

Apart from the intense grief caused by the loss of a pastor sincerely loved, Monseigneur Bourget, designated in advance as his successor, saw with great dread, the burden of the episcopacy falling upon his own shoulders. He had seen authority at too close range, and he knew too well its obligations to aspire to the position. With the greatest apprehension, therefore, did he assume charge of the Bishopric of Montreal on the twenty-third day of April, 1840. In a letter to his diocesans, written on the third of May, he announced the event with expressions of the most profound humility. After deploring in grief-stricken accents, the untimely loss of his regretted predecessor, he added :

«The sorrow his death causes you, Our very dear Brethren, is all the keener because you cannot comfort yourselves for his loss in seeing the mantle of the episcopacy falling upon one so little qualified to worthily replace a prelate so wise. Alas! We are far from having the necessary dispositions for the proper fulfillment of the glorious functions of the apostolate; and, it is to be feared that perhaps God has permitted our elevation thereto, only to punish us for our innumerable sins, and to chastise you for the little attention you have paid to the graces you have received through the ministry of your late excellent pontiff.»