

Monsignor de Laval



Number 23 • Autumn 2011-Winter 2012

François de Laval Animation Centre Newsletter

EDITORIAL



When Will Blessed François de Laval Be Canonized?

with the kind contribution of the Reverend Roger Laberge, r.s.v.

We are often asked when François de Laval will be canonized. Why the long wait to be elevated to the ranks of sainthood when he was beatified 31 years ago? What are we waiting in order to acknowledge the saintliness of this giant of our history, founder of the Church in New France? These are all legitimate questions that require clear, honest answers.

As explained by the postulator for the cause for the canonization of François de Laval in Rome, Reverend Roger Laberge, r.s.v., "we are anxious to see Monsignor de Laval proclaimed as a saint. His cause began so long ago, on September 29th, 1890. After long delays and new research by the authorities, the heroism of his virtues was recognized on February 28, 1960, and his beatification was celebrated on June 22, 1980."

To be able to pray, one day, to *Saint François de Laval*, we need a miracle obtained through his intercession. Before a miracle can be recognized, a healing or extraordinary fact is required and must be studied in the diocese where it took place. If the bishop deems the case to be important and viable, he sends the file to the Vatican, where it will be studied by two experts, and then by a commission of experts.

But the cause must first fulfil a preliminary step: prayer to receive this miracle. We need the prayers of everyone so that the Lord will sanction the saintliness of our Blessed François. We need a specific prayer during a critical illness or a grave physical danger.

The more devotion to François de Laval is encouraged and practised, the more quickly the miracle will occur. This devotion can be expressed in different ways: through prayer at his tomb in the funeral chapel of the Notre-Dame de Québec Basilica-Cathedral; through participation in the Feast of François de Laval on May 6th each year, which should be celebrated in Canadian catholic

parishes; through the regular recitation of the prayer for canonization included in this newsletter; etc.

Let us all be vigilant in our prayers and report anything that cannot be explained by science. Above all, let us not forget to "put our trust and strength in God" as François de Laval himself encouraged us to do.



The numbers

We receive between 600 and 1,000 prayer intentions a year. Of these, 42% are in French, 45% are in English, and 8% are in Spanish. They usually ask the intercession of the Blessed François de Laval:

- 32%: for the wellbeing of the family or certain family members
- 17%: for healing
- 6%: for work or money
- 5%: for the conversion of an individual
- 5%: for thanks or thanksgivings
- 4%: for their spouse, their marriage, their love
- 2%: for world peace
- 2%: to support people with compulsion disorders
- 2%: for the souls of the dead
- 2%: for a reconciliation or the strength to forgive
- 1%: for the vocations, priests and religious orders
- 1%: for academic success

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NEWS RELEASE

In the Spring-Summer 2011 newsletter, my editorial made reference to the nickname "The Old Monsignor" that the parishioners gave to François de Laval after his death. A clarification is in order: after he stepped down as bishop in 1688, François de Laval lived another twenty years, until 1708. So it was actually on his retirement, when the bishopric was held by his successor, Msgr. de Saint-Vallier, that the diocesans of Québec City gave him this affectionate title.

Marie-France Cossette

Promotional Gifts

Are you holding an event to honour people involved in your organization or parish?

We have free gifts* that can be given to them through a random draw or by merit.

All items are related to François de Laval, of course. This is a good way to help us promote devotion to our Blessed François de Laval.

*This \$50 kit will be made up of items of your choice: key chains, bookmarks, books, icons, DVDs, CDs, etc.

Learn more about our Blessed François de Laval

Visit our website
www.francoisdelaival.com

*Come and
visit our
exhibition centre!*

We offer special activities for:

- Schools: social science program
- Parishes: for retreats, in conjunction with Christian initiation or as part of the sacramental process
- Religious communities, movements, groups, etc.



Memoirs of François de Laval

by Virginie Gagné

As part of the Historic Writing Competition, held by the Historical Society of Québec City in 2011, Virginie Gagné, a Grade 9 student in the language program at the Collège de Lévis, won third place with her essay on François de Laval. A history buff with a keen interest in travel, Virginie has already had the opportunity to explore four major cities in our world. She is interested in stagecraft and every year she takes part in the theatrical production at her school.

This promising young woman is full of daring and determination. It's no surprise that she chose to write about the outstanding characteristics of this giant of our history!

Her highly original piece features François de Laval himself, passing on his memories to future generations.

Our warm thanks to this teenager from Lévis for spreading the word about our Blessed François de Laval in our schools!

April 6, 1708

I feel death catching up to me, but before I make my way to the Kingdom of God, I would like to leave a written proof of my passage through this world. At 85 years of age, I, François de Laval, have decided at last to write my memoirs. All my life, everything I have experienced, all of my lifelong hopes return to me today in my mind, as if these things had happened only yesterday. And yet they are so distant... Today, my only hope is to find the strength, despite my illness, to write about my life.

I was born on April 30th, 1623, in the glorious Kingdom of France. From my earliest childhood, I wanted to devote my life to God. It was at the age of eight, when my father entrusted me to the Jesuits, that my prayers were answered. It was not until 16 years later that I was appointed as a priest. I dedicated myself to my work with zeal, because I was finally enjoying the life I had so long desired. I also became a respected member of my community. In short, I was happy. But God had other plans for me.

In 1658, I was consecrated bishop to be sent to New France as apostolic curate. A year later, I left for the colony. Shortly before I left, I bid farewell to my native France, the country of my birth that I loved so dearly. With a heavy heart, I watched as it receded into the distance. Although I made the voyage in a first-class cabin, given the important position I would occupy at my destination, I admit that I found the crossing long and hard. On the voyage, I prayed every day for the men and women in the ship's hold, who were making the crossing in conditions much more difficult than mine.

When I arrived in the colony, I was astonished to see how disorganized the Church was and how much work there was to be done. Although at the time of my arrival New France it held only about 2,000 inhabitants, I knew that this number was bound to grow and that the number of priests present in the colony at the time would not be enough for future needs. And so in 1663 I decided to create the Seminary of Québec, to train new priests. That



same year, I became the governor, temporarily. Of course, I made very few decisions. Luckily, I was only required to deal with urgent matters, as I would not have been able to balance my responsibilities as vicar with the duties of being the governor at the same time.

With the influx of priests caused by the founding of the Seminary, I was able to divide the territory into parishes. This new division of the land ensured every colonist had access to a priest. By 1680, there were already 30 parishes across the territory.

In 1668, I had been in New France for only nine years, and I already loved this new land as ardently as I had loved France in my youth. I decided that I would give the colony a school, the Little Seminary of Québec, so that young boys could receive a suitable education. Who knows, perhaps one day that school will bear my name! I also joined the other Jesuits in campaigning to halt the disastrous sale of brandy to the Indians. Under the influence of alcohol, the Indians caused trouble, tarnishing their reputation with the colonists.

1674 marked a turning point in my life. Quebec's first diocese was established and I was named bishop. From

(Continued in page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

then on, my life was calmer: most of the problems I had encountered when I arrived in New France had been resolved. In 1682, I agreed for the second time to temporarily stand in as governor. By that time, my mandate as bishop was coming to a close. In 1685, no longer feeling strong enough to fulfil my role as required, I retired to the Seminary of Québec, the King having given me permission to end my days in New France, the land that had become my home. On that long-ago day when I first left France for Québec, I would never had believed that I would grow to love New France so much that I would choose to end my days here. And yet that is exactly what happened!

The bishop who succeeded me was Jean-Baptiste de La Croix de Chevrières de Saint-Vallier, a pious and highly competent man who shared my love of New France. Despite my certainty that the colony was in good hands, I initially had trouble letting go and not interfering in the decisions made by Monsignor de La Croix de Chevrières de Saint-Vallier.

May 6, 1708

Now that my story is told, or at least the parts of interest to future generations, I can depart in peace, knowing that I will not be forgotten. I leave this earth full of confidence in the future of the country I have loved so much. Finally, I hope that Jean-Baptiste de La Croix de Chevrières de Saint-Vallier and the bishops that follow him will be able to lead this magnificent land on the path to God.

François de Laval

François

HISTORY PAGE



Advice to the missionaries

Written by François de Laval, 1668. (abridged text)

Instructions for Claude Trouvé and François de Salagnac, priests, beloved of Our Lord, going on a mission to the Iroquois living on the northern shores of Lake Ontario. 1668.

That they firmly believe that being sent to work for the conversion of non-believers, they have the most important task in the Church; which obliges them to make themselves worthy instruments of God, to better themselves in every virtue proper to an apostolic missionary, meditating often, in the imitation of Saint Francis Xavier, the patron and ideal of missionaries, on these words from the Gospel: *For what does a man gain by winning over the whole world but losing his own soul?*

That they try to avoid two extremities that are to be feared in those who strive to convert souls: to hope too much or despair too much. Those who hope too much are often the first to despair of everything when they see the enormous difficulties found in the business of converting non-believers, which is more the work of God than the industry of men.

That they remember that the *seed of the word of God bears fruit in patience*. Those who do not have this patience are in danger, after a fiery beginning, of being discouraged and abandoning their efforts. Language is needed to take action with the Savages, but this is one of the lesser skills of a good missionary, just as in France speaking French well is not what makes a preacher fruitful.

The talents that make good missionaries are:

Being filled with the Spirit of God. This Spirit must sustain our words and our hearts: *the mouth speaks the abundance of the heart*.

Having great prudence in the choice and order of things to do, to either clarify the understanding or sway the will; any words that do not lead to this are lost words.

Working diligently not to miss the opportunity to save souls and compensating for the negligence that often slips into catechumens; since the devil, on his side, is *prowling about like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour*, so must we be vigilant against his efforts with care, sweetness and love.

Having nothing in our lives or in our habits that will belie our words or upset the hearts and minds of those we want to win over to God.

We must draw people to us with our gentleness, our





patience and our charity, and win hearts and minds so that we might lead them to God; too often a sharp word, impatience and a sullen face can destroy in a moment what we have worked so long to achieve.

The Spirit of God requires a peaceful, contemplative heart, not a fretful, undisciplined heart.

Our faces should be joyful and modest. We should avoid mockery and raucous laughter and generally anything that is contrary to holy and joyful modesty. *Let your modesty be known among all men.*

EVENT



A Woman Well-Established in Our History

by Marie-France Cossette

François de Laval did not leave behind a lot of writing, but his brief epistolary legacy reveals his great reverence to the Virgin Mary and the special place She held in his spiritual journey.

Consecrated to the episcopacy at the liturgical feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8th, 1658, at Saint-Germain-des-Prés Church in Paris, François de Laval established the parish of Québec under the name "Notre-Dame de l'Immaculée-Conception" in 1664. On July 11th, 1666, he placed the church under Her patronage and it was no coincidence that he inaugurated the buildings of the Seminary of Québec on the same day as this celebration in 1677. The solemn mass celebrated to this day on December 8th takes up this tradition and is always especially meaningful for the diocesans gathered together at the Notre-Dame de l'Immaculée-Conception Basilica-Cathedral under the auspices of the Archbishop. Even the University of Laval, founded by the priests of the Seminary in 1852, has decreed this day a "holiday" for students and administrative staff.

It was in the Congregation of the Holy Virgin, as he was pursuing his studies in La Flèche College in France, that François de Laval developed his devotion to the Immaculate Conception, which he maintained throughout his life. This was why, with the priests at the Seminary of Québec, he instituted the Prayer to the Immaculate Conception, which became part of Jesuit ritual around 1635.

This touching Marian prayer shows a heart set on evangelization and spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ to all the inhabitants of this new country. The Mother of Jesus is presented as a mediator between Her Son, Savior of the World, and we who are invited to serve Him faithfully. The exhortation to fast was a common practice at the time and served to support the intercession in prayer.

Faithful to the Prayer to the Immaculate Conception since 1665, the community of priests from the Seminary of Québec still feels called, like their Blessed founder, by the need to evangelize, but more especially by the "new evangelization" that takes the modern world and its specific needs into account.

Repeated every year by devotion, not obligation, the Prayer to the Immaculate Conception is a tradition that has survived for 350 years. Next December 8th, let us

unite our prayers with those of the community of priests from the Seminary of Québec to ask our Lord to keep alive in them the fire that burned so brightly in their Blessed founder and that is essential to the spreading of the love of God to the men and women today.

Vow to Mary Immaculate

Precious Jesus, Savior of the World,
 although our sins separate us from Thee,
 so it is that in our ardent desire to honour
 Thee and Thy Holy Mother,
 and to uphold the faithful correspondence
 that Thou desirest from Thy faithful servants,
 so that Thou shalt be recognized and adored by
 the inhabitants of this country,
 Thou seest us prostrate at Thy feet,
 where we promise and vow to Thee,
 and to the Holy Virgin Thy Mother,
 to celebrate twelve times (once a month) in
 the next twelve months
 the sacrament of Holy Mass,
 in honour and thanksgiving of
 the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin,
 Thy Mother,
 and also to fast, as we do on the eve of
 Her own feast of the same intention:
 that we might receive from Thy goodness and mercy,
 through Her intercessions and by Her merit,
 the conservation of this country and the conversion
 of all who live here.

O Holy and Sacred Queen of Angels and men,
 take under Thy holy protection
 these people whom we commend to Thee through the
 hands of Thy glorious Husband
 and Thy faithful servants,
 Saint Ignatius and Saint Francis Xavier,
 and all the guardian angels and protectors of this place,
 To offer them to Thy Beloved Son
 that it may please Him to keep and protect them,
 Grant the knowledge of His Holy Name to those
 who do not yet have it,
 And to all, steadfastness in His Holy Grace
 and His Holy Love.
 Let it be so. Amen.



If you mention Monsignor de Laval in one of your activities, please let us know. We will be happy to announce it.



In the photo: Sylvain Mercier, sacristan at the Notre-Dame de Québec parish, serving as a guide in front of Msgr. de Laval's first tomb.

Last March 1st, Philippe Leclerc, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Corporation du Collège François-de Laval, and Canon Jacques Roberge, procurator of the Séminaire de Québec, announced that the Petit Séminaire de Québec will now be known as the Collège François-de Laval in honour of its founder, the first Bishop of Nouvelle-France.

From September 16th to 18th, 2011, 28 seminarians from the three French-language Seminaries of Québec - the *Grand Séminaire de Montréal*, the *Grand Séminaire Redemptoris Mater* in Québec City and the *Grand Séminaire de Québec* - gathered together at the *Grand Séminaire de Québec* for their annual meeting, to take part in a set of spiritual, cultural and brotherly activities. They ended their activities with a visit to the Monsignor de Laval's tomb and the Basilica-Cathedral's crypt.



In the photo, from left to right: Marc Dallaire, executive director of the Collège François-de Laval, Canon Jacques Roberge, procurator of the Séminaire de Québec, and Philippe Leclerc, Chair of the College's Board of Directors.



Giant effigies of the Blessed Catherine de Saint-Augustin, Msgr. de Laval and Marie de l'Incarnation made a remarkable appearance in the square in front of the Basilica-Cathedral during the parish's summer tourist activities. It was an appealing pretext for an "educational catechism" for many curious onlookers. The event will be repeated several times next summer.

On Québec City Diocese's annual youth pilgrimage, on September 18th, some one hundred youth, led by Msgr. Lacroix, ended their long march at the Notre-Dame de Québec Basilica-Cathedral and at the tomb of the Monsignor de Laval.



(photo: Bonnie Nichol)



(Photos: ECDQ.tv)

On October 2nd, the parishioners of Saints-Anges de Lachine (Montréal) took part in a special celebration of their founder, Monsignor de Laval. We had the opportunity to present them with a distinguished relic and icon of our Blessed founder, which we then left for the devotion of the faithful.

Your prayer intentions...

All received prayer intentions are given to the Brotherhood of the Holy Family, which meets once each month. At a mass, the prayer intentions are entrusted to the intercession of the Blessed François de Laval.

Your prayer intention will be grouped with all those written by the dozens of pilgrims and visitors who come every day to the tomb of our Blessed François de Laval. You can send us your prayer intention by mail or email, through our website or directly in the funeral chapel at the Notre-Dame de Québec Basilica-Cathedral.

We promise that your requests will remain confidential.

Please report all favours granted:
Séminaire de Québec
Cause du bienheureux François de Laval
1, rue des Remparts
C.P. 460 H.V.
Québec (Québec)
G1R 4R7

Prayer for the canonization of blessed François de Laval

Lord Jesus, it is with great confidence that we pray to blessed François de Laval, whom you chose to send to our country to announce the good News of salvation.

Through his intercession, please grant us the favours we now implore. Give us the grace to imitate his audacity, his perseverance, and his complete surrender to Providence, and, if it be Your Will, may he soon be counted among the saints. We ask this in Your name, You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen

Picture: Stained glass window depicting Bishop de Laval at a sick person's bedside

« Bishop de Laval was continually there helping the sick and making their beds (...)
No eloquence would turn him from acts of humility. »

Marie de l'Incarnation

If you have obtained a favour, please contact

The Cause of blessed François de Laval
Séminaire de Québec
1, rue des Remparts, C.P. 460 H.V.
Québec (Québec) G1R 4R7

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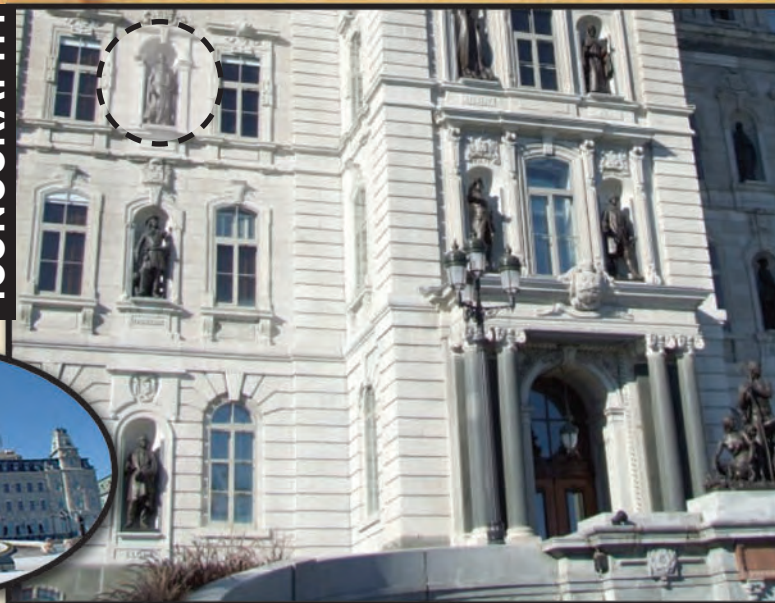


françois

evêque de québec



ICONOGRAPHY



▲ At the National Assembly building in Québec City

The National Assembly building is a true monument to the glory of the men and women who have marked the history of Québec and of French America. The 26 bronze statues that adorn the façade each represent a significant figure among our great founders.

Works by artist Émile Brunet, completed 1964-1965.

*In the words of
Monsignor de Laval*

“Have nothing in your lives or in your habits that will belie your words or upset the hearts and minds of those you want to win over to God.”

Advice to missionaries, 1668.



Blessed François de Laval
first bishop of Québec
1623-1708



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May 2012