

Saint François de Laval



Number 30 • May 2015

Centre d'animation François-De Laval Newsletter

EVENT



Saint François of Québec

By Gilles Bureau, retired historian and author of *François de Laval et son époque* [*François de Laval, his life and times*]

Following the canonization of François de Laval on April 3, 2014, artist Daniel Abel undertook the task of painting the first known portrait, as a saint, of the bishop who founded the Québec Church. He titled his work *Saint François de Québec* [*Saint François of Québec*], reflecting the words uttered by Msgr Pierre-André Fournier, Archbishop of Rimouski, a few months before his death on January 15, 2015.

The same man

Daniel Abel wanted to depict Saint François as a confident, welcoming man in his prime, about to embark on his major construction initiatives. The artist's portrayal - showing the simplicity of a bishop who had disavowed his noble origins - is as minimalist as possible, with a neutral background and nothing but a cross, an attribute of his mission. He also chose to outline the face in a dazzling light, rather than the halo, the usual symbol of sainthood. "His saintliness is fully internal, emanating from his person," says the artist, undoubtedly citing testimonials by François's contemporaries. "I thought a halo would distance him from us. It would be like a crown - but the François I know was a simple man, close to the people. I'm sure he wouldn't have liked that. I wanted him to remain the man his friends knew. He was already a saint in his own lifetime." With this in mind, the artist was careful to reproduce the face by which Saint François had always been known. "I wanted him to be recognizable."



Saint François de Québec

Fabriano Artistico satin finished cotton paper, 600 gsm, using pencil, acrylic, oil, and Liquin. 56 cm x 76 cm (22" x 36"). An original work created in Québec City, from January to March 27, 2015.

A new start

"What sets my painting apart, compared to other portraits, is the esthetic I adopted: a contemporary, modern, and energetic look. I saw his canonization as a start rather than the end: a new chapter about to be written." The author stresses that this modern interpretation is a departure from what was done before, thus marking a new chapter: "We're far from done with this great man!"

And the message carries through in the choice of medium. The artist decided to use cotton paper - a noble, high-quality stock - rather than the usual canvas. This was another way of highlighting the change he was looking to make. He managed to find the white he needed to express François's all-encompassing saintliness. The technique used was a combination of pencil, acrylic, oil, and Liquin - a replacement for traditional varnish, which always ends up yellowing.

The inspiration

"François de Laval has long been known to me," says Abel. "In 2011, I was asked to create a special illustration for the jacket of Gilles Bureau's book *François de Laval et son époque*. My deadline, based on the publishing schedule, was one month... and since then, I've had a number of sketches lying dormant in my boxes. I wanted to create another work - perhaps in pencil or in oil. But I always held back. I preferred to let time do its work."

(Continued on page 2)

Contents

Event

Saint François of Québec1-2

Interview

An Interview with
Cyrille-Gauvin Francoeur.....3-4

History

Msgr de Laval, in the
eyes of his manservant.....5

Available at the Centre.....6

Photo Album.....7

Iconography

Ceramic work by
Rose-Anne Monna 8



Saint François of Québec

(Continued from page 1)

"The concept came about through a happy coincidence: I had to travel twice to Petit Cap, where I was able to look at a reproduction of Duflos's engraving of Msgr de Laval. The first trip was in August 2013, for a reception that was part of the Séminaire de Québec's 350th anniversary celebrations, and the second time was the following year, while *François de Laval, apôtre de l'Amérique [François de Laval, Apostle of America]* was being filmed. You'll find quite a resemblance, in fact."

The next question was how to depict Saint François. He decided on his perspective last November. "And my choice of cotton paper for the medium meant it had to be a mixed application. Everything fell into place very quickly." He painted in tones of blue (a monochromatic paint, using various tones of the same color ranging from light to dark). "I worked on the piece for three months - from January to March 2015."



Engraving by Claude Duflos, 1708

The title

"Yes, I know - the title can be surprising. I was also taken aback when I first heard Msgr P-A. Fournier's comments, drawing an analogy to St. Francis of Assisi, who got his name from the city where he did his work. Thinking back on it, I thought it made sense. François de Laval dedicated the most important part of his life to Québec, and did great things here. He insisted on coming back to these shores to live out his final days. This saint belongs to us. What's wrong with wanting to flaunt this and take pride in the fact that a saint chose this place?"

A tribute

Daniel Abel has decided to donate this painting to the Séminaire de Québec. "I want to pay tribute to this community of priests, for all the effort they have put in - over many years - to make their founder better known and loved. They were convinced of his saintliness, and never gave up. That is often forgotten today! Without them, I wouldn't know this man, who I see as being so courageous and, potentially, such a role model to us!" He concludes by saying: "This work was done in complete humility. It's a story that links me to the people of the Séminaire. I'm proud to be a free and happy man."

Just like Saint François of Québec!



About the artist

Daniel Abel was born in Québec City in 1950. An artist in the Impressionist tradition, he trained at the École des Beaux-Arts de Québec. He has dedicated himself to painting for the past 30 years, as well as to photography and renewal of the iconography within the Québec Church and its religious heritage. His work can be found in a number of magazines and books. Visit his website at www.danielabel.net

Saint François de Laval

Number 30 • May 2015



Contact us

Centre d'animation François-De Laval
20, rue De Buade
Québec (Québec) G1R 4A1

Phone: 418 692-0228

Email: centre@francoisdelaval.com

Visit our website: www.francoisdelaval.com



This newsletter is published twice a year and sent for free by mail. It can also be found in PDF format on our website.

Executive Editor: Jean Duval

Contributor: Daniel Abel
Gilles Bureau
Cyrille-Gauvin Francoeur

Copyeditor: Martina de Vries

Graphic design: Lecourscommunication.com

Print run: 2,500 copies, available in French and English

We care about the environment.

By voluntarily signing on to our Email distribution list, you will help us minimize our use of paper. If you write us at centre@francoisdelaval.com, you will receive all forthcoming copies in PDF format. Thank you.

Legal deposit:

Library and Archives Canada ISSN 2290-3496



An Interview with Cyrille-Gauvin Francoeur

Cyrille-Gauvin Francoeur is the creator and artistic director of François, apôtre de l'Amérique, a film produced in 2014. We asked him to share his history with François de Laval and explain his interpretation of the great man for this film.



DVD jacket for *François, apôtre de l'Amérique*

François, apôtre de l'Amérique depicts the inner life of the first bishop of New France. A young team, recruited by a filmmaker who recently graduated from Concordia University, invites us to an event that gives us a sense of following a living being rather than watching a documentary.

François, apôtre de l'Amérique, Salt and Light, 2014, NTSC, French, 50 min.

A missed opportunity?

Like many others who had attended the Petit Séminaire de Québec, my first encounter with François de Laval was in the outside chapel. His recumbent statue lay on a rotunda, somewhat distant and aloof, deep within a marmoreal slumber. A tomb-like silence reigned throughout. And I must confess to mixed feelings of terror and respect when I found myself standing alone before him, his marble eyes fixed on the infinite – a realm that was invisible to me – and his fingers stiffly placed on his frigid chest. My impression was that he had not been very likeable. Although he was highly praised for his merits, my sense was mostly of the prickly side of this man. I believe, at the time, I preferred – or only understood – saints whose lives had followed a path of gentleness and patience.

Two other opportunities

In the early 1990s, I was part of the team that set up the Centre d'animation François-De Laval. This helped refresh my knowledge of the Blessed (as he was then), and made me aware of the scope of his epic story and the immense territory that his diocese covered under the French Régime. Most importantly, I learned – while painting a map on a wall of the various stages of his life – that he had spared no effort in crossing the ocean so many times. "He must have believed in what he was doing," I told myself. In this context, the verb "to believe" is quite reductionist in its meaning, considering the reality it signified! He needed to be passionate about what he did, with absolute love for the souls he saved, his parishioners, and

his causes. But I still wasn't ready to fully comprehend this man. I needed to be more mature if I was to understand François de Laval better.

In 2008, I had to write a dramatic script about the founder of the Church in America for a series of shows at the Palais Montcalm, put on by the Commission de la Capitale nationale de Québec... and I was equal to the task. I was more mature, ready to approach the subject of François de Laval more fully. As you can imagine, writing a short play means immersing yourself in the character you want to bring to life. You have to erase a large part of your own person to try and get closer to the other, who is similar – and yet vastly different – in so many ways. There's nothing saintly about me! But I possess all the qualities that make us human.

And I was, at this time, around the same age as François de Laval was when he began his great founding projects. So I knew more about life. I had learned a little about what it meant to fight for one's ideas, and to bring to completion a project one holds dear. The innocence of youth had prevented me from understanding how life forces us to confront unexpected adversaries during the creative process. The work I was creating was not equal in stature to François de Laval's achievements – far from it. But I found myself in the thick of battles that came up along the way, which I had never wanted to wage... battles that seemed an integral part of any vague desire to act, unlike a somewhat timid, quiet calm that often stems from inaction. I understood François de Laval better at that point. I should mention that I was, at the time, part of the team that organized the Eucharistic Congress. This was the start of a friendship. I think a lot of people enjoyed the dramatic piece I wrote in 2008. I know it must have been imperfect. I believe people were touched and moved by it. A friend whose father was dying at the time of the performance told me that his memories of the play were overwhelming. So I came to realize that this piece must have struck a chord. And I'll also tell you, with humility, that I feel, deep down, like it's one of the most validating things I've ever done or ever will do.

Never too far

And that's where things stood when François de Laval reappeared in my professional life last year – as a film presenting this new saint – while the campaign for his canonization was underway. I knew the people who were working to keep his memory alive and was familiar with the places he had been. I believe I can now say I had a better idea of this great figure in the life of New France and the Church of America. So I was enlisted to structure the project: a film that would help more people discover this person and get to know him better. I approached this mandate with respect and treated it as a great privilege. After all, had I not been preparing for something like this all my life, attending the Petit Séminaire and forging the many connections that connected me to Old Québec?

(Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

Love for the man despite gaps in knowledge

What was I looking for as I wove together the structure of the film? I was seeking to make Saint François de Laval known and loved. Time was short, of course, and the scope of the production was inadequate to exploring all the nuances of his works and his story. But I wanted to create a sensory experience for the viewer. St. Augustine said, "[...]Relating past facts draws out of memory something other than the things themselves that are past - it brings forth words conceived by the images stamped in the mind, like traces left as they pass through the senses"... and I believe the soul is marked more powerfully by the senses than by reason.



Fabrice-Édouard
La Roche-Francoeur,
director

I also got my son Fabrice-Édouard, a producer, to make the film. He's an extraordinary young man who, in my view, has a very special sensitivity entirely suited to using disruption to bring certain key elements of François's life to the screen, keeping in mind that the current Pope called our saint an "Apostle of the Americas" when announcing his canonization.

François: not a statue

Our young filmmaker wanted to depict Saint François in action. He has used the intuitive side of his nature to create some exceptional moments in the film, such as the treks through the forest, one of which ended in our apostle "lending a hand" or, as the camera suggests, coming to our aid. Other examples are the camera's fitful movements as it captures the figures in certain scenes, which suggests that each moment lasts just an instant, or the "traveling out" in the last section of the film, when we are choked by emotion without understanding why - a reaction our minds cannot explain.

This film, *François, apôtre de l'Amérique*, is meant to be a starting point, a step in the process, or a complement... passing the flame from one generation to another, and inviting them to pick it up. This is what the youngest among them takes away from his story. You just had to be there to see this young group of filmmakers, in locations made sublime by history, listening to and working with women and men often three times their age, looking

to take ownership of this 17th century figure and discover the bold visionary whose message remains current today. Saint François de Laval belongs to us now, more than in any other century.

Cyrille-Gauvin Francoeur

After spending his high school and college years at the Petit Séminaire de Québec, Cyrille-Gauvin Francoeur built a career as an artistic director, a playwright, and a stage director. He has four children, some of whom are also working toward arts. He has had the good fortune to build strong ties with the



Cyrille-Gauvin Francoeur

Commission de la Capitale nationale de Québec (CCNQ), where he has served as artistic director, for over ten years, of the *Tribunal de l'Histoire* series and served in various capacities in putting on a number of historical entertainment activities such as the *Grands Québécois* series. He is still with the CCNQ, where he is now directing - and, among other things, writing scripts for - a new series, *Les trésors de la capitale*, in conjunction with the Musée des civilisations de Québec.

For the past three years, he has had a mandate from Québec City to develop and dramatize the historical aspect of *Québec City Day*. He also played a role in the artistic direction of the Notre-Dame de Québec parish 350th anniversary jubilee.

The historical vignette he conceived and produced for the *Nocturne du Solstice* at the most recent edition of Québec's *Fête nationale* was a finalist for the *Coup d'Éclat 2014* award, in the "New original activity" category, presented by Festivals et événements Québec. In the fall of 2015, he will oversee the general public segment of opening events for Québec City's new amphitheater.



Notre-Dame de Québec Parish

To register for the pilgrimage:
418 692-2533 or
<http://notredamedequébec.org/>
- Gift shop
- Museum galleries: The Treasures of Notre-Dame
- Guided tours of the cathedral and Notre-Dame-des-Victoires



To Find out More about François de Laval

Centre d'animation François-De Laval
418 692-0228 or www.francoisdelaval.com
- Un fondateur à connaître (in French only)
- François de Laval, Lord of Beaupré
- Follow the man!
- Permanent exhibition



Msgr de Laval, in the eyes of his manservant

In September 1708, four months after the death of François de Laval, Hubert Houssard wrote a lengthy dissertation relating some aspects of the Bishop Emeritus's virtues. It was sent to Mr. Tremblay, attorney for the Séminaire de Québec in Paris. (An extract from Msgr de Laval vu par son serviteur [Msgr de Laval, in the eyes of his servant], 1961, Séminaire de Québec, 35 p.)

Dear Sir,

You have undoubtedly learned of the death of Bishop Emeritus Msgr de Laval, the first Bishop of Canada. I take the liberty of writing you, not to inform you of his passing, but to attest to you how deeply his death - the loss of such a good, saintly, and charitable leader - has touched me. This would not be difficult to conceive since you can be assured that I forged a very special bond with His Excellency, having been bestowed the honor of constantly attending upon His Excellency for the last twenty years of his saintly life, and His Excellency having shown me much charity, while demonstrating great confidence in my care for him. The loss of a person who was so dear and so favorable to me has therefore caused me inconceivable pain.

The consolation commingled with my sadness at witnessing a saint die as a saint, following a life lived as a saint, has been a tremendous balm to my pain, as well as that of the entire Séminaire and all the peoples of Canada; and the lofty idea that we shall all partake of the great heavenly glory possessed by our deceased saint and the father we all share leads us to hope that through his intercession and favor with God, we will be rewarded abundantly for our loss of his saintly presence.

Many have already experienced this in the form of relief of their pain and infirmity, through invocation and their recourse to the one we consider our deceased saint, as will otherwise be conveyed to you.¹

I personally rely greatly on his power and entrust myself to his succor and assistance, not only for deliverance or, in particular, relief of my bodily infirmity, as I have experienced many times before, but - what I consider to be infinitely more worthy - for assistance in fulfilling my soul's inner needs, both in establishing its virtues and destroying vices and bad habits, as I have previously experienced on numerous occasions.

Every person in the Séminaire must also be endowed with a very special confidence in the merits and intercessions of their first Father, since we all have reason to believe we were given to him through his sufferance of particular graces in order to avoid sin and be virtuous, with His Excellency being offered up in sacrifice, as was the case six days prior to his sacred demise, to bear the pain of all the Séminaire's sins, and having prayed to God to extirpate it on its own, in order to save all others in this said Séminaire, having also prayed to Him to entirely destroy the sin of the holy house and to maintain within it, to the end of time, the very sacred love and the genuine worship of God and the Very Holy Family - Jesus, Mary, and Joseph - and the Holy Angels, with His Excellency being fulfilled through a redoubling of the excessive pain he experienced from that day until the time of his death.

I cannot refrain, Dear Sir, from advising you that, when my memory invokes once again the stress and the fervor with which His Greatness pronounced these words and many others full of fire and love, his eyes and hands lifted toward the heavens, with extraordinary feelings of humility and lack of regard for himself, and a restoration of true confidence in God, notwithstanding, as observed, his immense indignity, my heart is penetrated to the point that I cannot hold back my tears; my wish at the time was for even a single word of his to reach - and set entirely afire - every person in Canada; since each one on its own could penetrate, move, and remove even the most hardened of hearts.



Msgr de Laval administers the sacrament of confirmation to the Prairie de la Madeleine mission. A drawing by Claude Chauchetière, s.j., 1686.

Hubert Houssard

On June 3, 1688, François de Laval, retired bishop, made his last trip from France back to Québec City. The Old Monsignor (which is how he would be referred to from then on) would never cross the ocean again - and in so doing, fulfilled his most cherished dream. Hubert Houssard, a young man of 21, was at the Bishop Emeritus's side for 20 years. He would become Msgr de Laval's faithful servant: his valet as well as his nurse. These laymen, who renounced their worldly goods and led a life of work and prayer serving the Séminaire, were known as "givens" to the community. Sick or well, the institution took charge of them. They were addressed as "Brother." Hubert Houssard served the Séminaire de Québec for 46 years. (Excerpted from the preface of to *Mgr de Laval vu par son serviteur* by Msgr Jean-Marie Fortier, Séminaire de Québec, 1961, 35 p.).

¹ Brother Houssard may be alluding to a narrative describing some extraordinary favors attributed to the intercession of God's Servant, written by Mr. Glandelet, who was then General Vicar of Québec. Unfortunately, this narrative is lost to us.

The great reliquary of Saint François de Laval

In response to the many requests from parishes, religious communities and Catholic movements, the great reliquary of Saint François de Laval will be available at the Centre in June.

To go with the reliquary, we have assembled a promotional kit, an animation guide and a booklet of prayers for your groups.

To receive the reliquary in your parish, send your request to the Center at **418 692-0228** or **centre@francoisdelaival.com**



Available at the Centre

TO ORDER:

centre@francoisdelaival.com

Delivery: 4 open business-days

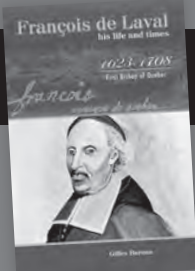
Shipping and handling: \$10

NEW!

François de Laval, his life and times

By Gilles Bureau

In response to the many requests to have an English version of the popular book *François de Laval et son époque* by Gilles Bureau, the Centre will publish in June *François de Laval, his life and times*, with updated information, an index, iconography, timeline, a chronological bookmark and a preface by Cardinal Gérald Cyprien Lacroix, Archbishop of Québec.



PRICE: \$25 (taxes non included)

DVD: François, apôtre de l'Amérique **[François, Apostle of America]**

This documentary presents François de Laval, the first bishop of Québec. Produced in 2014 by *Salt and Light*, in French only, 50 minutes.



PRICE: \$19.95 (taxes non included)

Écrits spirituels de François de Laval **[Spiritual Writings of François de Laval]**

By Msgr Hermann Giguère, P.H., 2014, 212 p. (in French only)

François de Laval is primarily known as a steadfast bishop and a great builder. While his legacy today comprises mostly official writings related to his duties, certain passages reveal him to be a warm and cordial man, highly solicitous of his flock, who believed that prayer should precede action. This is revealed by Msgr Hermann Giguère, P.H., professor emeritus of spiritual theology and history of spirituality at the Faculty of theology and religious studies of Université Laval (Québec). He is affiliated with the Séminaire de Québec, where he served as superior general from 2002 to 2012.



PRICE: \$25 (taxes non included)

Prier 15 jours avec François de Laval **[Pray for 15 days with François de Laval]**

By Doris Lamontagne, l.f.m., 2007

François de Laval was born in an era known as a time of mystiques. As a student of the Jesuits and influenced by the disciples of Bérulle, he is fascinated by the missionary ideal and Ignatian spirituality, and nurtured a life of prayer and abandon, inspired as he was by these two schools of spirituality. His passage to America is characterised by his spirit of complete abandon to divine Providence, lived without compromise.



PRICE: \$15 (taxes non included)



1



2



3



4

1- New: A novena

The Augustinians, Ursulines, Séminaire de Québec, and NDDQ parish authorities have joined forces to develop an annual novena (April 30 to May 8) titled *Sur les pas de nos témoins dans la foi* [Following in the footsteps of our witnesses in faith]. The novena is intended to help those who would like the opportunity to better know and deepen their faith through the example in spirituality set by Catherine de Saint-Augustin, Marie de l'Incarnation and François de Laval.

2- Reinforcements

The Centre is pleased to welcome back Sister Doris Lamontagne, I.f.m., to its team. Sr Doris ran the Centre for 12 years. She developed a strong attachment to Saint François de Laval and will further pursue her reflections on spirituality for the benefit of us all.

3- Relic of Saint François de Laval in France

A few months ago, a reliquary containing the relics of three Saint Canadian martyrs and Saint François de Laval was installed in the side chapel that had been recently dedicated to French Canadian saints in the church at the Collège de La Flèche.

4- Be prepared!

A new scout group came into being in Québec City last September. With the support of Father Brice Petitjean, parish priest of Saint-Charles-Garnier, Saint-Michel de Sillery, and Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin, Clément Vincent, a 23-year-old student, is looking for funding to purchase basic equipment. The mission of this scout group, which has been placed under Saint François de Laval's protection, is to promote the message and values of the Gospel. Part of the Federation of North American Explorers, this group is the first one based in Québec and composed entirely of francophones.

NEW!
Novalis published in 2007 a 108-page booklet entitled *François de Laval* where Jacques Gauthier, well known as a professor, author and public speaker, presents a summary of our new saint's life and work. Price: \$4.99 (taxes non included)

AVAILABLE IN QUÉBEC
Légende Dorée des enfants [Golden Legend for children] is a collection of short tales that present saints' lives to children of 5 to 10 years old. The French publisher Éditions Saint-Judes just added to its collection the booklet Saint François de Laval, Apostle of Canada, available at the Librairie Saint-Joseph in Québec. Paperback, 16 pages. Price: \$6.96 (taxes non included)



The first casket of François de Laval ▲

ICONOGRAPHY

Ceramic work by Rose-Anne Monna ►

Ceramist Rose-Anne Monna has created many works depicting François de Laval, the most recent of which was commissioned in 2014 by Cardinal Gérald Cyprien Lacroix, after François de Laval had been canonized. What sets this statuette apart is its blue color, proposed by the Archbishop of Québec, and the reworked preacher stance.

This is Ms. Monna's most recent ceramic depicting Msgr de Laval. Others, already known to us, include a work housed in the Grand Séminaire de Québec Chapel; another one, presented to Cardinal Louis-Albert Vachon in 1985, now located in the Archbishop's residence in Québec City; a third one, for Father Noël Baillargeon, in the Séminaire de Québec; and the one for Cardinal Marc Ouellet, presented in Rome in 2011.

(Source: *François de Laval et son époque*, 2011, p. 225)



Dimensions:
Statuette height: 55.25 cm (21 3/4")
Rectangular base: 28 x 15 x 45 cm
(11" x 5 7/8" x 1 3/4")



(Photo: Daniel Abel)

For many years now, Providence has led this Church - and, therefore, us - along paths that were extremely challenging and excruciating, both spiritually and temporally. This matters not to us, as long as His Holy Will is done. (Letter to his friend Henri-Marie Boudon, written in Québec City on November 6, 1677)



 Centre d'animation François-De Laval
 twitter.com/CentreFdL

www.francoisdelaval.com

Next issue:
December 2015