

## ***The Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart, 1905-1927*** **Window on Ultramontane Spirituality**

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The longest run of any Catholic magazine in Canada is that of the *Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart*.<sup>1</sup> It has been published continuously since 1891 to this present year – over one hundred years. First called the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, it was published at the Jesuit seminary in Montreal until 1925, and thereafter in Toronto. Its purpose was to spread among English-speaking Catholics the Apostleship of Prayer and devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The circulation has varied between 14,000 subscribers in 1898,<sup>2</sup> 20,000 in 1902 (with “a printing press staff of 16 employees”),<sup>3</sup> 45,088 in 1920, and 42,910 in 1940.<sup>4</sup> In 1996 the *Canadian Messenger* served 14,500 subscribers in Canada and the United States.

This is the first study about the *Canadian Messenger*, and one of the few studies on Canadian Catholic serials.<sup>5</sup> A review of *Messenger* articles offers

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<sup>1</sup> Other long-lived Canadian Catholic publications in English after the turn of the century were the *True Witness* (Montreal, 1848-1910), the *Casket* (Antigonish, 1852-), the *Catholic Record* (London ON, 1878-early 1950s), *Canadian Freeman* (Kingston), *North-West Review* (Winnipeg, 1885-), the *Catholic Register* (Toronto, 1893-), *New Freeman* (Saint John NB, 1900-), and *Prairie Messenger* (Muenster SK, 1904-).

<sup>2</sup> *Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart (CMSH)* 101 (January 1991): 4.

<sup>3</sup> *CMSH*, 101 (February 1991): 7.

<sup>4</sup> *CMSH*, 101 (March 1991): 7; *McKim's Directory of Canadian Publications* (Montreal, 1940).

<sup>5</sup> Studies on Canadian Catholic serials: Mark G. McGowan, “The De-greening of the Irish: Toronto’s Irish-Catholic Press, Imperialism, and the Forging of a New Identity, 1887-1914,” *Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers*, (1989): 118-45; Gerald J. Stortz, “The Irish Catholic Press in Toronto, 1874-1887,” *CCHA Study Sessions* 47 (1980): 41-57, and “The Irish Catholic Press in Toronto, 1887-1892: The Years of Transition,” *Canadian Journal of Communication* 10: 3 (1984):

a window on the shape and colour of Canadian ultramontane spirituality over a twenty-two year period. This paper will review the magazine's circulation figures and readership, analyse its dominant themes of devotional piety, social thought, and missionary zeal, and then conclude with a brief assessment.

### **Canadian Messenger**

The *Canadian Messenger* is a member of a family of *Messengers* published around the world by the Jesuit Fathers. In 1898, thirty *Messengers* were published in different countries in various languages.<sup>6</sup> In 1916 forty-three *Messengers* were published in thirty different languages, and it was estimated that the *Canadian Messenger* served 600,000 English-speaking Canadian members of the Apostleship of Prayer.<sup>7</sup> During these years the *Messenger Canadien du Sacre Coeur* was published for French-speaking Canadians. In 1921, the combined circulation of the fifty-one *Messengers* around the world added up to one and one half million subscribers. At that time, the American *Messenger* alone published 375,000 copies, and the Irish *Messenger*, 250,000. The English and the Australian Jesuits prepared their own editions.<sup>8</sup> The *Canadian Messenger* during these years served half a million members of the Apostleship.<sup>9</sup>

One way to estimate the influence of the *Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart* is to investigate its readership. It is conservatively estimated that the spiritual message of the *Canadian Messenger* touched monthly at least four times the number of persons as the number of copies were printed, and very often a larger number of persons than this. Each copy was passed among family members, to neighbours and friends, and then taken to patients in hospitals and to shut-ins at home. This meant that the magazine touched

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27-46; Art Cawley, "The Canadian Catholic English-Language Press and the Spanish Civil War," *CCHA Study Sessions* 49 (1982): 28; John S. Moir, "A Vision Shared? *The Catholic Register* and Canadian Identity before World War I," *Canadian Issues* VII (1985): 356-66; R. A. MacLean, *The Casket, 1852-1992: From Gutenberg to Internet, The Story of a Small-Town Weekly* (Antigonish: The Casket Printing and Publishing Company, 1995); Minko Sotiron, *From Politics to Profit: The Commercialization of Canadian Daily Newspapers* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997). In *Communication and Change in American Religious History* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), Leonard I. Sweet comments in reviewing religious publications in the United States that "religious journalism has been grievously understudied," and in Canada also, much work still remains to be done.

<sup>6</sup> *CMSH*, 101 (January 1991): 5.

<sup>7</sup> *CMSH*, 101 (March 1991): 7.

<sup>8</sup> *CMSH*, 101 (April 1991): 7.

<sup>9</sup> *CMSH*, 101 (January 1991): 4; and (April 1991): 7.

at least 56,000 readers in 1898, 80,000 in 1902, and 180,000 in 1920. The editors of the *Canadian Messenger* would put these figures much higher, because of the number of enrolled members of the Apostleship of Prayer who took an active role in extending the ministry of the magazine. Participating in a loosely-knit organization, members received the monthly Apostleship leaflets distributed through their parish, read the *Messenger* when possible, and prayed daily for the intentions selected by the pope. By 1898 there were 20,000 Canadian promoters of the Apostleship of Prayer and hundreds of thousands of Apostleship members. Most of these members were interested readers of the *Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, whose aim was to spread this devotion across the provinces in support of the worldwide church. At the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Canadian magazine in 1941, seventy-two *Messengers* around the world were published in forty-four different languages.<sup>10</sup> *Messenger* readers could be found around the world.

Letters to the editor is another way to gauge the influence of the magazine. The number of responses coming to the *Messenger* offices around the world was far beyond that of the average secular or religious magazine. Many of its readers monthly sent prayer petitions, offerings, donations, best wishes, and inquiries. These readers not only read but also prayed over the contents of the magazine, especially the pope's monthly intention, member's intentions, deceased members who were to be prayed for, devotional articles, uplifting stories, and inspiring poems. "The purpose of these organizations [*Messenger* and *Ave Maria*]," concludes Ann Taves, "was to pray as a group for the needs and requests submitted by their members."<sup>11</sup>

When viewing the pages of the *Canadian Messenger*, it is worthwhile inspecting the names of those who wrote and submitted petitions for favours, gave thanks for favours received, and requested prayers of the membership for the living and the dead. People "liked to write in" to recount what God, Jesus, or Mary had done for them.<sup>12</sup> The magazine during this period provided a great monthly catalogue of Catholic names along with their city, village and province. The names recorded during the editorship of the Jesuit, E. J. Devine (1905-1927), were predominantly Irish, Scottish, English, French, and Native from Ontario, Quebec, the Atlantic regions, and the United States. After 1910, German and Polish names from Ontario, western provinces, and British Columbia were added.

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<sup>10</sup> *CMSH*, 101 (June 1991): 6.

<sup>11</sup> Ann Taves, *The Household of the Faith: Roman Catholic Devotions in Mid-Nineteenth Century America* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 55.

<sup>12</sup> Taves, 65.

On various occasions the *Canadian Messenger*, along with other *Messengers* around the world, collected the spiritual offerings of prayers and good works for particular purposes. In 1900 at Paray-le-Monial in France, one hundred pilgrims from Canada presented a volume bound in red morocco containing the names of 150,000 members who consecrated themselves and their families to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. They also marched through the French streets under a “magnificent banner” of the Sacred Heart, which they then presented to the shrine.<sup>13</sup> Although in France these marches had strong restorationist overtones, the *Canadian Messenger* showed no interest in partisanship and always remained politically neutral in foreign and domestic issues.<sup>14</sup> When Pope Pius X was celebrating his Golden Jubilee of ordination in 1909, the Canadian members sent 40 million prayers and good works to the magazine to be recorded in an elaborately bound volume and then sent to Rome. For the 21<sup>st</sup> International Eucharistic Congress held in Montreal in 1910, a list of prayers and good works for the success of this event to the number of 61,921,851 was collected and tabulated.<sup>15</sup> During the Great War the *Canadian Messenger* staff collected monthly three to nine million spiritual works for various spiritual intentions. Soldiers in France wrote to the magazine testifying that they felt protected by wearing the Sacred Heart badge.<sup>16</sup>

In 1920 the staff tabulated an average of five million good works monthly.<sup>17</sup> During the interwar period the *Canadian Messenger* entered into an association with the Catholic Church Extension Society to collect funds to send to the Canadian missions in northern and western Canada.<sup>18</sup> Among other good works, donations of \$4753 were collected for the Russian Relief Fund in 1924. The membership in 1928 prepared a Spiritual Bouquet for Pius XI and the staff tabulated 731,657,495 good works as the offering.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> CMSH 101 (January 1991): 5. J. Derek Holmes writes: “The growth of new devotions was often closely linked with politics ... After 1870 Catholic monarchists organized pilgrimages to Paray-le-Monial and the dedication of France to the Sacred Heart.” *The Triumph of the Holy See: A Short History of the Papacy in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Burns & Oats and Shepherdstown: Patmos Press, 1978), 139-40.

<sup>14</sup> The *Canadian Messenger* remained politically neutral during these years and was right in line with the direction the secular press was heading. Minko Sotiron in *From Politics to Profit: The Commercialization of Canadian Daily Newspapers, 1890-1920*, 156, 160-1, points out that the Canadian dailies for commercial reasons shifted “from political advocate to interest advocate” in the period discussed.

<sup>15</sup> CMSH, 101 (February 1991): 7.

<sup>16</sup> CMSH, 101 (March 1991): 7.

<sup>17</sup> CMSH, 30 (1920).

<sup>18</sup> CMSH, 101 (April 1991): 7.

<sup>19</sup> CMSH, 101 (April 1991): 7.

This effort to enumerate spiritual works may seem superficial, but nevertheless, it does tell us about the zeal of members of the Apostleship of Prayer and others who responded actively to its appeals. Through the years the magazine collected this “treasury of good works,” and in 1924 the monthly total of good works averaged 7,000,000,<sup>20</sup> an impressive amount of regular correspondence and tabulation.

Edward J. Devine was appointed editor of the English edition of the *Canadian Messenger* in 1905 and retained that post until his death in 1927. From its founding, he had contributed occasional articles to the magazine and was its temporary editor between 1899 and 1902. For three years in the early nineties, he did mission work among the miners, railway workers, and native people in northern Ontario. This experience left a deep impression on him and forged the cutting edge of his social thought. For two years he was on the Alaska mission and at this time wrote installments for the *Canadian Messenger*. These episodes were published in 1905 under the title of *Across Widest America*. This volume revealed his love for the missions, which remained with him through his years as editor of the *Messenger*.<sup>21</sup>

From his taking over the important position as editor of the *Canadian Messenger*,<sup>22</sup> Devine, over the next twenty-two years, wrote many of the articles, signed and unsigned. Each month the pope would choose the general intention to be prayed for by the membership. Then the editor of the magazine, or a writer chosen by him, explained the monthly intention in an article of five to ten pages. The Holy See believed these intentions and accompanying instructions were crucial for the spiritual enlightenment of the

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<sup>20</sup> The Treasury of Good Works included acts of charity, acts of mortification, rosaries, stations of the cross, holy communions, spiritual communions, examinations of conscience, hours of silence, recreation and labour, holy hours, spiritual readings, Masses celebrated, Masses heard, works of zeal, various other works, various prayers, acts of resignation, victories over self, and visits to the Blessed Sacrament. *CMSH*, 34 (1924).

<sup>21</sup> Archives of the Society of Jesus of Upper Canada (ASJUC), Regis College, Toronto, E. J. Devine File; *Dictionary of Jesuit Biography: Ministry to English Canada, 1842-1987* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Jesuit Studies, 1991), 83-5; *Across Widest America* (Montreal: Canadian Messenger, 1905).

<sup>22</sup> Phyllis Senese contends that the Catholic press of the period was considered to have an important influence in mobilizing the Catholic masses in favour of ultramontane religious loyalties and away from the evil influences of materialism and indifferentism. See her “*La Croix de Montréal (1893-1895): A Link to the French Radical Right*,” *CHHA Historical Studies* 53 (1986): 85.

faithful. The magazine would spread these intentions across Canada, as its sister *Messengers* transmitted them to other parts of the world.<sup>23</sup>

The papal intentions, by their diversity, provided the magazine with a combination of ultramontane loyalty, Roman devotions, and missionary zeal. Topics discussed, such as, family spirituality, personal holiness, community devotions, and missions, confirmed this loyalty and reflected popular spiritual sentiment. Along with this traditional spirituality, however, Catholic social thought could be found in articles discussing workers' rights, higher education, and acceptance of eastern liturgies and cultures. The main themes developed in this next section will include devotional piety, Catholic social thought, and missionary zeal both domestic and foreign. The devotional piety of the magazine excluded political overtones. During the Great War, the magazine denounced the evils of warfare but showed sympathy for the victims of war, including the wives and children of soldiers. No enthusiasm was shown for Anglophone crusades to cleanse the world.<sup>24</sup> Foreign ideologies such as socialism and communism were opposed. These themes revealed a theologically traditional but socially progressive magazine. Because of his work at the *Canadian Messenger* and the popularity of the magazine, Devine at the time of his death in the fall of 1927 was probably the best known Jesuit in all of Canada.<sup>25</sup> The popularity of the *Canadian Messenger* reveals a high degree of spiritual activity among faithful Catholics during these years which was encouraged by the episcopate but not directed by it.

### **Devotional Piety**

The *Canadian Messenger* placed itself clearly among Christian devotional magazines. A number of broad themes emerge in its pages: prayer, saints, and personal holiness; the public devotions to the Sacred Heart and Our Lady; Eucharist and the reception of Holy Communion; and family spirituality and Catholic education. These themes exemplify the roots of Catholic spirituality and devotional loyalty.

Instruction in prayer and holiness was considered by the *Canadian Messenger* to be the focal point of Catholic devotional life. Prayer leads to holiness, the magazine explained, and private prayer "to God for aid and comfort." Our hearts cry to God when we are rendered conscious of our loneliness and needfulness. "Little by little this recourse to God becomes a

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<sup>23</sup> Nive Voisine, "L'ultramontanisme canadien-français au XXe siècle," in *Les Ultramontains Canadiens-Français: Études d'histoire religieuse présentées en hommage au professeur Philippe Sylvain* (Montreal: Boreal, 1985), 68-71,

<sup>24</sup> *CMSH*, 25 (July 1915), 281-3; 26 (April 1916): 148-50 and 285-8.

<sup>25</sup> Archives of the Society of Jesus of French Canada, Saint-Jérôme, Québec, Lettres de l'Alaska, le Père Edgar Colclough, D-7, E.J. Devine.

habit, a kind of instinct, and our greatest help in all the difficulties of life.” An excellent way to initiate the life of prayer is to start with the morning offering of the Apostleship of Prayer. This daily offering of one’s prayers, actions, and sufferings would draw believers to a more comprehensive devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a devotion where the heart is the symbol of God’s love present in believers.<sup>26</sup>

The *Canadian Messenger* published a continual stream of hagiographical stories to support the exercise of prayer and the pursuit of holiness. They included the conversion stories of Ignatius Loyola and his friend, Francis Xavier, Charles Borromeo, Marguerite Bourgeoys, Kateri Tekakwitha, and the martyrdom of the sixteen Carmelites of Compiègne during the French Revolution. These stirring stories of sanctity, miracles, and friendship were retold to inspire the faithful so that they too would have trust in God’s intervention and be inspired to embrace a more Christian mode of life.<sup>27</sup> Reading the lives of the saints helped to fill Christian minds with expansive and courageous thoughts.

The prayerful devotions of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady to assimilate inspiration into one’s heart and activities were encouraged. A special section of every issue was allotted to these two devotions. Special articles were also written to animate the devotions. The devotion to the Sacred Heart was aimed at bringing the love of God into the consciousness of those who prayed and into their homes and communities. The League of the Sacred Heart and the Apostleship of Prayer were both founded to foster this devotion, and the month of June was dedicated to the exercise and spread of this devotion. Formulated in the seventeenth century, the devotion to the Sacred Heart was approved and encouraged by nineteenth-century popes. During the June novena, the act of consecration was to be said on Fridays in parish churches along with mass, benediction, sacred readings, or public reflection. In homes where the image of the Sacred Heart was honoured by vigil light and June flowers, the saying of the rosary, the litany, and the consecration of that family to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, God’s blessing would reside through the year.<sup>28</sup> In Europe the devotion to the Sacred Heart and its enshrinement at the basilica of Montmartre in Paris was supported both by the religious ultramontanes and the French legitimists. The Parisian political environment, however, was not transmitted over the Atlantic, and the *Canadian Messenger*, without royalist sympathies, did not seek a more

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<sup>26</sup> *CMSH*, 15 (March 1905): 103-04; Joseph F. Conwell, *Contemplation in Action: Study in Ignatian Prayer* (Spokane: Gonzaga University Press, 1957).

<sup>27</sup> *CMSH*, 17 (July 1907): 322; 19 (December 1909): 537-44; 15 (November 1905): 512-16; 30 (May 1920): 159-67; 34 (January 1924): 11-15; 16 (April 1906): 167-9; and 16 (October 1906): 454-62; Holmes, 140; Taves, 48.

<sup>28</sup> *CMSH*, 15 (June 1905): 245-9; 18 (June 1908): 241-7.

tightly bound alliance of cross and crown in Canada. The magazine was overtly devotional and not political.<sup>29</sup>

The devotion to Our Lady, in the opinion of the *Canadian Messenger* and its readers, ranked right behind that of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was characteristic of the faithfulness of Catholic devotion, the *Messenger* added, and symbolic of the Protestant flight from the truth. E. J. Devine believed that whenever the veneration of Mary was ignored, a proportion of the worship of Jesus was abandoned. The more devout Christians were toward Our Lady, the more loving they would be toward Jesus her son. Mary, from her close relationship with Jesus, helped Christians know and follow Jesus more carefully.<sup>30</sup>

For a Christian embarking upon the voyage of one's life, the Sodality of Our Lady, in the view of E. J. Devine, was like a safe vessel on an ocean-going voyage. Further, he stressed that the Sodality was "a pious society, canonically established to help the faithful to walk more safely in the path of virtue under the protection of the Mother of God." The Sodality program of regular prayer strengthened the members and provided spiritual direction. The Sodality spread quickly throughout the world in thousands of branches, which were affiliated with the main Sodality in Rome and included millions of members. The magazine conjectured that where the League of the Sacred Heart and Sodality of Our Lady were located in Canada, parishes would be strong and active.<sup>31</sup>

The lay apostolate, according to the *Canadian Messenger*, called Catholics to get involved in the works of the Church, sanctifying the faithful, expanding the works of charity, and launching new initiatives to introduce Christ into the secular world. An excellent way to begin the lay apostolate was to make a weekend retreat. As the Canadian church was in the early stages of formation, the Holy See encouraged the growth of the retreat movement to provide strong lay leadership. A weekend retreat, with "reflection, self-examination and prayer," could awaken Christians to take a stand in the struggle against materialism and secularism. Since the second

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<sup>29</sup> See Phyllis M. Senese, "La Croix de Montréal (1839-1895)," *Historical Studies* 53 (1986): 83; Holmes, 139-40. Brian Clarke, in *Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto, 1850-1895* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 68, stresses the "private and personal" side of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Devine, however, suggests that the devotion was often performed in public and could be a social demonstration of Catholic loyalties. Both Holmes and Senese point out the political side of this devotion.

<sup>30</sup> *CMSH*, 23 (May 1913): 196. Brian Clarke stresses the transforming nature of devotion to Our Lady among Irish-Catholic women, *Piety and Nationalism*, 63-6.

<sup>31</sup> *CMSH*, 27 (May 1917): 120-3.

decade of the twentieth century, Canadian professionals, merchants, trades people, day labourers, and members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society had become serious in making retreats and providing facilities for others to do the same.<sup>32</sup> Retreats were the foundation for the expansion of the lay apostolate considered crucial to the welfare of the Catholic Church in Canada.

The most outstanding contribution of the pontificate of Pope Pius X was his 1905 decree, *Sacra Tridentina Synodus*, urging Catholics to receive weekly and daily communion. Up to this century only a few pious people received Holy Communion on a regular basis. Most good people, touched by a lingering eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Jansenist rigour, felt that their unworthiness to receive communion outweighed the good of receiving the Body of the Lord. By custom they accepted the sacrament only during Christmas and Easter time. It took the power of the papal office to move Catholics toward more frequent communion.<sup>33</sup>

Family spirituality, in the eyes of the *Canadian Messenger*, demanded a discussion and appreciation of the sanctity of the marriage bond in Catholic homes. Christian parents were praised for their contribution to family devotion. These parents emphasized the importance of the family's consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and underscored the spread of the League of the Sacred Heart to other families.<sup>34</sup> Being baptized into a Catholic family, on the one hand, meant being admitted to a household of faith where God dwelt as our Father, Mary as our mother, and Jesus as our brother. A sensitivity to the world of the angels and saints was made very real.<sup>35</sup> Mixed marriages, on the other hand, in the opinion of the magazine, endangered a couple's faith, weakened the family bond, and were to be avoided at all cost.<sup>36</sup>

For the Catholic church, education has always been a principal priority and a religious concern. The *Canadian Messenger* stressed the importance of education from elementary school to university.<sup>37</sup> Mothers are the first instructors of children, and Catholic school teachers continue the process of expanding the young peoples' minds in the maxims of the Gospel, the commandments, and Christian devotions. Sunday-school alone would be

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<sup>32</sup> *CMSH*, 18 (December 1908): 533-6; 20 (August 1910): 339-44; 24 (March 1914): 99-104.

<sup>33</sup> *CMSH*, 23 (June 1913): 243-6 and 19 (June 1909): 243-9.

<sup>34</sup> *CMSH*, 18 (October 1908): 433-5; 20 (May 1910): 196-8.

<sup>35</sup> Traves, 48-51 and 69.

<sup>36</sup> *CMSH*, 20 (November 1910): 485-7.

<sup>37</sup> Msgr. Dennis Murphy recently expressed the same conviction in "Expectations of Catholic Education: the Role of Catholic Colleges," *Grail* 6 (4) (1990): 32-3.

inadequate for those attending public schools.<sup>38</sup> The Catholic church has always insisted that education follow sound principles, which included Catholic teachers, a Catholic atmosphere, Catholic schools, and Catholic control.<sup>39</sup> During the Middle Ages, the Christian community founded universities only to find them secularized by the French Revolution. In the nineteenth century the church had to once again establish Catholic universities in Belgium, France, Canada, the United States and many other nations. Catholic colleges, the *Messenger* urged, would raise up generations of Catholics who would put their “pens and tongues” at the service of the Christian community.<sup>40</sup>

The devotion to the Sacred Heart was the centre piece of nineteenth-century Roman devotions as it supported the Pope in his effort to root out the traces of Jansenist rigour and to move the faithful toward regular and full sacramental practice. The devotion advocated the love of God rather than the fear of God as the healthy norm of spiritual life. It was founded on the principle that those who receive daily and weekly communion would first prepare themselves by living a virtuous life, being charitable, honest, and humble, and would transcend overindulgence. They would turn to prayer, reflection, and tranquillity of heart to prepare themselves to receive this sacrament properly.<sup>41</sup> Not politically involved or ambitious, the *Canadian Messenger* sought for its readers a regular, inspired, compassionate, and orderly spiritual life.

### **Catholic Social Thought**

A second topic that was dear to the heart of E. J. Devine and the *Canadian Messenger* was Catholic social thought. Devine showed great sympathy for workers labouring in an oppressive and exacting factory system. For the general intention of the month, the magazine published articles on Catholic trade unions. The articles provided a résumé of the historical evolution of the factory system and trade unions, of the principles

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<sup>38</sup> *CMSH*, 15 (February 1905): 55-60 and 16 (March 1906): 97-103.

<sup>39</sup> *CMSH*, 17 (September 1907): 385-9 and 18 (August 1908): 341-3. Jesuit educator, Carl Matthews, is candid in expressing this view, “Growth of the Catholic School System in Ontario Since 1841,” *Spiritual Roots: Historical Essays on the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto at 150 Years of Age*, edited by John Duggan and Terry Fay (Toronto: Lourdes, 1991), 53.

<sup>40</sup> *CMSH*, 20 (January 1910): 1-7; 22 (September 1912): 371-7; and 34 (February 1924): 49-54.

<sup>41</sup> *CMSH*, 23 (June 1913): 246-48 and 19 (June 1909): 243-9.

of Catholic social thought as laid down by the popes, and then by way of conclusion, added some deductions.<sup>42</sup>

An article in March 1909 on trade unions for Catholics asserts that in the last three generations great changes had occurred in the social conditions of the working classes. Small cottage industries had evolved through the machine age into large factories and caused many problems for the workers. Tending machines which never stopped made work de-humanizing and boring. Yet urban workers without property had no alternative but to work or starve. Many large soulless corporations, moreover, rejected their social responsibilities, cut salaries, and reduced the number of workers in order to compete more effectively in the market place.<sup>43</sup>

Pope Leo XIII in an important encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (1891),<sup>44</sup> defended the worker against insensitive employers and complained that “Workingmen have been given over, isolated and defenceless, to the callousness of employers and the greed of unrestrained competition ... A very small number of rich men have been able to lay upon the masses a yoke little better than slavery itself.”<sup>45</sup> Workers’ organizations infected with communist ideals, the editor regretted, replaced the medieval guilds and exhorted their members to radical, secret, and violent means.<sup>46</sup>

During the nineteenth century the English Parliament, the *Canadian Messenger* pointed out, gradually came to see the importance of trade unions for the industrial system and legalize them by bringing in new legislation. Germany, the United States, and France followed suit. By the end of the nineteenth century, western governments reluctantly accepted the trade union movement. The Christian churches showed a similar reluctance. Some Christians, however, were more prophetic and farseeing. One such Christian was Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, Catholic bishop of Mainz, who could discern in labour turbulence some basic societal truths and just aspirations. In fighting for the rights of the working classes, he hoped to protect them from the evils of socialism. He founded Christian trade unions and assured

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<sup>42</sup> *CMSH*, 19 (March 1909): 104; 17 (March 1907): 97-102 and 17 (April 1907): 145-51; 21 (February 1911): 66-74 and (March 1911): 99-104; 22 (March 1912): 99-105; 23 (April 1913): 147-52; 24 (May 1914): 195-9; 27 (August 1917): 209-13; 28 (July 1918): 30 (October 1920): 343-8.

<sup>43</sup> *CMSH*, 19 (March 1909): 105-06.

<sup>44</sup> For an excellent summary of this document, see *The Worker Question: A New Historical Perspective on Rerum Novarum* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1991), 3-5.

<sup>45</sup> *CMSH*, 19 (March 1909): 106.

<sup>46</sup> *CMSH*, 19 (March 1909): 106-07; Holmes, 200-02.

them the sympathy of religious groups.<sup>47</sup> His thinking provided the framework for *Rerum Novarum*, the most significant social encyclical of the modern world.

The magazine stated that *Rerum Novarum* remained “the workingman’s charter of liberty” and demonstrated great sympathy for the “toiler.” Leo described the unions as “suited to the requirements of this our age.” Unions have benefited society and gained workers “higher wages, shorter hours, more-sanitary conditions of work, the abolition of the middleman, [and] redress of many injustices.” They have also benefited companies by protecting them from the unfair competition of other companies which exploited their employees by substandard wages and conditions. Trade unions provide a mechanism for the peaceful settlement of disputes and a viable alternative to socialism.<sup>48</sup> In recent times, at the hundredth anniversary of this encyclical, Gregory Baum has pointed to the originality of this letter and to this “enlightened Toryism” as a most important representation of Catholic social teaching.<sup>49</sup>

According to the *Canadian Messenger*, trade unionism in Canada had “not had a particularly brilliant career.” In 1907, of 151 strikes, 57 gave victories to the employers, and only 33 to the workers. Union membership was decreasing because of unenlightened and autocratic leadership. During these years in the editor’s view, Canada had a buoyant economy, and did not need the extreme methods of European unionism. However, Canadian trade unionism was not socialist and was not to be associated with the evils of socialism. The active support of Catholics for Catholic trade unions would avoid the dangers of socialism. Workers also must become involved in their unions to influence union councils, but at the same time should remain docile to the church. The editor concluded by stressing that religious people must give “their time, their zeal and their money” to bring about a resolution for the social and economic problems.<sup>50</sup> The *Canadian Messenger* regularly emphasized the theme of social action – but it was the foreign missions which garnered most interest from the readers as they tended to raise their

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<sup>47</sup> *CMSH*, 19 (March 1909): 107-08; Holmes, 172-4; Paul Misner, *Social Catholicism in Europe: From the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 136-47; Hans Maier, *Revolution and Church: the Early History of Christian Democracy, 1789-1901*, trans. by Emily M. Schossberger (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 256-7 and 291-2.

<sup>48</sup> *CMSH*, 19 (March 1909): 109-11.

<sup>49</sup> Gregory Baum, “The Originality of Catholic Social Teaching,” in *Rerum Novarum: One Hundred Years of Catholic Social Teaching* (London: SCM Press, 1991), 55-6.

<sup>50</sup> *CMSH*, 19 (March 1909): 112-13.

horizons to the universality of Catholicism and expose them to stories of the perilous Canadian north and the exotic nature of Asian cultures.

### **Missionary Zeal**

Missionary activities in the first decade of the century were directed to both domestic and foreign fields. The domestic scene included ministry to Euro-Canadian workers in the north and new Canadians in the west. Noticeably absent in the *Canadian Messenger* was mention of the mission to the First Nations. The Jesuits renewed mission activity among the Native people at Sandwich and Walpole Island in 1843 and Wikwemikong in 1844,<sup>51</sup> but these missions were not discussed in the magazine. A typical missionary to the north was Jesuit Richard Baxter. In 1872 he was sent to preach the gospel on the north shore of Georgian Bay, “saying Mass in the houses of settlers, baptizing children, blessing marriages, and giving missions in white centres of population.”<sup>52</sup> The heroism of missionary saints and the hope they offered for all was part of the resolute nature of ultramontane spirituality presented by the *Canadian Messenger*.<sup>53</sup>

The magazine explored the importance of Catholic immigrants to western Canada. How would the influx of so many new Canadians effect the nation? Writing the monthly intention for August 1912, the *Canadian Messenger* pointed out that the Dominion was “taking her place as a young and vigorous nation among her older sisters of the world.” The Canadian-born population was growing quickly and passing on Canadian traditions. Attesting to this, the churches of Canada were well organized and the clergy well educated. The Catholic press was alert, Catholic schools educated the young, and Catholic charities were active and well supported. “Unless the unforeseen happens, everything predicts a healthy and brilliant career for the Catholic Church in this great Dominion.”<sup>54</sup>

What shattered this idyllic picture, in the view of the magazine, were the hundreds of thousand of immigrants from central Europe. Arriving in Canada at the turn of the twentieth century and “possessing ethnic ideals and points of view very often totally different from ours,” they went through much difficulty adjusting but could trust in Canadian justice to help them to achieve their own social betterment. Many of the new arrivals were Catholics who lingered in the cities where the parishes were unprepared to receive to them in their own language. Many Canadian cities, including Quebec, Montreal, Winnipeg, Halifax, and Saint John, had immigration

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<sup>51</sup> See the *Dictionary of Jesuit Biography: Ministry to English Canada, 1842-1987* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Jesuit Studies, 1991), 59.

<sup>52</sup> *CMSH*, 15 (June 1905): 261.

<sup>53</sup> Holmes, 138-9.

<sup>54</sup> *CMSH*, 22 (August 1912): 331-2.

agents to meet them and give direction so that they would avoid the “swelling ranks of Socialists and other criminal degenerates.”<sup>55</sup> Yet advised the magazine, they were better off going to western Canada where they would be better welcomed by their own language groups.<sup>56</sup>

Most Catholic immigrants travelling to western Canada discovered the churches had yet to be built and the clergy had yet to be stationed. Devine asked, “How are those Catholics to fulfill their religious duties? How can they keep the faith ...?” In eastern Canadian cities, ethnic immigrants settled in groups, and as a result, were better able to build their churches and schoolhouses. Thus they and their descendants kept the faith, and their churches enjoyed prosperity in many remote corners of Canada.<sup>57</sup>

As the Canadian prairies filled in, members of ethnic groups were unfortunately not directed to the same colonies where they could settle together and build a church and school. Instead, the clergy had to travel around the country looking for farmers here and miners there who were of the same culture and language group.<sup>58</sup> The Knights of Columbus in Winnipeg, to facilitate such activity, published an excellent map of the prairie provinces showing where there were resident priests and existing missions. An immigration chaplain in Quebec was appointed to direct immigrants to the west in an orderly fashion. The Catholic Church Extension Society of Toronto laboured to build chapels and support priests in the west, so that after a short while, these communities would become the centres of Catholic religious and cultural life.<sup>59</sup> Devine gave a ringing endorsement of the work of the Extension Society: “No charity that we know of ... can rival that of providing centers of worship and church accommodation in the small towns and isolated hamlets that are springing up almost weekly in the West.” Churches were built in the larger centres and the spiritual needs of settlers provided for, but much help was still needed in the rural and isolated districts.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *CMSH*, 22 (August 1912): 333.

<sup>56</sup> Avery, D.H. and J. K. Fedorowicz, *The Poles in Canada* (1982), 7-9; O. W. Gerus and J. E. Rea, *The Ukrainians in Canada* (1985), 7-11; *The Germans in Canada* (1985), 10-11, all in the series *Canada's Ethnic Groups* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1982- ).

<sup>57</sup> *CMSH*, 22 (August 1912): 334. For a fuller account of the hardships, see Jeanne R. Beck, *To Do and To Endure: The Life of Catherine Donnelly, Sister of Service* (Toronto: Dundurn, 1997), 239-53.

<sup>58</sup> *CMSH*, 22 (August 1912): 335-6.

<sup>59</sup> *CMSH*, 22 (August 1912): 336-7; See Mark G. McGowan, “‘Religious Duties and Patriotic Endeavours’: The Catholic Church Extension Society, French Canada and the Prairie West, 1908-1916,” *CCHA Historical Studies* 51 (1984): 109 and 118.

<sup>60</sup> See Stella Hryniuk, “Pioneer Bishop, Pioneer Times: Nykyta Budka in Canada,” *CCHA Historical Studies* 55 (1988): 37-8.

Leaflets of the Apostleship of Prayer and copies of the *Canadian Messenger* were sent to members who had moved west to its remote areas. The editor suggested that prayer circles be formed among isolated Catholics “as a means of keeping up piety and the spirit of prayers until better times come.”<sup>61</sup> The main thrust of the magazine stressed devotions and conformity to Roman religious norms, revealing that it was not entirely happy about the challenges offered by Catholics of different religious cultures and languages. Although the *Canadian Messenger* highlighted a welcome to new Canadians, it was clearly not comfortable with cultural pluralism.

The international apostolate attracted great attention among Christians because the foreign missionary was heroic and exotic by nature. The magazine asked prayers for the conversion of the Chinese and Japanese peoples and for Christian unity with the oriental churches of Greece and the Middle East. In fact, the Apostleship of Prayer paid increasing attention to the non-Christian nations of China and Japan.

In Japal, official persecutions had forced Christians to go underground until the end of the nineteenth century. With the reopening of Japan in the last half of the nineteenth century, Christian missionaries returned and discovered 4,000 practising Christians. The Japanese government withdrew restrictive legislation and religious freedom was restored. Converts soon increased to over 50,000, and the Catholic hierarchy was established in 1891 as Tokyo was constituted an archbishopric with three suffragan sees. As an advanced civilization, Japan was taking its place among the great powers of the world. Under British tutelage, the Japanese had won the Russo-Japanese War and halted further czarist advance into the Pacific. Yet further conversions among the Japanese offered special problems as Japanese scholars and statesmen held that worldwide Christianity contravened their national spirit. The missionaries needed both the zeal of a Paul at Athens and the wisdom of a scientist at Tokyo to explain the Christian faith to the sophisticated Japanese. Protestant evangelization moreover revealed the reality of Christian division to the bewildered Japanese, delaying their conversion. The Apostleship of Prayer members were urged to direct their morning offering and devotion to the Sacred Heart to “illumine the minds and move the hearts of this intelligent people.”<sup>62</sup>

Large in population and rich in resources, China was of great interest to the Christian world but was closed until the Treaty of Beijing opened it to outsiders in 1842. Yet Catholic inroads into this complex culture remained meagre. In 1900 Fr. W. Havret wrote: “Apparent results have not corresponded to the human effort: the churches have trebled, the missionaries

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<sup>61</sup> *CMSH*, 22 (August 1912): 337-8.

<sup>62</sup> *CMSH*, 17 (January 1907): 5-6 and 28 (August 1918): 225-6.

have sextupled; [but] the Christians have scarcely doubled.” In the fifty year period from 1840 to 1890, Chinese Catholics, for all the expenditure of energy, had only increased from 240,000 to 472,000. Many reasons existed for this disappointment. The scholarly élite, which in the seventeenth century had welcomed Fr. Matteo Ricci and his Jesuit colleagues, conducted in the twentieth century “a skilful and bitter fight” against evangelization. As well, “official persecutions and popular riots, rebellions and civil wars” also waged havoc against Christians schools, hospitals, and churches. Moreover, many educated Chinese saw Christianity as “the religion of the victors” and the missionaries as “fellow countrymen of those merciless conquerors.”<sup>63</sup>

The years after 1890 gave reason for encouragement as Catholics increased from 542,664 to 1,800,000. Missionary organizations had formed in Europe and America to evangelize China, and by 1915 the converts had greatly increased. Important politicians and industrialists were becoming Catholic despite the hardships involved. After the Sino-Japanese War, the European powers intervened with Japan to get more benevolent terms for China, and softened their image before Chinese eyes. But especially, the Catholic hospitals, dispensaries, orphanages, and schools spoke to the wisdom of the Chinese. In times of disaster, the intelligent devotedness of the missionaries awoke interest among perceptive people. By 1917 eight hundred Chinese priests laboured beside fourteen hundred European priests. Twenty-four hundred Chinese were preparing for the ministry in Catholic seminaries. American and Irish mission societies committed to the evangelization of China were recently founded. Yet the *Canadian Messenger* asked what does all this activity and these substantial numbers mean among the 400,000,000 Chinese of 1917? Nevertheless, it conceded the new parliamentary republic showed sympathy for reform and offered hope. Many Christians thus supported this novel government.<sup>64</sup>

Education was the crying need of parliamentary government, and Catholics had been quick to redouble efforts in this area. Protestant mission societies had also been busy teaching English to Chinese students – which may bring “the ruin of Catholicism in China.” Catholic Schools and colleges following the government syllabus had been opened in Canton, Hong Kong, Tientsin, Beijing, and Shanghai. Catholic universities in Shanghai, the Aurora under the Jesuits for young men and the Morning Star under the Helpers of the Holy Souls for young women, had opened. The literati and the mandarins sent their children to these universities, and the graduates went on to achieve excellence at other institutions. The Catholic institutions had a long way to go and stood in the shadow of the English and American Protestant institutions with “vast resources” at their disposal. Thus the

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<sup>63</sup> *CMSH*, 22 (July 1912): 291-2 and 27 (November 1917): 299.

<sup>64</sup> *CMSH*, 22 (July 1912): 292-3 and 27 (1917 November): 299-300.

members were asked to “offer their prayers, sufferings and good works for the conversion of pagan China.”<sup>65</sup>

The Middle East has exerted over the western imagination a poetic glamour as it was the birthplace of Mary, Joseph, and the “Blessed Redeemer,” Jesus Christ. Its caves and monasteries have produced many holy martyrs and saintly theologians. The “examples of Athanasius, Gregory, Basil, Cyril, Chrysostom, and other hundreds of bishops” have come down to us. Many churches in the Middle East remain in union with Rome. When East and West were united under one head, these men fought to keep the faith one in doctrine and discipline. However, imperial politics and episcopal servility “swept away the unity with Rome that had been for hundreds of years the secret of the strength of the Oriental Churches.”<sup>66</sup>

“The Armenians, Uniate Greeks, Maronites, Bulgarians, Egyptian Copts and Chaldeans, take special pride in their union with the venerable See of Peter.” However, other churches of the Orient, while sharing the common doctrines, episcopal tradition, and Eucharist, had been led by the Greek Orthodox to drift from union with the Western Church. Although there was always agreement on the first seven church councils and temporary reunification at the Council of Florence in 1439, the Eastern and Western churches still remained separate. The oriental churches have suffered from “languor, indifference, lukewarmness, and a spiritual sterility” owing to an uneducated laity and “dormant piety.” The laity suffered from lack of religious education among the faithful, and church people lacked frequent communion, prayer, proper devotions, and reforming retreats. The editor recommended that the Apostleship members pray for reunification with the oriental Christians, and for the arrival of missionary orders and congregations to educate the poor and the needy among them.<sup>67</sup>

After the example of the Divine Master, the Apostleship members must pray that “all may be one.” They must pray “to bring about the union of the two great branches of the Christian Church.” And with such unity accomplished under one Shepherd, the Kingdom of God would reach to the far corners of the earth with loving efficacy.<sup>68</sup>

The *Canadian Messenger* encouraged mission contact with Orthodox, Protestant and non-believers to bring them over to Roman Catholicism. It was hoped that the historic treasures of Orthodoxy, the physical resources of Protestants, and the energy of the non-believing Asians could be brought

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<sup>65</sup> *CMSH*, 22 (July 1912): 294-5 and 27 (November 1917): 301-02.

<sup>66</sup> *CMSH*, 20 (February 1910): 52 and 24 (February 1914): 51.

<sup>67</sup> *CMSH*, 20 (February 1910): 52-5; 24 (February 1914): 53-4; and 27 (July 1917): 180.

<sup>68</sup> *CMSH*, 24 (February 1914): 55 and 27 (July 1917), 183.

into union with the Holy See. The magazine's intention was clearly not the sharing of different faiths, but rather the conversion of non-Catholics to "the one True Church." It is also puzzling that this comprehensive concern for the extension of the Catholic faith around the world revealed little interest of the magazine in missions to the Canadian First Nations.

### **Conclusion**

During the editorship of E. J. Devine, the *Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart* proved to be a catalogue of Catholic devotional life, a window on Canadian ultramontane spirituality, which inspired hundreds of thousands of readers with a continual repertoire of devotional articles. A journalist but not a critical historian, Devine liked to entertain his readers with interesting stories, inspire them with literature, and to instruct them in social action. The articles were read, prayed over, responded to with letters, and obviously touched their readers deeply. Families read the issues and passed them on to other readers. The articles discussed personal holiness, parish devotions, foreign and domestic missions, Catholic education, and regular reception of the sacraments. Deploring socialism because it was against religious freedom, the magazine educated its readers to Catholic social thought. The *Canadian Messenger* showed little concern for Protestants or Native people and no interest in Canadian domestic or foreign policy issues.

During the Devine years, the magazine doubled its readership to 180,000 and laid a firm foundation for its further expansion in the 'forties and 'fifties. Beyond expanding the devotions of the Sacred Heart and the Apostleship of Prayer, the *Canadian Messenger* believed that awakening the love of God in the membership would inspire them to social action. The magazine aimed to create many apostolic prayer centres in Canada to foster Christian virtue among its members and compassion for their neighbours. The beauty of the Roman church and its devotions was stressed along with workers' rights, higher education, and world missions. While the members of other cultures arriving in Canada were accepted, eastern liturgies and cultural pluralism nevertheless challenged the uniformity of the Canadian devotional style. Quite apart from episcopal structures, the enthusiasm of promoters, readers, and participants transmitted a popular devotion to over 250,000 persons. As a Jesuit magazine, the *Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart* was religiously ultramontane, but in much of its educational thought and social ideas it demonstrated progressive influences.