



Father Peter Joseph de Clorivière S.J.

(1735-1820)

Max de Bazelaire S.J.

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FOREWORD

The documents of the Vatican Council concerning religious life rightly insist on “the obligation of religious to be faithful to the spirit of their founders, to their evangelical intentions and to the example of their sanctity.” (*Evangelica Testificatio*).

With this in mind, and in view of the need for an up-to-date life in English of the co-founder of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary, permission was obtained for the translation of the short life of Fr. De Cloriviere by Max de Bazelaire S.J.

As a point of general interest there is added an appendix giving a biographical notice from the Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus by Bro. Foley S.J.

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APPENDIX

Extract from Foley’s “Records of the English Province S.J.”

Chapter One

BIRTH - VOCATION - FORMATION - PROFESSION (1735-1773)

On the 23rd February, 1756, a tall young man was coming out of the chapel of the Jesuit Fathers, in the rue Pot de Fer, where he had been to Mass and received Holy Communion. It was not his usual custom to come to this chapel. He was recollected, obviously a student and rather distinguished looking.

As he was coming out someone he had never seen before followed him and said:

“God is calling you under the protection of St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier. That is the Jesuit novitiate. Enter there, God indicated this to me the moment you entered the chapel”.

It may be that this ‘invitation’ was a natural intuition at the sight of a recollected young man. Maybe it was the result of a supernatural inspiration. Whichever it was, the prediction was fully realised.

The student was Peter Joseph de Cloriviere. He did indeed become a Jesuit. In fact he was the last Jesuit to pronounce solemn vows in France before the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773. On the other hand he was the first professed Jesuit in France when the Society was restored in 1814, forty years later. Between these two dates he was in Belgium, England, back in his native Brittany as parish priest of Parame, then as rector of the college at Dinan. Finally events took him to Paris where he was to found two religious congregations totally new in their characteristics and especially suitable for the times in which he lived. Shortly afterwards he spent five years in the Temple prison.

He was eighty when he undertook and achieved the great work of restoring the Society of Jesus in France. At eighty four he died whilst praying on his knees before the Blessed Sacrament.

Peter Joseph de Cloriviere was a man of prayer and in the course of his life he reached intimate and constant union with God. From this he gained true wisdom, unshakeable trust and courage to overcome many trials. He was also, as will be seen, a man of action.

Peter Joseph was a Breton, born at Saint Malo on the 29th June, 1735. His family was ancient and honourable. Some of his forebears had served in the French Royal Navy. Others had fitted out ships for the famous India Company.

Little is known about the father of the future Jesuit. He was Michel Julien Picot, Sieur de Cloriviere. We do know that he was a companion of the young Arouet de Voltaire at the Louis le Grand College. Voltaire was then a turbulent and undisciplined student, and it is noteworthy that Michel de Cloriviere was given him as companion on the customary walks. We can assume that the tutor knew that this young man's common sense and good spirit could be relied on.

Peter Joseph had one brother, Alain, a year older than himself, and two sisters – one of whom became a visitation nun. Early in life he became an orphan losing his father when he was five and his mother when he was eight. This early trial left the child with feelings of timidity but at the same time increased his filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin – his heavenly Mother.

The little orphans were brought up by near relatives. The two boys were sent to Douai, to a school run by the English Benedictines who were then refugees in France. The school had a very good reputation and there Peter Joseph followed the usual classical studies as well as learning English, which was to prove very useful later on.

After leaving school he was offered a good position with the India Company, but he showed no interest either in going to sea or in entering commerce. He had to cope with the embarrassment of a pronounced stammer, and he often wondered what he could do with his life. He decided eventually to study law in Paris and he went to stay with an aunt – Mme. de Nermont – in the rue Cassette.

His deep faith and good sense led him to seek a spiritual director.

He was fortunate in meeting the Abbe Grisel, grand penitentiary of the diocese of Paris, who was an excellent guide. He was also an enemy of Jansenism and was devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Under his direction Peter Joseph made rapid progress in the spiritual life, was allowed Holy Communion almost daily and began to see the possibility of a vocation to the priesthood.

Following his meeting, already recounted, with the unknown person, he stayed quite calm. He went back into the chapel and prayed fervently. He felt inclined to knock on the Jesuits' door at once. But he was a prudent young man and he refrained, deciding to get his director's advice first. He made a ten-day retreat and, at the end, his director approved of his religious vocation.

So he went along to the novitiate in the rue Pot de Fer and asked to be admitted. The Jesuit fathers welcomed him warmly. Yet his family, although they were good Christians, strongly opposed his decision. They knew that he was intelligent and energetic, that he had an excellent education and a cultured mind. They believed that he could make a good career. And that a prosperous future awaited him. In spite of their faith they seemed to regret that all these precious gifts should be consecrated and sacrificed to God alone.

The Jesuit aspirant had to go to Saint Malo to plead his cause personally and sent out his reasons. He won his case and entered the novitiate on 14th August, 1756. He was twenty one years old.

He was now in his element. He was among fervent and generous young men and he spent two peaceful, happy and fruitful years which led to his profession of first vows on the 17th August, 1758. It was here also that he formed a firm friendship with a fellow novice, Charles Fleury. They helped and encouraged each other to persevere in their vocation despite the storms and persecutions they endured. Their friendship continued into old age. But this peace, which God often bestows by way of encouragement at the beginning of a vocation, did not last. Trials were necessary for the formation of a true and perfect religious.

The test came when Peter Joseph was sent to study philosophy at Louis le Grand College. First of all his stammer debarred him from speaking and disputing publicly as he was required to do. At the same time he suffered painful temptations against chastity which, though constantly resisted, troubled him greatly. He reached the point of asking himself whether he could ever be a suitable subject for the Society which he loved and esteemed more and more. He even came to think that the best service he could render would be to leave. However he came to the humble and brave conclusion that, even if he could never be a priest in the Society, he could at least persevere in it as a brother coadjutor. God permitted these trials to form him in humility and trust.

In September, 1759, Peter Joseph was sent to the small college at Compiègne where he taught the Second and Third Year boys. Formerly this had been a flourishing college, but now there were only about forty boys. It had a good spirit, however, and an excellent teaching staff. His stammer improved somewhat

and he was able to take a class. His temptations also decreased. He willingly gave himself up to his work with zeal and discovered that he had an excellent field for an apostolate.

But a storm was about to break over the Society of Jesus. Jansenists, philosophers, Parliament and secret societies were combining to accuse it of corrupting youth, troubling consciences, teaching false doctrine and perverting morals. Great statesmen of the period, Pombal in Portugal, d'Aranda in Spain, Choiseul in France, shared this hostility and demanded the dissolution of the Society by Rome. King Louis XV of France and Charles III of Spain let themselves be influenced by these views. Pope Clement XIII resisted strongly, but his successor, Clement XIV, was weaker and less resolute while the Society's enemies redoubled their efforts, stressing the pretended benefit to the whole of Christendom.

In 1747 the Society was thrown out of Portugal. It was dissolved in France between 1762 and 1764 and banned from Spain in 1767. Finally, for the sake of peace and the ostensible good of all, Clement XIV signed the Brief of Suppression but without any censure of the Society.

As for Peter Joseph de Cloriviere, he clung more closely than ever to the Society in its time of trial. He loved and esteemed its ideal, its spirit, its constitutions, its methods, its spirituality and its writers. Especially he admired such men as de la Colomviere, Bourdaloue, Lallemant, Surin, de Caussade – though he was also familiar with the works of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross.

On the 6th August, 1762, Parliament decided to dissolve the Society throughout France. On the 1st April, 1763, all colleges under the jurisdiction of the Paris Parliament were closed. Included in this number was the college at Compiègne. Now deprived of their pupils, the Jesuits there began a retreat on Thursday in Passion Week (now called

the 5th Week in Lent) so as to come out on Easter Sunday, 11th April, 1763. It was during this retreat that Peter Joseph de Cloriviere made a promise:

“to watch over my speech very carefully so that I may not utter, knowingly or deliberately, any word which is bad, useless or idle.”

This resolution may, perhaps, reveal a natural tendency on his part to criticism or thoughtlessness, but it is also an indication of mature virtue. It would appear that Peter Joseph was by temperament somewhat abrupt and impetuous which at times made his conversation sharp or critical. He watched himself on this point for a long time, because he found a certain difficulty in relating well with other people.

For three months Peter Joseph went through a period of painful uncertainty. What would become of him if the Society could no longer exist legally in France? Then he turned to his heavenly Mother and obtained his superior's permission to make a pilgrimage “on foot and begging my way” to Our Lady of Liesse. He did this from 14th April to 25th, and afterwards wrote to Charles Fleury:

“My pilgrimage is finished. I was consoled and very tired. I feel nothing, I see nothing, I have no inspiration from God except a resolution which appears unshakeable: with the help of grace to die a thousand times rather than abandon my holy vocation.”

The situation in the country was such that the superiors left those who had not yet made solemn vows free to decide whether to stay in the Society of Jesus and share its misfortune or to return to secular life, free from all engagements.

Peter Joseph chose to remain faithful to the Society no matter what the outcome. Father de la Croix, Provincial of

Paris, well knew his generous disposition and sent him to Lille, to the Gallo-Belgian Province. Then shortly afterwards he was asked to join the English Province and was sent to Liege, where the house of theology was situated. At last he had found security, but at what price! He had to exile himself from France and even from the French Province. In future he would belong to the English Province.

From 1763 to 1766 at Liege, Peter Joseph led a studious and recollected life which fitted in admirably with his contemplative spirit. He was more interested in ascetical theology than other branches; preferring to avoid speculation he nourished devotion by prayerful meditation on dogma. Numerous personal notes, accounts of conscience and his spiritual journal are precious documents for us. They show his soul being lifted up towards intimate union with God and coming more and more under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

However his stammering continued and some days it was very marked. It was so bad that superiors deliberated as to whether they could ordain him as a priest. Peter Joseph was deeply affected by these doubts and he turned once more to his usual refuge, his heavenly Mother, Mary. He got permission to make another pilgrimage to our Lady of Liesse. On his return he found that the superiors had quite changed their minds without any request on his part. He was ordained sub-deacon on 24th September 1763, deacon on 29th September and priest on 2nd October 1763, feast of the Holy Angels and Our Lady of the Rosary.

Notes, which he kept almost daily, reveal Father de Cloriviere as an ascetic and mystic. His prayer was mainly passive, what could be called the prayer of quiet. He lived in ever closer dependence on the Holy Spirit. At the same time he always sought to give a practical application to his prayer. He watched himself closely, did his utmost to be recollected, and practised

generous self-denial in peace and joy. Often he felt the desire to be a missionary – especially in Canada.

His theology finished, Father de Cloriviere was sent to Ghent to make his tertianship, that is to receive the final interior formation which St. Ignatius reserves for his sons before their perpetual vows and which he calls ‘the school of the heart’.

On his way to Ghent, Father de Cloriviere made a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Montaigut.

Although vast in size, the house at Ghent was not large enough to shelter the novices, tertians, and the large number of refugees who had come there. Because of this the duration of the tertianship which normally lasted for ten months was now reduced to one. In practice it consisted of the Long Retreat from 28th May to the 19th June, 1766.

In an account of conscience which the tertian made to his spiritual director, probably Fr. Knatchbull, he gave a self-portrait in which humility assures us of its exactitude:

“To begin with my faults:

“I have recognised for some time the great sway which pride and self love hold over me. I see this in the fear I have of being ridiculed because of my stammer. I am also subject to self-indulgence at table. I do not follow God’s holy inspirations when it is a question of doing something distasteful to me.

“Regarding temptations:

“I am not free from ill-regulated movements of the flesh, but I am less troubled in this way than formerly. What troubles me more at the present time is a certain apprehension and dejection which takes hold of me. To get over this I try particularly to acquire the freedom of a son of God and to do

all my duties with joy. If there is a virtue in me I think I can say that God has given me the gift of obedience. My mental prayer is not made up of many considerations. Mostly it is a peaceful waiting on Our Lord whom I contemplate present within me, as master... and soul of my soul. Nevertheless I do prepare my meditation in the usual way and I try to make this preparation practical. I am exact about performing the penances for which I have permission.”

Daily entries in his journal during the Long Retreat show him persevering in generous prayer with loving fidelity to the solicitations of grace and in docility to the Holy Spirit.

“I will never cease to implore the grace of the Holy Spirit. Day and night, by prayer and supplication, I will ask the Holy Spirit to make his home within me.”

At the end of the Exercises he drew up a clear programme of sanctity. He had the rare merit of following and fulfilling it.

On the 2nd July we find him in London at St. Ignatius’ College, the residence of the Provincial, from which depended the small college at Hammersmith where he was sent in October. There he fell gravely ill. The exact nature of his illness is not known but it is known that while he was ill he received unusual mystical graces. On the 16th May, 1767, he wrote to Father Fleury:

“My illness was indeed most extraordinary if I can judge by my inmost feelings and by the effects which continue to the present time. I am as one new born. Grace abounds: favours entirely unmerited flood my soul. But, since I did not always speak in a way that was acceptable to everybody, I had the merit for a time of being taken as someone suffering from hallucinations.

All ours here were of that opinion excepting Father Tichburn, who always maintained that nothing in my words or actions gave him occasion to form such a judgement. I believe that now they all share his opinion and do me the favour of thinking that I am in my right mind. My health improves from day to day. I spent a week in the country in the fresh air, drinking plenty of milk. Now I am being sent to Ghent as socius to the novice master. You ask how my speech is getting on. I am experiencing great ease in speaking whenever the talk is about spiritual things. This, I am firmly convinced, is a grace obtained for me by the Blessed Virgin.”

“Tell father Howard that Mother Donnet is in the perfection of the passive state. He need have no doubt about that. I believe that I myself experienced something of the kind and of the lights which she receives. I had sight of the marvellous things which God wishes to do through me.”

God permitted that this faithful servant should suffer great humiliations; stammering, tempted against purity, suspected of losing his sanity. But God always upheld Father de Cloriviere with the interior conviction of using him, one day, for great things.

Shortly after his recovery he accepted joyfully a call to be socius to the novice master in Ghent. It would, he hoped, assist his own spiritual life and offer him a fruitful apostolate amongst chosen men who would one day be ministers of the Church.

The situation however was a delicate one. Father Knatchbull filled three roles. He was rector, tertian master and novice master. Because of this he had to rely more and more on the help of his socius. But the socius did not always know how far to go on his own initiative, and he often remained

perplexed and ill at ease. In addition his stammer became very much worse, and the nervous tension of the young novices became a little strained in their efforts to control themselves. They would often shake with laughter at the sight of their socius, brought to a halt by a word, repeating it four or five times, and suddenly hurrying to finish a phrase, stuttering in a lamentable way. This trial was hard to endure and Father de Cloriviere wrote in June, 1768:

“During my first three months here I suffered great trouble of mind because I saw myself as incapable of fulfilling my duties as I desired. It seemed to me that death would be preferable to life in that situation.”

However he came to grips with the problem:

“I was consoled by the thought that it was providence which had put me here and that everything is possible with God”.

In a previous retreat he had written:

“I must go down to the depths of my nothingness before I can be fit for whatever lies ahead.”

Nevertheless the tone changes during the retreat which he made from 14th to 22nd May, Feast of Pentecost, 1768. He takes up his charge again with greater courage, trust and competence:

“wanting to imitate our Divine Model, Jesus Christ, as closely as I can.”

Also, for their part, the novices had got used to the unusual language of their socius. They had also come to appreciate his real humility, his devoted charity, his vigorous and continuous self-abnegation, his unbelievable zest for work.

They knew he worked long into the night, at the cost of much fatigue, to give them clear and precise ideas, founded on solid doctrine, on the Holy Eucharist, the Sacred Heart and the

Blessed Virgin. These were to give them material for conversations, subjects for future sermons and points for any controversy that might come their way.

In May, 1770, Father de Cloriviere received, rather unexpectedly, a fresh move. He had to leave the novitiate at Ghent and go to Brussels where he was to become chaplain to the English Benedictine nuns who had taken refuge in that city. Doubtless providence was giving him the opportunity of practising an apostolate amongst women – later he was to be director of so many.

In 1770 the Benedictines had found themselves without a chaplain. They appealed to the charity of their compatriots, the English Jesuits, at first in vain. The Society of Jesus forbade its members to take on the ordinary direction of women religious. However the nuns insisted and stressed the difficulty they had in finding a confessor who spoke their language. They also said that it was only temporary help they needed until a permanent confessor was appointed.

The Provincial, Father Thomas More, allowed himself to be convinced and he gave them Father de Cloriviere, who could speak English and whose prudence and virtue he esteemed. Cardinal de Frankenburg, Archbishop of Malines, appointed him “ordinary confessor of women religious” by an official document on the 20th May, 1770.

This temporary appointment was prolonged until the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773. From that moment the previous prohibition was no longer in force. A fresh document was drawn up extending his mandate for a further three years.

Father de Cloriviere was now thirty-eight years old and had been a religious for seventeen years. In these years he had completed all the tests of formation by St. Ignatius.

The time had come for him to pronounce final vows. He was about to make this great act under singularly moving conditions.

The Father General had already sent off the letters authorising him to make his final profession on the following Feast of the Assumption, 15th August, 1773. But a truly terrible blow put his hopes in mortal peril. Clement XIV had succumbed to the pressure exerted together by princes and philosophers and had decided on the suppression of the Society of Jesus by the Brief “Dominus ac Redemptor”. It was a condemnation to death.

However, although the Brief was signed on the 21st July, its promulgation was delayed. Whilst the sovereign decision of the Pope remained a secret and unknown the Society continued its canonical existence and held the right to govern by its own constitutions. Even supposing that it was about to die what a consolation for the youngest son to have belonged more completely were it only for a day, or an hour!

This delay in the promulgation of the Brief saved the profession of Father de Cloriviere who, in an atmosphere of anxiety, pronounced his final vows on the 15th August, 1773, at Liege, in the chapel of the College of the English Jesuits. Thus he found himself the last professed French member of the former Society of Jesus.

With the Benedictine nuns he had more scope for spiritual direction than he had had a socius. As for the nuns, they were more settled than the novices and less disposed to laugh at his faulty language. But he continued to write his exhortations and have them read on his behalf. In the confessional however, and in individual direction, he easily made himself understood. He was very successful indeed in his ministry, giving proof of his wisdom, discretion, piety, goodness and firmness. Some of his flock found him at first a little too severe and demanding. The father defended himself saying that he did not think anything

was too exalted for those who had embraced religious life and who were entirely consecrated to Jesus Christ.

He told them:

“The Lord was not going back on his gentleness when He preached abnegation and total renunciation; neither was St. Paul ceasing to be good, when he exhorted his faithful to crucify the flesh and die to themselves.”

He had found the nuns cold towards the Holy Eucharist and Our Lady. Soon he was able to lead them towards greater love and esteem for the Blessed Sacrament and their Communions were more frequent. He also helped them towards a more childlike and trustful love for Our Lady.

His success was marked by the abbess, Dame Ethel Manock, and she asked him to give her some guidelines on the duties and government of a superior. He wrote for her a little treatise which is considered as masterpiece of its kind.

Two years passed in this way after the suppression of the Society of Jesus. Then on the 15th September, 1775, the fiscal councillors of her Majesty the Empress Maria Teresa forbade Father de Cloriviere to continue his ministry. The reason given was that, in view of an edict promulgated in 1752, it was not permitted:

‘to establish, elect or choose any secular or religious priest from the kingdom of France to direct monasteries of nuns in the dominions of her Majesty.’

They told him also that he was to leave the convent of the English Benedictines within twenty-four hours and never set foot in it again. They added:

“we are also charged to tell you that you are not allowed to take on any ministry, either temporal or spiritual, other than to say Mass.”

Father de Cloriviere decided to return to France. His departure was deeply regretted by the entire community. The abbess testified that she had never seen, and doubtless would never see again, the same prudence and discretion as had been shown by 'Father Rivers' (the anglicised version of his name) in his dealings with the community.

Father de Cloriviere was forty years old. A chapter in his life had just been completed. He had gone through his formation and had reached maturity. The Society of Jesus had ceased to exist legally but he remained a Jesuit at heart, in spirit and in behaviour. A more exciting life was about to begin. God was leading him, without his being aware of it, to the fulfilment of the great things He had promised.

One recorded description goes:

“Father de Cloriviere was tall, with a firm and assured step. His features were strong and grave. He had a high forehead, a pale thin face; his expression was calm. His whole exterior betrayed mortification and recollection. When he spoke in public his voice was strong and penetrating. The entire appearance of this servant of God showed natural qualities which made him loved and respected. He had a cultured mind and was very likeable, though his exterior reserve and seriousness did inspire a kind of fear of him. He was embarrassed by his stammer, though he never let this be seen, and he always spoke when it was his duty to do so.”

To this portrait, Rene Bazin added:

“He was one of those rare persons of whom one says on first catching his eye, ‘whatever I say, I shall not surprise him; whatever I ask, he will not reply without considering the matter carefully. This is someone

who has rejected all ambition. I am in the presence of a conscience, a strong place where God dwells....where in a moment the door will open for me for he is smiling a little....a friend, possibly slow to gain... a friend who would be precious’.” (Preface to ‘Pierre de Cloriviere, Contemporain et Juge de la Revolution’.)

Chapter Two

FATHER DE CLORIVIERE RETURNS TO FRANCE AFTER THE SUPPRESSION OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

Father de Cloriviere was ready for any test. He was to show an astonishing facility in adapting himself to a great variety of circumstances. Living only for God and in God, dead to all self-seeking, he was a chosen instrument in the hands of God, who accomplished great things through him. During the forty-five years which elapsed between his return to France and his death on the 9th January, 1820, he was successively a parish priest, spiritual director, rector of a college, chaplain to nuns, founder of two religious congregations, a prisoner of the state and finally the restorer of the Society of Jesus in France.

At first, from November, 1775, he was at the Benedictine convent at Jarcy, living a hidden and recollected life and fulfilling the same functions as at Brussels.

But in September, 1776, we find him in Paris working zealously for the Carmelites of Saint Denis whose prioress was Mother Therese de Saint Augustine – Madame Louise of France – daughter of Louis XV. He also had contact with the Hermits of Mont Valerian whose superior was the Abbe Grisel, the priest who had been his spiritual director when he was first thinking of his vocation. Strictly speaking these hermits were not religious, but they led a kind of conventual life in which each had his own cell. They followed a rule of

penance and work and above all they gave themselves up to prayer. They asked for counsel on this subject from Father de Cloriviere and he wrote for them, almost straight away, a little treatise, 'Paths of Prayer', in which he taught and described what he himself had experienced.

Without getting involved in politics he watched attentively the course of events and the spreading of ideas and customs which impinged on the Kingdom of God here below. With anguish of soul he watched the increasing audacity of the philosophers, no longer held in check by the Jesuits. They openly spread rationalism and impiety, battered holes in the Church's authority and in that of the king. They preached a new gospel of so-called liberty, equality and fraternity. Father de Cloriviere deplored the false instruction given in the name of education. Some of the clergy, even those in country districts, allowed themselves to be won over by new ideas and worldly standards. An icy wind was blowing, a wind of independence and innovation, the forerunner of revolution.

To ward off these dangers Father de Cloriviere wrote a fictitious biography, a sort of novel, entitled:

“The life of M. Sernin, parish priest of a village in the diocese of T...”

Curious to relate, he was soon to have an opportunity of putting into practice what he was trying to get across in the book. The parish of Parame, near Saint Malo, became vacant and Mgr. des Laurents, bishop of the diocese, offered it to Father de Cloriviere. He accepted it and was installed as parish priest on the 4th December, 1779.

PARISH PRIEST AT PARAME

He had set such a high ideal for priests that he now felt the weight of his responsibilities, but he was an obedient man

and saw the will of God in the wishes of his bishop. He wrote at that time:

“If through our fault, heresy has increased; if errors and abuses contrary to faith have slipped in amongst us; if the sacraments are less frequented, the word of God heard more rarely or tampered with, then at God’s judgement seat we shall be held responsible.”

Father de Cloriviere held the view that preaching was one of the first obligations of a priest because it is the primary method of spreading the gospel. St. Paul had said ‘faith comes through hearing’ and the new parish priest was convinced that it was so.

But in his preaching he found himself face to face with a terrible obstacle, his stammering. It rendered his delivery of his sermons embarrassing and even ridiculous, as when he wanted to say the word ‘penance’ – but heard instead the word ‘pittance’ coming from his lips. However he went up into the pulpit with courage and humility, and especially with trust in God. Very soon his congregation paid no attention to his hesitation of speech because they were captivated by his clear and solid instructions and by the holiness of his life.

His sermons were well prepared. They were carefully set out, meditated upon in prayer and delivered with warmth and conviction. Later on in his life he shared his method with his nephew, Joseph, who had been ordained priest:

“I commend you for composing your own sermons and not searching in books for a bit here and a bit there. Sermons such as these do not hang well together and are given without conviction. Do not go after eloquence, but deliver them with a touching and instructive simplicity. Humbly implore God’s light

and then choose a subject suitable for your hearers. You may find it in the gospel for the day. Spend some time before the Lord meditating and praying about it. What you are conveying is of more importance than choice of words. Do not try to learn by heart and word for word what you have written, but concentrate on the sense and on the principal ideas. In this way you will have enough freedom of spirit to allow you to introduce into your sermon any further reflections which may come to your mind suddenly and without disturbing the order of what you are saying. Very often it will be these unpremeditated remarks which will strike your hearers most.”

Alarmed by the damage which neglect of religion was causing in the highest ranks of society, Father de Cloriviere tried to preserve the flock entrusted to him from being led astray by false philosophies.

“I am speaking of those proud men who are disdainful of others and call themselves the intelligentsia. Their hearts are so perverted and alienated from God that they work to destroy Christianity and substitute the cult of idols. All, or nearly all of them, profess faith in a new divinity whom they call Nature. This is not the God of nature but the assemblage of all created beings. Their books speak only of Nature; it is to Nature that their prayers are addressed...”

Foreseeing the worst consequences of this terrible aberration, he exclaimed in words which were well-nigh prophetic:

“If ever, as a just punishment for our lukewarmness, God should permit that this philosophy should get the upper hand, that the faith of Jesus Christ should be outlawed then you will see the

darkness of paganism covering the earth anew, temples of God destroyed or turned into temples of idols, vice reigning openly and the blood of the faithful flowing anew around the altars...”

The inhabitants of Parame were given to much dancing, especially at Carnival time. To combat this Father de Cloriviere instituted the Forty Hours Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in his parish.

He had a special affection for the poor. He himself lived as a poor person and his purse was always open for the needy.

During the holiday season many English and American visitors came to stay at Saint Malo and the neighbouring towns along the coast. Many of them were Protestants. His knowledge of English enabled him to make contact with them, to enter into conversation about religion, and he guided several into the true faith.

Although giving the greatest attention to the care of his parish Father de Cloriviere also found time to take part in the famous Breton Missions which had proved very successful and had borne much fruit. They had been started by the saintly Father Maunoir and now, in 1785, they were organised by the Abbe Cormaux, the parish priest at Plaintel.

He wrote to this Brother, Michel Alain de Limoelan, as follows:

“I had never seen a Mission before. I was delighted with the one at Plenee. I already held the Abbe Cormaux in high esteem and loved him dearly. Having seen him at work during a mission made me realise that he is endowed with rare gifts. He speaks like a man inspired by the Holy Spirit and he has the gift of moving and gaining hearts for God..”

Providence brought Father de Cloriviere and the Abbe Cormaux closer together. In fact the Abbe was later to become one of his first disciples in the 'Society of the Fathers of the Sacred Heart'.

To his apostolate of the pulpit the parish priest of Parame now added that of writer. He wrote a life of the Venerable Grignon de Montfort and Exercises of Devotion to Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, dedicated to Madame Louise of France who had a great devotion to this young Saint.

If his charity and simple moving eloquence resembled that of St. Francis de Sales it would seem that his continual prayer and austerity of life presaged that of the Cure of Ars.

He had a housekeeper who was devoted but somewhat outspoken. Every day she served the same dish of cod(it is true it was during Lent) which he learned to survive. One day he was expecting a guest to dine with him and he asked her to change the menu and to add more to it. She was astonished at this, but he said gently:

“This dish is very good for me, but not for a gentleman unaccustomed to such simple food!”

He could have said: “such disagreeable...”

All his life Father de Cloriviere enjoyed the delicacy of a cup of coffee after his mid-day meal. But one day, when he could not touch the heart of a hardened sinner, he looked around for a sacrifice to offer to the Lord to gain this soul. The idea came to him suddenly of vowing never to taste a drop of coffee again. His offering was accepted because almost immediately the recalcitrant parishioner yielded to grace. He kept his promise faithfully to the end of his life.

Parame was fortunate, indeed, to have as rector a man of such virtue, such wisdom and such goodness.

Chapter Three

FATHER DE CLORIVIERE

DIRECTOR OF THE DIOCESAN COLLEGE AT DINAN

Father de Cloriviere had been in Parame for seven years when his bishop, Mgr. des Laurents, died suddenly on 15th October, 1785. His successor Mgr. Cortois de Pressigny held Father de Cloriviere in high esteem and had the same confidence in him as his predecessor.

The superior of the diocesan seminary had just died and the new bishop was hard put to find a replacement. He called on Father de Cloriviere to undertake the direction of the college. He said later:

“Three reasons influence my choice. Firstly, Father de Cloriviere is a former Jesuit and knows from experience the teaching methods of the Society. Secondly, he is himself a literary person and, thirdly, he has some fortune and thus could aid a foundation that has only recently been established and which is poorly endowed.”

Father de Cloriviere accepted this new appointment with simplicity. He was accustomed to see the providence of God in the will of superiors. He quickly showed himself to be equal to his new responsibilities.

He was to pass four years at the college at Dinan and this period was to be a decisive time in his life. It was at Dinan that he was to meet the woman whom God had destined as his helper in the accomplishment of the great things which he had foreseen in prayer.

Close to Dinan was a mineral spring with therapeutic properties. A Breton woman from Rennes was sent there by her doctor. Her name was Mlle. Marie Adelaide de Cice. The year was 1787.

She boarded with the Ursulines of Saint Charles, and Father de Cloriviere acted as chaplain to these sisters. Naturally she went to him for confession. From the very beginning she confided in him because of his closeness to God. For his part Father de Cloriviere quickly recognised in Marie Adelaide a person who was generous and open to grace, one who could give her life to God in the service of His Church.

Marie Adelaide de Cice was the twelfth child of Monsieur Jerome-Vincent Champion de Cice, Captain of Dragoons in the Breton Regiment, and of Mme. Marie Rose Francoise de Varennes. Her mother was of delicate health and at the time of this last pregnancy she was already getting on in years and worried about her approaching confinement. A priest - Father de Kersaingilly – consoled her. He said:

“Do not worry, Madame, this child will be a comfort to you one day.”

Events were to prove this remark to be very true indeed.

In her early childhood she knew more sadness than joy. She was only two when her father died. Her mother became sad and melancholy in her widowhood and was inclined to neglect the child. This painful experience could have embittered the little girl's heart and turned her in on herself. Instead this austere solitude helped to strengthen her character, attracted her to

prayer and gave her a real compassion for the poor. She was often heard to say:

“Let us love Jesus Christ and the poor.”

She made her First Communion when she was ten years old in the chapel of the Visitation nuns at Rennes. When she was fifteen she wrote out a Rule of Life, showing that she already practised solid virtues and that she had certain strength of character:

“I propose to combat my pride first of all because that is what I am most inclined towards. I will mortify self-love and will try to destroy it as well as an attraction for worldly things. I pray that God will root these out of my heart. Before or after Mass I will make a quarter of an hour’s meditation. When I am back in my room I will set myself to study. For my education I will read the books recommended to me, and I will write to improve my handwriting and my style. In what regards my education in general I will follow my mother’s wishes.”

When she was twenty the world began to smile on her, on her youth, her position, her keen, well-informed mind. She herself began to smile on the world and she let herself be influenced by its attractions.

One of her friends had the charity and the courage to warn her of the dangers which could engulf her.

“But I keep the commandments”

She replied with some vigour. However she later reflected on the warning, recognised the dangers and promised God that she would belong to Him alone. From then on she thought of the religious life and even tried her vocation with the Visitation nuns at Rennes. But it became apparent that

her vocation did not lie there because she felt the need to go out to help the poor of the neighbourhood and to spend herself in serving them.

About this time she had the good fortune to meet the Abbe Boursoul. He was a well-known priest of the diocese of Rennes, highly thought of for his apostolic zeal, his eloquence, his trustworthy doctrine and his discernment in spiritual direction. Under his direction she learned how to meditate, how to battle against her faults, devote herself to her neighbour, communicate daily and grow in the love of Our Lord. She responded to this teaching with her usual generosity, and took as motto:

“Everything to please God; nothing to please myself.”

The Abbe Boursoul traced out a way of life for her in a few well-nigh prophetic words:

“spouse of Jesus Christ: mother of the poor.”

He died in 1775, collapsing in the pulpit as he was preaching on the joys of heaven. His death was a terrible blow to Marie Adelaide who found herself deprived of a spiritual guide. She remained faithful to his advice however and continued to devote all her energies to caring for her mother and the aged poor of her neighbourhood. She was thirty when her mother died, and from then on she never ceased imploring God to send her another spiritual director of the quality of the Abbe Boursoul. In the meantime she sought help from Father de la Croix, parish priest of Rennes.

She continued to give herself to works of charity without counting the cost. The result was that her health was affected.

Her brother, the bishop of Auxerre, who exercised some influence over her, was disturbed and sent her to rest and

take the waters at Dinan. It was here that she found the spiritual guide for whom she had longed and prayed.

With complete confidence in Father de Cloriviere, Marie Adelaide de Cice revealed to him her long standing and deep desire for religious life, whilst admitting that she felt no attraction for any existing Order. She told him about the special graces she received during a retreat made in 1776 when she had clearly seen, in what appeared to be supernatural light, details of a religious life without habit or cloister but with the three canonical vows and the possibility of exercising apostolic zeal and charity by all kinds of good works, both spiritual and temporal.

Father de Cloriviere listened kindly and with interest to this unusual private confidence. He was too wise to show immediate approval of such a project but neither did he disapprove. He counselled his penitent to pray much and to wait patiently for the testing of time and the coming of God's hour.

Meanwhile Marie Adelaide was harbouring the idea of leaving Rennes, where she had too many relatives, and of retiring to Saint Servan. She wanted to stay with the Daughters of the Cross in order both to find solitude and recollection and to make a kind of apprenticeship in religious life under the authority of the Mother Superior while not intending to join that Congregation. Father de la Croix had at first approved of this trial, but he subsequently admonished her for being imprudent and presumptuous. Father de Cloriviere, on the other hand, did not take such a negative approach yet he said he would withdraw and leave the decision to Father de la Croix. The result was that Marie Adelaide went through a period of painful suffering, the more so as her friends in Rennes were openly condemning her plan. They criticised her manner of life which was too austere for

their taste. They did not like her hair style which, they said, was too simple.

However, in the end, Father de la Croix withdrew in favour of Father de Cloriviere who, after much prayer and reflection, clearly approved of a trial of religious life with the Daughters of the Cross at Saint-Servan. He highly esteemed the superior there – Mother Marie of Jesus – he had no hesitation in putting his penitent under her care.

Father de Cloriviere wrote on the 8th September, 1778, to Marie Adelaide, now at Saint Servan:

“Mademoiselle, may Our Lord enlighten and sustain you in the new way of life which he has opened out for you. Do not look back any more. What good does it do to go over disturbing thoughts of the past? They can only serve to discourage you. Always look ahead, as St. Paul tell us to do. Never fear that you will lose anything if you throw yourself into God’s hands. Confidence and abandonment are two virtues which you do not yet know. Ask our Lord for them. Do all the good you can, but always have it sanctioned by obedience. I cannot say anything more: obedience comprises everything.”

Her resolutions re-affirmed by these encouraging words, Marie Adelaide continued her rather special type of novitiate.

Chapter Four

RUMBLINGS OF THE REVOLUTION

(1789-1790)

On the 24th February, 1789, the States General met in a highly charged atmosphere. The new ideas of philosophers and encyclopaedists were corroding Catholic doctrine and royal authority. The clergy made what appeared to be a generous concession in accepting a fusion with the Third Estate to form one single deliberative Assembly. The single Assembly allowed itself to be dominated and manipulated by extremists who were avid for novelties. This finally led to the schismatic declaration promulgated under the title of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. However some priests, such as the Abbe Cormaux, were more large-hearted than clear – minded. At first they believed in the good intentions of the Constitution. But they were quickly disillusioned and eventually became its victims. The Abbe Cormaux was guillotined at Paris on the 9th June, 1794.

As for Father de Cloriviere, he was not deceived. From the first he foresaw the fearful signs of a terrible revolution. In December, 1788, he wrote to Marie Adelaide:

“I can foresee nothing good coming from the way political events are moving in the Third Estate. But I fear still more for religion, taking into account the dispositions of most of its members. Religion is lost if it is left indiscriminately to the general vote of the Assembly and if the clergy do not remain, as they should, the judges of such matters.”

Alas! Events quickly confirmed these predictions. On the 13th February, 1790, the Assembly decreed the suspension of religious vows as challenging the dignity and liberty of the individual. All those living in religious houses were free to leave them and they would be provided with a suitable pension!

A few days after this sacrilegious vote of the 13th February the Assembly decided to demand an oath of loyalty from various civil authorities and, as well, from some ecclesiastics. The oath promised fidelity to the king and to the nation and to uphold the constitution. The constitution, it should be noted, had not yet been drawn up. When eventually it was published religion got a raw deal. Father de Cloriviere saw through this device and detected a trap for those taking the oath. He bluntly refused to take it.

Preaching the Lenten sermons at Dinan he sought to confine himself to spiritual matters, but there are times when political events include injustice and hostility towards religion. Then a priest must speak out and enlighten the faithful.

On the feast of the Annunciation he spoke with great conviction on the nature and value of the religious life, instituted by Jesus Christ, organised by the Church and

answerable only to the Church and to Our Lord. Consequently, he said, it was outside the jurisdiction of the state. He then traced an admirable picture of the many benefits which the great monastic orders brought to France and the whole civilised world.

Many in the congregation were profoundly impressed. But amongst them were some who adhered to the new ideas. They had come to catch the preacher in his words and in order to denounce him to the municipality. So the next day, as he was coming down from the pulpit, he was apprehended and asked to present himself at the town hall. He went at once without even stopping to take off his biretta and surplice. The magistrate was a certain M. Gautier, a priest who had been led astray by the ideas current at that time.

He strongly reproached the preacher for what he had said the previous day in praise of religious vows. Father de Cloriviere heard him through to the end without saying a word. Then with all the best theological arguments he established the orthodoxy of his thesis, and finally asked the magistrate if, as priest and theologian, he could take exception to any point in his sermon.

The Abbe Gautier replied:

“In other circumstances I would not condemn it, but it is not wise for the times in which we are living, and if you persist in talking like this you will make yourself a martyr.”

Father de Cloriviere answered this threat with characteristic fortitude.

“I am not worthy of such a great grace but, if such were to be the Lord’s will, then I would bless him from the depths of my heart.”

“That is sheer fanaticism”

Exclaimed the former Abbe in the language of the day.

Father de Cloriviere replied:

“I accepted that description. In fact I regard it as an honour, and, coming from your mouth, it bears witness to my fidelity in doing my duty. You can carry on fulfilling the new duties which you have taken upon yourself. As for me, I know of no others than those I have undertaken as a minister of Jesus Christ. I hope to fulfil them faithfully and I will never abandon the standard of Jesus Christ.”

Father de Cloriviere became suspect but that did not deter him from preaching and teaching the truths of the gospel in opposition to the revolutionary dogmas. He became a continual butt for ridicule and harassment from the municipality, and he was soon deprived of the direction of the college which was handed over to a lay team, supporters of the ascendant political faction.

Father de Cloriviere asked himself what he should do then and how best he could serve God. His thoughts went back to a dearly loved project of his early religious life, the foreign missions. He had wanted to go to Canada which had become renowned through the martyrdom of Fathers Jogues, de Brebeuf and six other French men. Just then he heard that his friend, John Carroll, of Irish descent, and, like himself, a former Jesuit, had been named Vicar Apostolic Maryland and that he was looking for priests to help him with his mission.

At once he wrote to Bishop Carroll offering himself, begging that he might be accepted. But by the providence of God his letter never reached its destination. Another mission awaited him...in France.

Meanwhile Marie Adelaide was completing her novitiate with the Daughters of the Cross at Saint Servan and wanting to make a total gift of herself to God. She too was being prepared for a great apostolic venture in collaboration with Father de Cloriviere.

Chapter Five

DOUBLE INSPIRATION – DOUBLE FOUNDATION

While dreaming about going to Canada Father de Cloriviere was also nourishing the secret hope of finding a good number of former Jesuits working with Mgr. Carroll in Maryland. He hoped to work with them for the re-establishment of the Society of Jesus which had survived in Russia. To bring about the resurrection of his Society was one of his deepest aspirations.

This thought struck him more forcibly than usual one morning. It was the feast of St. Vincent de Paul, 19th July, 1790. He heard as though interiorly, but very clearly:

“Why not in France? Why not throughout the world?”

It was as though what he had been thinking about was something desirable for the whole of Christendom and that God wished him to take action.

He was also shown “in the twinkling of an eye” the plan of an Institution which would be very useful to the Church and which would contribute to the good of many souls. While the plan was shown him in general its value was so clear that he imagined everybody else would see it the same way or, at least, fall in with his view as soon as it was explained to them. The impression made on him by this inspiration was so strong that he never doubted, from the first instant, that it came from God. He was only:

“astonished that God should cast His eyes on such a vile instrument as myself for an enterprise of such magnitude.”

Full of confidence in the power of God, he offered himself so that God could do with him and through him whatever was His good pleasure. That same day he sought out a priest, the Abbe Engerran, Dean of Studies at Saint Malo, and recounted to him what had happened that morning. The Dean confirmed his own opinion that the inspiration had come from God that it was something very useful to the Church, and further that he himself would help to bring it to fruition. He insisted that Father de Cloriviere should put in writing the things which he had just related.

Encouraged by his advice, Father de Cloriviere at once set to work and drew up an outline plan of this new type of religious Society which, because of the existing persecution, would have no sign to distinguish its members, no special dress; no office in choir, no enclosure. Its essential and fundamental aim would be to safeguard and perpetuate in the midst of the world, yet unknown to and in spite of it, the practice of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience.

The idea was always very clear and never changed in the mind of Father de Cloriviere. But the discovery of the means to be employed for achieving it meant much groping in the dark. At first he thought that the Society which he had envisaged could be an off-shoot of the Society of Jesus, or even the Society of Jesus in another form.... and that he ought to begin this work in America with some of his former brethren. But that was not what providence was wanting.

The detailed plan, drawn up in Latin so that it could be presented to the Holy Father, was finished on the 18th August, just one month after the sudden inspiration of the 19th July. Father de Cloriviere wrote:

“I was in a state of uncertainty as to whether I should present my work to Mgr. de Pressigny. This enterprise appeared to be far beyond my powers. It even crossed my mind that I would be considered an eccentric. But the thought that His Excellency was holding the place of God allayed my fears and I resolved to put all my doubts before him.

“This resolution was scarcely taken when it came into my mind, very forcibly, that I ought to do for women something similar to what I was doing for men. This thought appeared to have all the marks of a true inspiration.

“After imploring light from the Holy Spirit, I started at once to draw up a plan of what I had seen. Immediately I remembered two sentences from the holy gospels which are now at the head of the plan of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary. In these texts I believe I caught sight of the order and spirit of what I had to say:

‘I am not asking you to remove them from the world but to protect them from the evil one.’ (John XVII. 15)

‘I shall not call you servants any more, I call you friends.’ (John XV. 15)”.

In fact these two texts contain the distinctive characteristics of the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary, a life in the world in the midst of its storms and, on the other hand, a life of deep intimacy with Our Lord which would take the place of a religious dress, enclosure and all other helps and exterior safeguards.

There was one curious point - Father de Cloriviere did not at once see any connection between his own inspiration and the confidence given him by Marie Adelaide about a similar or, one could say, identical plan. Marie Adelaide saw it, however, and was singularly happy to see her dream being shared and coming to fulfilment.

Father de Cloriviere hastened to take his two manuscripts to the Bishop, Mgr. de Pressigny. The bishop read them attentively and on the 18th September, 1790, gave his full approval of both the contents and the aims of the documents.

He gave permission for men and women of his diocese, who so desired, to approach Father de Cloriviere whom he empowered to receive them as associates. Almost at once eleven Breton priests and two former Jesuits came forward and offered themselves. These formed the nucleus of the men’s Society. Several women gathered round Marie Adelaide. Her trial of religious life with the Daughters of the Cross had proved conclusive to Father de Cloriviere, and she was happy indeed to have found at last, without any ambiguity, the manner of life which she had desired for so long.

A man of action and determination, Father de Cloriviere wasted no time in going to Paris to see the Apostolic Nuncio. He

wanted to have the Nuncio's approbation and, thus, approbation from Rome. But he was soon to be disappointed because, after a first favourable reception, the Nuncio dissuaded him from petitioning the Holy See without first having obtained the approbation of the French bishops. Above all he dissuaded him from any idea of wanting to resurrect the Society of Jesus, always the object of intense hatred by the Church's enemies.

Again providence intervened and barred the way to Father de Cloriviere in order that he could go another way and eventually understand the true meaning of his mission. For the moment, though, he was disappointed and returned to the old idea of setting out for America. He prayed and reflected, coming at length to the realisation that the founding of the new Society and the re-establishment of the former Society of Jesus were not incompatible projects, that the two Societies could even help each other while remaining separate. The horizon was becoming clearer little by little.

But difficulties were springing up in Brittany for the women's Society which at its beginning had taken the name of 'Society of Mary'.

After a first wave of joy and courage Marie Adelaide was tried by great temptations, especially lack of self-confidence and faintheartedness. The devil, foreseeing the good which she could do, was seeking for ways by which he could fill her with excessive fears at the sight of her own misery and powerlessness. But Father de Cloriviere came to her aid and he sustained her, spurring her on with gentleness and strength. On the 1st October, 1790, he wrote:

“Have courage, think less of your own weakness and more of the strength you will find in God.”

He appealed to her generosity in a letter dated 27th October, 1790:

“May our own personal troubles appear insignificant besides the troubles of the Church. May the sacrifices which our Lord asks of us appear light beside the evils perpetrated against religion. Things go from bad to worse. At all times we must be ready for crosses but especially during these times of vengeance and punishment.”

Henceforth, although interiorly her soul was torn by her fears, Marie Adelaide appeared quite calm outwardly and she showed great zeal and courage in carrying out her tasks.

In Paris Father de Cloriviere stayed at the seminary of the Missions Etrangeres. He won the confidence of the Superior, Father Martin Hody. He introduced several interested priests to him, especially the Vicars General of Nevers and of Paris. The latter, M. Gabriel Despres, was to meet his death gloriously during the September massacres at the Carmelite Church. Four others came along and so, with the Breton priests already mentioned, Father de Cloriviere had nine companions, reminding him of St. Ignatius who also had nine companions from among the students of Paris.

The Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary was also growing little by little in Brittany and there had been some recruits in the capital. As yet they numbered not more than five but there was good promise of more to come.

Father de Cloriviere now judged that the moment had come to make a beginning with the two Societies. With the five recruits from Paris he went to Montmartre on the 2nd February, 1791, and celebrated Mass in the chapel of St. Ignatius. After Mass each one pronounced the Formula of Association but in a low voice, and separately, so as to avoid all publicity and indiscretion:

“We the undersigned....having only in view the glory of God, our own perfection and that of our

neighbour.... under the protection of the most holy Virgin Mary and all the saints... in particular St. Ignatius, whom we choose for Father and Patron form together a religious union and a sacred pact... proposing to ourselves to walk each day more closely in the footsteps of our crucified Lord Jesus Christ. In poverty and humility, we will aim at increasing in ourselves, - and it is God's will, throughout the world – the dignity of the Christian and of the priest. It is understood that this agreement depends on the approbation of the Holy See which one day we hope to obtain.”

There was as yet no word of a religious order but of a pious association. After a period of thanksgiving the associates embraced each other joyfully.

That same day in an unknown place in Paris members of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary also made their first commitment. Marie Adelaide was absent: she was detained in Brittany, but with all her heart, though from afar, she united herself to the events taking place in Paris. She had asked Father de Cloriviere to sign the Act of Consecration on her behalf. He put her name at the head of all the others because she was, he said:

“the first stone in this foundation”.

The associates naturally chose as their head and superior, the one who had assembled them together. Father de Cloriviere believed that he could not decline this office. He undertook it on the conditions that he would withdraw as soon as the bishops and the Sovereign Pontiff would decide on the destiny of the association and that he would remain superior only for as long as God's providence retained him in France and prevented him from going to America. In fact, until this point of time, Father de Cloriviere had been steadily thinking of joining Mgr. Carroll in Maryland. Marie Adelaide was to have accompanied him, as

well as several priests whom M. Emery, superior at Saint Sulpice, had enlisted to join the expedition. But this was not to be. The state of things in France called for his zeal on the home mission instead.

France was being shaken by the revolutionaries. From among the clergy who had taken the required oath of allegiance to the constitution, the first constitutional bishop was consecrated on 25th February, 1791. From then on bishops were to be appointed by the electoral assembly, invested and consecrated by the metropolitan and take the oath of fidelity to the king, the law and the constitution. They were not to seek any confirmation by the Pope. This denied to the Holy See any effective power over the Church in France.

In many parishes, priests who remained faithful to Rome were evicted and replaced by constitutional ones. There was danger of schism. In the midst of this confusion a large number of bishops left their dioceses and fled abroad.

“Were the faithful to be left defenceless, abandoned to schism, heresy and deprived of all religious help?.... Was it really the moment to go and evangelise a foreign country, whilst the eldest daughter of the Church was in danger of being lost?”

Such thoughts as these were agitating the mind of Father de Cloriviere and leaving him in doubt. In a spirit of faith, he went once more to confide his uncertainty to his bishop, Mgr. de Pressigny, who, after hearing him out, cut through his indecision saying:

“Stay in France.”

He hastened to pass on this news to Marie Adelaide, but left her free to do whatever she felt to be most useful for the service of God:

“Over there you will be able to do a great deal of good, and you will do it with less danger and less opposition. Here you will also do good, perhaps greater good, and you will certainly have more to suffer and overcome. With that in mind make your decision. I pray to the Father of Light to give you abundantly all you need.”

Marie Adelaide was too noble and too generous not to understand and share Father de Cloriviere’s decision. She too gave up the idea of going to America and, whilst her bishop-brothers and her sister left the country to seek safety abroad, she resolved to stay in France: “in order to have more to suffer and overcome” in Our Lord’s service.

After their consecration on the 2nd February the first Daughters of the Heart of Mary withdrew to the house of the Miramiones – the Daughters of St. Genevieve. Good candidates were coming along and someone was needed to be at the head of the group and give it direction. It seemed to be a clear indication that Marie Adelaide should go to Paris.

“The problems arise there; the remedy must also come from there.”

wrote Father de Cloriviere in a letter dated 30th April, 1791.

Marie Adelaide accepted courageously, but not without pain, the rupture with her beloved Brittany, in particular Saint Servan where she had received so many graces. But her arrival in Paris was only the beginning of a project which Father de Cloriviere had in mind. He wished Marie Adelaide to be the superior general of the rising society. Knowing her humility and sensitiveness, he foresaw her reaction but he knew he could count on her generosity.

He reflected and he prayed, and then he wrote to her on 30th April, 1791, a letter which was almost prophetic:

“Mademoiselle, and very dear daughter in Jesus Christ,

“The time has come to do something great for Our Lord. The immensity of the evils which overwhelm religion, the menaces which still threaten, and the worse things to come demand that we come to the rescue promptly. It is certainly the best way of ensuring our own salvation.... and we could not do anything more pleasing to our Divine Master. I must tell you that this is what he desires, this is what he expects from the love you bear him. There is reason to think that this is why you have received so many graces.

“Now, if through any lack of courage and trust we refuse to co-operate with his designs, it would be blameworthy infidelity which could diminish the ardour of his love for us. I am convinced of this as far as I myself am concerned.”

“As for you, Mademoiselle, what do you think of yourself? Can you doubt that God has granted you great graces? That Our Lord has forewarned you since childhood? Has he not for a long time inspired you with desire for perfection?

“Although he has never led you to consecrate yourself to him in the cloister, he has shown you the way to consecrate yourself in the midst of the world.

“Have a generous heart. Give full scope to your desires. Long to do everything, to suffer everything, in order to gain souls for Jesus Christ. Forget yourself. Think only of him whose mighty arm will hold you up if only you keep your gaze fixed on him instead of on yourself.

“Have you yet discerned who is the one whom I believe God has chosen to give a great number of daughters to his Holy Mother? It is someone who must have a great desire for her own perfection as well as great zeal for others... someone who is indifferent to this world’s goods and free from worldly vanities someone who, while never having been a religious, yet understands well the obligations of the religious life.

“As to natural qualities she must have prudence but not worldly wisdom.... she should have an engaging manner and know how to adapt herself to different characters in order to gain all to Jesus Christ. She must not be afraid of suffering. She should have a depth of spirituality as well as some experience of the ordinary things of life.

“Now I find all these things in someone who was led to me by the Lord many years ago and whose perfection I ardently desire.

“This is the person who, I believe, is the instrument chosen by God to carry out his designs. I am not telling her that she has all the qualities necessary for such a task, but I am able to assure her that if her goodwill never fails her, then God will supply abundantly for all the rest. The person about whom I am speaking is still far too sensitive. She does not yet give herself up entirely, in faith, and thus she easily falls into perplexities which the devil is always stirring up in order to harm her.

“But the Lord has given her a docile heart...and this virtue sustained by grace which is a reward of her fidelity, will disperse the obstacles which hinder her progress.

“However in a matter such as this I do not wish to command anything. Let the person concerned sound her own depths. I do not doubt that the Holy Spirit, who communicates with the humble, will let her see what he expects of her. If this person, as I believe she does, wishes to abandon herself to his action, and has no other desire than that of fulfilling his holy will, I have no doubt that he will give her the necessary dispositions to enable her to carry out his plans.

“I am writing from the country so that you may have sufficient leisure to reflect on it and, because when I return to La Croix tomorrow, I may not have enough time to explain fully to you.”

So it was that Father de Cloriviere did not impose anything but he pointed out the way very clearly. At the foot of her crucifix, Marie Adelaide silenced her repugnance and her fears and bowed her head beneath the weight of the burden.

Faced with having to exercise such authority, and fearful of herself, she felt a need for greater humility and more complete dependence on the father of her soul. It was then that she asked for and obtained something which she had previously asked for in vain on several occasions, to be allowed to make a vow of obedience to Father de Cloriviere.....according to the following formula:

“All powerful and eternal God, I, Marie Adelaide Champion de Cice, prostrate in your presence, although most unworthy but confiding in your goodness and mercy, in presence of the glorious Virgin Mary and all the heavenly court, make to your divine majesty, a vow of obedience to Father de Cloriviere, under the authority of all legitimate superiors. I ask your infinite goodness, through the precious blood of Jesus Christ, that it may please you to accept this holocaust ... You have

given me grace to desire and to make this offering.
Grant me also the grace to continue to live it for
the rest of my life.

6th June, 1791.”

A few days later Father de Cloriviere wrote her from Limoelan where he had gone to stay:

“Because it had pleased Our Lord to put me in charge of your soul in a special way, and because you have been inspired to put yourself under my direction I must advise you as frequently as possible as to what I believe to be helpful in your progress towards perfection. Lose sight of yourself and fix your eyes on him on whom you depend for your strength and salvation.”

Meanwhile Marie Adelaide was busily putting her own affairs and those of the Society in order before her departure for the capital. She committed the care of her little Breton community to Mlle Amable Chenu of Parame and put them under the direction of the Abbe Engerran with help from Mother Marie of Jesus – her former novice mistress at Saint Servan

Father de Cloriviere was preparing, too, for her arrival in Paris. He advised her not to stay in a convent but rather to rent an apartment which would allow her the necessary freedom to come and go. On the 20th August, 1791, he wrote to her:

“There is not much time now left for you in Brittany. The Archbishop of Paris, Mgr. de Juigne, has replied to his Vicar General, telling him that he approves of our project and judges it to be very suitable for procuring God’s glory. This is all I could wish, in order to encourage you to come into this part of the country where you are so long awaited.

You will have our good friend, the abbe Cormaux, as travelling companion.”

On the 15th October, feast of St. Teresa, he wrote:

“I received your letter yesterday evening and now I am replying on the day when you should arrive in Rennes under the protection of a great Saint who herself undertook long and painful journeys for the glory of her divine spouse. Travel with her – and travel as she did; you do well to learn in her school; be full of trust in God; it is he who will put on your lips those persuasive words which will draw to himself, those for whom he has special plans. Be docile to the holy inspirations which he gives you. There are many signs that he has indeed chosen you for his work.”

Father de Cloriviere added the following advice because, despite her firm resolution to go ahead, Marie Adelaide experienced painful alternations of confidence and despondency:

“Do not ask for anything more and do not desire to have complete certitude about it nor to be freed from all doubt. The Lord does not ordinarily give this. This kind of obscurity is very good for us and is an excellent way in which we can practice trust abandonment and love.”

Towards the middle of October, 1791, the Abbe Cormaux, one of the first disciples of Father de Cloriviere and a future martyr, was able to join Marie Adelaide at Rennes and travel with her to Paris. He carried the Blessed Sacrament with him on this long journey and together they worshipped and thanked God for the Eucharistic Presence.

Chapter Six

THE REIGN OF TERROR

(1792 – 1804)

Father de Cloriviere had arranged a lodging for Marie Adelaide at No. 8, rue des Postes. Meanwhile, he himself was in hiding on the third floor of a house in the Faubourg Saint Victor. From then onwards they were both suspect, Father de Cloriviere as a priest who had refused to take the oath and Marie Adelaide as an aristocrat and a sister of émigrés. For twelve years they both lived unsettled lives filled with dangers and demanding great heroism, resembling very closely the lives of the first Christians in the catacombs during the Roman persecutions.

Father de Cloriviere was barely installed in the Faubourg Saint Victor with a Brother of the Christian Schools who was devoted to him when he had a visit from the police. He had just left his room. They asked whether Citizen de Cloriviere was at home.

The priest coolly replied:

“No, he has just gone out. But, if you wish to wait for him, I can open the door of his apartment for you because I hold a key.”

They were satisfied with this and went off. Father de Cloriviere knew that they would certainly return and so he decided to leave Paris for a while. He went to stay with a relative at Villers sous Saint Leu where he spent his days in prayer and where he wrote:

“Some thoughts on the progress, the growth or decline of the light of Reason. A commentary on the 18th century – a century of intellectual and moral decline.”

However he was in a hurry to get back to Paris where Marie Adelaide had prepared a hiding place for him at No. 11. rue Cassette. This house had a sort of narrow corridor between two walls. It was very well-hidden and

designed to evade a most rigorous search. It was in this corridor that Father de Cloriviere could be said to have set up his headquarters.

Once he was settled in such cramped accommodation his first care was to erect an altar and tabernacle so that he could celebrate Mass and reserve the Blessed Sacrament. There also he was able to continue his medications and his writings and to fashion more precisely the Rules of the two Societies. He never went out without a good reason. He wrote later:

“When I was obliged to leave my hide-out to the rue Cassette, in order to bring Holy Communion to the sick, I began by prostrating myself before the altar at the end of my narrow cell. Then I put the tiny wooden statue of Our Lady into a secret pocket. I placed Our Lord beside his holy Mother and said: ‘It is your job, my good Mother, to look after your Divine Son because I can do nothing, as you well know, to protect my precious treasure.’ Then I said to the angels: ‘Now it is your duty to go before your Lord and your Queen, as you did during the flight into Egypt.’ I then faced the dangers outside without fear even along the main roads and thoroughfares.”

This heroic and filial trust was never frustrated.

Marie Adelaide was also suspected by the establishment of the day especially because she was known to be the sister émigrés. Her unshakeable trust in God, inspired and upheld by Father de Cloriviere, and her reputation as a woman of heroic charity protected her from the arm of the law for quite a long time. She was able to devote herself secretly to the welfare of her communities in Paris as well as of those in Brittany, whose members numbered two hundred and fifty nine by then.

Father de Cloriviere, always sparing with praise, wrote to her at that time:

“The great trouble you take, my dear daughter, shows that you are indeed the true mother of the Society. With all my heart I bless God and his holy Mother for having given me such an excellent co-worker in honouring their Sacred Hearts.”

Marie Adelaide made her religious vows on the 15th August, 1792.

However No.11, rue Cassette, was beginning to attract the attention of the police because of constant comings and goings. A policeman was sent to visit the house and Marie Adelaide was arrested on the 25th August, 1793. She was detained on remand for three weeks. An investigation of her belongings revealed nothing. Her letters were scrutinised but they gave no evidence of her being in touch with exiles or with enemies of the Republic. She was released but was put under the surveillance of the police of the XIth district.

The Abbe Cormaux was guillotined in Paris on the 9th June, 1794. Madame des Bassablons, a Daughter of the Heart of Mary, followed him to martyrdom a few days later. Father de Cloriviere, in a letter to Marie Adelaide de Cice, wrote:

“The two societies took possession of heaven, even before becoming fully established on earth.”

From his hiding place in the rue Cassette Father de Cloriviere followed news of the revolution with an anguished heart. The ashes of Voltaire, arch-enemy of Jesus Christ, were taken to the Pantheon. He heard of the tribute paid to the blood-thirsty Marat whose praises were sung in these words:

“Jesus Christ came to establish religion. Marat has destroyed this fanaticism.”

He shed tears over sinful France, as once our Lord had shed tears over faithless Jerusalem. He was dismayed to see his country repudiating her glorious history of faith and throwing herself headlong into a fury of shameful excesses and impiety. His judgement of each event as it occurred was made clear sighted vision. This revolution had long been brewing, the result of the licentious spirit and dissolute morals of the day. Now Satan had seized upon the situation under cover of so-called liberty, equality and fraternity. While the rights of man were proclaimed the duties of man towards God were neglected. Father de Cloriviere saw clearly the way ahead because he predicted:

“Present happenings forecast that this revolution will spread throughout the country”

In a Brief dated 10th March, 1791, Pius VI condemned the Declaration of the Rights of Man but this Brief had no effect France needed time to learn again her duties to God.

APPROBATION OF THE TWO SOCIETIES BY POPE PIUS VII (1801)

In spite of dark and difficult days, the two Societies were increasing in numbers and gaining in strength. Father de Cloriviere had, in 1792, drawn up a new Plan for them which he had printed and which defined more precisely their way of religious life and its organisation.

After obtaining the approbation of the French bishops, then in exile in Germany and England, he was able to send two of his priests to Rome. They were to ask for the approbation of Pius VII. This was given to them on the 19th January, 1801.

“In particular His Holiness declared that he approved the form of life described in the Memorial to the bishops but that this was not the time to give public approbation, that he would willingly give such an approbation in more peaceful times, that His Holiness gave authorisation for all those who so desired to follow this form of life.”

This verbal approbation was of great importance and was to have far reaching consequences. A new form of religious life was coming to birth in the Church. Innovations in what was regarded until then as essential to religious life were approved and ratified by the Vicar of Christ. Announcing this good news to his two families, Father de Cloriviere told them that this approbation,

“sanctions us religious societies, without a common house, without distinguishing dress or other observances of the cloistered life. It sanctions the names we bear of Society of the Heart of Jesus and Society of the Heart of Mary, the ends which we set before ourselves, the means which we propose to take in order to attain them, our rules, the manner in which we practise the vows, and the other ways in which we differ from existing religious orders.”

The two Societies could now express their joy and, after the uncertainties, set-backs and storms through which they had come, could now hope for better and more peaceful days. But God’s work progresses along the way of the cross and a few months later we find Father de Cloriviere writing to Mme. de Goesbriand, a Daughter of the Heart of Mary, in a letter dated 6th August, 1802.

“Since we have had the assurance that the Holy Father approved of our way of life it is unbelievable to what lengths hell has gone to destroy us.”

Persecution caught up with Father de Cloriviere and Marie Adelaide...

“In cruce salus et vita”

“(In the cross there is healing and life).”

Chapter seven

THE PLOT OF THE INFERNAL MACHINE

(1801)

ON 18th Brumaire (9th November, 1799), the Consulate replaced the Directorate. The young General Bonaparte, acclaimed by all for his brilliant victories in Egypt and Italy, had become First Consul. He had every sign of being a leader capable of fulfilling a role of prime importance as the head of the government. This prospect aroused fears among his opponents, the Jacobins whose violence Bonaparte had condemned and the Royalists who were fighting in Vendee. Their opposition led some of them to join together to hatch up an odious plot to do away with the First Consul.

On 3rd Nivose (24th December, 1800), Bonaparte was going from the Carrousel to the Opera. He was in the narrow rue Saint Nicasia when an 'infernal machine' exploded, rocking the neighbourhood, killing and injuring several people, but leaving the First Consul unharmed.

The people of Paris, eager for peace, were revolted by this criminal attempt. So was the rest of the country. Reprisals were severe and a large number of Jacobins and Chouans were executed or deported.

Search was made for all implicated in the plot. As a result of unusual and unfortunate circumstances Marie Adelaide de Cice was suspected of being one of these.

A few days after the assassination attempt a man called Carbon came to No. 11, rue Cassette, on the recommendation of Father de Cloriviere. He posed as an émigré who had returned to France before having his name struck off the list of those outlawed. He said he was at the point of getting permission to stay, and whilst awaiting this he needed a shelter where he would not be recognised. He asked for lodging for a few days.

Marie Adelaide was not alarmed, trusting in the one who had introduced Carbon. She was always disposed to help unfortunate people but at that time there was no room for the

self-styled émigré in her house. So she asked one of her friends, Mme. de Gouyon de Beaufort, to take him to Madame Duquesne in the rue Notre Dame des Champs where he would be housed and looked after by some nuns, the 'Dames de Saint Michel.'

But Carbon was soon discovered by the police. He had been one of the accomplices in the gunpowder plot. The unhappy man thought he might save his own life by betraying the name of the person who had found him his hiding place.

On the 30th Nivose Marie Adelaide was charged, as were her two companions. She was arrested and committed to prison at Saint Pelagie. She was to remain there for three months whilst the case against her was being drawn up and brought to the Assize. She was in danger of being beheaded.

ARREST AND TRIAL OF MARIE ADELAIDE DE CICE

At Saint Pelagie she might well have been disconcerted and bewildered when she found herself among prostitutes and criminals. But she had a special gift of getting on with others and of making contacts, a winning manner which Father de Cloriviere had often recognised and noted. Her heart was filled with compassion for these women. She knew how to talk with them and how to get them to talk with her. She showed a genuine interest in their sufferings and misery. She was ingenious in helping them towards a spirit of repentance, in consoling them as well as in counselling and encouraging them. She did what she could to help with a charming simplicity, sharing her clothing, her linen and footwear with them. She soon won their hearts and their respect, so much so that, having noticed her praying at certain times, they agreed among themselves to keep silence so as not to disturb her.

In return she taught them to sing some attractive songs and hymns instead of their lewd and obscene ditties. Before long her presence had transformed the atmosphere of the prison. When she was due to leave, these companions showed their distress and they made her promise that she would come back to visit them if she were acquitted. This she did after obtaining the necessary authorisation.

On the 1st April, 1801, Marie Adelaide was called to appear before her judges. The miserable Carbon pretended that it was de Limoelan who had recommended him to Marie Adelaide. She denied having seen de Limoelan about Carbon but she refused to name the person who had in fact sent him to her. This was none other than Father de Cloriviere. A dramatic point in the trial had arrived.

For the defence she had one of the finest lawyers in Paris, Monsieur Bellart, who was very devoted to her. One day she asked him:

“What will happen if I continue to keep silent?”

“Death, Mademoiselle” he replied.

“Death!” she repeated terrified, and then she fainted. She was helped back to consciousness and as she opened her eyes she said:

“My God, pardon my frailty. I am afraid of death. Nevertheless I will die, if I must, but I will not deliver an innocent person into the hands of the law.”

At the hearing the jury was impressed by her great courage, her simplicity and her charity. And when the moment came for the tribunal president to call witnesses for the defence Monsieur Bellart was able to say that if all those who offered themselves as witnesses on behalf of Marie Adelaide were to come forward the entire law courts would not be large enough to hold them. More than two thousand people had collected from all parts of

the city; the poor, the sick, children, people of all persuasions and of all descriptions. Numerous witnesses had also come from Brittany.

Monsieur Bellart extolled her heroic and universal charity. He expressed his surprise that his client should need any other witness than that of a life given completely to the service of others. His defence has now become famous:

“The crime of the 3rd Nivose has widowed many: give back to society the one who consoles such widows. This crime has brought poverty to many: give back to society the one who would gladly relieve the poverty of all poor, if that were in her power. This crime has wounded many: give back to society the one who is the comforter of the sick and wounded.”

The acquittal was unanimous. There was long and loud acclamation at the verdict. As she left a huge crowd surrounded her showing their admiration and sympathy. It was a veritable triumph. Looking back it would seem that God allowed this trial to take place so that the charity and heroic strength of soul of their Mother could be revealed to future generations of Daughters of the Heart of Mary. This trial, it was said, could be regarded as a process for canonisation.

Chapter Eight

IN PROVENCE

Marie Adelaide had been acquitted but she still remained under strict police surveillance.

She had admitted at the trial she knew de Limoelan but had not seen him in connection with Carbon. Limoelan was Father de Cloriviere's nephew. That was why the priest was being hunted down by Fouche's men. It was obvious that continued residence in the capital was highly dangerous for both of them.

Meanwhile the Concordat was signed in Paris on the 15th July, 1801, and ratified in Rome on the 15th August. The dioceses of France were reconstituted and new bishops were appointed. Mgr. Jerome de Cice was transferred from the diocese of Bordeaux to that of Aix en Provence. He was well aware of the painful situation of his sister in the capital and he pressed her to come and live with him. He even asked Father de Cloriviere to add weight to his request. While acquiescing the Founder wrote to her on the 15th April, 1802:

“This would be, Mademoiselle, a pleasant and sure way of withdrawing yourself from all kinds of enquiries and difficulties. Your jealous enemies will lose sight of you and will cease to think about you. From another point of view you are being given a kind of mission. Perhaps you are being asked to reveal God's work to others who are only waiting to hear of it in order to embrace it. You will reveal it best through meetings and private conversations – and God has given you gifts for that. Consider the matter before God, because I wish you to act freely...”

After reflection Marie Adelaide decided to go to Aix, leaving Mme. de Carcado in Paris with the title of Assistant

General. She continued to guide the Society by means of letters and lost none of her prestige....nor her authority.

At Aix she was obliged to share in her brother's way of life, with all that it entailed by way of receptions, visits and functions. The atmosphere was not exactly worldly but more hectic than what she had been used to in the capital. Father de Cloriviere wrote to her on the 20th July, 1802:

“Even in the midst of distractions, whilst you are fulfilling the obligations required by your position, take refuge in the hearts of Jesus and Mary. May these hearts be the centre in which you repose. Like Magdalene, settle peacefully at the feet of him whom you love and pour out your heart to him. Even while the world is occupying your attention listen interiorly to the divine word within you.”

Marie Adelaide took charge of many works of charity at Aix and she gave of her best with her usual generosity. But her health had deteriorated owing to the stress and strain of her recent imprisonment and trial. Father de Cloriviere sensed this and wrote to her with words of fatherly care on 16th August, 1802:

“Do not neglect any occasion which divine providence may send you of helping your neighbours and relieving their misery, but do not go out of your way to search for such work for fear that you may be thrown into too many distracting situations and exceed your physical and spiritual strength.”

The diocese of Aix was enormous at that time. It comprised the present dioceses of Marseilles and Frejus. After the trials and tumults of the revolution through which it had passed its people needed to be re-evangelised. Mgr. de Cice understood this very well and he called on Father Perrin, a

former missionary in the Indies, to come and preach some missions. Father Perrin was, by this time, a priest of the Fathers of the Sacred Heart. He willingly accepted the invitation and asked if Father de Cloriviere might come with him. The archbishop readily agreed. Father de Cloriviere was delighted and he dreamed of giving great missions of the type that he and the Abbe Cormaux had given in Brittany some years previously.

Mgr. de Cice however wavered on this point, and would not allow any great manifestations of faith. He feared the reactions of the government which was still suspicious, and which might see political intentions behind a religious demonstration. He would allow the two priests to give retreats to religious and clergy. Father de Cloriviere was very disappointed, but resigned himself to this reduced programme, hoping that Mgr. de Cice would eventually allow them to extend their ministry. In the course of these retreats he was able to recruit several members for the two Societies. But realising that the archbishop would not go back on his decision, he judged that his presence in Paris would be more useful and he prepared to return to the capital.

During this time the two Societies had been well received at Besancon, Poitiers, Tours and Orleans. They had begun to expand. Father de Cloriviere visited them on his return journey and everywhere he was welcomed enthusiastically:

“I have seen all our sisters and almost all our brothers. I can assure you that I have been well satisfied with all that I have seenand you would be equally so. Father Bacoffe is in charge of a chapel of ease. I said Mass there. He is greatly esteemed. The former vicar general, Mgr. de Chaffoy, has spoken to me more than once of the great services which Mlle. d’Esternoz gives at the hospital.”

At Poitiers Mlle. Gauffreau begged to be allowed to give hospitality to Father de Cloriviere and considered it a great

privilege to be allowed to do so. She was a woman who had shown great heroism during the revolution, hiding priests and coming to their aid, so much so that she had come to be called back to Paris. His sister, Therese of Gonzaga, had of going to Brittany and also to Anjou when he was suddenly called back to Paris. His sister, Therese of Gonzaga, had died in her Visitation community on the 3rd January, 1804. Once he had seen to the immediate business of her funeral, he had planned to stay in order to review and co-ordinate all his writings concerning the two Societies. But suddenly a fresh blow fell. On the 5th May, 1804, he was arrested at his lodging in the rue Notre Dame des Champs and handed over to the police.

Meanwhile Marie Adelaide, after long reflection, saw that her place was no longer in Aix and that duty required her to return to Paris. She arrived there in October, 1803.

Chapter Nine

ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT OF
FATHER DE CLORIVIERE
(1804 – 1809)

On his return from Provence Father de Clorviere had taken lodgings at rue Notre Dame des Champs, facing the rue de Mezieres. He thought that he was well screened from police pursuit and was about to revise and clarify various writings about the two societies. But Fouche, the Prefect of Police, was a man of action and wide awake. Cadoudal's conspiracy had brought to the fore again the name of Joseph de Limoelan, Father de Cloriviere's nephew, and consequently that of his uncle, who had been more or less linked with the affair of the 'infernal machine.' Thus it was that on the 5th May, in the morning, Father de Cloriviere was arrested, had all his papers seized, and was led off to the Prefecture of Police.

On that same day the police swooped on Marie Adelaide's apartment in the rue Mezieres. But it happened that she was ill in bed and her doctor, M. de Jussieu, was at her bedside with one of his colleagues named Marnier. They both declared that the invalid could not be moved. However her papers were seized and, although nothing was found that compromised her, she was again under police surveillance.

As for Father de Cloriviere, he was held for three days at the Police Prefecture whilst his papers were subjected to minute examination in his presence. Accounts of conscience, retreat resolutions, conferences to the Brussels Benedictines, sermons to the Parame congregation, spiritual canticles, writings concerning the two Societies, everything was searched but no trace found of any conspiracy.

Interrogations produced no result either. The first one was about the assassination attempt of the 3rd Nivose, the plot of ‘the infernal machine’. Father de Cloriviere said later:

“I had only one reply to make. Namely, that I had no knowledge of the affair until I heard it spoken of and read about it in the newspaper.”

Father de Cloriviere was then interrogated about the two Societies which he directed. He spoke openly and clearly about their nature and their aim, purely spiritual with nothing political, adding that they would find all that in his papers. At the end of the last interrogation M. Bertrand declared that he washed his hands of all these examinations and that the order for the arrest had come from a higher source than the Prefecture.

How curious and mysterious are God’s ways ... After having been saved from a thousand perils during the darkest days of the revolution, Father de Cloriviere was to be imprisoned for five years on the vaguest suspicion of complicity with Carbon and Cadoudal! Doubtless our Lord allowed this sore trial, this heavy cross, so that his servant could better reflect and pray in solitude and penance about the best organisation and government for the two Societies. Perhaps he remembered what the Father de la Colombiere had written in his spiritual notes, that he

“considered and esteemed it a great grace to be imprisoned for life thus escaping the dangers of the world and having the opportunity of living a more recollected interior life.”

In any event Father de Cloriviere accepted this cross as from the hand of God, calmly, peacefully and with greatest generosity.

The members of the two Societies were dismayed on hearing of the imprisonment of their superior and revered father. But Marie Adelaide was the most afflicted because

she was constantly dependent on the directives, the counsels and the encouragement of this incomparable guide who knew her so well and was aware of her aspirations and her needs.

Father de Cloriviere was taken first to the Conciergerie, then to the 'Force' and, after a short stay, to the Temple, the ancient prison which had seen so many sentenced to death, so much suffering, so many tears, but also such great heroism. Beginning with the king and royal family, the most notable in France had been taken from here by the gaolers to go to the scaffold. What profound reflections must have been evoked by this place.

He wrote to Marie Adelaide:

"This cross is common to both of us. Let us take it from our Father's hands. The Divine Head of all the elect himself appeared to be overcome by his enemies' blows, they triumphed over him, his friends were in tears. But it was in appearing to be overcome that he entered into his glory and overthrew his enemies, crushing them forever beneath his feet. If we are treated in the same way have we anything to complain of? Is it possible that there could be anything more noble than being made more like Jesus suffering and humiliated? I ask Our Lord to look with loving care on his little flock. But I would hope none would be anxious about my state. It is God's work; he has no need of a human arm to sustain it and make it bear fruit. Do not disturb yourself about me; any anxiety would indicate a lack of confidence and of faith, and for this you would have cause to reproach yourself before God. Do we not know that when we desire to do something great for God we must be prepared to suffer much? Is it possible to

fight against evil, to save souls from the corruption of the present time and lead them on to love of God, without stirring up the rage of hell?"

As soon as she knew of Father de Cloriviere's imprisonment Marie Adelaide called together her Council, gave precise instructions, and appointed Mme. de Carcado as the one who could best keep contact with the beloved prisoner. Prudence kept her from going herself to the Temple, but she did all that she could from a distance to lighten his sufferings and obtain his release. She had been suffering and extremely weak when the police came to make a thorough search of where she lived, but she suddenly gained new strength when she knew of the arrest and imprisonment of Father de Cloriviere.

Her own role took on greater magnitude because now she had to concern herself with the two Societies. The Founder wrote to her:

"You are showing yourself, indeed, to be a worthy mother of both Societies, and I bless God with all my heart for having given me such a good co-operator."

Marie Adelaide knew well that the greatest privation of the priest prisoner was his inability to celebrate Mass or receive Communion. She was ingenious in devising a way of providing him secretly with the Sacred Host. Mme. de Carcado accompanied by Mlle. Anger or another, regularly took the long road leading from rue Mezieres to the Temple, walking silentlywhile adoring in their hearts. The very ordinary looking basket which they carried was in fact a tabernacle. Beneath a layer of provisions of various kinds there was a little box containing consecrated Hosts. The precious basket could not be given directly to the priest, but the gaoler, M. Fauconnier, was a man who could be trusted, the kind of man who did not mind doing anything which kept the prisoners happy. Thus it was that during the five years

which Father de Cloriviere spent incarcerated in the Temple prison he was able to receive daily the Bread of the strong, without any outward incident or unhappy accident.

Towards the end of 1804, the Holy Father, Pius VII, came to Paris. Marie Adelaide hoped that a word from the pope would obtain the liberation of Father de Cloriviere. She even prepared an appeal, asking for this favour. But the prisoner did not approve at all of what she had drawn up. He thought it spoke too much in his praise, and he also feared to expose the Holy Father to the possibility of being refused by the Emperor.

However he himself drew up a memorandum in Latin which he asked Mgr. de Namur to present to the pope. In it he set out with filial frankness and absolute simplicity the state of the two Societies since the first verbal approbation which was given at Rome in 1801. He concluded by saying:

“May Your Holiness now dispose of these two Societies which have only just been born, as it pleases you; in whatever way you wish. I will gladly submit in everything. With God’s help, this is what I hope to do always, and this is what I promise.”

Pius VII accepted the memorandum favourably and confided to Mgr. de Namur that he renewed and confirmed the approbation previously accorded to the two Societies. Marie Adelaide was herself admitted to an audience with the Holy Father and was presented to him by Mgr. Pisani who acted as interpreter. She was also able to be present later at a Mass celebrated by the Holy Father, and was able to pass to him a short Latin letter in which Father de Cloriviere poured out his gratitude.

However Pius VII did ask the Emperor for the release of this holy old man but was refused. The Founder commented:

“It is not men but God Himself who keeps me here. He will deliver me in His own good time.”

Time was passing and Father de Cloriviere wrote to one of his colleagues:

“The months have passed quickly, and they have increased my peace and confidence. I have not been idle, and the Lord deigned to do some good through my ministry.”

At certain times the prison doors were opened for exercise. Then, watched by the good gaoler, Father de Cloriviere knew how to interest, distract and console his suffering companions. His serenity and good humour astounded them. He appeared to be as contented as if he were there by his own choice. He opened their minds to higher things than life in prison. He spoke to them of God and of the truths of their faith which they had long forgotten or never understood. The Temple yard with its old trees favoured confidences, and Marie Adelaide kept him supplied with medals, books, rosaries and prayer cards. Once he wrote to her as follows:

“Things are going marvellously well, far beyond anything I had hoped for. It seems to me that the good Lord is working through me for there is an extraordinary change in this person. A few days ago it appeared to be impossible but now all is easy. God alone can work these wonders, man can do nothing of himself. Let us together give thanks for this and also thank our holy Mother through whose intercession we have obtained this grace.”

In the spring of 1805, in a packet of letters passed in to him, he found one which filled his heart with joy. The Society of Jesus gave him back the plenitude of his religious life. Father Lustyg, Vicar General of the Society, who had

retired to Russia, integrated him into the Russian Province without his being required to leave France. Father Lustyg also approved of his work for the two Societies and encouraged him to continue it as a work for the Church.

The years were passing, however, and still the Temple doors remained closed on him. There had been many efforts to obtain his release but always without result. Mme. d'Allerac, his niece, was not afraid to approach the Minister of Police himself, but Fouche quickly showed her the door, sending her on to Real, the Councillor of State responsible for the safety of the Empire. He brutally replied:

“Yes, he is the Temple and he will stay there.
He is an old fool: he can blab and tell tales.”

The ‘guests’ in the Temple, mostly political prisoners, were only given accommodation by the State. They had to find food for themselves. The proprietor of a small eating house nearby provided a meal; for “twenty sous a head, and quite suitable” said the prisoner speaking for himself and one of his companions. M. de la Rouziere. At midday they took their meal together. In the evening a little bread and cheese sufficed for Father de Cloriviere. On Thursday a basket arrived. The contents of this were meant to be controlled and paid for by Father de Cloriviere. But very often he discovered other things added and in abundance. Marie Adelaide was the main culprit, and he admonished her thus:

“God has not put me here to live expensively but to do penance – of which I have great need.”

He asked her kindly whether she had nothing to reproach herself with before God by preventing this necessary penance.

On the 25th January, 1808, Mme. de Carcado succumbed to double pneumonia. Her death was a great blow to the

Society and she was sadly missed. Father de Cloriviere wrote at once to Marie Adelaide:

“My first care is to console you and, through you, all our afflicted family. But how can I do this since I myself am deeply affected by this loss? I judge the extent of your sorrow by that of my own which is very great. But let us accept the will of God. We still have God and his Holy Mother.”

Mme. de Carcado was replaced in office by Mlle. Francoise d’Acosta whose devotedness was discreet as well as generous. The visits to the Temple prison were now taken on by Mme. de Saisseval who obtained all the necessary permissions. But just at that time another blow fell. The Temple prison was earmarked for demolition and the inmates were to be transferred to the Vincennes dungeons. Father de Cloriviere wrote on the 3rd April, 1808:

“Our transfer is not far off. We are told that it will be on the 20th of this month. Doubtless there will be much inconvenience for us because we will not be able to communicate with each other in the same way. God allows this. Should we not be happy to be able to offer up something for him?”

He asked Marie Adelaide and her daughters to recite in union with him, each day, the following prayer:

“Lord, I give you humble thanks for this precious cross which, in your great mercy, you have sent me. I ask for an abundance of grace so that I may carry it joyfully...through Christ our Lord.”

In the providence of God however the elderly prisoner was not sent to the dungeons as he had expected. He was transferred instead to a mental home which was run by a Doctor Dubuisson. The place was far from pleasant but it did have an old chapel which could be brought into use again. Here Father de

Cloriviere was able to ascend the altar steps once more to celebrate Mass after long years of deprivation.

At first the doctor was reserved and reticent but was soon won over by the courtesy and ease of his new 'guest'. He became a true friend, and even a disciple of the priest; and he gradually overcame his Jansenistic tendencies. Father de Cloriviere had the joy of seeing him present at Mass and even sometimes receiving Holy communion. Contact with persons from outside became easier and eventually Marie Adelaide herself could visit the father of her soul and of the Society.

Finally Fouche and those responsible for security came to the conclusion that this old man was no longer a danger and could hardly exert any influence. He was released on the 11th April, 1809.

Mme. de Saisseval and Francoise d'Acosta went to the Dubuisson home to fetch the former prisoner. He was not in his room. They found him in the chapel, kneeling, as was his custom, on the altar steps. It was there that he had received the Act of Release, with great gratitude to his Lord, from the hands of the Director, whom he thanked for all his care. He had to protect himself from the poor sick inmates who were showing their feelings at losing him. He had won their hearts and they wept to see him go. A carriage was waiting. With a gesture indicative of his courtesy and authority he asked the two Daughters of the Heart of Mary to seat themselves facing forward. He sat opposite. After a minute or two of silence and recollection he said:

“What a saintly soul heaven has given you as Mother! You have all gained during these years, living under her direction rather than mine. What gratitude I owe for her marvellous courage which saved my life at the risk of her own.”

Marie Adelaide was waiting for him, surrounded by many other Daughters of the Heart of Mary. As soon as he arrived they all knelt to receive his blessing. All were deeply moved and the old priest tried to stiffen himself in order to hide his own emotion. He refused an armchair offered to him and kicked away a little footstool prepared for him. Instead he took an ordinary chair and sat among his daughters to speak to them about the things of God.

From then on he occupied a little apartment in the former Carmelite monastery. It was there that the 'black cardinals' – among them Mgr. di Pietro and Father Fontana ---- found refuge from the anger and pursuit of Napoleon, thanks to the generosity of Madame de Soyecourt, the former prioress.

Towards the end of his imprisonment Father de Cloriviere's eyes had become affected by cataract, but he had retained his robust health and capacity for work. Now that he was free he was much sought after and he gladly accepted invitations to Rouen, Chartres and Evreux.

On the 17th March, 1813, he had the great joy of a private audience with the Holy Father, Pius VII, then exiled at Fontainebleau, and for the third time the Vicar of Christ approved and blessed the work of the two Societies.

Chapter Ten

FATHER DE CLORIVIERE – LETTER WRITER

The correspondence between Father de Cloriviere and Marie Adelaide began at Dinan in 1787, when there was question of her vocation. But it was during his long imprisonment in the temple that letters multiplied. A complete collection of all his letters is contained in ‘Letters of Father de Cloriviere’ published by Daughters of the Heart of Mary, New York, 1953.

These letters recall those exchanged between St. Francis de Sales and St. Jeanne de Chantal but they are less flowery and not so captivating. The style is sometimes heavy, sentences are too long, there are repetitions and even grammatical mistakes. But in depth they show forth the same fatherly goodness and understanding. The tone of his letters is more serious than St. Francis’ – and what else could one expect during such tragic events? He reaches sublime heights sometimes, as when he wrote on the 30th April. 1791:

“The time has come to do something great for Our Lord. We must save as many people as possible from shipwreck... open your heart desire to do everything, to suffer everything in order to bring some souls to Jesus Christ.”

Marie Adelaide was generous and heroic and she saw a challenge in such a call. She dearly wanted to respond fully in spite of her weakness, but she was assailed with feelings and temptations of a discouraging kind. The feelings alternated with bursts of courage and confidence, and it is quite remarkable to see how patiently and with what solicitude and understanding her spiritual father stooped to help her misgivings and worries. We can admire his clear-sightedness in uncovering the action of the evil one, or in recognising simple love; and the numerous times that he

corrected and encouraged the Foundress setting her again on the path to her ideal.

Humility, confidence and abandonment were words that often came from his pen. He was a wise director, an enemy of all extremes. He avoided excess in everything and maintained her soul in the solid equilibrium of the middle way. He wrote on 8th June, 1791:

“God has given you many marks of his love. You should behave towards him with the trust and candour of a child. Love and confidence should put all your misgivings and fears to flight. What the Lord looks for from you is something far greater than you can accomplish by relying on come strong when they are in an all-powerful hand. Lose sight of yourself and fix your eyes only on him from whom you will obtain your strength and salvation.”

The lesson is repeated but in higher or lower keys according to the circumstances. Rarely is he picturesque in his language but, when an illustration helped, Father de Cloriviere knew all how to be graphic. On the 6th February, 1803, he was in Provence with Father Perrin, giving retreats there, and he wrote the following to Marie Adelaide:

“We left Aix in fine weather but it was very cold on horseback. The wind gradually rose until it was a fierce gale. My companion lost his stirrups and stayed behind. As for me, I went ahead on my nag but the cold and the storm got worse. I had all the difficulty in the world trying to keep astride, and the poor beast was having difficulty with every step. Finally I arrived at Palivaux more dead than alive. Some time later Father Perrin turned up at the same inn. We both pushed on, thinking that the weather had improved, going this time on foot

and leading the horses. But the storm rose again and we were unable to make any headway. To add to our troubles my hat blew off twice and I would have lost it had not my companion run after it. Meantime I had been standing bareheaded in the piercing cold and doing my best to hold on to the two horses. When we arrived at Salon we were lodged and entertained marvellously by the former cure...”

On the 23rd September, 1803, he wrote humorously about an unexpected meeting:

“Yesterday evening I dined at my hotel with a Captain of Mameluks who was going to Marseilles to train a company of men to take part in an invasion of England, which he said was about to take place. He murdered the French language and I could barely understand him.”

He was imprisoned on the 5th May, 1804, and he wrote on the 13th to ‘a certain Adele’:

“She should not be worried about me...are we not in God’s hands? Do we not know that if we desire to do something great for God, we must be prepared to suffer much? Can we attack evil, snatch men from corruption and lead them towards perfection without arousing hell’s fury? Suffering is the portion marked out for the disciples of Jesus Christ. This is what our Divine Master promised them, so they should thrill with joy.”

Reading the above letter calls to mind the famous letter of St. Ignatius of Antioch exulting for joy at the thought of being thrown to the lions and thus suffering martyrdom for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Father de Cloriviere was ready to practice whatever he preached. With the greatest humility and serenity he accepted unjust imprisonment as a cross coming directly from God's hands. In September, 1804, he wrote:

“I live here peacefully and am quite content, because I see in everything the accomplished of our good Master's will. God preserve us from thinking otherwise of all that happens to us especially when he sends suffering. No matter what it is or what the outcome may be for ourselves and others, let us always say: ‘O bona crux.’ Our fiat must be at each moment.”

He was grateful for all the efforts being made to obtain his release, but he had little hope of any success. On the 2nd January, 1805, he wrote:

“Once again I can see, my dear daughter, that I must wait patiently for my deliverance, which will come at the time chosen by Our Lord. We must have patience. Our Lord knows better than we do the best time for my release. We shall lose nothing by waiting with resignation, even if He keeps us waiting for a long time before granting what we earnestly ask of Him. He will grant it in a way that will more than compensate for the delay. For my part I can assure you that I have no difficulty in conforming my will with his in everything.”

Forgetful of himself, Father de Cloriviere thought of others. He continued to interest himself in his sons in the Society of the Heart of Jesus and in his daughters in the Society of the Heart of Mary. He used Marie Adelaide de Cice as his intermediary in directing them and he blessed God for having given him such a co-operator.

“This septuagenarian, who was restricted both by age and by captivity, spoke as little as possible about himself or his health, mentioning it just enough to reassure filial solicitude. But there was one rubric which was never infringed. He always expressed his gratitude for the food which was so faithfully sent to him. To repeated “thank you’s” he added an appreciation. But if asked to pass judgement on a partridge pate or to say whether a certain wine was indeed from Saint-Emilion or from another vineyard then the Father had to consult one of his companions in misfortune who was better informed than himself..... Didn’t he once mistake apple jelly for honey? However, native of Saint Malo that he was, he was better able to recognise sole, turbot or salmon. But for his own use he preferred cod, the fish of the poor.”

These homely details have their value. They give us

“a more complete knowledge of this champion of the religious ideal, a more human and attractive picture of an apostle whose zeal was heroic, of a wise and good director, of an inspired initiator who at the same time remained faithful to the tradition of his Order....”(P. d’Herouville, Preface to the letters of Father de Cloriviere.)

Chapter Eleven

FATHER DE CLORIVIERE AND THE RESTORATION OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS IN FRANCE (1814-1820)

After suffering much at the suppression of the Society, Father de Cloriviere clung to the hope that one day the Society would be restored. This hope and the presentiment that he might be called on to play a part persisted despite all his trials and the achievement of the founding of two religious congregations. Twice his thoughts turned to a missionary call to the New World but he remained in France.

From prison, in the Temple, Father de Cloriviere had written to Father Gruber who was General of the Society in Russia. The request received not the expected call to join the Society in Russia but incorporation into that surviving Province without leaving France. This solution had been applied in many other cases throughout the world, the men applied in many other cases throughout the world, the men so affiliated were to form the nuclei of many other Provinces when the full restoration of the Society took place.

The Province in Russia survived because Catherine II had not promulgated the Brief suppressing the Society. Father Gruber had been guardian of her son, Paul, whose succession led to the Pope's approval of that surviving Province. Father Gruber's successor, Father Brzozowski, who was to be the first General of the restored Society throughout the world, answered Father

de Cloriviere's renewed plea on gaining freedom from prison by asking him to stay in France and make preparation there for the restoration of the Society.

In response to petitions from such rulers as the Duke of Parma and the King of Naples, Pope Pius VII, on 7th August, 1814, by the Bull "Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum", re-established the Society of Jesus throughout the world. This was an immense joy for all the former Jesuits who had dreamed of this restoration. Father de Cloriviere in particular, as we know, had always kept a strong desire and a firm hope that this would come about. He now saw the fulfilment of what the Holy Spirit had intimated to him regarding the part he would take in this restoration.

He had written to the Father General:

"Give me your orders, Reverend Father, command me: all my powers are at your disposal, in whatever part of the world you choose. I desire to do more than is possible, obedience will increase my strength, confidence will add to my courage, God will give me the ability. If I cannot achieve something by myself, maybe I can achieve it through others. If things go here as we desire, I have no request, no other ambition, than a little corner where I can die unknown and in obscurity."

In his reply Father Brzozowski, far from satisfying the humble sentiments of the old man. Charged him on the contrary to prepare the way for the re-establishment of the Society of Jesus in France, and authorised him to receive novices. He gave him the title and powers of superior.

Father de Cloriviere was entering his eightieth year. For the next six years he found himself caught up in an extraordinary activity of such intensity and of such fruitfulness that it could be described as miraculous.

His first job was to call together the greatest possible number of former Jesuits. He thought at once of his old friend, Father Fleury, who was then in England. But he was too old and infirm to return to France. He asked the English Provincial for Fathers Fontaine and Simpson, but these were slow in coming, Father Varin came. He was formerly an officer in Conde's army, Superior General of the Fathers of the Faith, founded earlier by the Abbe de Tournely also with the aim of restoring the Society of Jesus. Now that the Society of Jesus was reborn there no further reason for its existence. Father Varin brought with him three companions, Fathers Roger, Boissard and Jennessaux.

Father de Cloriviere examined them and admitted them at once to the novitiate. Others followed them. On the feast of St. Ignatius, 31st July, 1814, the new Jesuits already numbered twelve: ten priests and two brothers. It was a small flock, but the members were full of hope. By the end of 1814 they numbered sixty.

A house was needed in which all these men could come together and follow a religious life in the best tradition of the Society of Jesus. Father de Cloriviere got in touch with the visitation nuns who had bought No. 20, rue des Postes, a property occupied by the Eudist Fathers before the Revolution. The nuns willingly offered a large part of their building and this was the first cradle and, as it were, the mother house of the restored Society of Jesus in France.

The novices were, in the main, mature men who had held responsible positions. Their formation required prudence and tact as well as firmness. Father de Cloriviere was well able to meet this challenge.

He gave the Long Retreat himself and he saw this exercise as the chief test of the novitiate. It began on the 4th January, 1815, and was attended by thirty priests, scholastics and brother coadjutors. At the sight of such a wonderful

gathering Father de Cloriviere felt his strength increase. He gave three long talks each day with astonishing animation for such an old man. He spoke at length because he had so much to teach in a short space of time. Father Cuenet, assistant novice master, has left us a picture of what he saw:

“The greatest regularity and the most lively fervour prevail here. The good old priest is rejuvenated; he is constantly in action, from three o’clock in the morning until ten at night. Our former Fathers vie with the young ones in penances and in humility. What a spectacle!”

As well as being Master of Novices Father de Cloriviere was also Provincial, and he had to reply to requests for schools from several bishops. Remembering the success of the Jesuits in the field of education and of youth, many authorities were anxious to have the benefit of their teaching. In spite of the restricted number of workers Father de Cloriviere was able to open houses at Saint Acheul, Bordeaux, Montmorillon, Soissons, Saint Anne d’Auray and Forcalquier. But he could not hold out indefinitely in a task which was now overwhelming. He earnestly implored for help from the General, but he was only able to send two priests in May, 1816. However some of his men had already received a good formation, and such men as Fathers Varin, Gury and Loriquet were appointed as Assistants. This left Father de Cloriviere free to visit houses recently founded at Soissons and Saint Acheul. It was no wonder that Marie Adelaide wrote at that time:

“I must confess that it makes me anxious to see him setting out on such journeys, in wintry weather and nearly blind. Yet he draws strength from obedience and inspiration to tackle the otherwise impossible.”

Indeed this resurgence of activity when he was over eighty was a miracle because, in addition to all his work for the Society of Jesus, he continued to direct the two new Societies.

In 1818 the Society of Jesus in France numbered one hundred and forty-five members; seventy-five priests, twenty-six scholastics and forty-four brothers, dispersed in five colleges and two residences. It was a good start.

By now Father de Cloriviere had almost entirely lost his sight and he could neither read nor write. He was also becoming hard of hearing and his memory was failing. It was time for him to retire. Father Brzozowski wrote to him:

“I am well pleased that Father Grivel has brought Father Simpson to France. Now I have the opportunity to satisfy the desire you have so often expressed to me of being allowed to take some rest after so many difficulties and so much work. Father Simpson is a worthy man. I can confide, without fear, to him the continuation of the work which you have begun with so much success. I release you then from the burden which you have carried so courageously, and thank you on my own behalf and on the part of the Society. I hope that you will be able to give considerable help to the new superior by reason of your enlightenment. Thus you will continue to help the Society and you will deserve our continued gratitude.”

Freed from the material cares and the office of Jesuit provincial, Father de Cloriviere now entered upon a calm and solitary life. He knew how to live a life of prayer and contemplation, for it was thus that he lived in his hiding place during the reign of terror and again in his prison cell in the Temple. Now that his sight had gone he could no longer say his breviary but he made up for this by saying the entire rosary every day. A greater deprivation still was his inability to say Mass. He could still receive his Lord in Communion and this he did every day with great fervour. He rose at three in the morning and prayed until half past five when the community Mass was celebrated.

Wedded to poverty and regularity, he refused to have anything out of the ordinary in his room. One day Marie Adelaide sent him an easy chair and a couch but he would not accept them. The story goes that he refused them quite brusquely, even with indignation, an indication of the continuing vitality of his temperament. He did not wish to have anything special in the refectory and made very few demands on Brother Mallet who was looking after him.

He would never have a fire in his room, even during the coldest weather. But his mortification was not in any way doleful or austere. During recreation he talked with shrewdness and evident enjoyment. He had a lot to say, and his manner of speech was pleasant. Young priests such as Father Fouillot and Father Delaisir read to him for an hour each day. He often chose his own work on the Apocalypse or his Commentary on the Epistle of St. Peter. The reading over, he would reply with animation and great clearness of mind to questions put to him. His memory failed him for ordinary every day things which he quickly forgot but he had a lively and very precise memory for holy Scripture and spiritual things. He always carried a little crucifix and a tiny statue of Our Lady which he had attached by chain to a ring. He wore this day and night, a constant reminder to him of those he loved most in all the world.

Father Simpson had made him spiritual father of the house and from time to time he addressed a few words to the community. The holy old man was always ready for this ministry. He spoke from the depths of his heart and from his experience.

He occupied himself a lot with the affairs of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary and in 1818 he worked on a new edition of the Rules and Constitutions of their Society.

This same year, 1818, he suffered a great loss. On 26th April at four o'clock in the morning Marie Adelaide de Cice died in the peace of the Lord and in the presence of the

Blessed Sacrament. As we have already seen, she had been his spiritual daughter and faithful and admirable collaborator in the forming and development and management of the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary. A long illness of fifteen months put the final seal on the virtue of the Foundress. Her life ended with a fever which caused her much suffering for eleven days. Already accustomed to seeing God in all things, she accepted this illness from his hand, just as she would have accepted good health. Often on her lips were the words, 'It is the Lord', words of faith from St. John as he saw his Master beside the lake of Tiberias. When she was given bitter medicine she would always say 'It is the Lord' as she accepted it.

Father de Cloriviere had been brought to visit her, but because he was blind and deaf he could not hear her confession or give her the sacrament of the sick. It was the priest of the Missions Etrangeres, M. Desjardins, who ministered to her instead.

The room in which she lay dying had a tribune facing the Blessed Sacrament. She spent long hours there by day and by night. Sleepless and suffering, she adored her Lord profoundly and with great love. At Dinan she had said many years earlier:

“Others cannot understand the great need I have of spending as much time as possible before the Blessed Sacrament.”

At last the time came for the curtain to part. She, who had once been called by the Abbe Boursoul 'a seraph of love', was now going to join the blessed spirits in a face to face vision of God. It was Saturday, 26th April, 1818. Marie Adelaide, always mistress of herself, devoutly followed the prayers for the dying. Then peacefully she gave up her soul to her Creator.

Father de Cloriviere was deeply affected by her death. Indeed the time was coming for him also to receive a recompense

for his work and suffering. Whilst he was a prisoner in the Temple he had received a letter from one of his daughters, asking for some words which she could consider as his last will and testament. He wrote to her on the 21st May, 1807:

“This idea pleases me because it takes me in spirit to the moment when my soul, freed from its bond with this miserable body, will be able to throw itself freely into the bosom of the God of mercy. This does not mean that I am tired of this present life; it even has some advantages over our future life: here we can suffer in imitation of our Divine Master, continue to obtain fresh merit, work to gain souls for God. All these things sweeten somewhat our life of exile.”

He always cherished one great desire, to shed his blood for Our Lord Jesus Christ; but if he were not worthy of martyrdom he desired the grace of dying at the foot of the altar in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

More than once in prayer, and especially when contemplating the Passion, he had believed that he heard a favourable response and his heart had throbbed with joy. In the midst of the dangers of the Revolution he had kept this hope. He had seen several of his friends and spiritual children – in particular the Abbe Cormaux and Mme. des Bassablons lose their heads on the scaffold. Death appeared to be close on several occasions but God’s hand always protected him.

On Saturday evening, 8th January, 1820, he took his usual meal and then went to the community recreation where he entertained his companions. He made his confession to Father Ronsin and retired to his room. The next morning, Sunday, 9th January, he rose as usual at 3.00a.m. and made his mental prayer. At 4.00a.m. he went to the chapel to visit his Lord. Two brothers who were there noticed that, instead of going to his usual place in a corner near the window, he knelt on the bench immediately

in front of the tabernacle. He rested his elbows on the bench, put his head in his hands and prayed fervently.

Shortly afterwards the brothers heard a slight sound. The little crucifix and statuette which he always held in his hand had slipped from his fingers. Brother Pelissier came forward thinking that he wished to leave the chapel but he saw that he was already collapsing. Helped by the other brother he got the old man on to a chair and went to call Father Ronsin who came at once.

Father de Cloriviere was breathing peacefully, his features calm, his eyes closed as though he was praying. Father Ronsin made acts of Faith, Hope and charity, invocations to Jesus and Mary and renewed his absolution. Scarcely had he finished the sacramental words when Father de Cloriviere gave his last sigh. He was surrounded by his community in the presence of the Lord. He was eighty four years and six months old.

Through his writings, his personal notes, his spiritual direction and his letters, Father de Cloriviere takes his place among the great French priests of the end of the eighteenth century, continuing the line of Lallemant, of Sarin, de Caussade, de Rigoleuc.

Through the foundation and organisation, at the height of the revolution, of the two Societies of the Heart of Jesus and the Daughters of the Heart of Mary he was a daring and prudent innovator.

As restorer of the Society of Jesus in France he showed himself to be a man of action with outstanding powers of government.

By his continuous prayer and contemplation, his austere self denial, his heroic charity, he was a man of God; one whom the Church could, we hope, one day recognise as a saint.

Chapter Twelve

THE ORIGINALITY OF FATHER DE CLORIVIERE'S INSPIRATION

The character of the two congregations Father de Cloriviere founded reveals his courage and his wisdom. Drawing together what had been exceptional features in earlier orders and congregations, he established what, for his age, could be called a new form of religious life. There is a whole history of founders who had to fight to gain conditions which would free their followers for a more productive apostolate – the friars who would be itinerant, foregoing the surety of their own houses in places they would visit to preach; congregations with no special habit but a sober secular style of ordinary priests of their day; St. Ignatius and the early Jesuits fought a running battle in the early years over the ‘necessity’ of Divine Office in choir.

Concessions were gained as privileges peculiar to this or that congregation while the canon lawyers argued over what was essential to religious life. Father de Cloriviere was to see that traditional external characteristics were only accidental and accessory. The urgency of his time, severity of political oppression and the needs of the apostolate demanded their almost total surrender, leaving the one essential spiritual characteristic, the pursuit of the three great evangelical counsels, striving for that perfect gospel witness with the Church's canonical recognition of the three public vows.

No uniform, no enclosure, no choir offices, no external distinguishing mark was so much a surrender of traditional aspects, especially for a congregation of women religious,

that Father de Cloriviere's vision was so innovative it could be called futuristic. Yet its simplicity could be seen as a return to the first centuries of the Church when consecration to God and the apostolate had not been restricted by convention and code. That vision would help to sharpen the focus of the Church on the true nature of religious life.

Poverty would be practised by absolute interior detachment and by dependence in the use of possessions. This poverty would not be uniform. It would vary according to the different positions of the members of the Society. It would require a great deal of personal responsibility and, because of this, it would be both demanding and meritorious. It would leave each person only with what was 'honestly necessary' in order to live in her particular station of life.

Chastity would be protected by a deep interior life of intimacy with Our Blessed Lord. Silence and recollection would nourish this intimacy. Daughters of the Heart of Mary would accept joyfully the renuncements demanded in guarding the senses and the heart. Their manner of life would be simple and ordinary in the sense that it would not differ from that of mature persons living in similar circumstances.

They could live outside the community, in the midst of their family, gladly accepting the daily grind. They could live alone for reasons of health, work or special apostolate according to the judgements of superiors. This life outside is not just tolerated. It is fully in keeping with the vocation of a Daughter of the Heart of Mary but it is a very demanding life, and those who live it must of necessity be women who are strong in faith and love.

Daughters of the Heart of Mary could also live in community because Father de Cloriviere foresaw that:

“the Society will have a great many common houses in order to provide a residence for superiors and those in charge of formation, to facilitate communication, to provide a place for retreats, conferences and tridua, to form a base for apostolic works and to receive those who are travelling.”

On the 21st May, 1798, Father de Cloriviere himself wrote to Mme. de Goesbriand, who was then a postulant:

“One is able to live in one’s family especially when some duties hold her there. This is quite in keeping with the nature of the Society for one of its aims is to give an image of the early Church. We know that for many centuries there were no special places destined for persons consecrated to God and therefore those whom God called to practise the evangelical counsels were of necessity obliged to remain in their families. This was how most of the renowned virgins and martyrs of early Christian times lived.

“.....However, as far as possible, it would be better for several to live together so that they could support each other and be occupied with greater freedom in works of mercy.

“....There would be in every place where there is a community, a common house, where in calmer times meetings could be held and where the superior could live with some of her sisters. There could be a place for the elderly, an infirmary and a library.”

These common houses were to be real religious houses with the consequent obligations and advantages. There would be order, silence, communal living and mutual support. The life style of the sisters would not be different from that of ordinary people in the same condition. There

would be diversity, therefore, regarding clothing, occupations, individual programmes, furniture, etc., but everyone would live according to the ideal and the norm. In the last analysis this common life would be expressed, above all, by the witness given of obedience and fraternal charity.

Obedience would be Ignatian – inspired by love rather than fear. Government would comprise an internal organisation modelled on that of the Society of Jesus, with a superior general, provincials and local superiors.

The secrecy regarding membership of the Society, so necessary in the early days during the troubled times, would not be considered definitive, but could be relaxed in peaceful times.

Two ends would be kept in view, personal sanctification and the sanctification of the neighbour, and the Society would therefore devote itself to all the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. It would supply for all religious congregations, which had been suppressed during the Revolution. All kinds of persons could be accepted, young or old – provided they had the marks of a true religious vocation and were able to undertake the obligations of religious life.

St. Francis de Sales, following St. Ignatius' inspiration, wanted to do this for his Visitandines, lightening their external structures, in order to permit them to leave their convent to go out and look after the poor. But Rome considered this attempt too daring and premature. If they went out they would not be, canonically speaking, religious. If they wanted to be religious then they must stay in. St. Francis de Sales bowed before this verdict.

St. Vincent de Paul also wanted the Daughters of Charity to be consecrated to God – yet not enclosed. He accepted the situation that they should only take private vows so that they could give themselves up to all kinds of temporal as well as spiritual works of mercy.

Then came the Revolution which attempted to suppress all religious orders of both men and women or, at least, to make their existence in France impossible. And so it was that God inspired Father de Cloriviere to make a synthesis between the idea of St. Francis de Sales and that of St. Vincent de Paul. The Daughter of the Heart of Mary could go out and be in contact with the world, but could also remain canonically religious.

The Holy Father, Pius VII, approved this new form of religious life, first verbally at Rome in 1801, a second time at Paris, more explicitly, in 1804 and a third time at Fontainebleau in a private audience on 17th March, 1813. Since then the Popes have approved it, praised it and encouraged it. Final approbation was given by Leo XIII in 1890.

Father de Cloriviere is, therefore, a pioneer and can be considered as the founder of religious life ‘in the world’ – a formula which, rather than becoming old fashioned, is becoming more and more meaningful in our times.

APPENDIX
EXTRACT FROM FOLEY'S "RECORDS OF
THE ENGLISH PROVINCE S.J."

CLORIVIERE, de, Picot, Peter (known in England as Pigot, Peter, and Rivers, Peter Joseph), was born at St. Malo, in France, June 29th, 1735; entered the English Province at Paris, August 14th, 1756, and was professed of the four vows August 15th, 1773.

Ordained priest at Liege in his second year's theology 1763-4.

In 1768-9 he was Socius to the Master of Novices at Ghent (whither the noviciate had been removed from Watten). In 1771, Confessor to the English Benedictine nuns at Brussels, and so continued for many years.

In the time of the great French Revolution he escaped to England, and lived for some years at Kensington. Returning to France on the restoration of affairs, he re-entered the re-suscitated Society in the French Province, and died in Paris, January 9th, 1820 at 84, at the hour of four a.m., in the odour of sanctity, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament and leaning upon the altar rails at his morning oblation. He was most devout to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, and did much towards spreading that devotion. He is regarded with special veneration, as the Founder of the admirable religious Society generally known in England as the "Filles de Marie." He took a very active part in the restoration of the French Province, and was held in high esteem by its

members and especially by the Father General Brzozowski, who wrote to Father Marmaduke Stone, the Provincial of England, on the occasion of a severe sickness of Father de Cloriviere, a letter dated March 3, 1815 (in the Province Archives): “I again beg your Reverence, and I earnestly entreat you, to send Father Charles Forrester” (ne Fleury, an old friend and fellow émigré of Father de Cloriviere, and who re-entered the English Province) ‘to Paris to assist Father de Cloriviere, who is failing. If he dies, all hope for the Society in France will be gone.’ He, however, survived the sickness, and died in Paris 1820, as stated above. Father Charles Plowden, the Provincial, writing to Father Hughes, February 5, 1820, says: “Old Father Peter Pigot died a few days ago in Paris in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, as he had always desired. We ought to pray for him, because he was for so many years a member of our province.” The altar rail upon which he was leaning is preserved by the above Society, which also possesses many of his original spiritual letters and some manuscript compositions of great beauty in honour of the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacrament Heart of our Lord. We subjoin an interesting and edifying account of his reconciling Anthony, the seventh Viscount Montague, to the Church on his deathbed, communicated by the late Dame Mary English O.S.B., St. Scholastica’s Abbey, teignmouth, from the records of the convent: “Father Peter Joseph Rivers, S.J., became Confessor to the English Benedictine Nuns at Brussels about 1773, and continued many years with the community. The following anecdote has been preserved concerning him: the occurrence took place in 1787, Anthony, seventh Viscount Montague, had been so unhappy as to apostatize. Going over to Brussels, he there fell dangerously ill and Father Rivers was sent for on Tuesday in Holy Week to visit him. The secular chapel attached to the Convent church was constantly attended by a poor man who, on account of his rare piety, was considered by the neighbours a saint, and who usually spent many hours there

in prayer. Father Rivers, before starting on his visit, asked this good man to pray for the Viscount's conversion. 'I will pray for him,' he replied, 'and I will not leave the church until my prayer is granted.' And such was his fervour that he continued his supplications the whole of the day and the following night and part of the next day without quitting the chapel. Father Rivers meantime was with the dying peer, whose wife, being a bigoted Protestant, endeavoured, by every possible means, to prevent her husband from being alone with him, hoping thus to hinder the sick man from making his confession. But her vigilance was happily eluded. Lord Montague became very contrite, received all the last sacraments, and gave up his soul to God, assisted by the zealous Father who remained constantly by him until Easter Day, when he peacefully expired."