

## XXIV

## A LASTING IMPRINT

If it is surprising that the work of Poullart des Places survived his premature death, it is even more so that it spread as a result of his sons' fidelity to his ideal of priestly and apostolic life. Love of poverty, concern for abandoned souls, doctrinal purity and loyalty to the Holy See became the heritage that generations of Spiritans would pass on to their successors.

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Having been founded precisely to help poor clerical students, the Seminary of the Holy Spirit continued to live by an exceptional attachment to poverty. François Pottier wrote in 1749:

*"Our students continue to live a life of poverty ... We are always in debt. The baker is for ever knocking at the door for the money owed to him for providing bread to the community; six weeks ago, we were faced with having no bread at all".<sup>1</sup>*

In 1783, one of the Directors of the MEP, referring to his friend Fr. Becquet, said: *"He is always at his wits' end trying to keep the seminary going".<sup>2</sup>* Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the superiors and bursars of the community lived on a financial knife-edge. The fact that they accepted such an impossible state of affairs, humanly speaking, can only be explained by their love of poverty. This shines through the words of Pierre Caris who somehow managed to feed the poor students for more than 40 years:

*"I try as much as I can to pay off our debts but I can never clear them completely; times are so difficult and the alms we receive are not very many and not very large. But I don't complain about God's providence. It's better to be poor than rich; I am happy as long as we can provide what is necessary (which others would call 'dying of hunger'!). After all, Jesus, our Master, chose to live and die a poor man".<sup>3</sup>*

Providence came up with some surprising schemes to make sure that Pierre Caris obtained what was necessary:

*"One day, a gentleman, who saw him passing by, sent him a message along these lines: 'You go around with an expression on your face which is both happy and sad. Can I be of any help?' Caris replied: 'I am Caris, a poor priest; I have 80 young men to feed but not an ounce of bread to give them'. In no time at all, a bag of gold coins was put into his hands.*

*Another time when things were very hard, the Lord used an even more surprising, if less agreeable, way of supplying the necessities of life. Caris was walking down the rue Saint-Antoine when the smelly contents of a chamber pot, emptied by a distracted servant from the floor above, landed on his head. The Master of the house*

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<sup>1</sup> From the correspondence of Mgr. Pottier with his family. (Archives of the Missionnaires Etrangères de Paris (MEP), vol. 508).

<sup>2</sup> Letter of M. Boiret to M. Blandin, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 1783. (Arch. MEP vol. 33).

<sup>3</sup> A Letter of 1734. (Arch. C.S.Sp.)

*was highly embarrassed and full of apologies. He said to him: 'Here are 500 francs for the Spiritans; that's the fine I would have been given if you had reported me to the police!'. The good Lord and the good Fr. Caris managed to raise money for the poor scholars in a surprising variety of ways!'.<sup>1</sup>*

One day, when both the butcher and the baker refused to give any further credit to the Spiritans, Fr. Caris spent the whole morning in the streets of Paris and finally came back to the house empty-handed. At midday, the community went to the refectory as usual, said the grace before meals and followed it immediately with grace after meals because there was nothing to detain them on the table. They filed out of the refectory and went to visit the Blessed Sacrament in thanksgiving, as was their custom, and while they were there, an abundance of food suddenly turned up from different sources. So the community returned to the dining hall and after an unusually good dinner, they sang the *Te Deum* together. Later that afternoon, enough money arrived to pay off their outstanding debts.<sup>2</sup>

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Even though they took no vows, the sons of Poullart des Places followed a very strict practice of poverty. In his last will and testament, Fr. Becquet, the Superior General wrote:

*"I declare that my personal habit, underwear and old clothes, as well as the furniture, and books that will be in the room where I shall die in the Seminary, will all belong to the Community, according to the custom of the said Seminary".<sup>3</sup>*

Fr. Jacques Lars, who was the bursar or superior of the Seminary of Meaux for 46 years, had "a father's heart" for the poor and abandoned people. In providing for the poor scholars, he followed the example of Poullart des Places: "By using what he had wisely, by saving money where he could and avoiding unnecessary expenses, he was able to provide for a large number of young students; without him, they would have had to terminate their studies for the priesthood". By the time he died in 1782, most of the priests in the diocese of Meaux, who had passed through the Seminary of the Holy Spirit, were indebted to Fr. Lars for being able to continue with their preparation for ministry.<sup>4</sup>

The example given by the directors of the Seminary often made a lasting impression on the students. A missionary in Guiana wrote to Fr. Becquet:

*"I only wish that we priests in Guiana were one heart and one soul and not obsessed with what is "mine" and what is "yours". It would be wonderful if we could be like you, the Fathers of the Seminary, living in a community with a bursar who would give us exactly what we needed, and would present an exact expense account at the end of the year to the missionaries".<sup>5</sup>*

Both the archives of the Company of Mary and those of the Missions-Etrangères de Paris witness to the spirit of poverty that so many Spiritans took with them from their seminary

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<sup>1</sup> G. Goyau: "La Congrégation du Saint-Esprit", Paris, 1937, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Archives C.S.Sp.

<sup>3</sup> Archives C.S.Sp.

<sup>4</sup> "Almanach historique de Meaux", 1783.

<sup>5</sup> Letter from Fr. Lanoë, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1784.

when they were posted to different missions. As a student, and then as a director, Joseph Hédan spent 20 years in the seminary of rue Lhomond. He devoted the rest of his life to the poor in the Hospital of La Rochelle.

*“He was extremely mortified; he loved the poor and wanted to be poor himself. When he was close to death, he only had one ecu and six livres to his name and he gave those away to a poor man. He used to say that he was born poor, lived poor and wanted to die poor. At his request, he was buried alongside poor people”.*

A missionary, who lived austerely himself, tells us of the heroism with which Mgr. Kerhervé, the Vicar Apostolic of Su-Tchuen, practised poverty:

*“We lived together for more than a year and everything he did spoke of poverty. He had one very old soutane and only wore shoes when he was presiding at the altar. He wrote many books for the education of young people and his greatest joy was in teaching catechism to the children, especially those who had been written of as ‘stupid’”.*

In the end, he died at sea, on his way to prevent a threatened massacre of some Siamese seminarians:

*“As he was leaving, I did everything I could to make him take some of the money we had left, but he gave it to a student and instructed him not to return it to me until he had set sail. He kept absolutely nothing for himself because he wanted to die a poor man”.<sup>1</sup>*

Bishop Pottier chose these words for his Episcopal coat of arms; *“Ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari”* (“Love to live unknown and be reckoned as a nobody”).<sup>2</sup> He was regarded as a model of spiritual poverty, but he loved to joke about it:

*“We don’t use our money to live a life of luxury: we live like the people around us – rice, herbs, occasional bits of pork, poultry if we are given some, and rice wine. Our clothes are such that if a poor Chinaman were to wear them, nobody would notice any difference. I have only three shirts to my name and they are all more than two years old. My bed is a mat, laid on a bunch of straw ... The bishop’s house could hardly be called a ‘palace’; there is no gilding, tapestries or mirrors. The walls are made of mud, coated with lime. But this hard life has never made me sick and despite the poverty, I lack nothing. As long as we have the basic necessities, we will always be rich. It is only the first step which is painful. Apart from life and clothing, nothing else really matters”.<sup>3</sup>*

This last sentence reminds us of the text of the Spiritan Rule: *“Habentes alimenta et quibus tegantur, his contenti sint”*. (Rules, Chapter II, 8.).

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<sup>1</sup> Letter of Fr. Artaud, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1768. (Archives of the MEP, vol. 744, p. 868-876.

<sup>2</sup> *Imit.* L. I, ch. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Nouvelles des Missions Orientales*, quoted by *Nouvelles Ecclesiastiques*, 1787, p. 102.

The same love of poverty was typical of the Spiritans who went to work in America. Fr. Allenou de la Ville-Angevin, who had become the Dean of the Chapter of Quebec, lived a very poor life; he gave all the income from his benefice to the Bishop, asking that it should be used for charitable purposes.<sup>1</sup> Fr. Lanoë, a missionary in Guiana, wrote in a letter to the staff of the Seminary of the Holy Spirit in Paris:

*“When I had the privilege of being associated with your house, I did not think about appointments, retirement or any other temporal advantage; my only ambition was to cooperate with the plan of God. Jesus Christ, my Master was a lot worse off than I, but I prefer his poverty and the ignominy of his cross to all the riches and honours that this world has to offer.”*<sup>2</sup>

There are other instances of former students of the Holy Spirit seminary referring back to their common formation in a spirit of poverty when disputes arose amongst them. For example, in 1820, the local government of the town of Saint-Xandre, close to La Rochelle, decided to cut the salaries of the Daughters of Wisdom who had run the local school and looked after the sick for more than a century. Because of this, their superior, Fr. Duchêne, decided to withdraw the sisters to their headquarters in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre. But the parish priest of Saint-Xandre, Fr. Royer, begged him to change his mind. He wrote:

*“Remember, dear confrere, that the sisters’ establishment at Saint-Xandre is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, of the Daughters of Wisdom. You and I were both trained in the Seminary of the Holy Spirit and whilst there, we acted as doorkeepers, doing the washing up and so on. The founders of the Missions of Saint-Laurent (Grignion de Montfort) and the Seminary of the Holy Spirit (Poullart des Places) were very close friends and both formed their disciples in a spirit of dedication, poverty and charity. Is it possible that a superior of Saint-Laurent, who was also a former student at the Saint-Esprit, would allow the oldest establishment of the Daughters of Wisdom to be dissolved for financial reasons?”*<sup>3</sup>

To finish this brief account of the enduring Spiritan poverty of the followers of Poullart des Places, let us return to his most faithful disciple - Fr. Pierre Caris. This *“spiritual and temporal father”*<sup>4</sup> of the poor students came to be known as *“the poor priest”*. When he was 72, he could no longer walk the streets of Paris. Because all those who knew him thought he was a saint, when his death was imminent, his confreres decided to prepare a vault where his body would rest under the community chapel. But when he heard this, Pierre Caris summoned two solicitors to the house. He wanted to follow the example of Poullart des Places and be buried in a common grave with the poor. So he dictated his last will and testament to make sure that his final wishes would be observed by his confreres: *“I want my burial to follow the normal custom of the House”*.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin des recherches historiques*, Quebec, vol. XIV, Sept. 1908, p. 265

<sup>2</sup> Letter of November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1784. National Archives.

<sup>3</sup> Letter of May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1720. (Archives of the Daughters of Wisdom). A few months later, Fr. Royer invited Fr. Gabriel Deshayes, the successor of Fr. Duchêne, to share the soup of *“a poor spiritan parish priest”*.

<sup>4</sup> The words of François Pottier in a letter of 1749.

<sup>5</sup> Mint. Cent., National Archives: XLVII, 158, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1756.

There is no true apostolic commitment without an attitude of detachment that includes a deep love of poverty. In the last years of the XVII century, a priest of the order of Saint-Sulpice, Fr. Constant, gave this advice to those about to be ordained in the diocese of Autun:

*“A good priest will seek no other riches than God himself ... He must be so free and forgetful of his own advancement that he will be ready to go to the ends of the earth if the Church so wishes. He will be willing to work in the poorest corner of the diocese, to remain a curate all his life or to serve in a penniless parish if the bishop thinks it important for the good of the diocese ... But such priests are very rare! The great majority of clerics who put themselves forward for ordination would rapidly withdraw if they thought they would be given such an appointment ... It would be a wonderful thing if a bishop had 30 such men at his disposal. May it please God to bring us some priests like this”.*<sup>1</sup>

God seems to have answered this prayer through a rich young man, Claude-François Poullart des Places, who renounced all riches and honours so as to follow Christ more closely. He inspired his disciples with a love for the most obscure and abandoned works in the Church. The aim of his foundation was,

*“to form poor clerical students in the love of obedience and poverty. They would be ready, in the hands of their Prelates, for anything: work in hospitals, bringing the Gospel to the poor and even the infidels, ready not just to accept but to prefer the most humble and difficult appointments for which the Church has difficulty in finding workers”.*<sup>2</sup>

This beautiful text, a jewel of the Spiritan heritage, did not remain a dead letter. Sixty years after the death of Poullart des Places, Fr. Charles Besnard was able to write of the past students of the Seminary of the Holy Spirit:

*“Carefully trained in the functions of the sacred ministry and all the virtues necessary for a priest, they are well known for their degree of detachment, their dedication and their obedience. They devote themselves to the needs of the Church and their only concern is to be useful and work in its service. They can be found, in the hands of their immediate superiors and the local bishops, like a corps of auxiliary troops, ready to go anywhere and work for the salvation of souls, preferably in missionary work, either at home or abroad. They volunteer for the poorest places and for abandoned projects where nobody else wants to go. If they have to bury themselves in the depths of the country or work in some corner of a hospital, if they are asked to teach*

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<sup>1</sup> *“Des saints ordres et des obligations qui leur sont essentielles »*, Archives C.S.Sp. Cf. the Revue « Spiritus » no. 10, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Rule 1 of the “Regulae” : *“Sodalitium ... pro fine habet in ecclesiasticae disciplinae zelo et amore virtutum, obedientiae presertim ac paupertatis, pauperes clericos educare, qui sint, in manu praelatorum, parati ad omnia, xenodochiis inservire, pauperibus et etiam infidelibus evangelizare, munia Ecclesiae infima ac laboriosa magis, pro quibus ministri difficile reperiuntur, non modo suscipere, sed etiam toto corde amare ac prae ceteris eligere »*.

Francis Libermann was to add much later: *“We are nothing more than the down and outs of the Church; we take on what others have left behind”*. (ND VII, p. 292).

*in a seminary or secondary school or travel to the extremities of the Kingdom of France, if they are faced with crossing seas and ending up on the other side of the world to seek souls for Christ, their motto remains the same: "We are here to do your will. Here I am – send me! (Isaiah VI, 8).<sup>1</sup>*

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The Spiritans had also become famous for the quality of the theological education they gave to their students. Fr. Dorsanne recognised this, in his own way, by referring to them as *"the Gillotins of the Jesuits"*. The author<sup>2</sup> of a *"A treatise on devotion to the Holy Spirit"* (1734) said of the Seminary of the rue des Postes: *"There is nowhere in France where ecclesiastical students receive a better training"*. François Pottier, the future bishop of Su-Chen, had already finished philosophy in his home town, Loches, when he presented himself to Fr. Bouïc for entry into the Seminary of the Holy Spirit, but he still had to re-start his studies in Logic. In a letter to his family, he repeated what one of his new directors had told him:

*"Very few young men enter this Seminary without re-starting their philosophy. When you finally leave, you will not have a doctorate from the Sorbonne but you will probably be every bit as capable as those who are awarded such degrees".<sup>3</sup>*

The Spiritans, following the wishes of Poullart des Places, continued to be educated *"following the principles of Roman and Catholic doctrine"* by Directors who were faithful to their Rules: *"They will avoid all doctrinal novelties; they will not teach opinions which are either too liberal or excessively severe; they will approve what the Church approves, and what the Church condemns, they will condemn".<sup>4</sup>*

In a letter to Cardinal Castelli, the Prefect of the Propaganda, Fr. de l'Isle-Dieu told him that *"This Seminary on the rue des Postes and all those who have studied there since its inception have always been very attached to the Holy See as the centre of unity".<sup>5</sup>*

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when people talked of theological "novelties", they were referring, above all, to Jansenism. The sons of Poullart des Places were always very opposed to this doctrinal tendency. As Pierre Thomas put it, *"Not one of them supported it; on the contrary, they nearly all fought against it either by their words or their writings".<sup>6</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Besnard: Life of Grignon de Montfort, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> A hermit living at the Abbey of Sept-Fonts.

<sup>3</sup> L. Guiot: *"La vie et apostolat de Mgr. Pottier"*, Paris, 1892, p. 71.

<sup>4</sup> *"Ab omni novitate doctrinae discipulos suos arceant, opiniones laxiores pariter et rigidores ne doceant; quod probat Ecclesia, et ipsi probent; quod damnat, damnent"*.

<sup>5</sup> Letter of June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1769, published by David: pp. 43-44.

<sup>6</sup> Letter to a Prelate (1734). Arch. C.S.Sp.

These disputes had dramatic effects for some of the young clerics. Before he became a bishop, Mgr. Armand Lefebvre, the Vicar Apostolic of Cochinchina, gave a startling account of the history of his vocation:

*“You can’t imagine how many problems I had before ordination, and several times, I began to lose hope of ever getting there. Some of my relations, who were rich in the eyes of the world rather than in the eyes of God, did all they could to make me commit myself to a group which had horrified me since my early days. I felt I had no option but to move away from Paris. But the Lord had pity on me and led me to the security of the Seminary of the Holy Spirit”<sup>1</sup>.*

These were not just words of gratitude to the successors of Poullart des Places; they also show the high reputation that his seminary enjoyed.

So despite the lack of university degrees, the Spiritans were well prepared by the length and quality of their studies to become professors of philosophy and theology. A good number of those who went to Canada or the Far East were asked to teach in the seminaries. Even in France, bishops turned confidently to Fr. Bouïc or Fr. Becquet for their staff. To encourage François Pottier to restart his studies in Logic, one director said to him: *“Our students are highly regarded everywhere. Quite often, we are asked for professors of theology and philosophy without any preliminary examination, because the bishops know and esteem the place where these young priests have been trained”<sup>2</sup>.*

When the ‘subjects’ came from their own dioceses, the bishops were able to contact them directly and their invitation to serve on the seminary staff could sound more like an order than a request. In January 1768, Fr. Liscoat, a young priest from the diocese of Quimper, received the following message from his bishop, Mgr. de Cuillé:

*“We need you to fill a vacancy in the seminary of Quimper; such is the urgency of this request, that I am sending you 200 livres to cover the expenses of your journey. It is not without hesitation that we are asking this of you because we know very well that the Seminary of the Holy Spirit will find it difficult to replace you, but our need is at least as great as theirs. The Superior of the Seminary will understand that as you are from my diocese, I will have the first call on your services”<sup>3</sup>.*

In 1737, Cardinal de Bissy, the successor of Bossuet in the diocese of Meaux, and Mgr. d’Hallencourt, the bishop of Verdun, both asked the Spiritans to take over the direction of their seminaries to protect the young students from the influence of Jansenist professors. This was another reason why the editors of the *“Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques”* (a Jansenist publication) had such a low opinion of what they called the “Bouïcs” or the “Bouïques”: they described them as *“uncivilised clerics, swept up from the dregs of society and fed and educated by the Jesuits. To show their gratitude, these men had lowered themselves to the most grovelling dependence on the Jesuits”<sup>4</sup>.* The same Jansenist journal also accused the

<sup>1</sup> Letter to M. Collet, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1743. (Archives of the MEP, V. 741, p. 481.)

<sup>2</sup> Guiot, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> Peyron: *“Notice historique sur le Séminaire de Quimper”*. Quimper, 1899, p. 74.

<sup>4</sup> They used either the words “Bouïc” or “Bouy”, but always pronounced them “Bouy”. This was by way of a joke on the part of the Jansenists. The *“Supplément Jésuitique”* which was started by the Jesuits to oppose the Jansenist slanders in the *“Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques”*, protested against the name “Bouïcs” being applied to

Spiritans of supporting “*the most pernicious ideas regarding the infallibility of the Pope*”, and made fun of them by calling them “*the priests of the Immaculate Conception*”, adding that “*their lectures and public theses were every bit as bad as those written by the Jesuits*”.

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In 1761, one year before the decree suppressing the Jesuits, the Parliament of Paris closed down the theology courses in the Jesuit College of Louis-le-Grand. The directors of the Seminary of the Holy Spirit reacted in the same way as their founder would have done: rather than send their seminarians to the University, they decided to teach them philosophy and theology themselves. Their right to do this was strongly contested. The text of a letter from the Archbishop of Paris to the Procurator General, in defence of the Spiritans, gives the impression that some people would even like to have seen the Seminary itself suppressed:

*“The more I consider the suggestion that the seminarians of the Holy Spirit should follow the lectures of philosophy and theology in the University, the more I can see drawbacks in the plan ... I am very conscious of your zeal for the good of Religion and the State, so I am sure that you must also have a great interest in preserving an establishment that is so advantageous to both”.*<sup>1</sup>

This intervention of Mgr. de Beaumont settled the affair and up to the Revolution in 1789, the Spiritan Seminary was the only one in Paris to have its own professors.<sup>2</sup>

Many Jansenists and Gallicans saw the Revolution as an opportunity to rid the Church in France of those Congregations which were most faithful to the Holy See. In the month of May, 1790, at the same time as the foundations of M. Olier and St. Jean Eudes, the community of Poullart des Places, was singled out by a monk of Marmoutiers for the attention of the lawyer Treilhard, the President of the Ecclesiastical Committee of the National Assembly:

*“ Within the Church of France, there are three sorts of pharisaical preachers who have to be entirely eradicated to purify the old leaven and renew it. These preachers are the Sulpicians, the Eudists, and the Bouïcs, a mob who are ignorant, hypocritical, superstitious and fanatical, and their two great weapons are the Formula of*

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*“the priests of the Holy Spirit and the Immaculate Conception: Fr. des Places was the first superior of this community which is normally referred to as ‘the Placistes’. Fr. Bouïc was only the third superior and he never gave his name to the community”.* (April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1746).

<sup>1</sup> The quotation can be found in the National Library, in the deposit of Joly de Fleury, 390, file 4462. A letter of June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1762. Mgr. Dosquet, the former bishop of Quebec, also wrote to the Procurator, Joly de Fleury, on August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1762: “*I have the honour of bringing to your attention that the Superiors and Directors of the Seminary of the Holy Spirit are still upset by the uncertainty that hangs over them. They are ready and will make it their duty to carry out the orders and intentions of the Court that they should send their students to the University*”. The only explanation for this intervention must have been the fear that the Seminary itself was in danger of being closed down completely. But on December 22<sup>nd</sup> of the same year, Fr. Darragon wrote to Bishop Pottier: “*The Fathers of the Holy Spirit are giving lectures in their own Seminary and will continue to do so, unless they are obliged to send their seminarians to the University*”. (Archives of the Missions Etrangères de Paris, Volume 25.)

<sup>2</sup> Delarc: “*L’Eglise de Paris pendant la Révolutions française*», Tome I, p. 373.

*Alexander VII and the Constitution (Unigenitus) of Clement XI. These sources of scandal must be eliminated*.<sup>1</sup>

But the National Assembly could draw no such distinction between good and bad congregations: “A truly free State must not allow any corporation to exist within its borders; therefore “they are all extinguished and suppressed”. In its declarations of suppression on April 26<sup>th</sup> and August 18<sup>th</sup>, the Spiritans had the privilege of being named twice: under the name of the ‘*Fathers of the Holy Spirit*’, who were placed after the *Sulpicians* and the *Nicolites*, and again under ‘the *Bouics*’, after the *Mulotins* and the *Priests of the Blessed Sacrament*.<sup>2</sup>

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When the revolutionary tempest finally abated in France, the congregation of the Holy Spirit did everything it could to remain faithful to its traditions. Despite the protestations of several Apostolic Prefects, neither Bertout nor Fourdinier would agree to shorten the programme of studies for their seminarians. And fidelity to the Holy See reappeared with increased emphasis. Even though he wrote no books or articles, Fr. Mathurin Gaultier, professor of moral theology in the Seminary of the Holy Spirit (1834-1869), became an important figure in the history of theology. More than anyone else, it was he who rid the seminary manuals in France of their narrow rigorist approach which they had inherited from the Jansenists and the Gallicans. He also played an important part in the restoration of Gregorian chant and the Roman liturgy.

Somebody wrote that his room in the rue Lhomond was “*the Roman salon of Paris and, his library the arsenal of those defending the Holy See*”! Fr. Rohrbacher rented a room in the Seminary to work on the definitive text of his monumental work, “*The Universal History of the Catholic Church*”; Fr. Bouix did likewise to write several works on canon law and launch the “*Revue des sciences ecclésiastiques*”; Dom Pitra, the learned Benedictine whom Pius IX made a cardinal, Fr. Migne, the editor of “*Greek and Latin Patrology*” and a series of dictionaries were amongst those who made great use of the many rare books that were collected by the librarian of the Seminary of the Holy Spirit. The circle of Fr. Gaultier included many of the most ardent defenders of the prerogatives of the Pope: Dom Guéranger, the founder of the Abbey of Solemes, Mgr. Parisi, the bishop of Langres, Cardinal Gousset, the Archbishop of Reims and Louis Veuillot. Through his many relationships, Fr. Gaultier had a great influence on the religious books that were being published in Paris: in his youth, they were very Gallican, but by the time he died, they were more or less Roman.<sup>3</sup>

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In 1701, Claude Poullart had sacrificed the wishes of his parents to the demands of his call from God. The dreams of M. and Mme. des Places were not realised in their own lifetime;

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<sup>1</sup> Letter of J. de la Martinière, (National Archives, D XIX, 14).

<sup>2</sup> Delarc: Volume II, pp 82 and 220.

<sup>3</sup> “*Fr. Gaultier, General Assistant of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit*”, from a series of articles published in *Le Monde* by Fr. V. Davin, Paris 1869. According to the author, as a reward to the Spiritans for the part they had played in the doctrinal struggle, headed by Fr. Gaultier, they were asked by Pope Pius IX to open the French Seminary in Rome in 1853.

they died without an heir who could continue their descendance and restore their ancient lineage and position in society. But in fact, their name has survived across the centuries on a far wider scale than they could possibly have imagined. Their son, this poor young priest who died at the age of 30, became the father of a great religious family which will do everything possible, in the words of Pierre Thomas, to preserve his devotion to the Holy Spirit and the Immaculate Virgin, his fidelity to the See of Peter, his passion for spiritual poverty and his dedication to the most abandoned souls.

\_\_\_\_\_ FINIS \_\_\_\_\_