

THE PATH TO THE BEATIFICATION OF JEAN-MARIE DE LA MENNAIS

1.1. Articles from Bro. Delfin Lopez, Postulator, in The Chronicle 392-393-394

The Chronicle N° 389 (March 2004) included an article entitled “What About the Cause of Beatification of our Father and Founder?” Before that, another article had been published and sent to the delegates of the “postulation” during the 2003 novena: “Jean-Marie, the Blessed?” On both occasions, we noticed a notable expectation and an interest in the subject. Many questions have cropped up. Let’s try to answer the most significant ones:

- Is there anything new, since last year, concerning the Beatification of Jean-Marie de la Mennais, one of the main subjects of preoccupation for the mennaisian family?

One year, it’s short, for something as important and complex as the cause of a servant of God. It’s true that some of them were quickly settled, too few of them - ; others, on the other hand, have been dragging on for ages... Such and such seem to stand still for good.

- What problems can be an obstacle to the cause?

There are mainly two of them. a) The first one concerns the “héroïcité des vertus”: this fact, this attitude, that writing, attributed to the servant of God, and not suitable for a saint: is it true or false? Is it only a rumor? We need to get (right) to the bottom of this. It’s the phase called “animadversiones”.

We cleared that step in the case of Jean-Marie de la Mennais. – Paul VI, proclaiming the “héroïcité des vertus” of our Father, settled the question. It’s already incredible.

- b) What’s the 2nd problem?

God must confirm the holiness of his servant with a miracle.

- A miracle?

Yes, and here we are. It’s a difficulty that can stop the cause for good. It happened so often before! But it’s not sufficient that the servant of God makes miracles... They need to be recognized: for example, we need to prove that a healing, after an invocation to the servant of God, and due to its extraordinary character, may be considered like a miracle...

- How can we succeed in proving it?

Two standpoints are to be considered: One is scientific (1), the other theological (2).

1- What about the scientific one?

Somebody suffers from a serious illness. All means have been used, all measures have been tried. This person has received the most appropriate treatments. In spite of that, this person does not recover. His condition is even getting worse. When everything seems to be lost, or the sick person is terminally ill, this is it, without our knowing how and why, his condition improves and he gets well in a relatively short time, and in a permanent manner.

- And the theological view point?

It’s an explanation of the healing, but on another level; at one point, someone in the family, a friend or the sick person himself, has called upon the servant of God, and after this invocation, the healing happened. It could be a miracle.

- Who has the responsibility to decide? The doctors?

The doctor’s role is to declare in all consciousness and in giving credit to the relevant documents whether the healing can be explained or not. Nothing else.

- But which doctors?

First, the medical chief, and then those who took care of the patient. Later on, in Rome, the medical committee will gather: 5 doctors, with a president, and a secretary (doctors themselves) will have to examine the case and take a decision...

- To give a decision on what?

On the inexplicable character of the healing from the scientific view point. It does not depend on them to take a decision on the miraculous character of the healing.

- Then, how do we proceed?

The Postulator of the Cause must collect and present the testimony, confirmed and certain, of those who asked for the healing, and prayed through the intercession of the servant of God, intercession included, of course, in those to Jesus the mediator and to Mary, whatever the form of invocation it may be... But the invocation must exclude any other servant of God or saint... Otherwise, the presumed miracle will not be recognized.

- What do they do with the statements?

A group of 10 theologians, forming the theological committee, - receive them in Rome, examine them, and give a motivated opinion, sanctioned by a vote.

Then, if the vote is positive, a committee made of cardinals and bishops, named “Congrégation ordinaire”, receives the conclusions of the previous trials - scientific and theological - examine them, give their opinion, also sanctioned by a vote. This vote remains secret and is submitted to the Pope. Finally, the Pope, deciding on the beatification or canonization, admits the miraculous character of the healing.

Let's stop here for a moment. We shall go on dealing with this theme quite difficult but also quite interesting, that is the miracle...

- But, is it true that to obtain the recognition of a miracle we need to make an extraordinary effort that looks like a new miracle itself?

We still have to call for the Venerable de la Mennais, asking God to bless us with a new miracle... That's where we stand!

Rome, January 24 2005

Bro. Delfin Lopez, Postulator

JEAN-MARIE DE LA MENNAIS, THE BLESSED?

In October 2003, the superiors of provinces and vice-provinces with the Assistants of the General Council gathered at Castelgandolfo (Italy). On that occasion, the new Postulator of the Congregation could talk with them and listen to the worries and interrogations of some brothers. Consequently, we decided to assign a “delegate” for each province and vice-province, who would be in contact with the Postulator.

- How much progress have we done since then?

As we were dealing with a new situation, the Postulator, who became also, by doing so, “promoter”, to get in touch, sent the delegates a short questionnaire trying to motivate and revive the Cause of Jean-Marie de la Mennais.

- How does the Postulator see this work with the delegates?

It progresses in a first direction, which, in turn, consists of two steps: a) from the Postulator to the delegates, and from them to the brothers and communities. b) And in the other direction: the flowing of the worries, propositions and needs of the communities to the Postulator, through the delegates.

- Are there any major worries to face now?

There are many of them. One of them, maybe the most serious one, is expressed by the “delegate” from Japan, among others... (Japan is a country with very few Catholics, but a place from where some very exciting propositions came.) Here it is:

- We don't have any doubt about the holiness of our Founder. We have been praying for decades... So many founders, men and women, even contemporary, have already been beatified or canonized, while our Cause seems so slow as to appear like a disturbing slowness... what can you say about it?

December 15 1966 was an important day for the Cause: Pope Paul VI declared the “héroïcité des vertus” of Jean-Marie de la Mennais. Maybe, we didn't highlight sufficiently

this event then. Two brothers, Hippolyte-Victor Gèreux and Gabriel Potier, worked steadily to obtain that decree. They deserve our gratitude.

- And after that?

It was the time to bring in a miracle, for the beatification...

- There are not any extraordinary healings, attributed to the intercession of Jean-Marie, whose “files” could be asleep in the Roman offices?

The cases of extraordinary healings to reach the “postulation” in Rome were quite few. They were examined closely in due time and archived...

- How come?

Either they were not sufficiently examined, or the reported facts, according to the doctors, were not extraordinary enough, and could be explained scientifically.

- The Postulator is, on account of his position, the key man to inform us of the apparent state of paralysis of the Cause...

That’s what we’re trying to do. But you must keep in mind that to be “postulator” does not mean to be “promoter” of the devotion to Jean-Marie...

- And then?

In fact, many mennaisian provinces had their own promoters, and their own way of promoting this devotion. In Canada, for example, for decades, the review “Le Courrier du Vénérable” had been published, and it was important. Bro. Bernadin de Sienne was in charge of it... But after that, at a crucial point for the Cause, it disappeared, and here we are: without information on what’s going on, without an occasional or continued concern about the Cause and the miracles.

- And for what purpose did they make efforts?

They worked hard in another direction: research on the mennaisian spirituality and pedagogy, and so on. Publishing the letters, homelies and other writings of Jean-Marie was a remarkable work that will bear fruit.

- Shall we have anything to reproach ourselves?

Perhaps, yes, exactly the question of miracles... Actually, in those days, there were many favors attributed to Jean-Marie, as well as extraordinary healings of cancer and others. But we had other things to worry about...

- Why?

Either we didn’t find the required documents, or we were not preoccupied or interested in finding them. Perhaps, we were not grateful to the Lord, not taking advantage of these events in favor of Jean-Marie’s holiness...

- And now?

Let’s try to be up to date, so as to see the Lord’s will. We are examining two actual cases of healing, others also are possible, let’s wait... Maybe it could be the subject of discussion on another occasion.

Conclusion

I tried to satisfy the request expressed by most of the “delegates”: to give information on the progress of the Cause of our Father and Founder, and of miracles.

- A wish?

Yes: let’s be faithful to the monthly novena and let’s pray for his beatification, putting aside individual theories that were perhaps a fashion for a while. Let’s join the “network” of prayer for the same intention and...

- One more word?

Yes, let’s inform Rome of the favors received and healings obtained, - for the adults or the children-, that we shall receive or shall have received from the Lord, through the intercession of His Servant, Jean-Marie de la Mennais. And whomsoever these favors may come from! :

priests, lay people, brothers, sisters... Which brother has not received, one or many of them, during his life?...

Rome, May 20 2005
Bro. Delfín López, postulator

TOWARDS THE BEATIFICATION OF JEAN-MARIE

D.+S. Rome, October 14 2005

In the previous “The Chronicle”, we invited those who are interested in Jean-Marie de la Mennais and pray to him, to let us know the graces and favors received from God through the intercession...

- What’s happening?

Many graces and favors, received in different parts of the world, were communicated to us. Following the “delegates” at the ‘Postulation’, dispersed around the world, we shall try to explain them in a formal and systematic way.

- How will you proceed?

For 6 months, we have been publishing a monthly leaflet, a A4 format, consisting of three panels, devoted to Jean-Marie. Two of these panels deal with the novena and its illustrations. A third panel is kept for the explanation of the theme chosen for that month. There is a fourth panel left. We are going to use it precisely to mention the favors obtained from God through the intercession of Jean-Marie. We shall try also to insert short stories, short mennaisian “rendez-vous”, suggested intentions, e-mail for the readers, and so on. The 4 panels, printed on both sides, will form a leaflet, entitled: “Mennaisian Novena”.

- We speak of “novena”. What’s the exact meaning of it?

Our purpose is to ask the Lord to bless us through the beatification of Jean-Marie. We have this novena every month: it goes on 9 days, from the 18th to the 26th, this last day remembering us his death, on December 26 1860.

- What does this novena consist of?

A theme is chosen. It is illustrated and explained basically with the thoughts of Jean-Marie de la Mennais. Animated and motivated by his example, we listen to what the Lord tells and asks us to do, so as to follow Him after that.

Besides that, we expose our intentions to the Lord, through the intercession of Jean-Marie, and end with the prayer for his beatification.

It’s a very simple thing that requires just a few minutes.

- We have spoken of graces and favors. What are they?

Those received from the Lord, through the intercession of his Servant, Jean-Marie de la Mennais: great or small, important or ordinary. For example, look at the healing case of the young Paola Tabachi, from Villa Giardino (Córdoba – Argentina).

In September during the novena, we recommended to your prayers this case of healing that had happened, to submit it to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

- How did the disease developed?

The patient had been suffering for a month, before the disease was identified. Once the seriousness of the disease was acknowledged, they offered intensive prayers to the Lord and Mary, through the intercession of Venerable Jean-Marie. A few days later, the sick person had changed radically... And she went back home after having recovered well. All this, without

scientific explanation clear, based on appropriate medicine which could have been given, although the medical treatment had been perfect.

- What kind of disease was it?

Its medical name is, "LYMPHOMA (a kind of cancer) NO HODKIN, AIGU". It's a disease similar to leuchemia. The young girl, she was 21 at that time (2001), recovered so well that she could get married six months ago.

- And now?

Using her clinical pedigree and the received statements, we are trying to synthesize this process of disease-healing.

- How can we succeed in doing this?

With the help and assistance of a distinguished doctor and other specialists. Dr. José Luis Calcagno, a former student and teacher at our school in Buenos Aires, has completed the first phase, collaborating regularly and shedding light on the cause. We still have to prove the divine intervention.

- How?

In showing that a complete healing has occurred with an invocation to the Servant of God, while medical and scientific means had not produced the expected result.

- What else must we do?

As you can imagine, this requires quite large expenses. The efforts, a long and hard work, trips must be paid for. Many people, including specialists, must intervene. Other expenses, later on, may be caused by the cost needed to contact dioceses, Congregations, the publication and festive gatherings organized for the beatification, and so on. Therefore, we have to include alms.

- What can you tell us about these alms?

They are quite significant, and always suitable and necessary. From the view point of our mentality influenced by globalization, consumerism, secularization, we could be tempted to give a judgment rather negative on alms. However, it's the way, for ordinary people and often strong believers, to show their gratitude to the Servant of God they have prayed to. That's where miracles come from. They are neither made up stories nor programmed events... They come from God's hand. Moreover, if we make these alms public, anonymous or signed, they become factors of promotion, a chain reaction, of this devotion...

- Is that enough?

Some canonizations were totally paid for with alms, and there were leftovers! It's the case for the Italian Capuchin friar, Padre Pio de Pietrelcina. Whith the alms offered for his cause, they could pay for other "poorer" causes, that did not have the necessary economic support...

- How come?

It's very simple: these alms received for one cause of beatification must be used only for the beatification... or for others, if need be. But, they cannot be used, in any case, for something else....

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- Then, what can you suggest?

That it's suitable to collect and send these alms, for that purpose...

- Where can we send them?

To Ploërmel, where the tomb of Jean-Marie de la Mennais is. Or, and it's better, to Rome, to the "Postulation", at the following address. Or to the "delegates" in each country.

Being the "Postulator" of the Cause of Jean-Marie de la Mennais, I thank you for your donation. It will be an encouragement more. Be sure we shall use these alms wisely.

Finally, I suggest this address:

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