



Figures in the Work



Georgette Major, Mother of the Family of the Sons and Daughters of Mary (born on December 23, 1925 – passed away on May 29, 2015)

In 1973, Marie-Paule wrote: “The service of others out of love of the Lord and His Mother echoes all the way to eternity.” (Review, *L’Armée de Marie*, vol. II, p. 101) This sentence very aptly describes Georgette Major’s entire life, she who was the first Mother appointed by Mother Paul-Marie.

Her life of service and of the forgetting of self was guided by the example of her parents, Henri-Louis Richard and Elizabeth Barras. Both were originally from France and they were married in 1919, in St. Genevieve parish, a French-Canadian village east of Winnipeg, Manitoba, there where the rich land of the prairies gives way to the meager and stony terrain of the Canadian Shield. Eight children were born of their union. Georgette, the fourth child, was born on December 23, 1925.

Elizabeth and Henri-Louis opened a general store in St. Genevieve. Business was good and the children helped their parents. During the great depression (1929-1939), the family came to the aid of the members of the community with a remarkable generosity.

Georgette obtained her teaching certificate at the Normal School in Winnipeg and taught until appendicitis forced her to give up her position. The following year, she would give private lessons to the daughter of the manager of a gold mine in northern Manitoba. That is where she met Stanley Major whom she married in the summer of 1946. They settled in Grass River in northern Manitoba.

Stan started a business. The children followed one another in rapid succession, five in six years, and Stan and Georgette would adopt a sixth child. Georgette looked after the accounting for her husband, played the organ at the church and became a member of the Catholic Women’s League.

The family moved to St. Norbert close to Winnipeg, so that the children could continue their studies at university. Georgette obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree and taught religion for a year in a high school. After having spent another three years in the province’s north, Stan and Georgette built a large house in St. Norbert, along the banks of the Red River.

Georgette discovered the Army of Mary in 1972, She would rapidly become the soul of the group through her zeal and her great charity.

During the summer, Stan and Georgette would rent a cabin in northern Manitoba. In July 1982, as they were crossing the lake to go to Mass, their canoe capsized. They both found themselves in the water, and did their best to keep hanging

on to the canoe. With her rosary in her hand, Georgette was constantly repeating: “Holy Mary, pray for us now and at the hour of our death.” After three hours, Stan no longer had the strength to continue hanging on and the couple bid each other “Goodbye, see you in heaven!” When help arrived, it was too late for Stan and he died of hypothermia.

In spite of her sorrow, this heavy cross strengthened Georgette in her faith. She would express “her gratitude to Marie-Paule and her collaborators for the blessings wrought in her husband’s soul. It was thanks to the Army of Mary,” she said, “that the virtues of faith, hope and charity were incessantly growing in him every day.”

A widow at the age of 57, she decided to dedicate her life to the development of the Family of the Sons and Daughters of Mary, and then nothing stopped her. In the spring of 1983, Mother Paul-Marie appointed her a Mother for the zone of the Prairies (Western Canada). She was the very first to receive such an appointment. She collaborated with the Animator of the Army of Mary, Mrs. Denise Cahill, to found Centers in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

She put her house at the disposal of the Work, fulfilling in a way her husband’s desire, for he kept repeating during its construction: “This is for the family.” She taught catechism to the children, translated Father Philippe Roy’s catechism courses and other documents of the Work. She faithfully attended all the national gatherings in Quebec, volunteering to do simultaneous interpretation. Endowed with an exceptional energy, she travelled a lot from one province to the other to support the Centers she had founded.

She had the sorrow of losing a granddaughter and then her eldest son. They were very heavy crosses, added to those of a failing health and a gradual loss of her sight, for she suffered from macular degeneration.

She accepted those successive detachments, uniting herself to Mother Paul-Marie through prayer and the offering up of her sufferings. On May 29, 2015, as the triduum began at Spiri-Maria, Georgette was absent for the first time because she was hospitalized. But that was the moment chosen by the Lord and the Lady to come and get her soul, and it was in Heaven that she would go and celebrate the Divine Quinternity.

Jacinta Palud

Picture: Georgette visiting the Army of Mary Center in Quebec City.

