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Pastoral Message on the Army of Mary

The celebration of the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord – postponed this year from March 25 to April 4 because of its coincidence with Good Friday – is a beautiful occasion to give thanks to God in the singing of an Easter Alleluia for the Blessed Virgin Mary who carried within her the author of Life. “Behold the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word” (*Luke 1:38*).

“After a long period of waiting the times are fulfilled in her, the exalted Daughter of Sion, and the new plan of salvation is established, when the Son of God has taken human nature from her, that he might in the mysteries of his flesh free man from sin.”¹

The Church declares that Mary of Nazareth is a human person well rooted in her time and the history of her people; through her, the unsurpassable grace of her divine motherhood has opened the final stage of the History of Salvation. The message of the angel to her, along with everything that followed her consent, has conferred upon her a unique and incomparable role to which cannot claim any other creature in the service of her divine Son.

Since my appointment as Archbishop of Québec in November 2002, I have noticed that the painful situation about the Army of Mary has not evolved for the better, in spite of the efforts of a second Pontifical Commissioner for the Sons of Mary and the appeals of the Doctrinal Note promulgated by the Canadian Bishops in August 2001. The Bishops’ intervention has even been rejected as alien to the group and the exhortation to cease their activities has gone unheeded.

I want to address now the Catholic faithful and give them an accurate assessment of the situation. I also want to address the people who, in good faith, are sympathizers or followers of the Army of Mary in order to reiterate the warning about the risks they are

¹ *Lumen Gentium* 55.

facing. I am especially speaking to the leaders of that group known as the Army of Mary or the Community of the Lady of all Peoples as well as anything connected to them, inviting them once again to re-evaluate their position and acknowledge the harm they are causing to the faithful and to the Church by locking themselves into refusing the pastoral judgement of the legitimate authority.

Dangers for the Faith

The Army of Mary is still spreading around doctrines that are foreign to the faith of the Church without taking any notice of the warnings made to them for several years. Denials and arguments cannot hide the central fact: what they are proposing are doctrines that wander away from Revelation; novelties are being added that far from being a progress or a deepening of the Revelation are in fact dangerous deviations.

The faithful are being misled when one upholds, for example, as done by Marc Bosquart: *In fact, according to everything we have seen (and to everything we will have yet the occasion to see), Marie-Paule is no more and no less than the Co-Redeemer – the Co-Redeemer in person! -, that is the female equivalent of the Redeemer*².

The faithful are also being misled when they are presented with: *The Immaculate is co-eternal with the eternal God*³. And when a founder is thus exalted, it may be sincere but also rebellious to the Church: *So, let's believe it, let's say it, let's proclaim it: in the Kingdom of the Spirit, in that Kingdom which is coming, in that Kingdom which has already begun, everywhere, side by side, there will be Jesus Christ and Marie-Paule, the Redeemer and the Co-Redeemer of all humankind!*⁴

On top of these few examples, we should add Marc Bosquart's personal "profession of faith" published in the official newspaper of the Army of Mary in 2000⁵ and whose propositions are contrary to the Catholic faith. Such an outrageous and exaggerated promotion of the alleged spiritual privileges of a person belonging to the common run of people, without the sanction of the *Magisterium*, stands outside of the Catholic faith.

These doctrines cannot claim to be faithful to Catholic Revelation, even under the cover of a mystical language. They are absolutely alien to the Bible, the teachings of the Popes and Vatican II; they are not supported by the official Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Furthermore, we must point out the recent and clear declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith concerning the so-called Amsterdam revelations to which are related the supporters of these doctrines: "the negative judgement already expressed in the 1974 Notification is still valid."⁶

² BOSQUART, Marc, *Terre Nouvelle Homme Nouveau*, 2001, p. 119.

³ BOSQUART, Marc, *L'Immaculée, la divine Épouse de Dieu*, 2001, p.24.

⁴ BOSQUART, Marc, *idem*, p.124.

⁵ *Le Royaume*, 2000, n.143, p.8.

⁶ RATZINGER, Joseph Cardinal, Letter of February 8, 2005.

These warnings thus confirm once more the severe admonition given by Maurice Cardinal Roy about the books "Vie d'Amour"⁷ and the judgement by Louis-Albert Cardinal Vachon in connection with the two books by Marc Bosquart⁸.

In view of the oddness of the proposed doctrines and the obstinate refusal in answer to the repeated calls by the legitimate authority, it is my pastoral duty to denounce the doctrine of the Army of Mary and the way this organization presents Marian devotion. I am thus calling on the leaders to radically change their attitude since the faith of the people is threatened and distorted to the benefit of a cause that deviates from the Church's spiritual patrimony.

Harm to the Unity of the Church

The spread of doctrines that are alien to the faith harms the unity of the Church. The constant refusal to accept the warnings from the Church's legitimate authority is also causing harm to the unity of the Church. Thus the unity of the Church is wounded when one states: "*In 1958, God had already identified the enemies of his work as being his priests and, as he later specified, his bishops.*"⁹ One is causing harm to the unity of the Church when, in spite of the usual polite forms of address and the claims of an absolute fidelity to the Pope, one brings into disrepute the pastoral intervention of the bishops and of the Holy Father's close associates through whom he exercises his pastoral responsibility, even leading up to personal attacks against them.

One is causing harm to the unity of the Church by opening "a Retreat House" and holding eucharistic celebrations on location without the Diocesan Bishop's authorization, all this while falsely claiming to serve the good of the souls and respect Canon Law.

One is causing harm to the unity of the Church by presenting the Army of Mary as the continual victim of a sombre persecution by Church authorities, a persecution that would paradoxically be at the same time the irrefutable proof of its divine origin.

These are wounds that cannot be part of a process designed by the Holy Spirit to bring the disciples of Jesus to unity and communion.

Conclusion

I thus reiterate today the rightfulness of the Doctrinal Note published by the Canadian Bishops on August 15, 2001: "Because the faith of the people is being threatened, we, the Catholic Bishops of Canada, urge the members and sympathizers of the Army of Mary to cease their activities, be they published material, participation to prayer meetings or liturgical celebrations, especially those being conducted at the *Spiri-Maria* Centre in Québec."¹⁰

⁷ ROY, Maurice Cardinal, Letter of March 16, 1981

⁸ VACHON, Louis-Albert Cardinal, Letters of July 14 and November 15, 1986

⁹ *Le Royaume*, n.171, p.22.

¹⁰ CCCB, *Doctrinal Note*, August 15, 2001.

This pastoral message is published in close cooperation with His Grace the Most Reverend Terrence Prendergast, Pontifical Commissioner for the Sons of Mary who has been empowered by the Holy See to lead this group of priests toward a recognized canonical status and the exercise of a priestly ministry compatible with the demands of the Catholic faith.

I strongly wish that all well-intentioned people, who for a while could have been misled, accept this call to faithfulness and unity of the Church.

I am aware that the choice to be made will cause for some painful strain within families. I pray the Holy Spirit to inspire the right words and adequate gestures that will help all those concerned to submit to the pastoral judgment of the Church.

In union with Mary, Mother of the Church, I call for prayer and a just discernment. May her unique cooperation with the divine plan and her humble attitude as the Handmaid of the Lord help us find through fervent prayer the road to fidelity and obedience to Christ and his Church.

Québec, on the solemnity of the
Annunciation of the Lord, April 4, 2005.

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