

SYMPOSIUM ON PÈRE MARIE-JOSEPH LAGRANGE

30TH SEPTEMBER 2006 IN TOULON

FRANCE – Père Lagrange, founder of the Ecole Biblique of Jerusalem, passed from this world to the Father on March 10, 1938 at Saint-Maximin (Var). This is why his cause for beatification has been introduced by the bishop of Fréjus-Toulon, Mgr Joseph Madec, on the 9th of July 1987. Before, the General Chapter of the Order of Preachers held in Avila in August 1986 had asked for the opening of the process for the canonization of this friar venerated as a master of exegesis and a model of religious life.

Père Lagrange is frequently called «the new Saint Jerome of the 20th century» because of the amplitude and the quality of his biblical research, and he is considered a doctor in the Church. He is offered as an example to those who, according to J.Maritain¹, «have worked to free the intelligence, that is to say to help their contemporaries to accede to the Truth that makes one free» (cfr Jn 8, 32), (Act of the General Chapter of Avila, n° 67, 2).

On September 30, 2006, Mgr Dominique

every one of you, close to you,» Bro. Cremona said.

He feels he can do the job because he sees himself as one who can build bridges. «We have to build the bridges we need to bring back the people who have abandoned the church», he said.

Local authorities, among them the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition congratulated Mgr Cremona and paid tribute to Archbishop Mercieca.

A short biography: Paul was born to Joseph and Josephine Cremona on January 25, 1946, in Valletta. He has an older brother, Lino, and a younger sister, Marie-Louise. Bro. Paul joined the Dominican Order following his studies at the Lyceum. He made his first profession in the Order on September 29, 1963 and was ordained priest on March 22, 1969. He obtained a Licentiate in Theology and Philosophy from the St. Thomas Aquinas College, the Dominican Studium in Rabat, Malta. In 1973 he obtained a Doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, with a thesis bearing the name «The

Concept of Peace in Pope John XXIII».

Bro. Cremona served the Dominican Family in Malta as Master of Novices and Students, as professor at the St. Thomas Aquinas College, Rabat, as conventual prior and as Prior Provincial. He was also Provincial Promoter for the Dominican Family and Lay Dominicans. He was twice parish priest, in Guardamangia and Sliema, and President of the Conference of Major Superiors of Malta. He was President of the Council of Formators in Religious Life and Archbishop's Delegate for Religious Life.

In 1994, the late Pope John Paul II awarded the medal Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice (P.E.P.) to Bro. Cremona as an appreciation for his dedication to the Catholic Church.

IDI joins the Dominican Family in Malta, and asks God's blessings on Bro Paul Cremona so that he could be a courageous leader of the local people who are God's children living on the Island of Paul.

Sources:

<http://www.di-ve.com>,

<http://www.timesofmalta.com>,

<http://www.maltastar.com>



Rey, bishop of Fréjus-Toulon, organized a symposium dedicated to Père Lagrange at Castille-La Crau on the occasion of the launching of two years of reflection on the Word of God in his diocese. Many people – about five hundred persons representing the active members of the diocese – took part joyfully in the conferences and the celebration of the Word of God. Fr. Marc Aillet, vicar general, opened the symposium. The historian Gerard Cholvy, professor emeritus of the Paul-Valéry University of Montpellier, spoke about the tormented era in which Père Lagrange lived, marked by the modernism that called the Bible into question. The rationalism of certain modernists aspired to a «world without mystery». Père Lagrange answered the scientific critique with scientific critique, from which arose his attachment to professional competence in the historical and biblical studies. Bro Bernard Montagnes, a Dominican friar from the convent of Toulouse, biographer of Père Lagrange, developed the theme «Marie-Joseph Lagrange, a daring pioneer of the historical critique of the Bible and faithful servant of the faith of the Church».

An exhibition of eight panels on Père Lagrange and a DVD were produced by Jacques Fichfeux² and the audio-visual service of the diocese of Toulon. They recall the life and work of Père Lagrange based on photos from the archives of the Dominican Province of Toulouse: family photos, photos of excavations in the desert of Israel, photos of the Ecole Biblique of Jerusalem, and of the Dominican life in Saint-Maximin.

As a vice-postulator for the cause of beatification of Père Lagrange, I had the pleasure and the honour of presenting the stages we have already covered and those forthcoming in this cause, their implications and as well as the graces received by couples, families, priests and religious. The work that was accomplished by a number of historians and theologians in view of the beatification should soon arrive at the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome, where a group of consultants, theologians and cardinals will pronounce themselves on the heroic virtues of Père

Lagrange who would then be declared «venerable». At present he is invoked as a «Servant of God». In order for a venerable to be declared blessed a miracle which is recognized by the Church is needed. Following St. Dominic who, when he was dying, exhorted his Dominican friars not to be discouraged because «he would be more fruitful in heaven than on earth», today Père Lagrange is responding by spreading graces on those who put their trust in him. This is shown by the many testimonies the *La Revue du Rosaire* receives.

Père Lagrange is not only a model for researchers but he can also illuminate the ways of everybody, from childhood to old age. His younger years were moulded by the Marian prayer, the education he received from his parents, fervent and demanding; his apostolic youth was fashioned by catechesis and the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, by his consecration to study, by his spirit so enamoured with light and truth, by his obedience in times of ordeal, by his humility that led him to regret his bursts of anger in the face of the ignorance of youth, by his sense of loyalty and justice, by his lack of bitterness and rancour, and by his inner life soothed by the Rosary and the prayer in Gethsemane in communion with the Passion of Jesus.

During his talk, Fr. Marie-Wladimir Gaudrat, abbot at the Cistercian abbey of Lérins, situated in front of the bay of Cannes, presented *lectio divina* as a means by which to put the Word of God in the heart of Christian life supported by quotes from the Fathers of the Church, like that of St. Gregory the Great³: «The Bible grows with him who reads it» (Commentary on the Prophet Ezekiel).

A celebration of the Word of God ended this day of study and prayer. Presided by Mgr Dominique Rey, it gave an important place to the participation of laypeople. Representatives from the different parishes of the diocese were divided into groups in order to display banners on which one could read: «Your Word, a light for my path» (Psalm 119); «I am the Light of the world» (Christ the

INAUGURATION OF THE NEW CHAPEL OF THE MONASTERY OF OUR LADY OF PEACE, RWEZA-BURUNDI

BURUNDI - Our new chapel was blessed on the 10th of June 2006 by the bishop during a celebration of the Eucharist. It was a day full of celebration and joy. On that same day Sr. Justine-Marie and Sr. Rose-Marie made their temporary profession in the Order of Preachers. Many invited guests were present including the families of the two sisters.

In fact, since 1999, we had launched an appeal to the convents and monasteries of our Order and elsewhere for us to get some financial help. Some gave us material help, the others offered their prayers.

First, part of the monastery was built, and then the cowshed. And now we have a big chapel which offers enough space for us and for the faithful who live nearby to pray.

The novitiate was blessed on the same day as the chapel. From now on we can welcome young ladies who would like to come and share our life whereas before the old sisters and the aspirants shared

the same roof and also, the number of sisters surpassed that of the cells. Other small rooms are at our disposal such as the parlours, library, classroom, linen room, laundry ...

This construction work was all done during a difficult period in which our country was shaken by civil war and the faltering economy of the country provoked some very annoying consequences such as the increase in prices which challenged us in our estimates.

Our monastery was attacked at gunpoint three times, and this plunged us into a climate of fear and uncertainty for the future. However, the Lord protected us thanks to your prayers.

Today, we are trying to build the walls (enclosure) so as to protect ourselves a little from thieves, knowing that unless the Lord guards the city, in vain the guard keeps watch.

We heartily thank all those who helped us realise all the above mentioned work. You have accomplished the words that Saint Paul attributes to Jesus: «There is more joy in giving than in receiving» (Acts 20, 35). May God bless you and repay you with much more than what you ask from him.

On our part, we pride ourselves in the Lord and we do not cease to give thanks to the Lord while offering each and every one of you to him.

A novena of thanksgiving for all these marvellous things will be held during the nine days in preparation for the solemnity of our father Saint Dominic.

We assure you of our prayers. With gratitude.

Your sisters in Saint Dominic.

► Pantokrator⁴ showing the gospel); «2006-2008, Years of the Word».

Bro Manuel Rivero op

¹ Jacques Maritain, philosopher and French diplomat (1882-1973).

² It is possible to ask for the text of the talk from Jacques Fichfeux. Tel: 06 09 33 91 69.

³ Gregory the Great, pope (590-604).

⁴ Pantokrator, in Greek « Ruler of all, Sovereign Teacher », is a representation of Christ in his majesty.

ORIGINAL: FRENCH



Sr. Mbonimpa Marie-Madeleine op
prioress

ORIGINAL: FRENCH

