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A Man for Our Age: Blessed Daniel Brottier, CSSp., Friend of Youth

Gerald Fitzgerald CSSp

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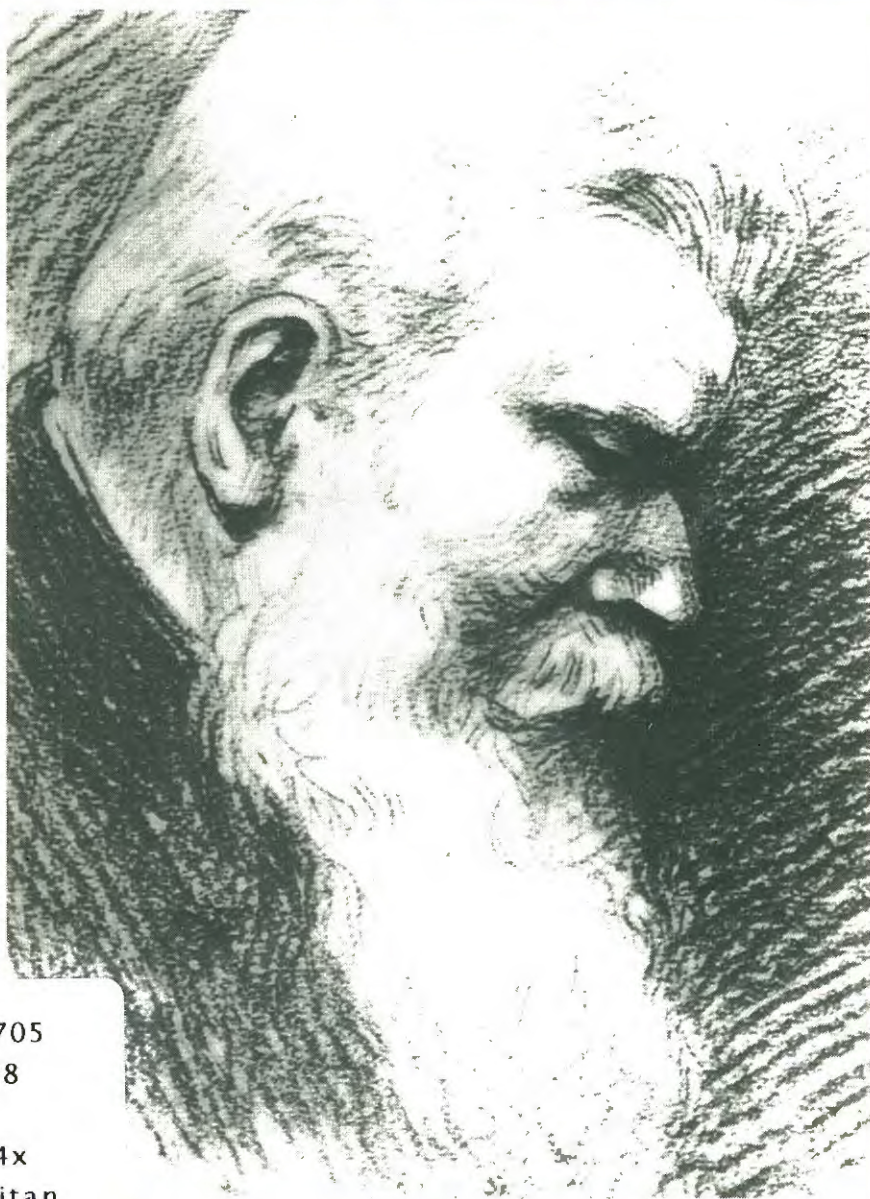
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BLESSED
DANIEL BROTTIER CSSp
Friend of Youth



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by Gerald Fitzgerald CSSp

A MAN FOR OUR AGE

Blessed Daniel Brottier

Friend of Youth

by Gerald W. Fitzgerald, C.S.Sp.

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A MAN FOR OUR AGE:
Blessed Daniel Brottier
FRIEND OF YOUTH...

*"Here lies Father Daniel Brottier, Missionary in Senegal,
Assistant-General of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost founder of
the cathedral, "The Africa Memorial" at Dakar and of this sanctuary of
Saint Teresa of the child JESUS
Chaplain to the 26th Infantry Division
Founder of the National Union of ex-Servicemen
Father to 1,400 Orphans;
"7 September 1876 - 28 February 1936"*

Inscription on the tomb of Daniel Brottier, in the Sanctuary of the Little Flower of Lisieux, attached to the Orphan-Apprentice School at 40 Rue de la Fontaine, Auteuil, Paris. XVI.

Beatified at St Peters, Rome, on November 25 1984 by Pope John Paul II

Acknowledgments: The author thanks the following for their help and advice and for reading the proofs:

Rev. T. Friery, C.S.Sp. Provincial; Rev. W. W. Gandy C.S.Sp. Archivist, English Province; Rev. B. Gogan, C.S.Sp. Mission Research and Publications Ireland; also the staff of the Review. A l'Ecoute (Paris) for permission to reproduce photographs.

Finally a special word of thanks to our indefatigable secretary, Mrs M Ford, Bromley for typing the original manuscript.

Introduction:

He died in Paris, this heroic man of whom I feel compelled to write, on February 28th, 1936. He was not yet sixty years of age but those years were filled with purposeful living. From his youngest days, he had a dream—not of wealth or earthly love or passing glory, but of service and dedication to men for love of God. This was to lead him to give himself with joy and determination to the care and training of poor boys in trades and careers, in the Christian surroundings of the orphanage of Auteuil, in the north western suburbs of Paris.

But, I am running ahead of my story of this great and kindly man, whom it was my privilege to know, at least superficially, in my own young days as a student in Paris, where I was ordained the year he died.

Before I begin to tell of his life let me emphasise the title I have chosen: A man for our age. In our world where so many young people deprived of a sense of purpose, discouraged by the threats to their future, sated too soon with worldly pleasures turn to drugs, drink and sex as an escape, Daniel Brottier has a message, a challenge, and extends the helping hand of a friend. You see, he truly loved and understood young people and their problems. May he prove the truth of my belief to every young person who reads this modest pamphlet. You, my friends, are important. The Church and the world of tomorrow needs you; needs the best that is in you. To you I dedicate this tribute to Father Brottier.

Formative Years and Priesthood

Daniel Brottier was born at la Ferté-Saint-Cyr, a small village in the Diocese of Blois in central France. It was September 7th, 1876. The following day, the Feast of Our Lady's Birthday, he was baptised in the local parish church and given the names Daniel Jules Alexis. His parents, Jean and Bertha, simple hardworking country folk, devoted to church and family, were overjoyed to have a little companion for their only other child, Gaston, two years older than his baby brother.



The family home at Ferté St-Cyr.



The parish church of Daniel's baptism and first communion.

There is nothing extraordinary in the early years of the young Daniel. Like all children, he was at times wild and self-willed but remained always unspoilt, loving and lovable, full of life and energy, honest, courageous, kindly.

There was also a reflective side to his character, which became evident when he was about five years old. One day he announced to his mother that he intended to be pope! She quietly explained to him that he would have to become a priest first. "In that case, I'll be a priest," he replied. From that determination he never wavered.

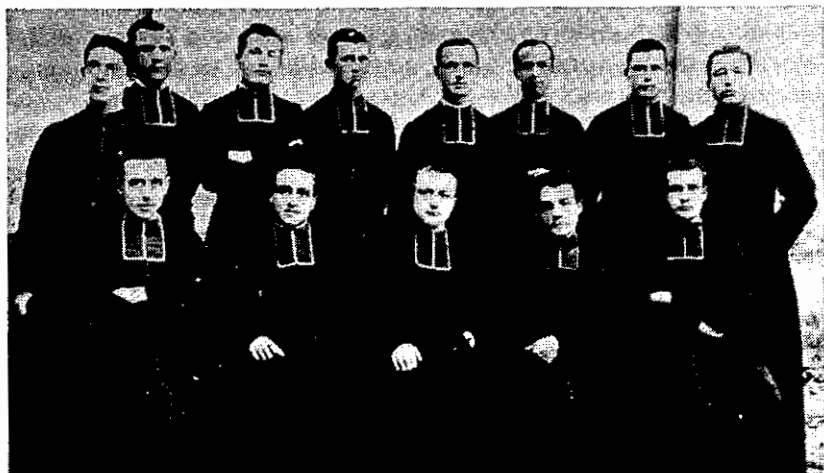
Characteristic of him too, at this early age, was his deep devotion to the Virgin Mary, which was evident all through his life. Already at seven years of age, his parish priest discerned in him a possible vocation to the priesthood and began giving him lessons in Latin. Another parish priest, who knew the boy at the time, was so impressed by his simple piety and deep intellectual promise that he said: "one day he will be famous."

His ambition did not rest in being a priest: at the age of 12, he determined to be both a religious and a missionary as well.

When he was 14, he entered the Junior Seminary at Blois to complete his secondary studies and three years later in October 1893, he entered the Senior Seminary of the same city to pursue his ecclesiastical studies of philosophy and theology. Already he was



A seminarist: Daniel on holiday.



Young priests' of his year. Daniel 2nd from right top row.

suffering from those terrible headaches which were to dog him all his life. He bore this suffering in a great spirit of faith and in union with the sufferings of Jesus. Deeply pious, he was still simple, affable, full of good spirits, a happy and fulfilled young man. His natural gifts and temperament tempted him to be proud, but he took measures to control that tendency and denied himself anything that might gratify it.

In accordance with French law, he had to do one year's compulsory military service. Fortunately, this was done at Blois and so he was able to consult regularly with his seminary directors. He resisted all attempts to turn him away from his vocation and continued quietly in the practice of his religious observances.

Two years after his return to the seminary, he was ordained for the diocesan priesthood, on 22nd. October 1899. Always, however, his thoughts and desires were focused on the far-away mission-fields, where whole populations had never had Christ's Gospel of love and redemption preached to them. For three years nonetheless he accepted a teaching appointment at the ecclesiastical college of Pontlevoy, and carried out his duties there conscientiously, with zeal and much success. Then he applied to the local bishop to release him for missionary work. Generously, though not without regret, the permission was granted. He applied for admission to the Congregation of the



Fr. Brottier during his military service while still a church student at Blois.

Holy Ghost and the Immaculate Heart of Mary and began his novitiate at Orly, near Paris. The decision was not taken without pain. He wrote to his future novice master, the saintly Father Genoud, on June 6th 1902: "I did not think it would be so hard to leave the world. When one measures it against the sacrifices other people have to make, it seems little or nothing, but when it touches you directly, it is a very different matter. Yet, I am consoled that in the depth of my being, I experience the same enthusiasm that moved me during my retreat last year". Perhaps, it was the pain of separating himself from his family, who could not understand his call, that made it so difficult. It was a foreshadowing of the greater separation when he would leave them for the African mission-field, a foretaste of the cross of suffering his heart had so generously consented to. "If happiness in this world was the object of our striving," he said to them, "then I am sure my project would be utterly foolish. But, the sufferings of the present are the seed of the glory and happiness that will be ours in heaven. When God calls, we should go forward whatever the cost."

A Religious and a Missionary:

The religious congregation that Daniel entered was that of the Holy Ghost Fathers. It had been founded in 1703 by a young Breton lawyer, Claude Poullart des Places, in Paris. The initial purpose was to open up the possibility of priestly training to poor students. As many of these went on to serve the Church overseas, the Seminary of the Holy Ghost quickly developed a missionary character. This was further emphasised in the 19th Century when the Holy Ghost Fathers absorbed the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary which had been founded by the convert Jew, Francis Libermann, the son of a rabbi of Alsace. His congregation was directly missionary with emphasis on bringing the Gospel message to the most needy, especially those of the black races. With spiritual advancement the aim of the missionaries was also to ensure the human development of the people they went to, at every level. It was a challenging life. It still is. It demanded of those who undertook it a religious spirit, zeal in the service of others and a profound spirit of sacrifice.

The young Father Daniel Brottier, gave all to God when he entered the novitiate, an experience which was only to deepen and mature his original offering of himself. He became at once both, reserved and affable, jolly yet recollected. Significantly, in a letter to his Superior



Professor with students at the College of Pontlevoy.

General, written in September 1903, he says: "I do not wish to appear presumptuous, but if you have a danger-post to fill where life itself is at risk, I say in all simplicity, I'm ready."

Three months later, he was appointed to the mission of Senegal in West Africa and to be second curate in the parish of St. Louis there.

It was a great disappointment to him, who had dreamt of being a missionary of the front line. He might as well have been back in a parish in his home diocese! So God was testing his spirit of obedience? Then, like his Master he would bow his head and say: "Not my will but Thine be done".



Fr. Brottier with parents on right, brother and wife left, nieces centre.

Thus, he sailed for the now lovely, old city of Dakar where he landed on November 26th 1903. Next day, he presented himself at his new parish and began a ministry that was to last until June, 1911. His parish priest there, Father Jalabert, who was later to be Bishop, was a man of great simplicity but astute: a wise and encouraging leader, a dedicated missionary, who accepted all the hardships of his apostolic journeys yet maintained a high standard of culture in the central parish, where he lived with his three curates: Father Brottier was the fourth. He was just the man to harness the energy and enthusiasm of the newcomer. Soon, the young Father Daniel brought to the not very thriving mission a new spirit, a new optimism. His radiant presence alone changed the whole atmosphere about him. His unquenchable energy and courage in some strange way made all things light and obstacles seem to fall before him. The kindly welcome he had received touched him. He was at home. So, to work!

When I read of the multiplicity of works he undertook in those eight years in St Louis of Senegal, I am overcome with admiration. Besides his parochial duties, in which the confessional and the visiting of the sick were so prominent, he was also chaplain to the boys' school run by the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the girls' school run by the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny; these tasks he carried out with much patience and kindness. It was a good preparation for what was hidden in the future of God's Providence, his ministry to the Orphans-Ap-prentices of Auteuil. He also threw himself into setting up recreation clubs for the young, discussion groups and other forms of social activity. Himself a talented musician, he encouraged music amongst them and eventually had a highly capable church choir. He also produced plays and concerts and had his own band! In all his ministry, there was no distinction of colour or race. Photos exist showing the prematurely white-haired, distinguished-looking and bearded missionary joyfully surrounded by children, black, white and coloured and looking radiantly happy. In his spare time he grafted roses, grew exotic fruits with great success and soon found a ready market for them amongst the European community, thus raising funds for his various good works.

A man of action, a man of deep prayer especially and with a lively sense of humour, a great lover of practical jokes, no one would ever have suspected how much he suffered from violent headaches ever since student days. These were now intensified by the warm humid climate of St. Louis. In 1906, reluctantly, after a period of illness, he

submitted to the doctors' advice and returned to his home country for a long convalescence of six months.

At home with his parents in Blois, he never spoke of the severe bouts of malaria he had undergone. He talked only, and enthusiastically, of how fine the young white and black of St. Louis were. He was very proud of them and gave himself wholeheartedly to them and to preparing them to found sound Christian families. When he left his family in 1907 to return to St. Louis, they were reassured and happy that he had indeed found his life-work but, alas, his health again obliged a return to his native land in June 1911. The following November, he made a retreat of 10 days in the Trappist Monastery at Lerins in the Mediterranean. He had a decision to make between the active religious life and the contemplative one, which he had long cherished secretly in his heart. Of it he wrote very simply: "I lived unforgettable hours in the recollection of the cloister, in an atmosphere of sacrifice and immolation. But, the lack of sleep and especially of food wore me down and after a few days I had to yield to the evidence: 'I was not made for this kind of life.'"

So, he returned to Paris. Bravely and without looking back, he faced the future "whatever it be" simply and realistically. There were big question-marks over his return to Africa and he knew it. "I have promised to leave all to Providence and take no steps for or against. That is the only way for a religious to do his duty."



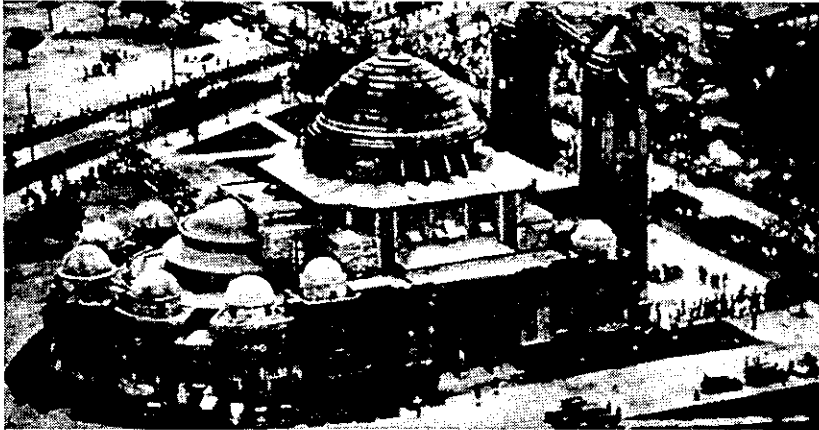
Learning the Local Language.



Bishop Jalaberi of Dakar.

The Africa Memorial Cathedral.

Providence did indeed take a hand. His old parish priest at St. Louis, Fr. Jalabert was now Bishop of Dakar, where the Holy Ghost Fathers had worked since 1846. The new Bishop decided to build a cathedral worthy of the new capital of Senegal. It would be a monument to the glory of all those who had given their life, their energy, sometimes their life-blood itself, for the service of the African people. Bishop Jalabert knew Fr. Brottier well and knew his health would not permit him to return to Africa. Soon he would use his talents in France. He would appoint him his Vicar-General but allow him to reside in Paris as director of the fund-raising necessary for the African Memorial.



Father Brottier was overjoyed. He could still continue his missionary work in France. He set to work with enthusiasm to organise his campaign. He set up a secretariate and a public relations office, an unusual idea in the Paris of those days. He also heavily involved lay-people as helpers. Soon, all France was afire with his missionary zeal and deep faith. A network of friends of the Memorial was set up throughout the country. His great gifts of nature and of grace were used to the full. This was to be his work from 1911-1923, with the exception of the years he spent as an army chaplain from 1914-18, during the First Great War. The cathedral was eventually completed and consecrated in 1936. The Papal Legate for the occasion was the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Verdier, but the man who had given twenty-five years of his life to the project and made it a reality was not

present. He preferred to remain quietly with the poor orphans of Paris, who were then the object of his love and concern. They would not, however, let him get away with that. They gathered to pay him their affectionate tribute. In his reply, he said "My children, I cannot find words to thank you enough to-day for this surprise. I am deeply moved. This intimate celebration gives me more joy than had I gone to Dakar with the Cardinal.... People are surprised I did not go. I am past the age for human honours; besides, about Dakar, I never for a moment thought of human glory. God's love brings things together for his greater glory. You should know that without Bishop Jalabert and the African Memorial, there would be no Chapel to St. Teresa here today, nor would I have been here with you. As long as life lasts, we should bless God and sing the Lord's mercy forever." As long as life lasts: twenty six days later, he was to meet face to face the God in whose company he had so long walked, in faith and love and service.

Chaplain to the Forces: 1914-18

When the First Great War broke out in 1914, Father Brottier was exempt from military service. His desire to help the thousands of soldiers who were risking their lives on the battlefields of Europe with few priests to help them, led him to volunteer for the Chaplain-Corps, a voluntary arm of the French forces. He left for the front-line in August 1914 and remained there until November 1918, as chaplain to the light infantry. He was present with these through all the great battles of 1917, such as Verdun, Yser and the Somme. Always he was to be found with the most exposed units, indefatigable, zealously bringing the comfort of his presence and of the Last Sacraments to the dying. At night, he buried the dead; in the day, he rescued and succoured the wounded, even under enemy fire. His charity and courage were equalled only by his spirit of humility and self-denial. He was untiring in his labour, contemptuous of danger, calm, recollected, utterly dedicated. This may seem high praise. It is not ours, but the tribute paid him by soldiers and officers alike, some of whom were, to say the least, rather anti-clerical. It was these who recommended him for the highest rewards of the French State, the Legion of Honour and the Croix de Guerre. Between 1916 and 1918, he was six times mentioned in dispatches!

He was not just "a man of God" in the service of souls. He had a very human side too. He could enjoy a game of bridge with the officers or spend a free hour with his men. He gave them cigarettes, bought out



Fr. Brottier with his men in the trenches 1914-1918.



of his own savings, took photos that they could send home to their dear ones, even found time to write letters for the illiterates. He admired the courage of the "little men" — he admired the manly comradeship that existed amongst them, a sense of community, forged and purified in the heat of battle. Already in 1916 after the terrible battle of Verdun he was thinking of how that might be perpetuated when the heroes returned to the monotony and obscurity of civilian life. Out of the spirit of apostolate and charity of the former missionary, there grew the germ of an idea which he would realise in peacetime. He would found a National Union of Ex-Servicemen, whose motto would be "United as on The Battlefield".

Naturally, he was respected and admired by both officers and men. They genuinely loved this big-hearted, generous man who was "all things to all men". Whatever the social milieu from which they came, all were drawn to him in a mysterious way and felt the urge to open their hearts to him and reveal its most intimate secrets. He had the right word for everyone and each one felt understood by him. But, it was to the most weak, the poorest and broken ones he turned by preference and numerous were the conversions he brought about.

When not in action, resting at night on a bed of straw in a freezing stable, in the darkness of a barn, where they were billeted, the men would gather around him. Calm, serene in the midst of danger, he quietened their fears and listened to their confidences. He settled himself, filled his pipe, passed his hand through his great white mane of hair, and heard the stories of their human adventures, some amusing, some tragic. He seemed to gather them protectively about him "as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing".

It is no wonder that the process of his beatification should record the testimony of a colonel, who told of how on Holy Saturday 1915, he confessed all the officers of his battalion and most of the soldiers. He drew men, not to himself, but to God. Thousands were to be reconciled to God, at the hour of death, or in the danger of the battlefield.

In the midst of action, he was always and above all, a priest. He preserved in the depth of his being, the same ardent faith he had secretly cherished in his youth. As the battle raged, he still was in constant practical union with God in prayer, invisibly bound to Him with chains of love. Recollection to him was a natural accompaniment to the affairs of daily life. This happy marriage of contemplation and action, perhaps, was the inspiration of the remark of a little black nun in Senegal, years before, "Father Brottier has two lives!"



A leader amongst leaders.



War is no pic-nic!

The National Union of Ex-Servicemen.

Towards the end of 1917, as the end of the war drew in sight, most of those engaged in the conflict, officers and men, were planning for their return to civilian life, to home and family. Father Brottier's vision was of post-war disillusionment, the difficulty fighting men would experience readjusting themselves to the humdrum of ordinary civil life and the possibility of unemployment, of social discontent, of anti-religious feeling. He must set himself even now to combat all that. Already, at the end of 1917, he was laying the foundation of the National Union of Ex-Servicemen, of which he had dreamed earlier. High-ranking officers, members of influential families, who had backed his efforts for the African Memorial, were now organised for his new project. Before demobilisation began, he had already enlisted 8,000 members: at demobilisation 160,000. Eventually, this was to rise to 2 million.

Typically, when the war ended, he asked for an interview with Georges Clemenceau, "the Tiger," as he was called. Clemenceau, President of France, was notoriously anti-clerical and at first made difficulties about receiving Father Brottier. In the end, the interview was granted and the enthusiasm of Daniel Brottier communicated itself to the Tiger, who would end up giving him a gift of 100,000 francs to launch the project. The Union never looked back and was to realise all Father Brottier had hoped from it.

Having set it up on a sure basis, and set it on its course as one of the most powerful post-war associations, Father Brottier retired from the Chairmanship of the Central Committee to take up where he had left off, in the monotonous task of fund-raising for the African Memorial.

African Cathedral: Phase II

Shortly after the War, Bishop Jalabert, his old and cherished friend visited the graves of the 200,000 African troops buried in Germany and spoke with their leaders. Fr. Brottier accompanied him. A tender affection united the two and a mutual gratitude.

Earlier, when they first met, the Bishop had commented upon the marvellous preservation of this brave chaplain under fire: "Not a wound, not a scratch. You have seen soldiers, officers, priests fall around you, your clothing has been torn to shreds by shrapnel, bullets have passed through your great-coat and you have been preserved".

Then, he had opened his breviary and shown him a picture of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, with a photo of Father Brottier attached and said simply: "I have prayed to her for you every evening for four years. She has saved you. Always remember that".

It was a moment decisive of all that lay ahead for Daniel Brottier, who until then had no particular devotion to The Little Flower: "Thanks to you, Monsignor," he said, "Teresa has protected me. I vow now that one day I shall build a chapel in her honour;" He kept that vow gloriously, as we shall see.

Meantime, they went to Rome together, to get the blessing of Pope Benedict XV on the project of the African Memorial. He presented them with a gift of 100,000 lire and warmly encouraged them to pursue their plan.

So, for Father Brottier, it was back to the monotonous task of writing innumerable letters, ringing on many door-bells, organising charity functions, publishing lists of patrons and subscribers, negotiating with architects and builders in Paris, year in, year out, amidst success and failure, approval and disapproval, interest and indifference. For years he persevered even when other duties weighed heavily upon him. And in the end he succeeded, as we have seen.

Meantime, Bishop Jalabert, shortly after his Roman visit sailed for Dakar. It was January 9, 1920. He had had a successful time and returned happily accompanied by, for those days, the large number of 18 missionaries. Aboard, he wrote a letter of thanks and farewell to his old friend. By the time it was delivered, he was dead.

On January 12th, the ill-fated packet-boat "L'Afrique" was shipwrecked on the reefs of Rochbonne in a heavy sea. 463 passengers and crew were drowned. Only 36 survived. One of these reported on the calmness and grandeur of the Bishop, who "gathered around him crew, missionaries, women and children, calmed their fears and led

them in one final, vibrant prayer to God". A few days later, a fisherman, off the coast found in his net, amongst the sole and turbot, a sodden breviary with the name: Mgr. Jalabert, written on the title-page. As he flicked through the pages, he found also, the picture of St. Teresa and, folded in four, the plan for the Cathedral of Dakar, the African Memorial, on which the Bishop's own name and those of his missionaries would one day appear. It was a cruel loss to his missionary congregation, the Holy Ghost Fathers, and to his friend, Father Brottier, a veritable crisis but he persevered with the Cathedral project.

It was for him also, so sensitive in his human relations and friendships, a kind of purification, a call to even more heroic reliance on the one absolute, God Himself. And God had other work for him to do yet, which in time would be revealed.

The Orphan-Apprentices of Auteuil: A Crowning Life-Work

In 1923, Cardinal Dubois, Archbishop of Paris, with the approval of the Superior-General of the Holy Ghost Fathers, Archbishop Le Roy, appointed Father Brottier as Rector of the Orphanage at Auteuil.



First communion day. Father Brottier centre.

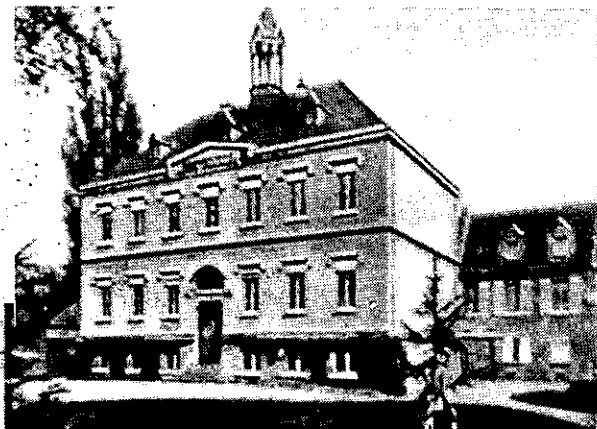
This work had been founded in 1866 by Father Roussel, an exceptional and forward-looking priest, who already in 1854 had founded the Congregation of Jesus the Worker. He was a professor at the College St Stanislaus in Paris. One evening he noticed a ragged boy scavenging in the street "What are you doing?" he asked the boy "looking for something to eat," he replied. "Come with me," the priest said, almost without reflection. He took the boy home and made up a bed for him, cleaned him up and gave him a meal. The next day, he had a second young boy. After a week, his room was crowded out with six of them, and food ran out. He launched an appeal to all his friends and wrote to the then Archbishop of Paris and expressed his desire to set up a special house for these abandoned young people, where they might be cared for and receive a Christian education. He had no illusions about these young homeless children ill-clad, insolent, quarrelsome, who roamed the streets and lived on petty-thieving or worse. Many were unbaptised, most had not made their First Communion. Left to themselves they would grow up to a life of crime and be a scourge to the Church and to society at large.

A favourable reply and generous donations from the Archbishop and his own friends encouraged Fr. Roussel, who soon found a derelict old house, with seven rooms, which he renovated himself before launching his work. There, for four years, he received these young street-arabs of 12 to 20 years of age, whom he instructed and prepared them for Holy Communion. Then he started his Technical school to teach them a trade. They came in ever increasing numbers, French, Belgian, Brazilian, Russian, all miserable and abandoned. Fr. Roussel tried to receive them and starved himself to do so. After his death, the Orphanage ran into increasingly greater difficulties, until taken over by Father Brottier, in the name of the Holy Ghost Fathers, on November 19, 1923.

That day, at the gates of the property at Auteuil, a little band of orphan-apprentices gathered with their teachers to greet their new director. It was a cold, frosty day, such as Paris knows in November. It reflected something of the cold anxiety of the 140 orphans, who wondered anxiously what he would be like—would he keep them or turn them out of the shelter of the poor, temporary buildings that spelt home to them, the only security they had ever known, the only place that offered hope and love.

Suddenly, he was there; this tall, broad-shouldered military-looking missionary apostle, his Legion of Honour proudly displayed on his

Vesinet



St Michel



Restigné (Indre-et-Loire)

Orphanages attached to Auteuil



*Above: Building in progress at Auteuil 1929-31.
Below: Auteuil as it was in 1923.*

soutane. He was every inch a leader and, even they sensed it, a man of God. As his eyes swept over them, clear honest, strong, they warmed to him as to a father. They were reassured; this man was indeed their friend and saviour.

At once, he visited the badly-lit, badly heated, badly equipped buildings and workshops which cried out silently to him a story of neglect, decay and inefficient "make-do". He saw, he pictured what might be and in his mind laid his plans silently. He had the space. He would give to Auteuil—solid buildings, airy and well-lit, suitably furnished, creating an atmosphere of joy and stability; class-rooms too, and well-equipped workshops which would be hives of industry, well-equipped to encourage professional skill and efficiency and hope of a decent livelihood to follow.

He was not just one man battling with adversity, but many men in one; ruler, administrator, diplomat, financier, and yet serene, peaceful, patient and charitable, inspiring confidence and affection. In the articles of his beatification, it is written: "During his 13 years of direction and of responsibility, the virtues of this Father shone with singular brilliance." This is the opinion of all who met him; supernatural prudence, a strength and self-control unconquerable in face of difficulty; faith to overcome mountains; exceptional humility; zeal for God's glory at once tenacious and reasoned and, above all, unlimited charity that bordered on folly and which, in particular, made him to see as his brothers, his children, his chosen friends, orphans, the poor, the most neglected of this world. From the beginning of his apostolate, he was reputed a saint.



Explaining plans to Cardinal Verdier of Paris.

A Basilica to the Little Flower.

Having finished his visit of the material plant, Father Brottier headed for the small brick-built chapel, cold and somewhat forbidding, which should be the spiritual power-house, the source of light and warmth, of the whole operation.

He knelt and prayed—and remembered his promise made to build a chapel in honour of St Teresa, the Little Flower, who had brought him safely through the war. Was she not the Patroness of the Missions, and had she not prayed specially for the work of Auteuil in her quiet Carmelite Convent in Lisieux? She was still only beatified but he would begin now to build a basilica in her honour.

It was characteristic of this great man. He was faced with a major reconstruction plan for the Orphanage, which lived precariously from day to day, he had a whole new spirit to inculcate in staff and orphans alike. And all he could think of was building a massive chapel: the rest would follow if only he had confidence. Not all would agree. Some would see it as utterly imprudent. No matter. He would speak to his little friend, Teresa, and tell her he would in 10 days or so seek an interview with the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris if she gave him a sign that she wanted this chapel. She must make it a practical sign: a gift of 10,000 franc. Otherwise, he would take it she did not want this chapel and he should say nothing to the Cardinal.



Archbishop Le Roy, Superior-General Holy Ghost Fathers Blesses foundation stone.

The very same day he wrote a long letter to the Carmelite Convent at Lisieux in which he said "I should like to build (a chapel) onto the street—spacious and beautiful, serving both the orphans and the neighbourhood and to dedicate it to Blessed Teresa. It would be her first sanctuary in Paris. I am sure Blessed Teresa will protect my dear children and receive the homage of all Paris, who will flock to this shrine. I shall not start without a sign from her. I write to ask your help in getting that sign—my first action here is to address this letter to you in all simplicity and confidence.... We begin a Novena tomorrow—to finish on November 30th—I ask you and your dear Sisters to join us".

December 1st—the day of the interview with the Cardinal. The novena was over, the sign had not come! Unperturbed, Father Brottier was about to set off for the Cardinal's house. A lady wished to see him. She handed him an envelope with 10,000 francs! Teresa had replied! It was the beginning of a series of miraculous interventions of the Patroness of Auteuil that endures to this day!

The Cardinal, a man of prudence, was at first reluctant to consent but eventually yielded before the enthusiasm of Father Brottier. It was the end of his first week's work for the Orphans.

The next week he launched his campaign of publicity for his new basilica. As is often the case with holy people, he met with opposition even from his own. But he soon won the support of the staff and the orphans by increasing salaries, improving living conditions and raising morale.

His methods were unusually modern for those days: advertisements in the Paris Underground, gala performances at the massive Trocadero Theatre, which had to be repeated twice more to satisfy all who sought to attend, a concert of religious music at the Madeleine Church, a "Golden Book," articles in the press of the capital, talks, flag-days; even in our day, few promoters would be as imaginative. He was indeed "Heaven's businessman" and it did not go to his head! Prayer kept him humble and self-forgetting in the midst of success.

The Friends of Auteuil grew, and still grows. It made it possible for the work to develop—more abandoned children to be welcomed, a spiritual centre for prayer, of petition and thanksgiving, of miracles of grace. It made heavy demands on Father Brottier. He wrote literally thousands of letters in a pre-computer society. But, it was all worthwhile.

The following year, 1924, the foundation-stone was laid. In 1930 the basilica was opened. The most distinguished architects and artists, the

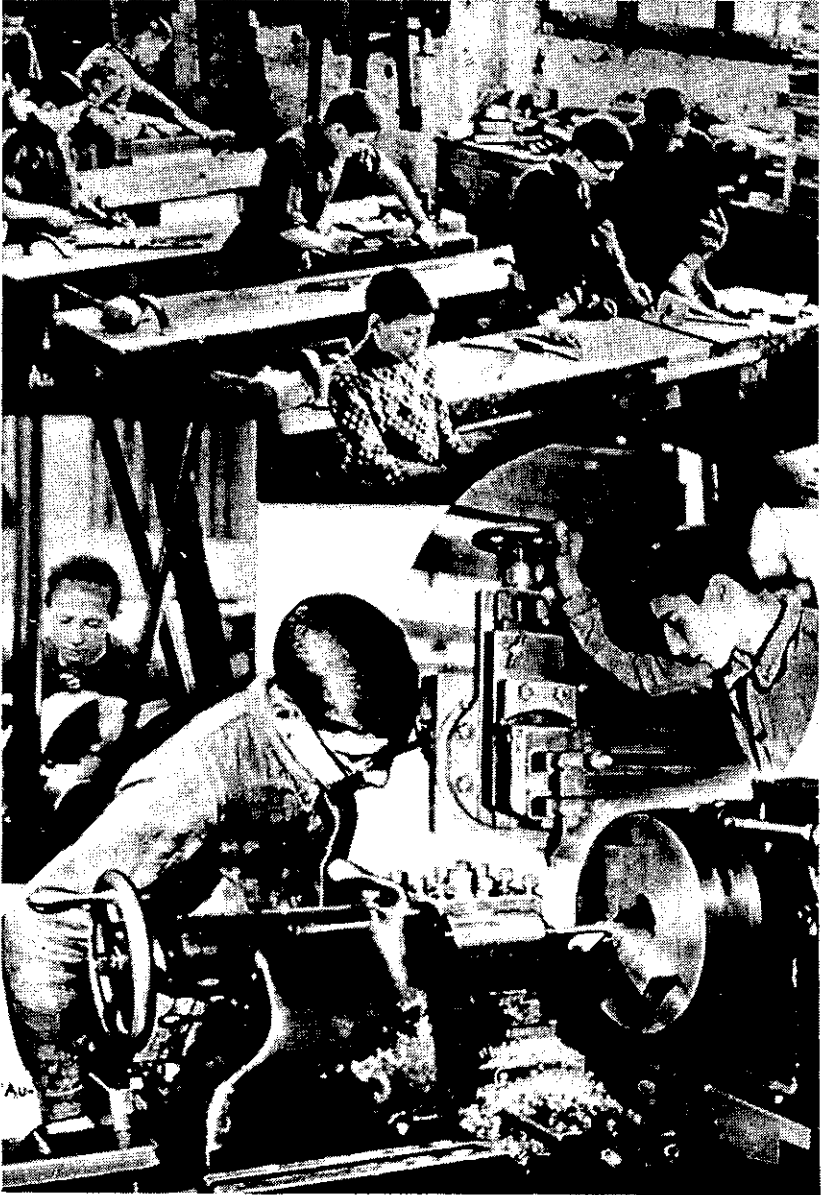
most skilled craftsmen co-operated. Seven million francs had been collected. It was a triumph of faith! It was to become a centre of devotion to Saint Teresa of Lisieux, a place of pilgrimage for Paris and for France.

The Expanding Work:

Meantime, Father Brottier had other irons in the fire. Unceasingly he welcomed growing numbers of orphans, homeless children, abandoned children. From 170, the number grew to 250, 400, 500, 1000! There were 1,400 the year he died, in Auteuil alone: other homes had also been bought.

Over the 13 years of his administration, he built permanent accommodation for his children, well-equipped workshops, dining and recreation rooms. He opened new houses throughout France. He set up an Association of "The Orphans of France" whose members of the farming community took into their homes hundreds of orphans and taught them farming skills in the happy family atmosphere of a Christian home. He had established also 10 other houses throughout the country as annexes to Auteuil. The Little Flower continued to be his Treasurer! In all his years at Auteuil each day -he received a 1000 franc note in his mail, or in the church-box or by the hand of an anonymous donor. It was an ongoing miraculous approval of his apostolic charity and, in his simplicity, he took it all quietly for granted! These gifts have never ceased to multiply at Auteuil over the years. But more important still are the miracles of grace and physical cures obtained through prayer in that chapel.

The miraculous growth of the Auteuil of Father Brottier continues. His successor, also a Holy Ghost Father, Marc Duval, opened 16 more houses. Today, the Auteuil Organisation cares for 3,400 young people, all of whom are given a trade or a profession. They are trained and educated by 1,300 dedicated men and women, besides those who administer the whole movement. The laws of all good management are defied. As in Father Brottier's time, 60% of the budget foreseen is always in doubt, left to Divine Providence, St. Teresa and Daniel Brottier.



To work and pray: Apprentices learn.

The Basis of the Education he gave:

He did not see his work for the orphans of Auteuil as mere philanthropy, but as an overflow of his love of God. Faith inspired him. He was deeply devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He never took an important decision without recourse to prayer. His deep love of God filled him with charity to all, especially the poor, little ones, the victims of injustice. "As long," he wrote, "as we are able to say to God, I took these unfortunate children out of love of you: help me now to train them, be certain that Providence will step in...."

His immense love of people was most in evidence in those last years in Auteuil: "What better life could you wish for a priest" he said to one of his colleagues and went on to justify his statement by saying that all day long they were practising the virtue of charity. "What do we do from morning till night? We receive people in pain, encourage them, help them, give them hope. We receive orphans, clothe and feed them, give them beds, shelter them from want, train, catechise and make good Christians of them. We serve as intermediaries for the unemployed to get them work. We seek the help of civil, military and religious authorities for families or peoples in difficulty. We offer light and guidance to erring souls in search of the right path. We visit and console the sick and reconcile them with God. We pray and get our children to pray for the thousand and one miseries we hear about. We are at the service of all, the rich at times more than the poor.... What is all that indeed but a perpetual exercise of charity?"

This was a perfect description of his own life and outlook. God has chosen him for the better part and he never ceased to thank God for it. To live as Christ lived was for him, as for any priest, the way of perfection. His politeness, courtesy and distinguished appearance all reflected his goodness of heart and mind: "To be good is to be self-possessed" he taught, "in the details of life, reflecting before replying or taking a decision. The greatest strength is to refrain from anger".

All this, as well as his natural bearing of authority made him an excellent educator, who preferred to err on the side of generosity rather than fail in justice. Goodness and fairness stamped him. He saw his children as sons of God, whatever their family or social background or personal deficiencies. He made demands upon them, but with affection and esteem and respect for their time and freedom, for he loved them and offered himself to serve them unto death. "I desire no other job-I want to die in their service". They knew it and they loved

him for it, as many would testify in adult years. He was indeed a just man, practical too!

He believed in looking after their material needs first of all: food, clothing, tools for work. After that, those in charge could appeal to them, preach, catechise and get them to pray! When he spoke, especially to the first communicants, he was eloquent in his simplicity—"I have a favour to ask you today, my children, at the moment when the Master of heaven and earth is in your heart, What is it? Not money but prayers! By your prayers you are the lightning conductor of the house of Auteuil!"

"The Christian life will be inculcated in the children from the Liturgy of the Mass. Only we must take the trouble to prepare it well. It should be thirty-five living, sung and basically happy minutes. They must get a taste for the things of God without being overdosed!" he said, revealing his balanced and realistic approach to religious education.

How I wish many young people today would follow the advice he gave to his orphans on growing up: "Your ambition is to become men. But, a man knows what he wants and accomplishes it, whatever the cost. Do not turn out to be aimless wandering shadows. Spiritual values are proper to men. Our financial and social situation can change: our personal, intellectual and moral values remain.

"Take this to heart and develop your personality-God's gift to you."

The Spiritual Counsellor:

Those who had to deal with Fr. Brottier were conscious of his union with God. "When anyone went to see him, he would lay down his pen, listen attentively, then reply as if he were repeating words he had heard in the depths of his heart" said one priest. Another had the same impression on coming out of his room: "You would think Our Lord was speaking when he replies." Cardinals, bishops, priests and lay-people came to consult him: his gift of counsel was outstanding. One old bishop, still happily alive, who had only spoken to Father Brottier on two occasions, comments that with all his problems and the burden of overwork, "I was struck by his serenity, patience and goodness that nothing could disturb... only an intense interior life and constant union with God could bring about such virtue."

This peace and serene self-possession was a second nature to him. In fact, it hid a warm, sensitive, tender character capable even of great violence. As a seminarian he had been judged quarrelsome and

turbulent! What prolonged and sustained effort it had taken to acquire this self-mastery and to appear always calm—whatever the difficulty or disappointment, whatever the misunderstanding or malicious opposition, whatever his personal suffering.

This recollected love of God, this perpetual self-denial, opened the heart of this apostle to the action of the Holy Spirit and to his gifts. It was this that attracted men to him, whose life reflected the fruits of the Spirit. It was this that made him like Francis Libermann, whose disciple he was, a wise and compelling counsellor, firm, strong and gentle.

“Do not complicate the spiritual life”, he would counsel, “people often do. Yet, it is a simple thing... made up of little details; doing our duty to please God. In this way, we are united to Him at all times and become more perfect by grace.” Little things, like his own humility, never vain of his successes rejoicing in them only as means of furthering the cause of his dear orphans.

The story is told of how Father Brottier and his two chaplains behind the orphanage band - led his 400 other orphans in the public procession for the national feast of St. Joan of Arc in May 1935. His work and his person were known to all Paris. As they passed the Place de la Concorde, a cry went up from the onlookers: “Long live Father Brottier.” it was taken up and repeated all the way to the Ministry of Finance. His face glowed with joy, but the glory was not for him. “How fortunate for my orphans”, he whispered to his neighbour. A favourite saying of his was: “The more one does great things, the smaller one feels. It is the do-nothings who feel big.”

I could go on but I feel enough has been said to help us understand why people sought him out for advice and guidance and were always sent away strengthened and comforted by this very human man of God.

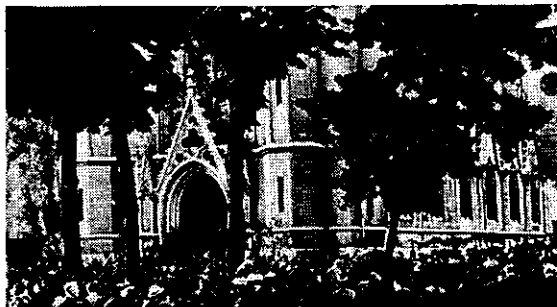
Very human and balanced indeed. I like the story told of him, how one day after a long hard morning in the office, he came to the lunch table with one of his assistants, who wanted to continue their discussion of business matters—“Don’t you think” he said gently, “that it’s better not to talk shop at meal-times. Let’s talk of the detective film we saw at the cinema (he had also built a “good” cinema for his boys and for the public!) yesterday afternoon.” The conversation continued on a lighter note. After lunch, he invited his assistant to join him for a cup of coffee at the cake-shop nearby!

The End and the Beginning:

Shortly before leaving for Dakar to take part in the solemn consecration of the cathedral there, his friend and admirer, General Gouraud, came to see him. He expressed disappointment and surprise that Father Brottier was not accompanying the Cardinal Legate: "I cannot understand it" he exploded, "After all the Cathedral of Dakar is your Church." Then, sadly, Father Brottier told him: the doctors would not permit it. He had already had a heart-attack three years before; now the heart was played out... "Your health," argued the old soldier, "Surely a sea voyage will be an opportunity for a good rest. The change will do you good. The joy of visiting Dakar again will complete your recovery." But, Daniel Brottier merely shook his head and in his usual gentle voice replied: "My dear friend, this is my last sacrifice..." and turning away slowly, he moved to the recreation ground where his dear children were playing. It was the last view the General would have of him in relative health. A picture of Father Brottier in the midst of his boys, who pressed happily round him, his great cloak spreading as if to shelter them in the security of its ample folds.

The day of the colourful consecration ceremony of the cathedral in far-away Dakar, he had offered a Mass of Thanksgiving and assisted at the simple family feast offered him by his orphans - of which we have spoken. Although, some had sensed a sadness, a weariness in his voice, in his address to the orphans, at table he was full of serene joy and thankfulness for what had been achieved in Dakar and for the moving kindness of the friends who surrounded him. Yet, in the depths of his being he felt it was a turning point, a moment of climax. It seemed as if a veil was descending already between him and this world. Perhaps, it was a signal from heaven that his mission was drawing to a close - and yet, there was so much to do!

When he went to his room early that evening, after presiding Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, he could not summon up enough energy to light his lamp. This sturdy warrior felt utterly played out. He sank slowly into his arm-chair and took out his rosary beads. Silently, meditatively he recited it slowly. His mind drifted away as the night grew colder: childhood past, African heat, the frozen battlefields, Auteuil, his beloved orphans, home. He was waiting for something, for someone. He knew who it was. When one of the Sisters came to give him a hot drink in the late evening, he spoke to her but in a voice she did not recognise, he looked at her with eyes that looked



Loudspeakers carry to the overflow congregation the sermon on St Teresa's day.



The Saint's relics carried in procession. Fr Brottier behind.



Paris celebrates the feast of St. Teresa of Lisieux at Auteuil.

beyond her. He radiated an extraordinary joy: "I had the impression," she later testified, "that he was in ecstasy."

He rose early next morning, February 3, but with some difficulty, and made his usual morning and mental prayer. At 8 o'clock he said Mass and distributed Holy Communion to the boys. By 9 o'clock, he was in his office to preside over his regular weekly meeting with the Council of Administration. It would last till 10.30 am; he was in bed a half hour later. He would never rise from it again.

A heavy fever had struck him down suddenly, acute pains stabbed his chest. His doctor was called and double pneumonia diagnosed. All that could be done was done for him medically and spiritually. A novena was begun by his orphans. It finished on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, 11th February. He seemed to rally but relapsed next day. His excruciating headaches were causing alarm. In the intervals of intense pain, he welcomed visitors with his habitual kindness, courtesy and gratitude. To a priest-friend, he confided: "I took ill on the day of the *Nunc Dimittis*" (Now you can dismiss your servant, O Lord, in peace." the words of Simeon on the first Presentation Day, celebrated on 2nd February), "Soon I shall go to heaven to sing for eternity the praise of God."

On top of the pneumonia and the violent headaches an infectious influenza developed. On 17th February, he was removed to hospital, his eyes fixed lovingly on the Chapel of The Little Flower, as they carried him down the steps. He would never see it again.

In hospital he was visited by the Cardinal of Paris and other notables as well as by some of the "little" people he had helped. He was scarcely able to greet them.

On 27th February his agony began. About 4.15 in the morning of 28th February, he gave three profound sighs and - Daniel Brottier, intrepid missionary, builder of churches, legendary army chaplain and priestly father of 1400 orphans was with God.

At Auteuil tears flowed. The word "saint" was repeated. A sister began to put order into the personal belongings of the holy director. She opened his wardrobe. Her work was quickly done. She found only two used soutanes, two well-worn pairs of shoes, four shirts, six handkerchiefs and other items of personal clothing. The orphans friend had died, like St. Francis, faithful to his "Lady Poverty" to the end!

The Beginning of the Story without End

But, a new phase was about to open. The night he died, an old friend in far-away Alsace, Fr. Groell, C.S.Sp. woke up to hear Father Brottier say to him three times: "Father Groell, I am going"; while at 4 a.m. another friend in his bedroom in Paris, Baron de Brechambant, heard a voice calling him twice. Certain that Father Brottier was dead, he rose at once and set out for the hospital.

When the radio announced later on the following morning, February 28th 1936, that Father Brottier had died, an old employee at the orphanage at Auteuil who, for several months, had been confined to bed with painfully deformed arms and legs of rheumatic origin, cried out: "Good Father Brottier, if you are in heaven, cure me." She was completely cured at once and lived to praise the Lord for many years.

It was the beginning of a long succession of many favours of all kinds - spiritual, mental, moral and physical. Indeed, as I write, I have by me two heavy volumes each of over 600 pages, recording graces obtained through the intercession of Father Brottier between 1936 and 1959. These extraordinary interventions still go on to the present day. Even our incredulous age must bow before such evidence. Perhaps, we ourselves in our needs might profitably present our petitions through Daniel Brottier.

The mortal remains of Father Brottier were removed to the Chapel of St. Teresa of Lisieux at Auteuil and for forty unbroken hours a guard of honour was mounted by the catafalque. There his doubly-bereaved orphans stood alongside scions of noble families and humble tradesmen trained by him. There too stood officers and men who had come to know and admire him on the battlefields of Flanders. Most of these were members now of the two million strong National Union of Ex-Servicemen he had founded.

Next day, Sunday March 1st., some 15,000 Parisians came to gaze affectionately for the last time, on that fine, noble face they had known so well, as he slept in peace at last.

His funeral was more a triumph than a bereavement. All Paris, all France, it seemed, people of every class of society, official and private, were represented there - gathered with Father Brottier's Superior-General and members of the General Administration (of which he had been Second Assistant) of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost. Cardinal Jean Verdier, Archbishop of Paris assisted by two of his Auxiliary Bishops presided at the Requiem Mass, sung by the choir of the Holy Ghost Senior Seminary at Chevilly-Larue.

After the Absolution, the Cardinal delivered a moving tribute to the deceased. He himself had been the Papal Legate for the consecration of the cathedral at Dakar and could therefore give immediate testimony to the affectionate esteem of the people of that city for the young Father Brottier, who had served them so whole-heartedly and had never really forgotten them. He spoke of Father Brottier's work for the orphans of Auteuil, the achievement of building this splendid Chapel of St. Teresa, of the annual garden fete, which each year welcomed 50,000 Parisians - supporters of this work - in the vast and beautiful grounds. So many wonderful achievements, all breathing love and compassion. He concluded by saying that Christian sorrow is not without hope for "The Christian and above all the Saint, never wholly leave us. In heaven, Father Brottier will watch over the family he so deeply loved. By his merits and his prayers, he will continue to perfect it".

Prophetic words! Auteuil has grown and developed along the lines laid down by Father Brottier and inspired by his spirit. It survived the terrible years of the Second World War Occupation by Germany. Its members have increased, its dependent houses multiplied. No genuine need is every refused, no material difficulty left unresolved. Today, the work embraces 25 houses, and as we already said has 3,500 young people and 1,300 adults looking after them. The original foundation at 40 rue Fontaine in Paris in 1982-83 was "home" to 340 young boys of 32 different nationalities; a measure of the problem of our times.

The work today is almost entirely in the hands of a lay-administration: priests are present only as chaplains, spiritual counsellors and educators in the Faith.

Providence has seen to it that the men and women chosen have continued to work in the spirit of its founder while adapting to the changed conditions of our times. When in 1962, Father Brottier's body was exhumed for examination in the process of beatification, it was found intact as the day it was buried in the Chapel of St. Teresa, twenty-six years before. It is a promise, an assurance of God's providential care of this favoured work which with open arms, welcomes the poorest, the most deprived of God's children, all victims of our contemporary society. Sixty per cent of the budget is always in doubt. The present Director of Auteuil Mr. Jean Gosselin, writes: "The Little Flower and Father Brottier gave us the bad habit of miracles and a daily miracle is hard to expect, yet it happens..."

Why this permanent miracle?" This is the unfinished story of one man, whose feet were firmly planted on the ground, but whose inspiration was in Heaven.

Epilogue

At the beginning of this pamphlet I suggested that Father Brottier had a message for the youth of today, a message for young people seeking a purpose in life, an ideal to live for. Now that I have completed my task, I am more than ever convinced of this; and I do not limit his appeal only to young people. I believe his life story and life style has something to say to all of us. It challenges us to work in faith, out of a spirit of love and in spite of hopeless odds, to improve the lot of the most unfortunate, neglected and oppressed of society. This is to do in our age and for the people of our age, what Jesus did in his. It is not just a humanitarian undertaking but an expression and extension of our love of God, who first loved us.

Father Brottier himself wrote: "To serve means to get outside yourself, to be your own no more. It also means to have no rights, only duties, it means to have no self-interest, to sacrifice everything to the general interest. It is to think, will and act for the good of others. It is to live, and sometimes to die, for the well-being of all, out of love of God". This was how he lived and died.

In doing so, Daniel Brottier was only fulfilling most perfectly the rule and tradition of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost and the Holy Heart of Mary, of which he was a loyal and humble son.

The particular mission of that congregation is a call, in the community of a religious family, to preach the Gospel to the poor, wherever the need is greatest or where labourers are to be found only with difficulty. They bring the Good News to those who have not heard it, or scarcely heard it. They share, as brothers, the lives of the underprivileged amongst whom they work. This demands of them an ever ongoing conversion, a readiness always to listen to the cry of the poor with discernment, ambitious only that justice and peace prevail amongst men, that free and fulfilled, all men may glorify God in Christ.

When Daniel Brottier was proclaimed "Blessed" on November 25th, 1984, by Pope John Paul II, his Beatification was not the beginning of a mere "personality cult," but a setting of the seal of divine approval on all those Christians who see their lives as a service of others for God's sake. "My husband has just died," wrote a widow, "after a long illness,

two years of agony and terrible suffering. He never rebelled. He kept the faith and called on Father Brottier and St. Teresa for support. He offered his sufferings for others." That comes close to one of Daniel Brottier's own last statements: "The doctors are trying to find out the cause of my illness. If only they knew of all the human misery that knocks on my door and my powerlessness to relieve it, they would know what is breaking my heart today".

Suffering...Suffering for others! From his earliest years, he had been the victim of the most terrible migraine: it stayed with him to the end and he could only manage to keep up his work-load by swallowing large quantities of aspirin. Alone, had he often been found weeping, head in hands, in sheer agony. Alone, as he lay dying, a nurse overheard him whisper: "My God, how I suffer! But, if that is your will, I would not suffer less." In life, in death, he had a special predilection for those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Perhaps that is why so many of the extraordinary graces received by praying to Father Brottier have been miracles of healing.

The miracle retained by Rome for his beatification was just such a ministry: -

"Jean Gabriel, a strong and healthy child, took ill on Pentecost Tuesday, 22 May 1945. That evening, he was pale and feverish. Next day, his temperature rose to 39.5 ...40°...

In spite of the nursing he received, his state grew worse and on Sunday evening, 27th May, the doctor declared he had bronchial pneumonia. In spite of energetic treatment the state remained stationary; the child was listless, disinterested, teeth clenched, which made it impossible to give him medicine, even water. The face was blue, the nose cold and pinched. A blackish tint developed around the finger and toenails and spread gradually to elbows and knees.... For the whole week the child did not sleep. The temperature remained constantly above 40°....

On Saturday 2nd June, the child began to have convulsions. The body took the shape of an arc. the head thrown back brusquely, the arms twisted, the eyes rolled back. Although constantly supplied with oxygen, he frequently suffocated.

On the morning of Sunday, 3 June, the mother asked the doctor if death did not threaten. The doctor told her her little one might live till 7 p.m. but no longer.

Madam L, then remembered that Sister Marguerite had brought her two holy pictures with relics attached, of Father Brottier and of Sister

Teresa of the Child Jesus: these had lain on the mantelpiece for several days. As she remembered, she took them and placed them on the child, under the sheet, and prayed with faith: "Father Brottier, you who obtained all from St. Teresa and who cared for so many orphans, cure my child. St. Teresa of the Child Jesus who protects so many priests, obtain his cure."

Immediately—the limbs of the little one began to relax, his body no longer curved in an arc, he snuggled down in his cot. His mother, thinking him to be dead, did not dare touch him. After a moment, she noticed his breathing. The child had gone to sleep, something he had not done for a week. He slept until two in the morning. Then, waking up and sitting up unaided, he called "Mama" and asked for a drink. She had only the cup of sweetened water with which she had been moistening his lips. She gave it to him. He drank it all, said "Thank you, Mama," lay down alone and slept again till seven next morning. At 7 he awakened, sat up in his cot and again called "Mama". He looked fresh and rosy-cheeked, as if he had never been ill. He asked for a drink. His mother, who had been breast-feeding him before his illness, had no milk left after the twelve days interruption. She prepared a bottle and gave it to him. He drank it without stopping. When the doctor came, to pronounce death, as he had thought, the child was sitting up in his cot, his mother alongside him, laughing heartily.

From that day on, he resumed his normal life and has had no trace of this illness since. It is as if it had never happened. The day of Daniel Brottier's Beatification he was a guest of honour, with his wife, his family and his grandchildren, in St Peter's, Rome.

Need I say more to justify my belief that Blessed Daniel Brottier is a man of the spirit, a suffering servant of the poor, a Christ-like model to the people of our age?

In his own words: "I have done what I could; God will do the rest..."

PRAYER TO OUR BLESSED MOTHER FOR THE GRACE OF A HAPPY DEATH

(Found in his Breviary)

“At the hour of my death, O Mary, whom I have often invoked, be near my bed. Be there as my mother would have been, if she were still alive. My paralysed tongue may not be able to pronounce your name, perhaps. But my heart will be calling it, as it does now, in that fearful moment.

Will I be alone, without help, without a loving hand to close my eyes? It does not matter, I will still die with a smile, for you will be there.

This I hope
This I believe
This I know for certain”

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DANIEL BROTTIER

Among those who respond in the most intense way to the missionary call. When he departed for Africa he devoted himself without compromise to the service of the Christian community of Saint Louis in Senegal, most especially to the service of youth. His apostolic zeal led him incessantly to undertake new initiatives so that the Church might be a living reality and the Good News might be heard. Even when he was far distant from this field of his activity he did not cease to aid the building up of the Church in Senegal.

He was a disciple of Christ also through the ordeal of suffering. He was never free from physical pain. As a volunteer on the front he cared for and comforted the wounded by his courageous presence, and he brought God's aid to dying soldiers. When the war ended, he strove to prolong the fraternity which had grown up among these men in their privation and their heroic gift of self.

When he received the care of the orphans of Auteuil, he resolutely plunged into a most overwhelming activity on their behalf which made him known far beyond Paris. Nothing impeded his charity when it was a question of receiving, nourishing and clothing children who were bruised and abandoned by life. He gathered innumerable associates in this profoundly evangelical labour. Since it was necessary to house these youths and place them in a warm environment, to aid them in learning a trade and building their future. Pere Brottier multiplied his appeals and established a chain of active solidarity which is alive even today.

As a priest and religious, his great activity 'flowed from his love of God', as one witness testified. Both humble and genuine, active to the limits of endurance, an unselfish servant. Daniel Brottier proceeded with boldness and simplicity because he worked as if everything depended on him, but he also knew that everything depends on God. He entrusted the children of Auteuil to Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus whom he called on familiarly for help, certain of her efficacious help to all those for whom she had offered her own life.

Blessed Daniel Brottier perfected his work on earth with a courageous *fiat*. We know today that he is ready to aid the poor who call upon him because he is in communion with the love of the Saviour, which animated all of his priestly ministry.

Extract from the homily of John Paul II at Beatification Mass November 25th 1984.



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