



A painting of the Holy Family in the Sacristy of the Mission of St. Francis Xavier at Caughnawaga, P.Q.

This lady, whose husband was twice the Governor of New France, had the idea, while I was in Montreal, of looking for some powerful though informal means of reforming Christian family life on the model of the Holy Family of the Word Incarnate by instituting a society or confraternity where people could learn, even in the outside world, how to imitate Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. As for myself, for fourteen years and more, I had entertained ardent and just about continual desires that Mary the Divine, would have a great quantity of spiritual and adopted children to console her for the sufferings that the loss of her Jesus had caused her. Then the first thought I had on this subject came to me as I meditated upon the infinite sorrow of Mary's compassion at the death of her Son and, since this time, I have held converse in my prayers on few other subjects than to entreat the Holy Spirit to give His most worthy Spouse as many devoted children as possible to compensate for the respect, the love, and the assistance that the Savior Himself would have rendered her, if death had not taken away for three days this much beloved Son.

Father Chaumonot's Prayer

"What!" I often said to God, "you really promised Abraham a posterity more numerous than the stars and the grains of sand of the sea because he accepted to sacrifice his dear Isaac at the first command he received from you, and even then he was not obliged to carry it out. You likewise were satisfied to see him struggle for three days only with his paternal tenderness for his son; but here we have quite another martyrdom! As thirty years outnumber three days, as Mary outshines Abraham, as Jesus outshines Isaac, and as truth prevails over its foreshadowing, so does the Virgin Mother's interior struggle prevail over this patriarch's trouble. I entreat you then, O Holy Spirit, to give more spiritual children to Mary than you gave Abraham children of his own flesh and blood!"

I experienced very great consolation in requesting for all sorts of motives Divine Love to grant my request, and so much so that I never became tired of meditating on this topic, and I then had no other desire to request anything else of God. Once, as I was taken up with these ardent desires of obtaining for the Virgin Mary this holy and numerous family, suddenly I heard distinctly in the inmost recess of my soul these intellectual locutions¹ which said to my heart: "You will be my spouse, since you wish me to be the mother of so many children." Quite abashed and embarrassed that the Mother of God should have thought of honoring me so much, I was sunk