

History of the Devotion to the Blessed Virgin in British Columbia

by

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In 1849 Vancouver Island was proclaimed a Crown Colony. In 1858 the mainland territory was in its turn proclaimed a Crown Colony, and named British Columbia by Queen Victoria. In 1866 Vancouver Island was united with British Columbia and in 1871 British Columbia became a province of the Dominion of Canada.

Latitude 49° was established as the international boundary in 1846. Before this time the whole Pacific coast west of the Rockies from California to Alaska was a sort of no man's land, with no government control. Great Britain and the United States had a working agreement by which their citizens could live and work and trade there. This agreement could be terminated by either government giving a year's notice. The whole territory from California to Alaska was called Oregon, and Bishop Demers in 1866 still calls his diocese "Oregon."¹ In the reports of the Propagation of the Faith published at Quebec and in the Oblate reports for many years after 1846, all of what is now British Columbia, was usually referred to as "Oregon."

History carries the connotation of past time. Ordinarily we do not look on what takes place in our own time as history. We say it is history in the making. It is not yet history until it becomes past.

So, for the purpose of this paper, it will be convenient and proper to follow our subject as far as the first years of the present century. A number of important events have taken place since then which it would not be right to omit, and we shall mention them briefly in their proper place. Our subject then is very definite and precise. No one but a Catholic could write it. This fact rules out almost all the secondary works on the history of British Columbia, and forces us to go to the original materials as furnished by the missionaries themselves.

¹ *Missions de la Congrégation des Oblats de Marie immaculée*, I, 121.

Works on the history of British Columbia hardly ever mention it at all. Even the missionaries themselves: letters, reports, even books written by them may not have anything to say of that devotion as such. Page after page of the letters and reports of the missionaries, and no mention of Mary at all; ten, twenty, fifty pages; sometimes they run into hundreds of pages. Then, all of a sudden a little incident is told which throws a clear light and illumines the hearts of the people and shows that Mary is the very life of their souls. I shall give some examples later.

Father Blanchet and Father Demers and those who followed in their footsteps taught special devotion to the sign of the Cross. It is amazing what use they made of it, and the wonderful effect it had upon the Indians. An incident, told by Bishop Demers himself, will bring this out. The Yougltas were the fiercest tribe on the West Coast in the neighbourhood of the Gulf of Georgia. They terrorized all the other tribes. They heard that the Bishop was to be in Nanaimo on a certain day. They decided to go there and meet him. They set out in thirty canoes, twenty men in each canoe. As they entered the bay and approached the settlement, the Nanaimos saw them. Terror ran through them. Torture, pillage, massacre, that was all they could see. They made what preparations they could to fight, without much hope. As the Yougltas drew nearer they saw the reception the Nanaimos were preparing for them. Surprise and consternation filled them. They did not come to fight; they came to see the Bishop. What to do? A brilliant thought came to the chief. He passed the word along to all the canoes. They would make the Sign of the Cross. By this time they were near the shore. At the given word of the chief every man, openly and plainly, so that all on the shore could see, blessed himself with the Sign of the Cross. The Nanaimos were thunderstruck. These, the fierce Yougeltas? Of course they received them as friends with joy, and showered hospitality upon them.²

The Jesuits stressed devotion to the Sacred Heart. With the Oblates it was the Blessed Eucharist to which special attention was paid. So none of them picked out devotion to the Blessed Virgin as a special devotion; which is at first sight surprising. The explanation will become clear as we proceed.

Since the Oblates were Oblates of Mary Immaculate, we could be sure, without further investigation, that devotion to Mary was not neglected. In one of the earliest Oblate documents sent to the Holy See these words occur: "The Congregation has for its special end to spread and propagate devotion to the Blessed and Immaculate Mother of God, particularly in her privilege of the Immaculate Conception."³ We shall find that this devotion was in the very

² *Rapport sur les Missions du diocèse de Québec*, XII, 91 ff.

³ H. Charbonneau, "Dévotion à l'Immaculée Conception," *Etudes Oblates*, X (1951), 275.

texture, the warp and the woof of the faith that was taught and practiced. It was in everything, everywhere and always.

Sir Bertram Windle used to say that if a fish could think the last thing it would think about would be water, just as the last thing we ordinarily think about is air. Devotion to Mary was part of the very religious air they breathed. They would no more have thought of special devotion to Mary than they would have thought of special devotion to Jesus.

If I speak mostly of devotion to the Blessed Virgin among the Indians, it is because we have more information of the devotion among them. The missionaries took care of the whites as well as the Indians, and tried to promote the same religion, piety and devotion. In fact the first missionaries did not come west in the first place for the Indians. They came in answer to the pleadings of the white settlement in lower Columbia.

In 1847 Father Demers was named Bishop of Victoria. His diocese comprised all that is now British Columbia and Alaska besides. British Columbia is considerably larger than the combined areas of the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, and Denmark. Such was his diocese. And he had no priests, not a single priest! At his request in 1863 the mainland was given in charge of the Oblate Fathers, with an Oblate as bishop. From that time practically until the end of the century all the priests on the mainland were Oblates, and for years afterwards nearly all of them were Oblates. To form an idea of the part played by the Oblate Fathers on the mainland of British Columbia it is worth our while to note what they are still doing in northern Canada.

In the diocese of:

Grouard there are	67 priests, 56 are Oblates
Hudson's Bay	26 priests, 26 are Oblates
James Bay	18 priests, 18 are Oblates
Keewatin	56 priests, 54 are Oblates
Labrador	19 priests, 19 are Oblates
Mackenzie	61 priests, 61 are Oblates
Prince Rupert	31 priests, 26 are Oblates
Whitehorse	29 priests, 28 are Oblates.

All the bishops in these diocese are Oblates.⁴ In other words, all the north of Canada right to the Arctic is taken care of almost in its entirety by the Oblate Fathers. Only God knows the part the army of anonymous Oblate brothers played and are still playing in furthering devotion to Mary.

The Sisters of St. Anne pioneered in British Columbia. They came to

⁴ *The Official Catholic Directory*, 1953, Canadian Section, pp. 139.146.

Victoria in 1858. The Sisters of the Child Jesus came to Williams Lake in 1896. The Sisters of Notre Dame and the Sisters of Providence came much earlier still. Their work lay below the border until later. Before the Oblates took complete charge of the mainland, they served on Vancouver Island. They left Esquimalt and Victoria in 1866 and their last post on the Island in 1874. They took over the West Coast Missions of Vancouver Island in 1938.

The missionaries all worked differently. Secular priests, Jesuits, Oblates; they were all different. Furthermore, each priest had his own personality and did things in his own way. But they were one in working for Christ, and one in their devotion to His Mother, and in communicating that devotion to those in their charge, both whites and Indians. The instructions of the priests, the practices they inculcated reveal the devotion to the Blessed Virgin as taught. The prayer books and books of devotion, as they were approved by the bishops, can be accepted as in general use.

How far the Indians understood these instructions, took them to heart, put them into practice and assimilated them comes out in incidents told by the priests and in casual remarks and stories. The piety and devotion of the priests towards the Blessed Virgin express the spirit with which they animated the faithful. This spirit appears in innumerable incidents which show that the Indians, particularly where they were not influenced by the whites, lived a life of such Christian perfection that the missionaries, seeking an illustration, look back to the primitive days of the Church. There is any number of such incidents to choose from. The amount of material in the aggregate is so vast that these insights into the religious life of the Indians can literally be counted by the score.

Turning now to the concrete history, we find that the Spaniards were at Nootka in 1789 and occupied it to an uncertain extent up to 1795. "A Solemn High Mass was sung by Don de Nava, the chaplain. The second chaplain, Don Diaz, and four Franciscan Friars assisted. It was the first Mass in this land."⁵ The Spaniards could not be there without devotion to Mary. "May 3 (1790) El Virgen del Rosario the Patroness of the San Carlos was deposited on shore with becoming ceremonies."⁶ The Catholicity of the Spaniards at Nootka, however, left no lasting impression there.

Father Blanchet and Father Demers were the first priests on the mainland of British Columbia. Father Blanchet describes the memorable occasion: "The following day (Oct. 14, 1838) being Sunday, it was on that day that the holy sacrifice of the Mass was offered for the first time in Oregon at Big Bend, on the banks of the dangerous and perilous Columbia. At this great act of religion performed by Rev. M. Demers, the two missionaries consecrated themselves to

⁵ Howay and Scholefield, *History of British Columbia*, I, p. 139 ff.

⁶ *Diaries of Freres Crespi and Penas* (May 3, 1790).

the Queen of Angels.”⁷ There you have the beginning of the history of devotion to the Blessed Virgin in British Columbia. By the way the site of the first Mass at Big Bend is over two hundred miles north of the U. S. border.

In *New Indian Sketches* Father De Smet includes “The Short Indian Catechism in use among the Flatheads, Kalispels, Pende D’Oreilles and other Rocky Mountain Indians.”⁸ An excerpt:

- Q. Whence did the Son of man take His body and soul?
A. The Son of God took His body and soul from the womb of the Virgin Mary by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Another excerpt:

- Q. What is the best among all the prayers?
A. That which Jesus Christ teaches us.
Q. Recite that prayer.
A. Our Father, etc.
Q. What is the second prayer which we must know?
A. The salutation of the angel in which we speak to the Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ.
Q. Recite that prayer.
A. Hail Mary, etc.

This is typical of all the missionaries. The English Manual and Prayers and Catechism approved by Bishop Durieu, O.M.I., is almost word for word the same.

“Tender and solid piety toward the Blessed Virgin” was at the heart of all the instruction of all the missionaries.⁹

The first prayer they taught the Indians was the Our Father, the second the Hail Mary. Immediately they gave them rosaries and taught them how to say the rosary. All the missionaries were the same in this.

Father Brabant’s journal: 1874 “During our stay at Hesquiat, as well as at Macheltas, we said Mass at 5 o’clock, at which all the Indians were present and during which they recited the rosary.”¹⁰

“April 1898 – I lost a few days ago one of the most sensible and most pious persons it has been my fortune to have in my parish. This woman ... received the

⁷ Archbishop F. Blanchet, *Historical Sketches of the Catholic Church in Oregon*, p. 9.

⁸ P. J. De Smet, S.J., *New Indian Sketches*, p. 66.

⁹ *Father De Smet’s Lite and Travels among the North American Indians*, I, p. 328.

¹⁰ C. Moser, O.S.B., *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, p. 31.

last sacraments and oh! how touching it was to see her with her beads in her hands... She was buried on Sunday morning at the parochial Mass. Her husband with his beads in his hands said the prayers aloud, to which the rest of the people answered.”¹¹

Letter of Father De Smet to a lady:

Now you can be sure that in every Indian family the rosary is said, and I have the consolation to assure you that many thousand *Paters* and *Aves* have been offered for you to God and to His august Mother ... How happy I would be if I could enable you to understand how great, sweet and ravishing their devotion is to the august Mother of God. The name of Mary, spoken in the Indian tongue has a sweetness which rejoices and charms them.

The hearts of these good children of the forests melt with tenderness and seem to overflow, when they sing the praises of her whom they, like ourselves, call their Mother.

Oh! how sure I am, knowing their dispositions as I do, that they have a place of honour in the heart of the Blessed Virgin, and that, by the intercession of Mary, which so many fervent souls invoke, you will obtain what you ask.¹²

For a long time the missionaries could not remain with the Indians for they had to move from place to place. The mission at Stuart Lake extended 350 miles from north to south and 350 miles from east to west. They taught the Indians to come together to say their prayers in common morning and evening. They used to say the rosary every day. In some cases they were given meditations on the mysteries of the rosary.¹³ Needless to say, they knew and recited the *creed* and the *confiteor* and expressed the devotion to Mary in them.

Long ago the Indians had the living rosary. In some places also there was a Society of the Perpetual Rosary. “In my time” says Father Thomas, “we had volunteers amongst the devotees of the Perpetual Rosary.”¹⁴ They had May devotions. In the morning and evening prayers there was a special prayer to Mary. The morning prayer to Mary in the Carrier Prayer Book runs: “And you, holy Mary, my Mother, and all the Saints, do pray for me, help me that being good in the eyes of God till I die, I may go to Him.”¹⁵

In some places they had the devotion of Miraculous Medal.¹⁶ There was also

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

¹² P. J. De Smet, S.J., *Missions de l’Oregon*, pp. 196-197.

¹³ J. M. R. Lejeune, O.M.I., *Chinook Book of Devotion; Latin Manual or Hymns and Chants in use by the Indians of British Columbia*.

¹⁴ Letter of Father Thomas, O.M.I., to Father Forbes.

¹⁵ A. G. Morice, O.M.I., *Carrier Prayer Book*.

¹⁶ P. J. De Smet, S.J., *Voyages dans l’Amerique Septentrional, Oregon*, p. 253.

the practice of consecrating themselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.¹⁷

The angelus was a great devotion. One of the first things the two pioneer missionaries did was to bring two church bells from the east, one for Willamette and one for Cowlitz. “On the day after his arrival he (Father Demers) blessed the bell he had brought with him, which weighed 50 lbs., had it set up 40 feet from the ground and began to ring the Angelus three times a day. The Vicar-general (Father Blanchet) who had also brought one which weighed 80 lbs. had it blessed two days before Christmas and began to ring the Angelus three times a day in honour of the Incarnation and the glory of Mary Immaculate.”¹⁸

“At midday the bell warns them to stop their work, and with the angel to salute our good and tender Mother, refuge of sinners, comforter of the afflicted. This they never fail to do even when they are travelling or at a distance from the Mission.”¹⁹

The Latin manual published at Kamloops by Father Lejeune, O.M.I., contains the *Ave Maria*, the hymn *Ave Maris Stella*, the *Magnificat*, the *Stabat*, *Maria Mater gratice*, *Alma Redemptoris*, *Ave regina cœlorum*, *Regina cœli*, *Salve regina*, *Sub tuum*, *Litany of the Blessed Virgin* and *Chant for the Litany*.²⁰

Bishop Durieu was bishop of the whole mainland of British Columbia. That means that all these devotions to Mary were taught and practiced everywhere. It does not mean that he began them. He was, as Father Morice says, “incontestably the greatest of all missionaries in B. C.,” but he found these devotions in operation when he became bishop.

The Indians loved to sing. They had quite a number of hymns besides the Latin ones mentioned.²¹ Letter of Bishop Durieu describing great celebration at Squamish, June 28, 1890, “The valleys and the mountains resounded with hymns in honour of the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph.”²²

They often invoked Mary in ejaculations, “Jesus, Mary, Joseph,” came frequently and spontaneously to their lips.

Letter of Father Morice describing the homes of the Indians at Squamish Mission. “You will not fail to notice in the place of honour the crucifix, the picture of the Blessed Virgin and the holy water... They have learned early to love the Blessed Virgin. A picture of her is in every house and seems to preside and govern.”²³

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

¹⁸ Archbishop F. Blanchet, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

¹⁹ *Missions de la Congrégation des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, I, 170.

²⁰ J. M. R. Lejeune, O.M.I., *Shushwap Manual or Prayers, Hymns and Catechism in Shushwap*.

²¹ J. M. R. Lejeune, O.M.I., *Chinook Book of Devotion*.

²² *Missions de la Congrégation des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, XXVIII, 286.

²³ *Ibid.*, XXVII, 63.

Letter of Father Chirouse from Tulalip, describing the boys and girls who have left the school there and married one another and settled down, says they wore the scapular.²⁴ In the schools taught by the Sisters of St. Anne and by the Oblate Fathers the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin flourished. “The girls in the school (Convent School of St. Anne at Westminster) belong to the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin and are a great edification to everybody.”²⁵ Consecration to the Blessed Virgin was customary. “The High Mass was about 10 o'clock and the consecration to the Holy Virgin was in the afternoon.”²⁶

The Indians loved high Mass and the celebration of feasts with splendor. Eighty and ninety years ago Eucharistic Congresses were held, especially at St. Mary's Mission, at what is now Mission. There were great processions of the Blessed Sacrament and there was always a procession of the Blessed Virgin. They carried the statue of Mary. On one occasion, to enhance the celebration they brought in the statues from distant missions, and there were six statues of Mary carried in that procession.²⁷

In 1892 a shrine in honour of the Blessed Virgin was established at Mission. Not long before he died Bishop D'Herbomez had to attend a General Chapter of his order in France. He thought he might never return and he wanted to be buried among his “dear Indians.” He made a vow to the Blessed Virgin, that if he returned safely, he would erect a shrine in her honour. When he returned, one day at Mission while taking a walk with the Superior, he pointed to a spot and remarked how much it was like the grotto at Lourdes. The superior thought no more about it than of a casual remark. When the bishop died, the superior found himself his executor, and a desire expressed in the will that a shrine be erected to Our Lady. Then he knew; and that is how the shrine at Mission came into being, and became a popular place of pilgrimage.²⁸

Missions, chapels and altars²⁹ were named in honour of Our Lady. The mission at Mission was St. Mary; in the Okanagan, Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception; in the north at Fort St. James, Our Lady of Good Hope. Sister Theodore, Sister of St. Anne, published a most interesting booklet with 1,000 titles of the Blessed Virgin. Sister died in 1951 at the age of ninety-eight. She was professed seventy-seven years of which seventy-three were spent on the West Coast.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Nov. 24, 1872.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, XIX, 382.

²⁶ P. J. De Smet, S.J., *Missions de l'Oregon*, p. 198.

²⁷ *Missions de la Congrégation des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, XXVI, 71 ff.

²⁸ A. G. Morice, O.M.I., *L'Eglise dans l'ouest Canadien*, IV, pp. 329-330. This edition corrected by Father Thomas, O.M.I., now at William's Lake who came to America on the ship with Bishop D'Herbomez, O.M.I.

²⁹ *Missions de la Congrégation des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, I, 454.

Devotion to Mary was of the very air the missionaries breathed, and the Indians assimilated it and became like them. It is only a matter of selection of incidents to show this.

Father Chirouse tells of an Indian girl Catherine “One morning two days before a feast of the Blessed Virgin, tired and weary, as she said, from having been so long without receiving her Jesus Christ in the flesh ... she made a journey of two days and two nights of the hardest kind of walking joyfully enduring heat, hunger and thirst. When she reached the mission, she was done out. When they asked her if she did not find the trip too hard, she answered: ‘Jesus, Mary and Joseph suffered much more when they travelled to Egypt’.”³⁰

Letter of Father Lejacq: “I raised my eyes and my heart to heaven, right to the throne of Mary, praying her to cast a look of compassion on this poor village still seated in the shadow of death.”³¹

Report of Father Pandosy:

Father Joset, the Jesuit Superior of the Mission of Colville agrees with the plan I propose to him of establishing the archconfraternity of the Most holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary. He charges me to announce it myself the following Sunday. The Sunday comes; I preach to the white people of the Mission on the aim and advantages of the Archconfraternity; I ask them to enrol under the standard of Mary. Mary touches their souls, she takes them captive and after Mass they all come and ask me to register them in the heart of their Mother, and their husbands and wives as well and even their little children still at the breast, binding themselves to say the prayers for them. On all sides they ask me for copies of the consoling prayer of St. Bernard, *the Memorare*. My heart leaps with joy. It is a victory which promises me the great event I am waiting for. The Indians of the Mission when they hear the same devotion preached also come and give their names. Mary could not fail to hear so many desires. It would be too far from her maternal heart. I dare say further that from the first moment, she has heard our cries, as in her immense charity to hear and to grant is instantaneous, she has acceded to our desires.³²

Bishop D’Herbomez to the Superior-General tells of a young Indian boy, Felix, who died. As he lay dying he asked the priest, who was with him, to give a message to two Oblate priests he knew and loved, Fathers Ricard and Jayol: “I am dying; I am going away... Tell them that Felix is dead, and that he is gone to see Jesus and Mary and his guardian angel... Tell them that to my last breath I have always loved and prayed to my saviour Jesus, and my good Mother Mary. Tell them I wept, but that my tears were only tears of love for Jesus and Mary or

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Letter of Father Chirouse, Feb. 15, 1860.

³¹ *Ibid.*, IX, 149.

³² Denys Nelson, “Father Pandosy, O.M.I.,” *Okanagan Historical Report*, I (Sept. 9, 1927), 116.

for sorrow for my sins.” Bishop D’Herbomez says “Felix held on to my hand, and the last words he uttered were the sacred names of Jesus and Mary ... Poor child he was so good, and he loved Jesus so much and his powerful Mother, good Mary.”³³

Coming to our own times, that is, considering the last forty or fifty years, many developments have taken place. During the last war the practice was begun and has continued at Holy Rosary Cathedral in Vancouver of offering every Tuesday a noon-day Mass for those who fell in battle. To honour our Lady pilgrimages have been organized, both to the shrine of Our Lady of Consolation at Ladner and also to the shrine of Our Sorrowful Mother at Portland. Every Tuesday evening there are devotions at Holy Rosary Cathedral to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. These devotions are also held at the parish church of the Redemptorist Fathers and some other churches. The Confraternity of the Holy Rosary is canonically erected in every parish, and carries with it the obligation of a procession of the Blessed Virgin. Devotions in honour of the Immaculate Medal are held at St. Augustines, Vancouver, and St. Peter’s, New Westminster. Every parish in the archdiocese has a day on which the faithful recite the Rosary for the intentions of the Archbishop. The Pastoral letter for 1954 for Vancouver was concerned with the Marian Year, and pointed out a program which includes four pilgrimages: one for the children at Ladner, three for all the faithful, one at Our Lady of Consolation at Ladner, one at St. Mary’s Mission, and the third at Our Lady’s Altar at the Cathedral. A National Pilgrimage to the Shrine at Cap de la Madeleine will have a group from British Columbia. The Legion of Mary flourishes in Vancouver with thirty-two praesidia. The Children of Mary is also in existence and active. Many churches in the province are dedicated to Our Lady under different titles. In 1942, in response to the action of the Holy Father, the Archdiocese was consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Rosary Sunday has been continuous in Vancouver, (except for one year) since 1931 on the First Sunday of October. In 1949 Rev. P. Peyton, C.S.C., conducted a Rosary Crusade for all British Columbia. More than 90% of all Catholics signed the pledge to recite the rosary daily. What I have said of Vancouver is typical of the other dioceses of the Province.

It would be hard to find a more fitting conclusion for this paper than the letter of Bishop Demers to His Holiness Pope Pius IX four years previous to the declaration of the dogma of the Immaculate conception as a doctrine of the Church. Bishop Demers was one of the two first priests who came together to the west coast. He said the first Mass on the mainland of British Columbia. He was bishop of Victoria and Vancouver Island until his death in 1871. His devotion to Mary radiated through the faithful of the Island, priests and laity, whites and Indians. From his outlook and spirit we can judge what the devotion

³³ *Missions de la Congrégation des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, I, 57 ff.

to Mary was in his lifetime and the foundation which he laid for the future. Here is, in part, what he says:

January 21, 1850.

Most Holy Father:

I was in Canada, on my way to the presence of your Holiness, to pay you the tribute of my most humble respects, when I received the Encyclical Letter Your Holiness addressed to all the bishops in Christendom, informing them of the plan You had conceived ultimately to pass a dogmatic judgment on the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Mother of God and ever Virgin, requesting at the same time the help of the prayers of the faithful in an event of such great importance. This Encyclical, Most Holy Father, I received with profound respect and with very great joy as well, ... only too happy to be able to respond to your zeal for the Mother of God by a prompt adhesion to a point of doctrine upon which it will have been given to You to pronounce a solemn and dogmatic judgment that will overwhelm with joy millions of Catholics who with one voice proclaim Immaculate in her Conception Her whom God the Father chose to elevate to the sublime dignity of Mother of His Son, the Saviour of the human race. Prostrate before Your Holiness I hasten to unite my voice, my desires and my wishes with those of the other Bishops of the Catholic Church to entreat you to pronounce ... in virtue of the plenitude of that power which the Holy Church has constantly recognized in the Vicar of Jesus Christ, Mary, Mother of God and ever Virgin, immaculate in her Conception. Moreover, has not the Church, enlightened and guided by the Holy Spirit, sufficiently approved this doctrine by according Mary so universal a cult and by instituting in her honour so great a number of Feasts? In Canada, the land of my birth, our forefathers handed on that precious belief to their children whose devotion to Mary and her Immaculate Heart has been and still is as ardent as though it had been based upon an article of divine Faith. In Oregon, where the Lord had the extreme goodness to make use of my ministry for ten years, the Canadians are not one whit behind their brothers in Canada in their devotion to and faith in the Mother of God. The eight thousand native Indians also who, in Oregon, have already embraced the Faith, have a remarkable devotion to the Most Holy Virgin, each one wearing around his neck a rosary.

Oh! In these days of unbridled human passions, when hell seems to have declared war against God and His Christ, does not the Church have need of the powerful intervention of Mary? Is it not reserved for her intercession to make it emerge triumphant from the terrible struggle that the Lord has allowed his enemies to wage upon it? Will it not be the Immaculate heart of the Mother that will utter sighs strong enough to awaken the Son who seems to be asleep in the Barque while it is in danger of being swamped by the waves of the storm?

As the Archbishop of Oregon City and the Bishop of WallaWalla will not be able to get their answer to Your Holiness for some time, I think I may take

it upon myself in advance to express their sentiments, knowing as I do their devotion to Mary and their desire to see her exalted more and more ...

This is the most ardent desire of him who humbly begs the privilege of subscribing himself,

Your Holiness's

Most Devoted and Respectful Servant,

Modeste, Bishop of Vancouver Island.³⁴

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³⁴ *Lettre de Mgr. Modeste Demers, Evêque de L'Ile Vancouver*. Del Vescovo, Di Vancouver. Nell'Oregon Extrait de la Collection des Pareri, vol 3, pp. 221-223.

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The Historical Archives of the Oregon Province of the Society of Jesus, located at Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington. Father De Smet, S.J., made one trip up north, from the Okanagans to the source of the Columbia, then east through one of the passes and then north to Edmonton. He returned by way of the Columbia. He did not stop except for a short time at Edmonton. Father Nobili, S.J., worked for some time in New Caledonia. Outside of these two men the Jesuits did not participate in missionary work in British Columbia save for occasional visits over the border in the Kootenays and the Okanagans. The Jesuits worked in Montana and western Washington.

* * *

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