



# Society of St Pius X District of Canada

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Dear Friends and Benefactors,

February brings back the beautiful feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, and therefore the great mystery of the Immaculate Conception: "I am the Immaculate Conception!" By saying "Immaculate Conception", one says an eternal "enmity", a struggle, a fight as much as between the Immaculate Woman and the cursed serpent as well as between their descendants just as there is enmity between grace and sin. The Apostle said it well: "What union can there be between Christ and Belial, between light and darkness?" (II Cor 6 :15)

In reviewing the last two centuries from this angle of the Immaculate, it is clear that Our Lady continues to fight by herself directly and indirectly through her children. In the nineteenth century, with 1) the Miraculous Medal (1830), 2) Our Lady of Victories and the consecration to the Immaculate Heart (1836), 3) the rediscovery in 1847 at the bottom of an old chest the *Treatise of the True Devotion* of Saint Louis-Marie-de-Montfort, and 4) Lourdes (1858) - to mention only these four dates - we see the Queen of Heaven remind us that she is here among us to give us hope, confidence and some very powerful weapons for the spiritual warfare which is first of all hers.

In the twentieth century, the Queen organizes her troops even more for a fight that intensifies. Of course, there is Fatima, on which we spoke a lot last year. I would like to highlight here two organizations that have had an extraordinary impact over the past hundred years and that are gaining more and more importance in the ranks of Tradition in our difficult times: the Militia of the Immaculate (MI) and the Legion of Mary.

The MI is founded in Rome, by the younger brother Maximilian-Marie Kolbe, a Polish, 3 days after the miracle of the sun of Fatima, on October 16, 1917, eve of the feast of St. Margaret Mary. The foundation of the Legion of Mary follows closely, being founded in Dublin, Ireland, on September 7, 1921, at the first vespers of the feast of the Nativity of Mary by Mr. Frank Duff.

Brother Maximilian-Marie Kolbe was not yet a priest (he will be ordained a year later), nor any of his six Franciscan companions in their convent of Rome, at the founding of MI. Frank Duff, himself a government employee who will never marry, who will say the complete breviary in Latin for nearly fifty years, had gathered a priest and a group of ladies, they were fifteen, to put themselves at the service of the Blessed Virgin.

These two very modest groups are reminiscent of the choice of the twelve apostles, most of them simple fishermen, whom Our Lord will send to conquer the whole world after his Ascension.

The MI is essentially based on the consecration to the Blessed Virgin in word and deed, on the desire to work for her service, and on the conviction of the existence of the apocalyptic struggle between the Immaculate Woman and the dragon. Father Maximilian will draw deep inspiration from the *Treatise of True Devotion* to train and inflame his knights to be apostolic and to constantly remember that they are precisely in the militia of the Immaculate.

It is a historical fact that the Legion of Mary was born two short weeks after a meeting of a circle of the Conference of Saint Vincent de Paul. The theme of this special meeting was the study of Blessed Montfort's book, which Frank Duff had just discovered and understood perfectly. "If absolutely all the graces come from the Blessed Virgin, universal Mediatrix with the Mediator, what are we waiting for to devote ourselves to her and to put ourselves entirely at her service," rightly thought this Irish young man.

The first years of the MI were slow and met with a lot of opposition until Father Kolbe founded the *City of the Immaculate, Niepokalanow*, in Poland, in 1927. Beginning with 18 brothers, in 12 years the community increased to more than 762 brothers with an apostolate, especially that of the press, which certainly ranks in the annals of the Church. When one thinks that the last editions of his little popular magazine, at the beginning of the war, reached the figure of one million copies, one can imagine the immense good that it made to souls. Which Catholic magazine, even today, has ever reached this quantity?

The beginnings of the Legion were slow and very humble too. For nearly ten years there were only ladies, and they only worked in and around Dublin. Then it opened in Scotland, and in England, and little by little the legionaries, who knew by their consecration that they were but simple instruments in the hands of the all-powerful Virgin, were sent all over the world, and with the blessing of the bishops, spread this magnificent work. Let us give two examples: Edel Quinn, knowing that she had tuberculosis, wanted to consecrate the last years of her life to the Blessed Virgin. Frank Duff, in an act truly heroic but considered crazy by many, sent her alone to found the Legion in Africa. In a few years she founded more than a thousand *praesidia* (note: a *praesidium* is the core group of the Legion).

In China, it was Father Adrien McGrath (future spiritual director of Rose Hu - see the book *Joy in Suffering* - for sale at Nova Francia Publishing), Irish, who had been using with great success for some years the system of the Legion of Mary in his small village in Sichuan – who was then mandated by the Apostolic Nuncio in 1948 to establish the Legion as much as possible all over China, before Mao and his communists took power and began the persecution of the Church. Shortly after, the communist dictator had to admit that the Legion of Mary had become the number one enemy of Communism in China!

These two organizations that complement each other beautifully have come back to life in Tradition for a few years now. Once again after a very humble beginning in Poland in 2000, the MI was able to present a spiritual bouquet of more than 100,000 members in Notre-Dame, Fatima, on August 20th. In most of our chapels in Canada we can find the "Corner of the MI", which contains the essential material of the MI.

Although the Legion of Mary advances more slowly, nevertheless it does advance. At this moment, we have some *praesidia* in Lévis, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. These *praesidia* form a *curia* which is itself subject to the *senatus* of the Philippines.

The Militia of the Immaculate and the Legion of Mary help us to live our consecration to the Blessed Virgin, not to bury this treasure, but to make it fruitful for the honor of the Immaculate and the greatest glory of God.

Fr. Daniel Couture  
District Superior