living. He put energy into travelling to each diocese and

almost begging for these poor women both with bishops and civil authorities. But to no avail! He even wrote a letter to Pope Gregory XVI at Christmas 1837. The letter was never given to the Pope. But Cardinal Mastai did not give up.

He decided to create a service for them and for children in moral danger in his own diocese, on a reduced scale. He talked about it and enquired about religious sisters specialized in this service. He wrote to a friend in Rome in January 1845 asking about Sisters: "I have heard that in Rome there are certain Sisters called 'Good Shepherd' who dedicate themselves to care for and educate these women. I am preparing to open a center for them and would like to know if these Sisters are prepared for this work and if I could have a couple for my House'.²

In the meantime the House of the Good Shepherd received two legacies even though it was not yet a reality!

There were two difficulties yet to be resolved. These did not frighten Cardinal Mastai: pregnant women and finances. "The pregnant women will have a separate apartment and will be assisted by a married woman dependent on the Sisters. Husband and wife will live in an apartment attached to the center but not within it. In regard to the financial aspect, at present I am able to maintain ten teen-age girls and 6-8 younger ones. The pregnant women will be few and at times none will be present. Therefore, with two sisters, besides my own household, I do not think I can provide for more than that..."³

Cardinal Mastai expected the sisters to arrive in June. He had written Mary Euphrasia June 9th! The sisters left Angers on August 17. They were three: Sister M. Irenaeus Bellanger, age 25 years, superior, Sister Angela Vallois, 24 years, from Lille, Sister Valentina Selliers, 19 years, professed a few months earlier. They departed from Angers "in holy joy for an unknown country,

unknown language and without letters of recommendation! When they arrived at Genova the superior there realized none of them spoke Italian, so she sent along an Italian Sister from Piedmont, and for some unknown reason she sent along another French sister Mary Dolors Lecauf from Paris.⁴

The Sisters arrived at Imola September 3 at 11 o'clock They were received by the Bishop's secretary Monsignor Stella. The Bishop was surprised at the two extra sisters but he greeted them in French and housed them all in his own palace until their new house would be ready. He himself served them at table, and they lived in his palace for forty days. In this way the bishop got to know them and helped them with the new language. They passed Sundays at the Dominican Sisters' convent conversing in Italian and praying together besides visiting Mary's sanctuaries at Piratello, the city hospital and St Joseph's Institute.

On September 14, 1845, Cardinal Mastai informed Mary Euphrasia of the arrival of the Sisters.⁵

This letter was the first contact Mary Euphrasia had with Cardinal Mastai-Ferretti. The Annals of the Sisters at Imola contain nineteen letters from the Cardinal in seven months to Saint Mary Euphrasia, from October 1845 to May 1848.⁷ The first of these is dated October 21, 1845, the day after the Sisters officially took over their new home which he had prepared for them on St Matthew's Street:

My Beloved Daughter, God's work has begun and I am consoled by this because I am sure the Lord, through the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, will make known his works of mercy. And you, beloved Daughter, destined to preside over the whole congregation and community, will be the principal instrument in the hands of the Lord, who has given you all necessary gifts for your holy task: you are capable and active, of good will,

experienced, therefore I do not doubt that you will succeed wonderfully. You are an instrument in the hands of the Lord; therefore you should continually ask Him for docility so that as his instrument you may always be ready to follow the movements of the Divine Hand. As custodian of your constitutions and all the holy customs of your institute, when you renounce your own will, placing it in the Hands of the Father, you can be sure you are accomplishing great things for the glory of God and the good of souls. I live in this holy hope and I decided to write this to you so that you may, whenever you wish, re-read these my sentiments in order to share my deep aspirations and be animated with a holy courage to continue joyfully in the holy work you have begun. With all my heart I bless you together with all your Sisters and I leave all of you in the peace of Christ. Most affectionately, G.M. Mastai, Archbishop of Imola.⁸

Before the Sisters left the Cardinal's palace for their own convent which he had, again, arranged for them, he invited them to his chapel where they recited together the *Veni Creator*, the Litany of Our Lady, and other prayers. The Cardinal then told them, "the true superior of your new convent is the Blessed Virgin Mary to whose protection I confide you." He was happily excited and added, "Go, my dear daughters, I will always be a kind father to you. I will always assist you, my eyes will always be watching over you and the young women who will soon come to you. I beg you to remain united in God, faithful to your constitutions for there you will enjoy all blessings from heaven!" ⁹ The Cardinal then blessed them. His emotion overwhelmed him so, he could say no more! The next day, fearing he had abruptly ended his blessing, he wrote to Sister Irenaeus, telling her to have faith in God's Providence and to work always for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

The Cardinal had already provided all that was needed in the convent for the first few days. The first two young women guests

arrived the first day. The Sisters welcomed them with tender love. The Cardinal had also carefully chosen a chaplain for the community, a young and fervent priest, Don Anthony Cenni. Further, he appointed the ordinary confessor, a Spanish Capuchin, but remained himself extraordinary confessor to the community. The Cardinal was the only priest in Imola who understood and spoke French. He continued his concern for the welfare of the community.

By December there were six women guests with the Sisters. The latter were anxious not to overburden the Cardinal financially so they lived poorly and worked hard. In November he wrote them, 'You are working too hard and nourishing yourselves too little. Please take care of your health. I thank the Lord for His mercy towards the young women and I hope that as their number increases, God's grace will increase in them.'⁹ In December the Cardinal again wrote, 'I see that you spend so little and I wonder how you can maintain your community in this way.' Again in January 1946 he wrote, 'I have received your financial statement and I am so happy to read the first letter in Italian written by the good Sisters of the Good Shepherd. I noticed that your statement was short while much paper was left blank! Therefore I am sending you a small addition to your allowance so that you can get more dresses for the young women!'¹⁰

The last letter of Bishop Mastai Ferretti, as bishop, to the superior is dated May 23, 1846. ¹¹ Eight days later Pope Gregory XVI died and Cardinal Mastai left for the conclave at Rome. First he visited with the Sisters and their guests. He had written, 'As founder it is impossible for me to forget my community at Imola.' When he learned from the Sisters that Mary Euphrasia had predicted in her last letter to them that he would be elected the next Pope, he laughingly replied, 'I am sure your superior general is a saint, but I don't think you need to believe this prophecy she wrote you....'¹²

THREE

The expectations of those gathered in Conclave were that given the political situation of turmoil in Europe and of the Papal States in Rome, this one would be long, violent, and turbulent. The Conclave lasted two days and two hours! On June 16, 1846 Cardinal Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti was elected Pope. He reluctantly accepted. He took the name of Pius IX.

The day following the election, Pope Pius IX was announced and he presented himself to the people. Few of these in Rome knew him but stories had been told and repeated about his kindness, his charity, his deep piety, his generosity, gentleness and graciousness. These disposed the people to receive the new Pope with open arms. From that moment they also considered him capable of recreating a new Italy. In truth Pius IX was a fervent priest of God animated by a deep religious zeal for God and for God's people. He loved the persons of his diocese and had suffered with them while trying to remedy the causes of their sufferings.

The Sisters at Imola received two personal letters from the new Pope dated July 7 and August 23. With all the new responsibilities of the papacy he had not forgotten his spiritual family at Imola. He provided a 30 years trust fund for them the annuities of which would be a continuous reminder of his extraordinary affection and attention to their needs. Pope Pius IX officially renounced his office at Imola and appointed his successor there, Monsignor Gaetano Baluffi from Ancona, Archbishop at Pirgi and Secretary to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.

He who had always been so delicately attentive to others would never have interfered with the new bishop. At the same time Pius IX called the chaplain Don Antonio Cenni to Rome and appointed him his personal secretary and private librarian. Don Cenni became the link between Rome and the Pope's dear ones at Imola. In fact, through the 72 letters Msgr Cenni wrote from

October 1847 to 1852 and especially that of the 22 of October 1847 he was go-between for the Pope and the Good Shepherd Sisters at Imola.

In October 1846 when the superior at Imola went to Rome to pay her personal homage and that of her community to the Pope, she had three audiences with him. He said these words to her, "My daughter, just as it is impossible that a father forget his only beloved child, so it is impossible that I forget my House at Imola." Having heard that the superior general intended to transfer the superior of Imola to the Good Shepherd house at Rome, he added, "Your superior general would like to take you from Imola and send you to Rome, but she is mistaken if she thinks thus to please me, because I love the House at Rome as Bishop, and that at Imola as founder. Therefore, my dear daughter, go back to your convent at Imola and do there all the good possible!"¹³

During the pre-agony of the Papal States, Pope Pius IX worried about the safety of his foundation at Imola! After the Pope's allocution of February 10, 1848, with his well-known slogan, "O great God, bless Italy", the people were filled with enthusiasm. They felt the Pope offered hope for national unity. The patriots and even priests began wearing a miniature Italian flag in their hats as a sign of allegiance to the Pope. The Good Shepherd Sisters were charged to make the symbolic flags and they worked hard to satisfy the people. They were paid well for their work which for them was very helpful for their own and their guests' livelihood. The Pope was happy to hear that they had received 15 scudi and in November he sent 30 scudi to Sister Irenaeus, doubling the amount received. She wrote for the first time in Italian to thank him. The Pope jokingly remarked, "Oh, look what it cost me to make her write to me in Italian!"¹⁴

The goose feather pens used by Pius IX to write his letters and sign official documents were made by a Good Shepherd Sister.

Even the goose feather pen used by the Pope late in 1854 to sign the promulgation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Mother of God, was sent to him from Imola and returned to Sr. M. Angels who had carefully sculptured it.

This cordial exchange of gifts between the Pope and the Sisters was a sign of normal times.

By November 15, 1848, everything changed; the agony of the Papal States began with no turning back. Msgr Cenni wrote to the Sisters that same day predicting this possibility: "Today the government reconvenes. There are many fearful predictions, but let us hope for the best."¹⁵ That very day the predictions turned into fist-fights. Minister Pellegrino Rossi was assassinated while ascending the stairs to the chancery office where he was to explain the program of the new papal government.

The Pope had tried to calm the exploding situation through his proclamation on May 2. He had appointed T. Mamiani minister and ordered the government to reconvene. However, inertia and uncertainty marked the new government. The Austrian invasion of Emilia and Bologna's response in a sudden popular uprising on August 8, had created havoc among the people. In another effort to remedy the situation the Pope had appointed Minister, Pellegrino Rossi. However, he was not accepted by the reactionaries on account of his political orientations, his extreme liberalism and his severity. His appointment had come too late - (September-November 1848). He too had failed in spite of his good qualities on which the Pope had counted. He was murdered November 15, 1848.

Nine days later, November 24, the Pope, incognito, succeeded in escaping from the Quirinal Palace, and on the 25th in a covered carriage arrived at Gaeta, guest of King Ferdinand of Naples.¹⁶ In Rome, the Good Shepherd Sisters and those under their care,

weeping, lined the road by the river. As the carriage arrived the Pope recognized them and stopped to bless them! Many other people having heard of the Pope's flight were there also to greet him sorrowfully.

While at Gaeta Pope Pius IX received many offers of hospitality at Montecassino, Benevento, Piedmont, Nice, Marseilles, Avignon, Versailles, England, Malta, Spain, Austria and Bavaria The Pope chose to remain at Gaeta, close to the Mediterranean sea.

Pius IX had another sorrow. His Secretary of State, Cardinal Sogliardi Casola Valsenio, diocese of Imola, resigned. December 6, the same day this painful news arrived at Gaeta, the Pope appointed a pro-Secretary of State in the person of James Cardinal Antonelli, considered the Richelieu of Italy.¹⁶ Msgr Cenni who had followed the Pope to Gaeta wrote two letters to the Good Shepherd Sisters in which he did not mention the above facts but asked for human help,—"the stockings and other things because the person for whom they were made ... needs them urgently. Don't hope for payment because now we are bankrupt". We can understand 'the person' is Pope Pius IX.¹⁷

In spite of his personal needs the Pope did not want to leave his "poor house at Imola" without help and in May and August 1849 he sent them 50 scudi.¹⁸ In these dramatic days the Pope often asked for news of Imola. On September 4, 1849 Pope Pius IX left Gaeta for Portici on the ship "Noble Corvetta Cristina", accompanied by five other ships.

While at Portici the Pope was making plans to renew the House at Imola and promised 3000 scudi towards this. Monsignor Cenni wrote the Sisters that on Thursday, April 4 the Pope would leave Portici for Rome where he should arrive on the 12th. "Let us pray that the Lord approves this resolution." The Pope began his long

trip to Rome April 4. He stopped at all the towns from Santa Maria Capua Vetere to Albano and finally Rome. His exile had ended.

FOUR

In February 1851 Pius IX had expressed his desire that Imola have its own novitiate for the formation of young women who sought admission to the Good Shepherd Order instead of sending them to France. Mary Euphrasia had to do some deep discernment over this. She took advice from several canonists before responding affirmatively to the Pope five months later. In 1855 after the Declaration of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the Pope visited his former diocese including his beloved Good Shepherd fold. He was astonished at the progress and the development of the Household with over 92 persons. On June 8, the Pope visited the Church and the convent. When he saw 25 novices he exclaimed, "Oh how many angels we have at Imola!" He visited the entire house and in the kitchen tasted the bread. As he blessed them all his voice sounded as though he were overcome by nostalgia and not a little sadness.¹⁹

The new law of 1866 together with the historical movement and an atmosphere of anti-clerical kingdom in Italy shook the very foundations of the Good Shepherd in Imola. On December 9, 1869, the government took full possession of all the buildings and grounds belonging to the convent even those given by Pope Pius IX as dowry for future needs. And so the Sisters social work of redemption and salvation was strangled to death.

In 1870 Rome was conquered by the Italian forces. Pope Pius IX made himself prisoner in the Vatican. He died there February 7, 1878. To the end a tragic yet noble figure. Even after his death Pope Pius IX lived on in the zeal of the Sisters. After his death, as would be expected, they were heartbroken. Yet later they were to

find comfort in the thought that he was spared living through their own passion in the suppression of his foundation in 1887 and their subsequent expulsion from their convent. They were given ten days notice.

1895 marked the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Good Shepherd in Imola by Pope Pius IX (1845-1895). The Sisters' taking possession of the "Conventone",—as it was called,—that they had built in seven years,—by the 104 persons—Sisters, women, young girls, boarders and children living there,—was a worthy celebration of Bishop Mastai Ferretti's achievements. The chapel was publicly inaugurated. It was built over the spot where the Bissini Palace once had a ballroom. Thus, the prayerful celebrations of the 50th anniversary of foundation at which Bishop Tesorieri of Imola, Cardinal Sebastian Galeati, Archbishop of Ravenna, and other well-known personalities took part. The Bologna Newspaper commemorated the event with an article praising the activity of social rehabilitation carried on by the Sisters and recalling Pope Pius IX as their holy founder at Imola. In 1904 Pope Pius IX was honored again through celebrations in the cathedral, and at the Good Shepherd, of the 50th anniversary of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception.²⁰

In 1946 the Sisters collaborated in the great congress organized by Catholic Action in honor of Pope Pius IX, Mastai Ferretti's 100 anniversary of election as Pope (1846-1946). On October 6, 1946 over 10,000 youths led by the Archbishop of Bologna Cardinal Nasali Rocca, the Bishop of Imola Msgr Tribbioli and other bishops of the dioceses in the region, together with the national president of Catholic Action, Louis Gedda, took over the Great Square of Imola and with booming Alleluias opened a spiral of hope for a new Christian spring.²¹

In 1984, after 140 years in Imola, the Sisters decided to close their mission, much to their sorrow, and remembering all Cardinal

MASTAI FERRETTI / POPE PIUS IX had done to initiate it. Pope Pius IX's name is kept in memory and prayer and veneration by all the members of the Congregation around the world following the teaching and example of Saint Mary Euphrasia, for whom gratitude is the memory of the heart.

FIVE

Pope Pius IX's struggle to defend the temporal power of the papacy occupied the greater part of his pontificate. Therefore, we offer some reflections on this absorbing ingredient of his ministry, and of his impact upon the history of his time.

He and his predecessors knew the costs of struggles with rulers of nations over papal rights to appoint bishops and to carry on church business unimpaired. The temporal power seemed a vital and the only viable alternative to bowing to these outside forces.

In the 8th century the Papal States had come into being as a result of an alliance between the papacy and the Carolingian dynasty. Defending the regions included and involved often outside alliances. But after a thousand years and the withdrawal, following the war of 1859, of Austria from the regions of Emilia and Romagna (in which lay the city of Imola) the Papal States were no longer an insured entity. The unification of the peninsula was underway.

Pope Pius IX had encouraged the political unification of the Italian States. What he did not approve was the public manifestations and the newspapers crying out for war against Austria in the name of the nation and the CHURCH! In his allocution of April 29, 1848 the Pope clarified that as representative of the God of peace he could not war against this Catholic nation. However, in the confusion, the Pope's own well-known prayer, "Great God, bless Italy!" was interpreted to be asking God to bless the war in which the people wished to participate!

The joint message of September 8, to Pius IX, of Carlo Alberto, Garibaldi, and Mazzini, created a shock wave among the people — "Unite Italy, your country! Tell us: the unity of Italy must be accomplished in the XIX century, this will be enough for us; we will work for you"! Pope Pius IX, realizing he was being urged beyond his intentions, renounced any personal part in the national Italian movement and affirmed his international function and role as Pope.²²

At this point, the defeated illusions of some and the anger of others replaced the former enthusiasms for Pope Pius IX. His popularity faded.

Refusing to compromise, Pius IX resisted all efforts to reach an agreement with his political opponents in this struggle—the "Liberals". The Roman government declared the death of the Temporal Power of the Papacy February 9, 1849, the 4th time in 50 years, and proclaimed the Roman Republic. It was dissolved in July 1849! On April 12, 1850 Pope Pius IX returned to the Vatican. He visited his provinces in 1857.

In 1870 the Papal States in their entirety were annexed to the new Kingdom of Italy, and the papal temporal power destroyed. Still, Pope Pius IX did not accept compromises or guarantees offered him on May 1, 1871, nor did he accept sums of money assigned to him by the new government, as part of the annexation.

Yet, in spite of these events, this intelligent and sincerely good Pope, motivated by his love for the church, succeeded both in developing the prestige of the church and in extending its influence across the world. He was involved in other activities concerning political situations.

This was the time when the Kulturkampf was beginning in Germany, with conflicts between that civil government and

religious authorities over education and church appointments. In Switzerland catholic bishops were being persecuted. The Nuncio was expelled from there in 1874.

Across the Atlantic, Pius IX had better success with Latin America. He established diplomatic relations with Guatemala in 1852; San Salvador, Honduras, Venezuela, Ecuador in 1862. Conditions in Colombia and Mexico, on the contrary, obliged him to denounce the persecutions of 1856-1860 against the clergy in those countries.

Pius IX consecrated much of his activity to bettering conditions of catholics in protestant countries, hi 1850 the Catholic hierarchy was re-established in England; 1853 in Holland, and many new dioceses were erected in the United States during these years. This Pope took great care of the penetration of the Catholic faith in the Americas, he founded the Latin American College in Rome in 1853, that of the United States in 1859, with a great increase in its missions.

Pope Pius IX, profoundly sincere in his faith, tenaciously fought against ideas and systems which threatened religion and the church as he knew and loved them.²³ His was a struggle against the spirit of the century: he condemned in 80 propositions the orientation of philosophical-political "Liberalism" in 1864. Criticisms, sarcastic remarks and attacks against his points of view did not stop him. With the Papal Bull "Aeterne Patris" of June 29, 1869, he convoked

Vatican Council I. It was interrupted by the political movements then in process. Nonetheless Pius IX, on July 28, 1870, defined the infallibility of the Pope, which caused lively opposition even among the conciliar Fathers.

He was staunchly firm when he thought the true interests of the church were endangered. To him, the turbulence of his times was as a great struggle between good and evil. To him "liberalism"

was an unbridled license to disregard all legal and moral laws and values. He is considered by some to be wanting in making a realistic technical analysis of certain characteristics of his times, but he marched to his own inner drummer.

One of the most relevant aspects of Pius IX's pontificate was the movement toward centralization in the Church. Centralization coincided with his aspirations; he perceived it as indispensable to the restoration of catholic life, where government policies threatened to suffocate apostolic zeal of clergy and faithful alike. It seemed to be the best means to reunite the forces of Catholicism in order to react to antichristian liberalism which sought to engulf them.

However, his achievement in promoting the ultra-montane movement, favoring as it did papal supremacy, together with the condemnation of liberalism vexed some countries' governing bodies. So, the last years of Pius IX were darkened by conflicts with a number of governments in Europe and America. These were exasperated by what they considered papal intransigence to modern ideas.

Pius IX felt it necessary to recall the society of his times from its preoccupation with scientific progress to a more supernatural order, to a biblical concept of humanity and salvation history which contradicted the sense of history thought to be a liberation from religious values, and such great faith in human potential as to reserve no place for the need of a Redeemer. For 30 years Pius IX vigorously fought against liberalism, which he called "the error of the century." He did so because he wanted to center Christian thought on the fundamental truths of revelation.

Just as important, and probably more so, is the parallel untiring effort of Pius IX to better the quality of Catholic life of the masses. The most spectacular result of his long pontificate is, without doubt, the great development of popular devotion and priestly

spirituality which began in the first half of the century. Many diverse elements fostered this movement. However, Pius IX contributed to it in a special way by his example, his directives and encouragement. He believed the success of the movement was indispensable to the success of Christian restoration; therefore, he was intransigent, in contrast to his personal conciliatory attitudes. The Pope persevered in repeating a certain number of principles which constitute the substance of his doctrinal teaching.

At the same time, during the 32 years of his pontificate the church developed and grew around the world. Missionary activity was also very alive on the various continents. The local churches turned always ever more willingly to Rome not because of the centralization policy carried on by the nunciatures and the Jesuits. Rather, the movement was spontaneous, facilitated by the prestige which Pius IX enjoyed from the people, which was greater than that of all his predecessors.

Finally, his qualities of simplicity, goodness, kindness, serenity even in scarcely serene situations, should be remembered, as well as his outstanding oratorical gifts. Very evident was his profound religious sentiment and his dominant effort to act less as atemporal sovereign and ever more as a man of the Church, responsible before God for the defense of Christian values which were greatly jeopardized. Neither personal ambition nor show of theocracy led Pope Pius IX to systematically encourage Roman centralization and anatomize the principles of liberalism. His motivation was essentially pastoral.²⁴ Pius IX's insights and intuitions were far-sighted and could have been and can be helpful to our times.

No greater proof of the singleness of purpose of this man can be found than in the fact that, unlike all the Popes buried in the crypt of St Peter's Basilica in Rome, he desired to be buried with his people. His body therefore rests with the people in the common cemetery of St Lawrence Outside the Walls of Rome, considered

the cemetery of the poor. Above his tomb is a round plaque of the Good Shepherd whom Pope Pius IX reflected to his people by his own life of goodness and dedication.

- Rose Virginie Warnig, RGS

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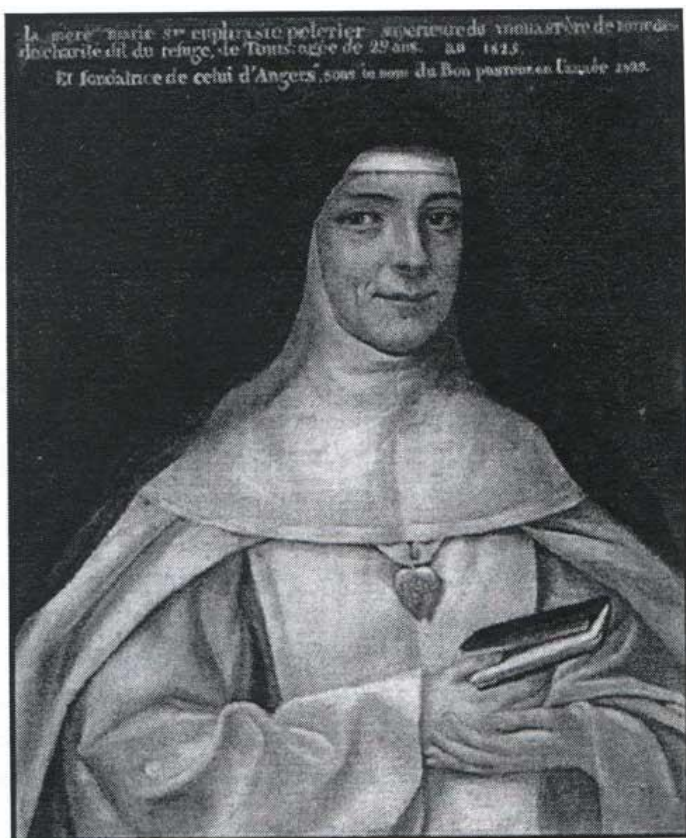
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XII

Saint Mary Euphrasia Pelletier
(1796-1868)

SAINT MARY EUPHRASIA PELLETIER

1796-1868

Having presented our readers the "Ode to Gratitude" to our benefactors and collaborators, and sharing their generous support and self-giving in the beginning of our Institute, in favor of the many women, young girls, children and families assisted, we now wish to offer a few words about the Woman of God inspired to create around the world during her lifetime, 120 facilities for their human, spiritual, intellectual and social development and welfare. We are preparing to celebrate her 200 anniversary of birth during 1996. We can offer our readers who wish to know more about her a biography entitled "Redemption", by Gabriel Francis Powers edited in 1940, with a third reprint in 1993, of which we still have some copies. The reader will enjoy it!

For Saint Mary Euphrasia was known to be vibrant, enthusiastic, sensitive, loving and loveable, warm, broadminded, generous, and faithful even unto sacrifice (Portais II p.3 81). She was endowed with a clear-sighted, lively, penetrating intelligence and a happy memory which she maintained until her death. She was considered a remarkable woman, great of mind and heart and greater still by her will power! Her mind was full of vast projects, her heart devoured by that holy ambition to do good which consumes great souls. We read that she was capable of governing an empire, but she chose to put her vast and ready intelligence to the service of her great heart. Saint Mary Euphrasia was extremely tenderhearted for her Sisters. "Her cordiality and delicate attentions moved us deeply and are engraved on our hearts".

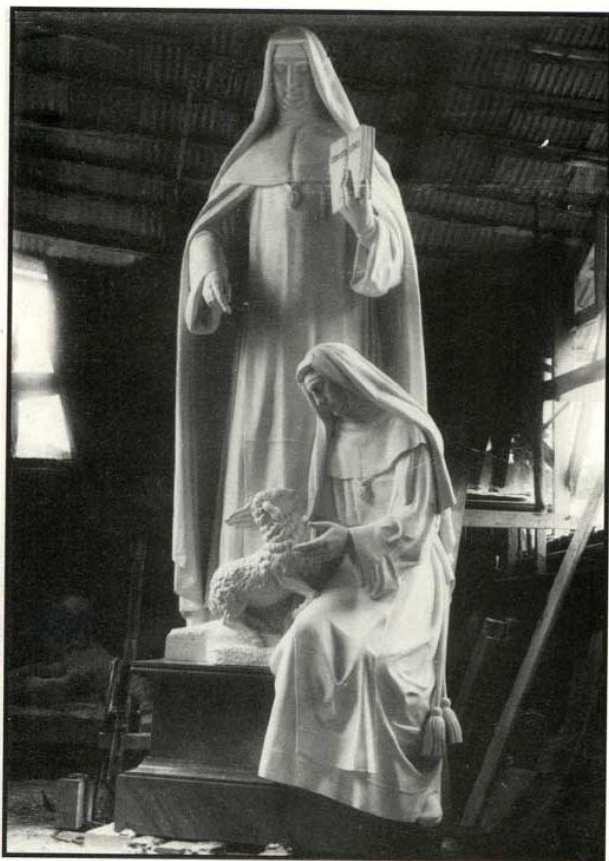
Pope Pius XI who Beatified Mary Euphrasia declared: "Her soul, the deep source which nourished the abundance of fruit and spiritual riches of her Congregation are the gifts of grace and nature, of wisdom and holiness which she put at the service of her charity, a marvel of interior gifts, a harmonious fusion of the most beautiful

and resplendent virtues. What great things she accomplished and in what great difficulties! While she maintained serenity of spirit and a certainty of intuition of the given facts capable of leading her with security. What great prudence embellished her soul! She is truly the valiant woman!' He spoke of the "gigantic virtues of that admirable woman who taught us to be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful. Let us interiorize this message from the heart of God and from His servant, keep it deep in our hearts and make it apian of life!" (Pope Pius XI, March 6, 1924.)

**- Sisters of the Good Shepherd
Cincinnati Province, 1996**



Blessed Maria Droste Zu Vischering RGS
soul of the spiritual momentum which led to
the consecration by Pope Leo XIII of the
human race to the Heart of Jesus, June 11, 1899.



The Carrara Group

The Carrara Group is the work of the sculptor Giovanni Nicolini. He carved the three form statue from one solid block of marble. The background in the picture is the shack on the mountain in which the renowned sculptor released the three from the marble after meditating on the Life and Mission of Saint Mary Euphrasia Pelletier. In 1942 the statue was brought from St. Peter's Square to below the niche in the Basilica of Saint Peter's in Rome. It was then hoisted to the niche using the ancient wheel and other means created by Michaelangelo for his sculptures in the same basilica in Rome.