

The Evolution of the Catholic Church's Presence in Quebec:  
*From Priests from France to Priests from Africa*

Evans Masakhalia

A Thesis  
in  
The Department  
Of  
Theological Studies

Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of Master of Arts (Theological Studies) at  
Concordia University, Montreal  
Quebec Canada.

May 2025.

© Evans Masakhalia

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY  
School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Evans Masakhalia

Entitled: The Evolution of the Catholic Church's Presence in Quebec: From Priests from  
France to Priests from Africa

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MA Theological Studies

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with  
respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final examining committee:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. André Gagné Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Christine Jamieson Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Marie-France Dion Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Lucian Turcescu Thesis Supervisor(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Supervisor(s)

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Lucian Turcescu Graduate Program Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Pascale Sicotte Dean of Faculty

## **Abstract**

### **The Evolution of the Catholic Church's Presence in Quebec: From Priests from France to Priests from Africa**

Evans Masakhalia

Until its secularization, Quebec was characterized by cultural Catholicism that penetrated all its social structures. After the 1960s Quiet Revolution, which is considered the beginning of secularization of Quebec, there has been a noticeable abandonment of the institutional Church. This has led to a decline in the priestly vocations. The Catholic bishops of the Quebec Church, which once flourished with vocations, have been compelled to invite priests from elsewhere to serve in their dioceses. The Quebecers' memory of their triumphal Church before secularization continues to lead to varying hypotheses. This thesis attempts to study the evolution of Catholicism in Quebec, its adaptation to secularization and the relevance of priests from elsewhere, taking African priests as a case study.

## **Dedication**

To all who desire to contribute to the universal mission of the Church.

## **Acknowledgements**

I am sincerely grateful to my Community, the Quebec Foreign Mission Society, for granting me an opportunity to further my studies in theology. I acknowledge with humility the constant support that I have received from my confreres, who were not only interested in my day-by-day progress in studies, but also created a conducive environment I needed, besides suggesting useful resources for this thesis.

I am indebted to Mr. Hurbert Mposo whose initial insights helped me to develop more interest in the Catholic Church of Quebec. Most sincerely, I thank Prof. Lucian Turcescu who not only accompanied me as the university supervisor, but also willingly worked tirelessly, often with short notices, to ensure that I am well guided towards completing this thesis successfully. I wish to wholeheartedly thank Dr. Bertrand Roy, Pmé, who often went beyond his busy schedule to create time to offer me thoughtful ideas that contributed to the successful completion of this work.

In a special way, I wish to thank Sr. Veronica Chepngeno who generously created time to read through my original work in English and gave constructive corrections. I also sincerely thank Fr. Aubin Somé who generously created time out of his busy schedule to correct the grammar of the French translation of this work. I, sincerely thank all the subordinate staff of the SME Central house who worked so hard to keep me comfortable while I worked on this thesis. Finally, to all my friends and family who often called me to communicate words of encouragement that made me remain focussed. May God bless you abundantly!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	III
DEDICATION .....	IV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	V
ABBREVIATIONS.....	VIII
GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE: A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF CULTURAL CATHOLICISM .....	3
1.0. INTRODUCTION .....	3
1.1. THE EARLY BEGINNINGS.....	3
1.2. TOWARDS CATHOLIC DOMINANCE .....	4
1.3. TRACING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH’S IMPACT ON QUEBEC .....	5
1.4. THE GALRICAN PERIOD, CONQUEST AND TRIUMPHALISM.....	8
1.5. PROTESTANT MISSIONARY EFFORTS.....	11
1.6. FRENCH LANGUAGE AND CATHOLICISM IN QUEBEC .....	12
1.7. CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DEVOTIONS .....	12
1.8. THE CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS CULTURE IN QUEBEC .....	14
CHAPTER TWO: SECULARIZATION IN QUEBEC: A PLATFORM FOR REINVENTION OF CATHOLICISM .....	16
2.1. THE BACKGROUND OF QUIET REVOLUTION .....	17
2.2. QUIET REVOLUTION (1960 TO 1970S).....	19
2.3. EFFECTS OF QUIET REVOLUTION.....	20
2.4. CHURCH’S REACTION TO QUIET REVOLUTION .....	20
2.5. DAVID MARTIN’S SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLANATION.....	22
2.6. COMPROMISE AND PLURALISM WITHIN CATHOLIC RANKS .....	23
2.7. VISIBLE IDEOLOGIES IN CONTEMPORARY QUEBEC.....	24
2.8. RELIGION PUSHED FROM PUBLIC TO PRIVATE SPACE IS A SCANDAL IN QUEBEC .....	27
2.9. THE REINVENTED CATHOLICISM IN SECULARIZED QUEBEC .....	28
CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MISSION IN SECULARIZED QUEBEC 30	
3.1. THE CONCEPT OF MISSION .....	30
3.1.1. <i>Traditional Understanding of Mission</i> .....	31
3.1.2. <i>Development of the Understanding of Mission after Vatican II</i> .....	32
3.2. THE EVOLUTION OF THE CHURCH’S PERSPECTIVE ON “MISSION AGENTS” .....	35
3.3. MISSION IN THE CONTEXT OF QUEBEC .....	37
3.4. THOUGHTFUL REFLECTION .....	37
CHAPTER FOUR: PRIESTS FROM ELSEWHERE IN QUEBEC, PARTICULARLY AFRICANS.....	39
4.1. PRIESTS FROM ELSEWHERE.....	39
4.2. JUSTIFICATION OF “PRIESTS FROM ELSEWHERE” IN QUEBEC .....	40
4.3. PRIESTS FROM AFRICA IN QUEBEC .....	41
4.4. AFRICAN <i>FIDEI DONUM</i> PRIESTS IN QUEBEC.....	43
4.5. THE <i>AREOPAGI</i> OF SECULARIZED QUEBEC .....	45

4.6.	CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY OF QUEBEC .....	47
4.7.	POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE FIDEI DONUM PRIESTS FROM AFRICA TO THE CONTEMPORARY QUEBEC'S CHURCH .....	49
4.8.	RECIPROCITY .....	53
	GENERAL CONCLUSION .....	56
	BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	57

## ABBREVIATIONS

RM	Redemptoris Missio
MD	Mediator Dei
AG	Ad Gentes
EN	Evangelii Nutiandii
IL	Instrumentum Laboris
EG	Evangelii Gaudium
MCC	Mystici Corporis Christi
LG	Lumen Gentium
FD	Fidei Donum
PO	Presbyterorum Ordinis
Acts	Acts of the Apostles
Jn	John
Lk	Luke
Mk	Mark
Mt	Mathew
Cor	Corinthians
Phil	Philippians
PMÉ	Prêtres des Missions Étrangères
SME	Société des Missions Étrangères



## General Introduction

The secularity of contemporary Quebec has created a complex context for Catholicism in this Canadian province.<sup>1</sup> In the past, Quebec society was dominated by the Catholicism embraced by a majority of the Francophone population, which penetrated every stratum of community life and shaped its culture. Contemporary Quebec society has transformed itself from a Catholic-dominated culture to one where secularism has become a state policy, while many rejected the very religion that shaped their society. Today, the disconnect between Catholicism and society is something that strikes an outsider who visits the province. The disconnect includes cultural aspects that involve rites, religious practices, conception of the nation, family and the education of children, as well as cultural heritage. The Catholic Church in Quebec used to have 85% Sunday mass attendance, but now has to function in a context of open secularism that sees very few Francophone people attend Sunday mass.<sup>2</sup> José María Vigil argues that the Quiet Revolution led to the abandonment of Catholicism in Quebec. According to him, 70% to 80% of the population have distanced themselves from the Church.<sup>3</sup>

Several studies using philosophical, sociological and theological approaches have been made in an attempt to explain the real causes of the abandonment of Catholicism in Quebec. These studies have produced various academic papers and reports, including “the Dumont Commission report: *L'Église du Québec un héritage et un projet* (1971),”<sup>4</sup> “Rapport Larochelle (1992): Risquer l’avenir,” and the 2008 Bouchard-Taylor report on cultural and religious accommodation.<sup>5</sup> Vigil indicates that Quebec had already been warned by the report of Larochelle, which foresaw the total disappearance of the Church in Quebec if there were no changes in its pastoral approach.<sup>6</sup>

It is a general assumption that secularization has led to a decrease in priestly vocations in Quebec. Catholic bishops in the Province of Quebec have accepted and welcomed priests from different countries and continents to exercise their priestly ministry within their respective dioceses. Quebec is not an isolated case. The universal Church contemplated mutual assistance of churches, especially to share their resources (human and material) to promote communion. As far as the teaching of the Catholic Church is concerned, especially from the perspective of Vatican II, mutual missionary assistance of churches is encouraged (AG 38), especially those in a certain state of regression or weakness (AG 19). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the Church of Quebec had enough human resources, it sent missionaries abroad as missionaries.<sup>7</sup>

This thesis attempts to study the evolution of the presence of the Catholic Church since the foundation of Quebec society up to today, paying special attention to the presence of priests from elsewhere in Quebec. Routhier claims that inviting and welcoming priests from elsewhere is not a recent phenomenon, but part of the history of the Church of Quebec since its foundation.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Catherine E. Clifford, “An Insight into Catholic Intellectual Engagement with Secularity in the Context of Contemporary Quebec,” *Theoforum* 45 (2014):313.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> José María Vigil, “Sortir à la rencontre du Québec qui est allé au-delà de la religion,” in the KAIRÓS QUÉBEC <https://eatwot.academia.edu/JoséMaríaVIGIL>. Accessed October 26, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Clifford, “An Insight into Catholic Intellectual Engagement with Secularity in the Context of Contemporary Quebec,” 315.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Mager, “Quebec’s Act Respecting The Laicity of The State And Demise of Religion: Scandal or Trial?” *Toronto Journal of Theology* 35, no.2 (2019):166.

<sup>6</sup> José María Vigil, “Sortir à la rencontre du Québec qui est allé au-delà de la religion.”

<sup>7</sup> Gilles Routhier, “Des Prêtres venus de ...,” in *Venus d’ailleurs* (Fides, 2013): 195.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 194-195.

The main goal of this thesis is to investigate whether priests from elsewhere, particularly from Africa, can contribute to the contemporary Church of Quebec given its secularity context.

To explore this question, I will begin by validating the claim of Routhier in the first chapter, where I will look at the history of Catholicism in Quebec. In this chapter, I will demonstrate the presence of priests from elsewhere throughout Quebec's Church history, show how the Church formed cultural Catholicism that penetrated all the social structures of the society and finally, how cultural Catholicism contributed to the development of Quebec as a society. In the second chapter, I will argue that in the secularized Quebec, there has been much insistence on the decline in Catholicism while ignoring the platform for its reinvention that secularization has provided.

I will then proceed to argue in the third chapter that the new Catholicism in Quebec calls for the Church's presence as an institution that understands its mission in contemporary Quebec. In my view, it is urgent, relevant, efficient and timely for the Church of Quebec to conceive mission as communion and mutual sharing. This concept of mission in Quebec forms the basis of the arguments in my fourth chapter. In the fourth chapter, I will establish how priests from Africa can contribute to the Church of Quebec, that is in a secular context where "ideals of modernity (individualism, rationality, progress, etc.)"<sup>9</sup> are used to challenge Catholic values while normalizing abortion, divorce and euthanasia, all of which go against the teachings of the Catholic Church. The conclusions I will draw from the fourth Chapter will mainly include my findings in response to the central question of this thesis.

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 164.

## **Chapter One**

### **A Historical Account of Cultural Catholicism**

#### **1.0. Introduction**

This chapter presents the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec since its foundation up to today. In this chapter, we shall trace when this journey began, how it rolled down and the effects it had, mainly on the people and the entire society of Quebec. While doing this, we shall pay particular attention to the periods when the Church was under threat and how she ensured her survival and continuity. In this regard, and particularly for this thesis, this chapter will take note of the time in the history of the Church of Quebec when priests from elsewhere were invited or welcomed to exercise their ministries in Quebec.

#### **1.1. The Early Beginnings**

The beginning of the Catholic Church's journey within Quebec can be traced back to the sixteenth century context when the Catholic Church in Europe was fervently seeking new places of apostolate across the world and when European nations were aggressively seeking to establish new permanent colonies.<sup>10</sup> The Catholic Church's foundation in Quebec was therefore associated with colonization as well as expansion (implantation), where the old Church in France simply implanted itself and passed on its heritage to the new Church of Quebec. The indigenous people were forced to accommodate French people (colonizers) who later imposed their religion and way of life.

The indigenous people were very uncomfortable with the introduction of a new religion within their land because they did not need it. They had their religion that was organized and functional.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, the French colonizers proceeded to implant in Quebec the Catholic Church. This implantation involved duplicating everything about the Catholic Church of France, including the structural appearances of church buildings, names of those church buildings, the manner of doing apostolates (mission), administration and even the devotions.

The duplication was to be very particular to ensure that the Catholic Churches within French colonies had common characteristics pointing to France. It was understood as passing on a heritage and was acceptable in the traditional way of evangelizing, not only by French people but by all European countries. Just as it was happening in France at that time, the newly implanted Church in Quebec maintained a relationship between itself and the state, a practice that had begun during the time of Constantine when the Church was officially recognized within the Roman Empire and adapted throughout Europe.<sup>12</sup>

By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the task of evangelization was mainly associated with Europe. Both evangelization and colonization were inseparable. As such, it was a common understanding that those who evangelized a place needed to change everything about that place, including language,

---

<sup>10</sup> Nive Voisine, *Histoire de l'Église catholique au Québec (1608-1970)*, (Fides, 1971), 9.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 26.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 9.

worship, education and all other social aspects. In other words, an evangelized indigenous needed to attend to formal education, speak French, be a baptized Catholic and live as though he or she were French. This was described as evangelization, carried out by colonizers camouflaged as Church missionaries. Evangelization and civilization were used interchangeably to refer to impositions on the local people. In the context of Quebec, Malvern would later remark that at that time (mid-16<sup>th</sup> century), the Church responded well to the call to spread the gospel in the new land of Quebec. He notes that the evangelizing Church at that time had a deep spirituality and a missionary zeal that are not obvious in the Church of today.<sup>13</sup>

## 1.2. Towards Catholic Dominance

Dominance of the Catholic Church in Quebec can be traced back to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century when the French population manifested a constant growth. The Church personnel in France felt the need to go and give pastoral care to the Christian population in the new French territory. In 1604, there arrived 80 colonialists led by Pierre du Gua de Monts and, among them was Samuel de Champlain, who had converted to Catholicism from Huguenotism in 1598 after the edict of Nantes.<sup>14</sup> These group of colonialists was accompanied by an anonymous Huguenot pastor and two Catholic priests, to settle in *Baie Française*, now known as the Bay of Fundy. Much is not known about what happened with those priests after their arrival.<sup>15</sup>

The first known priest to arrive in *La Nouvelle France*, Fr. Jessé Fléché, was a secular priest. He arrived in Acadie in 1610.<sup>16</sup> He is barely referred to as “the first missionary” in *La Nouvelle France*, perhaps because the definition and understanding of a missionary did not include a secular priest when the history of the church of Quebec was written. Fr. Jessé Fléché was soon replaced by two Jesuits, Fr. Pierre Biard and Ennemond Massé, the following year and stayed among the Micmacs.<sup>17</sup> These two Jesuits are considered the first Missionaries in North America.<sup>18</sup> A decade later, a Cardinal named Richelieu, who played a significant role in French politics and ecclesiastical affairs, would gradually influence the expulsion of Jesuits from French colonies, mainly in North America (Quebec). On the other hand, Samuel de Champlain had advocated for the arrival of Recollet missionaries in Quebec during the Estates General<sup>19</sup> in 1614. The Recollets, including Denis Jamay, Jean Dolbeau, and Joseph Le Caron, arrived in Quebec in 1615, with Dolbeau ministering to the Montagnais, Le Caron to the Hurons, and Jamay to the settlers. These

---

<sup>13</sup> Paul Malvern, “Falling from Grace: The Rise and Fall of the Quebec Catholic Church,” <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/falling-from-grace-rise-fall-quebec-catholic-church-paul-malvern>. Accessed June 20, 2024.

<sup>14</sup> Samuel de Champlain was a key figure in French exploration and colonization efforts in North America as explained in Lucien Lemieux, *Une histoire religieuse du Québec*, (Novalis, 2010), P.27.

<sup>15</sup> Lucien Lemieux, *Une histoire religieuse du Québec*, (Novalis, 2010), 27.

<sup>16</sup> Voisine, *Histoire de l'Église catholique au Québec (1608-1970)*, 10.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 10

<sup>18</sup> Lemieux, *Une histoire religieuse du Québec*, 27.

<sup>19</sup> This was “a representative assembly in pre-revolutionary France” that the King of France convened to advise him. The composition of the members of this assembly was “the delegates from the three 'estates' or classes of French society: the clergy (First Estate), the nobility (Second Estate), and the commoners (Third Estate).” See [https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/estates-general-1614#:~:text=Traditionally%2C%20the%20government%20asked%20for,place%20from%20Sens%20to%20Paris](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/estates-general-1614#:~:text=Traditionally%2C%20the%20government%20asked%20for,place%20from%20Sens%20to%20Paris.). Accessed June 27, 2025. The French Revolution took place after the Estates General of 1614.

missionaries made efforts to Christianize and "humanize" the indigenous peoples, but their initiatives yielded limited results.<sup>20</sup>

### 1.3. Tracing the Catholic Church's Impact on Quebec

While the French were the colonial masters in Quebec, different Europeans continued to show colonial interests in Quebec as they engaged in trade with the indigenous people or even with the French people within Quebec. In 1625, the colonial interests of both France and Great Britain created tensions that led to the capture of Quebec in 1629 by the Kirke brothers.<sup>21</sup> Samuel Champlain and all other official administrators of New France were forced to return to France, leaving behind only about 20 French people. On arriving in France, Champlain learned that peace between France and England had been signed by the time Kirke brothers attacked and conquered La Nouvelle France. This meant that the conquest of the Kirke brothers was invalid. He tried to have King Louis XIII intervene in negotiating with King Charles I, King of England. Charles I demanded that King Louis XIII pay "*la balance de la dot*" (balance of the dowry) of his wife, Queen Henriette. An agreement was later reached in March 1632, though only the Jesuits returned immediately to La Nouvelle France.<sup>22</sup> During this tough time, the Jesuit Missionaries persisted in manifesting their interest in evangelizing the native peoples.<sup>23</sup>

As missionaries, the Jesuits recognized the importance of learning the native languages to communicate with the people they sought to convert. They also understood well that converting those in authority, such as chiefs and sorcerers, was crucial for the success of their mission. In addition, they made efforts to assimilate indigenous youth into French culture through education. These efforts faced difficulties, including the rapid deaths and frequent runaways of students in the Quebec City college established by Charles Lalemant.<sup>24</sup> Despite these challenges, the Jesuits continued their missionary endeavours, establishing missions among various indigenous groups, including the Hurons and Algonquins.<sup>25</sup>

Apart from learning native languages, the Jesuits also sought to employ different approaches depending on the lifestyle of the indigenous groups, including living among native tribes and participating in their life, establishing reductions for sedentary groups, and setting up residential centers. While there were some successes, such as the baptisms of hundreds of adults in Sillery and Trois-Rivières, the reductions eventually declined and disappeared by 1660 due to the mismatch between permanent sedentarization and indigenous customs. Cognisant of this mismatch, the Jesuits adapted their approaches to the diverse cultural and geographical contexts of the indigenous peoples they sought to convert. During this period, they encouraged immigration through their annual relations, despite acknowledging the challenges of conflicts between natives and Europeans. This contributed to a growing interest in the French colony of New France (Quebec) and provided financial support.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 28

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 29

<sup>22</sup> Henri Rivard, ed. *Histoire du Québec*, (Beaux Livres, 2008), 47.

<sup>23</sup> Lemieux, *Une histoire religieuse du Québec*, 29. (see also Lacoursière Jacques et al. eds. *Histoire 1534-1968*, (Renouveau pédagogique, 1968), 64.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 30.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 31.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

The efforts of the Jesuits to adapt to the diverse cultural and geographical contexts of the indigenous people and live among them were a brilliant missionary approach. Such an approach can help missionaries discover the values and richness of the people and broaden their understanding of being human. In addition, their initiative to encourage immigration facilitated mutuality, complementarity and unity in diversity that are useful for living the gospel values.

Thanks to the immigration promoted by the Jesuits, Madam de Combalet, duchess d'Aiguillon (a niece of Cardinal Richelieu) and Marie-Madeleine de Chauvigny de la Peltrie spearheaded initiatives such as building a hospital and a convent in Quebec. The presence of religious women, including the Hospitalières from Dieppe and the Ursulines from the monastery of Tours, further strengthened the colonial efforts. Despite challenges such as the 1650 fire that destroyed their monastery, the Ursulines continued educating children and serving the community. The Canonesses Hospitallers of the Mercy of Jesus also made significant contributions, initially facing challenges due to their reputation as a "house of death" during a smallpox epidemic. However, they persevered in providing valuable services, although their efforts were not always recognized.<sup>27</sup>

It is important to note that these French nuns and the Church in general played a vital role in laying the foundations of Quebecois society through their contributions in education, healthcare, social welfare, and immigration in the early years (1608-1663).<sup>28</sup> Their contribution gave the mission of the Church in Quebec a holistic approach where the good news of the gospel can be realized in good education and health, among other social necessities. Marie de l'Incarnation, in particular, emphasized the importance of both "civilizing" and "evangelizing" the indigenous people while recognizing the challenges and complexities of this endeavour.<sup>29</sup>

Besides the priests and the religious nuns, there were some aggressive Christians like Jérôme Le Royer de la Dauversière, a family man and tax collector who had founded the congregation of the Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph in La Flèche, and conceived the idea of establishing a hospital on the island of Mont-Royal. Together with four wealthy individuals, priests, and laymen, they formed a group with Paul de Chomedey and made Sieur de Maisonneuve its governor. In those days, a nurse named Jeanne Mance had been inspired by the Jesuits' work. She informed Le Royer of her plan to found a hospital in Canada. Getting some support from Marquise Angélique de Bullion, she joined forces with Sieur de Maisonneuve, and they arrived in Quebec late in 1641 and founded the Ville-Marie (current Montreal) in 1642. Different from the City of Quebec, which was mainly associated with trade, the founding of Ville-Marie marked an important event in Christianity, being dedicated to Mary and established to evangelize the indigenous peoples.<sup>30</sup>

Jeanne Mance opened her hospital on October 8, 1644, but faced challenges due to the decline in settlers. She persuaded Les Hospitalières de la Flèche to take over the Hôtel-Dieu in Ville-Marie. Meanwhile, Marguerite Bourgeoys, associated with the sisters of Notre Dame in Troyes, arrived in Ville-Marie in 1653 and expressed her interest in establishing a congregation of secular teaching nuns. This was faced with opposition from the bishops until 1676 when she received an official authorization from Mgr De Laval. Jeanne Mance and Marguerite Bourgeoys would later be considered the "mothers of the holy city of Ville-Marie" because of the pivotal roles

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 31-32.

<sup>28</sup> Malvern, "*Falling from Grace*."

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 32.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 33.

they played in its foundation and development. Their efforts laid the foundation for the flourishing of Ville-Marie as a center of religious and educational activity in New France.<sup>31</sup>

In 1645, violence broke up, leading to the deaths of missionaries such as Isaac Jogues, Jean Lalande, Jean de Brébeuf, Gabriel Lalemant, Charles Garnier, and Noël Chabanel. These missionaries and the Hurons were martyred during Iroquois attacks on the Great Lakes region, resulting in the near destruction of Huronia, the center of Christianity in New France, between 1647 and 1650.<sup>32</sup>

There arose a need for a centralized religious authority that would ensure the future of the Catholic Church in Quebec as well as unify the growing Christian population in the main towns of Quebec, Trois-Rivières and Ville-Marie. Gabriel Thubières de Levy de Queylus, a French priest closely related to the congregation of the priests of Saint Sulpice, arrived in Quebec in 1657, marking a significant moment in the establishment of religious authority in the region. However, his arrival along with a few companions and the subsequent management of Ville-Marie and Quebec town led to some tensions with the Jesuits, particularly over the control and administration of religious affairs. The Jesuits had preferred Francois Xavier de Laval to Gabriel Thubières de Levy de Queylus.<sup>33</sup>

Until this time, the Congregation of the Propagation of Faith, founded in 1622, considered New France (Quebec) as a mission territory that always needed the Vatican to assert its authority over it. It therefore opted to create a vicariate and not a diocese so that the new religious authority would be directly linked to the Vatican and not to the civil power. In 1658, François de Laval was appointed as the vicar apostolic of New France. This appointment faced opposition, particularly from the Archbishop of Rouen, Mgr. de Harlay. Nevertheless, Mgr. de Laval was ordained bishop in secrecy on December 8, 1658, in a chapel exempt from the authority of the French episcopate.<sup>34</sup> After the episcopacy of De Laval, the Church of Quebec would import its next five bishops from “elsewhere”: Mgr. Saint- Vallier (1687-1727), Mgr. Louis François Duplessis de Mornay (1728-1733), Mgr. Pierre -Herman Dosquet (1733-1739), Mgr. François -Louis Pourrie de Lauberiviere (1739-1740) and Mgr. Henri-Marie Dubreuil de Pontbriand (1741-1760).<sup>35</sup>

When *Mgr. François de Laval* took over as a bishop, by the objectives set by the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, he founded the Seminary of Quebec in 1663 as not only a training center for young men destined for priesthood but also as a cornerstone for the foundation of the Church in New France. Besides training priests, he entrusted the seminary with the financial administration of parishes, making it a center controlling all religious affairs of Quebec. Through the seminary of Quebec, *De Laval* succeeded in instilling in the clergy a spirit of prayer, poverty, mortification, attachment to the Holy See, and charity towards the needy and sick.<sup>36</sup> Linking all the parishes to the seminary also enabled him to address the abuses witnessed in France, such as profit-seeking, accumulation of ecclesiastical offices and neglect of pastoral duties. Having formerly been a member of the SME in France, *De Laval* preferred communal life for the priests. He wanted the priests to live together in the seminary as a center from which they would commute to the mission and return. The seminary was to be the central source and origin of

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 34.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 38.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 39.

<sup>35</sup> Lacoursière et al. eds., *Histoire 1534-1968*, 182.

<sup>36</sup> Lemieux, *Une histoire religieuse du Québec*, 41.

the parishes. The first Parish to be canonically established would be Quebec Parish, named after *Notre-Dame* (Our Lady) in 1664.<sup>37</sup>

We can already observe here that Mgr. de Laval was determined to train and form his secular priests in *La Nouvelle France* to understand their ministerial engagements from the perspective of a community of equals who are sent as missionaries and expected to bring back the feedback to the community. He created a common fund at the seminary for secular priests, aiming to foster a sense of communal responsibility and accountability.<sup>38</sup> The bishop who succeeded him had a different approach.<sup>39</sup> He encouraged the erection of churches in each village and had a priest installed in the parish as a resident. This explains why there are numerous churches all over the province of Quebec.

#### **1.4. The Gallican period, Conquest and Triumphalism**

The Gallican period (1663-1760) is a period in the history of Quebec, when the relationship between the Church and the state changed, making the Church, which had so much involved itself in administrative duties, subordinate to the state. However, the Church continued to enjoy state protection while remaining responsible for health, education and social services, though under close supervision of the state. In 1760, when the British conquered Quebec, the Church lost state protection and financial support. This forced the Church to accept British governance and collaborate with them to gain their acceptance. As a result, Quebec lost contact with France, affecting the immigration of French people from France, including the clergy. Religious communities, mainly the Jesuits, were banned.<sup>40</sup> The British made every effort to promote the English language and the Anglican Church while diminishing the Catholic Church and the French language. "All civil servants were even required to take the Test Oath, introduced in England in 1673, which obliged them to stop recognizing the Pope as their spiritual leader and to declare their opposition to transubstantiation and the reverence of saints, in particular Mary, the mother of Jesus."<sup>41</sup>

With time, the British realized that they could not succeed in ignoring the Catholic faith in la Nouvelle France. In 1763, the Treaty of Paris was signed with a clause "His Britannic Majesty agrees to grant to the inhabitants of Canada the freedom of the Catholic religion, which allows them to profess the worship of their religion according to the rite of the Roman Church, in so far as the laws of Great Britain permit."<sup>42</sup> Later, the Quebec Act of 1774 granted Catholic parish priests within the Diocese of Quebec the right to collect tithes; access for Catholics to public office, without having to take oaths contrary to their faith and the free exercise of their religion.<sup>43</sup> The British imperial policy had been designed to make the Church in Quebec a dependent institution.

The Catholic Church in Quebec lived in constant fear of being attacked by certain British constitutional provisions. Because of this and some other factors, the Catholic Church, as an

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. P. 42

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Lacoursière et al. eds., *Histoire 1534-1968*, 181.

<sup>40</sup> Malvern, "Falling from Grace."

<sup>41</sup> Lemieux, *Une histoire religieuse du Québec*, 42.

<sup>42</sup> Lacoursière, et al. eds., *Histoire 1534-1968*, 196.

(Also cf. Lemieux, *Une histoire religieuse du Québec*, 42).

<sup>43</sup> Lemieux, *Une histoire religieuse du Québec*, 57.



already established institution, suffered a chronic shortage of priests.<sup>44</sup> Meanwhile, the population of la Nouvelle France kept growing, especially in Montreal, Quebec and Trois-Rivières. The constantly growing population manifested a serious challenge of a lack of enough priests to serve every community of the population. This affected the control of the Church over many communities within the province.<sup>45</sup> The Christians and the clergy in Montreal began to express the need to have a resident bishop in Montreal. In 1836, Montreal was made a diocese with Mgr. Jean-Jacques Lartigue as its first Bishop.<sup>46</sup> Sooner, the British Empire recognized the Church's property rights, which had been contested since 1763.<sup>47</sup>

Having lost control over many communities, the Church sought to consolidate its position over cultural, social and political influence on the population. First and foremost, the Church took advantage of the pressing need of the time to form an ecclesiastical province of Quebec.<sup>48</sup> Subsequently, other dioceses were established in quick succession, including Trois-Rivières and St. Hyacinthe (1852), Rimouski (1867) Sherbrook (1874). Chicoutimi (1878), Nicolet (1885), Valleyfield (1892).<sup>49</sup> There was also a rapid increase in the number of religious orders and classical colleges from which about 50% of the graduates joined the priesthood.<sup>50</sup>

At the time of the formation of the ecclesiastical province of Quebec, the civil law of United Canada recognized the nomination of Bishops by the Pope. Consequently, the Church as an institution and members of its clergy gained more influence on the first provincial council that took place in 1851, as well as the foundation of the University of Laval as the first French university and the first Catholic University in North America.<sup>51</sup>

Within the institutional Church, there was an increase (from 50% in 1840 to 99% in 1896) in the number of Christians who did their easter duties of confession and communion at least once during the easter season. The civil registries were kept by the Church, her corporations were not taxed, she remained in control of health services, education and charitable institutions.<sup>52</sup> Besides that, the Church as an institution became more organized both internally and externally. The seminaries that had been established in the 1830s were beginning to produce more clergy, and there were various Roman Catholic Christian manifestations, including:<sup>53</sup>

- Parish annual retreats and diocesan priestly vocation promotion.
- Creation of the catholic men's and women's movements
- Promotion of popular pieties like eucharistic adoration, way of the cross, novenas, confraternities of St. Vincent de Paul and propagation of faith.
- Teaching of philosophy and theology at schools
- Creation of parish libraries and publications of ecclesiastical journals
- In the provincial council of 1851, the bishops discussed various concerns, including the incorporation of foreign priests and calling for the separation of catholic

---

<sup>44</sup> Roberto Perin, *Rome in Canada: The Vatican and Canadian Affairs in The Late Victorian Age*, (University of Toronto Press, 1990), 32.

<sup>45</sup> Malvern, "Falling from Grace."

<sup>46</sup> Lemieux, *Une histoire religieuse du Quebec*, 58-60.

<sup>47</sup> Perin, *Rome in Canada*, 32.

<sup>48</sup> Lemieux, *Une Histoire Religieuse du Quebec*, 62-63.

<sup>49</sup> Perin, *Rome in Canada*, 32.

<sup>50</sup> Malvern, "Falling from Grace."

<sup>51</sup> Lemieux, *Une Histoire Religieuse du Quebec*, 62-63.

<sup>52</sup> Malvern, "Falling from Grace."

<sup>53</sup> Lemieux, *Une Histoire Religieuse du Quebec*, 81-83.

students from other schools at all levels, since they doubted the competence of lay people's instruction to children in matters concerning religion and morality.

- Setting up public boarding schools based on language and Christian denomination, thus linking the education of children with parishes.

The nuns that the Church of la Nouvelle France had already founded in 1755, les Soeurs de la Charité, also known as the “Grey Nuns,” became more helpful for the local Church. By 1840, many female religious congregations of the consecrated life from elsewhere were already established within La Nouvelle France, including the Ursulines of Quebec, les Hospitalières de la Miséricorde de Jésus at the Hôtel-Dieu de Québec, les Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph in Montreal, Les Soeurs de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame and the Ursulines of Trois-Rivières. These female religious congregations continued to concentrate on health, education and social life of the population, hence contributing to the Church's completeness as a spiritual and political authority.<sup>54</sup> Sooner, the Church of La Nouvelle France founded some other religious congregations like Soeurs de la Providence (1843), les Soeurs des Saints-Noms de Jésus et de Marie (1844), les Soeurs de la Miséricorde (1848), les Soeurs de Sainte-Anne (1850) and les Soeurs du Bon Pasteur de Quebec. The impacts of these religious congregations on the population of Quebec were so impressive, with each social aspect assigned a specialized religious congregation. This led to a multiplication of religious nuns in the 36 female religious congregations within Quebec by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>55</sup>

Following the needs of the Church, the second Bishop of Montreal, Mgr. Ignace Bourget acquired personnel of both secular priests and religious communities to care for the spiritual and physical needs of the rapidly industrializing population in Montreal.<sup>56</sup> These personnel included members of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (1841), the Clerics of Saint-Viateur (1847) and the Congregation of Holy Cross (1847), along with several other religious, who sailed to Quebec to work as foreign priests and later, the return of the Jesuits, following their re-establishment in 1842.<sup>57</sup>

To the rest of Canada, Quebecers, mainly Catholics, remained the minority in what would later be known as Canada. It became necessary to determine the cultural character of united Canada. Bishop Bourget advocated for legislation that would establish Quebec as a Catholic Society and defend the educational rights of Catholic minorities in the other provinces. This contributed to the ideology of French-Canadian nationalism. Consequently, there arose a debate with two schools of thought concerning the rights of the Catholic Church in the United Canada. One school argued that “the Church had a constitutional right to organize itself as it saw fit,” and the other argued that in a country with a Protestant majority, these rights could be secured not through making declarations, but through negotiation and quiet diplomacy.<sup>58</sup>

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Church of Quebec had enough secular priests working within it and numerous religious and missionary priests in different congregations. Quebec clergy and nuns of varying missionary congregations went all over Latin America, Asia and Africa as missionaries. These were the days when Pope Benedict XV wrote an apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* (1919), asking all Christians of the universal Church to foster missionary vocations

---

<sup>54</sup> Lemieux, *Une Histoire Religieuse du Québec*, 83.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. 84-85.

<sup>56</sup> Perin, *Rome in Canada*, 32-33.

<sup>57</sup> Routhier, “*Des prêtres venus de ...*,” 194-195.

<sup>58</sup> Perin, *Rome in Canada*, 34.

among priests and seminarians to fill the gap of missionary needs of the time (MI 34). In this apostolic letter, the pope underlined that the missionaries need to prepare local priests (MI 14), by training and educating them in the same way as candidates in Europe, (MI 15) and that the presence of the local priests was to be the measure of the success of mission (MI 16).<sup>59</sup> To implement this invitation of the pope, the Catholic bishops of the province of Quebec founded “la Société des Missions Étrangères du Québec” in 1921, as a society of diocesan priests to establish missions abroad to form local priests. The members of la Société des Missions Étrangères began their first mission in Manchuria in China.<sup>60</sup>

### 1.5. Protestant Missionary Efforts

Religion was a national identity marker, and the Catholic bishops had become the guardians of faith in French Canada. One of the reasons for this is that by the time of the federal union between Quebec and the rest of Canada, the Catholic Church was well organized as an institution. The British conquest that had forced Catholics in Quebec to live with the Protestants was regarded as a threat that would contaminate Catholic orthodoxy. At conquest, the British made considerable attempts to suppress the Catholic Church. For instance, the newly arrived Protestants, especially Anglicans and the Huguenots, used Catholic chapels for their worship. This created some difficulties and conflicts with the Catholic bishops, especially concerning doctrine and practice. In addition, the Protestants were exempted from public service and remained as merchants, army mercenaries or a link between their faith and the country.<sup>61</sup>

The Protestants, just as the Catholics did, imported missionaries from Europe in the 1830s, mainly from France and French-speaking Switzerland. In those days of missionary enthusiasm, the Society of Evangelical Mission of Lausanne had sent a couple, Henri and Jenny Olivier, to the United States of America. This couple made a stopover at Montreal, where they received a good welcome from the Presbyterians, the Baptists, Methodists and Congregationalists. The missionary couple later settled in Grande-Ligne (Great-Line) in Acadie and even converted the assistant Parish priest of the Catholic parish of Acadie to Protestantism. They would later be referred to as Grande-Ligne Protestant missionaries.<sup>62</sup>

The achievement of converting a Catholic priest to Protestantism motivated the Protestants greatly, leading to the foundation of a Protestant French Missionary Society in 1839, by James Thompson, a Presbyterian from Montreal, with the support of other English Presbyterians, Anglicans and Methodists. Their dream was to convert all French Canadians to Protestantism. Their main missionary approaches included:

- a) Having a personal and direct contact with individuals and giving them a Bible
- b) Creating a temporary missionary station and placing a pastor there
- c) Using rural schools to evangelize school children.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Benedict XV, Pope. "Apostolic Letter - *Maximum Illud*", Vatican, 1919  
[https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/en/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_ben-xv\\_apl\\_19191130\\_maximum-illud.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xv_apl_19191130_maximum-illud.html). Accessed June 22, 2024.

<sup>60</sup> Lemieux, *Une Histoire Religieuse du Québec*, 108-109.

<sup>61</sup> Lemieux, *Une Histoire Religieuse du Québec*, 65.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. 85.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 86.

Since each Protestant church sought to expand itself, the French Missionary Society closed its doors to other Protestants and identified itself only with Presbyterians. Parallel Missionary societies were created, including the Church of England, the French-Canadian Missionary Society (1848) and the Methodist Missionary Society (1854). By 1881, there were a total of 86 Protestant missionaries within Quebec: 52 Presbyterians, 15 Great-Line, 10 Methodists and 9 Anglicans. Among them were 60 men and 26 women. The Anglican missionary societies differentiated themselves from others and strictly carried out their mission in Anglican ways. On the other hand, the Catholic Church was vigilant enough to protect its flock. These two factors destabilized the other Protestants, causing them to finally opt to flee away mainly to the United States of America.<sup>64</sup> The Protestants convinced a former French Canadian Catholic priest in 1859, who had founded a “New Catholic Church” in Chicago, following Protestant theology, to come back to Quebec to win over Francophone Catholics. He succeeded in converting some Catholics from Montreal and Quebec into his church.<sup>65</sup>

### **1.6. French Language and Catholicism in Quebec**

On the occasion of the 21<sup>st</sup> International Eucharistic Congress in Montreal, in September 1910, the Catholic primate of England, Archbishop Francis Bourne of Westminster, represented the Pope at that congress. In his speech, he presented the English language and its literature as prestigious, powerful and influential. He then strongly recommended that the Catholic Church of Quebec entirely adopt the English language so that it can well accommodate immigrants, attract people of other religions and make Canada a truly Catholic nation.<sup>66</sup> This was not well received by French Canadians. The Archbishop of St. Boniface in Manitoba, Mgr. Adélard Langevin invited Henri Bourassa to respond to the recommendation of the Catholic Primate of England. Henri Bourassa was a famous journalist and founder of a celebrated newspaper in Quebec known as *Le Devoir*, and a member of parliament in Ottawa and Quebec. He stated that “the French Canadians constitute a race of Roman Catholic Christian belief.”<sup>67</sup> He insisted that the Catholics of Quebec would continue to practice Catholicism in their French language while respecting other British immigrant Catholics. Bourassa insisted that even if French Canadians were fewer, they still had a right to live, and that right manifested in their French language.<sup>68</sup>

### **1.7. Christian Life and Devotions**

After liberating itself from the British Conquest, the Church reorganized and dedicated itself to Christianizing every aspect of Quebec society.<sup>69</sup> Christian life in la Nouvelle France was to be lived in totality, understood in the sense of glorifying God. This understanding was to be manifested in all aspects of the life of a Christian as well as in all social institutions. The Church taught and encouraged Christians of la Nouvelle France to favour sacred devotions. The most popular one was devotion to the holy family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, since they believed that

---

<sup>64</sup> Lemieux, *Une Histoire Religieuse du Québec*, 86.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. 87.

<sup>66</sup> Rivard, ed. *Histoire du Québec*, 165.

<sup>67</sup> Lemieux, *Une Histoire Religieuse du Québec*, 101. (Translated from French to English by DEEPL translator).

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. 101-102.

<sup>69</sup> Malvern, “*Falling from Grace*.”

this would sanctify the families. Men were encouraged to imitate Joseph, women Mary and the children Jesus.<sup>70</sup> The devotion to the holy family was so strong that in the parishes, the parish priest would often ask the Christians to pray to the holy family to obtain “la grâce que les familles qui composent cette paroisse soient des familles saintes, en qui la paix, la pureté et charité.”<sup>71</sup>

The other devotion that was equally popular was Marian devotion. Lemieux suggests that the popularity of this devotion may have had a relation with the native culture that was notoriously matriarchal. According to him, each house had a small oratory dedicated to Mary. He writes;

“Chaque maison possédait un petit oratoire dédié à Marie, sous un vocable ou l'autre : Notre-Dame des Vertus, du Grand Pouvoir, de la Victoire, de la liesse, du Bon Secours, où les membres de la famille se regroupaient pour des prières quotidiennes, surtout le samedi, journée dédiée à Marie. on considérait beaucoup cette dernière sous l'angle de son immaculée conception, même si le dogme ne serait promulgué qu'en 1854. La confrérie du Saint Rosaire ne tarde pas à s'implanter. Des sanctuaires mariaux apparurent bientôt : Notre-Dame-de-la Recouvrance à Québec en 1633 et Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours à Montréal en 1659. Quant aux missionnaires auprès des Amérindiens, ils faisaient de la dévotion mariale le pivot de leur spiritualité et leur arme de conquête.”<sup>72</sup>

Besides the devotions, sacramental life was an important aspect of any Christian within *La Nouvelle France*. The majority of the Quebecers were Catholics, and all Catholics were expected to go to Church to attend mass as often as possible. Any newborn was baptized and confirmed as an infant and received Holy Eucharist at the age of twelve years. Records of those baptized, confirmed and received first Holy Communion were well kept by the parish priest, and only such ones would receive the holy communion in the parish. In case they attended mass in a different parish, they needed an attestation to be allowed to partake in the Holy Communion. Those to partake in Holy Communion during morning mass were expected to prepare themselves well by fasting at least from midnight. Confession during the Easter period was obligatory. To receive the sacrament of marriage in the church, some conditions had to be met, including having to answer some prayers before the priest to ascertain that those to be married knew how to recite prayers.<sup>73</sup>

Some bossy priests put pressure on their married couples to give birth to many children, some even insisted on about 16 children, but still preached that children are a blessing from God. Some historians have suggested that those priests had to do that because having large numbers of children was an easy idea to sell to many rural parishioners who were farmers and needed personnel on their farms.<sup>74</sup> Since agricultural activities needed enough labour, mass production of children was a logical approach.

---

<sup>70</sup> Lemieux, *Une Histoire Religieuse du Québec*, 46.

<sup>71</sup> Prevost Honorius “La dévotion à la Sainte Famille en Canada” p. 4, Quoted in Lemieux, *Une Histoire Religieuse du Québec*, 47. « The grace that the families that compose this parish be holy families, in whom peace, purity and charity reign.” (Translated by DEEPL translator).

<sup>72</sup> Lemieux, *Une Histoire Religieuse du Québec*, 47. « Every house had a small oratory dedicated to Mary, under one name or another: Our Lady of Virtues, of Great Power, of Victory, of Jubilation, of Good Help, where family members gathered for daily prayers, especially on Saturday, the day dedicated to Mary. Mary was highly regarded for her immaculate conception, even though the dogma was not promulgated until 1854. The Confraternity of the Holy Rosary soon took root. Marian shrines soon appeared: Notre-Dame-de-la Recouvrance in Quebec City in 1633 and Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours in Montreal in 1659. As for missionaries to the Amerindians, they made Marian devotion the pivot of their spirituality and their weapon of conquest. Translated by DEEPL translator.

<sup>73</sup> Lemieux, *Une Histoire Religieuse du Québec*, 48.

<sup>74</sup> Malvern, “*Falling from Grace*.”

## 1.8. The Contemporary Religious Culture in Quebec

Generally, a culture that can well describe Quebecers today emphasizes experience, authenticity, and self-determination (autonomy<sup>75</sup>) as well as a concern for the common good, social justice, and a preferential option for the poor. Young Quebecers have adopted a new philosophy characterized by individualism, materialism, and utilitarianism, resulting in intolerance towards religion, manifested by their struggle to integrate a new wave of immigrants and refugees who are religiously committed. Public religion in Quebec is assumed to be coercive, authoritarian, anti-egalitarian, and potentially dangerous. In a country where the majority of the population was Catholic Christians, Church liturgy or Christian theology has become completely foreign to French Canadians, and they are uncomfortable in any forum that speaks about God.<sup>76</sup>

This new culture in Quebec has placed the individual at the centre of truth. There is no common truth, profession of faith, understanding of the tradition, actions of faith, incorporation into a believing community or communication of the same truth with a common voice. What is appreciated most is the ability to be more scientific, use critical methods, analyze, reason and argue.<sup>77</sup>

We cannot talk of Quebec as a Catholic society; it is neither a Christian nor a non-Christian society. The constantly evolving Quebec has become a meeting place for different people from different cultures, skin colours, languages, educational backgrounds, mentalities, and religions, among others. This pluralism has subjected the Quebec social structure to constant change and a need for continuous adjustments, while at the same time creating a platform for mutual enrichment and complementarity.<sup>78</sup> Quebec, which was once a Catholic society, is now defined by secularism, where few religious movements are tolerated. These religious movements manifested in four main categories:

1. Those with Christian symbolism have a reference to Jesus Christ and the Bible. They include: The Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the United Church of Canada, the Mormons (the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), Jehovah's Witnesses, the Universal Church of God, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the Calvinists, the Lutherans, the Unification Church and the Family (children) of God.
2. New religious movements originating from the Far East that often believe in reincarnation and are inspired by Buddhism and Hinduism. These movements include the International Krishna Consciousness Association, the Universal Baha'i Faith, the Sivananda centre and the Siddha (Yoga) meditation centre.
3. The new religious movements originating from the West have arisen out of a desire for innovation. They find their traces in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Enlightenment ideas of adapting the major religions to progress and scientific advances, as well as anthropocentrism (focusing on the human being and his abilities rather than on the presence of God).

---

<sup>75</sup> David Seljak in "Truth, Relevance and Social Transformation in Quebec," *Theoforum* 45, (2014): 321 refers to a British sociologist, Linda Woodhead who refers to the evolution of culture of authenticity and autonomy as "autonomization." Linda explains that the process of autonomization makes individuals see themselves as final arbiters of religious truth and rely to their experience to determine their beliefs and behaviors.

<sup>76</sup> Seljak, "Truth, Relevance and Social Transformation in Quebec," 319.

<sup>77</sup> Assemblée des Évêques du Québec, *ANNONCER L'ÉVANGILE DANS LA CULTURE ACTUELLE AU QUÉBEC*, Quebec: Editions Fides, 1999. 33-45.

<sup>78</sup> Lemieux, *Une Histoire Religieuse du Québec*, 143-144

Examples of these movements include: Raelians, Church of Scientology, Eckankar, Solar Welcome Center, and Listen to Your Body.

4. Magical movements where a human being manipulates and imagines that he or she can put the sacred at his/her service. These movements include: Spiritism, Satanism, occultism, neognosticism and sorcery. The examples here include the Order of the Rose-cross (AMORC), the Church of Satan, the Order of the Solar Temple and the Martinist order.<sup>79</sup>

## **1.9. Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to explore the history of the Church in Quebec. The Catholic Church succeeded in forming cultural Catholicism in Quebec society, allowing the Church to have a great influence on the people in general. I have established that the cultural Catholicism of Quebec is associated with the French heritage that came with the implanted Church in Quebec. Also, since its inception, the Catholic Church in Quebec has invited and welcomed priests from elsewhere to come and exercise their ministries in the Quebec Church.

Most importantly, this chapter has demonstrated that Quebec has seen all its present development thanks to the Catholic Church's efforts. Though the Catholic Church tried its best to make society work and prosper, and determine the day-to-day Christian life and practices, it is no longer popular among Quebecers. However, it is observable that the Quebecers embrace Christian values such as honesty, charity and justice. In Quebec society, abortion, euthanasia (medical aid in dying), and divorce have been made lawful, though not acceptable to all Quebecers.

---

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter Two

### Secularization in Quebec: A Platform for Reinvention of Catholicism

#### 2.0. Introduction

In chapter one, I have explored the history of the Church of Quebec, beginning from its foundation up to date. While doing so, I have demonstrated the truth of the statement of Gilles Routhier that inviting and welcoming priests from elsewhere is not a recent practice, but has been present throughout the Catholic Church's history. We have also traced how the Church formed cultural Catholicism that penetrated all the social structures of Quebec society. I have also identified various roles that cultural Catholicism played in developing Quebec as a society.

In what follows, I will argue that secularization of Quebec has had a twofold impact: a decline in cultural Catholicism and the creation of a platform for a new Catholicism. I submit that secularization brought about some disconnects between the church and society. For instance, the religion that defined every aspect of the lives of Quebecers is now said to be pushed from the public to the private space. About 70% to 80% of the population have distanced themselves from active participation in the Church activities.<sup>80</sup> Today, the Church buildings are closing up or being sold to be used by other religions or for non-religious functions. Interestingly, the sold-out church buildings are left to retain their outward physical appearances as churches. Some gain recognition as patrimonies that are part of the national heritage of Quebec. Religious houses that were filled with members are empty and closing up. Quebecers are no longer interested in the Church life, though they observe important Church feasts like St. John the Baptist (24 June) as the National Day of Quebec. They still take their newborns to Church for baptism, celebrate their marriages in Church and invite priests for the Christian burial of their deceased family members. Recent surveys<sup>81</sup> have indicated that many Quebecers profess faith in God and consider themselves Catholic Christians.

The main arguments in this chapter are inspired by Rodney Stark's desecularization thesis, which he proposed against pro-secularization social scientists and some Western intellectuals who prophesied the end of religion and its replacement by science and reason.<sup>82</sup> While acknowledging its decline, I will demonstrate how cultural Catholicism, which made Quebec a people and a nation, has transformed itself and continues to be visible among Quebecers.

No doubt, before secularization, life in Quebec could not be contemplated outside the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. The Church's identity animated all the aspects of life in Quebec society. Sunday mass attendance was about 85% of the population. As I have demonstrated in the first chapter, the Catholic Church was the most powerful institution controlling

---

<sup>80</sup> Vigil, "Sortir à la rencontre du Québec qui est allé au-delà de la religion."

<sup>81</sup> Statistics Canada, Distribution (in percentage) of Religious Groups, Quebec, 2011 and 2021, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/fogs-spg/alternative.cfm?topic=10&lang=E&dguid=2021A000224&objectId=2>. Accessed June 29, 2025. Similar information is also available in an article by Andy Riga published in "The Gazette" on October 27, 2022, <https://www.montrealgazette.com/news/article117171.html>. Accessed June 29, 2025. (See also Sivane Hirsch's article "In Quebec" <https://ccrl-clrc.ca/work/in-quebec/>, accessed June 29, 2025).

<sup>82</sup> Rodney Stark, "Secularization, R.I.P.," *Sociology of Religion* 60, no. 3 (1999): 249.



education, health, and social welfare, and remained an ideological guide to provincial governments' decisions.<sup>83</sup> Today, things have changed.

Referring to the 1960s Silent Revolution as the beginning of secularization in Quebec, I will begin this chapter by establishing how secularization has changed the manner of practising Catholicism in Quebec. To do this, I will argue that secularization in Quebec has created two different ideologies (Secularism and *Laïcité*) that are often mistakenly used interchangeably as though they mean the same thing. By demonstrating how secularism and *Laïcité* each play a role in the actual state of religion in Quebec, I will follow the lines of argument of Charles Taylor to suggest that religion in Quebec cannot successfully be separated from the public space since its social impact on Quebecers undoubtedly forms part of their identity. My final submission would suggest that the platform secularization has created for Catholicism in Quebec is an opportunity for the Church to transform itself from being a church of the buildings, offices and authority to a church of testimony on the street with the people, in bars and dance halls. In this way, what would matter is not whether religion is public or private but whether it can be lived in every space, and have an impact on people without necessarily requiring them to be part of a religious institution.

## **2.1. The Background of Quiet Revolution**

No doubt, the Quiet Revolution played a major role in the secularization of Quebec. For this paper, it is imperative to examine the context and background of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec. First and foremost, let us begin by noting that in many secularized societies, industrialization and modernization are said to be the immediate causes of secularization, and consequently, contributing to a decline in religious participation.<sup>84</sup> In Quebec, secularization occurred much later after industrialization and modernization; therefore, this assumption cannot be applied. Gregory Baum observes that before industrialization and modernization, the Church in Quebec had placed a great emphasis on large families, while at the same time encouraging Quebecers to remain an agricultural society, defining itself with values appropriate for agricultural life.

When the 20<sup>th</sup>-century industrialization and by extension modernization began to intensify in Quebec, neither did the communities break up, nor did their religious devotion decline. The provincial government insisted on its jurisdiction over education, healthcare, and matters of public welfare, while not taking direct responsibility, but instead leaving these tasks to private institutions, mainly the Catholic Church. Though the Church and the state were legally separated, the Catholic Church continued to influence provincial government's decisions. The Catholic Church continued to be responsible for the educational system from primary to university level, for hospitals and other health services, and the assistance of the poor and the destitute.<sup>85</sup> The entry into modernity did not affect the religious commitment and the engagement of the Church in the Quebec Society.

---

<sup>83</sup> Gregory Baum, "Catholicism and Secularization in Quebec," *CrossCurrents* 36, no.4 (1986-7): 438. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24459103>. Accessed October 26, 2024.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.444-446

<sup>85</sup> Baum, "Catholicism and Secularization in Quebec," 438.

In response to the waves of modernity, other societies in North America organised themselves as interfaith societies, but French Canadians persisted in forming a strong Catholic culture that manifested its religious affiliations in all aspects of life including education, health, family life, entertainment as well as in cooperatives, labour unions and other organizations such as the *Union Catholique des Cultivateurs* and the *Confédération des Travailleurs Catholiques du Canada*. Almost all schools, hospitals, streets, markets, villages, etc, were named after the saints. The number of priestly and religious vocations kept increasing. Everything was Catholic. The Church imposed on everyone the practice of a religious life. Consequently, the lifestyle of Quebecers was different from the rest of the surrounding North American societies.<sup>86</sup> Though this gave Quebecers a unique identity in North America, it also created in them a longing to be like others. This longing was expressed in different ways, but the Catholic Church, which was a very powerful institution in Quebec, kept suppressing it.

In addition, after World War II, all the neighbouring societies enjoyed economic prosperity brought by modernization, except Quebec. This made Quebecers determined to find out what other societies did well or differently from what they were doing. In most cases, the conclusion was that the education system that was offered by the Catholic Church was below the irrelevant. At that time, the level of formal education in Quebec province was at 13% as compared to 36% of those who had finished grade 11 in the anglophone Canada.<sup>87</sup>

Again, Quebecers expressed their dissatisfaction with the Church's involvement in education but were silenced by "the powerful institution." The Church did not accept criticism. It is this Church's refusal to accept criticism, as well as the longing of Quebecers to be like other neighbouring societies, that served as the immediate causes of secularization as understood today in Quebec. The Quebecers understood well that the Church they understood to be holy and human was becoming more human, increasingly interested in control over things that did not belong to her domain. As a result, the Catholic Church in Quebec was seen as a "controlling and manipulative" institution that consistently kept departing from its real identity day by day. Quebecers unanimously chose to distance themselves and take a break from such a "controlling and manipulative" church. This "distancing" was not initially meant to abandon the Catholic Church; otherwise, the Quebecers would have joined other Protestant churches that were already established in the Quebec region. Quebecers simply needed a break, hoping that the Church would "come back to her senses,"<sup>88</sup> transform herself and make a bold decision to truly live her identity.

The Quebec Christian parents, whose responsibility once included transmitting their Catholic faith to their children, now transmitted hatred for the church without allowing them to experience the Church and make an informed judgment. This reminds me of the answers some students gave in a theological workshop I attended at Concordia University. While discussing the usefulness of theology, the facilitator asked individuals to share why they were doing theology. One Quebecer student responding to the question said that he wanted to find a meaning in life as a future engineer, but his parents never allowed him to go to Church and always told him that he should not go to Church because it is manipulative. The other student shared that at her workplace,

---

<sup>86</sup> Jean-Philippe Warren, "Secularism in Quebec," in *Canadian Encyclopedia*. (2020)

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/secularism-in-quebec>. Accessed October 26, 2024.

<sup>87</sup> Wikipedia, "Quiet Revolution," [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quiet\\_Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quiet_Revolution). Accessed June 25, 2024.

<sup>88</sup> This Phrase is adapted from the Story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15, 11-32 where a younger son who had wandered far from his father "came back to his senses" and resolved to go back to his father and ask for forgiveness.

she discovered that many people are longing to talk about God or have someone talk to them about God, but they are not allowed to do so.<sup>89</sup>

## 2.2. Quiet Revolution (1960 to 1970s)

Historians and other scholars have associated “the distancing” of Quebecers from the Catholic Church with the “Quiet Revolution.” Some scholars have specified the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s as the beginning of secularization in Quebec while dating the usage of the term back to much earlier dates than the 1960s. These Scholars argue that “Quiet Revolution” had been used since 1844 in different newspapers in Quebec, but in contexts different from that of the 1960s.<sup>90</sup> Some argue that the term was born in 1940 when the first liberal prime minister, Adélard Godbout, employed different measures that would change the appearance of Quebec. Some others associate its beginning with the end of World War II, when soldiers came back from the war with new ideas after having a different vision of diverse mentality across the world.<sup>91</sup> From these hypotheses, we can argue that the term “Quiet Revolution” was often used to refer to unusual, extraordinary events that contradicted the existing ordinary reality.

The Quiet Revolution of the 1960’s sought to give Quebecers a popular policy; to emancipate women from male guardianship, freeing them from the confinement they suffered in the home and domestic work, without participating in society or politics; to liberate public opinion from its relationship with religious, biblical, mythical and traditional beliefs. The revolution also led to the creation of a secular Ministry of Education, in secular hands, without entrusting the Churches with the privileged mission of shaping the minds of new generations according to their biblical and doctrinal mentality and their traditional devotion to the pious. In addition, it made Quebecers have a commitment to all social freedoms, based on a democratic political decision, taken in an adult manner, and avoid basing decisions on Christian faith, Catholic morality in general, or sexual and reproductive morality in particular, which had weighed so heavily on the social conscience.<sup>92</sup>

Education was the main reform among the many reforms brought about by the Quiet Revolution. There had been a general opinion that the education system that was controlled by the Catholic Church had been designed to favour a few individuals to proceed to higher education. The then Prime Minister Lesage, in what he referred to as “a determination to modernize Quebec,” took over the schools that had been built by the church and declared them the property of the provincial government. By 1964, he had already created the Ministry of Education and assigned it a minister. Sooner, secondary schools and junior colleges were created.<sup>93</sup>

The Catholic Church, which had been applauded for creating a powerful ideology that helped the people to resist and decline assimilation into English culture, giving Quebecers an independent cultural identity, was now being accused of being responsible for the “slow speed of modernization” in Quebec. Baum argues that, for Quebecers, the opportunity cost of catching up

---

<sup>89</sup> Workshop at Concordia University by Lynn Barwell, on the value of a theology degree in Quebec, March 15, 2024.

<sup>90</sup> Rivard, *Histoire du Québec*, 198.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> José Maria Vigil, *Un appel à la théologie Québécoise* in the KAIRÓS QUÉBEC <https://www.academia.edu/?h=33016191>. Accessed March 13, 2025.

<sup>93</sup> Canada Broadcasting Corporation. Une Histoire Populaire: Quiet Revolution, <https://www.cbc.ca/history/EPISCONTENTSE1EP16CH1PA1LE.html>. Accessed June 25, 2024.

with modernity is the powerful Catholic ideology in Quebec that created a sense of difference characterized by spiritual pride. The search for a new, more contemporary self-image as a people was the force behind the creation of the Liberal Party (to which Lesage belonged) that initiated the quiet revolution of the 1960s. It is that search that created in Quebecers a self-doubt that often made them feel left behind by modern development.<sup>94</sup>

The idea of revolution was so attractive to different groups of people. Some of the agents of the Quiet Revolution were members of the Catholic hierarchy who, by no means, would have thought of replacing their cherished faith. The force that was behind the political movement that initiated and carried forward the quiet revolution came from the members of the middle class who had an urgent economic interest in the victory of the liberal party and modernization of the Society, the employees of the church, mainly lay people, working in education, health and social welfare, who had yearned for independence from control of the Church Hierarchy, and some well-known priests and religious who promoted Quebec's political modernization in the fifties expressing a yearning for a more liberal, more educated, more responsible and more modern society. Also, small business owners and French-Canadian middle managers at large industrial and financial corporations who could not rise to the top simply because they were French Canadians (this was an unwritten rule). These groups of people thought that new nationalism and modernization of the government would make French the working language and consequently, allow them to rise to top positions and protect the French-Canadian economic and industrial institutions. In addition to this, several sectors of Society, mainly including the middle and lower classes, thought that their inferiority in industry and commerce was caused by the unrealistic education provided by the Catholic Church.<sup>95</sup>

### **2.3. Effects of Quiet Revolution**

The Church lost control over social institutions, of the symbols by which Quebec society defined itself, and suffered an enormous loss of membership. The new secular nationalism, with a liberal and socialist perspective, became the public philosophy. Until now, active Catholicism remains visible in Quebec culture as a historical memory, its architecture, its public symbols in the religious names of villages, towns and organizations.<sup>96</sup> The dimensions of Quiet Revolution affected an entire Quebec society, making between 70% to 80% of the population distance themselves from the Church. The Church as an institution lost the social privileges that had been reduced to its clergy and religious for centuries, it was rejected by young people, and diminished in population, threatening its extinction.<sup>97</sup>

### **2.4. Church's Reaction to Quiet Revolution**

The bishops of the Catholic Church in Quebec reacted to the Quiet Revolution by avoiding confrontation with modernization, instead taking time to reflect on the spirit of Vatican II and seek

---

<sup>94</sup> Baum, "Catholicism and Secularization in Quebec," 441.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. 442.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Vigil, "*Sortir à la rencontre du Québec qui est allé au-delà de la religion.*"

a new definition of the Church's mission in Quebec. They understood well that in the Quiet Revolution, there was a secular trend toward modernization and religious renewal suggested by the Spirit of Vatican Council II.<sup>98</sup> Determined to examine the Church's identity crisis to take corrective measures, a study commission including pastors, theologians and social scientists was created by the bishops in 1968. This commission was presided over by Fernand Dumont, a layman and well-known Quebec sociologist. The Quebec Catholic Church's honest work on the report from this commission is indicative of its "coming back to its senses." To date, the Dumont report remains an ecclesiastical document. According to Baum, this report recommended that the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec:

1. To accept and recognize that political modernization and cultural pluralism in Quebec are inevitable.
2. Acknowledge the loss of its institutional power and prestige in Quebec and abandon the idea that Catholic culture could be handed on from generation to generation just as the French language and historical memories of Quebec.
3. Redefine its role and remain present in Quebec, as one moral voice among several, that would contribute to building a modern Quebec.
4. The bishops are to embrace dialogue with the entire catholic community while creating the possibility of allowing Christians to express what Jesus Christ means to them today, what discipleship means for them, and how they conceive the role of the Church in their contexts.<sup>99</sup>

At the institutional level, as Jean-François Roussel notes, the bishops and religious communities consented to the government's plan to nationalize schools, hospitals and orphanages, which meant agreeing to lose the places where they had a concrete presence in Quebec society outside the Church.<sup>100</sup> This remains one of the unique features of the Quiet Revolution in the Church of Quebec. Roussel writes:

"Très rapidement, l'Église catholique sortait du quotidien des Québécois, remplacée par de nouvelles institutions laïques et par une culture de masse axée sur de nouveaux désirs, de nouvelles valeurs et de nouveaux porte-paroles. Une société ne vit pas tant au rythme de ses intellectuels qu'à celui de références moins nobles mais ô combien efficaces : la télévision, rock stars tels les Beatles « plus populaires que le Christ » et une panoplie de chanteurs pop locaux ; les chanteurs et poètes du nouveau nationalisme des années 1960 et 1970 tels Félix Leclerc, Gilles Vigneault, Robert Charlebois, Pauline Julien, Clémence Desrochers, qui ont tracé la voie du nouveau « pays à nommer » ; Stéphane Venne qui à la même époque annonce « le début d'un temps nouveau » où « le bonheur est la seule vertu ». Sans oublier la foule d'agences publicitaires qui à chaque pause publicitaire assurent connaître cette voie du bonheur, à la télévision qui a remplacé les vêpres à l'église et le chapelet à la radio. D'année en année, l'Eglise devint de plus en plus étrangère à la vie des gens, délaissée. Non pas tant dans le fracas de la rupture inaugurale que dans l'indifférence subséquente."<sup>101</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Baum, "Catholicism and Secularization in Quebec," 446.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. 443-444.

<sup>100</sup> Jean François Roussel, "La Théologie Québécoise après la Révolution Tranquille: Entre le temple et l'exil," Université de Montréal (2017): 11.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. "Very quickly, the Catholic Church disappeared from the daily lives of Quebecers, replaced by new secular institutions and a mass culture based on new desires, new values and new spokespeople. A society lives not so much to the rhythm of its intellectuals as to that of less noble but oh-so-effective references: television, rock stars like the Beatles "more popular than Christ" and a panoply of local pop singers; singers and poets of the new nationalism of the 1960s and 1970s like Félix Leclerc, Gilles Vigneault, Robert Charlebois, Pauline Julien, Clémence Desrochers,

## 2.5. David Martin's Sociological Explanation

According to Baum, David Martin's sociological theory that religion influences how a given traditional society ushers into modernization is useful in understanding secularism in Quebec.<sup>102</sup> Using Martin's theory, Baum explains that both Protestantism and Catholicism guided societies into modernity, each in a distinctive way. In articulating Martin's argument, Baum writes "... how Protestant societies have moved into modernization produced pluralism, tolerance and democratic cooperation of different interest groups... Protestantism produced a cultural imagination of pluralism: thus, the advance of secularization was not accompanied by great hostility to religion."<sup>103</sup>

Different from Protestantism, Catholicism produced "an imagination of totality," presenting itself as "an ideology of the whole," which means rejecting one aspect of the system implies not being loyal to the rest. "Those who dissented on one issue had to reject the system in its entirety and define themselves against the inherited Catholicism. And because they rejected the whole, the dissenters were in turn obliged to create their totality." Baum refers to this as a tragic cultural schism.<sup>104</sup>

While the modernizing part of the society went against Catholicism, the Catholic Church itself continued to identify itself with resistance to modernization, resulting in a divided society of Catholics (conservatives) and liberals. This meant that being a Catholic did not leave room for being liberal. The same happened between Catholics and socialists. Catholics tended to totalize conflicts in society and discouraged "cumulative legitimation."<sup>105</sup> This explains why in Catholic Countries, the conflicts between economic classes and between different regions easily take on the character of a total struggle.<sup>106</sup>

Baum presents his twofold thesis of modernization before and after 1960, arguing that Quebec entered into modernization without producing a Cultural Schism that has commonly characterized Catholic Societies' entry into modernization. Until the 1950s, Quebec remained thoroughly Catholic. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the workers and intellectuals who had always been loyal to the teachings and traditions of the Church started joining other Canadians in the American Labour Federation, trade unions and labour congress. The Church became concerned with the future of workers, the middle class and the intellectuals. In 1911, the Church in Quebec founded an adult education centre called *École sociale populaire* to promote the teachings of the universal Catholic Church on labour.

---

who charted the course of the new "country to be named"; Stéphane Venne who at the same time announced "the beginning of a new time" where "happiness is the only virtue". And let's not forget the host of advertising agencies who at every commercial break, claim to know the way to happiness, on television, which has replaced vespers in church and the rosary on the radio. Year after year, the Church became more and more alienated from people's lives, more and more abandoned. Not so much in the uproar of the inaugural rupture as in the indifference that followed." (translated by DEEPL Translator).

<sup>102</sup> Baum, "Catholicism and Secularization in Quebec," 444.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. 445

<sup>105</sup> Baum explains in (*Catholicism and Secularization in Quebec*, p. 444) that this term is used by sociologist David Martin to mean "different sectors of society, whether religious or secular, regional groupings or economic classes, while possibly in conflict with one another, have their own way of legitimating society as a whole."

<sup>106</sup> Baum, "Catholicism and Secularization in Quebec," 445.

Determined to separate her people from American radicalism and keep the French identity, the Church opted to create Catholic Trade unions, in which the workers would be instructed in religion and social teachings of the Church. The Church founded Labour unions in 1921, and their chaplains were appointed by the bishops to act as chaplains who would be responsible for the religious education of the workers as well as influence the decisions of the labour unions.<sup>107</sup>

In 1949, the Asbestos strike served as a warning to the Catholic labour movement. The striking workers had a good support of the Church, including a few bishops, priests, the catholic action movement and liberal-minded catholic lay people. This made other unions feel the need to remain attached to Catholicism. Meanwhile, the middle class of Quebecers had social aspirations of, firstly, corporatism<sup>108</sup> inspired by *Quadragesimo anno* of Pius XI that “envisaged society as a social body kept alive and well through the corporation of the various industries, trades, and professions;” where all sectors, the owners of the industries as well as the workers accept “common norms of justice and common social faith” by promoting the participation of the people in taking important decisions that affect their lives. Catholics who admired corporatism envied countries like Portugal that had a Catholic leader who “translated Catholic ideals into political reality.”<sup>109</sup>

Secondly, nationalism had been linked to the propagation of the Catholic faith as a counter to the secular ideas inspired by the French Revolution. The bishops had made the people believe that “fidelity to Catholicism... would enable French Canadians to survive on a hostile continent and create their own collective identity.” Protestantism, Secularism, materialism and English-speaking modernity were made to appear as enemies of Quebecers’ identity. Baum describes this as a “backward-looking nationalism” embedded in clericalism. This clerical nationalism required the Quebecers to resist modern liberal ideas, preserve their language and their faith and struggle for independence from English Canadians.<sup>110</sup>

In the 1950s, the provincial government of Maurice Duplessis proved to the people to be completely detached from the social reality of Quebec. A new review known as *Cité Libre* was founded as an organ for the promotion of liberal ideas. Young intellectuals (including Pierre Trudeau) used this platform to demand modernization of Quebec and improvement of the education system. Some of the main ideas the review advocated for included civil liberties, pluralism of opinions, the strengthening of democracy, and popular participation. The contributors to *Cité Libre* advocated for modernization and secularization rooted in Catholicism.<sup>111</sup>

## 2.6. Compromise and Pluralism within Catholic Ranks

The Vatican II dynamic Catholicism that opposed the static Catholicism helped Quebecers to be well prepared for the harsh language that accompanied secular, liberal modernization in their society. They participated in the secularization movement of the Quiet Revolution and welcomed the exclusion of the control of the institutional Church over education, health and welfare. The

---

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. 447.

<sup>108</sup> “Corporatism” is a social justice theory that goes against unregulated capitalism and socialist totalitarianism that emerged from industrialization. This theory, proposed by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, 1931, is part of the official social teaching of the Catholic Church. It advocates for people’s participation in decisions that concern them through cooperatives representing their productive activities, to avoid exploitation. (see Baum, *Catholicism and Secularization in Quebec*, p. 448).

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. 447-448.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. 448-449.

<sup>111</sup> These demands points to the Corporatism social aspiration of the middle-class Quebecers discussed earlier.

Catholicism designed by Vatican II favoured pluralism. Different individuals and personalities, including members of the clergy, questioned the relevance of the Church of Quebec in modern times. This was interpreted by the ecclesiastical authorities as self-criticism, completely unwelcome within the institutional Church. This created a conflict between the “old, powerful Catholic Church of Quebec” and the “new, dynamic Church.” Some high-ranking clergymen, like Cardinal Léger, an archbishop of Montreal who had been a proponent of “the old powerful Catholic of Quebec,” recognized the need for the Church to be relevant in a pluralist society and meet the needs of their contemporary faithful. In the context of his time, Cardinal Léger was seen as a supporter of the Quiet Revolution and the New Quebec.<sup>112</sup>

It is essential to underline that the rapid secularization of Quebec did not produce any political anti-clericalism. What created anti-clericalism and hatred for the Church in Quebec was mainly the extraordinary power with which the Church controlled the consciences of the Quebecers. Anti-clerical sentiments are said to have existed in Quebec as early as the 1930s. The Quiet Revolution, which marked the beginning of secularization, primarily aimed to remove the education system from the control of the institutional Church. The liberal government took several years to prepare the education reform bill, and part of the preparation was confidential dialogue with the bishops, who finally gave their approval for the reform. In that negotiation, a consensus was reached between the provincial government and the bishops of Quebec that the government would not interfere with the confessional nature of the school system in Quebec. After handing over the management of the education system to the government, the bishops were allowed by the government to continue appointing chaplains to the Catholic schools and were represented on the educational council of the Ministry of Education.<sup>113</sup> There was indeed “affinity and cooperation between secular reform and the Catholic renewal”<sup>114</sup> during the secularization of Quebec. The Quebec society is what it is today, according to Baum, because of “the compromise that was sought by the Catholic bishops when they gave their approval to the educational reform in the early sixties, when they appointed the Dumont commission to examine the crisis of the Church, and when, more recently, they adopted a nuanced position vis-à-vis the government’s new project of nationalizing the Quebec school system.”<sup>115</sup>

## **2.7. Visible Ideologies in Contemporary Quebec**

To avoid possible confusion about terminology, it is important to begin by clarifying what is generally understood by secular, secularization and secularism. According to José Casanova, these three concepts are related but used differently; the first categorizes what is modern (secular), the second is a world-view or an ideology of what is modern, while the third is a process that analytically conceptualizes what is modern (secularization). The secular is the central modern category that constructs, codifies or grasps a realm differentiated from what is religious. Secularism refers to secular world-views, ideologies and philosophies associated with modern

---

<sup>112</sup> Baum, “Catholicism and Secularization in Quebec,” 451-452.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. 453.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. 450.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. 453.



culture,<sup>116</sup> characterized by ideals of modernity; individualism, rationality and progress.<sup>117</sup> The worldviews and ideologies that may be elaborated consciously into modern culture or philosophies are what concerns secularism. Secularization “usually refers to actual or alleged empirical-historical patterns of transformation and differentiation of the religious and the secular.”<sup>118</sup>

The contemporary Quebec, which was formerly a “priest-ridden province,”<sup>119</sup> is a “liberal, urban and technologically advanced society” that came out of “the Great Darkness” of before the 1960s. Since the exit from “the Great Darkness,” two main ideologies have continued to manifest in Quebec society, namely, Laicity (*laïcité*) and Secularism.<sup>120</sup> *Laïcité* is the “separation of religion from influence over a public sphere,” introducing “a distinction between public and private with profound implications for both institutions and individuals.”<sup>121</sup> It concerns the separation of state and social institutions from religion. *Laïcité* involves the ideologies that emerge from Laicization.<sup>122</sup>

Quebec is a Laic Society. The state in Quebec is separated from religion as well as public social institutions like schools and hospitals. Catholics who once dominated every aspect of society now participate in public institutions personally, just like any other citizen. In 2019, Bill 21 affirmed the *laïcité* of Quebec and prohibited government and civil officials from wearing religious symbols while at work.<sup>123</sup> The laic identity and its values in Quebec have undergone a transformation from French Canadians (who implied Catholicism) to citizens of the Quebec nation that is under ongoing secularization.<sup>124</sup>

Secularism refers to secular worldviews and philosophies associated with modern culture,<sup>125</sup> characterized by ideals of modernity, individualism, rationality, progress, etc.<sup>126</sup> The ideologies of secularism and *laïcité* (laicity) have ecclesiastic origin since they both question the involvement of the Church in the domains that are not proper to it.<sup>127</sup> They correspond to secularization and laicization, respectively, whereby the former allows churches to find a place within the public sphere and the latter only occurs where a denomination once dominated. From

---

<sup>116</sup> José Casanova, “The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms,” in C. Calhoun, M. Juergensmeyer, J. Vanantwerpen, eds., *Rethinking Secularism* (Oxford University Press, 2011). P.55.

<sup>117</sup> Mager, “Quebec’s act respecting the Laicity of the state and the demise of religion,” 164.

<sup>118</sup> Casanova, “The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms,” 55.

<sup>119</sup> Vigil, “*Sortir à la rencontre du Québec qui est allé au-delà de la religion.*”

<sup>120</sup> Mager, “Quebec’s act respecting the Laicity of the state and the demise of religion,” 162.

<sup>121</sup> J. C. Soper, K. R. den Dulk, and S. V. Monsma, *The Challenge of Pluralism: Church and State in Six Democracies*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Rowman and Littlefield, 2017), 62.

<sup>122</sup> Jérôme Mélançon, in differentiating Laicity from Secularization writes “Laicization could only happen where one denomination dominated; where this denomination was highly institutionalized and centralized, as in the case of Catholicism; and where correspondingly public sphere could only be created through a strict separation of the state from the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, through political struggle against those who would maintain this authority.” (Jérôme Mélançon, “Laicity and The Inherited Boundaries between Religion and Politics in Quebec.” *Religious studies and Theology* 34, no.1 (2015): 87 EBSCO host.)

<sup>123</sup> Mager, “Quebec’s Act Respecting The Laicity of The State and The Demise of Religion,” 164.

<sup>124</sup> Here Laicism concerns state and social institutions, and Secularism concerns cultural ideologies, (see Mager, “Quebec’s act respecting the Laicity of the State and the demise of religion, 164).

<sup>125</sup> Casanova, “The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms,” 55.

<sup>126</sup> Mager, “Quebec’s act respecting the Laicity of the state and the demise of religion,” 164.

<sup>127</sup> Mélançon, “Laicity and the inherited boundaries between religion and politics in Quebec,” 87.

this, we can conclude, as Rodney Stark Argues in “Secularization R.I.P.,” that secularism does not affect religion in any way,<sup>128</sup> but *laïcité* (laicity), especially in the context of Quebec, does. However, it is important to underline that the Roman Catholic Church as an institution is responsible for the *laïcité* (laicity) in Quebec, because it controlled the consciences of the Quebecers, leading to the creation of anti-clericalism sentiments since the 1930s to the 1960s at the time of the Quiet Revolution. The recent surveys indicate that most Quebecers believe in God, declare themselves as Catholics, baptize their newborns in the church, get married in the church and invite the priests to bury their loved ones. To this effect, the question that Stark raises is particularly important: “Why do they persist in believing but see no need to participate with even minimal regularity” in churches?

Let us look at several examples to elaborate on this point. In the late 1990s, the state suddenly discovered that the Roman Catholic Church that had been presiding over the social welfare of Quebec society had, during the 1940s and 1950s, collaborated with the Duplessis government to put in place a scheme that wrongly certified about 20,000 orphaned children as mentally ill. These children were made to stay in psychiatric institutions belonging to Catholic nuns to attract additional funding from the government of Quebec. It was also revealed that a majority of these “mentally ill orphaned children” were sexually abused. The Church has also been accused of destroying indigenous communities and their cultures through church-run residential schools that were generally described as having “various forms of violence and abuse.” Priests and nuns in these schools (and some parishes) are said to have engaged in sexual misconduct that was covered up by the Church hierarchy.<sup>129</sup>

Because of its past, Catholicism and, by generalization, religion in Quebec have been termed as evil. *Laïcité* of Quebec portrays religion like cigarette smoking, that is bad for people’s health, yet some people still smoke it because it is highly addictive. The Quebec government, aware of the “dangers” of religion that is addictive, “respects the freedom of its citizens” while taking some measures to “adopt laws and regulations to limit its use in the public sphere, to confine it to homes, and to put its proponents under surveillance.”<sup>130</sup> As part of this surveillance, when the Twin Towers in New York were attacked in 2001 by Muslim terrorists, Quebecers labelled Islam as “a potentially violent, sexist, and obscurantist religion.” Islam’s religious symbols became “symbols of oppression, dissimulation, and conspiracy.” Later, a law (Bill 21) had to be created to ban Muslims in Quebec working in public offices and institutions from using their religious symbols.<sup>131</sup>

A “democratic” Quebec consistently remained cautious of religion, its addiction and manifested its commitment to protect its citizens. When there was a general demand by “the religious addicts” in 2006, the government formed a Cultural and Religious Accommodation Commission, hired two intellectuals – sociologist Gerard Bouchard and philosopher Charles Taylor – to lead it and convey its findings. The two intellectuals came up with a report in 2008.

---

<sup>128</sup> Stark, “Secularization, R.I.P.,” 249.

<sup>129</sup> Mager, “Quebec’s act respecting the Laicity of the state and the demise of religion,” 161-175.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

Following the recommendations of the Bouchard-Taylor Commission Report, Bill 21 was presented in parliament to create a law that would define religious accommodation in Quebec. A parliamentary commission was struck that strategically invited “convenient stakeholders” to oversee hearings about Bill 21, except religious or theologians, to comment on the bill. Until the date of the Bouchard-Taylor report, many Quebecers had argued in favour of “open *laïcité*” in consideration of the contributions made by religion (especially Catholicism) to the history of Quebec. *Laïcité* activists, on the other hand, insisted on a laicity that combats religious influence on society and culture to let the society wholly embrace reason, evolution and science. Their main argument here was that “some religions’ obscurantist views about evolution, blood transfusion, vaccines, and other matters ...threatened the prevalence of science and reason in society and caused serious public health concerns.”<sup>132</sup> The current government has come up with Bill 40, which now seeks to erase from the Education Act all references to spirituality or spiritual life, as well as abolish the governmental committee on religious affairs.<sup>133</sup>

## 2.8. Religion Pushed from Public to Private Space Is a Scandal in Quebec

Public space can be understood in two senses: “what affects the whole community” and “what is accessible to everyone.”<sup>134</sup> Religion cannot be public or private in the same sense as a school, a hospital, or a market can be, because the latter are places, while the former is a system of beliefs and values. These beliefs and values are at once private and public, because they begin with personal, ordinary life,<sup>135</sup> and proceed to seek to live one’s ordinary life meaningfully with others and with God. One can live an ordinary life privately, hence individualism. Some important questions a believer asks him/herself include: What is the meaning of my life? Why do I exist? What is my place/role in this world? And, how do I get to be fulfilled? What is my final destiny after this life?

To answer these questions, one understands how he is connected to “an intimate sphere of close relations,”<sup>136</sup> like the family and friends and how he or she reacts to the experience in this circle or relationship. These intimate relations, according to Taylor, lead to the emergence of the public space, because the intimacy has “to be defined through public interchange... a new definition of human identity, however private, can become generally accepted only through being defined and affirmed in public space.”<sup>137</sup> This explains why social religious manifestations like justice, peace, love of neighbour, charity, truthfulness, honesty, which are widely witnessed in Quebec, are in the public space. Considering that these religious manifestations are values<sup>138</sup> inherited from cultural Catholicism, living them thus becomes a new form of Catholicism in the Secularized Quebec. In this sense, it is indeed ridiculous to claim that religion in the Secularized Quebec is in the private space, yet its social manifestations are undeniably visible, besides almost

---

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.166.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. 167.

<sup>134</sup> Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*. (Duke University, 2004), 104.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. 102.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.105.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Chapter Seven of Lemieux’s “*Une Histoire Religieuse du Quebec*” explains the importance Quebecers give to values as a Catholic heritage. (see Limieux. *Une Histoire Religieuse du Quebec*. 128-136).

everything in the public space still bearing the names of saints. Religion pushed into private space is a scandal in Quebec.

## 2.9. The Reinvented Catholicism in Secularized Quebec

This section concerns the innovations and creativity associated with the reinvention of Catholicism in secularized Quebec. To begin with, I must underline that these reinventions find their beginnings in the historical mistakes that are being overcome by positive and normative ideas. “Catholicism,” as Taylor explains, refers to “universality and wholeness” based on incarnation that brings redemption, uniting human lives that are “different, plural,” and “irreducible to each other” with that of God. By wholeness, Taylor implies complementarity. Thence, he points out that the historical error of Catholicism in Quebec involved attempting to achieve wholeness by making the same or identical to bring “unity bought at the price of suppressing something of diversity in the humanity that God created.”<sup>139</sup> Creative and innovative Catholic initiatives have made it urgent to accommodate and complement each other with openness and flexibility as a way of life for the new Catholicism in Quebec.<sup>140</sup>

This kind of Catholicism has struck a balance between concentrating on non-Christian aspects in secularization that make it appear as an anti-Christian, and feeling at home with it.<sup>141</sup> Quebecers have strived to understand Secularization to accommodate it, hence the new Catholicism. Taylor argues that in Secularist cultures, in this case Quebec, “there are mingled together both authentic developments of the gospel, of an incarnational mode of life and also closing off to God that negates the gospel.” Secularization can carry further and develop some Christian life facets (like affirmation of universal human rights to life, freedom, citizenship and self-realization) into radical unconditionality during the process of its breaking with the structures and beliefs of Christendom.<sup>142</sup> It is from this perspective that new Catholicism in Quebec may appear a compromise to the rule of Canon Law that defined Cultural Catholicism, and tolerant to the state law that accommodates divorce, abortion, euthanasia and same sex marriage. In any case, new Catholicism relies on the formed conscience of individual Christians. Notably, Quebec’s new Catholic spirituality seeks to achieve freedom that would involve unconditional love/compassion that propels them to be what humans most profoundly are, that is, beings in the image of God.<sup>143</sup> Their being Catholics does not have the conversion of others as a goal, but the testimony of life that befits the Catholic faith. It is their testimony that can attract others to their faith. Attempting to impose one’s faith is not appreciated.<sup>144</sup>

---

<sup>139</sup> James L. Heft (ed.), *A Catholic Modernity? Charles Taylor’s Marianist Award Lecture*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1999), 14.

<sup>140</sup> This relates to the proposals brought forward by the Dumont report that suggested that Catholics be “one moral voice among several” (see Baum, “Catholic and Secularization in Quebec,” 443).

<sup>141</sup> This statement is formulated from a remark of Charles Taylor, who argues that Christians should not concentrate on non-Christian aspects in secularization if they must understand it and find ways of accommodating it. (See Heft, *A Catholic Modernity?* 16).

<sup>142</sup> Heft, *A Catholic Modernity?* 16.

<sup>143</sup> Heft (ed.), *A Catholic Modernity?* 16

<sup>144</sup> Ibid. 17

Taylor rightly argues that the foreignness of secularism to Christianity does not necessarily involve a rejection of it, and therefore, Christianity should envisage accommodating it. The new Catholicism in Quebec understands well that God is powerful enough not to be limited by what is known to human beings, because “God’s grace may be seen operating in cultures that have been beyond the bounds of explicit gospel proclamation.”<sup>145</sup> Precisely, Catholics in Quebec use secularism as a platform to rediscover how they can realize the grace of God in their contemporary context, love others unconditionally and be authentic images of God that they were created to be. Notably, making use of secularism as a platform can be challenging. However, in the case of Quebec, these challenges have been overcome by letting go of the confinement in the church to become comfortable witnesses in the streets, in marketplaces, on the bus or train, both in the family and outside the family.<sup>146</sup>

## **2.10. Conclusion**

Thanks to secularisation, the Catholic Church that is now present in a secular Quebec recognizes complementarity as opposed to the traditional cultural Catholic Church that insisted on “sameness,” making as many people as possible into “good Catholics.”<sup>147</sup> Whereas a good Catholic in the traditional church was the one who was identical to others, a good Catholic in Quebec today is the one who lives his or her faith in freedom of the gospel of Christ. Today in Quebec, churches are not as full as they used to be, but those who come to church are convinced and do not have any external pressure compelling them to do so. Indeed, secularization has created a platform for a reinvention of Catholicism.

---

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> This statement considers the religious manifestations I have discussed in the previous pages.

<sup>147</sup> Heft (ed.), *A Catholic Modernity?* 14.

## Chapter Three

### Conceptualization of Mission in Secularized Quebec

#### 3.0. Introduction

In Chapter Two, while demonstrating the new Catholicism adapted to the secularized Quebec, I argued that secularization of Quebec has had a twofold impact: a decline in cultural Catholicism and the creation of a platform for a new Catholicism. The chapter discussed the Quiet Revolution that is associated with the beginning of secularization in Quebec, establishing its background, its effects on the Church and how the Church reacted to it. Without limiting secularization of Quebec to Quiet Revolution, I have also presented the sociological theory of David Martin that argues that both Catholicism and Protestantism entered into modernity in distinctive ways. Martin explains that Protestantism produced a cultural imagination of pluralism, making religion less hostile to secularization. On the other hand, Catholicism produced an imagination of totality that presented itself as “an ideology of the whole,” where rejecting one aspect implied not being loyal to “the whole.” The chapter has also presented Gregory Baum’s twofold thesis of modernization before and after 1960 (Quiet Revolution era). In this thesis, Baum has argued that Quebec entered into modernization without producing a cultural schism that has mainly characterized other catholic societies’ entry into modernization.

Proper to the secularization of Quebec society, I have identified two main ideologies: Laicity and secularism. Laicity is associated with laicization; it refers to the separation of religion from influence over the public sphere. Secularism refers to secular world views and philosophies (individualism, rationality, progress, etc.). I have indicated that the two ideologies of laicity and secularism have ecclesiastical origin since they both question the involvement of the Church in domains that are not proper to it.

I have established two basic arguments in the previous chapter. Firstly, the secularization of Quebec had a twofold impact: a decline in cultural Catholicism and the creation of a platform for a new Catholicism. Secondly, religion in Quebec is still in the public space; pushing it to the private is a scandal. I now proceed to the third chapter, which conceptualizes mission in secularized Quebec society. The chapter explores how the concept of mission has been understood and applied throughout the history of the universal Church, including Quebec, to the present day. The primary objective of this chapter is to develop a relevant, urgent, effective, and timely understanding of the Church's mission in contemporary society. At the core of the discussions of this chapter is the demonstration of how the historical understanding of mission determined the contexts and places (*areopagi*<sup>148</sup>) of mission. I will conclude the chapter by constructing a possible sketch of the mission concept in contemporary Quebec based on the present *areopagi*.

#### 3.1. The Concept of Mission

---

<sup>148</sup> This term is used metaphorically by Pope John Paul II in *Redemptoris Missio* (The Mission of the Redeemer) to refer to contemporary places and contexts where evangelization need to take place. He drew the term from Acts 17:16-34.

### 3.1.1. Traditional Understanding of Mission

David J. Bosch argues that throughout the history of the Church, the understanding of mission has differed from period to period. He explains that there has been a tendency during each historical period to take a specific Bible verse to define the missionary paradigm of that particular period. Beginning with the patristic period, Bosch demonstrates that the expression of mission was found in John 3:16 (“For God so loved the world that He gave His only son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life”). Mission meant making everyone believe in the Son of God so that they may have eternal life. This understanding persisted until the medieval period, when the Church split into Catholics and Protestant reformers. In medieval times, the Catholics found mission expression in Luke 14:23 (“then the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled’”). Mission for the medieval Catholics involved baptizing as many people as possible to increase the number of Christians. For the medieval Protestant reformation, a Christian’s mission meant going around to insist that salvation is acquired by faith in Christ alone, not faith and works as the Catholics taught. For them, the expression of mission was found in Romans 1:16f (“for I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek”).<sup>149</sup>

The Enlightenment Era’s concept of mission cannot be summarised into one. This is because within this era, there was a significant variation in the understanding of the mission depending on the exact period of enlightenment. Bosch identifies three distinct concepts of mission during this era of enlightenment. The first one associated with the period when Christianity defined the western world, westerners looked at “peoples of other races and religions as living in darkness and despair and as imploring westerners to come to their aid.” Their concept of mission found justification in Acts 16:9 (“During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us’.”). For them, the *areopagi* was very clear: it represented the poor countries all over the world. The second mission understanding, mainly by pre-millennials, was drawn from Mt. 24:14 (“And this good news of the Kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come”). Looking forward to the eschatological end of times, they understood that mission meant proclaiming the gospel to all peoples of this world. The third mission understanding, mainly among those who promoted social gospels, was found in John 10:10 (“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly”). Mission here was understood as bringing abundant life to all wherever they may be.

The 19<sup>th</sup>-century mission concept is mainly characterized by vigour, aggressiveness and reactions to counter modernity. This period was known for the Protestant missionary optimism to convert and promote religious piety using the gospel as an instrument, a weapon, a divine medicine and an antidote.<sup>150</sup> The Protestants were convinced that the future of Christianity was under the threat of modernity, and so they were responsible for ensuring continuity. They visibly became more “pragmatic, purposeful, activist, impatient, self-confident, single-minded and triumphant” using a common language of “conquering the world for Christ.”<sup>151</sup> Commenting on this period Bosch writes,

---

<sup>149</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. (Orbis Books, 1991), 339.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. 335.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. 336.

“Mission stood in the sign of world conquest. Missionaries were referred to as ‘soldiers’, as Christian “forces.” References were made to missionary strategies and tactical plans. Military metaphors such as “army,” “crusade,” “council of war,” “conquest,” “advance,” “resources,” and “marching orders” abounded. All circumstances added up to the recognition that the present moment was a mandate for mission; it was “an opportune time, “a critical time,” a testing time for the Church, “a decisive hour for the Christian mission.””<sup>152</sup>

The mission understanding during this period mainly involved justification of this vigour. Both Protestants and Catholics quoted the “great commission” text in Matthew 28:18-20 (And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always, to the end of the age”) in any discussion, even when the text was not relevant. The mission understanding during this period involved claiming the mandate of Jesus to preach as those who own the truth.

The common denominator applicable to both Protestants and Catholics throughout these periods is that the *areopagi* of mission mainly depended on the working definition of the respective period.<sup>153</sup> For instance, the missionaries who were sent to go to “civilize, help, bring God or save souls” could only be relevant in places where they believed were uncivilized, had no religion and by consequence, their salvation was in doubt. The mentality that assumed that God was not present in some places simply because they did not practice Christianity has been questioned, but for this paper, I will remain focused on the subject matter of this thesis. However, I want to note that this assumption impelled the missionaries to impose their cultures and languages on those they went to evangelize, while rejecting in totality the existing religious practices. Those who successfully abandoned their long-known religious practices to believe in the new ones brought by missionaries had “their souls saved.” It is important to note here that quite often, the “uncivilized” communities did not express much interest in being civilized. They had organized community life, social structures and religion with specialists who were responsible for providing solutions to each challenge that affected their community. They reacted in opposition to missionaries. This made the mission to be understood against the background of colonization.

### **3.1.2. Development of the Understanding of Mission after Vatican II**

As already observed, the traditional understanding of mission for both Catholics and Protestants was characterized by variations and continuous evolution. These variations were brought about by different motivations, including “the glory of God, sense of urgency because of the imminent millennium, the love of Christ, compassion for those considered eternally lost, a sense of duty, the awareness of cultural superiority, and competition with Catholic missionary efforts.”<sup>154</sup> Each of these motivations has played a contributory role in shaping the subsequent understanding of mission.

---

<sup>152</sup>Ibid. 338.

<sup>153</sup> An *areopagi* of mission is meant to be public, following the strict sense of the term “*areopagus*. ”

<sup>154</sup>Ibid. 342.



Cerviño argues that in today's globalized world, characterized by diversity, mission is a "relationship with diversity." According to him, this involves living in harmony and making this diversity bear fruit. In his view, this creates a new relationship that generates "new expressions, gestures and rites that help to communicate with the mystery of God."<sup>155</sup> LaRousse explains that the mission is migration. He argues that mission necessarily involves movement from one place to another (to be sent), hence migration. According to him, what makes mission migration is not the migration of Christians, but migration itself offers new possibilities for the missionary to share the good news with others. What migration simply does is create a meeting point for different faiths and cultures. The person who migrates can either be a Christian going to a non-Christian milieu or vice versa.<sup>156</sup>

Mission today is also understood as a participation in the paschal mystery, where man, who is created in the image of God, is a paschal being. Here, the argument is that the paschal mystery reveals the mission and at the same time the very being of the Trinity. The self-giving love of the Trinity, therefore, corresponds to the self-sacrificing love of man, where he is sent from his comfort zone to go become "Love" for others.<sup>157</sup>

Commenting on the mission in the colonial context, Kabamba<sup>158</sup> comes up with an argument that exposes one more concept of mission. According to him, the places of mission that were associated with colonization were not autonomous since they were linked with the interests of the origin of the missionaries. In that context, mission was an area the Church entrusted to her members, essentially priests and religious or lay Europeans, to announce the gospel to the non-Christian tradition (pagan countries called "places of mission" to convert them to Christianity. Therefore, a missionary in a colonial context is a religious, a priest or even a lay sent to a place that is not theirs, with the mandate to announce and witness to the gospel, and eventually convert the people into Christianity. The mandate of the missionary here is studied, structured, and planned with objectives to be achieved. He argues that even though we are no longer in the colonial era, the mission of the priests from Africa who go to work in Europe is approached with colonial ideas, especially those to whom they go to bring the good news.

Kabamba argues that priests from Africa, "missioned" in Western countries, cannot be efficient missionaries because they respond to the needs and agenda of the host ecclesial communities in Europe that are well-established. According to Kabamba, these missioned African priests remain almost at the mercy of those ecclesial communities. Those ecclesial communities are masters of their own houses, dictating their laws to the "missioned" African priests and setting for them the working framework and conditions. This leaves the "missioned" priests with minimal or no possibility for maneuvering and taking initiatives that can bring a change.<sup>159</sup>

Using Netherlands as a reference point, Wijzen insinuates that the contemporary concept of mission in western countries is a "reversed mission, mutual assistance and internal outsourcing."<sup>160</sup> It is reversed because western countries had sent overwhelming number of missionaries to "mission territories" and now it is their turn to receive foreign missionaries from

<sup>155</sup> Lucas Cerviño, "Mission as Life Irrupting from Diversity: *A Bet Against Monocultural Globalization*," *SEDOS* 40, no.1 (2008), 33-36.

<sup>156</sup> William LaRousse, *Migration and Mission: Missiological Reflections*, (\_\_\_\_, 2007), 1.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. 5.

<sup>158</sup> Olivier Kabamba Nkulu, *Les Prêtres Africains en Europe : "Missionnaires" ou "Missionnés"?* (L'Harmattan, Paris, \_\_\_\_), 33-40.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid. 37.

<sup>160</sup> Frans Wijzen, "Foreign Priests in the Netherlands: Reversed Mission, Mutual assistance and internal outsourcing," *Exchange, Journal of Missiological and ecumenical Research* 45, no.1 (2016): 22.

abroad. It is mutual assistance and outsourcing based on the economic principle of demand and supply. He writes, “the mutual missionary assistance of Churches paradigm has a parallel in international business, where outsourcing is quite normal. Outsourcing means contracting out business activity to another business unit within the same enterprise (internal outsourcing) or to a third party (external outsourcing) because they can do it better or cheaper.”<sup>161</sup> Wijesen argues that “importing priests from abroad” is “a strategy of the Church authority to meet the shortage of priests” and since many parishes lack priests to celebrate mass and end up celebrating the service of the word and communion presided over by a lay minister, it is as well a strategy “to reduce the number of services of the word and communion.”<sup>162</sup>

Mission in western countries, Wijesen observes, has shifted from the traditional communication model that involved “sending” and “receiving” to a market model of “demand” and “supply.” In the former model, it is the one sending missionaries who identify the *areopagi*, but in the latter, it is the one in need who asks for the missionaries. Wijesen thinks that this shift has made the mission a “market of spiritual goods.”<sup>163</sup> In this market, the negotiation must satisfy both parties. Again, this limits the possibility of the missionary to maneuver since he must always act within the agreement made between the two “bosses.”

Quoting Bosch, LaRousse indicates that mission cannot be defined but can at best, only be described with some approximations.<sup>164</sup> This position is also shared by Lepori and Karecki, who describe the mission as “a complex reality with many facets.” According to them, scholars have used various ways of defining mission have been used to define it while introducing the preposition “as”, for instance, “Mission as reconciliation, as witness, as prophetic dialogue, as option for the poor, as *inter gentes* and so forth.”<sup>165</sup> For apostolic missionary communities, such definitions of mission are in line with the needs they feel called to respond to in a given time. For instance, the Quebec Foreign Mission Society, which was founded in Quebec in 1921 and had only French Canadians as its members who were “at the service of the gospel abroad,” defined “mission as communion” during their Tenth General Assembly in 1997. They stated that witnessing communion constitutes their missionary call at five different levels, namely: the communion in interreligious dialogue, the communion between cultures, the communion between churches, the communion in the different ministries, and the communion with the excluded. They therefore felt called at that time to open up for internationality and welcome other members from other nationalities.<sup>166</sup> In 2013, during their 13<sup>th</sup> general assembly, they defined “mission as presence” in the local Churches that send them, as well as those that welcome them, as collaborators.<sup>167</sup>

Lepori and Karecki explain that all the attempts to define mission reveal the fundamental validity of mission as God’s work. Mission is, therefore, primarily an attribute of God to meet man. The Church that is called to participate in the Mission of God, consequently, needs “to live in a deep relationship with the triune God and then to find ways to facilitate the encounter of others with the triune God.”<sup>168</sup> Missionaries should “go forth,” avoid rushing and slow down while

---

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. 26.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid. 23.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. 24.

<sup>164</sup> LaRousse, “Migration and Mission,” 3.

<sup>165</sup> Laura Lepori – Madge Karecki, “In search of transformative ways of being in mission: Introducing the mission spirituality spiral,” *International Bulletin of Mission research* 47, no. 1 (2023):58.

<sup>166</sup> The Quebec Foreign Mission Society, Documents of the 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (1997): Paragraph 15.

<sup>167</sup> The Quebec Foreign Mission Society, Documents of the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2013): Paragraphs 12 and 14.

<sup>168</sup> Lepori – Karecki, “In search of transformative ways of being in mission,” 59.

putting aside their eagerness (EG 46). They are not conversion machines that Christianity needs to increase the numbers. As Kavunkal writes, Mission

“...is not a question of agonizing over the destiny of the non-Christians or bringing all into one’s own Church to rocket them to an otherworldly salvation. It is a service whereby all humans, more so the excluded ones of the society, can experience the benefits of the arrival of the divine reign – when all can feel accepted and respected, without the least denial of one’s human rights, as children of God, the Abba of all... What is to be emphasized is the quality of Christian life, a life of love and compassion, which can make others exclaim with wonder, see how the Christians love one another and what makes them do so!”<sup>169</sup>

Amaladoss summarises this for contemporary missionaries when he writes:

The focus of the mission used to be the saving of individuals by making them members of the Church, “Planting the Church” in the process. Today, the goal of the mission is seen as the building of the kingdom and of the Church as its symbol and servant. ... The other religions, cultures and other believers are seen as collaborators rather than competitors, certainly not enemies. Dialogue then becomes the way of the mission.<sup>170</sup>

We enter into dialogue to understand each other. In dialogue, no one is right or wrong. It is not a debate but an explanation of our point of view while respecting the point of view of the other. It is only in dialogue that we can discover the beauty that is hidden in the other and allow our beauty to interact with the other. Mission necessarily involves dialogue, and without dialogue, no mission is possible.

### **3.2. The Evolution of the Church’s Perspective on “Mission Agents”**

It was a common understanding that the primary agents of the mission of the Church were the members of the hierarchy until the preaching of Henri Lacordaire (1802-1861), a Dominican. Lacordaire preached that “the layman has a mission to fulfil; he has to supply whatever may be lacking to the diocesan clergy and the religious orders.”<sup>171</sup> By that time, the statement of Lacordaire was ignored. Much later, it became necessary for the teaching office of the Church to come out clearly. Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) taught that lay people did not have a right to live active life of the Church because this right was embedded in the apostolate of the ordained ministers, and if the lay were to do anything within the Church it was to be understood as a delegation from the ordained ministers.<sup>172</sup>

Pope Pius XII, the successor of Pius XI was the first Pope to deviate from the long-held tradition when he based on Paul’s doctrine, in 1943, to teach that all *Christifideles* (Christ Faithful) have an obligation of working hard and constantly for the building and increase of the mystical Body of Christ, the Church (MCC 117). Five years later, he taught that lay people participating in the mass are not passive spectators but active participants because they offer the sacrifice through the hands of priests and at the same time, they offer the same sacrifice together with the Priest (MD 92).<sup>173</sup>

---

<sup>169</sup> Jacob Kavunkal, “A Re-look at the Mission Concept and Missiology,” *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 86, no. 6 (2022): 39.

<sup>170</sup> Michael Amaladoss, “Jésus Christ, le Seul Sauveur, et la Mission,” *SPIRITUS* 159, (2000): 339.

<sup>171</sup> Yves Congar, *Lay people in the Church: A Study for Theology of the Laity*, (Newman Press, 1957): 360.

<sup>172</sup> Joseph Bitole Kato, *Awakening the Laity: Ugandan Pastoral Approach*, (Gaba publishers, 2003): 60.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.* 37.

The Vatican II Council insisted that all the faithful share in Christ's three-fold office as Prophets, priests and kings (LG 1013). This ecumenical council taught that among *Chritifideles*, there exists common dignity, common grace, common call to perfection, one salvation, one hope and a unified charity (LG 32). In 1983, Pope John Paul II promulgated *Codex Iuris Canonici* (Code of Canon Law), containing canon 225 that binds all the baptized Christians to participate in the mission of the Church.

The Vatican II document *Ad Gentes*, while teaching that the Church is missionary by nature (AG 2), affirmed that bishops, as successors of the apostles, have a duty to ensure that the mission that was entrusted to the Church by her founder continues (AG 1). Fundamentally, the Vatican II identified evangelization of all nations as the core responsibility among all the activities of the mission of the Church. By "activities" the Council means "particular undertakings by which the heralds (ordained ministers) of the Gospel, sent out by the Church and going forth into the whole world, carry out the task of preaching the Gospel and planting the Church among peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ" (AG 6).

On the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the document of the Second Vatican Council, *Ad Gentes*, Pope Paul VI issued in 1975 an encyclical letter, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, in which he expanded the mission understanding established by the Second Vatican Council. He taught that the Church's mission continues the mission of Jesus and that all the people of God (the whole Church) are responsible (EN 59), but the bishops and ordained priests have direct responsibility for the mission of the Church (EN 68).

In 1990, Pope John Paul II issued an encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio* (Mission of Christ the Redeemer), to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Vatican II document *Ad Gentes*. In this encyclical, John Paul II offered a systematic theology of mission, teaching that the mission of the universal Church is founded on faith in Jesus Christ (RM 4), who came to bring an integral salvation of each person and the whole mankind (RM 11). The mission of the Church is mandated to all "members of the Church by baptism" (RM 77), but the primary responsibility of the mission of the Church, John Paul II reaffirms, "the charge of announcing the Gospel throughout the world belongs to the body of shepherds" (RM 63). This mission is "one and undivided, having one origin and one final purpose; but within it, there are different tasks and kinds of activity" (RM 31). Regardless of whether a diocesan or missionary priest, John Paul II taught that "the spiritual gift that priests have received in ordination prepares them, not for any narrow and limited mission, but for the most universal and all-embracing mission of salvation "to the end of the earth." For every priestly ministry shares in the universal scope of the mission that Christ entrusted to his apostles" (RM 67).<sup>174</sup>

Pope Francis in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, taught that all baptized Christians are agents of evangelization (EG 1) but specifically referred to priests as shepherd of the flock who need to smell the sheep (EG 24), not to limit themselves in administrative works but to be in a constant state of mission (EG 25). In this document, Pope Francis dreams of a missionary Church where everyone becomes a missionary disciple (EG 1); a Church that does not seek self-preservation (EG 27); that which "goes forth" (EG 46) and its pastors smell the sheep (EG 24). Francis describes a missionary Church that will be a true house of the Father with doors open to welcome all (EG 47); whose members will go about doing good without expecting to be paid back thus making the poor privileged recipients of the gospel (EG 48), a missionary Church that works for bringing everyone to Christ while allowing itself to be bruised, hurt and get dirty (EG 49).

---

<sup>174</sup> Here Pope John Paul II quotes *Presbyterorum Ordinis* no.10, that is a Vatican II document on the ministry and life of priests.

The churches that send their priests to work in Quebec have several needs and deficiencies, sometimes even of vocations. They are poor countries that struggle to invest a lot of resources in training priests. But with all these struggles, they are still able to send missionaries to other parts of the world to remain in communion with the universal Church and share what God has blessed them with. This brings us to an understanding of mission as sharing. In a nutshell, mission in Quebec can be perceived as communion, collaboration and sharing.

### 3.3. Mission in the Context of Quebec

The church of Quebec is part of the universal Church and needs missionaries just like any other within the church. So first and foremost, the mission in Quebec is to be understood as communion with the universal Church and as mutual collaboration with churches that have a lot of vocations. This understanding is in tune with Vatican II's decree on the missionary activity of the Church, "Ad Gentes." In this document, Vatican II encouraged those Churches with plentiful resources (both human and material) to assist others, especially those in a certain state of regression or weakness (AG 19). Echoing this teaching of Vatican II, Benedict XVI told the bishops of Africa that "the Church Family of God in Africa, faithful to its vocation to proclaim the gospel, the good news, wishes to remain ever more available for mission *ad intra* in the continent itself and *ad extra*, towards the particular Churches of other continents that request it" (IL 148).

### 3.4. Thoughtful Reflection

Whatever definition we give to mission, we always point to the fact that Jesus, truly God, became man like us, lived among us, and so will save us. His saving us is immediately associated with His becoming man. From this, we discover that the WHAT and the HOW are the main components of the mission of Jesus. I argue that the main focus should not be on what definition, but on keenness to the process, which for Jesus involved BECOMING, to DO. Those who want to be missionaries must be willing to "become" that person(s) who can do the mission. While not counting equality with God (Phil.2:6), He was rich, but chose to become poor for our sake (2 Cor. 8:9). "Jesus, does not show us in the first instance what it means to be God's Son, but he demonstrates first of all, what it means to be truly human – to have no power, no support, no security except 'the enthusiasm and commitment of one's own heart.'"<sup>175</sup> The accidental qualities (skin colour, place of origin, economic ranking of his or her origin, etc) of a missionary are not important. What matters is his or her capacity to empty oneself to participate in the mission of Jesus, the first missionary of the Father.

Mission belongs to God (*Missio Dei*).<sup>176</sup> I suggest the summary of the mission of Jesus, truly God and truly Man, that Peter gives in Acts 10:38, "...He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, ..." This summary describes HOW Jesus did his mission. From this description, we can deduce that the HOW involves a "lifestyle." The lifestyle of Jesus involved doing good and healing. The question that is begged here is, what does doing good and healing mean in the contemporary context of Quebec? More urgent than ever before is the need

---

<sup>175</sup> John Fuellenbach, "You Cannot Serve God and Money, (cf.Mt.6:24): Some Biblical and Theological Considerations Concerning Mission and Money." *SEDOS* 38, no. 5/6 (2006):101.

<sup>176</sup> Lepori -Karecki, "In Search Of Transformative Ways Of Being in Mission," 58-59.

for missionaries to be credible witnesses to Jesus and the kingdom he proclaimed. It is not our mission we do, but God's mission, and those who believe so are the ones who are sent. They must show what they believe in words and deeds.<sup>177</sup>

### **3.5. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have discussed the conceptualization of mission in Quebec. I began by exploring the traditional concept of mission, after which I looked at how mission understanding developed after Vatican II. I have also paid attention to the agents of mission and looked at how the Church has perceived and identified those charged with the responsibility of mission throughout history. To conclude the Chapter, I constructed the concept of mission that I suggest is appropriate and relevant to contemporary Quebec.

---

<sup>177</sup> Amaladoss, "Jésus Christ, le Seul Sauveur, et la Mission," 339.

## Chapter Four

### Priests from Elsewhere in Quebec, Particularly Africans

#### 4.0. Introduction

In the third Chapter, I discussed the conceptualization of the mission of the Church in the secularized Quebec Society by exploring how mission was understood traditionally and how it is perceived in the contemporary world. I also identified the main actors of mission in both traditional and contemporary mission perceptions and indicated how these concepts of mission and their actors determine the *arena* of mission. I concluded by presenting a possible sketch of the mission concept in contemporary Quebec based on the present *areopagi*.

In what follows, I will discuss the way forward for the mission of the Church in contemporary Quebec based on the reality of a lack of enough priestly vocations. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Church of Quebec was considered a mature and self-sufficient Church that did not need resources from elsewhere. Many things have changed since the Church, which was once self-sufficient, admitted that “we are no longer the ones who can help others, but we are the ones who need help and are crying out for help.”<sup>178</sup>

The effect of secularization on vocations has exposed the fragility of the Church of Quebec, making it understand itself not as “that which gives and helps” but “that which asks and solicits.”<sup>179</sup> The Quebec Church has continued to invite and welcome priests from elsewhere to come and exercise their ministries in Quebec. This chapter will seek to establish how priests from Africa can contribute to the Church of Quebec. The main question that I seek to answer is: What are the possible contributions that priests from Africa can make to the Church of Quebec?

#### 4.1. Priests from Elsewhere

To begin with, it is important to clarify here why I use the expression “priests from elsewhere” and not “foreign priests.” Routhier suggests three perspectives that help understand this question: the phenomenon of the mobility of manpower in Quebec and Canada, the fact that the Church of Quebec depended for a very long time on the religious who came from elsewhere, and the fact that throughout the history of the Catholic Church in the last 2000 years there has been mobility of evangelizers, representing an ecclesial law that has made the good news to spread.<sup>180</sup> Forgeat explains that the terms “foreign” or “immigrant” cannot be used to describe the dynamic of collaboration between churches. The priests who come as collaborators, according to Forgeat, are to be welcomed as brothers with whom to live a human and spiritual fraternity in the service

---

<sup>178</sup> Gilles Routhier “Des prêtres Venus de...,” *Venus D’Ailleurs* 116, no.4 (2013):196 (Translated from French by DEEPL translator).

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.* (Translated from French by DEEPL translator).

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.* 194-195

of the same mission. They are not immigrants, even though they come from other countries, because their coming is in a dynamic of a genuine collaboration between churches.<sup>181</sup>

Following the argument of Forgeat, welcoming the priests from elsewhere in Quebec does not call for their getting integrated into the Quebec culture, but, on the contrary, succeeding in being in communion with them, which manifests mutual respect of the cultures. There is a mutual acculturation of both the priests from elsewhere and the Quebecers. The Church of Quebec should be more welcoming to these priests as persons in whom rich cultures are vested and who represent their churches of origin. It should create every opportunity to learn from their history and ministry in ways that enrich their ways of living the universal mission in their actual contexts.<sup>182</sup>

Roy argues that the joy of the faith of different Christians and priests from elsewhere and the vitality of their community life can help Quebecers to do things differently, thereby discovering new ways of fulfilling their mission.<sup>183</sup>

#### **4.2. Justification of “Priests from Elsewhere” in Quebec**

The universality of the Catholic mission is the main argument that can justify the presence of “priests from elsewhere” in Quebec. Otherwise, those priests are just foreigners or immigrants in Quebec who happen to be priests.

As we have already seen in the previous chapter, the Catholic Church, by its nature, is all-embracing and its mission is universal (AG 2). Paul, a Jew who persecuted Christians, is the one God chose to become the apostle to all the Gentile, non-Jewish nations. The missionary zeal of Paul compelled him to travel far along the borders of the Mediterranean, from where the gospel reached Europe and later from Europe to other continents. This missionary expansion in the Church was mainly assured by both female and male missionary congregations who have continued to go all over to preach the good news of the gospel.<sup>184</sup> Most of the members of these congregations until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century came from Europe, North America and a few from Latin America, Asia and Africa. In his encyclical *Fidei Donum*, Pope Pius XII in 1957 seeking to address mainly the situation of the Church in Africa, he asked the bishops of the churches that had enough vocations to send, for a given time, some of their diocesan priests and willing lay people to help missionary priests abroad, especially in Africa, (FD 73). The call of Pope Pius XII initiated solidarity and collaboration among churches, and that solidarity continues to date, manifesting an exchange and renewal between all the churches within the universal Catholic Church.<sup>185</sup>

Routhier observes that the shortage of pastoral human resources in Quebec is a current reality that is affecting the entire Church of Canada. According to him, it is naturally impossible to acquire these resources in Quebec. Manpower is a general problem that is affecting Quebec and the whole of Canada because of the aging manpower that is not sufficiently replaced by the new generations.<sup>186</sup> Echoing the argument of Routhier, Roy writes:

---

<sup>181</sup> Jean Forgeat, “Prêtres venus d'ailleurs: observation sur la présence de pres de 1300 prêtres, venant d'ailleurs et présents aujourd'hui dans les diocèses de France,” *Revue Lumen Vitae* Vol. LXXVIII, (2023):14.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid. 14-15

<sup>183</sup> Bertrand Roy “Des prêtres venus d'ailleurs,” 25.

<sup>184</sup> Forgeat, “Prêtres venus d'ailleurs” 13.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid. 14.

<sup>186</sup> Routhier, “Des prêtres Venus de...,” 194.



“En effet, ces prêtres nous arrivent non seulement avec leur bagage d'histoires heureuses et malheureuses de leur pays d'origine, mais aussi avec l'énergie de la jeunesse, alors que leurs confrères québécois prolongent souvent leur service pastoral au-delà de l'âge de la retraite faute d'une relève adéquate. Embaucher des prêtres de l'étranger pour accomplir un ministère que des jeunes d'ici ne semblent plus vouloir assumer n'est pas sans soulever des questions. S'agirait-il de maintenir une organisation ecclésiale devenue inadéquate en retardant l'heure où il faudra faire autrement ? Si on engage des travailleurs saisonniers du Mexique et d'Amérique centrale à cause du manque de main-d'œuvre locale, il serait injustifiable que l'Église fasse de même, d'autant plus que les Églises d'Amérique latine, d'Afrique et d'Asie font face, elles aussi, à des défis, souvent plus grands que les nôtres.”<sup>187</sup>

Roy makes his point that the priests from elsewhere are not hired in the same way as other sectors hire workers, but their presence here is simply a reciprocal collaboration. He argues that there is a time when many Quebec missionaries contributed to the formation and growth of the Churches elsewhere, and still today, there are some Quebecers who are taking their place in mission without borders and wish to make their contribution. According to Roy, having given generously, it is now the turn of the Church of Quebec to receive. Linking his argument with the current immigration situation, he continues to argue that the Church of Quebec has not only welcomed priests but also Christians from all walks of life, among whom priests are included.<sup>188</sup>

#### **4.3. Priests from Africa in Quebec**

Because of the dominance of the French language, Fidei Donum priests from Africa<sup>189</sup> in Quebec mainly originate from Francophone countries. They come from Congo Kinshasa, Congo Brazzaville, Cameroon, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Senegal. The circumstances of their coming vary:

1. Fidei Donum priests who came based on the agreement established between their diocese of origin and a local Church in Quebec.
2. Priests who come for studies with a legal pastoral insertion.
3. Priests who come for a sabbatical year.
4. Priests who come for medical reasons.
5. Priests who come as refugees and found a temporary asylum in Quebec
6. Priests who come as members of religious communities that have been in Quebec for many years.
7. Priests who have come to offer service to a cultural community in which they share a language and tradition (eg. Filipino community, Italian Community, Ethiopian community, etc).

---

<sup>187</sup> Roy, “Des prêtres venus d'ailleurs,” 25. « Indeed, these priests come to us not only with their baggage of happy and unhappy stories from their homelands, but also with their youthful energy, while their Quebec confreres often extend their pastoral services beyond retirement age for lack of an adequate succession. Hiring priests from abroad to carry out a ministry that young people here no longer seem to want to take on is not without raising questions. Is it a question of maintaining an ecclesiastical organization that has become inadequate by delaying the time when something else will have to be done? If seasonal workers are hired from Mexico and Central America because of a lack of local labour, it would be unjustifiable for the Church to do the same, especially as Churches in Latin America, Africa and Asia also face challenges that are often greater than our own. » (translated by DEEPL Translator).

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> The study about priests from Africa in Quebec is not much developed. I have gathered this information from various sources including the Articles of Routhier Gilles, “Des Prêtres Venus de...” in *Venus D'Ailleurs*.

## 8. Priests who have come by their own initiatives.

The presence of these African priests is visible in parishes, hospitals or areas of cultural community pastoral needs. Others are concentrated mainly near the university centers, and mainly in the Montreal diocese and neighbouring dioceses.<sup>190</sup> The cultures of Quebecers and those of these priests are very different, with Quebecers regarding themselves as developed nations as opposed to African nations that are still developing. Routhier observes that the fact that Africans come for a mission in Quebec, for Quebecers, represents “*une blessure*.”<sup>191</sup> According to him, priests from elsewhere arrive in a Quebec Church where the role of women in the Church is well recognized, disposing themselves as a threat whenever they seem to represent different opinions. By this, they become a general threat to the dream of creating a Church that is non-clerical.<sup>192</sup>

African priests come from countries where the weather is moderate. Most of them have never had an experience of winter before arriving in Quebec. Upon arrival, Francophone African priests are often criticized for their French accent that is not “French enough” for the Quebecers. Culturally, these African priests have been socialized to treat women differently than in Quebec. Their social lifestyle is different.<sup>193</sup>

The Quebecers mainly speak French or English. The priests from Africa arrive, looking different physically, speaking French and many other languages, with different experiences of the Church, different ways of doing things, different preferences for food and different approaches to pastoral activities. Their spontaneous involvement in the life of the Quebec Church naturally sounds threatening to the already established order. Most African priests arrive with missionary zeal and end up being disappointed because their zeal is not welcomed as a blessing to the Quebec Church but as a threat, especially by the pastoral agents who want to be engaged in the pastoral life of the Church. Not withholding their intentions, their presence becomes a disorder and a threat.<sup>194</sup>

African priests may have tendencies to relate with Christians in the same way they do in Africa, where a priest is highly respected and placed in a very high position in society. The ways of reciprocating respect for a priest in Africa are not obviously the same as in Quebec. For instance, Blanchet notes that some African priests have been understood to be distrustful and irresponsible because of punctuality.<sup>195</sup> Those priests may have been trained as priests, but they still have an African mentality of time. In a real African mentality, punctuality does not exist. The African concept of time is totally different from that of the Western world. If a program is supposed to begin at 9 am but, for some reason, gets to begin at 9:30 am or even at 10:00 am, it is still ok. This cannot automatically be translated to be irresponsibility or disrespect. What matters for an African mind is the occurrence of the event, not when the event will happen. Explaining the African traditional concept of time, Parker English writes, “time is a composition of events that have occurred, those which are taking place now and those which are inevitably or immediately to occur.” English argues that the African traditional concept of time is two-dimensional, past and

---

<sup>190</sup> Roy, “Des Prêtres venus d'ailleurs,” 25.

<sup>191</sup> “*Une blessure*” is French meaning an injury

<sup>192</sup> Routhier, “Des Prêtres Venus de...,” 196.

<sup>193</sup> Bertrand Blanchet, “Les prêtres d'ailleurs et les communautés chrétiennes, in *Venus D'Ailleurs*,” *Revue des agents des Pastorale* 116 no.4 (2013):202-203.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid. 197.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid. 204.

present, because African time has to be experienced to be real. “The future has not been experienced and therefore cannot constitute time.”<sup>196</sup>

Blanchet notes that the majority of African priests “doivent apprendre de toute urgence la discipline et la modération”<sup>197</sup> of money and material things. This is because other priests have invited them for a meal and found out that the African priests did not carry their wallets with them.<sup>198</sup> This is a matter of culture. In some cultures, when someone invites you, it is understood that they are happy to accommodate and entertain you.

Routhier correctly observes that priests belonging to different religious communities have been present in Quebec from the earliest periods of the history of the Church of Quebec, as this thesis has also established. These priests in religious communities, among whom are of African origins, continue to be present in Quebec to date. He gives the impression that “priests from elsewhere” is a new phenomenon in Quebec that is associated with “the mobility of manpower”, which he argues is a recent reality in the whole of Canada.<sup>199</sup> Arguably, by priests from elsewhere, he does not refer to foreign priests belonging to communities that have been in Quebec for a very long time. He also mentions that “le plus important n'est pas tant de recruter de nouveaux prêtres, mais de veiller à ce que ceux que nous accueillons bénéficient d'un soutien de qualité.”<sup>200</sup> Presumably, those who belong to religious communities are invited by their communities and, upon their arrival, are accompanied by their communities.

It is therefore important to be precise here and have a look at those diocesan priests who come in response to the invitations of the local ordinaries. The question that is begged here is the reason why foreign priests in religious communities do not bother the Church of Quebec, but the diocesan (*Fidei Donum*) priests from elsewhere do. To maintain the focus of this study, we shall limit ourselves to the *Fidei Donum* priests from Africa. Do the *Fidei Donum* priests from Africa contribute to the mission of the local Church of Quebec?

#### 4.4. African *Fidei Donum* Priests in Quebec

*Fidei donum* priests respond to the invitation of bishops of individual dioceses in Quebec who acknowledge that “nous ne sommes plus ceux qui peuvent aider les autres, mais nous sommes ceux qui ont besoin d'aide et qui crient à l'aide.”<sup>201</sup> Following the communion spirit of the Second Vatican Council that encouraged mutual missionary assistance of churches, asking bishops to stimulate, promote and direct the work of missions (AG 38), individual bishops of Quebec understand well that they are not “qui donne et qui aide” but “qui demande et sollicite.”<sup>202</sup> They approach their brother bishops in Africa, whose Churches have plentiful human resources, to assist and collaborate with them (AG 19).

---

<sup>196</sup> Parker English, “Kalumba, Mbiti, and a traditional African concept of time,” *Philosophia Africana* 9, no.1 (2006):53-54, EBSCOhost.

<sup>197</sup> « ...urgently need to learn discipline and moderation. » (Translated by DEEPL translator). Blanchet, “Les prêtres d'ailleurs et les communautés chrétiennes,” 203.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid. 194.

<sup>200</sup> “The most important thing is not so much to recruit new priests, but to ensure that those we bring in are given quality support.” (Translated by DEEPL translator). Ibid. 198.

<sup>201</sup> Routhier, “Des prêtres Venus de...,” 196. “We are no longer the ones who can help others, but we are the ones who now need help and cry out for help” (Translated from French by DEEPL translator)

<sup>202</sup> Ibid. 196. “...who gives and helps” but “who asks and solicits” (Translated by DEEPL translator)

Acknowledging the universality of the mission of the Church, and persuaded by the call of Pope Benedict XVI in the second African synod document *Instrumentum Laboris*, that invited the Church in Africa to remain “ever more available for mission *ad intra* in the continent itself and *ad extra*, towards the particular Churches of other continents that request it,” (IL 148) the bishops of Africa generously send their priests to Quebec. The African bishops do not send their priests to Quebec because they do not need them. Having spent a lot of their limited resources to train them as priests, they agree to send them to Quebec because they understand well that Quebec is part of the universal Church to which they belong. They also understand well that the mission of the Church is *Missio Dei*, it is one and it involves communion, collaboration and sharing; a mission that is the initiative of the Trinity with the intention that all may become one body (1Cor.12:12) whose head is Christ Himself, (Col.1:18).

From the understanding of mission that we established in the previous chapter, collaboration of African priests in Quebec is normal and healthy because it is driven by the understanding of mission as communion between churches that collaborate and share the resources they may have, both human and material as members of one body of Christ, (1Cor. 12:12). According to Routhier, many Quebecers are not happy not only with the presence of the priests from Africa, but with the whole situation of priests from elsewhere. Routhier writes, “L’arrivée au Québec de prêtres venus d’ailleurs, appelés par nos églises, provoque des interrogations, dérange et remet en question bien des choses.”<sup>203</sup> Describing the situation of foreign priests in the Netherlands as a demand-driven outsourcing,<sup>204</sup> Wijzen argues that priests from elsewhere cannot simply reduplicate the local priests, and if they did, then they would not have any added value to the local Church. What makes them different, in his opinion, is their having their own voice, theology and charisma.<sup>205</sup>

I argue that the dissatisfaction that Routhier expresses is based either on the fact that the priests from elsewhere, and particularly from Africa, cannot be carbon copies of the local Quebecer priests, or that they are not accepted in Quebec as missionaries. Of course, Quebec is not a poor nation of “the uncivilized” where missionaries go to “civilize,”<sup>206</sup> where the inhabitants need to be “humanized,”<sup>207</sup> or a battleground where missionaries would become “soldiers in a conquest.”<sup>208</sup> Quebec is a nation<sup>209</sup> whose Church became autonomous in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; “une église qui a envoyé des collaborateurs apostoliques dans le monde entier, et nous avons à notre tour été accueillis par d’autres églises.”<sup>210</sup> It is therefore the turn of the Church of Quebec, as Roy argues,

---

<sup>203</sup> Ibid. 194. “The arrival in Quebec of priests from elsewhere, called by our churches, raises questions, disturbs and calls into question many things.” (translated by DEEPL translator).

<sup>204</sup> Wijzen defines outsourcing in (Foreign Priests in the Netherlands: Reversed Mission, Mutual assistance and internal outsourcing, *Exchange, Journal of Missiological and ecumenical Research* 45, no.1 (2016): 26) as contracting out business activity to another business unit either within (internal) or to a third party (external) because they can do it better or cheaper.

<sup>205</sup> Wijzen, “Foreign Priests in the Netherlands,” 26.

<sup>206</sup> Lemieux, “Une Histoire religieuse du Québec,” 32.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid. 28.

<sup>208</sup> Bosch, “Transforming Mission,” 338.

<sup>209</sup> Baum in page 436 of “*Catholicism and Secularization in Quebec*,” explains that even though it is one among the provinces of Canada, Quebec “*n’est pas une province comme les autres*”. It is a people that regard themselves a nation constituting a language and a culture, whose “people are vividly aware that they make up a community enjoying a unity, individuality and a spirit of their own” yielding them “an unshakeable right to their own existence and development.”

<sup>210</sup> Routhier, “Des prêtres Venus de...,” 195. « ...a church that has sent apostolic workers all over the world, and we in turn have been welcomed by other churches. » (Translated by DEEPL translator).

to welcome missionaries from other churches<sup>211</sup> while acknowledging that it is “celui qui demande et sollicite”<sup>212</sup> and that Quebec is part of the universal Church that does its mission in Communion.

Traditionally, missionaries were understood as those who went to “pagan countries” called “Mission fields”<sup>213</sup> to convert them to Christianity. Today, the understanding of the mission field has changed. Since the 1980s, a new Catholic movement has emerged known as “reversed mission,”<sup>214</sup> where the churches that evangelized others are being evangelized by those whom they evangelized. Evangelization that used to be associated with material richness is no longer valid. It is in this regard that Quebec went all over the world to evangelize others, must today acknowledge “...sa fragilité, sa pauvreté et sa dépendance.”<sup>215</sup> It is in the fragility, poverty and dependence that each church finds a place in the universal Church. Keeping the need for human resources as a constant, all churches, as members of the one body of Christ, are mission fields. What may vary is what I referred to in the previous chapter as the *areopagi*.

#### 4.5. The *Areopagi* of Secularized Quebec

The meeting places of the present Quebecers are very different from those of ancient Quebec. With the religion having been pushed into the private, the Church of Quebec acknowledges that faith is confined to personal life “*sans prise sur les réalités collectives*” (with no grip on collective realities), and therefore encourages bringing the gospel to the public space.<sup>216</sup> Discussing the challenges of mission in secularized societies, Routhier argues that the mission of the Church in a secularized society should not be confined to the Church buildings where Christian rites are celebrated, because that would marginalize the good news of the gospel. According to him, the Church should remain at the service of the gospel and the kingdom of God through words and deeds while anticipating the future. To do this in the present societies that are secularised, Routhier proposes “le développement d'un réseau capillaire capable d'irriguer de sève évangélique tout le corps social et la mise en circulation de l'Évangile dans les grandes artères de la société.”<sup>217</sup> The three arteries of this capillary network that he proposes are what I would call the *areopagi* that I discussed in the previous chapter.

The first *areopagi* is the human activities in the secular space. In Routhier's view, secular spaces are privileged places to announce the gospel, mainly by making use of the lay people. He observes that the Second Vatican Council had already indicated these spaces in the lay apostolate as:

- a) The sciences and culture (LG 36; AA 1; GS 62; AG 21),
- b) The family life (LG 35; AA 4,11; GS 47ff.),
- c) The social, economic and political activities and the solidarity between persons and nations (AA 7,13; GS 63ff.)

---

<sup>211</sup> Roy, “Des prêtres venus d'ailleurs,” 25.

<sup>212</sup> Routhier, “Des prêtres Venus de...,” 196. « ...the one who asks and solicits. » (Translated by DEEPL translator).

<sup>213</sup> Bosch, “Transforming Mission,” 338.

<sup>214</sup> Wijzen, “Foreign Priests in the Netherlands,” 22.

<sup>215</sup> Routhier, “Des prêtres Venus de...,” 199. « ...its fragility, poverty and dependence. » (Translated by DEEPL translator).

<sup>216</sup> Assemblée des évêques du Québec, Annoncer l'évangile dans la culture actuelle au Québec, Fides (1999):86.

<sup>217</sup> Gilles Routhier, “Les défis de la mission dans les sociétés sécularisées,” *Mission 2*, (2006): 255. « ...the development of a capillary network capable of irrigating the entire social body with evangelical sap, and circulating the Gospel in the major arteries of society. » (Translated from French by DEEPL translator).

d) The safeguarding of peace (GS 77ff).

On the above list, Routhier suggests adding:

- Promotion of the recognition of human rights,
- Safeguarding of creation,
- Progress of sciences and techniques in the biomedical domain.<sup>218</sup>

In addition to these, it is particularly important to make use of the real things that Quebecers like or participate in. For instance, sports (Hockey, soccer and American Football), pets (mostly dogs), Music, among others.

The second *areopagi* suggested by Routhier is the social life where the Church can consider a presence that is less institutional in the social media platforms “those of health, education, social and international solidarity, culture, communications - networks of decision-makers and researchers, networks of families and young people, economic networks, etc.”<sup>219</sup> The bishops of Quebec also acknowledge that there is a need to adapt to the new media platforms that are more dynamic and appealing to all groups of people.<sup>220</sup>

Thirdly, he suggests a flexible institutional network in the neighbourhood that he calls “*les maisons de quartier*” (houses of the neighbourhood). He envisions these houses to have a presence of the gospel through the Christians themselves and the same gospel materialized in visible things. For instance, he talks of a cultural house to promote the Christian tradition. In this house, there can be workshops and activities that are relevant to all people, including children and adults: projection of films, conferences, workshops on Christian icons, debates, theatres, library services, among others. He also talks of a multifunctional house in the neighbourhood that would respond to different needs of the people: an environment where one can find silence but also welcome the word of God, spiritual accompaniment or celebrate the sacrament of penance.<sup>221</sup>

To identify these *areopagi* is not enough for the priests from Africa to become efficient as missionaries in the secularised Quebec. There is also a need for them to recognize that their presence as Fidei Donum priests “*missionné*” (missioned) to the Church of Quebec is a missionary one. Kabamba Nkulu refers to this when quotes the Second Vatican’s *Lumen Gentium* and *Presbyterorum Ordinis* to argue that “the role of the priest is developed around three axes: the proclamation of the gospel, the celebration of the sacraments and government,” and that it is the contextualization of these roles that creates the missionary aspect of priests.<sup>222</sup> He argues further that traditionally, missionaries contextualized these roles and translated them into “civilize”, “educate”, and “convert”. According to him, a missionary, that means “one who is sent, had to meet the objectives that were defined by the context and interests of the one who sent him. The work of a missionary, therefore, involved studying, structuring and planning to meet the objectives. From this perspective, the mission did not exist autonomously.<sup>223</sup> In the same way, “missioned” African priests can discover appropriate and concrete ways of contributing to the Church they are planted.

To state that their presence is a missionary one involves acknowledging that they were baptized and became members of a Church that is missionary by nature (AG 2), and whose members are all missionaries (RM 77). In addition, their training and ordination prepared them for

---

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid. 255. (Translated from French by DEEPL translator).

<sup>220</sup> Assemblée des évêques du Québec, “Annoncer l’évangile dans la culture actuelle au Québec,” 90.

<sup>221</sup> Routhier, “Les défis de la mission dans les sociétés sécularisées,” 258-259.

<sup>222</sup> Kabamba Nkulu, “Les Prêtres Africains en Europe,” 33.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid. 35.

the universal and all-embracing mission, qualifying them to share in the universal scope of mission entrusted to the apostles (RM 67). To state that they are missioned simply means they are sent.

Kabamba continues to argue that the “missioning” of priests from Africa creates a context that coincides with the spirit of decolonization and empowerment of the churches in Africa and the transition from the status of colonized countries to that of independent countries. In such a context, he argues that *Fidei Donum* priests respond to the needs of the community that welcomes them, and their mission does not involve studying, structuring and planning to meet the objectives of the bishops who sent them.<sup>224</sup> Again, what is to be understood here is the fact that the success of the mission depends on the capacity of both the missionary and those who welcome him or her, to understand that Mission belongs to God, who invites them to be docile enough to become that person (s) who can do what needs to be done in a given context. From this, we can see that the success of the mission of *Fidei Donum* priests in Quebec requires a reciprocal commitment between them and the local Church of Quebec.

#### 4.6. Contemporary Theology of Quebec

Contemporary theology of Quebec can be understood as one which is immersed in a society which values rationality as the basis that shapes the minds of the people and their worldview. José Maria Vigil observes that “...Quebec theology neither takes into account what has been lived, nor gives a hope that responds to the debacle endured.” In his view, Quebec should look at its history, especially the event of Quiet Revolution, acknowledge its importance, and from it construct a theology that considers the social religious consciousness of people who rejected Christian tradition, why they did so and the experience of their conscience as ex-Christians.

Vigil argues that the Quiet Revolution undoubtedly played a major role in the current religious situation of Quebec and has been studied by different scholars. What has mainly been documented about it are its cultural, political, historical and sociological phenomena describing the event as “l'évolution d'une société qui prend conscience d'elle-même et de sa dépendance radicale de la religion et de l'Église, et qui décide tranquillement de se transformer, de se doter d'un nouveau contrat social : séculier, démocratique, laïc, pluriel...”<sup>225</sup> However, he expresses his dissatisfaction and disappointment with how the effects of the revolution have been explored to develop a theology that fits the context and history of Quebec. Vigil writes:

“...la signification théologique et religieuse de ce qui a peut-être été la transformation religieuse la plus radicale et la plus massive d'une société des temps historiques connus, l'abandon d'une religion par une partie d'une société d'une manière massive, accablante... et tranquille, c'est-à-dire sereine, consciente, convaincue, sans hésitations. Des phénomènes semblables, bien que mineurs, se sont produits dans des sociétés européennes, mais l'expérience religieuse québécoise de la RT détone par son caractère limpide, frappant, et pour moi, emblématique. Cela me semble un véritable "lieu théologique".<sup>226</sup>

---

<sup>224</sup> Ibid. 36-37.

<sup>225</sup> José Maria Vigil, “Un appel à la théologie Québécoise,” <https://www.academia.edu/?h=33016191>. “...the evolution of a society that is becoming aware of itself and its radical dependence on religion and the Church, and is quietly deciding to transform itself, to adopt a new social contract: secular, democratic, laïc and plural.”(Translated from French by DEEPL translator).

<sup>226</sup> Ibid. “... the theological and religious significance of what was perhaps the most radical and massive religious transformation of a society in recorded history, the abandonment of a religion by part of a society in a way that was massive, overwhelming... and calm, that is to say, serene, conscious, convinced, without hesitation. Similar

He argues that both the Church hierarchy and progressive Christians “n'ont pas abordé, ou ne veulent pas aborder, l'élaboration d'une réponse au plus grand phénomène de transformation religieuse vécu dans toute l'histoire par le peuple du Québec.”<sup>227</sup> He thinks that the progressive Christians of Quebec are more activists than religious, interested in justice and solidarity that would transform Canada or the world through global liberty. Echoing the argument of Vigil, David Seljak notes that Gregory Baum's “Truth and relevance” attempts “to show how the unique nature of the evolution of Quebec society has expressed itself in a theology that emphasizes experience, authenticity and self-determination (autonomy) as well as the common good, social justice and the preferential option for the poor.”<sup>228</sup>

Responding to Vigil, a scholar from the University of Montreal, Jean-François Roussel, explains that the Quiet Revolution did not cause rejection of faith (Christianity) but a transformation of the society into one where the form of Christianity is not mythologized. He argues that Quebec has a theology which addresses the spiritual quest of the people who have developed new ways of Christian life.<sup>229</sup> This theology is contemporary and relevant to the secularised Quebec society; a continuous reflection on the contextual problems characterizes it.<sup>230</sup> It is a theology of a society that criticizes more and more the Church while seeking to understand the causes of the rupture that came with the Quiet Revolution; a theology originating from Quiet Revolution, socially involved and prophetic.<sup>231</sup>

This theology according to Roussel, is conscious of the homogeneous religious context in which Quiet Revolution was initiated, where Catholics were the majority. He observes that today the social religious debate in Quebec must make references to religious pluralism. Consequently, its theology is more interested in interreligious dialogue and contemporary issues like ecological crisis. He continues to explain that the Nationalism spirit that led to the Quiet Revolution, was inspired by the processes of decolonialization of Africa and the West Indies who demonstrated well that decolonization requires more than just a change of a political regime. According to Roussel, this helped the young generation of Quebecers to see themselves as colonizers of the indigenous people as well as the new arrivals. From this, the theology of Quebec became a voice that cries for the decolonization of Quebec society and its Church.<sup>232</sup>

Eloy Roy seems not to agree with Roussel's proposition that there exists a contemporary theology in Quebec. To cement his argument, he uses the analogy of the sinking boat (Mt 8:23-28) where Jesus falls asleep while travelling with His disciples by boat. Threatened by the storm, they wake Him up, crying out that their boat is sinking. Roy sets his argument to imply that Quebecers are the disciples travelling with Jesus in the same boat, and he thereby questions whether Jesus or Quebecers are sleeping. His arguments insinuate that Quebec is still clinging to the traditional theology that animated its Cultural Catholicism, that corresponds to “sleeping,” while “tous les

---

phenomena, albeit minor, have occurred in European societies, but Quebec's religious experience of quiet revolution stands out for its limpid, striking and, for me, emblematic character. It seems to me a real ‘theological place’” (Translated from French by DEEPL translator).

<sup>227</sup> Ibid. “...have not addressed, or do not wish to address, the development of a response to the greatest phenomenon of religious transformation ever experienced by the people of Quebec.” (translated by DEEPL translator).

<sup>228</sup> Seljak, “Truth, Relevance, and Social Transformation in Quebec,” 318.

<sup>229</sup> Roussel, “La Théologie Québécoise après la Révolution Tranquille,” 3.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid. 6.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid. p.7.

<sup>232</sup> Roussel, “La théologie québécoise après la révolution tranquille,” 13-14.



jours face à des rangées de bancs vides, enveloppant Jésus avec dévotion dans un linceul d'homélies dégoulinantes d'orthodoxie, tandis que quelques personnes âgées malentendantes s'égosillent en gardant les yeux sur leur montre.” This, according to Roy, corresponds to a cry to save Quebecers sinking bought.<sup>233</sup>

Roy thinks that traditional theology that animated Quebec’s cultural Catholicism is outdated and irrelevant in contemporary Quebec. While questioning whether people should follow “the highly divine Jesus exalted by religion, or the highly human Jesus assassinated by religion, Roy argues that the traditional theology promoted a Jesus who is locked up in the golden ciborium and tabernacles, or “taken away from the earth” to be “stored in the highest heavens.” The Jesus of traditional theology, Roy continues to argue, “has been changed into a shining star and a living statue towering over the clouds only to receive our complaints and prayers so that He never thinks again of coming back to the earth to disturb our peace as we conceive it.” Roy advocates for a theology that promotes “the real Jesus who, during the last three years of his life, fought tirelessly against the ‘dinosaurs’ of his people... never stopped moving, breaking moulds, shaking the cage up, standing up to His adversaries,” challenging the established order.<sup>234</sup>

Mager, on the other hand, thinks that Catholic bishops and theologians should be conscious of the fact that they do not enjoy a monopoly of “sitting on Truth.” He suggests that they should strengthen their well-established interest in social issues and their attitude of service, while acknowledging that truth can also be found outside the boundaries of their convictions.<sup>235</sup> For instance, what is perceived as true concerning abortion, medical aid to die, same sex marriage between the Church and the Law governing Quebec may be opposing to each other.

Concisely, Roussel notes that the main objective of the contemporary theology of Quebec is to give “an account of a hope and a crucified person” in such a way that would help the radically transformed communities that compose the Quebec society. This theology, Roussel writes values “l’amour, le désir, l’indignation et la référence à la subjectivité au cœur du savoir académique, au lieu de les maintenir en marge du savoir académiquement acceptable.”<sup>236</sup>

#### **4.7. Possible Contributions of the *Fidei Donum* Priests from Africa to the Contemporary Quebec’s Church**

To the question of whether *Fidei Donum* priests from Africa can contribute to the contemporary Church of Quebec, which is in a secular context, I affirm that they can. To explain my affirmation, I must begin by noting, that as pastors trained in theology, *Fidei Donum* priests from Africa’s unique contribution can only be effective when they integrate the theology of Quebec into the theology they have learnt during their training. Though still the same Catholic theology,

---

<sup>233</sup> Eloy Roy, “Who is Sleeping, Jesus or Us?” (This is an unpublished article sent to me by the author through email.) “...everyday faced with rows of empty pews, devotedly wrapping Jesus in shroud of homilies dripping with orthodoxy, while a few hard-of-hearing elderly individuals dose off as they keep an eye on their watches.” Translated by DEEPL translator.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Mager, “Quebec’s Act Respecting the Laicity of the State and the Demise of Religion,” 171.

<sup>236</sup> Roussel, “La Théologie Québécoise après la Révolution Tranquille,” 14. (... “love, desire, indignation and the reference to subjectivity at the heart of academic knowledge, instead of keeping them on the margins of academically acceptable knowledge”). Translated from French by DEEPL translator.

the ways of its appropriation vary depending on the culture and context.<sup>237</sup> In the spirit of communion, collaboration and sharing, the theologians and local priests of the Church of Quebec may create a forum which can allow the contemporary theology of Quebec and African theology brought in by the *Fidei Donum* priests from Africa. Such an interaction of the two theologies can enhance their mutually enrichment. This enrichment can be stretched to include the liturgy to create a possibility of the *Fidei Donum* priests from Africa sharing with Quebecers the joy and liveliness of the African celebrations, their rich cultural values and their personal qualities as individuals. African culture has notable strengths like community life, an individual's joy or sorrow becomes communal, hospitality, respect for elders, collective responsibility and connectedness with nature. These strengths can not only enrich Quebec's culture but also its theology.

Vigil's claim that Quebec's theologians have failed to address or respond to "the greatest phenomenon of religious transformation ever experienced by the people of Quebec," whether true or false, provides an additional insight of possible contribution of African *Fidei Donum* priests. They can become active collaborators with the bishops and the local clergy to continue offering to the Quebecers a pastoral care that emphasizes their experience, both past and present, to reconcile them to the prospect of the future Church of Quebec. As I already noted in the second chapter page 66, the events in the historical past of the Church of Quebec still remind Quebecers of the wounds they suffered at the hands of the Church, and this makes it difficult for the Church to go out and talk about the kingdom of God, that is, the good news of the gospel. The people look at the historical Church that had some failures regarding witnessing to the good news, and based on that, to judge the present Church. The Church has lost credibility.<sup>238</sup> Priests from Africa can contribute by living testimony of the Good News of the Gospel, alongside the local clergy of Quebec, while at the same time, not only acknowledging the past mistakes, but also making genuine efforts to avoid them and any other mistake.

Roy's challenge of the Quebec's theology bases on the established order that he believes does not adapt itself to the signs of the time. *Fidei Donum* Priests from Africa can contribute by collaborating with the local clergy in exposing to Quebecers the spirit behind the established Church orders, while at the same time creatively encouraging them to seek sainthood in their constantly changing society through their ordinary ways of life, which they feel comfortable with. For indeed, in the secularized Quebec,

"We need saints without cassocks, without veils – we need saints with jeans and tennis shoes. We need saints who go to the movies that listen to music, and hang out with their friends. We need saints who place God in first place, ahead of succeeding in any career. We need saints who look for time to pray every day and who know how to be in love with purity, chastity and all good things. We need saints – saints for the 21st century with a spirituality appropriate to our new time. We need saints who have a commitment to helping the poor and to making the needed social change.

We need saints to live in the world, to sanctify the world and not to be afraid of living in the world by their presence in it. We need saints that drink Coca-Cola, that eat hot dogs, that surf the internet and that listen to their iPods. We need saints who love the Eucharist, who are not afraid or embarrassed to eat a pizza or drink a beer with their friends. We need

---

<sup>237</sup> This point is also echoed by Emilie Warren when she writes "Roman Catholic priests receive the same training and their job duties... That said, they have to know and adapt to the customs of the communities they serve." (See, Emilie Warren. A Day in the life-Calling Canada home. <https://cusjc.ca/mrp/catholicisminquebec/chapter-5/>).

<sup>238</sup> Ibid. 5.

saints who love the movies, dance, sports, and theatre. We need saints who are open, sociable, normal, and happy companions. We need saints who are in this world and who know how to enjoy the best in this world without being callous or mundane. We need saints.”<sup>239</sup>

In Quebec, just like in other secularized societies, there is on one hand noticeable gospel values such as justice, equality, the promotion of the rights of the marginalized and environmental protection, and on the other hand, there are lawful acts like medical aid to death, abortion, same sex marriage, organ transplant, etc. Most individuals who live the gospel values identified above, simultaneously ask for abortion at their convenience, or to end their lives in times of crisis or marry people of the same sex. In any case, priests can be approached to either give a blessing to same sex marriage or give a final right to someone who has asked for medical assistance to end his or her life. In all these cases, the society expects the priest to respect the conscience of the people asking for the Church services. In such a society where values are based on freedom, science and rationality, the existential question of truth is brought into question. *Fidei Donum* priests from Africa can contribute to the Christian life of Quebecers by clarifying the difference between what is lawful and what is moral. The fact that the law of the land allows some practices does not necessarily mean that those practices are morally acceptable from a natural law and Christian perspective. What is legal is not always moral. The *Fidei Donum* priests can contribute by collaborating with the local clergy to form the consciences of the people in a way that may make them prefer what is moral to what is legal.

Emilie Warren, the author of “The New Face of Catholicism in Quebec’s Rural Towns,” explores the immigration of foreign-born religious workers to Canada. In her sixth chapter, “Integrating the Community,” she notes that bishops and priests have witnessed “remarks aimed at foreign missionaries that were indisputably xenophobic or prejudiced.” These remarks have included and not limited to “oh well I’m getting my daughter baptized, I don’t want it to be a black priest,” “Oh the African priests are just here for money,” “Oh the African priests don’t know anything about us here, about our culture,” “Could I have the white priest? You know, for my mother’s funeral?” Even some parishioners have had to ask some bishops why they were making parishes African. Still, some have discussed African priests with their bishops, saying, “We don’t want them.”<sup>240</sup> *Fidei Donum* priests from Africa can contribute by giving their lives fully for the service of Quebecers, consequently giving a testimony of life that does not create room for racism or love of money. To achieve this, it may be crucial for them to be exemplary in favouring interpersonal relationship free of prejudice and generalization. Their presence and engagement in the pastoral care can create a trusting relationship with the Quebecers that would help them develop more confidence in persons and not in races.

Warren further discusses the interview with Fr. Serge Tidjani, a Beninese who was in the diocese of Gaspé for a couple of years. She reports Tidjani saying that most Quebecers he encountered were grateful because they “realized that migrant priests were leaving their homes and loved ones as an act of service.” However, Tidjani acknowledges that the integration of

---

<sup>239</sup> Association of Catholics in Ireland, “The poem that Pope Francis didn’t write ... [29<sup>th</sup> July]” <https://acireland.ie/poem/>. The author of this Poem is unknown, though its inspiration is said to be the second paragraph of Pope Francis’ Homily during his apostolic journey to Rio De Janeiro on the occasion of the XXVII World Youth Day (see [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130728\\_celebrazione-xxviii-gmg.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_celebrazione-xxviii-gmg.html) ).

<sup>240</sup> Emilie Warren, “The New Face of Catholicism in Quebec’s Rural Towns,” <https://cusjc.ca/mrp/catholicisminquebec/chapter-6/>.

newcomer priests has not always been smooth.<sup>241</sup> *Fidei Donum* priests from Africa who have had enough experience in Quebec can contribute by facilitating a suitable integration process based on their experience.

Though the Church of Quebec is in the context of labour shortage affecting all the institutions in Canada, *Fidei Donum* priests from Africa, just as other priests from elsewhere do not go to Quebec to work in the same sense as workers in other institutions. On the contrary, as I have established in my third chapter, they go in the name of the universal Church, to do mission as communion, collaboration and sharing (c.f. AG 2, 19, 38; RM.67, 77). In addition, just like other priests from elsewhere exercising their ministries in Quebec, they do not come to Quebec because they are not needed in their churches, but they want to contribute to the mission of the universal Church<sup>242</sup> (c.f. IL 148). The churches from where priests from elsewhere, especially Africa, understand well that the mission of the Church belongs to God, who has privileged the Church to participate in it. This *missio Dei* involves communion, collaboration and sharing, and its goal is that all may become one body (1 Cor. 12:12) whose head is Christ Himself (Col.1:18). Hence, their very presence, is an important contribution to the Church of Quebec since it gives it the universal image that defines any local Catholic Church.

Needless to mention, Quebec is a modern and highly secularized society where people are interested in what can be scientifically proven or appeals to technology. Beliefs that were once shared by the Quebecers have been replaced by technology and science. There exists in the contemporary Quebec a social diversity resulting from freedom to choose and express opinions, beliefs and commitments that makes it hard to reach a social consensus, making the other a stranger. This, to some extent, contradicts the gospel values since it makes it difficult to see the other as a brother or a sister. What is observed is withdrawals to oneself, leaving no possibility of bonding. Lack of openness to others has created mistrust in all social places. This has slowed down the possibility of mutual benefit from the richness of various cultures that exist in Quebec. Dialogue among individuals from various cultures, speaking different languages and practicing various faiths, is necessary and urgent in Quebec.<sup>243</sup> *Fidei Donum* priests from Africa may contribute here by remaining authentic bearers of African culture that prioritizes welcoming the strangers, entering into conversation with the people we meet to be sure that they are fine and being available to others.

There is an emergence of “new alternative spiritualities” where people consider themselves spiritual rather than religious. People find meanings in relating with nature, in meditation and silent retreats, but do not want to associate themselves with institutionalized religion.<sup>244</sup> Besides,

---

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Fr. Sylvestre Awono Enama shares his experience, indicating that the good will to contribute to the mission of the Church is sometimes met with a lot of prejudice and suspicion. This prejudice sometimes reveals a preference for priests from places other than Africa, and if from Africa, those who at least made their studies in Europe. Enama writes: “There is no adequate support and right framework to enable these priests from abroad to exploit their wealth for the benefit of Christians in the countries where they go on mission. The Church is thus depriving itself of a precious contribution from abroad. It remains rather timid in this regard and resorts to palliative solutions and subterfuges to meet the problems of the next generation of priests. This is a serious mistake and it is suicidal.” (See, Sylvestre, Awono Enama. “Mon expérience missionnaire au Québec,” in “Prêtre et Pasteur,” *Venus d’Ailleurs* 116 no.4 (2013):224-225. [Translated from French by DEEPL translator]).

<sup>243</sup> The Quebec Assembly of the Catholic Bishops and of the Quebec Foreign Missions Society, Joint Pastoral letter on the occasion of the Centennial of foundation of the Quebec Foreign Mission Society “Called and Sent to Serve: The Joy of the Gospel,” 4.

<sup>244</sup> Craig A. Baron, “Christian Theology and The Re-enchantment Of The World,” *Crosscurrents* (2007):117.

religious language has been made insane and is often used to give negative connotations. Words that were once used to point to holiness or holy objects are now used for swearing.<sup>245</sup> This may require the *Fidei Donum* priests from Africa not to rush to judge and condemn those who misuse the religious language, because some of them, especially the young generation, have no idea of the actual meaning of the religious words they may use.

#### 4.8. Reciprocity

It is important to note that both “missioned” *Fidei Donum* priests and the welcoming church have important roles to play in ensuring the success of mission in each local church. The local ordinary is responsible for preparing the local community to become more welcoming. This preparation may involve coming up with a written document that has practical indications on the things that need to be done to welcome *Fidei Donum* priests.<sup>246</sup> Roy observes that the bishops of Quebec, learning from both successes and failures, have defined the legal framework, both canonical and civil, that is useful in welcoming priests from elsewhere. To help these priests fit well in the Church of Quebec, the bishops emphasized adequate preparation, for example in terms of language, culture and pastoral care. However, Roy recommends listening to these priests from elsewhere to reconcile their witness and fresh perspective on the social and ecclesial reality of Quebec.<sup>247</sup>

Traditionally, missionaries went to introduce God to cultures as if God had never existed in those cultures. Today we know that God is present in every place, working, and that missionaries simply arrive to discover how God is in a given culture. The question begged here is how to discover God who is working in the secularised Quebec culture where churches are closing up. It is in this regard that the accompaniment may be useful. Forges observes that priests who arrive in new countries never miss questions, that sometimes they don’t dare to ask. He suggests that there is a need to have an insertion committee that foresees these questions and provides answers.<sup>248</sup> For instance, in the context of Quebec, it may be of interest to the African priests to understand:<sup>249</sup>

- 1) Why do parents lack the same authority over children as parents have in Africa?  
Why do the parents leave it for children to decide whether to go for catechism classes or not?
- 2) Why are the aged people sent to the residences for the aged as opposed to their family living with them to take care of them, as is done in Africa?
- 3) Why is it that only the old people participate in the mass?
- 4) Why is the Church of Quebec not so demanding on the sacramental life, especially the sacrament of marriage?
- 5) Why are priests not encouraged to touch children?

Routhier argues that what is lacking is not the formation they may have received as priests, but rather the accompaniment of the priests who come from elsewhere. This accompaniment is the key to the success of their mission. According to him, the trauma of the insertion is experienced by both the priests from elsewhere and the church that welcomes them. They both need to modify

---

<sup>245</sup> Examples here include: Tabernacle, sacrament, chalice, eucharist, corporal, sacristy among others.

<sup>246</sup> Arnaud Join-Lambert, “Les Prêtres venus d’ailleurs: Une approche systémique nécessaire et urgente,” *Lumen Vitae* LXXVIII, no.4 (2023): 459.

<sup>247</sup> Roy, “Des prêtres venus d’ailleurs,” 25.

<sup>248</sup> Forgeat, “Prêtres venus d’ailleurs,” 18.

<sup>249</sup> These questions have been adapted from the questions Forgeat raises in the context of France, (see Forgeat,

and resituate in new practices, habits and dreams different from the ones they had before and give new images of themselves to the other. The accompaniment, he argues, should not only involve indicating to the new priests what they need to do and how things are done in Quebec. But it should be a quality accompaniment that engages the new priests to reflect on what they are called to become in Quebec, discovering how to act and what their actions provoke in this new place.<sup>250</sup>

Routhier also acknowledges that the Church of Quebec sent priests abroad for mission and that they were welcomed by those churches.<sup>251</sup> It is obvious that these priests did not speak the languages of their new mission places at all, or if they spoke, they did not have the same accents. The members of the Church of Quebec may consider welcoming the African *Fidei Donum* priests with unfamiliar accents with Charity. The African *fidei donum* needs to “*se laisse accueillir*”<sup>252</sup> by making genuine efforts to adapt to the Quebec accent.

Undoubtedly, Priests from Africa benefit from their collaboration with the Church of Quebec. Through this collaboration, they get an opportunity to live in a new country, culture and sometimes a new language. In addition, they get the privilege of exercising their ministry in Quebec as prescribed by the Second Vatican Council (PO 10). Roy argues that this collaboration can bring new life to the Church of Quebec. He writes:

“La présence et la collaboration de ces prêtres venus d'ailleurs signalent une nouvelle dans l'Église catholique au Québec. Cette nouveauté se présente sous un double aspect. D'une part, elle manifeste la diversité culturelle croissante des communautés chrétiennes d'ici dans le contexte actuel des mouvements d'immigration. D'autre part, elle témoigne de la situation difficile de l'Église confrontée à une réelle conversion pastorale pour continuer sa mission au Québec, alors que son personnel et ses moyens d'action sont de plus en plus limités. Cette réalité nouvelle est complexe, lourde de possibles malentendus, mais riche aussi de collaborations innovatrices pour l'avenir.”<sup>253</sup>

Aware that there is a huge cultural difference, there are possibilities of the Quebecer culture interacting constructively with the African cultures that are brought by the *Fidei Donum* priests from Africa. Blanchet takes note of some of the elements of some African cultures that may not be appreciated in Quebec, including punctuality and relating to women as though they are inferior to men. However, he acknowledges that the priests from elsewhere can help the local Church of Quebec discover different approaches to particular things.<sup>254</sup>

For instance, one of the strengths of African traditional culture is community life, where one's concerns become the concern of the entire community; raising a child is a communal affair, when someone dies, the whole village mourns, family priority, everyone is welcome, and no one is a stranger. Apart from community life, African cultures are known for hospitality, collective responsibility, respect for elders and connectedness with nature. No doubt, these good values of the African culture can be a source of enrichment to the Quebec culture. It may be helpful for both

---

<sup>250</sup> Routhier, “Des prêtres Venus de...,” 198.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid. 195.

<sup>252</sup> Blanchet, “Les prêtres d'ailleurs et les communautés chrétiennes,” 201.

<sup>253</sup> Roy, “Des prêtres venus d'ailleurs,” 25. « The presence and collaboration of these priests from elsewhere signal a new development in the Catholic Church in Quebec. This novelty has two aspects. On one hand, it reflects the growing cultural diversity of Christian communities here in the current context of immigration movements. On the other, it bears witness to the difficult situation in which the Church is faced with a real pastoral conversion in order to continue its mission in Quebec, at a time when its personnel and means of action are increasingly limited. This new reality is complex, fraught with possible misunderstandings, but also rich in innovative collaborations for the future. » (Translated by DEEPL translator).

<sup>254</sup> Blanchet, “Les prêtres d'ailleurs et les communautés chrétiennes,” 203-204.

the local Church of Quebec and the “missioned” (*Fidei Donum*) priests to explore the cultural horizons<sup>255</sup> of the other. In the context of Quebec, I suggest a step further to understand as well the theological horizon, which may not have been familiar to the *Fidei Donum* priests, but sounds necessary to know about it and ask questions that will help expand that knowledge.

#### **4.9. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have discussed the presence of the “priests from elsewhere” as an inevitable way forward for the mission of the Catholic Church in contemporary Quebec which is faced by lack of enough priestly vocations. I began by clarifying why the expression “priests from elsewhere” is preferred to “foreign priests.” I then established the justification of the presence of “priests from elsewhere” in Quebec in accordance with the teaching and practice of the universal Church. Thereafter, I proceeded to discuss the *Fidei Donum* priests from Africa missioned in Quebec. Before discussing their possible contributions to the Church of Quebec, I discussed the contemporary theology of Quebec. Finally, I concluded the chapter by noting that the success of the mission of the *Fidei Donum* priests from Africa depends also on the collaboration and support of the local Church of Quebec.

---

<sup>255</sup> This term is used by Bernard Lonergan in his “Method in Theology.” It simply refers to the interests in knowledge that one has. These interests are aroused only when one is in need but when not in need doesn’t care to ask questions about particular thing. We don’t ask some questions simply because they are not within our horizon; we don’t care about them. Horizons change and expand as one grows. (See Robert M. Doran-John D. Dadosky, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Method in Theology*, Herder and Herder, Toronto, (2017): 221-223).

## General Conclusion

This thesis has explored the evolution of the Catholic Church's presence in Quebec from priests from France to priests from Africa. To unpack my arguments, I arranged this thesis in four chapters. In the first Chapter, I traced cultural Catholicism since its foundation up to date, the challenges it faced and how the Church addressed those challenges to ensure survival and continuity. In the second chapter, I argued that secularization did not cause the decline of Catholicism, but only provided a platform for a new form of Catholicism. The third chapter sought to establish the concept of mission appropriate for the secularized Quebec. In this chapter, my main argument is based on the fact that Church's presence needs to be relevant and creative enough to avoid giving "a response to a world that no longer exists."<sup>256</sup> In the last Chapter, I discussed the presence of priests from elsewhere, especially Africa, as a present reality in the Quebec Church. The main goal in this chapter was to determine whether their presence is relevant or not, and whether they can contribute to the Church of Quebec.

In general, I have established that Priests from elsewhere are not a new phenomenon in the Quebec Church, but it has been present throughout her history. Even today, Priests from Africa are not going to Quebec "to bring back the gospel to those who have forgotten."<sup>257</sup> My study of the evolution of the Church's presence has indicated that their judgements should be slow and prudent, especially on things that are different from what they have always known. This is because in contemporary Quebec, many things have changed; what used to be done collectively is now done individually. It belongs to the individuals to determine the truth. Discernment in such a context can be difficult if a pastor does not ground himself in a firm spirituality. Lepori and Karecki explain that "mission has a spirituality and spirituality informs mission," resulting in "mission spirituality where being and doing, prayer and action constitute a whole." Mission spirituality, according to Lepori and Karecki, takes shape in "mission Spirituality spiral," containing different approaches that denote "a continuous and ever-deepening ongoing process." This process involves encounter with God, contextualization, analysis, theological reflection, discernment and reflexivity.<sup>258</sup>

---

<sup>256</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 345.

<sup>257</sup> Wijzen, "Foreign Priests in the Netherlands," 23.

<sup>258</sup> Lepori-Karecki, "In search of transformative ways of being in mission," 60.



## Bibliography

### A. Primary Bibliography

Assemblée des évêques du Québec, *Annoncer l'Evangile dans la culture actuelle au Québec*, Québec, Edition Fides, 1999.

John Paul II. Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (7 December 1990), 56: AAS 83 (1991),304;  
<[http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp\\_ii\\_enc\\_07121990\\_redemptoris-missio.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp_ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html).

Lemieux, Lucien. *Une Histoire Religieuse du Quebec*. Novalis, Montreal, 2010.

Second Vatican Council, decree *Ad Gentes*, 7 December 1965, in *The Documents of the Second Vatican Council*, Paulines Publications, 2013.

Taylor, Charles. *Modern Social Imaginaries*. Duke University, Durham, 2004. 83-107.

The Dumont Commission Report, “*L’Église du Québec un heritage et un projet*,” Fides, Montreal, 1971.

### B. Secondary Bibliography

Amaladoss, Michael. “Jésus Christ, le Seul Sauveur, et la Mission.” *SPIRITUS* no.159 (2000): 335-340.

Association of Catholics in Ireland, “The Poem That Pope Francis Didn’t Write ... [29<sup>th</sup> July]” <https://acireland.ie/poem/>. Accessed April 27, 2025.

Baum, Gregory. “Catholicism and Secularization in Quebec.” *CrossCurrents* 36, no.4 (1986-7): 438. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24459103>. Accessed October 26, 2024.

Baillargeon, Stéphane. « Un Québécois sur deux ne croit pas en Dieu », *Le Devoir*, published 22 October, 2021, <https://www.ledevoir.com/societe/642084/l-adieu-a-dieu>? Accessed June 23, 2024.

Baron, A. Craig. “Christian Theology and the Re-enchantment of the World.” *Crosscurrents* (2007). p.117

Benedict XV, Pope. “*Apostolic Letter - Maximum Illud*” (Vatican,1919)  
[https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/en/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_ben-xv\\_apl\\_19191130\\_maximum-illud.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xv_apl_19191130_maximum-illud.html). Accessed June 22, 2024.

Benedict XV, Pope. “*Apostolic Letter - Maximum Illud*”, Vatican, 1919  
[https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/en/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_ben-xv\\_apl\\_19191130\\_maximum-illud.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xv_apl_19191130_maximum-illud.html). Accessed June 22, 2024.

Benhadjoudja, Leila. "Racial Secularism As Settler Colonial Sovereignty in Quebec." *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 7, no.2 (2022):182-199.

Bitole Kato, Joseph. *Awakening the Laity: Ugandan Pastoral Approach*, Gaba publishers, Gaba (2003).

Blanchet, Bertrand. "Les prêtres d'ailleurs et les communautés chrétiennes." *Venus d'Ailleurs* 116 no.4 (2013):202-203.

Bosch, J. David. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 1991. 334-345.

Casanova, José, "The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms," in C. Calhoun, M. Juergensmeyer, J. Vanantwerpen, eds., *Rethinking Secularism* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2011) 54-74

Canada Broadcasting Corporation. *Une Histoire Populaire: Quiet Revolution*, <https://www.cbc.ca/history/EPISCONTENTSE1EP16CH1PA1LE.html>. Accessed June 25, 2024.

Cerviño, Lucas. "Mission As Life Irrupting from Diversity: A Bet against Monocultural Globalization." *SEDOS* 40, no.1(2008): 33-37. EBSCOhost.

Christiano, J. Kevin. "Beheading the Saint: Nationalism, Religion, and Secularism in Quebec." *The Catholic Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (2018): 726-728.

Clifford, E. Catherine. "An Insight into Catholic Intellectual Engagement with Secularity in The Context of Contemporary Quebec." *Theoforum* 45 (2014):313-316. EBSCOhost.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic church on some Aspects of the Church understood as Communion*, 28th May 1992:  
[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_2805\\_1992\\_communionis-notio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_2805_1992_communionis-notio_en.html). Accessed February 17, 2025.

Congar, Yves. *Lay People in the Church: A Study for Theology of the Laity*, Newman Press, Westminster, (1957).

Doran, M. Robert and Dadosky D. John. *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Method in Theology*, Herder and Herder, Toronto, 2017.

English, Parker. "Kalumba, Mbiti, and A Traditional African Concept of Time." *Philosophia Africana* 9, no.1 (2006):53-54, EBSCOhost

Forgeat, Jean. "Prêtres Venus d'Ailleurs: Observation sur la présence de près de 1300 Prêtres, venant d'ailleurs et présents aujourd'hui dans les diocèses de France." *Revue Lumen Vitae* Vol. LXXVIII (2023).

Francis I, Pope. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 56 in AAS 105(2013),1043:[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html). Accessed February 22, 2025.

Fuellenbach, John. “You Cannot Serve God and Money (cf.Mt.6:24): Some Biblical and Theological Considerations Concerning Mission and Money.” *SEDOS* 38, no. 5/6 (2006). p.101.

Heft, James L., ed. *A Catholic Modernity?* Charles Taylor’s Marianist Award Lecture (Oxford University Press, NewYork, 1999).

Jenkins, Philip. “How Quebec Went from One Of The Most Religious Societies To One Of The Least”, *The Christian Century*, Vol. 138, May 5, 2021 issue.  
<https://www.christiancentury.org/article/notes-global-church/how-quebec-went-one-most-religious-societies-one-least>. Accessed June 20, 2024.

John Paul II, Pope. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (30 December 1988) in AAS 81(1989),461; [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_30121988\\_christifideles-laici.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici.html). Accessed January 13, 2025.

Assembly of the Catholic Bishops and the Quebec Foreign Missions Society, Joint Pastoral letter on the occasion of the Centennial of the foundation of The Quebec Foreign Mission Society “*Called and Sent to serve: The joy of the Gospel*,” pp.1-5.

J. C., Soper, K. R. den Dulk, and S. V. Monsma. *The Challenge of Pluralism: Church and State in Six Democracies*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, 2017).

Join-Lambert, Arnaud. “Les Prêtres venus d’ailleurs: Une approche systémique nécessaire et urgente.” *Lumen Vitae* LXXVIII no.4 (2023):455-468.

Kavunkal, Jacob. “A Re-look at the Mission Concept and Missiology.” *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 86, no. 6 (2022): 37- 41.

Lisée, Jean-François. “*Les Québécois, ces mécréants*,” in *LeDevoir* of 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2024, <https://www.ledevoir.com/opinion/chroniques/809980/chronique-quebecois-ces-mecreants?> Accessed July 13, 2024.

LaRousse, William. “Migration and Mission: *Missiological Reflections*.” \_\_\_\_ (2007). Pp. 1-7

Lepori, Laura – Karecki, Madge. “In Search of Transformative Ways Of Being in Mission: Introducing The Mission Spirituality Spiral.” *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 47 no.1 (2023):58-59.

Lefebvre, Solange, et al. *Catholicisme et cultures: Regards croisés Québec-France*, (Presses de l’Université Laval, Quebec, 2015), 85-105.

Mager, Robert. "Quebec's Act Respecting the Laicity of the State and the Demise of Religion: Scandal or Trial?" *Toronto Journal of Theology* 35, no. 2 (2019): 162. EBSCOhost.

Malvern, Paul. "Falling from Grace: The Rise and Fall of the Quebec Catholic Church," <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/falling-from-grace-rise-fall-quebec-catholic-church-paul-malvern>. Accessed June 20, 2024.

M. Martin et J. Legault-Leclair. "Les inquiétudes d'une majorité et la Loi 21: le Québec, le catholicisme et la laïcité en 2019" in *Revue internationale des Francophones*. <https://rfrancophonies.com/index.php?id=1167?id=1167#authors-Infos>. Accessed October 25, 2024.

Mélançon, Jérôme. "Laicity and The Inherited Boundaries between Religion and Politics in Quebec." *Religious studies and Theology* 34, no.1 (2015): 85-99. EBSCOhost.

Nkulu Kabamba, Olivier. *Les Prêtres Africains en Europe: "Missionnaires" ou "Missionnés"?* (L'Harmattan, Paris, \_\_). 33-40.

Paul VI, Pope. "Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests", *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 1965, [https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19651207\\_presbyterorum-ordinis\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_presbyterorum-ordinis_en.html). Accessed March 12, 2025.

PIUS XII, Pope. Encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*, n. 29-VI-1943, in AAS 35 (1943); [https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p\\_xii\\_enc\\_29061943\\_mystici-corporis-christi.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p_xii_enc_29061943_mystici-corporis-christi.html). Accessed January 12, 2025.

Prevost, Honorius "La dévotion à la Sainte Famille en Canada" p. 4, Quoted in Lemieux, *Une Histoire Religieuse du Québec*, 47.

Perin, Roberto. *Rome in Canada: The Vatican and Canadian Affairs in The Late Victorian Age*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1990.

Roussel, Jean François. *La Théologie Québécoise après la Révolution Tranquille: Entre le Temple et l'Exil*. Université de Montréal, Montréal, 2017.

Routhier, Gilles. « Les Défis de la Mission dans les Sociétés Sécularisées », *Mission* 2 (2006) :252-260.

Roy, Bertrand. « Des prêtres venus d'ailleurs » in *Reflets* (Journal de l'Association québécoise des retraité(e)s des secteurs public et parapublic), vol. 30, no 2, décembre 2013, p. 25.

Stark, Rodney. "Secularization, R.I.P." *Sociology of Religion* 60, no. 3 (1999): 249-273.

Rivard, Henri, ed. *Histoire du Québec*, (Beaux Livres, Quebec, 2008).

Seljak, David. "Truth, Relevance and Social Transformation in Quebec." *Theoforum* 45 (2014): 317-322. EBSCOhost.

Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 21 November 1964, in *The Documents of the Second Vatican Council* (Paulines Publications, 2013).

Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 7 December 1965, in *"The Documents of the Second Vatican Council"* (Paulines Publications, 2013).

The Quebec Foreign Mission Society, Documents of the 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (1997)

The Quebec Foreign Mission Society, Documents of the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2013)

Vigil, José Maria. *Un appel à la théologie Québécoise* in the KAIRÓS QUÉBEC <https://www.academia.edu/?h=33016191>. Accessed March 13, 2025.

Vigil, José María. *Sortir à la Rencontre du Québec qui est allé au-delà de la Religion*, in the KAIRÓS QUÉBEC <https://eatwot.academia.edu/JoséMaríaVIGIL>. Accessed October 26, 2024.

Voisine, Nive. *Histoire de l'Église catholique au Québec (1608-1970)*. Fides, Montreal, 1971). 9.

Warren, Emilie. "The New Face of Catholicism in Quebec's Rural Towns." <https://cusjc.ca/mrp/catholicisminquebec/chapter-6/>. Accessed April 28, 2025.

Warren, Jean-Philippe. "Secularism in Quebec," in *Canadian Encyclopedia* (2020). <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/secularism-in-quebec>. Accessed October 26, 2024.

Wikipedia, "Quiet Revolution," [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quiet\\_Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quiet_Revolution). Accessed June 25, 2024.

Wijzen, Frans J.S.. "Foreign Priests in Netherlands: Reversed Mission, Mutual Assistance and Internal Outsourcing." *Exchange*, 45, no. 1(2016): 22-30.