

**THE PENULTIMATE STAGE BEFORE THE
PROCLAMATION OF THE HEROICITY OF
VIRTUES (1960 - 1966)**

The case was therefore in the hands of the Historical Department. It had been entrusted to Monsignor Aimé-Pierre FRUTAZ who had worked closely with the postulator, Br. Hippolyte-Victor, during ten years of intense activity, involving research in a large number of archives, recovery of testimonies from the initial stages of the process, in particular the testimonies of De Villerabel and Bro. Abel Gaudichon and critical commentary of the most authoritative biographies, in particular those of Laveille and Ropartz. The two historians had to answer the following questions, concerning the Servant of God:

- his in depth collaboration with his brother Féli, especially in their early joint writings "*Reflections on the State of the Church in France*" and "*Tradition of the Church on the institution of bishops*".
- his position in relation to the four Gallican articles.
- his attitude towards Féli at the time of the publication of "*Words of a believer*" and from then until the latter's death.
- his position in relation to Gregory XVI's encyclicals "*Mirari vos*" and "*Singulari nos*", as well as his behaviour towards the dissident members of the Congregation of Saint Peter (1832-1834).
- his attitude in relation to his confrontation with the bishops of Saint-Brieuc and Rennes (1819-1841).
- the value he placed in the writings of Frs. Coedro, Feidel and Persehais, who were all hostile towards this servant of God.
- his conduct during the administrative proceedings and appeals aimed at defending his rights and those of the Brothers of Christian Instruction and the Daughters of Providence.
- the accusation brought against the defenders of his Cause of having failed to quote texts hostile to the Cause in both the Vannes trial (1899-1901) and the apostolic process (1912-1914).
- the value of the two principal biographies written by Ropartz and Laveille of the Servant of God.

The answers to these important and delicate questions were the result of an intense collaboration between Mgr. Frutaz and Br. Hippolyte-Victor which resulted in an imposing 700 page volume published in 1960 by the Historical Dept. of the Sacred Congregation of Rites and which was edited by the Vatican Printing Office under the title of "*Summarium additional, official presentation of documents annexed to the new Positio on the virtues*".

In reality, this fundamental text presented by the Historical Dept. was intended for the Consultors to enable them to pass a fully informed judgment on the virtues of the Servant of God, in response to the serious objections of the Promoter of the Faith, formulated during the ante-preparatory meeting of 1946. This document was officially called "*Informatio*"

... and included the following sub-sections:

- Object and purpose of the *Summarium*,
- History of the Cause,
- Work carried out by the Historical Dept.,
- Chronology of the life of the Servant of God,
- Results of the investigation conducted by the Historical Dept.,
- Criteria that governed the edition of the texts.

This precious collection was then handed over to Consultors of the Historical Dept. so that they could have answers to objections which had been faithfully reproduced at the end of the volume. At the same time, the document was also transmitted to the Theological Consultors. It was up to the latter group to pass judgment on the virtues of the servant of God. On June 30th 1960, the Consultors of the Historical Section gave a very favourable judgment on the responses to the *Animadversiones* of 1946. This judgment was handed over to the Theological Consultors.