

THE LETTER

THE FRIENDS OF CAFFAREL

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of the canonisation of Father Henri Caffarel

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OF FRIENDS OF FATHER CAFFAREL

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‘L ’Association des Amis du père Caffarel’,

- Either by post : 49 rue de la Glacière F-75013 PARIS

- Or on the internet website : www.henri-caffarel.org

Price: **10 €**

Please find attached an application form for membership
of the Association for distribution to those around you.

EDITORIAL



Gérard and Marie Christine de ROBERTY

Father Caffarel... Please tell us?

What would you have thought if you had known all that is going on around you... this association of your friends who are asking for your canonisation?

“In the first place,” Father Caffarel would have said, *“I would have reminded you that my abiding wish is to be discreet: a discretion in keeping with my natural inclination to the monastic life, discretion in my daily life, discretion in my dealings with everyone, discretion in the very manner of my passing to the Lord and in my peaceful and simple burial in the little cemetery at Troussures.*

Then, on further reflection, I would have asked you in what way can all this encourage an encounter with the Lord... You know what was the passion of my life: It was to facilitate everyone’s encounter with God, an encounter that I personally had with him when I was 20 years old, on the day when I staked everything :”

In answer to your question, I would have gone on to say: Father Caffarel, you who gave so much of yourself so that all would find God, you must go all the way, beyond your death, and give of yourself even further so that others who have not known you, may seek and find the way that leads to our Father in Heaven... ’

“You are probably right to make me a servant for posterity.”

Many thanks, Father, for, as you know, we feel responsible for making everyone benefit from what you have given to couples, to families, to widows and widowers, to all seekers of God in prayer and contemplation.

We cannot keep for ourselves this treasure that the Lord inspired you to give to the people of our time and of years to come. You are so much present in the heart of so many men, women, religious and priests, whom you have helped to truly encounter God in the very depth of their heart, that we could not let you fall asleep for ever and ever... you of whom Cardinal Lustiger said: “Father Henri CAFFAREL is a prophet for our times”.

And you would no doubt have concluded, as you did in 1938 when Equipes Notre-Dame were born: *“Come, let us journey together...!”*

Many thanks again, Father !

Why ask for Father Caffarel 's beatification ?

Father Paul-Dominique Marcovits, o.p.
Postulator



Who made this request ?

The "Equipes Notre-Dame", constituted as an association called "The Friends of Father Caffarel" - 49, rue de la Glacière, F-75013 Paris. This association is composed of all the members of the International College that is to say, the International Leading Team and the Super-Regional Couples of the Movement. The decision to request Father Caffarel 's beatification was taken by the International College at its meeting in July 2005.

The Movement "Hope and Life" (for the newly widowed) and "Fraternity of Our Lady of the Resurrection" (a Secular Institute for widows who have consecrated their lives to Christ) have associated themselves to this initiative.

Why was this request made?

1. *Because many people consider that Father Caffarel was "a man gripped by God" (Title of Jean Allemand 's biography of Father Caffarel).*

In Latin America and especially in Brazil where Teams are most numerous, Father Caffarel is honoured as an exceptional person who is a living influence on everyone: there is a Father Caffarel 'presence' in Brazil. In France, where many have known him, he is still esteemed as one who gives life. "He has given us God", say those who have known him. He has helped many lay people to discover the prayer of contemplation.

2. Because Teams have received a "treasure", they cannot keep it exclusively to themselves.

Father Caffarel 's personality and his message on marriage are so relevant today and can do so much good to couples that it is important to promote them for the good of the Church and society. "Marriage is a way to holiness", said Father Caffarel. He was "a twentieth century prophet", said Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger in his homily at the mass celebrated in

the Church of 'la Madeleine' in Paris soon after his death on the 18th of September 1996.

Two reasons have therefore led Teams to ask for the opening of the cause of his beatification: firstly his reputation for holiness and secondly the universal validity of the content of his message on marriage.

To whom was this request made?

It was made to the Archbishop of Paris because Father Caffarel was a priest of that diocese. On the 25th of April 2006, archbishop André Vingt-Trois agreed to open the Cause of Father Caffarel's beatification by agreement with the bishop of Beauvais, in whose diocese Father Caffarel ended his days and after having consulted the Roman Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. He established a canonical commission of enquiry to study this Cause. The second stage will be for the Congregation of the Causes of Saints in Rome to 'instruct' this Cause.

Who is responsible for promoting the Cause of Father Caffarel?

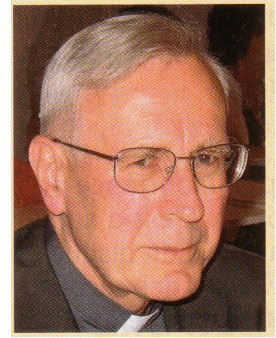
The Postulator: Father Paul-Dominique Marcovits, a Dominican priest, currently Spiritual Counsellor of the Super-Regional Team for France, Luxembourg and Switzerland. He is assisted by a Vice-Postulator, Madame Marie-Christine Genillon.

What is the role of every team member?

- 1 *To give a testimony.* Contact: The Postulator, "The Friends of Father Caffarel", 49, rue de la Glacière, F-75013-Paris (postulateur@henri-caffarel.org)
- 2 *To get to know* further Father Caffarel's personality, his writings, the books he wrote. (cf. the bibliography)
- 3 *To pray* that the holiness of his life be recognised by the Church and so that his message and person may do ever more good in the Church and in society. (cf. prayer)
- 4 *Becoming a member of* "The Friends of Father Caffarel".

State of progress of the Cause (2005-2007)

Mgr François Fleischmann



The opening of the Cause of Father Caffarel's canonisation was requested by Father Paul-Dominique Marcovits, appointed Postulator by Equipes Notre-Dame (promoters of the Cause) on the 21st of December 2005.

The 'Decree of the opening of the canonical Enquiry into the Cause of canonisation of Father Henri Caffarel, Priest of the diocese of Paris' was signed by Archbishop Vingt-Trois, archbishop of Paris, on the 25th of April 2006.

The official presentation of the opening of the Cause of Canonisation was made in Lourdes during the International Gathering of Equipes Notre-Dame, on the 18th of September 2006, the tenth anniversary of Father Caffarel's death.

The 'Decree instituting a canonical Commission of Enquiry into the cause of canonisation of the Servant of God Henri Caffarel' was signed by Archbishop Vingt-Trois on the 27th of April 2006. The President of the Commission is Bishop Maurice Fréchal; the Promotor of Justice is Father Henri Moreau; the Notary is Madame Brigitte Jézéquel.

The Diocesan Commission began its sittings on the 22nd of March 2007.

Father Alain Mattheeuws and Monsieur Xavier Lacroix have agreed to be expert theologians. Mme Agnès Walch and Monsieur Olivier Landron have agreed to be expert historians. They have all been appointed by Archbishop Vingt-Trois to verify the biography of Father Caffarel and to study all the documentary sources. They will have to identify the evolution of his thinking in his writings and in the movements and revues that he founded. They have to make sure that his writings are in conformity with the teaching of the Church and to evaluate his theological contribution.

The plan of work of the Postulation process

(2005-2007)

Marie-Christine Genillon,
Vice-Postulator



The Postulator and Vice-Postulator of the Cause of beatification have to date interviewed 39 French-speaking and 7 non French-speaking witnesses. They have received 8 French-speaking and 15 non French-speaking testimonies. Finally, a number of shorter written testimonies have been submitted or are being written.

A bibliography of books written by Father Caffarel (including dates of publishing and translations) has been drawn up and the various articles written by him in various revues have been listed. An inventory has been made of all booklets and brochures of the Publishers "*Les Editions du Feu nouveau*" founded by Father Caffarel.

Thanks to the considerable precise and efficient work done by Mgr Fleishmann, the inventory and transcription of all editorials and articles written by Father Caffarel in the revue *L'Anneau d'Or* (1945-1967) and in the *Equipes Notre-Dame Newsletter* from 1942 to 1973 have been done under their various titles. The inventory and transcription of his "*Cahiers sur l'Oraison* (1957-1989) (Notebooks on Prayer) and of his series of articles "*La Chambre Haute*" (1973-1978) (The Upper Room), are in the process of being done. Also in progress is the partial scrutiny of "*Offertoire*" (the revue of the movement for widows which began in 1947); all the issues of this revue have not yet been assembled.

Eight files of archives belonging to people who have worked with Father Caffarel have been received and listed; these include the family archives of members of the first team.

The time consuming work of going through the archives of Equipes Notre-Dame up to 1973 is in progress, with the valuable assistance of Bernadette Chovelon, a member of Teams.

Archives :

An Editorial by Father Caffarel (July 1955)



*In view of the impending holiday time, we offer you
an editorial written by Father Caffarel for the
July 1955 issue of the Monthly Letter of Equipes Notre-Dame*

HOLIDAYS: A TIME OF STRENGTH OR OF WEAKNESS?

To begin with, what do we call holidays ? I would define them as a time of interruption of normal work: schoolwork, remunerative work or housework. From which we conclude that whereas students and men generally have holidays, this is not always the case for the mother of a family; yet she needs them as much – if not more – than the other members of the family (fathers of families, please note!).

In the aftermath of their holidays, I often observe in parents what teachers observe in students, namely a lowering of spiritual quality: the springs have slackened. Has an increase in physical vitality to be paid for by a lowering of spiritual vitality? That would be very disappointing, yet nothing is more evident.

Where does this lowering come from? Is it because we inevitably or deliberately abandon our customary religious exercises? ... Perhaps - but not necessarily. This is not the first reason, it seems to me, for this weakening. There is an interior reason. On holidays, love is no longer my motivation; 'what suits me' becomes my rule of life. Games, sleep, walk, reading - everything is governed by this one sovereign law. Let me make myself clear. It is not resting, relaxing or sporting activities that I find reprehensible (albeit that some adjustments may be necessary) it is the motive: 'because it suits me'. It is the perpetual thinking of self and therefore not thinking about God

or about others; it is my own preferences to the detriment of others' preferences. Whereas, throughout the year, having scant opportunities to do what suits us, we try to do the will of God (if not always seen as God's will, at any rate in terms of duty), once on holidays, we go into reverse. As if, to take a rest from loving and serving God and others for eleven months of the year, we are at last surely entitled to love and serve ourselves. We put love on holidays and selfishness takes over in the meantime.

That is the mistake. Love has no holidays. You don't stop breathing during holidays; do you? So, don't stop loving; love is the soul's breathing.

You are quite right to take a break from your normal activities, but do so precisely because it is the will of God and, in so far that it is his will, do it out of love for him. Let love be awake, alert, vigilant and prompt. Let it be even more so than usual. Breathe deeply, love deeply! The soul, like the body, needs to rebuild itself, to renew itself and it is loving that renews the soul. Holidays should be – must be – precisely a time when it is easier to love God and others. It is easier on holidays to love God because creation reveals the glory of God. It is easier on holidays to love others because we have come out of our breathless life and we can leisurely and together discover, marvel, read, speak to one another at length... Being a time when it is easier to love, we must therefore practise loving more, loving better. Then holidays will fulfil their purpose: they will be a 're-creation'; they will recreate each one of us; they will recreate the bonds between the soul and God, between husband and wife, between parents and children, between brothers and sisters. Holidays make it possible to create new bonds with the people of the village; with relatives and friends we meet... .

Back at home, we can resume our work. Our soul is stronger; our vitality has increased.

Your holidays will have been the highlight of your year, because you will have made them a time to love.

And it is in order to help you to make it so that the Monthly Letter of June 1955, pp. 6-10, gave you indications and suggestions.

Henri Caffarel

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