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## CARDINAL ROULEAU

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*BRO. TIMOTHY SPARKS, O. P.*



HE Holy Father at a consistory held on December the nineteenth of last year elevated, among others, Raymond-Marie Rouleau, O. P., Archbishop of Quebec, to the dignity of the "Roman purple." Cardinal Rouleau was born on April 6, 1866, at Isle-Verte, in the diocese of Rimouski, which is a part of the ecclesiastical province of Quebec. At baptism he received the name of Felix after his father. His early life was spent in the quiet rural district of his birthplace. The efforts of his parents to instruct the boy in the Faith were seconded by those of his uncle, Abbe Rouleau, then cure of Isle-Verte and later canon-cure of the Cathedral at Rimouski. The good example of his uncle, prayer and the grace of God drew the youth's heart to a desire for the sacerdotal life and accordingly he entered the seminary of Rimouski in September, 1879, where he began the studies of the classics.

At the seminary the farmer boy displayed every sign of a vocation to the priesthood. He was a healthy lad; he had a great love for his Eucharistic Lord; he was obedient; and, not least among his qualifications, he was a worker. His intellectual talents made him stand out above his fellow students. As a consequence it was a source of joy for all when he put on the black cassock at the end of his classical course in September, 1885. Shortly afterwards he met his first big cross: his health began to fail. The doctors pronounced his malady tuberculosis and held out little hope for his recovery. The early training at Isle-Verte however did not fail him. He prayed earnestly to the Blessed Virgin and through her intercession was restored to health. This favor of our Lady was not forgotten. It is said of him that he has never written a letter without mentioning

her, preached a sermon without invoking her, nor given a retreat without praising her.

A desire to lead a life of poverty, chastity and obedience and to lead it after the manner of the sons of St. Dominic caused the young seminarian to exchange his cassock for the Dominican habit. In 1885 the Dominicans established a novitiate at St. Hyacinthe where they had located in 1873. There he sought admission to the Order and on December 8, 1886, received the habit and took the name Raymond-Marie. For such a devout client of Mary that day held many joys: he received her name, he was invested with the scapular she gave to Blessed Reginald and he was permitted to wear her Rosary on his girdle.

On August 31, 1888, Brother Raymond-Marie took his simple vows. There was at that time no house of studies of the Order in Canada and the persecution of the religious in France prevented any organization of the studies there. As a result the newly professed brother was sent to the Dominican College of Corbara on the Island of Corsica. From the eminent professors at Corbara, among whom was Père Beaudouin, he received a complete scholastic training and imbibed their devotion to St. Thomas. His choice of the life of a Friar Preacher was irrevocably confirmed by his solemn profession on the feast of St. Dominic, August 4, 1891. A year later, July 31, 1892, he was ordained priest by Msgr. della Foata, Bishop of Ajaccio.

After finishing his studies at Corbara and receiving the degree of Lector in Sacred Theology, Pere Rouleau returned to his native land in August, 1894. His first assignment was to the convent of St. Hyacinthe where he filled the post of Novice-Master for three years. He imparted to his charges his own zeal for the glory of God and trained them as he himself had been trained at Corbara by the last companions of Lacordaire. His next task, which was to continue for twenty-five years, was the directions of studies, first as *Lector-Primarius* and later as Regent. In 1900, when the house of studies was changed to Ottawa and when the vicariate of Saint-Jean-Baptiste there became a formal convent, Pere Rouleau was made its first Prior.

In his new environment, the genius of Pere Rouleau had more chance to manifest itself. He exhibited ability as administrator and leader of men which developed as the years passed. Though Prior, he did not relinquish his professorial duties. He continued to occupy one after another, and sometimes simultaneously, the chairs of dogmatic, moral and pastoral theology, canon law and introduction to Holy Scripture. He was a professor devoted to his classes and to

his pupils, and his profound theoretical knowledge was strengthened by much practical experience. The Order recognized his services as a teacher by conferring on him the title of Master in Sacred Theology, June 12, 1909. Despite the multiplicity of Pere Rouleau's labors in the classroom, he did not forget that other very important part of his Dominican vocation—preaching the word of God. His vacations were spent in this work, especially in giving retreats to the clergy and Religious of Canada..

Outside the Order, too, the ability of Pere Rouleau was highly appreciated. His knowledge of the law of the Church brought him into frequent contact with the Bishops of Canada and with the Apostolic Delegate. He was greatly esteemed by the Metropolitans of Ottawa. For fifteen years he was *Defensor Vinculi* of the Archdiocesan Matrimonial Court and he served Msgr. Duhamel as theologian during the Plenary Council of Quebec. At various times the Holy See has employed him as Apostolic Visitor to religious communities.

Pere Rouleau was honored by his Dominican brothers at the Chapter in Ottawa, July, 1919, when they chose him as their Provincial. He carried on the work of his new office with his characteristic energy and devotedness to duty. In this as in his other positions he was always the kind father to all. Before the expiration of his office new honors were conferred upon him and new responsibilities placed on his shoulders. On March 9, 1923, he was designated Bishop of Valleyfield to succeed Msgr. Emard who had been promoted to the archbishopric of Ottawa, and his life in the cloister was broken. To leave his brothers was a real sorrow for Bishop Rouleau. "Not without profound sadness and poignant regret," he wrote to them, "do I leave my cell and our convents where for thirty-seven years I have received so many graces . . . . It is the regular psalmody of choir and our liturgy with the celebration of conventual Mass, the sweet melody of Compline and the blessing of the *Salve Regina*, . . . it is the refreshing liveliness of community recreations after long hours of silence that I shall miss."

Bishop-elect Rouleau was consecrated on May 22, 1923, in the Cathedral at Valleyfield by Msgr. P. di Maria, then Apostolic Delegate to Canada, assisted by Bishops Gauthier, coadjutor of Montreal, and Couturier, O. P., Bishop of Alexandria. The new prelate spent the next three years in caring for his flock with truly pastoral solicitude. These were years of progress for the diocese of Valleyfield and they served to prepare the Bishop for the higher honors that were to come as a recognition of his outstanding efficiency. He was ele-

vated on July 2, 1926, to the archbishopric of Quebec, the primatial see of Canada. He is its nineteenth bishop and ninth archbishop.

In the issue of July 13, 1926, the editor of the *Action Catholique* wrote of Quebec's new Ordinary:

The Holy Father has spoken. He calls to succeed Msgr. Paul-Eugene Roy an eminent religious, whose solid and brilliant qualities have already won the esteem and admiration of those highest in ecclesiastical and civil society. The solicitude of the Pope for French Canada and especially for this province of Quebec, where the first Catholic archbishop of North America had his seat, appears once again in the judicious choice he has just made. His Grace, Msgr. Rouleau, had already occupied the highest positions in his Dominican province when Rome chose him to succeed Msgr. Emard. His short stay at Valleyfield has sufficed to justify fully the confidence placed in him. Filled with experience and merits, he comes to put on the mantle of Laval and Plessis and their worthy successors.

Archbishop Rouleau made his solemn entry to his new see on the eighth of the following November amid great enthusiasm on the part of the citizens of Quebec. The pallium was conferred on him in the Cathedral of Quebec on February 24, 1927. The Archbishop had scarcely become accustomed to his new surroundings when he was notified early last December by Cardinal Gasparri, Papal Secretary of State, that he had been elevated to the Cardinalate.

On December 19, 1927, the prelate of Quebec was, with four other illustrious ecclesiastics, made a Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church. He is the third Ordinary of Quebec to be raised to that dignity. The Cardinal's titular Church in Rome is that of St. Peter in Montorio.

America is honored in receiving as its newest Cardinal, Raymond-Marie Rouleau, O. P. The Church of Canada and especially the Church of Quebec are to be congratulated on the Holy Father's choice of so worthy a successor to a Taschereau and a Bégin. The Order of Preachers is also honored to have in the Sacred College another of its sons to carry on the glorious traditions of such Cardinals as John Dominici, Cajetan and Alessandrino. To the Cardinal himself the fathers, students and novices of St. Joseph's Province extend their sincere felicitations and assure him of their prayers. They earnestly hope, too, that God may spare him many years to labor in his beloved Canada, bringing about the "peace of Christ in the reign of Christ."