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# THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ARMY OF MARY (*L'ARMÉE DE MARIE*)

Robert Fastiggi, Ph.D.\*

## Introduction

Fifty years ago, the fathers of Vatican II expressed their hope that “devotion, especially liturgical devotion, of the Blessed Virgin be generously fostered” (*Lumen gentium*, 67). At the same time, they exhorted “theologians and preachers of the divine Word to abstain zealously both from all false exaggeration (*omni falsa superlacione*) as well as from petty narrow-mindedness in considering the singular dignity of the Mother of God.”<sup>1</sup> The story of the rise and fall of the North American Marian group the Army of Mary (*L'Armée de Marie*) is a case study of Marian devotion distorted by “false exaggeration.” Even though the interventions of the Magisterium regarding the Army of Mary are very recent (between 1987 and 2007), scholars of religion have already taken notice of the interesting and sometimes bizarre story of the Army and its foundress, Marie-Paule Giguère (1921- ) of Lac-Etchemin, Québec.<sup>2</sup> While some scholars, like the Italian sociologist Massimo

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<sup>1</sup> *Lumen gentium*, no. 67; the translations are taken from the Vatican website ([www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)) with some minor changes: e.g., *cultus* is translated as “devotion” rather than “cult,” and *falsa* is translated as “false” rather than “gross.”

<sup>2</sup> See Massimo Introvigne, “En Route to the Marian Kingdom: Catholic Apocalypticism and the Army of Mary,” in *Christian Millenarianism: From the Early Church to Waco*, ed. Stephen J. Hunt (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 149-165; Massimo Introvigne and Pierluigi Zoccatelli, “Army of Mary,” in *Religions of the World: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices*, ed.



Introvigne, understand the Army of Mary as an example of “Marian apocalypticism,” others, like Paul L. Gareau, emphasize the “ultramontane ideology of French-Canadian identity” as the key to understanding the devotional milieu of Marie-Paule Giguère and the *Armée de Marie*.<sup>3</sup>

### Marie-Paule Giguère (1921- ) and the Origins of the Army of Mary

The origins of the Army of Mary are inseparable from the biography of its foundress, Marie-Paule Giguère. She was born on September 14, 1921, in Lac-Etchemin, Québec,<sup>4</sup> a small village about 326 km. (202 miles) from Montréal and about 99 km. (61 miles) south of Québec City.<sup>5</sup> Marie-Paule was the eldest of ten children, consisting of six girls and four boys.<sup>6</sup> She was raised in a very devout Catholic home. As she recalls: “We were given a deeply religious education, open to the love of Jesus and Mary, to a love for the Church and the Eucharist, particularly of the sublime priesthood.”<sup>7</sup> Marie-Paule’s parents, Ernest and Laura, did all they could to raise their children “in a spirit of Christian charity, pious devotion, prayer, and absolute obedience to the traditions and authority of the Church.”<sup>8</sup>

J. Gordon Melton and Martin Baumann (2nd ed., 6 vols.; Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 1:193-194; Fr. Raymond Martel, *La face cachée de l’Armée de Marie* (Montréal: Fides, 2010); and Massimo Introvigne, “Modern Catholic Millennialism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 560-563.

<sup>3</sup> See Paul L. Gareau, “Le providentialisme d’hier à aujourd’hui: la construction idéologique ultramontaine de l’identité canadienne-française dans le développement de l’Armée de Marie,” *Studies in Religion/ Sciences Religieuses* 42, no. 3 (2013): 346-363.

<sup>4</sup> Gareau, “Le providentialisme d’hier à aujourd’hui,” 356.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.quebecgetaways.com/lac-etchemin>. The population of Lac-Etchemin today is around 4,000; see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lac-Etchemin,\\_Quebec](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lac-Etchemin,_Quebec).

<sup>6</sup> Marie-Paule Giguère *Autobiographical Note* (September 22, 1995), found on [www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/vie-damour/VA\\_notice-MP\\_AN.htm](http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/vie-damour/VA_notice-MP_AN.htm) (accessed Dec. 15, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Gareau, “Le providentialisme d’hier à aujourd’hui,” 356.



Nevertheless, all was not perfect. Marie-Paule's father suffered from auto-destructive traits connected to alcoholism, which were moderated by his religious contrition and the affection of his wife and family.<sup>9</sup>

During her adolescent years, Marie-Paule began to suffer various maladies caused by indigestion and chronic insomnia.<sup>10</sup> These sufferings inspired her to make an offering of herself to Jesus. In her multi-volume work, *Vie d'amour*, she records these words of self-oblation: "Make me suffer all that You'll wish, my Jesus of love . . . Accept, o my Love, the little thing that I am . . . I wish to share also the sufferings of Mary, this Mother so good whom mother teaches me to love. I wish to be a victim like You, if You wish."<sup>11</sup> Shortly afterwards, Marie-Paule heard the voice of God say: "ONE DAY, YOU WILL BE VERY GREAT, MY CHILD, HAVE CONFIDENCE, BE GOOD."<sup>12</sup>

In her youth, Marie-Paule became "obsessed" with the idea of being a missionary religious.<sup>13</sup> During a retreat made when she was sixteen, she presented this desire to the retreat master, but he told her: "No, God is not calling you to the religious life; God wants you in the world."<sup>14</sup> Marie-Paule took this as a sign from God, and she put away thoughts of religious life. On July 1, 1944, a few months shy of her twenty-third birthday, she married Georges Cliché (1917-1997). Although she hardly knew him, she was convinced that God was calling her to marry him.<sup>15</sup> Her marriage proved to be a trial. Cliché was "a spendthrift, unfaithful, and an alcoholic."<sup>16</sup> She was subjected

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Marie-Paule Giguère, *Vie d'amour*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Limoulu, Québec: Vie d'amour, 1981), 29 (my translation of the French which reads: *Fais-moi souffrir tout ce que Tu voudras, mon Jésus d'amour . . . Accept, ô mon Amour, le peu que je suis . . . Je veux partager aussi les souffrances de Marie, cette si bonne Mère que maman m'apprend à aimer. Je veux être victim comme Toi, si Tu le veux*).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. The French original has the capital letters and reads: "UN JOUR, TU SERAS TRÈS GRANDE, MON ENFANT, AIE CONFIANCE, SOIS BONNE."

<sup>13</sup> Marie-Paule Giguère, *Autobiographical Note*.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Gareau, "Le providentialisme d'hier à aujourd'hui," 357.

<sup>16</sup> Introigne and Zoccatelli, "Army of Mary," 193.



to “profound psychological abuse” brought about by her husband’s “paranoid rages, conjugal violence, familial negligence, alcoholism, and infidelity.”<sup>17</sup> In spite of these trials, the marriage resulted in the birth of five children within seven years: André (born 1945), Louise (1947), Michèle (1948), Pierre (1950), and Danielle (1952).<sup>18</sup> In the midst of these marital difficulties, Marie-Paule claimed that she “was broken humanly, but happy spiritually.”<sup>19</sup> Eventually, she decided to accept the advice of four different “persons in authority”; in 1957, she separated from her husband and placed her children in a boarding school for their protection, a decision that made her feel “torn apart in an indescribable fashion.”<sup>20</sup>

Marie-Paule claims that she received two revelations in the spring of 1958. The first disclosed diabolical influences in the world and in the Church—a reality that will inform the theme of civil and ecclesiastical opposition in her thought.<sup>21</sup> The second alleged revelation, received on May 4, 1958, proved to be even more decisive. God says to Marie-Paule: “*You know, my child, that my beloved Mother dwelt on earth and She ascended to heaven without dying! Today, I must tell you that She has incarnated herself and her maternal glance has inclined itself upon you. It is you, my child, who suffers my Passion and who, in the name of my beloved Mother, will give Christ again to the world.*”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Marie-Paule Giguère, *Autobiographical Note*.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. Eventually, her husband, Georges, had an experience of conversion and sought forgiveness by starting “a new life in the Army of Mary” before his death in 1997. See Peter Jan Margry, “Mary’s Reincarnation and the Banality of Salvation: The Millennial Cultus of the Lady of All Nations/Peoples,” *Numen* 59 (2012): 492, n. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Gareau, “Le providentialisme d’hier à aujourd’hui,” 357.

<sup>22</sup> Marie-Paule Giguère, *Vie d’amour*, 2nd ed., 1:326. The italics are found in the French original, which reads: “*Tu sais, mon enfant, que ma Mère bien-aimée est passée sur terre et qu’Elle est montée au Ciel sans mourir! Je dois te dire aujourd’hui, qu’Elle s’incarnée et son regard maternel s’est penché sur toi. C’est toi mon enfant, qui souffre ma Passion et qui, au nom de ma Mère bien-aimée, va redonner le Christ au monde.*” As can be seen, there is a certain ambiguity as to how the Blessed Mother has incarnated herself in Marie-Paule.



In 1958, Marie-Paule's spiritual director told her to begin to write the story of her life. She followed his advice and began the composition of her spiritual autobiography, *Vie d'amour* (*Life of Love*), which was published in a total of fifteen separate volumes: thirteen between 1979 and 1980, two more between 1993 and 1994, and five volumes of appendices in 1992.<sup>23</sup> Soon after moving to Québec City with her children in 1965, Marie-Paule began a Marian prayer group that formed the nucleus of what would eventually become the Army of Mary. Every year this prayer group would make a pilgrimage to the chapel of Notre-Dame d'Etchemin in her home village. It was in this chapel on August 28, 1971, that the Army of Mary was officially begun.<sup>24</sup> The image of an "army" was inspired by a passage from *True Devotion to Mary* by St. Louis de Montfort (1673-1716), where he states that: "Lastly, Mary must become as terrible as an army in array to the devil and his followers, especially in these latter times. For Satan, knowing that he has little time—even less now than ever—to destroy souls, intensifies his efforts and his onslaughts every day."<sup>25</sup> The original "Army" had about seventy-five followers. It was conceived of as "an alternative" to the Legion of Mary, the lay Marian association to which Marie-Paule had once belonged.<sup>26</sup>

### **The Army of Mary from 1971 to 1975: Initial Growth and Ecclesiastical Approval**

Between 1971 and 1975, the Army of Mary began to attract followers from different regions of Canada, the United States,

<sup>23</sup> *Vie d'amour*, 15 vols. plus 5 vols. of Appendices (Limoilou, Québec: Vie d'amour, 1979-1994). There is also an English translation, *Life of Love*, which includes all the volumes except for 4 and 6 and the Appendices (Limoilou, Québec: Vie d'amour, 1979-1987); see the article on l'Armée de Marie on the website of CESNUR, Centro Studi sulle Nuove Religioni (Center for the Study of New Religions) under "Le religioni in Italia: La Chiesa Cattolica e suoi scismi," available at [http://www.cesnur.org/religioni\\_italia/c/cattolicesmo\\_07.htm](http://www.cesnur.org/religioni_italia/c/cattolicesmo_07.htm) (accessed Jan. 18, 2014). CESNUR is directed by the Italian lawyer and sociologist Massimo Introvigne and is located in Turin, Italy.

<sup>24</sup> Gareau, "Le providentialisme d'hier à aujourd'hui," 357.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 357-358. The passage from St. Louis de Montfort is taken from *True Devotion to Mary*, in *God Alone: The Collected Writings of St. Louis Marie de Montfort* (Bay Shore, NY: Montfort Publications, 2003), 304, no. 50.7.

<sup>26</sup> Margry, "Mary's Reincarnation and the Banality of Salvation," 492.



and Europe. In 1972, Fr. Philippe Roy (1916-1988), a priest of the Archdiocese of Rimouski, Québec, joined the Army of Mary. Eventually, he would become its director.<sup>27</sup> In March and April of 1973, Marie-Paule went on a pilgrimage to Europe, accompanied by her mother, Laura Giguère, and some other members of the Army of Mary. While in Rome, she met with Abbè Lionel Mélancon (1920-2000), a priest and seminary professor from the Diocese of Trois Rivières, Québec, who was in Rome for a sabbatical year. Abbè Mélancon arranged for Marie-Paule to meet Bishop Jean-Pierre van Lierde, O.S.A. (1907-1995), a Belgian prelate who was the papal sacristan and vicar general of Vatican City State. Based on Marie-Paule's description of the Army of Mary, van Lierde was supportive. He communicated his endorsement of the mission of the Army to Cardinal Maurice Roy (1905-1985), the Archbishop of Québec.<sup>28</sup> On March 10, 1975, Cardinal Roy, following consultation with the Assembly of Québec Bishops, gave approval to The Army of Mary as a "Pious Association" according to canon 708 of the (1917) *Code of Canon Law*. He was impressed by the self-confessed marks of the Army of Mary: 1) fidelity to Rome and to the Pope; 2) devotion to Our Lady of Fatima and the triumph of Mary's Immaculate Heart; 3) consecration to Mary according to the writings of St. Louis de Montfort; and 4) devotion to the "Triple White—the Eucharist, the Immaculate, and the Pope."<sup>29</sup>

Bishop van Lierde's endorsement was no doubt helpful in convincing Cardinal Roy to approve the Army of Mary as a pious association. According to one scholar, Roy's approval might have been "due to a combination of inadvertence and eagerness to support religious initiatives in a time when the Church was in decay."<sup>30</sup> The formal ecclesiastical approval

<sup>27</sup> Introvigne and Zoccatelli, "Army of Mary," 193.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 358, and also the entry by Fr. Johann Roten, S.M., on The Army of Mary available via "the Mary Page:" <http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/ArmyOfMary.html> (accessed May 22, 2012).

<sup>30</sup> Margry, "Mary's Reincarnation and the Banality of Salvation," 494.



contributed to the movement's eventual growth from a small group to an international association with perhaps as many as 25,000 followers.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Army of Mary from 1975 to 1988: Growth, Controversies, and the First Magisterial Interventions**

The Army of Mary grew steadily during the late 1970s and 1980s. In 1981, a religious institute for professed male and female religious was established, called the Community of the Sons and Daughters of Mary. By 1995, it had grown to seventy-five Daughters of Mary and eighty-three Sons of Mary (including forty-three priests). In addition to the professed religious, there were various branches of associated and affiliated members. Between 1975 and 1985, the number of those associated with the Army of Mary grew to about 20,000, with groups in Canada, the USA, Europe, and Jamaica.<sup>32</sup>

On May 31, 1981, the Family of the Sons and Daughters was founded, consisting of seven branches: 1) the associated members; 2) the auxiliary members (lay people: benjamins, adolescents, and adults); 3) the affiliated members (priests); 4) the Oblates (lay people); 5) the Mothers (in charge of families in their respective areas); 6) the community members, Sons and Daughters of Mary; 7) those Consecrated to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.<sup>33</sup> On August 15, 1986, the Oblate-Patriots were formed as a branch of the Oblates of the Sons and Daughters of Mary who seek to apply the social doctrine of the Church to their respective countries.<sup>34</sup> In 1992, the Marialys Institute was established for priests with a special fidelity to the Pope

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., n. 11, which states that the number 25,000 "has repeatedly appeared in newspapers without any source reference." Reputable scholars, though, have put the number of those associated with the Army of Mary at its height as around 20,000: see Gareau, "Le providentialisme d'hier à aujourd'hui," 358, and Introvigne, "En Route to the Marian Kingdom," 159.

<sup>32</sup> Gareau, "Le providentialisme d'hier à aujourd'hui," 358, and Introvigne, "En Route to the Marian Kingdom," 159.

<sup>33</sup> *The Army of Mary, L'Armée de Marie* [brochure published by the International Center of L'Armée de Marie] (Limoilou, Québec, 1986).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



and a special commitment to the Christian renewal of the young.<sup>35</sup> The Army of Mary also established a publishing house, a bakery (*Miche d'Or*), and a chocolate-making workshop run by the Daughters of Mary (*Chocolat de Lys*).<sup>36</sup>

In October 1984, fifteen Sons of Mary go to Rome to begin studies for the priesthood at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas (the Angelicum). They find lodging at the Generalate House of the Passionist Fathers, and they are placed under the care of Fr. Denis Laprise, a Camillian priest who is given permission by his religious superiors to serve as the formation director for the Sons of Mary studying at the Angelicum.<sup>37</sup> By 1985, there are thirty-two Sons of Mary living in Rome, with twenty-nine of them studying at the Angelicum.<sup>38</sup> Advised by the Roman Curia to seek a bishop protector for the young religious community, Fr. Laprise finds such a patron in Most Rev. Mario Peressin (1923-1999), the Archbishop of L'Aquila, Italy. In 1986, Archbishop Peressin presents the first member of the Sons of Mary to be ordained a priest to John Paul II, and, on May 25, 1986, the Roman Pontiff personally ordains him at St. Peter's Basilica. In spite of Cardinal Vachon's revocation (May 4, 1987) of recognition of the Army of Mary as a pious association, Archbishop Peressin continues to ordain Sons of Mary as priests, with a total of thirty-two ordained by him between 1987 and 1994.<sup>39</sup> In addition to L'Aquila, these priests receive assignments in other dioceses of Italy, as well as France, Austria, Ontario, and Jamaica.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Introvigne, "En Route to the Marian Kingdom," 159.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> See the chronological summary of the Sons of Mary available at: [http://www.marianaute-dame.qc.ca/oeuvres/OE\\_oeuvres-hist\\_FR.htm](http://www.marianaute-dame.qc.ca/oeuvres/OE_oeuvres-hist_FR.htm) (accessed Jan. 18, 2014).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. He ordains nine on May 30, 1987; three on August 13, 1988; five on October 7, 1989; one on September 8, 1990; three on September 12, 1991; four on May 28, 1992; six on September 16, 1993; and one on May 31, 1994.

<sup>40</sup> Introvigne, "En Route to the Marian Kingdom," 159. One Son of Mary, Fr. Michel Palud, is eventually named vicar general of the Diocese of Mandeville, Jamaica. However, in 2001, he and five other Sons of Mary leave the religious community after the Bishop of Mandeville withdraws his support for the Sons and Daughters of Mary.



Two European writers, Raoul Auclair (1906–1997) of France and Marc Bosquart (1955– ) of Belgium, become intimately involved with the work of the Army of Mary. Auclair was a professional writer for the French Office of Radio and Television who became interested in eschatology, prophecy, and Marian devotion.<sup>41</sup> Although he published books on Catherine Emmerich (1974) and Nostradamus (1958 and 1975), his writings on Marian apparitions and prophecy became best-known. In 1967, he published *Les Épiphanies de Marie* and a French translation of *The Lady of All Peoples*, based on the messages received between 1945 and 1959 by the Dutch visionary Ida Peerdeman (1905–1996). Auclair heard about the Army of Mary soon after its August 28, 1971, foundation.<sup>42</sup> On December 24, 1971, he sent a letter expressing his support for the newly formed group, saying: “Blessed be this Army of Mary which, in obedience to Mary, pledges itself to remain faithful to the pope. That is the great need of these times. But, alas, it is also a great rarity.”<sup>43</sup> He read with enthusiasm the initial volumes of Marie-Paule’s *Vie d’amour*, even before they were published. After his wife’s death in 1976, he undertook a lecture tour of Canada and the United States on behalf of the Army of Mary. By 1978, he had relocated from France to Québec, and, in 1979, he became the editor of *L’Étoile*, the publication of the Army of Mary which was renamed *Le Royaume* in 1982.<sup>44</sup> In addition, Auclair wrote the preface for the first volume of *Vie d’amour* when it was published in 1979. By this time, he had become one of the closest collaborators with Marie-Paule.<sup>45</sup>

in his diocese: see the article on L’Armée de Marie on the website of CESNUR: [http://www.cesnur.org/religioni\\_italia/c/cattolicesmo\\_07.htm](http://www.cesnur.org/religioni_italia/c/cattolicesmo_07.htm) (accessed Jan. 18, 2014).

<sup>41</sup> See the biography, “Raoul Auclair (1906–1997), the Poet of the End Times,” available at [http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/raoul\\_aclair/RA\\_biographie\\_AN.htm](http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/raoul_aclair/RA_biographie_AN.htm) (accessed Dec. 30, 2013).

<sup>42</sup> See the website of “The Lady of All Nations” (<http://www.de-vrouwe.info/>) where the Dutch expression, *de Vrouwe van alle Volkeren*, is translated into English as “Our Lady of All Nations.” In French, *de Vrouwe van alle Volkeren* is translated as *la Dame de tous les Peuples* (The Lady of All Peoples), which seems closer to the original.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. See also Introvigne, “En Route to the Marian Kingdom,” 159.

<sup>45</sup> Eventually, as a widower, he became a brother within the community of the Sons of Mary.



In 1985, Auclair's most controversial book was published. Entitled *L'homme total dans la terre totale* [The Total Man on the Total Earth], it attempted to explain the role of the Immaculate in the work of redemption. According to Auclair, the Immaculate is She (*Celle*) who existed with the Trinity before creation. She is not *of* God, but She *is* in God from all eternity. In this way, She (*Celle*) is "the Fourth of the God in Three Persons."<sup>46</sup> The Immaculate participates in the work of creation, but she participates more directly in the work of salvation history, which parallels the seven days of creation. On the fourth day of history, the Immaculate becomes incarnate in the Virgin Mary, which prepares the way for the age of the Incarnate Word (day five) and the age of the Church (day six). The era of the Marian apparitions—beginning with Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1531—heralds the coming of the seventh day, when Mary will carry out her co-redemptive role to help establish the Kingdom of God.<sup>47</sup>

Marc Bosquart joined the Army of Mary a few years after Auclair, and he proved to be equally if not more important. Following his studies at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium, he worked in Brussels for the International Secretariat of the World Federation of Catholic Youth.<sup>48</sup> During this time, he began to read and admire Raoul Auclair's books. When he met Auclair in 1978, he learned about the Army of Mary. During a work-related trip to Québec in November, 1979, Bosquart had the opportunity to meet Marie-Paule. He started to read her *Vie d'amour*, and he spent the summer of 1980 in Québec with the Army. In November of 1980, he decided to move to Québec to dedicate himself to the work of the movement. Within a year he met his future wife, Susie Proulx, and on September 26, 1981—during a pilgrimage of the Army of Mary to Rome—they were married in St. Peter's Basilica.<sup>49</sup>

Influenced by Auclair—who assumed the role of his second father (following his own father's death in Belgium)—Bosquart

<sup>46</sup> Introvigne, "En Route to the Marian Kingdom," 160.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> See "Mark Bosquart, Biographical Note," available at [http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/vie-damour/VA\\_oeuvre-col-Marc\\_AN...](http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/vie-damour/VA_oeuvre-col-Marc_AN...) (accessed Dec. 30, 2013).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.



began to write articles and books of his own in the same genre of Marian apocalypticism. Two of these generated considerable controversy—*De la Trinité Divine à l'Immaculée-Trinité* (From the Divine Trinity to the Immaculate Trinity), Limoilou, Québec: La Famille de Fils et Filles de Marie, 1985, and *Le Rédempteur et la Co-rédemptrice* (The Redeemer and the Co-redemptrix), Limoilou, Québec: La Famille de Fils et Filles de Marie, 1986. In these books, Bosquart proposes a “double Trinity.” The first is the divine Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The second is the Immaculate-Trinity, consisting of the Immaculate Mary, Marie-Paule, and the True Spirit (i.e., the Holy Spirit who is included in both Trinities).<sup>50</sup> Mary is the Co-redemptrix for the Age of the Church, which corresponds to the sixth day of the new creation. Marie-Paule is the Co-redemptrix of the “new Church” of the seventh day of the new creation.<sup>51</sup>

Complaints about the Army of Mary began to surface in the early 1980s. To a large extent, these followed the 1979 publication of the initial volumes of Marie-Paule’s multi-volume work, *The Life of Love/Vie d’amour*. As Peter Jan Margry notes:

The fact that the texts with Marie-Paule’s views were not published before 1979 is presumably the main reason that the movement remained under the radar of those charged with checking whether its teachings conformed to the doctrines of the faith. Misled by the formal approbation of the Church, followers did not fully realize the implications of the new teachings when they were published. Beginning in the early 1980s people became increasingly worried after closely reading the first published volume of Marie-Paule’s *Vie d’Amour*.<sup>52</sup>

Archbishop (later Cardinal) Louis-Albert Vachon succeeded Cardinal Roy as Archbishop of Québec in 1981, and he listened to these complaints with care. He appointed a commission to investigate the Army of Mary in 1984.<sup>53</sup> Concerns increased

<sup>50</sup> See Introvigne, “En Route to the Marian Kingdom,” 162.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Margry, “Mary’s Reincarnation and the Banality of Salvation,” 494.

<sup>53</sup> See Introvigne, “En Route to the Marian Kingdom,” 160.



after the publication of the above-mentioned books by Marc Bosquart in 1985 and 1986. Archbishop (now Cardinal) Vachon writes two notifications about these books and he sends them to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.<sup>54</sup> On February 27, 1987, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, under Cardinal Ratzinger, replies that Bosquart's books teach "gravely erroneous doctrines," and Cardinal Vachon is free to act against the Army of Mary as he sees fit.<sup>55</sup> On May 4, 1987, Vachon formally revokes the decree of his predecessor, Cardinal Roy, which had established the Army of Mary as a Pious Association.<sup>56</sup>

On May 7, 1987, Marie-Paule and other members of the Army of Mary hold a press conference responding to Cardinal Vachon's judgment. She states that it is "utterly false" that she "takes herself to be the Blessed Virgin Mary."<sup>57</sup> Instead, she claims to be "only an instrument that Mary is using to realize her plan of love."<sup>58</sup> She notes that the sales of Marc Bosquart's controversial books have been ordered to cease, and she and the Army of Mary have manifested an obedience that is "prompt" and "rapid."<sup>59</sup> Marie-Paule makes it clear that the Army of Mary will appeal to the Holy See for a revocation of Cardinal Vachon's judgment.

On March 25, 1988—after the Vatican Secretary of State had referred the appeal of the Army of Mary to the Pontifical Council for the Laity—Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, the President of the Council, issues a letter ratifying the decrees of Cardinal Vachon of Québec against the Army of Mary.<sup>60</sup> He reports that

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. See also Gareau, "Le providentialisme d'hier à aujourd'hui," 358.

<sup>56</sup> See *Pastorale-Québec* 99, no. 10 (June 22, 1987): 245. See also Introvigne, "En Route to the Marian Kingdom," 162.

<sup>57</sup> See Press Conference, Quebec City, May 7, 1987, which can be found at: [http://www.communate-dame.qc.ca/oeuvres/OE\\_oeuvr-hist-presse\\_AN.htm](http://www.communate-dame.qc.ca/oeuvres/OE_oeuvr-hist-presse_AN.htm) (accessed May 22, 2012).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Letter of His Eminence Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, March 25, 1988; available at: [http://www.communate-dame.qc.ca/oeuvres/OE\\_oeuvr-hist-reniement2\\_AN.htm](http://www.communate-dame.qc.ca/oeuvres/OE_oeuvr-hist-reniement2_AN.htm) (accessed May 22, 2012).



the Pontifical Council for the Laity carefully studied all of the documents related to the Army of Mary's appeal and reached the conclusion "that the foundation of the doctrinal principles upon which rest the statutes, the teachings and the activities of the Army of Mary are not in conformity with the teaching of the Church, and thus the goals of the Army of Mary do not correspond to the goals of the faithful provided by the Code of Canon Law (can. 299 ff.)."<sup>61</sup>

### **The Army of Mary from 1988 to 2007: The Path to Excommunication**

The Army of Mary did not accept the 1988 ruling of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. They appealed this decision to the Apostolic Signatura. This appeal was unsuccessful. On April 20, 1991, the Apostolic Signatura issued a definitive decision upholding the decrees of Cardinal Vachon.<sup>62</sup>

In spite of these magisterial rulings, the Army of Mary continued its activities during the 1990s. The decision of Cardinal Vachon was understood only to apply to the Archdiocese of Québec or at least only to the Province of Québec. Consequently, other dioceses and bishops were sought out, especially for the ordinations of the Sons of Mary (*les Fils de Marie*). Most of these ordinations continued to be done by Archbishop Perresin of L'Aquila, Italy, until his relations with the community deteriorated in the mid-1990s.<sup>63</sup> The Sons of Mary then sought a new ordaining bishop, and, in January, 1996, they were able to secure an invitation from Bishop Eugène LaRoque of Alexandria-Cornwall, Ontario, to come to his diocese.<sup>64</sup> On June 23, 1996, in the Co-Cathedral of the Nativity in Cornwall, Ontario, Bishop LaRoque ordains four Sons of Mary to the

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> See *Studia Canonica* 25, no. 2 (1991): 409-415.

<sup>63</sup> See the article on L'Armée de Marie on the website of CESNUR, available at: [http://www.cesnur.org/religioni\\_italia/c/cattolicesmo\\_07.htm](http://www.cesnur.org/religioni_italia/c/cattolicesmo_07.htm). Archbishop Perresin's last ordination of a Son of Mary was on May 31, 1994. See the chronological summary of the Sons of Mary found at: [http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/communaute/oe\\_comm-histoire\\_an.htm](http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/communaute/oe_comm-histoire_an.htm).

<sup>64</sup> See the chronological summary of the Sons of Mary found at: [http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/communaute/oe\\_comm-histoire\\_an.htm](http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/communaute/oe_comm-histoire_an.htm).



priesthood. He is assisted by Bishop Paul Michael Boyle, the Vicar Apostolic of the Diocese of Mandeville in Jamaica. More than 1200 people are in attendance.<sup>65</sup> In 1998, the Sons of Mary open a mission in Nova Scotia at the invitation of Bishop Colin Campbell of Antigonish, and on August 14, 1999, Bishop Campbell ordains three Sons of Mary to the priesthood.<sup>66</sup>

Because of the acceptance of the Army of Mary in some parts of Canada but not others, the Canadian Conference of Bishops referred the matter to Rome. Some argued that the doctrinal problems were in the works by Bosquart and not in the writings of Marie-Paule. This argument, though, was rejected by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). In a letter of March 31, 2000, the CDF declared that Marie-Paule's spiritual autobiography, *Vie d'amour*, contained doctrinal errors and further action should be taken.<sup>67</sup> In the meantime the Army of Mary, in the early spring of 2000, began construction of a multi-million-dollar center in Lac-Etchemin, Québec, called Spiri Maria, intended as the permanent spiritual center of the movement.<sup>68</sup>

On June 29, 2001, the Catholic Bishops of Canada issue a *Doctrinal Note of the Catholic Bishops of Canada concerning the Army of Mary*, prompted by the Army's continued defiance of the decisions of Cardinal Vachon. This *Note* states that "the Army of Mary's on-going activities and teachings pose dangers for the Catholic Church in Canada and to the faith of its members."<sup>69</sup> Citing the Creed of the Army of Mary found in the July 2000 issue of *Le Royaume*,<sup>70</sup> the bishops note:

The presumed private revelation upon which the Army of Mary bases its claim to legitimacy does in fact introduce new and erroneous doctrines

<sup>65</sup> See *Le Royaume*, no. 112 (Juillet-Août, 1996). On pages 8-9 and 24, there are photographs showing the large number of those present for the ordination itself and those gathered for the subsequent reception.

<sup>66</sup> See the chronological summary of the Sons of Mary found at: [http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/communaute/oe\\_comm-histoire\\_an.htm](http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/communaute/oe_comm-histoire_an.htm).

<sup>67</sup> Introvigne and Zoccatelli, "Army of Mary," 193-194.

<sup>68</sup> Gareau, "Le providentialisme d'hier à aujourd'hui," 358.

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.cccb.ca/site/Files/armyofmary.html> (accessed May 22, 2012).

<sup>70</sup> *Le Royaume*, no. 143 (July 1, 2000): 8.



about the Virgin Mary and her role in the economy of salvation history. It significantly adds to Christ's definitive revelation. It would have its followers believe, for example, that their "*Immaculate*" is co-eternal with the Triune God, and that although she was once the historical mother of Jesus, she is now "*reincarnated*" and "*dwells*" in the very person of the recipient of these presumed private revelations.<sup>71</sup>

As a result of these errors and the dangers they pose, the bishops exhorted "the members and sympathizers of the Army of Mary to take no further part in the activities of this group, whether this involves its publications or participation in prayer meetings and liturgical celebrations, including those notably at its Centre Spiri-Maria, located in Québec."<sup>72</sup>

In spite of these warnings by the Canadian bishops, some members of the faithful continued to support the Army of Mary. In light of this situation, Cardinal Marc Ouellet—who became Archbishop of Québec in 2002—issues a "Pastoral Message on the Army of Mary," dated April 4, 2005. In this message, the Cardinal reaffirms the 2001 warnings of the Bishops of Canada, and he stresses the "dangers for the faith" present in the teachings of the Army of Mary, especially the claim that Marie-Paule is "Co-Redeemer in person!—that is, the female equivalent of the Redeemer."<sup>73</sup> He also emphasizes the harms to the unity of the Church caused "by the constant refusal to accept the warnings from the Church's legitimate authority."<sup>74</sup>

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.cccb.ca/site/Files/armyofmary.html> (accessed May 22, 2012): italics in original.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., in the third paragraph.

<sup>73</sup> This Pastoral Letter was originally posted on the website of the Archdiocese of Québec. Copies of the letter can be located on various websites. In French, it can be found at: <http://nouvellejerusalem.forumactif.com/t3369-cardinal-marc-ouellet-concernant-l-armee-de-marie-eglise-de-jean>. In English, it can be found at: <http://www.royaume-amour-verite.org/en/dossiers/2005-04-04-pastoral-message.html> (accessed Jan. 16, 2014). The claim that Marie-Paule is the female equivalent of the Redeemer is found in Marc Bousquart, *Terre nouvelle homme nouveau* (Lac-Etchemin, Québec: Éditions du Nouveau monde, 2001), 119.

<sup>74</sup> Cardinal Marc Ouellet, *Pastoral Message on the Army of Mary*, April 4, 2005, available at: <http://www.royaume-amour-verite.org/en/dossiers/2005-04-04-pastoral-message.html> (accessed Jan. 16, 2014).



The Cardinal expresses concern about the movement's claim that "*In 1958, God had already identified the enemies of his work as being his priests and, as he later specified, his bishops.*"<sup>75</sup> He points out that this mindset harms the unity of Church because it allows the Army of Mary to present itself "as the continual victim of an underhanded persecution (*une sourde persécution*) on the part of Church authority, a persecution which would—at the same time and paradoxically—be the irrefutable proof of its divine origin."<sup>76</sup>

Several members of the Army of Mary respond quickly to Cardinal Ouellet's message. On April 6, 2005, Mrs. Sylvie-Payeur Raynauld, a writer and editor for *Le Royaume*, issues a statement calling the Cardinal's message "disappointing and unjust." Reaffirming her belief that Marie-Paule's mission is from God, she appeals to the words of Acts 4:19, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight for us to obey you rather than God."<sup>77</sup>

On April 10, 2005, Fr. Pierre Mastropietro writes a letter to "the Knights of Mary and Friends" on behalf of "the Community of Our Lady of All Peoples (*La Communauté de la Dame de tous les Peuples*)—the new name assumed by the Army of Mary for the association of its various "works."<sup>78</sup> In this letter, he states that Cardinal Ouellet's accusations against the Army of Mary "are totally false and unfounded." He cites a 1987 letter

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. (the italics are in the original).

<sup>76</sup> My translation from the French version of the Pastoral Letter noted above. This particular line is found in the second to the last paragraph before the conclusion, and in French it reads "comme la victim continuelle d'une sourde persécution de la part de l'autorité de l'Église, persécution qui serait en meme temps et paradoxalement la preuve irrefutable de son origine divine."

<sup>77</sup> Sylvie-Payeur Raynauld, "A Disappointing and Unjust Pastoral Message" (April 6, 2005), available at: <http://www.royaume-amour-verite.org/en/dossiers/pastoral-message/2005-04-06-our-response-to-the-pastoral-message.pdf> (accessed Jan. 16, 2014).

<sup>78</sup> Father Pierre Mastropietro's letter of April 10, 2005, to the Knights of Mary and friends can be found at: <http://www.royaume-amour-verite.org/en/dossiers/pastoral-message/2005-04-10-father-pierre-mastropietro-letter.pdf>. (accessed Jan. 16, 2014). The "works" of the Community of Our Lady of All Peoples are: the Army of Mary, the Family and Community of the Sons and Daughters of Mary, the Oblate-Patriots, and the Marialys Institute. See *Le Royaume*, no. 191 (Mai-Juin 2008), 2.



of Bishop Kabongo of Luebo, Congo, to Marie-Paule, allegedly instructing her to follow the orders she receives from God even if a bishop or a cardinal instructs her to the contrary. Fr. Mastropietro ends his letter by giving “thanks to God and the Immaculate for having prepared us, over so many years, through our Foundress, for all these events which are part and parcel of the mystery of the great combat being waged with a view to the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart.”<sup>79</sup>

On the same day as Cardinal Ouellet’s pastoral message (April 4, 2005), Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, S.J., of Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, writes a letter to the Sons of Mary. He sends this letter as the Pontifical Commissioner of the Sons of Mary in Canada, a position he assumed in 2003, succeeding Bishop Gilles Cazabon, O.M.I., of the Diocese of St. Jérôme, Québec, who had been appointed commissioner in 1997. The Holy See had then appointed a Pontifical Commissioner to help the Sons of Mary already ordained and those studying for the priesthood find their proper place within the Church.

Archbishop Prendergast asks the Sons of Mary “to sacrifice a certain legitimate freedom in order to adhere to the authoritative discernment of bishops.”<sup>80</sup> The Archbishop then mentions the devotion of the Sons of Mary to the Lady of All Peoples and the apparitions of Amsterdam based on the messages received between 1945 and 1959 by the Dutch visionary Ida Peerdeman (1905-1996). While acknowledging that devotion to the Lady of all Peoples “has a legitimate place in the Church,” he notes the problems involved with “certain ways of considering the [Amsterdam] apparitions . . . particularly certain formulations by Marc Bosquart which cause serious difficulties.”<sup>81</sup> He, therefore, asks the Sons of Mary “to stop, for the time being, all public manifestations to the Lady of All Peoples until a more opportune time when the questions of Marc

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., in the final paragraph.

<sup>80</sup> Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, S.J., *Letter to the Sons of Mary*, April 4, 2005, available at: <http://www.royaume-amour-verite.org/en/dossiers/pastoral-message/2005-04-04-archbishop-prendergast-letter.pdf> (accessed Jan. 18, 2014).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.



Bosquart's writings have been clarified."<sup>82</sup> He also asks them "to cease all public devotion at Spiri-Maria or elsewhere."<sup>83</sup>

Toward the end of his letter, Archbishop Prendergast rejects attempts by the Army of Mary to compare its own situation to the persecutions endured by St. Joan of Arc and St. Padre Pio at the hands of Church authority. He ends his letter by asking the Sons of Mary to follow the example of "this great Padre Pio who gave witness of an exemplary submission to his Superiors."<sup>84</sup>

On April 5, 2005, Sylvie Payeur-Raynauld responds with "A few thoughts following the reading of Archbishop Prendergast's letter of April 4."<sup>85</sup> She states that "now a new time is beginning," and God "is asking us to discern well into the hands of which authority we are placing our lives, and here I do not think it is to be the Pontifical Commissioner."<sup>86</sup> She claims that "in our time Mother Paul-Marie<sup>87</sup> obeys God and the Immaculate" in spite of the persecution of the authorities "who cannot understand the mystery that is developing in our time."<sup>88</sup>

In addition to his letter to the Sons of Mary of April 4, 2005, Archbishop Prendergast also writes a letter to Marie-Paule on April 25, 2005, addressing her as "Dear Daughter in Christ."<sup>89</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> See Sylvie Payeur-Raynauld's April 5, 2005, response to Archbishop Prendergast's letter of April: <http://www.royaume-amour-verite.org/en/dossiers/pastoral-message/2005-04-05-sylvie-payeur-thoughts.pdf> (accessed Jan. 17, 2014).

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> "Mother Paul-Marie (Mère Paul-Marie) is an alternate name used by Marie-Paule who became a Daughter of Mary after the death of her husband in 1997, and soon afterwards the Mother Superior of the community. According to P. J. Margry, Marie-Paule began publishing under the name "Mère Paul-Marie" in the 1980s; see Margry, "Mary's Reincarnation and the Banality of Salvation," 487, n. 1.

<sup>88</sup> See Sylvie Payeur-Raynauld's April 5, 2005, response to Archbishop Prendergast's letter of April 4.

<sup>89</sup> Archbishop Prendergast's Letter to Marie-Paule Giguère (April 25, 2005), available at: <http://www.royaume-amour-verite.org/en/dossiers/pastoral-message/2005-04-25-archbishop-prendergast-letter-to-mother-paul-marie.pdf> (accessed Jan. 18, 2014).



He reminds Marie-Paule of two prior requests of his: 1) that the Sons of Mary not celebrate the Eucharist in the presence of a picture of a host with Mary and Jesus on it, because this picture, placed above the main altar of the chapel of Spiri-Maria, “could cause simple faithful to think that Mary is substantially present in the Eucharist, which is not in accordance with the Catholic faith”<sup>90</sup>; and 2) that the Sons of Mary “stop, for the time being, all public manifestations to the Lady of All Peoples until a more opportune time when the question of Marc Bosquart’s writings will have been clarified.”<sup>91</sup> He tells Marie-Paule that she is “a woman of good will who has given everything and wants to give everything to the Church.”<sup>92</sup> He reminds her, though, of her need to submit to proper authority and to “to accept in a spirit of faith the recent message from Cardinal Ouellet.”<sup>93</sup>

Marie-Paule does not reply to Archbishop Prendergast’s letter. Her community explains that she prefers “to remain silent, leaving complete freedom of action to the members of the Community as well as members of the Work.”<sup>94</sup> Mrs. Sylvie Payeur-Raynauld, though, does reply, and she reasserts her confidence that the work of the Army of Mary is being divinely guided, and “if the temporal heads of this Church wish to rise up against this Work, Jesus and Mary—against whom these temporal heads are rising up—will lead it to other pastures where it will be able to grow according to the divine designs.”<sup>95</sup> She asks Archbishop Prendergast whether he has “the pretentiousness of believing himself above God who is quite obviously guiding this Work?”<sup>96</sup>

Archbishop Prendergast responds with another letter to Marie-Paule, dated June 4, 2005. He expresses his surprise to have read his letter of April 25, 2005, which was addressed

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> <http://www.royaume-amour-verite.org/en/dossiers/2005-04-4-pastoral-mes...> (accessed Jan. 18, 2014).

<sup>95</sup> *The Kingdom*, no. 114 (July-Aug. 2005): 12.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 13.



to her, posted on a website with a reply by a third person, Mrs. Sylvie Payeur-Raynaud. He notes in Mrs. Payeur-Raynaud "a will to defend 'at all costs' the work you have founded against anyone whomsoever who would dare to question anything whatsoever with regard to this work, to the point of even sacrificing truth."<sup>97</sup> He points out that in the history of the Church there have been similar rents from the unity of Church "in the name of God."<sup>98</sup> He asks Marie-Paule to respond to his letter before his June 17 departure for Rome "to hand over the last events concerning the Sons of Mary to the Holy See."<sup>99</sup>

Replies to the June 4 letter come not from Marie-Paule, but from Fr. Eric Roy, O.F.F.M., the Superior General of the Sons of Mary, and from Fr. Pierre Mastropietro, a member of the Sons of Mary. In his letter dated June 8, 2005, Fr. Roy states that he and other Sons of Mary will act according to their conscience in obedience to God and what God wants for His Church, which is "a broadening of the Church that will gather together all Peoples into one single community!"<sup>100</sup>

Fr. Mastropietro, in his reply of June 9, 2005, maintains that the key question is "whether or not we believe in the veracity of the Work of the Army of Mary and more particularly in the veracity of its Foundress."<sup>101</sup> He refers to the present time "as the hour of truth and of choice," and he asks for himself and all his confreres "the grace of fidelity to the charism of the Work and the Community to which we belong."<sup>102</sup>

In addition to his appeals to Marie-Paule, Archbishop Prendergast also writes a letter to Marc Bosquart, dated May 13, 2005, the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima. He informs him that the "spiritual privileges" he has ascribed to Mrs. Marie-Paule Giguère

<sup>97</sup> Archbishop Prendergast, Letter to Marie-Paule, June 4, 2005, in *The Kingdom*, no. 114 (July-Aug., 2005): 15.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> "Fr. Eric Roy's Reply to Archbishop Prendergast's Letter," June 8, 2005, in *The Kingdom*, no. 114 (July-Aug., 2005): 16.

<sup>101</sup> Fr. Pierre Mastropietro, "Reply to His Exc. Archbishop Prendergast," June 9, 2005, in *The Kingdom*, no. 114 (July-Aug., 2005): 17.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.



"are irreconcilable with the Catholic faith."<sup>103</sup> He tells Mr. Bosquart: "Your writings have resulted in an ambiguity that clouds the ministry of the Sons of Mary who acknowledge that they are closely bound to this Work."<sup>104</sup> Drawing from articles of Bosquart published in *Le Royaume*, the Archbishop notes serious problems related to: 1) a different vision of God because of the affirmation that the Immaculate is "co-eternal with God" and "the divine Spouse of God"; 2) an anthropological difference because of the affirmation that the Immaculate "became incarnate in Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, and that She became reincarnate in Marie-Paule with a view to the Co-Redemption of humanity"; 3) "a different way of understanding the creation of the world" because of the belief that "God-Creator fecundated the Immaculate Co-Creator, and the latter gave birth to a universe constituted of three 'worlds' or 'degrees': the physical world, the psychic world and the spiritual world (from the lowest to the highest)"; and a different theology of the Eucharist, because of the affirmation that the Immaculate "joins up with the 'Christ-Man' in the Eucharist" and suggestions that Mrs. Giguère is present in the Eucharist "in the same manner as Christ or at least in a similar manner."<sup>105</sup> At the conclusion of his letter, Archbishop Prendergast asks Mr. Bosquart to subscribe to a series of dogmatic statements drawn up by "a bishop-theologian who is well informed of the situation."<sup>106</sup>

Marc Bosquart replies to Archbishop Prendergast in a letter dated May 22, 2005.<sup>107</sup> He gives an account of how he became involved with Marie-Paule and how in the spring of 1984—when he and his wife were expecting their second child—a

<sup>103</sup> Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, S.J., "Letter to Marc Bosquart," May 13, 2005, available at: <http://www.royaume-amour-verite.org/en/dossiers/pastoral-message/2005-05-1-archbishop-prendergast-letter-to-marc-bosquart.pdf> (accessed Jan. 18, 2014).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Marc Bosquart, "Reply to His Exc. Archbishop Prendergast," May 22, 2005, available at: <http://www.royaume-amour-verite.org/en/dossiers/pastoral-message/2005-05-22-marc-bosquart-reply-to-archbishop-prendergast.pdf> (accessed Jan. 18, 2014).



formula, an "equation" came to him that proved to be decisive: "*Marie-Paule is to Mary what Jesus Christ is to God the Father.*"<sup>108</sup> It is this formula that has led to his other insights, such as: "the Reincarnation of the Immaculate in Marie-Paule"; that Mary-Immaculate "was more than just a simple woman and that, being divine, She shares with God certain 'divine attributes'"; the "Trinity of the Immaculate" that is closely associated and complementary to the Divine Trinity; the union of God and "the Divine Immaculate" constitutes what can be referred to as a Divine Couple: "the idea that the Divine Couple, associated with the reality of the Divine Trinity and the reality of the Trinity of the Immaculate, leads to conceptualizing the Divinity in the form of a Quinternity"; and, in this context, "Marie-Paule as the Co-Redemptrix . . . *the feminine equivalent of the Redeemer*" who participates in "the '*new Eucharist of the Kingdom*' in the same manner as Jesus Christ."<sup>109</sup>

Bosquart refers to himself as "a simple messenger" who has neither the right to declare false what he must transmit nor the authority to declare it to be true. He openly tells the Archbishop: "... you subordinate God to the Catholicism you represent . . . and, because in your eyes there is no place for Marie-Paule within the very 'narrow' Catholicism that dominates today, you have declared that it is impossible for her to speak in God's name." Bosquart also resists the idea that "*one cannot expect any new doctrinal revelation.*"<sup>110</sup> To this, he asks: "How can one claim that God would not have anything more to say to humanity? Is that not placing oneself above God?" In place of the dogmatic statements the Archbishop asked him to affirm, Bosquart presents his own dogmatic statements, among which is: "I believe that God is absolutely free to reveal to us whatever He wishes, as He wishes, when He wishes." This would seem to provide a dogmatic basis for his claim that God is now revealing new truths for humanity through Marie-Paule.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. Italics in the original.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. The italics and the underlining are in the original.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. Italics in original.



On May 25, 2005—three days after Marc Bosquart’s reply to Archbishop Prendergast—Bishop Paul-André Durocher, the Bishop of Alexandria-Cornwall, Ontario, issues a pastoral letter regarding the Army of Mary and the Sons of Mary in his diocese. He acknowledges good points about the movement, such as “Marian devotion, love of the Eucharist, [and] respect for the priesthood,” and he says: “My feeling is that the great majority of people who gravitate around the Army of Mary are attracted by these aspects and have found therein nourishment for their faith.”<sup>111</sup> Nevertheless, he points out that “members of the Army of Mary have developed a series of teachings that raise questions,” and he then goes on to enumerate the main problems, some of which had been previously condemned by a doctrinal note of the Bishops of Canada.<sup>112</sup> Because of these dangers, he asks the four priests of the Sons of Mary in his Diocese to sign a document “professing their Catholic faith, rejecting the heretical teachings of Marc Bosquart and recognizing the doctrinal note of the Canadian Catholic Bishops.”<sup>113</sup> Only one of the four priests complies with these demands. He becomes incardinated into the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall while the other three depart.

The efforts of Cardinal Ouellet, Archbishop Prendergast, and Bishop Durocher, during the spring of 2005, to reconcile the Sons of Mary and the other associates of the Army of Mary with the Catholic Church have only limited success.<sup>114</sup> The core group attached to Marie-Paule, including Marc Bosquart, Fr. Eric Roy, and Fr. Pierre Mastropietro, preferred fidelity to Marie-Paul than to the Catholic bishops of Canada and the Holy See. The stage was being set for the creation of a new

<sup>111</sup> Pastoral Letter from Bishop Paul-André Durocher regarding “Les Fils de Marie,” May 25, 2005, available at: <http://www.royaume-amour-verite.org/en/dossiers/pastoral-message/2005-05-25-pastoral-letter-from-bishop-paul-andredurocher.html> (accessed Jan. 20, 2014).

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.; e.g., Fr. Éric Robichaud, at the request of Bishop Durocher, decided to discontinue his commitment to the Army of Mary and seek incardination in the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, Ontario.



Church, *L'Église de Jean*—the Church of John—which would be seen as “the renewed Church of Peter” (*L'Église renouvelée de Pierre*), the Church led by the Roman Pontiff.<sup>115</sup>

Members of the Army claim that the establishment of the Church of John had been prophesied by various events and mystical signs, especially those given to Marie-Paule between February 2, 2000 and February 28, 2006.<sup>116</sup> Sylvie Payeur-Raynauld links the Church of John to the “terrestrial kingdom” of the Book of Revelation as well as to insights of mystical writers such as St. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), Nicholas Berdyaev (1874-1948), and Adrienne von Speyr (1902-1967).<sup>117</sup> Mark Bosquart argues that the resistance of the Church of Peter to the Church of John is analogous to the resistance of the Jews to the early Christians.<sup>118</sup> Members of the Army of Mary also see the Church of John as the fulfillment of the prophecy of St. Malachy (1094-1148) concerning “Peter the Roman” assuming the leadership of the “new Rome.”<sup>119</sup> They note that the name of Fr. Pierre Mastropietro contains the name of Peter twice, “Pierre” in French and “Pietro” in Italian.<sup>120</sup>

The establishment of the Church of John takes place during a concelebrated Mass in the chapel of Spiri-Maria on

<sup>115</sup> See “Vers l'Église de Jean,” *Le Royaume*, no. 181 (Sept.-Oct., 2006): 6; available at: [http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/actualites-royaume/LR-images/LR\\_181\\_Eglise%20de%20Jean\\_reportage.pdf](http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/actualites-royaume/LR-images/LR_181_Eglise%20de%20Jean_reportage.pdf) (accessed Jan. 21, 2014).

<sup>116</sup> See Abbé Marcel Larouche, “Realité de L'Église de Jean,” *Le Royaume*, no. 201 (Jan.-Fév., 2010): 1; available at: <http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/actualites-royaume/fr/201-realite-de-l-eglise-de-jean.html> (accessed Jan. 20, 2014).

<sup>117</sup> See Sylvie Payeur-Raynauld, “L'Église de Pierre et L'Église de Jean, deux visages de L'Église du Christ,” *Le Royaume*, no. 180 (Juillet-Août, 2006); available at: [http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/actualites-royaume/LR-images/LR\\_180\\_Payeur\\_Sylvie.pdf](http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/actualites-royaume/LR-images/LR_180_Payeur_Sylvie.pdf) (accessed Jan. 22, 2014).

<sup>118</sup> Marc Bosquart, “2000 ans plus tard: même attitude et même incompréhension,” *Le Royaume*, no. 186 (Juillet-Août, 2007); available at: [http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/actualites-royaume/LR-images/LR\\_186\\_Bosquart\\_Marc.pdf](http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/actualites-royaume/LR-images/LR_186_Bosquart_Marc.pdf) (accessed Jan. 22, 2014).

<sup>119</sup> Abbé Marcel Larouche, “L'identité de Pierre le Romain—Confirmation prophétique,” *Le Royaume*, no. 205 (Sept.-Oct., 2010); available at: <http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/actualites-royaume/fr/205-le-royaume-sommaire.html> (accessed Jan. 20, 2014).

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.



September 17, 2006. The high point of the ceremony is the nomination and enthronement (*intronisation*) of Fr. Pierre Mastropietro as the “Father of the Church of John” (*Père de L’Église de Jean*) by *le Père marial*, Fr. Victor Rizzi. The Mass is concelebrated by thirty-one priests and over one thousand people are in attendance.<sup>121</sup> After his formal installation as the Father of the Church of John, Fr. Pierre begins to carry out actions reserved only to bishops or to popes. On January 7, 2007, he ordains five Sons of Mary to the diaconate, even though he has never been consecrated a bishop.<sup>122</sup> On May 31, 2007, Marie-Paule is wheeled into the chapel of Spirit-Maria, and she rises to crown Fr. Pierre with a tiara with images representing “the five Persons of the Quinternity: the true Holy Spirit (on the front), the Father and the Son (to the right), and the Immaculate Mary and the Lady of All Peoples (to the left).<sup>123</sup> Fr. Pierre, acting now it seems with the authority of the universal shepherd of the Church, declares the dogma of Mary, Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate. He does so in these words:

In the name of the eternal God the Father; in the name of the Immaculate-Mother, his divine Spouse; in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of the Father and Mary-Immaculate; in the name of Marie-Paule, daughter of the Father “*in the same way as the Son*” (*au même titre que le Fils*), and Daughter of the Immaculate, reincarnated in her in order to accomplish in Her, here, now, the designs of God on earth; in the name of the Spirit of Holiness, of Light and Truth, who is the ultimate expression of the Total Divinity, revealed today in all His Glory to humanity, We proceed on this 31st of May in the year 2007, of the birth of the Redeemer, to the solemn promulgation of the dogma of Mary, Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, and

<sup>121</sup> *Le Royaume*, no. 181 (Sept.-Oct., 2006): 15; available at: [http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/actualites-royaume/LR-images/LR\\_181\\_Eglise%20de%20Jean\\_reportage.pdf](http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/actualites-royaume/LR-images/LR_181_Eglise%20de%20Jean_reportage.pdf) (accessed Jan. 22, 2014).

<sup>122</sup> See the chronological summary of the Sons of Mary available at: [http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/oeuvres/OE\\_oeuvres-hist\\_FR.htm](http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/oeuvres/OE_oeuvres-hist_FR.htm) (accessed Jan. 18, 2014).

<sup>123</sup> *Le Royaume*, no. 185 (Mai-Juin, 2007): 10; available at: [http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/actualites-royaume/LR-images/LR\\_185\\_Payeur\\_Sylvie\\_reportage.pdf](http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/actualites-royaume/LR-images/LR_185_Payeur_Sylvie_reportage.pdf) (accessed Jan. 20, 2014).



Advocate, in conformity to the will of the Lady of All Peoples, expressed in all obviousness and clarity at the time of her manifestations at Amsterdam in the middle of the last century.<sup>124</sup>

The definition continues with support for the dogma combining references to Church councils with references to messages of the Lady of All Peoples given at Amsterdam. It ends with this final declaration:

Today, the 31st of May of the year 2007 of the Incarnation, we proclaim Mary, present in Marie-Paule, and therefore, Marie-Paule herself, **Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate** under the new title **Lady of All Peoples**, and I invite all the faithful of the Church of John, the first-fruits of the Kingdom, to venerate Her under this title forever.<sup>125</sup>

On June 1, 2007, the day after the solemn definition, Fr. Pierre ordains six Sons of Mary to the priesthood.<sup>126</sup> On June 3, 2007, he canonizes Raoul Auclair a saint.<sup>127</sup>

The Magisterium responds quickly and decisively to these acts. Learning of the invalid diaconal ordinations, on March 25, 2007, Archbishop Prendergast establishes May 31, 2007, as the date by which the Sons of Mary are “required to make known their intentions by recanting errors and schismatic acts, and promising obedience to the Holy See, or face appropriate canonical sanctions.”<sup>128</sup> Cardinal Ouellet, on March 26, 2007, issues a Declaration concerning the statutes and activities of “the Community of the Lady of all Nations” better known as “the Army of Mary.”<sup>129</sup> He states that “those responsible for the

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 7 (my translation from the French).

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 9: my translation of the French which reads: “Aujourd’hui, 31 mai de l’an 2007 de l’Incarnation, nous proclamons Marie, présente en Marie-Paule, et donc Marie-Paule Elle-même, **Co-Rédemptrice, Médiatrice et Avocate** sous le titre nouveau de **Dame de Tous les Peuples** et j’invite tous les fidèles de l’Église de Jean, prémices du Royaume à La vénérer sous ce titre à jamais” (bold in original).

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 11-15.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 18-20.

<sup>128</sup> See “Excommunication of ‘The Community of the Lady of all Nations,’” in *Enchiridion Vaticanum 24, Documenti ufficiali della Santa Sede 2007* (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, 2009), 772, n. 1138.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 771-772, n. 1137.



'Army of Mary' have excluded themselves from the communion of the Catholic Church."<sup>130</sup>

On July 11, 2007, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issues a "declaration" concerning the movement "The Community of the Lady of All Nations" and its affiliated groups, including "the Army of Mary." It declares that the diaconal and presbyteral ordinations performed by Father Jean-Pierre Mastropietro were invalid. Moreover, it states that Fr. Mastropietro has incurred an automatic excommunication along with those who claim to have been ordained by him.<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, it makes clear that "all members of the above-mentioned Movement and of the works associated with it who, despite the warnings of the Cardinal Archbishop of Québec on March 26 2007, have participated in these schismatic acts and have determined to associate with said Movement, are in schism and, therefore, they have incurred an excommunication *latae sententiae*."<sup>132</sup> Finally, it declares that "the doctrine promoted by the Movement 'Community of the Lady of All Nations,' better known as 'The Army of Mary,' is heretical," and "whoever knowingly and deliberately embraces this doctrine incurs an excommunication *latae sententiae* due to heresy (CIC can. 1364)."<sup>133</sup>

The July 11, 2007, Declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith results in some further actions. On September 18, 2007, Bishop J. M. Punt of Haarlem-Amsterdam issues a notice dissociating veneration of Mary as the Lady of All Peoples from the Army of Mary.<sup>134</sup> The Army of Mary had linked itself with devotion to Our Lady of All Peoples, and the Army had claimed that the Amsterdam visionary, Ida Peerdeman, had confirmed Marie-Paule's mission. Bishop Punt notes that, according to key witnesses, Peerdeman did in fact meet

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 772.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 772, nn. 1139-1141 (in the original English) and 773 (in an Italian translation).

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 772-775, n. 1142.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 774, n. 1143 (in English), 775 (in Italian).

<sup>134</sup> The letter can be found in Dutch, English, and other languages at: <http://www.de-vrouwe.info/en/notice-regarding-the-qarmy-of-maryq-2007> (accessed Jan. 18, 2014).



Marie-Paule Giguère, but Ms. Peerdeman “clearly distanced herself from her” and “in neither the archives of the Lady of All Nations nor those of the diocese is to be found any document which would confirm or indicate the claim made by Ms. Giguère.”<sup>135</sup> It is also pointed out that Bishop Punt had previously written to Archbishop Ouellet in 2004, strictly rejecting “*any connection between the veneration of the Lady of All Nations and the movement of Marie-Paule Giguère.*”<sup>136</sup>

On September 26, 2007, Msgr. J. Gaston Hebert, the administrator of the Diocese of Little Rock, Arkansas, issues a decree imposing excommunication on six sisters from the Monastery of Our Lady of Refuge in Hot Springs, Arkansas, for their obstinate association with the Army of Mary. This was the culmination of a process begun by Most Rev. James Peter Sartain, the Bishop of Little Rock from January 4, 2000 until March 6, 2006, who had tried in vain to have these sisters (three of whom were siblings) dissociate from the Army of Mary.<sup>137</sup>

### **The Army of Mary after 2007: Subsequent Developments**

After the events of 2007, many former associates of the Army of Mary separated themselves from the group. It is estimated, though, that about 5,000 still remain.<sup>138</sup> The headquarters of the Army of Mary or the Community of Our Lady of All Peoples (*la Communaauté de la Dame de tous les Peuples*) still remains the Spiri-Maria Center in Lac-Etchemin, Québec. Since the excommunications of 2007, some key events have occurred. On May 31, 2008, Marie-Paule was crowned the “Souverain of the Entire Earth.”<sup>139</sup> She subsequently named

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.; italics in original.

<sup>137</sup> Malea Hargett, “Six Arkansas Nuns Excommunicated for Supporting Heresy,” *Arkansas Catholic*, October 7, 2007; available at: <http://www.arkanas-catholic.org/article.php?id=1013> (accessed May 1, 2012).

<sup>138</sup> Introvigne and Zoccatelli, “Army of Mary,” 194.

<sup>139</sup> See the article on L’Armée de Marie on the website of CESNUR, Centro Studi sulle Nuove Religioni (Center for the Study of New Religions) under “Le religioni in Italia: La Chiesa Cattolica e suoi scismi”; available at: [http://www.cesnur.org/religioni\\_italia/c/cattolicesmo\\_07.htm](http://www.cesnur.org/religioni_italia/c/cattolicesmo_07.htm) (accessed Jan. 18, 2014).



twelve new apostles for the Church of John.<sup>140</sup> On June 1, 2008, Father Pierre (or Jean-Pierre) Mastropietro—acting as the universal shepherd of the Church of John—canonized Fr. Phillipe Roy (1916-1988), who was the first superior or *Père marial* of the movement, as St. Philippe-Marie.<sup>141</sup> On May 31 of 2009, he canonized Marie-Paule<sup>142</sup>—even though she is still alive—and, on May 31, 2010, he named her “Doctor of the Church” because of the spiritual doctrine contained in her *Vie d’Amour*.<sup>143</sup>

On May 31, 2010, in a solemn ceremony, Marc Bosquart is anointed as Marc-André I, the King of the Church, apparently enjoying a type of parallel authority alongside Fr. Pierre Mastropietro, the “Father of the Church of John.”<sup>144</sup> On May 31, 2012, Bosquart, speaking as Marc-André I, solemnly declares that “Marie-Paule is God” (*Marie-Paule est Dieu*).<sup>145</sup> On June 3, 2012, a ceremony takes place in the chapel of Spiri-Marie during which thirteen signboards (*écriteaux*) are held up by thirteen young people “marking the thirteen principal stages of the revelation of the Mystery of Marie-Paule,” with the final one stating: “*Marie-Paule est Dieu*”<sup>146</sup> Bosquart later explains that “Marie-Paule, the Co-Redemptrix, has been mysteriously configured to Jesus Christ” and “is living the end of her passion in the hollow of her bed of pain.”<sup>147</sup> On September 14, 2012, on the occasion of Marie-Paule’s ninety-first birthday, Bosquart issues a tribute to her entitled, “the homage of our faith”

<sup>140</sup> See [http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/oeuvres/OE\\_oeuvres-hist\\_FR.htm](http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/oeuvres/OE_oeuvres-hist_FR.htm) (accessed Jan. 22, 2014).

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> See CENSUR article on L’Armée de Marie, available at: [http://www.cesnur.org/religioni\\_italia/c/cattolicesmo\\_07.htm](http://www.cesnur.org/religioni_italia/c/cattolicesmo_07.htm) (accessed Jan. 18, 2014).

<sup>145</sup> Marc Bosquart, “De l’un à l’autre écriteau,” *Le Royaume*, no. 222 (Juillet-Août 2013); available at: <http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/actualites-royaume/fr/222-ecriteau.html> (accessed Jan. 21, 2014).

<sup>146</sup> Ibid. In this issue of *Le Royaume*, there is a photo of the thirteen young people holding up the signboards. Above the photo there is a circle with a crown at the top and within it the words in upper case: “2012 MARIE-PAULE EST DIEU.”

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.



(*l'hommage de notre foi*). In this homage, he tells Marie-Paule that "You are henceforth venerated as equal to God" (*Tu es désormais vénérée à l'égal de Dieu*).<sup>148</sup>

### Concluding Reflections

The story of the Army of Mary can be evaluated in several ways. With respect to the appeal of this movement, some, as we have seen, believe that the Army of Mary initially attracted traditional-minded Catholics in Québec disturbed by the rapid secularization of their province and the perceived liberalization of the Catholic Church. It spread to Catholics with similar perceptions in the USA, Europe, and the Caribbean. At least on the surface, the movement embodied familiar expressions of traditional Catholic piety—Eucharistic adoration, Marian devotion, liturgical processions, women religious in white habits, and reverence for priests. There is also the appeal of what Introvigne calls "Marian apocalypticism," which provides a privileged sense of being in the middle of the unfolding of divine interventions in salvation history. Others say the Army of Mary is a case study of how a charismatic individual, such as Marie-Paule, can become the focus of a distorted cult-like group. All of these explanations seem worthy of consideration.

From a theological perspective, the rise and fall of the Army of Mary can be evaluated in light of the criteria for discerning private revelations. On February 25, 1978, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) issued a document, *Norms regarding the Manner of Proceeding in the Discernment of Presumed Apparitions or Revelations*. These *Norms*, which Paul VI approved, were sent to Bishops but were never officially published. Translations of the document, however, made their way into the public domain over the years. In light of this, the CDF decided, in 2012, to publish the *Norms* in principal languages to make them available to the public, together with

<sup>148</sup> Marc Bosquart, "L'hommage de notre foi," *Le Royaume*, no. 217 (Sept.-Oct., 2012): 1; available at: <http://www.communaute-dame.qc.ca/actualites-royaume/fr/217-hommage-de-notre-foi.html> (accessed Jan. 20, 2014).



a December 14, 2011, preface by Cardinal William Levada, the Prefect of the Congregation.<sup>149</sup>

In terms of the criteria provided in these *Norms*, it is easy to see why the Canadian bishops, as well as the CDF, acted as they did with regard to the Army of Mary. The *Norms* highlight the importance of “true theological and spiritual doctrine immune from error” as one of the positive criteria in discerning private revelations. In this regard, the doctrines proposed by the Army of Mary—the co-eternal status of “the Immaculate,” the “Quinternity” of Divine Persons, Marie-Paule as the reincarnation of the Immaculate Mary, etc.—are not examples of “true theological and spiritual doctrine immune from error.” Moreover, the attempts of members of the Army of Mary to explain these doctrines were judged as inadequate by proper magisterial authority. The *Norms* also propose among the positive criteria the “personal qualities of the subject or subjects” including “sincerity and habitual docility towards Ecclesiastical Authority.” In this regard, it is clear that the key leaders of the Army of Mary have resisted proper ecclesiastical authority because they were (and are) convinced that their movement is being divinely guided. Thus, they have argued that Church authorities are not above the authority of God.

The final theological point that needs to be stressed is that the members of the Army of Mary fail to grasp the distinction between private and public revelation. This is most apparent in the exchanges between Archbishop Prendergast and the apologists for the Army of Mary, especially Marc Bosquart and Mrs. Sylvie Payeur-Raynauld. It is also manifest in Fr. Pierre Mastropietro’s “solemn promulgation” of Mary as Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate, which appeals to private revelations of Amsterdam (of Our Lady of All Peoples) for support. Even if these apparitions of Amsterdam were approved by the local

<sup>149</sup> The *Norms* can be found on the Vatican website under the disciplinary documents of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19780225\\_norme-apparizioni\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19780225_norme-apparizioni_en.html) (accessed Jan. 22, 2014).



bishop,<sup>150</sup> they still remain on the level of private revelations not public, and they do not belong to “the deposit of faith.”<sup>151</sup> According to Catholic teaching, “no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of Our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>152</sup>

The story of the Army of Mary provides a vivid example of the need to avoid all false exaggeration (*omni falsa superlacione*)<sup>153</sup> with regard to Marian devotion and doctrine. We need not pass judgment on the inner sincerity of Marie-Paule Giguère and the other followers of the movement. It seems, though, absolutely clear, that the Magisterium of the Church acted with justice and prudence in condemning the Army of Mary. What will happen when Marie-Paule, who has been proclaimed “God,” passes from her earthly life remains to be seen.

<sup>150</sup> On May 31, 2002, Bishop Josef Maria Punt of Haarlem-Amsterdam issued a statement expressing his conclusion that the apparitions of “Our Lady of All Nations,” given to the visionary Ida Peerdeman between 1945 and 1959, “consist of supernatural origin.” See statement at: <http://www.de-vrouwe.info/en/approbation-of-the-apparitions> (accessed May 3, 2012). He made it clear, though, that “private revelations are never binding on the conscience of the faithful,” citing the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 67. Years earlier, on May 25, 1974, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith had published a “Notification” confirming the earlier judgments of the Bishop of Haarlem (in 1956 and 1957) that he “found no evidence of the supernatural nature of the apparitions.” This Notification can be found at: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_1974\\_0525\\_signora-amsterdam\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_1974_0525_signora-amsterdam_en.html) (accessed Jan. 20, 2014). In his *Pastoral Message on the Army of Mary* of April 4, 2005, Cardinal Ouellet cites a letter of Cardinal Ratzinger of February 8, 2005, stating that “the negative judgment already expressed in the 1974 Notification is still valid. In July of 2005, the CDF asks that the words “who once was Mary” be changed to “the Blessed Virgin Mary” in the prayer of the Lady of All Nations. See <http://www.de-vrouwe.info/en/change-by-the-congregation-for-the-faith-2006> (accessed Jan. 20, 2014).

<sup>151</sup> See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1997), no. 67.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., no. 66, citing Vatican II’s *Dei Verbum*, 4.

<sup>153</sup> Vatican II, *Lumen gentium*, no. 67.