



Congregazione delle Suore dei Sacri Cuori
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Katherine Francis Miller, ss.cc.
Postulator of the Cause of Henriette Aymer de la Chevalerie
to:
All the Sisters of the Congregation

Rome, January 8, 2002

Dear Sisters,

It is with great joy and thanksgiving that I begin a service to the Congregation as Postulator for the Cause of the Good Mother collaborating with the General Government to fulfill a recommendation of the 33rd General Chapter.

During a two week work period in Rome, November 23 to December 7, I was able to confer with members of the General Government, do some research in our archives, and meet other helpful persons in order to effectively resume the journey towards the beatification and canonization of Henriette Aymer de la Chevalerie.

While in Rome, Jeanne and I were able to meet with a member of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, a Belgian Dominican priest Father Ols, who was very cordial and helpful in pointing out the process and procedures needed to pursue the cause of the Good Mother. He referred often to a very important document New Laws for the Causes of Saints promulgated by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in 1983. An important point to keep in mind throughout the process is the reason why the Church beatifies and canonizes saints:

It is not for the saint, but for the faithful who need models of holiness capable of helping people interpret the gospel message in every day life situations. Saints are the pioneers, the creative prototypes of the holiness needed for a specific period of time. Saints are the concrete manifestation of the vitality of the Church, a sign of the sanctifying action of the Spirit.¹

The Good Mother is certainly someone who demonstrated in her life the sanctifying action of the Spirit and is a woman that can be offered to the Church as a model of holiness for our day. It is up to us as a Congregation to provide persuasive evidence of this fact. Working in the archives enabled me to learn about her impact on past generations, but it is important to show her influence today.

Another important person that I was able to consult was Father Emilio Vega García, Postulator General of the Brothers. We discussed various issues among them, the feasibility of putting forward the single beatification of the Good Father and the Good Mother as Founders of the Congregation. At the present moment, there are serious reasons for not pursuing this route, one of which is the greater complexity involved in the beatification process of the Good Father.

¹ Manuale per Istruire I Processi di Canonizzazione , Romualdo Rodrigo, O.A.R., Institutum Historicum Augustinianorum Recollectorum, Roma, 1998, p. 13

To summarize what has been done thus far, I highlight the following:

1. The cause was introduced in Rome in June, 1927.
2. The Archives of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints has five volumes of documents used in the Informative Process of the Good Mother before the Tribunal of the Archbishop of Paris dating from February 11, 1925 to May 7, 1926.
3. The Decree approving her writings is dated July 8, 1949.
4. A small booklet exists Articles for the Construction of the Ordinary Informative Process in the Cause of the Beatification of the Servant of God the Reverend Mother Henriette de la Chevalerie, Paris c. 1924.

What needs to be done now?

Father Ols has advised us to pursue the cause in the following manner:

1. A letter must be written by Jeanne Cadiou to Cardinal Lustiger, Archbishop of Paris, requesting him to allow the Congregation to take up the cause of Henriette Aymer de la Chevalerie, a cause which has not been advanced since at least the early 50's. Jeanne has already written the letter and awaits the response of the Cardinal.
2. In the event of a positive response, which we are hopeful of receiving, a vice-postulator and a historical commission needs to be named to continue the investigation of the cause in Paris.
3. A formal judicial process investigating the Good Mother's ongoing reputation for holiness needs to take place before the tribunal in Paris. This investigation will call forth about 10 to 20 diverse living witnesses—lay people, religious, priests, bishops, youth, adults, SS.CC.s and non-SS.CC.s who can attest to the Good Mother's reputation for holiness, to how she lived the theological and cardinal virtues and/or who have received special favors through her intercession.
4. In a letter to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Cause of Saints, the Archbishop of Paris requests a *Nihil obstat* decree, that is, a declaration from other Congregations of the Curia, especially from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, that there are no obstacles to the further pursuit of the cause of the Good Mother.
5. The Archbishop visits the tomb, the houses where the Good Mother lived and died and ascertains that there has been "no cult" given to her—no images of her, no invocations to her, no devotions to her as to a saint.
6. If the Archbishop of Paris is satisfied with the investigation, he sends all the material to Rome. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints studies the material with a view to writing a convincing *Positio* on the heroic virtue lived by the Good Mother. A Relator is named to prepare this *Positio* and to bring the cause before a committee of Cardinals who will submit it for the Pope's decision.
7. While this work is taking place, a study of cures attributed through the intercession of the Good Mother is also undertaken in the diocese in which the cure occurred. A thorough medical investigation must take place to corroborate that the cure, almost always physical, was complete, of lasting duration, and inexplicable by current medical procedures. In the case of the Good Mother, there are several cures that have been submitted, but thorough investigation of them on the diocesan level still needs to take place.

The results of this investigation are sent to Rome where a special medical review board goes over the documentation. If they accept the cure as inexplicable, it is submitted for the review of a group of Cardinals and finally, for the decision of the Pope.

This is a brief overview of what needs to take place for the Good Mother to be beatified and eventually canonized. What we need to do now, and I ask for your enthusiastic collaboration, is:

- Pray daily as individuals and communities for the beatification
- Renew interest in the life and virtue of the Good Mother
 - use the Beatification Prayer Cards and give them to persons in need of favors and cures
 - make the Good Mother known in schools, parishes, other ministry groups; publicity on web sites
 - show how her life is a persuasive witness to Jesus and gospel values for people today
- Gather information regarding the reputation of holiness of the Good Mother
 - evidence of prayers said in her honor: novenas, triduums;
 - schools, organizations, anything named in her honor and giving reasons for why this was done;
 - music, plays, art done in her honor
- Look for persons who can serve as witnesses to her virtues, ongoing reputation of holiness, who have received favors through her intercession.

If any of you has any information or suggestions on any of the items spoken of above, please let me know. We need to gather as much information on the Good Mother as possible from every time and place. The General Government will also soon name a commission to work for the cause together with me. It is invaluable to have different perspectives and skills working on this important Congregation project.

For the next phase of the work, I will go to Paris in June to do some research in the archives of the French Province, to confer with Bernard Couronne, Vice Postulator of the Brothers in Paris for the cause of the Good Father, and to see what other things need to be done in France.

It is exciting and inspiring to work for the cause of the Good Mother, serving not only the Congregation, but today's people in need of an authentic model of Christ's compassionate love for a broken and divided world. I trust that each of you will be an active collaborator in this important work.

United in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

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