

"For Me, She Will Always Be MOTHER!"



Pierre Cliche,
during his testimonial at Spiri-Maria.

In the message from the Lady of All Peoples on May 31, 1955, we read the following: *"I have said: 'I will console.' Your Mother, peoples, is acquainted with life; your Mother is acquainted with sorrow; your Mother is acquainted with the cross. All that you have to put up with in this life, your Mother, the Lady of All Peoples, has experienced it before you. She has travelled this road before you."* (51st message)

That message reminds us that the Lady lived a life like every other human being, accomplishing the duties of her state with all the hopes, the desires, the sufferings inherent in it, even if the spiritual element occupied an essential place in her life.

We, her five children, had the privilege of living next to her for many years before the Work of the Lady began. Today, I want to talk to you about that period in her life.

Who better than Saint Raoul Marie can express what I want to say? When he gave me a copy of his book *L'Homme*

Total dans la Terre Totale ["The Total Man in the Total Earth"], he began his autograph with these words: *"To you, Pierre, who can say 'Mother' to the One who gave supernatural life to so many spiritual sons..."* Thus, I am happy to be able to bear witness to the privilege of having had her as a mother.

For us, her children, she was a mother, like yours is for each one of you, even if we understood that, in her case, there was a more important spiritual dimension.

Her entire life breathed love: the love of God first of all, then that of her children, and afterwards that of her neighbor.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DUTIES OF ONE'S STATE

Accomplishing the duties of her state was always important, and every act in her life was done with gentleness, calmness and affection in order to teach us. Since her moral values were often different from those generally promoted by society, that would occasionally cause friction with her children. Even if we would complain bitterly at times, she would stand firm, saying: "It is more important to accomplish the duties of one's state than it is to see to being loved, even by one's children." Day after day, in spite of the sickness and sufferings weighing her down, she fulfilled her duties of a mother with love.

VALUES LIVED NOBLY

Throughout our childhood and our adolescence, our mother passed on to us both human and spiritual values such as:

- the respect and love of others,



1960 - Marie-Paule,
at the age of 38.

- humility and simplicity,
- the giving of self and even being able to forget oneself in favor of those needing help,
- forgiveness,
- abandoning oneself to God's will,
- attentiveness to providential events,
- trust in Providence,
- the beauty of every vocation,
- the meaning of suffering, and so much more.

Our mother practised all those values. The best example I can give of the forgetting of self is her attitude regarding the telephone calls she would receive from a Sister in Manitoba during the night. This went on for a long time. Mother would even settle herself in a very uncomfortable position so as to disturb us as little as possible. However, when, in spite of everything, we complained because of the disturbance, she had us take note that we were to set aside our selfishness in order to help others.

In the case of forgiveness, for example, ought we pardon those who make us suffer, who ridicule us or who take everything away from us, even our children? Our mother forgave everything. She also forgave our father for all the sufferings he made her endure and even for having taken her children from her for a few months. She always told us to love our father and to respect him.

With regard to believing in Providence, the example she continually gave us and her words of trust in God were constantly present in our life. And she practised it well beyond anything that would usually have been acceptable.

There you have only a few examples, but you know what all her values were through the reading of the volumes of *Life of Love*. Mother took advantage of everything, whether it was a news item on television, an event in our lives or our own little intrigues, to give us the appropriate teaching.

AN ATTENTIVE AND CONSIDERATE MOTHER

When I recall some memories of the time spent with her, I see again a mother who was attentive to her children, who took care of them and who liked to please them.

At Saint-Georges, for example, we would ask her to play the piano to put us to sleep, and she would willingly oblige. She would ask us what we wanted to hear, and usually our answer was, "Prière à la Vierge" [Prayer to the Virgin]. Was that simply by chance?

Likewise, when I hear the "Souvenez-vous..." [Memento to Our Lady of Etchemin] sung here, this brings back so many memories, such as the many pilgrimages to the shrine of Our Lady of Etchemin when I could hear mother sing with so much softness in her voice.

Every event was also underlined. For example, she would never want to miss a birthday. But what do you give when you yourself have nothing? At the end of the summer holidays when I was about 10 or 11 years old, mother, after having prepared everything for boarding school, did not have any money left for my birthday. However, she absolutely wanted to give me a gift. So, she gave me the only thing she possessed, her bible which father had given her. Since I did not want to take

it, she told me that one cannot refuse a birthday gift. So, I accepted it. Before leaving for boarding school the next day, I gave her a gift for her birthday a few days later. I gave her her bible back, saying that a birthday gift could not be refused. Dear mother! That is the way she was, ready to give even the little she had.

My sister Michelle reminded me recently that during our summers at the cottage, we would gather together



1963 - Marie-Paule and her children were received by her cousin Simone in Lac-Etchemin, where they were finally able to have a family life. Father Adrien Ouellet was also welcomed with joy.

on the verandah in the evening, and mother would ask us: "What would you like us to talk about?" She would take the time to answer us, whatever the topic was.

I also remember the noon meals we shared in the last years when I was living with her, during which we talked about so many things. She was really the "Big Book" that taught me everything, as much on the human level as on the spiritual one. Those moments were often spent joyfully because mother liked to laugh and tease, while still always reminding us that one's teasing should never be hurtful.

ABSOLUTE TRUST IN AND ABANDONMENT TO PROVIDENCE

To clearly illustrate that our relations with mother were like all those that exist between a mother and her child, I will relate an incident. In my last year at the CEGEP, I had bought a car. Often, just before leaving for classes, and really just before leaving, mother would ask me, as she handed me an envelope: "Could you drop this off at the Generalate House?" or at the General Hospital and even once at the Bishop's House. Grumbling a little bit, I would reply that I didn't have time, that I would be late for class, that she should have mentioned this sooner, etc. She would always answer that there would not be any problem and that I would not be late. Well, despite all the many times this happened, I was never late for a class!

I also remember other events but with more sadness. For example, there is mention in *Life of Love* of the times when her children would leave for boarding school. There was much sadness in the house then. While we read that in one of the book's chapters, afterwards we turn the page and the story is already dealing with another event. But that sadness would last day after day, for her as well as for us. She had to live through it, and she would show us in this way that we were always to accept God's will, telling us that He alone knew the good that would come of it, that our suffering would serve to redeem our father's soul and many other souls.

Up to the time of her departure for Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts, her very human desire was to have a marriage and a home in which every member of the family could develop and be happy. That was so important to her that, on the simple promise that our father would go there to pick himself up again, and contrary to all human logic, she left everything behind and took

us with her. Re-establishing her home and her marriage was of a major importance. However, Heaven had other plans for our mother...

At the same time as we were living events which were more or less happy, as is the case in every family, we had the opportunity to experience a supernatural dimension through our mother. In fact, when this concerned our family or herself, she would explain the different interventions given by Heaven to guide her.

As an example, we could mention our departure from Saint-Georges when the Lord indicated what she was to do, and then everything fell into place without her having to intervene.

We could also speak of Our Lord's request that the summer cottage be readied for the summer, whereas mother did not even know where her children were. Well, the very day she finished getting everything ready, I was the first to arrive, thanks to the help of the Sisters at the boarding school and a good samaritan from Lac-Etchemin who had come to pick up his son and who accepted to bring me back with them.

PREPARATION FOR A FUTURE ROLE

As I reread *Life of Love*, I remember certain words mother received from Heaven which she would pass on to us. Even if we would not see their immediate realization, that enabled us to hope and to understand, in our own measure as children, the presence of God in our mother's life.

Long before the Army of Mary was founded, mother told us that the Lord had informed her that she would direct a great and wonderful movement one day. She would talk to us about this future role without, however, understanding perfectly what it was all about. We are living it now.

Our mother also informed us that she would then be less available for her children because, mainly, she would have to look after the Work. It would happen occasionally that she would leave a family get-together to meet with someone who was calling upon her. Knowing that this was to help someone who was suffering or to help a person advance spiritually, we would accept it willingly, all the more so when we now know that this led to certain religious or priestly vocations.



1966 - Over Christmas, the whole family was together at 2040, 26th Street in Quebec City where Marie-Paule had just moved with her children in 1965.

Sometimes, too, to forewarn us, she would mention that she would be calumniated and held in contempt to the point where we might be ashamed of our mother. We have never been ashamed of her. However, I am glad she warned us of this because the many crusades against the Lady's Work and against her were very difficult to live through. Hearing such comments about one's mother is already hard to bear, but when it is false and you are not even allowed to give the truth, that is even harder to take.

However, those periods did not obscure all the beauty of the mystery be-

ing unveiled before our eyes.

"SHE IS DOUBLY MY MOTHER!"

After having read and understood – that which can now be understood –, I believe because I was a witness from my childhood of the life of a person centered entirely in God and continuously acting in His presence.

Many proofs were given to us. The revelation of her mystery was done without there ever being any contradiction and it was unveiled little by little. And it is a good thing that this occurred gradually, because how could I have accepted this mystery and lived with her if that had been said during my childhood or shortly thereafter? You know, a solemn declaration asserting that your mother is God is not an everyday occurrence! Even if several stages had prepared us for this, it is always surprising! And I repeat, I firmly believe it, but for me, she will always be Mother!

A few days after having written those last lines, it suddenly occurred to me that perhaps I was too intent on maintaining a human link with my mother. Of course, it will always be very important to remember that she lived the same human

aspects of her life as every person on earth. However, she is the Co-Redemptrix, a person in the Divine Quinternity, and that has a much greater importance than the human person herself. In the future, I will try to see her more as she is now, while still keeping in the depths of my heart the marvelous memories uniting us. She is simply doubly my mother.

Mother, after we have heard you say to us so often, "*I love you*", it is now the turn of each of your children, your spiritual sons and daughters, to say to you, "*I love you, Mother!*"

Pierre Cliche