

Life of Mgr. Guérard des Lauriers, O.P.

By Fr. Giuseppe Murro, I.M.B.C.



Early Life

Raymond Michel Charles Guérard des Lauriers was born in Suresnes, near Paris, on the 25th of October, 1898, at 10:45pm, at 27 Barrières road, the son of Paul Louis Guérard des Lauriers and of Lucie Madeleine Lefebvre, his wife. He was then baptised in the parish of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in Suresnes, on the 24th of December, 1898; his godfather was Charles Guérard des Lauriers, and his godmother was A. Lefebvre.

Despite his first name being Raymond, he was always called Michel by his family.

Since his childhood, he displayed a particular disposition towards study, revealing an uncommon intelligence: “a genius”, we would say. Owing to this, he had excellent grades even from public school, in Suresnes: in 1908 for “maps”, and in 1909 for “his work, his care and his conduct”.

He received a Christian education at home: his mother had great faith and great piety. He said of her that she was a saint. Michel must have made a good First Communion, since it is to this that mother attributed the grace of a vocation. He received the Sacrament of Confirmation on the 25th of April, 1910, also in the Parish of the Immaculate Heart.

After the painful trial for all of the family of the death of his father in 1913, Michel enrolled in the *Lycée Chaptal*. In November of 1915, he was admitted as a postulate in the Third Order of the Marists, who had meditation as a daily exercise of piety; after the novitiate, he made his profession on the 26th of March, 1917. It was at this moment that Michel began to think of a vocation. However, it was also in March of 1917 that he had to interrupt his studies, owing to conscription: he was conscripted into the 113th Regiment of the Infantry; afterwards, he assisted at the *Centre d’Instruction* at St-Cyr, from the 1st of September, 1918, until the 1st of February, 1919, during which time he even participated in a training course for the use of a machine gun en Granville, and he was mentioned as “very able”. This is the description of Michel given by the commander of the 7th Company of St-Cyr, Captain Regard: “*A cold and methodical spirit, giving little, but reflecting a lot, knowing its terrain thoroughly; of a superior education, he will be first-rate chief and a brilliant officer*”. But the designs of Providence will be very different for Michel.

After the War

He left the army to go to the Lycée Chaptal towards the end of 1919. He was admitted to the *École Polytechnique* in 1920; he left in 1921 to enter the *École Normale Supérieure*. In 1924, he obtained a professorship in Mathematics, and afterwards received scholarships in Paris and Rome, where he studied with the professor Levi-Civita (1925-26), and went to the *Accademia dei Lincei*.

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Here we must emphasise especially the good influence that was Fr. G. Massenet, the parish priest of the parish of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. A devout and zealous priest, whom all considered as a kind of new *Curé d'Ars*. Very humble, he categorically rejected all of the promotions offered to him, and ended his life piously as the honorary priest of Suresnes. Fr. Massenet knew Michel thoroughly, and always maintained contact with him during his military service, his studies, his stay in Italy: he could thus wisely advise him about his future, either for a vocation, or for a solution to the difficulties that were presented to him. He did not hide his joy when Michel made his decision and then, before his departure, he gave him some final advice: *"We have to almost continuously separate ourselves from the effects that circumstances present to us. I understand, too, your pain in abandoning the places that are dear to you for the memories they bring you. Can we not say in this respect the words of St. Paul: quotidie morior (I die every day)? In one of the readings of the Breviary, a Holy Father tells us that life is nothing but a prolonged death. It is true for the heart... and what is marvellous is that which you tell me: aside from all the sacrifices you must make, in the depths of your heart you are happy, and you would not change your place for another! This is what Jesus did for those that surrender themselves totally for him: with one hand he takes away all that they are most attached to, and with the other he leaves them a thousand times more than that which they gave. You will feel this more and more during your novitiate..."* (Letter of 29th of July, 1926)

Vocation

Michel's mother, Lucie Madeleine Lefebvre, lived on faith. She came to Italy twice with her son; she visited basilicas, churches, cathedrals, participating in the religious ceremonies. During her second stay in Rome, in April of 1926, she was informed of Michel's vocation.

She wrote in her travel diary, with the date of the 1st of April, Holy Thursday, *"Michel told me the great decision... before the image of Saint Thomas Aquinas..."*

he will enter the Dominicans. Praised be God! May His will be done entirely, and may he make me calm and courageous.”

Two days later, after participating in the Office of Holy Saturday, she wrote, *“Office of St. Joachim. Communion at the feet of the resurrected Saviour, aside from the terrible separations that frighten my weakness, everything within me sings in thanksgiving, courage, peace, in praise to so good and merciful a God that, in an instant, can change the face of all things. Ordination in St. John Lateran. Oh, marvellous and consoling spectacle!”*

Upon returning to Suresnes, on Saturday the 17th of April, she would go to the church the same day: *“I go without delay to the feet of the Virgin of Suresnes to thank her for having protected her beloved little son from all armed patrols, the child which had been marked on the day of his First Communion; She could not abandon him! No, she will always protect him, as the best of all mothers, right? I hope that he does the work of God, and works for His glory”.*

Michel had been previously an exemplary young man, not only in his studies, but also in his moral life: serious, devout, he made an effort to practice the evangelical counsels: *“I never went to the theatre, to shows, this seemed strange to me”*, he would later recount. He went every week to see Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, and he felt attracted towards the Dominicans.

But what is it that made Michel pursue a vocation, and the order of Saint Dominic? One afternoon, he had stayed in the convent of the Angelicum for the singing of Compline, and so, on seeing the star in the painting of St. Dominic, and of the image of St. Peter Martyr, he had *“a kind of vision. An immense joy to have found ... that the good God had chosen me to belong to the Order of truth. It was the end of my whole youth, I was 28 years old”*. And he explained again: *“It was a kind of intuition. The same habitually beautiful images had become, for me, a kind of powerful protection from Heaven. I saw the splendour of the Truth, the splendour of the Divine Truth.”*

The Seminarian

Michel entered the novitiate of Amiens in September of 1926, at 28 years of age. He took the habit on the 23rd of the same month, with the name of Br. Louis-Bertrand. He made his religious profession on the 23rd of September, 1927.

Due to the anticlerical laws of the early 1900s, in France, the religious orders had been forced into exile; for this reason, the novices had to continue their studies abroad. The Dominicans had their Seminary of Saulchoir in Kain, Belgium, near the French border. The rector of the seminary was Fr. Hérís, the author of an important commentary on the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas. This study did not make Br. Louis-Bertrand forget his desire for the conversion of souls: on the 15th of October, 1927, he enrolled in the Arch-confraternity of prayer for the conversion of Israel, and, on the 3rd of February, 1928, in another, for the return to the Catholic Faith of the people of Northern Europe.

In the seminary, his classmates held him in high esteem, being because he was the oldest, being because of the studies he had done, being ... for the good humour that made him so friendly. And so, he was thus already known for his interest in speculative matters, whilst material things left him largely indifferent.

On the 6th and 7th of October, he received the tonsure and the minor orders from the Bishop of Tournai, Monsignor Rasneur. On the 24th of September, 1930, Monsignor Drapiez ordained him to the subdiaconate; Mgr. Rasneur ordained him to the diaconate on the 21st of December, and to the priesthood on the 29th of July, 1932, in the Church of the Convent of Saulchoir. He celebrated his first Mass in his city of birth, Suresnes.

The Professor

After ordination, his superiors decided that he would continue his studies so as to be able to teach. During the summer of 1932, the Faculty of Lille asked of the Order of St. Dominic a professor of differential and integral calculus, since the professorship had been left vacant due to the illness of its holder. The

Provincial, Fr. Padé, proposed Br. Louis-Bertrand, who had yet to finish his undertaken studies. The latter, foreseeing the objective difficulty in following the theology courses in Saulchoir and giving courses in Lille, wrote to the Father Provincial, to whom he was subject, who responded: “It was Fr. Hérís who sent you, not me.” When Br. Louis-Bertrand spoke of this to Fr. Hérís, he responded: “It was the Father Provincial, not I.” So, Br. Louis-Bertrand could do little else than accept, without knowing who had sent the order.

On the 23rd of March, 1933, he obtained the title of Lector, which in the Dominican Order is equivalent to a master’s degree. From 1933, he was a professor of philosophy at Saulchoir, teaching epistemology and philosophy of science.

In these years, he contributed to the *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Theologiques*, as well as the *Bulletin Thomiste*.

On the 26th of November, 1934, he received the title of senior member of the Faculty of Lille. And those who saw this could not forget that he was the only professor of the Faculty who knelt down at the start of a lesson to recite the prayer, *Veni Sancte Spiritus*.

In 1939, thanks to a serious state of fatigue, he submitted his resignation in Lille, to the great discontent of the Rector, who had kept him with great pleasure.

The anticlerical laws in France had fallen into disuse, and the religious orders could return: the Dominicans of Kain obtained in Etoilles, near Paris, a house that also received the name of “Saulchoir”. The move happened in two stages, firstly with philosophy in 1938, and then with theology in 1939; it seemed that Br. Louis-Bertrand. went the first time; in any case, it certainly happened by 1939.

In the Second World War, after general conscription, Father was called to service on the 9th of September, 1939, with the rank of reserve lieutenant; he was assigned to the technical branch of the artillery, where his knowledge was

used in the production of shooting. After a stay in Tarbes, he was demobilised on the 10th of September, 1940.

It was at this time that he thought of a Carthusian vocation. He wrote to various convents, one of which was the *Grande Chartreuse*. And it was just a few years afterwards that he was admitted to test his vocation, something which he did not continue. Mgr. Guérard lived always with a great interior silence; perhaps it was because of this that he thought of pursuing a Carthusian vocation, but even in this, he did not cease to want to follow the Will of Christ and to find it in the events of everyday life.

Aside from the activities of religious life, he still managed to continue his studies in mathematics. In 1930, he was received as a member of the *Société Mathématique* in France; on the 3rd of April, 1941, in *La Sorbonne*, he defended a thesis entitled, “*Sur les systèmes différentiels du second ordre qui admettent un groupe continu fini de transformations*”, a thesis defended under the patronage of professor Elie Cartan, who awarded him a doctorate in mathematical sciences.

After the war, Mgr. Guérard wrote numerous books: “*Le Mystère du Nombre de Dieu*” (1940), “*Le statut inductif de la théologie*” (1942), “*La Théologie historique et le développement de la théologie*” (1946); his master work in these years was “*Dimensions de la Foi*” (1950), an extension of the epistemological analysis in the area of the knowledge of God, carrying out with total rigour and theological clarity, “*La théologie de S. Thomas et la grâce actuelle*” (1945), “*L’Immaculée Conception, clé des privilèges de Marie*” (1955), “*Le Phénomène humain du P. Teilhard de Chardin*” (1954).

From now on, all were aware that his lectures were excellent, but they were also difficult, such that not many were able to follow them. This earned him some friendly jokes from colleagues; they paraphrased, for example, the “I think, therefore I am” of Descartes to attribute to him “I think, therefore you follow”.

The Religious

He was full of charity for others, as much in personal relationships as in particular circumstances; so when he knew that a poor religious woke up at 5:15 in the morning to make a meditation in the freezing cold, he wanted to give him his cloak; it was all that he possessed at this time.

Although he was a great “intellectual”, he did not lack common sense; on the contrary, he often liked to repair broken objects, and he did a bit of gardening every day; he did not hesitate to get his hands on the most humble jobs. His studies, his positions, even the episcopacy never made him forget that he was, before all else, a Dominican religious.

He liked to travel by train, carrying his portable altar, his books to study during the journey and some personal objects, and if the person who had come to pick him up had some kind of trouble, he would, without bother, be on his way, carrying his luggage.

How can we not remember his ability to remain for a long time on his knees on the ground, immobile, absorbed in prayer, and the poverty in which he lived, keeping himself happy with little?

He was obliged to keep a strict diet, owing to the stomach problems he had since his youth; Fr. Massenet had already recommended that he take care of his health. When he moved back to Saulchoir, he asked that those who live there take no more than an hour for each meal, including its preparation, since this occupation, he said, deserves no more than that! Later, he alleviated this rule, which was so rigorous, that the cooks “tried to make do” using pressure cookers to keep within the time! Those who approached him did not fail to notice a certain humour that never left him, with which he coloured even the most serious things; they laughed at his remarks, especially for their truth.

We must not forget his activity in the spiritual life: the numerous retreats that he preached, either to religious communities, to groups of Third Order Dominicans, or to parishes. Numerous are those which were published. Of his spiritual writings, we cite, “*Virgo fidelis*” (1950), “*Magnificat*” (1950), “*La*

Charité de la Vérité” (1951), “*La Voie Royale*”, “*Ma Maison sera appelée une maison de prière*”, “*Marie Reine*”, “*Le Silence*”. He was named, on the 7th of April, 1950, the confessor for the Dominican Sisters of the Monastery of the Cross, en Etiolles, whilst he continued teaching in Saulchoir and participating in different conferences, especially the Thomist Conference in Rome, in 1955, in which he intervened regarding metaphysics and metascience, and in the conference of Gallarate, in 1959.

Works and Controversies

During the 1950s, Mgr. Guérard participated in the controversies against the boundless neo-modernism which would end up dominating the Second Vatican Council. In his many writings regarding the theology of grace, he distinguished clearly the natural order from the supernatural order against the tendencies of the “*Nouvelle Théologie*” and of Fr. de Lubac. With respect to evolutionary cosmology, he was one of the principle opponents of Fr. Teilhard de Chardin (see Somnavilla: *La Compagnia di Gesù*, Rizzoli, 1985). These controversies led to the condemnation of neo-modernism on the part of Pius XII, with the encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950).

Mgr. Guérard denounced Fr. Congar to the Holy Office, and warned that the prefect, Cdl. Ottaviani, was ignoring the ideas of Congar; this unleashed against him the bad tempers of many of his colleagues, even in Saulchoir.

Fr. Guérard des Lauriers was an eminent mariologist. Under this title, he participated in the preparatory works for the definition of the Dogma of the Assumption (1950). On this occasion, he developed the doctrine of the Universal Ordinary Magisterium (regarding the Assumption) which proved the infallibility of the future dogma.

Moreover, he was one of the principle theologians who seconded the intention of Pope Pius XII to complete the Marian Dogmas with the definition of Mary, Co-Mediatrix and Co-Redemptrix. But the progressives, who had not been able to evade the proclamation of the Assumption of the Most Holy Virgin, were able

to put aside these two definitions. The proclamation of the Queenship of Mary (1954), which in the plans of Pope Pius XII should have served as a prelude to the two terms, was thus the sign of the time of stoppage, of which Fr. Guérard was immediately conscious.

The role assumed by Fr. Guérard in the 1950s makes us understand why Pius XII was going to propose the Cardinalate to him, but well-informed sources tell us that De Gaulle vetoed it.

In 1961, Mgr. Piolanti invited Fr. Louis-Bertrand to come to Rome to teach in the University of the Lateran, and so for ten years he had to be away for months from Etioilles to work in Rome, staying in the Angelicum, where he met again his beloved Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, until Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's illness.

The Ottaviani Intervention

Meanwhile, things are quickly unfolding: liturgical reform is in full swing; even the Holy Mass is thrown into turmoil. Mgr. Guérard relates:

“Rome, Holy Thursday, the 3rd of April, 1969. The so-called “Novus Ordo Missae” appeared. There were two choirs, that of Satan, and that of Jesus: joy, dismay. I belonged, by God’s grace, to the second. But I had to act. A Roman lady of the haute bourgeoisie, Vittoria Cristina Guerrini, and her friend Emilia Pediconi (both later deceased), knew the workings of the Vatican very well, especially of Cardinal Ottaviani. The latter let himself be convinced. And so it was that the Cardinals’ approach was decided, an approach whose honour should be given to the one who conceived the project, bore the burden and died of that agony. It was necessary to prepare the document, whose revision had been reserved for Cardinal Ottaviani, and was promised to be sent to the ‘pope’. The two Romans, especially V.C. Huerrini, were in contact with many clerics. Some, perhaps five or six, responded to the call, but they did not contribute much more than a passive contribution at some weekly meetings. However, the group owed much to an extremely distinguished liturgist, the brave author and critical articles that he published at that time in Roman periodicals; I lament that I

forget his name. Mgr. Marcel Lefebvre encouraged us, at a distance, and even filled us with hope: 'We will get the signature of 600 bishops!' Unfortunately, he did not even put his own.'

Fr. Guérard thus wrote the *Short Critical Study of the Novus Ordo Missæ* during April and May of 1969, especially at night, since this unforeseen task was added to already quite full days.

Because of the preparation of the *Short Critical Study*, there was a Mass at the tomb of St. Pius V in Rome, on his feast day, the 5th of May, celebrated by Mgr. Lefebvre, who – to the amazement of the attendees – adopted the mutilations of Paul VI (quite grave mutilations, although it was still not the New Mass). When, on the way out, he was asked, with respect and sadness at once, the reason for his actions, he responded: *"If they saw Mgr. Lefebvre celebrating the traditional Mass, this could cause scandal."*

Fr. Guérard later commented: *"Even if Mgr. Lefebvre did not celebrate the New Mass, he still, however, committed or omitted exteriorly such gestures that led one to think of it, something which I had not been the only one to observe... Mgr. Lefebvre had two personalities on the 5th of May, 1969. Whilst he was considered the soul of a small group of 'friends' that worked day and night to save the Mass from the 'mass', and whilst he showed this group encouragement and sympathy, Mgr. Lefebvre hit this group with the public disapproval of unconditional loyalty to the 'authority' that had to be faced".*

The writing of the *Short Study* cost Fr. Guérard his professorship at the Lateran, which he lost in June of 1970, *"together with the rector, Mgr. Piolanti, and some fifteen professors, all judged undesirable."*

Meanwhile, in the convent of Etiolles, where Father still had his home, things were not going better: some students of the seminary participated in the protests of 1968 in Paris, and the flag of the anarchists was raised on the roof of the convent. The superiors, although they took measures, no longer controlled the situation.

Extra Conventum

The decision of the Dominicans to sell Saulchoir was, for Fr. Guérard, a cause of sadness. In Saulchoir, he had had quite a quiet life in his little room in the upper part of the house, the “barn”, as his colleagues said, in jest, and there he had written on the wall of his cell: “*O Beata Trinitas stat Veritas dum volvitur orbis*” (O Blessed Trinity, the Truth remains whilst the world passes). It is a little summary of the entirety of his interior life, in which he tried to penetrate the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity.

The Dominicans did not even bother to transport all of the sacred furniture, and it was thanks to the intervention of Fr. Louis-Bertrand that many objects of worship were saved from destruction or profane use. After this last episode, Mgr. Guérard asked (and obtained from his superiors) to live “*extra conventum*”: from that point, the Faith obliged him to physically separate himself from those persons that – by accepting the new reforms – were going to lose the Faith. At this moment, he thought of retiring to a practically isolated place, to consecrate himself to prayer and the completion of his studies. But man proposes and God dictates.

Father dedicated himself to the preaching of retreats, the giving of conferences, especially about the current situation, and to looking after traditional Mass centres.

Mgr. Lefebvre opened the seminary at Écône and needed professors to provide teaching. He asked Fr. Guérard to give courses. Thus began the co-operation of Father with Mgr. Lefebvre, to whom he tried to do good, to clarify principles that truth and coherence demand in “traditionalist” action.

During this time, Fr. Guérard searched for the theological explanation that rendered the rejection of the new reforms just and legitimate: he produced a thesis according to which the “pope”, from at least the 7th of December, 1965, openly and objectively did not outwardly profess any longer the Faith, and as a result of this lost *ipso facto* Authority over the Church Militant, because he no

longer directed his actions in view of the good of the Church and the salvation of souls. Since, until proof to the contrary, his election seems valid, and seeing as no bishop has yet publicly warned him to retract his heresy, one conclude that he is “pope” solely “materially”, and not “formally” (cf. *Sodalitium* no 13, pp. 18-24), and so must not be mentioned in the Canon of the Holy Mass, in the offering of the Victim to God.

Having divisions in Écône about this topic, as much between professors as between students, Mgr. Lefebvre took the decision to “purge” the faculty. And Fr. Guérard was fired in the Autumn of 1977, after having preached the opening retreat to the seminarians at the start of the academic year, during which he had said, among other things, that one had to obey the “pope” as one would a corpse (not “*perinde ac cadaver*”, but rather “*sicut cadaveri*”).

Relations with Mgr. Lefebvre, however, continued to be good. Fr. Guérard gave the habit of the Third Order of Dominicans to some people; he had the ability to do so, but he did not have the power to give “the mercy of the Order”, and so did not receive anyone into the Order, properly speaking: “*I know that I do not have this right, and I have said so explicitly*”, he later wrote. It is for this reason that, when one of the tertiaries gave the habit to postulants, Mgr. wrote to him to tell him that he did not have the right, and that he himself did not recognise these postulants as brothers of the Third Order.

Fr. Guérard and Mgr. Lefebvre

In gratitude for the good he had done to others, he was abandoned by all. We cite, as an example, the letter of Mgr. Lefebvre in which he explained why he did not want Father to return to Écône, not even to visit a group of young men to whom he had given the habit and had directed towards the seminary of Écône for their studies (O blissful confidence and simplicity!), without imagining that everything would be done to separate them from him:

“Esteemed Reverend Father... the only reason which gives me a certain apprehension is the absoluteness of your affirmations about the Pope and, eventually, about the N.O.M.

My thinking is less affirmative. I have expressed, and I still have, doubts about Pope Paul VI. I ask myself, indeed, how a Pope could contribute so much to the self-destruction of the Church, but is it permitted for me to say that he is not the Pope? I do not dare to say it in such an absolute and definitive manner.

... If you have evidence of the legal forfeiture [of the Papacy] of Pope Paul VI, I understand your subsequent logic, but, personally, I have a serious doubt, and I do not have absolute evidence...

... With regard to the practical attitude, it is not the lack of a Pope which my conduct is based on, but rather the defence of my Catholic Faith...

But you believe in conscience that one must break with this principle, which unfortunately creates confusion and provokes violent divisions, which I want to avoid...

This is, in a few words, my thinking, which is not very far from yours, but which, regarding behaviour, takes more into account the traditionalist realities as much as the progressive ones...”

The response of Fr. Guérard was clear and coherent (7th of February, 1979):

“With respect to Pope Paul VI, I do not have evidence of the legal forfeiture [of the Papacy], but I have, and there is, metaphysical and theological evidence that, if the highest Authority of the Church teaches an already defined traditional doctrine, said Authority enjoys ipso facto the immediate assistance of the Holy Ghost. And if said Authority bases a Declaration expressly on the authority of Scripture, it must thus ipso facto declare, infallibly, the truth.

If this is not evident, deign to show me where the defect is.

And if this is evident, the 'Authority' that has affirmed an error was not, in fact, ontologically able to exercise Authority.

I have never said either that there was a juridical cessation of 'Authority'. Paul VI remained pope materialiter, but he was not so (at least from the 7th of December, 1965) formaliter...

It is impossible for a sacrilegious profanation of the truth to be introduced into the Church, which is holy. To explicitly declare that Vatican II, as a Council, is not 'of the Church', that it does not exist as a true Council, is a condition sine qua non to restore order in the Church. One could have had a traditional interpretation of the truths contained in Vatican II, but there is no traditional interpretation possible of Vatican II as a Council, given that, precisely from this point of view, Vatican II operates as a rupture with Tradition.

You specify that 'your conduct is founded, not on the lack of a Pope, but rather on the Catholic Faith'. But I do not see, in the Roman Catholic Church, how one can testify in favour of the Faith, without situating oneself exactly where the Magisterium as it is (or seems to be) today.

The existence of an infallible Magisterium, which affirms of itself that it is infallible, is a condition sine qua non for the exercise of the Faith, as much from the theoretical point of view as from the practical one.

You add, Your Excellency, that 'you take into account, more so than myself, the traditionalist realities as much as the progressive ones'.

But, finally, is it advisable to take into account progressivism, even though it is a reality? And to what witnesses do we go, but towards those who do not regard the person of men, and who 'teach the way of God according to the truth' (St. Mark 12:14)?

It is 'the truth who will set us free' (St. John 8:32); and the truth alone. One cannot resolve a question which refers to the truth through 'passive co-existence' in a sense of 'pseudo-charity', or through that silence which authority imposes.

This is the way of the retreating church, the way that gives rise to the ‘Father of Lies’.

‘Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord ... if these shall hold their peace, the stones shall cry out’ (St. Luke 19:40). Blessed be the truth. One must not keep it quiet; one must shout it.

I do not think that the (relative) lack of a Pope (‘formaliter’) is, as you write, a ‘principle’. It is the unavoidable consequence of the observed facts; and it is an indispensable presupposition, as much to give testimony to the Faith as to administer the Sacraments of the Faith in the Church.

In the charity of the truth, I pray you accept it...”

That letter remained without a response.

This search for the truth, which repudiated all false charity, sentimental or opportunistic, this adherence to that which is true and rational, would be the cause of rejection of many, be it of Father’s Thesis, or even his person. Abbé Coache had the... decency to make an invitation to a reunion, scheduled for the 22nd of January, 1979, which arrived for Fr. Guérard on the 29th, that is, seven days after the event! Criticised by all for his position, he never received, from whoever it may be, a logical and precise response to the Thesis that he had expounded.

He who rejects grace sinks further into sin: so he who rejects the light of the truth sinks further and further into the darkness of error. And, in fact, it was at this time that Mgr. Lefebvre signed the “*Communiqué to the Society of Saint Pius V*”, written in Flavigny together with other “leaders” of traditionalism; they affirmed their union with the “Successor of Peter”, aside from the serious reproaches which we have the right to make (sic!), and asked of Catholics that they gather themselves around “*faithful priests united to Rome and to the Successor of Peter.*”

“It is heretical, against the instinct of the Faith”, commented Fr. Guérard, “aberrant with respect to all of Tradition, to pretend that one can, and a fortiori must, ‘remain united to the so-called Successor of Peter’, who habitually utters heresy, favours in act everything which would destroy the Church, refuses, in fact, to exercise as he must the charism of infallibility... in view of condemning and removing the extremely grave alterations to the Mass and the Magisterium”.

The reactions to this open letter were numerous: the distance between Fr. Guérard and the “traditionalist world” was made bigger; with regard to the doctrinal responses, *there were none*, as if by custom; there was nothing more than insulting attacks.

In the same year Father began, for the first time, the publication of his Thesis about the formally vacant See in the “*Cahiers de Cassiciacum*”, which still received no serious response, nor any more people with the courage to embrace the Truth when it came accompanied with sacrifice and humiliation.

The Consecration

After pressing invitations, on the 7th of May, 1981, Fr. Guérard accepted episcopal consecration from Mgr. Ngo Dinh Thuc, Archbishop of Hué (Vietnam), *“a valid, licit and legal consecration”*, of which we have given all of our explanations in our magazine, *Sodalitium* no 13, pp. 25-28, and no16, pp. 33 and 34.

For what reason was Mgr. Guérard brought to accept after approximately a year of reflection? He himself answers us: it was the same “voice” that brought him to a vocation:

“The perception that I had when I entered the Order of the Truth was, for me, a resonance of the same life, of the same tone that the intuition I had, that I had to accept a kind of interior voice, an interior impulse. One moves out of oneself when necessary. One sees, feels an absolute certainty, a kind of impression from the depths of the soul. And thus the first intuition was: VERITAS. And, for the

episcopacy: HOC EST ENIM CORPUS MEUM. And I understood: everything must be done to save the 'Oblatio Munda'".

The consecration took place without anyone being informed, and this lasted for a while. Was this a mistake? An act of imprudence? Agreeing to overly cautious advice? In any case, Monsignor had the courage and the humility to admit that he could have been wrong (and who has not been wrong in traditionalist circles?). But many if not all, take advantage of this secondary circumstance to condemn the act itself of the consecration (these are the same people, largely, who today applaud the consecrations of Mgr. Lefebvre); is this honest? It seems quite liberal! God will judge, but the acts that have happened have already been put on the balance, and the Lord has already judged them.

Very few were friends that remained close to Monsignor: with the episcopacy, he really had embraced the whole cross. Abandoned by those with whom he was considered close, hurt by the incomprehension and distortion of the Thesis of Cassiciacum and by the obstinacy of souls when faced with the Truth, Mgr. Guérard experienced a similar sadness to that of Jesus in the garden; the words of Isaiah (63:3) truly do apply to him: *"I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a man with me."*

Calumny

When someone has been left alone, it is easy to lie about him so as to hurl the disdain of others against him. An example among them all could once again be Mgr. Lefebvre, during the "Simposio de Montreux", on the 16th of March, 1983, published by *Marchons droit*, in June-September of 1983: *"Fr. Guérard des Lauriers and Fr. Barbara have written to me with nonsense and insults; I have never responded to them. I have never insulted any of my colleges that have separated themselves from me..."*

Two considerations: are the arguments of Mgr. Guérard "nonsense"? Is it an insult to call "treason" the requests for compromise with the modernists, and "traitor" its author? With regard to the response, it was imposed on Mgr.

Lefebvre, given his equivocal attitude towards the Faith: if he had not given it, the suspicion surrounding the Faith would remain. “*I have never insulted...*” Mgr. Guérard responded: “*But Mgr. Lefebvre has calumniated, which is much worse*”; and here is the calumny: “*Fr. Guérard des Lauriers went to Palmar de Troya to see if this Pope could consider himself authentic. This is schism. It is not for each of us to choose a Pope. This is moving away from the cornerstone, moving away from the Church*”. This is false: Mgr. Guérard did not only not go, but rather never even imagined or took into consideration the question of Palmar; he disapproved of the fact that Mgr. Thuc had let himself be deceived by them. Further, he always rejected the tendency of certain “Thuc lineage” bishops to claim for themselves a power of jurisdiction and to even elect a pope; he defined such a position as “*creative participation ... which flatters the spirit of adventure*” (Sodalitium no 16, pp. 22 and 24)

Mgr. Lefebvre, although informed about the falsity of his statement, never retracted his calumny, never admitted that he had made a mistake. So, who uses “*nonsense and insults*”, as well as lies and false testimony? Here again: God judges and acts that have already happened have already been judged.

The Aspostolate of Mgr. Guérard

From 1983, Mgr. Guérard dedicated himself to deepening the Thesis of Cassiciacum, making precise what ought to be precise. He made clear the necessity of having bishops that profess the Catholic Faith integrally, and that are validly consecrated so as to be able to continue the *Missio* imparted by Our Lord Jesus Christ to His Church. He also specified what the actual powers and limitations of this episcopacy are during this state of privation of a Pope.

Mgr. Guérard never avoided discussion: he never refused to entirely revise his thesis according to the objections made to him, and this was because of simple honesty and intellectual loyalty, without being subject to prejudice, not even to “his” thesis, but rather with the sole desire to seek the Truth, wanting to be its humble instrument.

“I place myself at the point of view of being”, he often said when he explained his thinking: this realism in the highest speculations made evident the truth that he affirmed. And when he “discovered” a truth, he loved it and he embraced it totally: this adherence was such that he did not persist in contradicting what was true, and was accompanied by the faculty of discerning those who made a mistake due to invincible ignorance from those who did so culpably.

Quick to speak with all, he maintained with all his simplicity and his firmness: *“One must not lack faith”,* he used to say, and he remained faithful to this principle, eventually paying the price by giving his trust to some who did not deserve it, or who did not reciprocate the good that they had received. This “trusting” and almost innocent openness towards his neighbour gave him the possibility of accessing many souls, of recognising those whom the same Faith encouraged, and of bringing the Sacraments to the people who had been long estranged from them.

“The charity that comes from God does not make exceptions with regard to persons”, he wrote; without ostentation, without “edification”, without conjecture. *“If a life is true, it cannot not radiate”. “If we made the truth the rule of our words and our thoughts, we prompt others to sincerity, without which no life is possible with God”.*

These are his affirmations which demonstrate to us the clarity of his soul, and the rectitude of his intentions. Moreover, his trust in people never impeded him from knowing or recognising the practical (although not theoretical) impossibility of being able to convert modernists to the Faith.

The love of the Truth and the attachment to the Holy Church, the desire to do good for Our Lord Jesus Christ, brought Mgr. Guérard to never rest on his laurels, but rather to continue the fight *“usque ad mortem”,* until the end of his life. The Thesis of Cassiciacum is the starting point of his action; he wrote:

“What one actually thinks about the Thesis he manifests in act, since what the Thesis actually affirms, inevitably implies the following alternatives:

A) continue the Missio, and therefore recognise the necessity for this reason (and only this reason) of bishops, which, in the current situation, must evidently be consecrated without it being possible to refer them to Authority;

B) admit that the Missio can cease, at least temporarily, because it is impossible that it can perfectly be what it ought to be.

It follows that if, at the same time, the consecration of bishops is rejected and the Missio is continued, then whatever is said or desired, one does not actually support the Thesis, that is to say: in reality, the Thesis is denied.”

Life of Mgr. Guérard des Lauriers, O.P.

To those who denied such an alternative, he responded: “*either there is a Missio or there is not a Missio, according to the principle of non-contradiction. The essential component of the Missio is the Mass, the pure Oblation. What are the components of the Missio that can survive without Bishops? The Missio, without supreme Authority, requires Bishops*”.

So, to continue the *Missio*, Mgr. Guérard wished to ordain priests and to consecrate bishops; in fact, on the 17th of March, 1984, he ordained Fr. Hubert Petit a priest, and on the 30th of April, he followed by consecrating Mgr. Storck, as well as Mgr. McKenna on the 22nd of August, 1986, and Mgr. Munari, on the 25th of November, 1987.

Before each consecration, he always specified the necessity of doing so without the Roman Mandate and the desire of submitting himself to a true Pope when God would give one to the Church, thus putting an end to the state of formal vacancy (*Sodalitium* no 16, pp. 3-4).

The love of the Church and of the pure Oblation did not stop him in the face of any sacrifice: aside from his old age, he did not cease to travel thousands of kilometres to preach, to say Holy Mass, to administer the Sacraments, to visit people in their time of need, even to accept vocations with the burden of preparing and giving courses without ever thinking about himself, nor his

fatigue, nor his liver problems, which often forced him to stay in bed due to his pain.

Clairvoyance

In recent times, one can see his ‘precautions’ about events in which we live today becoming true. And, above all, the ‘collapse’ of Fr. Blignières, whose qualities he knew, but of which he had seen what others had not discerned: “*He will be a man for the best or for the worst.*”, he had predicted a long time ago. In 1982, he wrote similarly: “*I already cannot be sure of him. He seems too anxious to maintain (easy?) contact with all. This is not reassuring.*”.

Yet, already, after the consecration of Mgr. Guérard, Fr. Blignières demonstrated such vehemence against this act that his adherence to the Thesis of Cassiciacum did not seem secure. Only God scrutinises hearts and knows the most secret intentions; but Mgr. Guérard tried and hoped until the very end to bring Fr. Blignières again to the good path, aside from the bad returned for good on the part of Fr. Blignières.

With respect to Mgr. Lefebvre, we can also say today that Mgr. Guérard had foreseen the manner in which the consecrations would occur:

“It will be necessary, therefore, if said consecrations take place, that one does not rejoice prematurely. It will be necessary to examine if the question of the ‘Roman mandate’, normally required for every episcopal consecration, is clearly posed and resolved... Episcopal consecrations that occur according to the traditional rite, but... ‘una cum W’ [Wojtyla] would be valid, but alien to sound doctrine, stained with sacrilege, being injurious to the Testimony of the Holy Faith; they would not be explained by anything other than the cunning of Satan” (Sodalitium no 16, pp. 16-17).

The Thesis of Cassiciacum and the Consecrations

“The Thesis and the inference which it establishes (the formal vacancy of the Apostolic See because of the capital schism of Wojtyla, unable to establish laws with enforceability in the Church) must be certain; it must not only be justified, but rather rule the practical behaviour of the faithful who, clear in their adherence to Tradition, refuse to recognise W as, formally and in act, the visible head of the Church Militant.

Further, this inference must be independent. That is to say, the required certainty for this inference cannot proceed, not even implicitly, from a judgement whose pseudo-certainty supports itself in the pseudo-authority that currently plagues the Church Militant, that of W. Therefore, it would be contradictory (and thus vain) to turn to the authority of ‘authority’, in view of proving that it is necessary... to not recognise this ‘authority’.

It would be contradictory to presume, with the goal of making up evidence, the infallibility of what one is claiming: that such a thing lacks infallibility. Such is the radical vice of Lefebvrism.

Concretely, in reality, whatever may be of platonic declarations or extraordinary inclinations, whoever fulfils the Missio inevitably and objectively has the same behaviour with respect to the Thesis and with respect to the consecration, because these two things are ontologically indissociable, as are, in any concrete existence, the act of being and the nature which is its measure.

This is also what observation confirms. On one hand, to reject the Thesis and to accept the consecration, would be evidently schismatic. On the other hand, to reject the consecration, and to (apparently) accept the Thesis, is to degrade the latter to an eidetic abstraction (purely logical and cut off from reality), wherein that which is TRUE is no longer convertible with REALITY. The consecration proves that someone who, even if it is on only one point, is not for the Thesis, is, in reality, against the Thesis (‘He who is not with me, is against me’; St. Luke 11:23)...

If one chooses to continue the Missio without referring it to the ‘authority’, it is because this apparently abnormal behaviour is justified by affirming that the ‘authority’ is not the Authority, that is, affirming the Thesis as a ‘principle’ and positing ‘in act’ that this ‘principle’ demands that one continue the Missio. Therefore, that which is opposed ex se to the continuation of the Missio, is opposed ex se and ipso facto to the Thesis, which has the right of the principle of necessity. And given that, without a consecration, the Missio cannot perdure, the fact of the continuation of the Missio without reference to ‘authority’ implies that, objectively and concretely, to reject the consecration is to negate the Thesis. In other words, the consecration being a necessary condition for a necessary factual consequence of the Thesis, to impede this consequence (by rejecting the consecration) is, in reality, to reject the Thesis, which is the necessary principle for this consequence.”

These principles of action, studied and lived by Mgr. Guérard, were a coherent manner and rule of his life during his last years, right up until his death: criticised, ridiculed, and above all abandoned, he never ceased to follow the truth. Until this very day, nobody has known how to analyse the current situation better than him, nobody has known how to respond to objections that he has given to other theses that intend to resolve in another way the current situation.

“*Defunctus adhuc loquitur*”: the dead still speak, which is the case of Mgr. Guérard, since we find in his writings and in his words an understanding of the facts of today and of tomorrow: the solution to the crisis in the Church will appear when they honestly apply all of the principles that he expounded. To take, like many, just a part of what he taught “to not get one’s hands dirty”, is dishonest and does not resolve anything. But, evidently, to adhere to Mgr. Guérard’s Thesis today costs various humiliations and misunderstandings.

Blessed Are the Dead Who Die in the Lord

Now, Mgr. Guérard looks at us from on high. What to say of him now? It is he himself who suggests to us:

“Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur. Beati. The Faith shudders and nature remains forbidden. Mystery and mystery. It is the solemn word which radiates its own light in the Kingdom. Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur. It is like a ninth beatitude, it is the dawn of eternal Happiness, the only thing that passes from a ‘why’. This way we can finish the last happiness of the Earth, which must be similar to the eight others: ‘Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur’ quia ‘Pretiosa est in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus’ (‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord’, because ‘precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints’: Apoc. 14:13; Psalm 115:15).

Witnesses to the death of others, we cannot reconstruct the role of dying. Desiring to see God, our nature refuses to understand why the unity of our being must be destroyed so as to possess He Who is its cause. But in this case there is only one thing to understand: death came into this world solely through sin... No-one on Earth sees God. He who wants to see God therefore wants to abandon the world. He who wants to remain in the world, perhaps he may desire to see God, but, in reality, he does not want to see Him. Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur. Blessed are those who die by virtue of desiring their Lord.

The desire for God is thus carried out in the bliss of death; although not pointing to death itself, this is the fact: to die is to gain (Philippians 1:21).

How is this possible? Well, there is a radical opposition between the mirabilis reformasti and deformation: one was a violent break imposed by man from the outside, putting himself voluntarily outside the order of God; the other always comes from within, according to the softness and strength of God. Death, in which one faces a blind and life-depriving desire, here becomes, in and through the Resurrection, an intrinsic condition for life; and behold how a holy desire assumes death to the point of producing it, far from wanting to flee it. O Lord, how great it is to die of desire, and I ardently ask Thee to make me entirely humble, if Thou deignest to make Thy Mystery resound in my heart: ‘If you want...’ (St. Matthew 19:21).