CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. The Seminary and the Congregation of the Holy Ghost

Foundation and Purpose

On the Feast of Pentecost, May 27, 1703, Claude Francis Poullart des Places, formerly a lawyer, now a seminarian, finished preaching a retreat to a dozen fellow-aspirants to the priesthood; its Leitmotiv had been the scriptural text: "He hath sent me to preach the Gospel to the poor." At its conclusion, the little group went to the Parisian church of Saint-Etienne-des-Grès and there in the chapel of Our Lady consecrated themselves to God’s service. Returning to their modest rented quarters, the ardent young men closed with a quiet but happy celebration the first day of a new foundation that became known as the Seminary and the Congregation of the Holy Ghost.1

The purpose Father Poullart des Places had in mind in founding his seminary was to do what he could to alleviate the dreadful shortage of zealous and learned priests that plagued the world of his day.2 He never tired of reminding his students, "A priest who is full of ardor for God’s cause but who lacks learning is blind in his zeal, and a learned priest who lacks piety is close to falling into heresy and rebellion against the Church."3 So that his priests might be learned, he added two extra years of study to the regular course offered elsewhere. He formulated strict rules for the acceptance of students and set up a strenuous program of studies.4 Above all, however, Father des Places emphasized the religious and spiritual formation of his aspirants to the priesthood, hoping in this way to preclude the danger that these future priests would become more interested in ecclesiastical careers than in the care of souls.5

Following the instructions of the Council of Trent, the young founder welcomed to his seminary poor students,

2 Ibid., p. 17.
3 The Spiritual Writings of Claude Francis Poullart des Places, Pittsburgh, 1959, p. 167.
4 Ibid., pp. 167, 175.
5 Ibid., pp. 171 ff.
unable to pay full board and lodging elsewhere, inspiring them with a great love for God's service in the most humble positions. His eighteenth century biographer, Father Charles Besnard, S.M.M., tells us that the priests trained at Holy Ghost Seminary "constitute a kind of military detachment of auxiliary troops, ready to go anywhere where there is work to be done for the salvation of souls." They had to be willing, he said, "to go and stay in the poorest and most abandoned places for which it is especially difficult to find candidates. Whether it is a question of being exiled to the remote countryside..., teaching in a college, lecturing in a seminary..., or even crossing the seas and going to the very ends of the earth to gain a soul for Christ... their motto is: 'Behold we are ready to do Thy will'."

To assure the continuation of this work, Father des Places, as early as 1705, began to associate the best of the seminarians, trained in his foundation, with the direction of it. Two years later, the first of these associates became members of the Holy Ghost Society, a continuing body that would carry on the work after the founder's death. It was a well taken precaution, for in 1709, at the age of thirty, Father des Places\* died after a brief illness.

\* As the founder of a clerical congregation or order, Father des Places occupies an unusual position as may appear from the following comparative table:\n
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<td>priest</td>
<td>Vincentians</td>
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Father Libermann was ordained a priest a few days before the formal opening of his first novitiate.

6 Ibid., p. 289.

7 Ibid.

8 Koren, op cit., p. 15.
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Although the first two members of the congregation followed him to the grave within a year, the organization which he had provided proved strong enough to survive this succession of disasters. For the next fifty-three years it received its impetus and guidance from the able hands of Father Louis Bouic. This remarkable man not only preserved the youthful institute in its original fervor and spirit of learning, but developed it so effectively that it became one of the most renowned sources of zealous priests in the eighteenth century.

Like so many other ecclesiastical institutions, both the Seminary and the Congregation of the Holy Ghost foundered in the furious storm unleashed by the French Revolution of 1792. It was only ten years later, when Napoleon concluded a concordat with the Holy See, that Father James Bertout was able to restore both foundations. Even then, a sequence of persecutions and other adverse factors prevented the Spiritans from securely re-establishing themselves until in 1848, the Venerable Francis Libermann entered their society with all the members of his newly founded Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary. Since then the membership of the Spiritans has grown until at the present day it reaches a total of more than five thousand.

Organizational Development

In the early days, one could belong to the Holy Ghost Society only if he were a professor or director of the seminaries it conducted in Paris, Verdun and Meaux. Such members alone qualified as Spiritans in the strictest sense of the term.*

That name, however, soon came to be applied to any priest who had received his training from the Society. Many of these priests joined the diocesan clergy in

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* At first they were often referred to as Placists after the name of their founder, but later the name Spiritans or Holy Ghost Fathers became the commonly accepted term.

** Ibid., p. 12.
12 Ibid., pp. 97 ff.
13 Ibid., pp. 24 ff.
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France or entered a religious order, and for them the term “Spiritan” meant little else than a reminder of their seminary days. The term has also been applied with more justice to the priests, graduates of the Spiritan seminary of Paris, who were placed at the disposal of ecclesiastical authorities for the foreign missions in the Western hemisphere. While the missionaries going out to the Far East from Holy Ghost Seminary went to the Foreign Missions of Paris to become formally associated with that organization, the situation was different with respect to those who went to labor in America. True, by virtue of a formal agreement between Bishop Laval of Quebec, dating from 1665, the priests going to North America had to be presented by the Foreign Missions of Paris, but in 1752 this situation changed and Holy Ghost Seminary was empowered to present its candidates for appointment directly to Church and State.

Even in regard to those who departed for America before 1752 and subsequently obtained a kind of association with the Foreign Missions of Paris, this society did not want to equate their status to that of its other missionaries or to be held responsible for them. It refused to record their names and deeds in the Mémorial listing its members and associates, and formally claimed that “it was not in charge of the missionaries of Acadia.” These priests, it asserted, were “missionaries of the King and not of the [Foreign Missions] Seminary,” and when they returned to France they were “foreign to the Seminary of the Missions.” It refused to support these missionaries and considered its duty done “as soon as

30 Regarding the special position of the Montfortists, see the author’s book, The Spiritans, pp. 11 f. and 19 ff.
40 Except those who, following their return to France, became directors of the Society or went to the missions of the Far East.
50 The priests sent out in this fashion were very much disturbed
14 Cf. p. 12.
16 Mémoire ... contre les Supérieurs ... des Missions-Etrangères, Paris, 1764, p. 43. Cf. Mémoire ... contre les sieurs Girard, Manach ..., Paris, 1764, pp. 57 f.
17 Ibid. (both mémoires).
18 Ibid. (both mémoires).
the King had accepted the subjects presented by the House in Paris." In other words, as far as North American missionaries were concerned, the Foreign Missions Society acted merely as a clearing house, even when it allowed them to become nominally associated with the group. It realized that the candidates presented by Holy Ghost Seminary passed through its headquarters merely as the government-recognized channel of communication in order to obtain free transportation and other temporal advantages offered by the King.

Some of these eighteenth century Spiritans attracted so much attention by their outstanding achievements that both Church and State soon agreed formally to entrust some missions to the Congregation. The first of these was the Prefecture of the Miquelon Islands in 1765. Others followed in the next decade. Evidently, the priests sent to these missions at the end of their studies at the Spiritan seminary were entitled to be called Spiritans, not only because they were educated by the Spiritans and sent out as missionaries presented by Holy Ghost Seminary, but also because they continued to work in territories for which the Holy Ghost Congregation was responsible to the Holy See.

True, despite these continued ties with the Society, even they were not members of it in the strict sense of the term.6*

when, upon their return to France, they suddenly saw themselves deprived of support by the position taken by the Foreign Missions Society.20 In 1764, three of them, Fathers Le Loutre, Manach, and Girard, went to court to obtain a redress of what they considered an injustice. The verdict of the court, however, was in favor of the Foreign Missions, and against the priests dispatched to Acadia.21 It was to remedy this injustice that, when a few years later, the Spiritans began formally to associate foreign missionaries with their own congregation, they made provisions for the maintenance of sick and retired missionaries.

Some modern Holy Ghost Fathers have sought the reason for this in the fact that these priests were not religious in the canonical sense of the term. Such a view, however, shows great ignorance of history. The Spiritans did not become a religious society until 1855 during the generalate of Father Schwindenhammer, their twelfth

19 Ibid., first mémoire, p. 130; second mémoire, p. 57.
20 Ibid., first mémoire, passim.
In 1778, however, the Congregation began to associate foreign missionaries as members.* This was a very important step in the development of the organization. It meant that henceforth the Society would no longer be an association whose members pursued solely educational endeavors, but would also engage in the direct apostolate for which hitherto they had prepared others.

After the Venerable Francis Libermann and the members of his Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary had merged with the Holy Ghost Society in 1848, the majority of the Spiritans engaged in this direct apostolate. Moreover, the situation of the priests who were graduated from Holy Ghost Seminary changed. Until 1848, for the reasons already noted, they had been entitled to be called Spiritans. But from 1848 on, this seminary became just one of the many institutions conducted by the Holy Ghost Fathers. Thus there was no longer any particular reason why its graduates should be called “Spiritans.” Although it took some time for everyone to become accustomed to the new status, after 1848, the history of the clergy trained in Holy Ghost Seminary is no longer Spiritan history. Starting from this date, the term applies exclusively to the members of the Congregation.26

Superior General. Prior to that time, the Society consisted of secular priests (and pious laymen or Brothers), similar to other “secular” institutes such as the Sulpicians.

Even before this date there are a few facts that may point to some kind of association of missionaries with the Holy Ghost Congregation. For example, Father Frison de la Mothe, after his return from the seminary of Quebec in 1737, joined the Spiritan staff of the seminary of Verdun.23 Ten years later, Father Simon le Bansais, a staff member of the Spiritan seminary of Meaux, accepted a similar position in the Quebec seminary.24 It should be kept in mind, of course, that until the middle of the nineteenth century the moral bond uniting the members of the Holy Ghost Congregation was rather loose. They were secular priests belonging to a diocesan organization and the formality of membership involved merely a legal contract.
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2. The Origin of Spiritan Missions in North America

Father Poullart des Places had once thought of personally serving in the foreign missions. In his Reflections on the Past he says: "Of all temporal things I wanted to keep health alone, and I wanted to offer the latter in a complete sacrifice to God in the work of the missions." 27 His original rule makes no mention of missionary work explicitly, but it is only reasonable to assume that he wanted to include this type of apostolic endeavor among the most difficult and neglected works which the students trained in his seminary should be happy to undertake.

The first specific mention of foreign missions occurs in the rule which Father Bouic submitted for ecclesiastical approval in 1734. 28 Undoubtedly, its insertion was due, at least in part, to the desire to provide some remedy for the decay in which the great Seminary of Foreign Missions had fallen at the beginning of the eighteenth century. 29 The record shows that many of its missionaries to the Far East in subsequent years came from Holy Ghost Seminary. 30

According to Amet Limbour 31 and Henri le Floch, 32 the educational ties which Holy Ghost Seminary maintained with the Jesuits stimulated early Spiritan interest in the missions of North America. It is not impossible that some of the priests trained in Holy Ghost Seminary came to America following the paths of the Jesuits. 88 However, all available historical data indicates that it

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87 Gallia Christiana, vol. VII, published about 1774, mentions as the foreign missions in which the Spiritans labored "China, Tonkin, Siam, Cochin-China and the territory of Canada, as well as the French colonies, and among the savages of America." 33

27 des Places, op. cit., pp. 133 f.
29 Ibid., p. 15.
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was through the intermediacy of the Foreign Missions of Paris that the first Spiritan entered the New World in 1732. He was Father Francis Frison de la Mothe, a staff member of the Seminary of Quebec. He was followed in 1735 and 1737 by the two most famous Spiritans in the American missions, Father Peter Maillard and Father John Le Loutre. Reinforcements flowed steadily during the years that followed.

Because these priests first entered the American scene through the agency of the Foreign Missions of Paris, many historians, such as Moreau, Casgrain, Murdoch, and Parkman, have simply confused all eighteenth century Spiritan missionaries with the priests of the Foreign Missions. The first writers to realize the distinction were Camille de Rochemonteix, S.J., 34 and Louis Le Jeune, O.M.I. 35 Since then most historians have recognized the special position of the priests sent by Holy Ghost Seminary. Léonce de Grandmaison, for example, states that at the time of the Acadian deportation "the largest number and the best of the missionaries [were] Spiritans, mostly from Brittany, as John Louis Le Loutre, Francis Le Guerne, [John] Allain, [Francis] Le Jamtel etc." 36

3. Areas of Labor in North America Before 1848

After the first recorded arrival in 1732, at least nine others followed to the Quebec region before the French Revolution made further influx impossible. At least a dozen priests labored in the regions now known as Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Cape Breton, Prince Edward, and the Magdalen Islands in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence around the time of the cruel deportation of French settlers known as the "Grand DérangeMENT."

The aforementioned numbers refer only to priests who can be designated with certainty as Spiritans. Contemporary documents indicate that, in all probability, there were many others. In 1769, for example, the Abbot of

34 Rochemonteix, op. cit., pp. 268-271.
35 Tableaux synoptiques de l'histoire du Canada, Québec, 1917, fasc. 3, p. 228.
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Isle Dieu wrote to the Holy See: “During the thirty-eight years that, as Vicar General, I have been in charge of all French and Indian Missions in the vast and extended Diocese of Quebec in North America, I have sent only priests trained and educated at Holy Ghost Seminary.”37

His testimony is corroborated by Father Becquet, Superior General of the Spiritans, who three years earlier had written that his Seminary “for the past thirty years had trained all the missionaries employed in Acadia and among the savages of that peninsula.”38 And as early as 1753, the Abbot of Isle Dieu had stated that “the majority of the staff in the Quebec Seminary”39 had been furnished by the Holy Ghost Fathers.

The year before, Peter Dosquet, Bishop of Quebec from 1733 to 1740, gave the Spiritans a substantial property at Sarcelles in recognition of their services to his former diocese,40 and the following year the Abbot of Isle Dieu wrote that “for several years now the Bishop of Quebec has instructed me to address myself to Holy Ghost Seminary which has supplied him with the best priests he has in his diocese.”41

All this indicates that there were probably a number of other Spiritans in French America whom extant records9* do not identify as such.

In addition to the Spiritans working in Quebec and Acadia, there were two other important areas in which they labored. In 1763, when France ceded Canada to the British, it retained only the Miquelon Islands, off the coast of Newfoundland. Soon after, the Holy See separated these French possessions from the immense Diocese

9* Many valuable documents have disappeared in the course of time, among which are large parts of the old archives of the Holy Ghost Fathers.

37 L'Abbé de l'Isle Dieu au nonce apostolique, 5 juin 1769: Arch. Qu. 1937-38, p. 239.
39 See footnote 30.
of Quebec and established them as a separate Prefecture, which was officially entrusted to the Holy Ghost Fathers. A minimum of six Spiritans labored there in the eighteenth century before the entire population was deported by the British in 1793.

When the French Revolution expelled the Holy Ghost Fathers even from their South American Mission of Guiana, several of them sought refuge in the United States and labored there for many years.

Before tracing the experience of these Spiritans in our part of the world, it seems fitting to devote a few pages to the plans actively pursued by the Abbot of Isle Dieu, because of the eminent role which he wanted to assign to the Spiritans in the ecclesiastical reorganization of these countries and because of the enormous influence which they have exercised upon the subsequent history of the Holy Ghost Fathers.

4. *The Plans of the Abbot of Isle Dieu*

Father Peter de la Rue (1688—1779) is better known in history as the Abbot of Isle Dieu because, after obtaining the benefice of this medieval abbacy, he always signed his letters and papers in this fashion. In 1734, Belgium-born Bishop Peter Dosquet of Quebec nominated him as Vicar General of his immense diocese, which at that time extended to all French colonies in North America, including Louisiana. The office assigned to the Abbot, who continued to reside in Paris, was to represent the bishop at the Court of the King of France and at the Holy See, to take care of all the affairs concerning the welfare of the diocese, and to confer the necessary faculties upon the priests he would send to *Nova Francia*.

Despite the greatest difficulties, the Abbot fulfilled his delicate function so competently, zealously and unselfishly that three successors of Bishop Dosquet confirmed him in his position until shortly before his death at the age of ninety-one; he had been Vicar General for

42 Gosselin II, p. 263.
43 Gosselin II, p. 264; Arch. Qu. 1935-36, p. 274.
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almost a half century. His official title in relation to the French government was Chaplain General of the Colonies of Nova Francia, that is, the French possessions in North America.

Personnel Problems of the Foreign Missions Society

One of the most pressing difficulties Bishop Dosquet and his successors faced was that of finding an adequate number of priests for their diocese. The Foreign Missions Society was supposed to supply him with personnel for the seminaries of Quebec and for other works but, as has already been noted, since the end of the seventeenth century the Society was hampered by tremendous manpower problems. It had, moreover, pressing obligations toward its missions in the Far East, for which in 1722 it had only seventeen priests, bishops included. Its personnel problems were so great that the Society considered the possibility of merging with the Sulpicians. This plan, however, was not put into effect; instead the Sulpicians aided the Society in its struggle for survival by giving it a few outstanding priests, including the future Bishop Dosquet.

Although, since 1732, Holy Ghost Seminary had supplied the Foreign Missions Society with a large part of its personnel both for the Far East and for the American Missions, the Society appeared reluctant to appeal constantly to the Holy Ghost Fathers. Its directors may have felt somewhat humiliated by the stark contrast between their own empty seminary and the flourishing situation of the Spiritan institution, with which the missionaries

10 A century later, the Holy Ghost Fathers faced a situation similar to that of the Foreign Missions. While they were in a rather critical situation, the Congregation founded by the Venerable Francis Libermann flourished and thus gave added emphasis to their dangerous condition.46

continued to keep in touch. Thus they made efforts to find priests for their Canadian commitments elsewhere, but with so little success that the Bishop of Quebec got almost no one.

Annoyed by this situation, the Abbot of Isle Dieu, in 1752, asked Father Caris, the Spiritan Procurator, "why lately he had supplied so few priests." "The reply," he relates, "was very short: 'those gentlemen [of the Foreign Missions] do not want any'." It was then that the Abbot decided to bypass the Foreign Missions Society and to present the Spiritan priests destined for America directly to the government for their appointment. At the same time he tried to maintain cordial relationships with the Foreign Missions Society. Writing, for instance, to the Minister of the Colonies in 1753, he says: "Please, do not discredit me with them... Give them whatever instructions you wish and give me those that are necessary for me."

The Seminary of Quebec

Meanwhile the situation of the junior and senior seminaries in Quebec degenerated to such an extent that in 1734 the Bishop complained about ten vacancies on the staff. All the Foreign Missions Society could do was offer two candidates, both of whom Bishop Dosquet himself had found while he was still in Paris. For this reason he wanted the society to renounce all its claims upon

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11 For instance, in 1740, Father Le Loutre asked the Superior of the Foreign Missions "to act as his procurator" with respect to the Spiritans' institution; in 1746, Father Maillard went on audience with the Duke of Orleans in company with the saintly Father Peter Caris, the Spiritan Procurator, but the Foreign Missions claimed that "he should have gone with their Superior." 48

49 L'Abbé de l'Isle Dieu à Mgr de Pontbriand, 26 avril 1752: Arch. Qu. 1935-36, p. 343.
50 Same letter, ibid., p. 344; le Président... de la Marine à M. Galissonnière, 20 juin 1752 and à l'Abbé de l'Isle Dieu, same date: * Arch. Col., C11B, vol. 96, 100v(83) and 103(85).
51 L'Abbé de l'Isle Dieu au Président... de la Marine, 9 mai 1753: Arch. Qu. 1935-36, p. 399.
52 Gosselin II, p. 248.
the seminaries and to release them from the bond uniting them to its central seminary in Paris. Writing to the Minister of the Colonies, the prelate asked him: "I beg you to demand of the priests of the Paris Seminary that they renounce this bond. In that case I am quite confident that I will be able to staff [the seminaries] with good priests who are not attached to any congregation, unless you prefer to attach them to the Congregation of Saint Sulpice or to that of the Holy Ghost, which is now capable of supplying us with a substantial number of priests."\(^53\)

Perhaps it was all for the best that the bishop's request went unheeded for, as Gosselin remarks,\(^54\) the prelate did not appear to be a very good judge of men and collected from various sources a number of clerics who were of doubtful value for his diocese. Associating them with the Holy Ghost Fathers or letting them operate the seminaries independently of any congregation would undoubtedly have produced very questionable results.

The idea of entrusting the seminary to the Spiritans arose again under the capable administration of the highly respected Bishop de Pontbriand. Staff difficulties and disputes over the bishop's control had continued to plague the seminary. In 1753, the Abbot of Isle Dieu expressed his surprise that the Foreign Missions Society did not pursue its former policy of "addressing itself to Holy Ghost Seminary, which would easily furnish them with all the necessary subjects, just as it supplies them with all those whom they need for their missions in the Far East."\(^55\) At the same time he affirmed to Bishop de Pontbriand that "the Holy Ghost Fathers are quite willing to supply... all the necessary personnel, even for the Seminary of Quebec if you so desire."\(^56\)

Foreseeing that the Foreign Missions would threaten

\(^{53}\) Ibid., p. 249; David, Les missionnaires..., p. 30.
\(^{54}\) Gosselin II, pp. 249 f.
\(^{55}\) See footnote 30.
\(^{56}\) L'Abbe de l'lsle Dieu à Mgr de Pontbriand, 3 mars 1753: Arch. Qu. 1935-36, p. 371.
to withdraw, the Abbot wanted to put the Bishop at ease regarding this question. Consequently he wrote him, "In case the Foreign Missions Society withdraws its men from the seminary, Your Excellency will not be left without priests. The same community [the Holy Ghost Fathers] which offers you personnel for Louisbourg will see to it that you will not be short-staffed in Quebec."57

In June of the same year (1753), he again encouraged the Bishop not to be intimidated by threats of withdrawal: "They say openly that, as soon as you change anything in the control of the seminary, they will hand it back to you and withdraw... They imagine that you will not be able personally to find anyone [willing to staff it]. But I am certain of the opposite, for the Holy Ghost Fathers will be happy to take it if you assign to each of them a small salary to cover the cost of clothing and board."58

It is difficult to conceive what the ultimate results of the Abbot's proposal for the Holy Ghost Fathers would have been had it been executed. Success could have meant their permanent establishment in Canada in the middle of the eighteenth century, resulting in a large and solidly established province in later times. It would also have nullified many of the evil consequences of their suppression by the French Revolution. The history of the Congregation in the first half of the nineteenth century might thus have been quite different.

As it was, the disastrous events in Acadia, followed by the British conquest, effectively disposed of all plans to entrust the Quebec seminary to the Congregation of the Holy Ghost. All the Spiritans did was to contribute a number of men to its staff.

The Removal of the Recollects

Another problem which plagued the Bishops of Quebec concerned the Recollects, a group of friars who later merged with the Franciscans. After the founding of Louisbourg on Ile Royale (Cape Breton Island) in 1715, this order had been introduced there and subsequently extended its work also to Ile Saint Jean (Prince Edward

57 Du même au même, 1 avril 1753: ibid., p. 388.
58 Du même au même, 9 juillet 1753: Arch. Qu. 1936-37, p. 334.
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Island). From the outset, however, the Bishop had never been very satisfied with them, and efforts to put them under the control of a Vicar General foreign to their order failed, so that finally the Bishop resolved to get rid of them entirely.

Here also the Abbot thought that only the Holy Ghost Fathers would be able to provide the Bishop with well-trained and capable personnel in sufficient numbers to satisfy all needs. It is somewhat embarrassing for a Spiritan to repeat here some of the glowing compliments which the Abbot continually bestowed upon them in his confidential reports to the Bishop, the Holy See, and the Minister of the Colonies, especially when one sees the perpetual complaints he voices with respect to the Foreign Missions of Paris and the Recollects.

At the risk of seeming smug, a few examples of why the Abbot wanted to make the Spiritans play such a preponderant role in North America are here presented. Writing to Bishop de Pontbriand he says: "All who come from this institution are very good men. The education they get there for life is fairly hard, the studies are good, the priestly spirit is well-taught, the students are trained in a great simplicity of behavior, moral theology is studied well. The best priests in your colonies and in the Far East missions have come from this institution." The French government, likewise, was told that "only the spirit acquired in this institution, the education which its students receive and the way in which

12 The canonical situation of priests working in mission territories had not yet been as fully clarified as is now the case. As a result, there were constant and widespread jurisdictional conflicts between religious orders and the bishops in whose dioceses they worked.

13 Only the Jesuit missions shared generously in the praise of the Abbot, who was generally very well informed about everything that went on in the French territories of America.

14 This subject more often than not was neglected in other seminaries.

60 Cf. p. 31.
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they are trained are capable of creating truly apostolic men." 63 Most flattering of all is the Abbot's report of 1769 to the Holy See that, for the past thirty-eight years, "the priests trained and educated at Holy Ghost Seminary... have always surpassed his hopes without a single one of them ever disappointing him." 64

To offset somewhat this continuous praise, a statement of a colonial official in Cayenne can be noted. The man did not like the idea that the religious service of this territory had been entrusted to the Spiritans and voiced his disappointment rather violently: "If [the government] had wanted to give preference to the biggest fools, it could not have done better." 65 This remark, however, is one of the rare exceptions to the general satisfaction of Church and State with the services of the Spiritans in the eighteenth century.

The same strain of praise runs throughout the Abbot's letters regarding the individual priests sent out by the Holy Ghost Congregation to the Acadian and Indian missions. 15* Thus it is not surprising that the Abbot wanted to assign to them a preponderant role in the apostolate of French America.

For this reason he made determined efforts to support the Bishop's intention of dispensing with the services of the Recollects. His zeal led him to repeatedly complain about the friars to such an extent that Bishop de Pontbriand had to tell him that "he was 'overloading' the

15* The only notable exception is a passage concerning Father Le Guerne. 66 The Abbot erroneously thought that after the fall of Beau-sejour he had cowardly abandoned his post to seek safety in Quebec. As he learned soon after, just the opposite had happened; Father Le Guerne had become the chaplain of hunted men. 67

63 Mémoire de l'Abbé de l'Isle Dieu sur le projet... de retirer tous les missionnaires reguliers...: David, Les missionnaires..., p. 53. See also reference of footnote 30.

64 L'Abbé de l'Isle Dieu au nonce apostolique, 5 juin 1769: Arch. Qu. 1937-38, p. 239.


66 L'Abbé de l'Isle Dieu au Président... de la Marine, 23 déc. 1755: Arch. Qu. 1937-38, p. 171.

67 Cf. pp. 61 ff.
Franciscan cowl." However, as the Abbot was able to point out, "It may be true that I thunder a bit, but my thunder merely echoes yours. All I want is to see to it that your views are carried out." As soon as he heard that the Bishop wanted to build a large church at Louisbourg, he insisted once more: "This poor mission of Louisbourg will never be solidly established as long as it remains in the hands of the Recollects... The Holy Ghost Fathers will gladly take it, and the small community which they will establish there will serve the town and the various posts much better."

This community, he added in 1755, was to become a center where the Spiritan "missionaries destined for Saint Jean [Prince Edward Island], the rivers of Beauséjour, and the St. John River [New Brunswick] could debark and where those whose health would be threatened could find rest as well as replacements for such posts as old age or infirmity would force them to leave." If the Recollects were to stay at all, the Abbot insisted, they should be "used only as military chaplains and not for anything else."

Influential as he was with the Court, the Abbot would most likely have succeeded in his plans to remove the Recollects if the disastrous military events of 1755 and the following years had not resulted in the deportation of all priests from the area. Although, as is later detailed, a number of Holy Ghost missionaries went to work on the islands of Prince Edward and Cape Breton, the Abbot's fond dream of seeing them establish a central community at Louisbourg to replace the Recollects could never be accomplished.

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68 See reference of footnote 57, p. 384.
70 Du même au même, 9 juillet 1753: Arch. Qu. 1936-37, pp. 335 f.
71 Du même au même, 25 mars 1755: ibid., p. 397.
72 Du même au secrétaire d'État... de la part de M. l'Evêque de Québec, 23 mai 1751: Arch. Qu. 1935-36, p. 313.
73 Cf. pp. 68 ff.
The Suppression of the Jesuits

It is generally known that in 1763 the French government ordered the suppression of the Jesuits throughout France and all its dependencies, a move which soon after was imitated by most other governments and the Holy See itself. Whatever may have been the faults of the Jesuits in France during the turbulent eighteenth century, the Abbot of Isle Dieu steadfastly believed that they deserved the highest praise for their missionary work in North America. Their suppression and the subsequent resolution of the Court of King Louis XV to remove all religious orders from its American colonies meant that other means had to be found to provide for the spiritual needs of the Miquelon Islands, Louisiana, French West Indies, and Guiana.

As soon as he heard that the Court was considering the substitution of priests from Holy Ghost Seminary for the religious orders, the Abbot addressed a long memorandum to the government in which he vigorously supported this idea. It begins by pointing out that these Spiritan missionaries "had always been of an exemplary behavior in all their missions, both French and Indian, of North America," that "the French settlers and the savages of whom they took care, especially in Acadia, were profoundly attached to them," that "they had always lived in perfect unity and harmony with one another, had always professed and practiced a spirit of unselfishness and evangelical poverty, and had been submissive" to the authorities.

Next, the Abbot emphasized that the government's plan could succeed only if the Holy Ghost Fathers were officially approved for the purpose of providing the colonies with a new clergy. "I am not afraid," he said, "to state that in the entire kingdom only Holy Ghost Seminary is capable of providing as many priests as subsequently will be needed both with respect to quantity and quality because of the kind of education that

74 See footnote 63, David, op. cit., pp. 51 f.
75 Same mémoire, p. 51.
76 Same mémoire, pp. 52 f.
is given in this institution. The students trained there are educated for the most difficult, the most laborious, the least lucrative, and the most abandoned posts.\textsuperscript{16}\textsuperscript{*}

The Abbot terminated his memorandum with an outline of the steps to be taken to secure the satisfactory religious service of the colonies.\textsuperscript{77} Among these, he mentioned the creation of four Vicariates, headed by titular bishops, in Guadeloupe, Martinique, San Domingo and Guiana.\textsuperscript{17}\textsuperscript{*} These bishops should be endowed with the same evangelical and apostolic spirit as their priests. They should consequently have been educated in a similar fashion. After mentioning that the Holy Ghost Fathers had provided the Foreign Missions Society with "the greatest bishops they have ever had in the Far East,"\textsuperscript{79} the Abbot suggested that the Court address itself to Holy Ghost Seminary or its missionaries returned from Canada and Acadia to fill these episcopal posts.

In addition, he stressed that for these missions there should be a central establishment from which the bishops "would draw all the necessary personnel,"\textsuperscript{80} through whose superior they "would maintain the necessary correspondence with the Holy See,"\textsuperscript{81} and which would serve also as a rest house for retired missionaries. Although the Abbot did not mention any name, the gist of his memorandum made it abundantly clear that the Mother House of the Holy Ghost Fathers should be the central establishment of this ecclesiastical organization.

The constant efforts of the Abbot finally produced\textsuperscript{16}\textsuperscript{*} At the same time the Abbot pointed out that the Holy Ghost Fathers did not limit themselves to the training of missionaries but educated also other priestly candidates with a different vocation.\textsuperscript{17}\textsuperscript{*} This proposal was not carried out until eighty-seven years later when Father Libermann, the eleventh Superior General of the Holy Ghost Fathers, managed to push through the ecclesiastical reorganization of the old French colonies. San Domingo (Haiti) had to wait until 1862\textsuperscript{78} and Guiana until 1934.\textsuperscript{77} Cf. also l'Abbé de l'Isle Dieu au nonce apostolique, 5 juin 1769: Arch. Qu. 1937-38, p. 238.\textsuperscript{78} Koren, op. cit., pp. 115 ff.\textsuperscript{79} See reference of footnote 63, p. 57.\textsuperscript{80} Same mémoire, p. 54.\textsuperscript{81} Same mémoire, pp. 54 f.
results. State and Church decided to entrust the spiritual care of the remaining French colonies in America,\(^{18}\) India, and Africa to the Congregation of the Holy Ghost, and to make their Superior General the intermediary between the Court and the Holy See in the affairs of these territories.\(^{82}\) In addition, the State created a special fund to support their retired missionaries at the Mother House. The first missions thus assigned was the vestigial territory which the Treaty of Paris (1763) allowed France to retain of its formerly immense empire in North America; namely, the tiny Miquelon Islands, off the coast of Newfoundland, Guiana, Senegal and other colonies followed later. As the responsible authority for these territories, the Spiritan Superior, Father Francis Becquet, began to use the title of Superior General in 1766. Thus it was largely due to the initiative and influence of the Abbot of Isle Dieu that the Holy Ghost Congregation assumed a pronounced interest in missionary labor. Subsequent events would serve to make this interest even more emphatic. For instance, a few years later, the Congregation began to accept as members priests who went to the missions.

Nevertheless, the society has never lost sight of its ancient educational purpose. Even today it continues to play its dual role expanding the boundaries of Christ's Kingdom on earth through both missionary labor and the formation of an elite, destined to act as a leaven, through educational work.

\(^{18}\) Louisiana meanwhile had been ceded to Spain (1763).
\(^{82}\) Koren, op. cit., pp. 28 f.