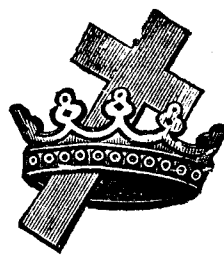


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FATHER LANGEVIN.

BY LEA FAIL.

[The Northwest Review has been officially informed of the appointment of the Very Rev. Father Langevin O. M. I., D. D. and Vicar of Missions to the Archbishopric of St. Boniface, rendered vacant by the death of the late lamented Mons. Tache. The first intimation of the appointment reached Winnipeg on January 2. It was in the shape of a telegram from Rome. Nothing was authoritatively known however until January 29, when Father Langevin returned from a visit to Bishop Grandin. Among the many letters awaiting him was one from Very Rev. Father Soullier, Superior General of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. This communication conveyed to Father Langevin the news that Rome had selected him to be the next Archbishop, and was official in its nature, inasmuch as the Propaganda had notified Father Soullier, and he in turn notified Father Langevin. The papal brief is probably now on its way, and will in all likelihood reach here within the next two weeks. After it has been received steps will be taken towards completing arrangements for the consecration, which will take place in the cathedral of St. Boniface. Who the consecrating Prelate will be is not yet known, nor is the date of consecration decided on. It is expected that the ceremony will be one of the most imposing ever witnessed in the Northwest; prelates from the East and West will be in attendance; priests from all the outlying missions will also assemble in St. Boniface on that occasion. On the evening of the day of the consecration special commemorative services will be held in St. Mary's church, Winnipeg, when the new archbishop will officiate. Steps are now being taken to present a gold pectoral cross to Archbishop-elect Langevin, after his consecration. This will be the gift of St. Mary's parishioners. On Sunday last Father Langevin relinquished the pastorate of St. Mary's church, and installed Rev. Father Guillet O. M. I., his successor.]

When, in the roll of time the veil concealing the future from the present is lifted up, when the past with all its intricate workings is laid bare, how easy it is for us to discern the many little causes which had been silent workers towards the accomplishment of some particular fact whose existence we are now beholding. This is the thought which comes to my mind as I pen these lines intended to convey to the reader my impressions of the man whom Rome has chosen to be our next spiritual ruler. I distinctly remember talking with the Very Rev. Father Langevin at the door porch of St. Mary's presbytery one clear calm night of the summer that has just past. We both were looking in the direction of St. Boniface and speaking of that saintly man then in the throes of his deathly agony. 'Twas the night which immediately preceded the morrow of the demise of the Archbishop. "Do you think the Archbishop will recover from his illness?" I said to Father Langevin. "I have very grave doubts upon the matter" he answered, and he then shook his head ominously. A moment or two of silence ensued followed by a deep sigh from the good priest. "What will we do if God calls him away? What will we do?" He muttered. I then felt that a priest was in very truth praying the Creator of all to spare the life of the Holy Archbishop. The sad event of the following morning must not now be recalled, when Catholics of the Northwest have occasion to rejoice. Not that we Catholics have forgotten that holy man, that much loved father, that revered Archbishop, Mons. Tache who now lies cold in death beneath the cathedral of St. Boniface. No indeed, for the name and memory of Archbishop Tache will live forever. But we have too great occasion to rejoice, and to be glad, and to be ever grateful to Rome for having given us as successor to our departed Prelate, another in every way worthy to walk in his footsteps, to fill the chair which death made vacant at St. Boniface, in a word, for having chosen to be the next Archbishop of St. Boniface, our spiritual ruler and father that good and holy man, the Very Rev. Father Langevin O. M. I.

Upon special request of the Northwest Review have I undertaken to furnish to its readers a narrative of the life and character of the man who in very short will be Archbishop of St. Boniface. True it is, I have not known him longer than a year, but during that time I have met him often, have made a study of his disposition—never for a moment dreaming that I would soon be called upon to write his biography as it were—but because I always saw in him a something

which bespoke his greatness, which clearly pointed out to my own mind at least the characteristics of the true missionary of Christ. I have known him only since he first took charge of the pastorate of St. Mary's church, Winnipeg, and upon this knowledge alone my remarks concerning him are founded. The brief biographical sketch of Father Langevin, herewith given is taken from the Northwest.

Biography.

Very Rev. Father Louis Philip Adelard Langevin, O. M. I., D. D., and Vicar of Missions, was born at St. Isidore, county La Prairie, Province of Quebec, on the twenty-third day of August, 1855. His father is Francois Theophile Langevin, a near relative of Sir Hector Langevin, to whom the present Father Langevin is said to bear striking resemblance in look and voice; and his mother was a Pamela Racicot. Both parents are descendants of families noted in their respective circles, and are highly educated, being possessed, in addition, of unusual natural gifts. They are both alive today and will now receive the consolation of hearing of the elevation of their son to one of the highest positions in the Catholic church—a position rendered doubly honored by the greatness of the man who for well nigh half a century filled it. Rev. Father Langevin has six brothers and one sister, one of his uncles is a priest, being a canon, and bursar of the Archdiocese of Montreal.

When a boy Adelard Langevin received his early education at Montreal, entering at the age of eleven the Sulpician college in that city. Here he remained until he had attained the age of nineteen, when he became professor of classics, which position he filled for the three following years. He then spent two years in the Grand Seminary at Montreal. While here he received tonsure, minor orders, and finally became a sub-leacon. He also acted in the capacity of private secretary to Archbishop Fabre. Before leaving the Grand Seminary the young ecclesiastic was ordained deacon. At the expiration of his term here he went to St. Mary's college, Montreal, which is under the care and guidance of the Jesuit Order. Here he remained one year, filling the position of Master of Studies.

BECOMES AN OBLATE.

In 1881 Rev. L. P. A. Langevin, as deacon, entered the Order of Oblates of Mary Immaculate, commencing his novitiate at Lachine, near Montreal. In 1882, he, having completed his novitiate, took perpetual vows and was ordained a priest in the chapel of the Good Shepherd, Montreal. The first three years of his sacerdotal career were spent as a missionary Father in connection with the Oblate church of St. Peter's, Montreal. He then was moved to the Catholic University of Ottawa where he assumed the chair of Professor of Theology. During the next eight years he continued in this pursuit acting also as Director of the Grand Seminary and subdean of the faculty of theology. In 1892 the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him.

Archbishop Tache first met Father Langevin in 1883, and seemed at once to take a great liking for the then young priest. In fact it is told now when Father Langevin did at last come to Manitoba, Archbishop Tache said: "It is ten years that I have been wanting you."

On the first of July, 1893, Father Langevin's labors were changed from those of a professor and director to that of an untiring and active missionary. On that date he arrived in Manitoba whether he was sent by the Superior General, to fill the position of Superintendent of all the Oblate missions of the Northwest—this was at the special request of the late Archbishop Tache. Early in 1894 Father Langevin was appointed to the pastorate of St. Mary's, Winnipeg, which position was vacated by the removal of Father Fox to Rat Portage.

St. Mary's Pastor.

It is from that date that the writer intends to start his own remarks. On an occasion last spring I visited Archbishop Tache for the purpose of asking his advice on a matter of importance. After listening to all I had to say he re-

ferred me to Father Langevin whom he said was "better versed in such matters" "It is ad Josephum." At the time I did think it strange that so experienced a man as the late Archbishop would send me to Father Langevin, especially concerning something in which I knew he himself would naturally be well versed. But so great was his confidence in Father Langevin that he referred me to him, rather than give me advice from

interested enter into a project with greater zeal and fervor.

HE IS AN HUMBLE MAN.

Humility is one of the very prominent traits of Father Langevin. Learned as he is possessed of elocutionary powers in no small degree, advanced to the high position of Vicar of Missions, he never acted in any way other than as a humble missionary. He was to the world at large on the same footing as his co-



FATHER LANGEVIN.

himself. This confidence dates back to 1883, and lasted to the dying breath of the Archbishop. It is stated by those well informed on the subject that Archbishop Tache procured the coming of Father Langevin to Manitoba for the sole and only reason that he might become his successor in the Archbishopric of St. Boniface. It would require no very vivid imagination to conceive that one of the last wishes which the dying prelate entertained, one of his latest prayers, was that Providence would furnish as successor a man worthy of the position, a man capable by reason of his piety, his wisdom and his learning to continue the good work so auspiciously begun by Mons. Provencher, and so faithfully furthered by himself. That his desire has been ratified before God is amply manifest today, and there is no doubt that that venerable old man can now look down upon his recently orphaned children, and rejoice, for the third father to whose care they are entrusted will certainly not be neglectful of them and their interests.

Many are the salient features of Father Langevin. As I consider his doings during the year just past, I try hard to recall one which might be more prominent than another. His earnestness is a marvel; his humility is of the genuine type; his piety is writ in his every action and word; his zeal in missionary labors is unfathomable; his stern determination to follow out the tenets of the Church in their entirety is too well known; his endearing qualities as a priest, a father are on the tongue of everyone who knows him; his love for his fellow priests is deep-founded. Let me then take these up in the order named.

AN EARNEST WORKER.

Everything Father Langevin does, or attempts is done well. There is no half doing with him. He never ceases at that which he has begun until he brings it to a successful issue. Be it the getting up of a church choir, the bringing about of a new society or organization, be it what you will, once Father Langevin undertakes it, success is insured. This I venture to state, is not my own individual opinion; it is the universal belief of those who know him, and especially of his parishioners. His very presence inspires courage, gives renewed hope, fresh vigor to an undertaking, and people once they see him

laborers. Owing to my own calling in life I have had ample opportunity of perceiving how truly humble a man Father Langevin is. Several times I took occasion to report his sermons for one of the daily papers, and in every instance would furnish as near as possible his exact words. Afterwards when he would meet me he would say "you have put words into my mouth which I could not think of. Gracious, I could not have used as fine a language as that. The ideas are all right, but that is not my language." I would then assure him that I reported his sermon accurately, and yet he always seemed to think himself incapable of the efforts ascribed to him. The lowliest of his people could approach him as easily as the most opulent, and to the poor as well as to the rich he extended the hand of greeting. There was nothing whatever in his look, mien or word which bespoke pride. On the contrary humility was stamped upon his very countenance. And this is, perhaps, the one characteristic which endears him to all those who know him. In very truth he is the simple, meek black robed friar going round among the poor even as his Master.

HE IS A PIOUS PRIEST.

How often do we meet with priests who though holy, are not as pious as we would expect a priest to be. Somehow or other we Catholics expect a great deal from our spiritual Fathers, and what is there on earth which we love and venerate and respect, more than we do a good saintly priest. We are never surfeited with too much sanctity in our clerics. The more we see in them the more are we drawn towards them, for we realize that they are God's anointed. Surely Father Langevin is not wanting in this respect. Words of mine are not required to speak of Father Langevin's holiness. Whether celebrating the mass, or singing the psalms with the choir boys, he is always the same, a good holy priest, inciting by his example his congregation to pray, inspiring them with pious thoughts. Even on the street, there is a look of sanctity on his countenance, and more than once have I heard Protestants remark, "what a good face he has," meaning of course in their way of putting it what a saintly man he is. Yes, Father Langevin is a credit and glory to the Catholic church, a worthy disciple of Jesus Christ.

"IGNIS ARDENS."

He is an "Ignis Ardens," full of zeal, activity and energy in his calling. Few there are who know how really much he labors for the salvation of souls. The majority of his congregation see him once or twice on Sundays; they listen to his burning words, and go away filled with deep impressions. But they never for a moment dream that perhaps that sermon was being pondered over during a long and lonely drive through the bleak prairie, when on the way to some distant mission. They perhaps think that two, or six hours were devoted to its preparation in a comfortable room surrounded with everything that he might wish for. Such, I can assure my readers, is not the case. Father Langevin has never a spare moment. On Monday morning early, he may have to leave for an outlying mission, either to hear the confession of another Father, or to administer to the wants of perhaps the poor Indians. It matters not to him where the call be from, or for what purpose, if his presence is required at a certain place, there he will go, and if necessary to do so will deprive himself of sleep and rest and comfort. Speaking of his zeal the Northwest says:

"As a worker the coming Archbishop has no equal. He never knows what rest is; he never seeks it, always on the alert, preaching oftentimes twice on a Sunday, fasting till after the noonday mass, taking a hurried trip to some distant mission, driving in the cold of night eager in his missionary labors, Father Langevin is a worthy follower of the indefatigable prelate whom he succeeds. Many a time has he been heard to say "Would that I had more time; I have so much to do that I cannot really attend to everything." Necessarily he does himself injustice, for he cannot devote sufficient time to preparations of his sermons."

FULL OF DETERMINATION.

The Archbishop-elect is most determined. Nothing will daunt him, nothing will persuade him to turn aside from the course of action which he considers proper. In this regard many may consider him an extremist, for his utterances from the pulpit, when occasion requires are certainly of the very strongest nature. Only recently did he display this characteristic. Speaking of the question of Catholics contracting the tie of marriage in a Protestant church before a Protestant clergyman, he said that Catholics were at full liberty to leave the Catholic church if they felt so inclined, but while Catholics they would be obliged to comply with the tenets of the Catholic church, and could not under any circumstance be justified in contracting marriage before a minister of another denomination. He said he would not absolve them, for he could not. The Archbishop alone could deal with them. In connection with this feature I might mention his attitude on the School question. From the very beginning of his pastorate in St. Mary's, he has taken a strong stand in the matter of our Catholic schools. Over and over again has he been heard to say from the pulpit "our schools will be retained, yes, if we had to go to Europe to beg for money to sustain them." His utterances on this point have been noticed by the press, especially by such newspapers as are opposed to us. In fact I remember having read in a Toronto paper a remark akin to the following: "Father Langevin from the pulpit of St. Mary's Church denounced the present system of Manitoba Schools. He said the School Act of 1890 was not a law, for the first principle of law was justness. And this is the man whom rumor says will be the next Archbishop of St. Boniface." No longer is it a rumor, it is now a confirmed fact, and perhaps those same eastern papers will say "what a terrible man is to become Archbishop of St. Boniface!" Yes, he is terrible, if being a staunch supporter of Catholic rights be terrible. There is no doubt whatever that the Catholic school cause will be advanced under his leadership. He will now be a tower of strength to it. Asked by a reporter as to what he thought the outcome of the decision of the Privy Council would be he said:

"I cannot tell you any more than that we Catholics will continue to demand redress of our grievances, until redress be given. On Feb. 15 a petition will be laid before the Governor-General in Co-

uncil. That petition will be signed by every Catholic of the Dominion. This question is no longer confined to Manitoba; it now is of interest to the Catholics of the entire Dominion, and regardless of party we Catholics will be united. Today the School question is more alive than ever. We feel that our rights will be restored."

HE IS AN ORATOR.

I have had the fortune to have heard some of the greatest pulpit orators of the present day, among whom I might mention the names of the late Father Tom Burke, and Archbishop Ryan of Philadelphia. Father Langevin of course cannot be placed on a par with either of those. But nevertheless he is a preacher of most powerful eloquence, an eloquence which appeals strongly not only to the feelings but to the intellect of his hearers. When in the pulpit and speaking upon common place topics he does not seem to possess that fluency which is his when discussing subjects of a higher order. His language on such occasions is not nearly as good as when he loses himself in flights of oratory. Then he never knows what it is to stop for the correct word or phrase, but his sentences flow smoothly out unimpeded by any hindrance. People have been seen to shed tears while listening to him and on one occasion especially he completely captivated the congregation. Father Langevin has but one superior in the Catholic church in Manitoba. He is by nature a pulpit orator, and at times when discussing suitable subjects ascends into realms of highest eloquence. Lamenting as he does from the difficulties of a racial tongue, his power as a preacher is a little impaired, but so intense is his fervor that either he masters all such obstacles in the climax of his oratory, or his hearers becoming lost to themselves, forget for the time the taint of racial accent which is his. Those who heard him from the pulpit on that Sabbath day when the remains of Archbishop Tache were lying in state, will not soon forget him. Rarely if ever was heard such an outpouring of sorrowful emotions, such a spontaneous burst of oratory as was that when turning to the vacant throne he cried out "Our father is dead." That was one of those occasions which people remember forever; it was as when the orator was at his best, one in which Father Langevin surpassed himself.

This then is the man whom Rome has chosen to be Archbishop Tache's successor, this is he who very soon will be in possession of the See of St. Boniface. I trust that from the outline which I have given of him, enough will be gleaned by my readers to show them that Father Langevin is no ordinary man, but on the contrary one among many, fitted by nature and education to fill the high place which Mons. Provencher occupied and from which Mons. Tache only recently passed away. "God always raises up the right man in the right time and at the right place," is an adage most applicable in the present case. No more fitted priest could have been chosen for the highest position which the church offers in the Northwest, and there is no doubt whatever that the appointment will tend towards the marked advancement of Catholic interests in this country. Before concluding this brief sketch of the Archbishop-elect, I feel it my duty to state that what I have written herein is prompted solely by the affection and esteem which I bear towards Father Langevin. During the short time I have known him, he has proved himself to be my truest friend, a kind father, a faithful director, and above all a noble priest. I feel that I have done nothing but my duty in penning these lines, and I am heartily glad that such an occasion has been offered to me. As Archbishop of St. Boniface, Father Langevin will not be in such close contact to those with whom he has labored during the year past. But he will not forget us, neither will we forget him. He will always look upon us as his earliest friends in Manitoba.

We in turn must consider that in Fr. Langevin we will ever have an unflinching leader in the Catholic cause, one who fearlessly will proclaim our rights and until such be granted will never for a moment cease fighting for them.

Then, dear Father, we will say farewell to you as our pastor. Our words are not needed to convince you of our love. Accept this offering from one of the many who rejoice with you in your elevation, who would feign have you remain among us, but who are willing you should go, that the entire country should reap the reward. That your career as Archbishop of St. Boniface be "ad multos annos" fraught with prosperity and happiness and success is the sincere wish of one of your many friends who subscribes himself
LEA FAIL.