

A PRIEST ON THE CROSS!

“A day will come when, on this mountain, the Lord of hosts will prepare for all peoples a banquet of rich foods. He will remove the mourning veil covering all peoples, and the shroud covering all nations. He will destroy death forever.” (Is 25:6-8)

This passage from the book of the prophet Isaiah, which we have just read, leads us to understand that death is not an end but the beginning of a new life. If we have remained faithful to the Lord's commandments, He will have us share in the eternal banquet, where there will be no more tears or pain but the peace, light and love of God.

This faith in everlasting life is a consolation since the loss of a loved one is heartbreaking. Knowing the happiness that awaits the elect in heaven brings comfort and peace. Faith opens us to a hope which human reasoning cannot provide. Some people will say that our deceased ones continue to live on in our memories and through the works they left behind. Others believe in a mysterious presence of their departed. But all of that is nothing in comparison to what the faith leads us to believe, that is, eternal life.

Our dear Foundress described the happiness of the elect, a happiness in God, in these words: *“Many times during the following days, I have the impression of again going through that ascent, and enlightenment is born of the experience... I see again, in this heavenly dwelling, the souls working together in marvelous harmony, and I ‘learn’ that the more souls there are, the more peace there is. What a contrast with our planet!*

“And it is not love that is the ultimate satisfaction of the souls On-High, for hatred does not exist there; no, it is felicity, perfect happiness. Souls that have had the experience of an ecstasy on earth have had a tiny taste of it. Nothing, absolutely nothing, in this life can compare with this happiness!” (Life of Love VIII, p. 28)

If we are saddened by Father Maurice's departure, we are also rejoicing because we know the eternal reward the

elect receive. And for those who have left everything behind to follow Christ, what a reward. Jesus Himself said: *“I solemnly say to you, everyone who has given up home, brothers or sisters, father or mother... or property for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel will already receive many times as much now, and, in the world to come, inherit everlasting life.”* (Cf. Mt 19:29.)

Give up everything to follow Christ and be a witness to the celestial realities in our world is what the young Maurice did when, at the age of 13, he decided to leave his family and enter the juvenate



Father Maurice was exposed in the chapel at Spiri-Maria before the celebration of the funeral Mass.

with the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. He would never look back. After his novitiate and his first vows, he generously dedicated himself to teaching for twenty years. Then, providential events introduced him to the Army of Mary and led him to continue his journey in the Community of the Sons of Mary. He joined the Community on May 31, 1981, and was ordained a priest on May 30, 1987 at L'Aquila in Italy.

He had a variety of responsibilities, especially that of Master of novices for several years, a corrector for the paper *Le Royaume*, chaplain for the Daughters of Mary at the Founding Center in Quebec City and then at the Residence of the Lady in Lac-Échemin. At the same time, he accomplished many humble tasks within the Community with joy and simplicity. An excellent preacher, endowed with a great

sensitivity, he was able to stir hearts through his words and his faith, enlivening them to the beauty of the spiritual life, while helping souls approach the sacrament of divine mercy with confidence and trust, devoting himself to it faithfully and generously.

An upright man, he journeyed in faith, accepting to walk without understanding, in abandonment to divine Providence. His love of the Immaculate shone through his whole life and every sermon of his ended with an invocation to the Virgin Mary. Father Marie-Bernard, his name in religion, always sang the praises of Mary, as did Saint Bernard whom he particularly liked.

He intensely “felt” what he said in his preaching, because he sought to live what he preached, especially when he spoke of the importance of accepting the cross. The cross was well and truly present in his life in all its many forms, especially in the last years when illness crossed his path; it was a painful ordeal which he bore with joy and acceptance. Then, he united his offering to that of our Mother whom he loved so much and who lay on her bed with its mother-of-pearl cross. It

was “his small part,” he would say to us. It was also in such a spirit of co-redemption that he lived the last moments of his life: an offering of love united to the sacrifice of Christ the Redeemer and of Paul-Marie the Co-Redemptrix in the Eucharist in which he was able to participate even on the last day of his life.

Father Maurice left us discreetly last June 24. He died like a flame that was entirely consumed by Love. The Redeemer and the Co-Redemptrix came to get him after he too had lived a “life of Love” in his small measure. From On-High, he exhorts us to remain faithful to this Work of Love, to remain attached to the Lady's Heart and to accept immolation with love because our crosses will blossom into a springtime of peace, joy and love.

Father Serge Lépine, O.F.F.M.



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