
MSGR. LIONEL DAIGLE'S SPIRITUAL LEGACY



The man of God and priest-artist who was Monsignor Lionel Daigle was also a gatherer. In its message to artists, Vatican Council II had these words: *"The world in which we live needs beauty in order not to despair. Beauty, like truth, is what brings joy to people; it is the precious fruit that resists the vagaries of time, which unites generations and has them experience admiration. Remember that you are the guardians of beauty in the world; may this be sufficient to free you from passing fads which have no lasting value. Always and everywhere be worthy of your ideal, and you shall be worthy of the Church."*

PRIEST-ARTIST

Msgr. Lionel Daigle was one of those priest-artists who was worthy of his ideal and worthy of the Church. He responded to the constant invitation of the Word of God. *"Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his surpassing greatness! Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!"* (Psalm 150) Monsignor Daigle was a singer of creation, a singer of God; it behooves us to carry on his work by becoming ourselves beings of gratitude, beings of praise, singers of God with everything we have.

PASTORAL MINISTRY TO YOUTH

Msgr. Lionel Daigle loved his parishioners, at St. Basile, Clair, Baker Lake, and Grande Anse. He developed a very special ministry to youth, he joined in complicity of the heart with them, especially with those involved in the boy scouts and those who wanted to learn to play some musical instrument, violin or other. He put much patience, kindness, and joy in making himself all things to all people, especially to the younger crowd. Our Church has a special need for like pastors who are attuned to our youth; in each of our deaneries we shall have to seriously re-consider our youth ministry, and the example of Monsignor Daigle will serve as a good example in this difficult task.

BUILDER OF COMMUNITIES

Monsignor Daigle was a builder not only of churches but also of Christian communities. The Clair parish church is a marvellous work of art in its lines and colour, and harmony. But for Msgr. Daigle, people were more important than stones. While at Baker Lake he worked tirelessly in the cooperative movements and social field, attentive to those in difficulty or the needy of all kinds. At a time when we are looking into the pastoral restructuring of parishes, concern for others and for the Christian communities is a most important preoccupation. Monsignor Daigle's pastoral service, his serenity, wisdom, trust in others, and good spirits are an inspiration to us.

FAMILY WITNESS

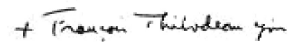
On April 8, 1995, on behalf of the entire family, Mrs. Irène Daigle-Nadeau stated: *"From a young age Monsignor Daigle loved quiet, tranquillity, perfect agreement, and harmony; never a word louder than the other; he had his own way of calling us to order when voices were getting a little too loud: 'Put the brakes on... Lower your voice a half-note.' With that musical ear of his, how he disliked what sounded off-key. And when as a youth, during vacation time he would repair a used violin bow with a bit of horse hair, he was learning a new trade, and a career was in the offing. Still, his real vocation, later on, was without doubt the priesthood with, as complement or supplement, the training of youth. His great merit is not that he loved music but, rather, that he was able to pass on this love to those around him and bring it within the reach of so many young people by helping them discover their aptitudes and undeveloped talents. It is in his work that the labourer is known."*

TESTIMONY OF BISHOP DIONNE

At the gala evening given in honour of Monsignor Daigle on May 5, 1990, Bishop Gérard Dionne stated: *"Some hearts of the elderly refuse to grow old. The recipe for this is to hang around young hearts. With an artist's soul, musical discrimination, and responsiveness to the beauty of music, he was present at every local initiative regarding music groups: symphonies, orchestras, school of music. Gifted in a special way for teaching, and with a patience which is the envy of parents and teachers, enthusiastic over the least success of a young student, full of compliments for those who furnish the greatest effort rather than the most progress, generous in encouraging and affirming those who lack self-confidence, he was able to find the support of volunteers who were first his students then his lieutenants in the opening of schools for the teaching of the violin to children. It is a great service to humankind to give it the opportunity to listen to and, even more, to make beautiful music. By beginning at a very young age, the child can direct his or her music education towards the beautiful and make of it a an incentive to reach further. [...] Our organists today, our choir directors, our choirs, musicians and dancers, carry on the tradition of Leo Poulin. Father Daigle has a place among the great."*

WITNESS TO THE BEATITUDES

Through his words but especially by his concrete actions Monsignor Lionel Daigle revealed to us the kindness, goodness, mercy, pursuit of justice, concern for the afflicted, and peacemaking in which every Christian is called to share. Blessed are you, Monsignor Daigle, for having met so many people and for having introduced them to the Gospel's stimulating message!



+ François Thibodeau

Bishop of Edmundston

« From A Bishop's Journal » (247) (14 October 1998)