

I — History of the Cause

Eighty-nine years elapsed between the death of the Servant of God Mother Mary St. Ignatius (3rd February 1837) and the first session of the Informative Process (16th October 1926) relative to her beatification and canonisation. This remarkable delay, even though it is common in Historical Causes, needs some explanation. Above all one needs to recognize that the life of the Servant of God was neither enriched by sudden illuminating graces nor by extraordinary actions. In addition, her work as Foundress remained, during her life, geographically limited to the two departments of Rhone and Haute-Loire, and definitively organized in four communities (two of which, Belleville 1821-35, and Monistrol 1823-26, were closed after a few years) and had not such immediate or resounding success as to attract the attention and admiration of her contemporaries. One must also add that Mother Mary St. Ignatius was always personally not only a great lover of the saying *Love to be unknown and counted as nothing*, but she so impressed this tendency towards silence and self-effacement on the spirituality of her Congregation, that the religious refrained entirely from giving any publicity to the example and virtues of their Sisters, justifying this attitude by appealing to a traditional line of spirituality which went back to their Foundress herself. Even in 1899 the Superioress General of the Congregation would not allow the publication of brief biographical accounts of a religious who died in the odour of sanctity, because: "It is better for us to preserve the customs which our first Mothers left us, and not give publicity to the memories of our Mothers and Sisters." (Doc. XXII, 2, p. 450).

This mentality and this reserve of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, undoubtedly somewhat excessive, explain in some way the lack of a contemporary biography of the Servant of God, and also the delay in beginning preparatory work in view of a possible glorification.

However, the memory of the Foundress was always held in veneration within the Congregation, and the memory of her virtues remained a stimulus to imitate her and an encouragement to continue the work she had begun, as is documented in the third part of the *Positio*. Already in 1854 a *Memorial* was compiled on the history of the Congregation, with short biographical accounts of the Foundress (Doc. XXIII, p. 454). From 1867, a collection was begun of notes, anecdotes and biographical reminiscences, doubtless with a view to

preparing a biography, or keeping alive among the Sisters who had not had the good fortune to know her, the memory and example of the Servant of God (Doc. XXVI, p. 492). In the years that followed, historical facts and spiritual memories were collected until in 1896 the *Histoire de la Congregation*, containing the testimonies, more or less direct, of 56 religious who had lived for some time with our Mother Foundress, was published in Lyon (Doc. XXVII, p. 521). It is quite certain that this publication contributed much to deepening the knowledge of the virtues of the Servant of God and to spreading admiration for her life and work. However, twenty more years elapsed before serious thought was given to the possibility of commencing the process of beatification, but little by little the way was being prepared.

As we know from the registers kept in the archives of the Congregation, in the General Chapter celebrated in Rome in 1908, in various sessions, the virtues of the first Mothers of the Congregation were spoken of, with special insistence on the example of the Foundress. The same subject was discussed in the Chapter of 1913, and this time, as in the following Chapter of 1919, the Capitulars discussed whether it was opportune to take the initial steps necessary for the institution of the Diocesan Process. However, no concrete decision was taken about it.

By this time the wider and deeper knowledge of the virtues of the Servant of God, both within and outside the Congregation, made the superiors understand that there was a valid and solid basis for promoting the Cause of Beatification. It was decided to do so in 1923. Fr. Louis Copere, a Marist, was appointed Postulator. Whilst the necessary documentation was being built up, a new General Chapter, that of 1925, was celebrated, and two very important decisions were taken regarding the Cause:

1. Mother Eufemia (Rosa Mandri) was appointed to help the Postulator, in order to speed up the preparatory work for the Process.
2. The request was made for the necessary permissions to transfer the mortal remains of the Servant of God from Lyon to Rome.

The second proposal was not accepted, and the body remained in the cemetery of Lyon.

On the 11th February 1926, the Postulator of the Cause appointed a vice-postulator, Fr. Pietro Pitre, who in his turn, on the 11th October of the same year, presented to Cardinal Maurin, Archbishop of Lyon,

the request for the institution of the Informative Process. On the 14th October 1926, the Cardinal issued the relative rescript (c.f. *Public Copy*, pp. 7-10), and the Process was formally opened on the 16th October. It ended on the 7th September 1928, and was delivered to the Sacred Congregation by the new Postulator Fr. Carlo Miccinelli S.J. The Process was opened on the 20th November that same year.

In the following month of May, 1929, the lawyer, L. Toeschi, after having examined the *Public Copy*, said that it was necessary to complete the information and strengthen it with other documentary evidence. Consequently, on the 25th October, 1930, the Sacred Congregation authorized an Additional Process. This took place in Lyon from the 24th November 1930 to the 30th June 1933. Four Rogatory Processes, held respectively in Barcelona (1st to 13th December 1930), Madrid (22nd to the 26th December, 1930), Valencia (30th March to the 14th April, 1931), and Buenos Aires (1931), were included in it, as well as fifteen written reports and a list of 106 favours attributed to the intercession of the Servant of God.

In the meantime, to be exact, on the 6th February 1930, the Supreme Pontiff published the *Motu Proprio Gia da Qualche Tempo*, by which he instituted the Historical Section, and the Cause of the Servant of God, Mother Mary St. Ignatius, had now to be dealt with according to the norms of the aforesaid *Motu Proprio*.

II — The Work of the Historical Section

The Informative Process of Lyon was opened by the Sacred Congregation of Rites on the 30th October 1933, and the preparation of the *Positio Super Introductione Causae et Virtutibus* was entrusted to the Historical Section. On the 1st October, 1935, the Postulator, Fr. Miccinelli, presented the *Copia Publico* to Fr. Ferdinando Antonelli, the Relator General who succeeded Dom. Enrico Quentin (14th February 1935) and who is today the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation.

Mother Eufemia, principal collaborator of the Historical Section of the Cause, died in Rome on the 18th April, 1936. That same year saw the beginning of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), and then came the Second World War (1939-1945). These events had a notable influence on the progress of the preparatory studies. The Holy Office granted the

nihil obst at for the introduction of the Cause on November 12th, 1940.

Before commencing the writing of the *Positio*, the documentation that had been collected, and which was in the possession of the Historical Section, was examined by two Historical Consultors. They recognized that the documents were insufficient, but that they offered a good foundation on which the *Positio* could be drawn up, in case new historical research and re-examination of the documentation collected for the Cause should clarify some points less well known, or insufficiently documented. Therefore it was necessary to carry out more research in archives. This work was entrusted to Fr. Bernardino Llorca, S.J., professor of Church History at the Pontifical University of Salamanca, who succeeded in completing the documentation with some important pieces of work. But his own work at the University did not leave him time to follow the work up with sufficient regularity. Fortunately in 1960 the Historical Section was able to give him, as collaborator, Mother Gabriela Maria (Clotilde Montesinos), a religious of Jesus and Mary who, having been occupied for several years with the study of the history of the Congregation, had a good knowledge of the documentation, both literary and in archives.

Towards the end of 1961 a first outline of work was presented. Mgr Amato Pietro Frutaz, Relator General from the 21st November 1959, and at present Under-Secretary for the Causes of Saints, did not find it completely satisfactory, and, under the direction of the Historical Section, Mother Gabriela Maria undertook more research in the archives of Lyon, Monistrol, Belleville, Le Puy and Rome, through which she succeeded in enriching the documentation in a notable way, thanks to the efficient collaboration of Rene Lecour, Director of the Departmental Archives of Rhone, of Henri Hours, Archivist of the Municipality of Lyon, and of Fr. J. Permezal, Superior of the "Institution des Chartreux". At the same time, other specialists studied particular problems, such as Canon J. Jomand, Archivist of the Archdiocese of Lyon, who worked on questions regarding the relations of the Servant of God with the Sisters of St. Joseph, and Dom. Mario Pinzuti, Director of the Institute for the Restoration of Books, who applied his calligraphic expertise to the Registers of the Congregation, which were among the principal sources of corroboration, indicating the historical situation of some facts, and resolving certain specific difficulties.