

EDOUARD QUERTIER

Catholic Priest

GRANDSON OF JEAN-BAPTISTE MATHIEU ARIAIL

Edouard Quertier, Catholic Priest, founder of the Society of Temperance (alcoholic anonymous) born in Saint-Denis-sur-Richelieu on Sep 5th, 1796, 12th of 17 children of Helier Quertier, deacon, and of Marie Anne Ariail, deceased at Saint-Denis-de-Kamouraska on Jul 17th, 1872.

Edouard Quertier conducted his studies at the Seminary of Nicolet from 1809 until 1815, and according to the statement of Father Paul-Loup Archambault, (the most clever in his class). In 1815, he enrolled to study Theology at the Grand Seminary of Quebec, an institution where he quit 3 years later. In 1820, we again find him at Sainte-Marie-de-la-Nouvelle-Beauce, where he worked as a teacher. Afterwards, he chose to study law, and in 1822 he enters an apprenticeship with Master Charles Panet of Quebec. Two years later, the destitution forced him to give up his position. He applied again to enter into the priesthood. Monseigneur Joseph-Octave Plessis decided not to admit him until after 2 years of reflection. In the meantime, he took the leadership position in a manufacturing facility at Saint-Antoine-de-la-Riviere-du-Loop(Louisville). Finally, to the threshold of his 33rd year, Edouard Quertier was ordained Priest at Quebec, on the 9th of Oct 1829, by Mgr Bernard-Claude Panet.

He was built like an athlete. (Breadth of shoulders; countenance not refined; features-short and striking; eyes imperious; lips stern; hair overflowing upon the black skullcap), Father Quertier was one remarkable man. After 26 months of curacy, he was there appointed, in October of 1831, first parish Priest resident of Saint-Antoine, on the island of Grues (County of Montmagmy). (Charming little stay, wrote Quertier. One old tumbledown cottage for lodging which had been halfway mended two times in three years, causing me to close myself within the attic of my small house. If I wasn't able to build my parsonage, then we know who is responsible for that. To keep the peace, I yielded and leased the place).

The Parish Priest was in conflict with the Father Charles Francois Painchaud, owner of the place where the church parish and the parsonage were built, who harshly kept up his claim. (all the blame falls on (Painchaud) the great benefactor of the Isle), wrote Quertier to Charles-Felix Cazeau.

In the springtime of 1833, Father Quertier traveled to the missions of Mingan (County of Saguenay) and grudgingly came back to the island to stay, until in 1834, Mgr Joseph Signay yields to his complaint and the Father Quertier was appointed Parish Priest of Saint-Georges of Cacouna. Would he be (the angel of peace and the (instrument) of reconciliation), which was the wish of his Bishop. At this time, the civil power and the religious power were in constant conflict.

The (bill he submitted), which would alter the composition of the (assembly) chamber during the session of 1831 and was sent back by the counsel; it would put the church against the state according to public opinion, and this brought a strong reaction from the

public. Quertier was warned that, in Cacouna, he would be in the middle of two opposing groups. One in favor of building in the village itself a church destined to take the place of the old chapel. The other one, to the construction, within its concessions, of this new church. (all that was needed was to exercise diplomacy in order to soften and gain the consent from people living away from the fixed place it is hard to change, especially when you follow legal procedures). Quertier answered, in part, to these views of his Bishop: the brand new parsonage within the village and the repaired chapel will be transferred to him after serving 7 years as priest.

After 1835, having assured Mgr Signay that (the peace had been firmly established), the Priest, Quertier, tended his resignation. Periodically, having written volumes of bitter revendications and mocking insinuations, the fruitful writer renewed his demands. Finally in 1841, he got a response to his disadvantage. For the second time, in 12 years of priesthood, Father Quertier was called up, in September of 1841, to plant a new parish, that of Saint-Denis-of-Kamouraska. (how did I land on this dry rocky place? At my arrival (in the month of October) there was not even enough of a floor to put a bed or table. I was forced to go down the hill and rent a little house, rather shack. No matter! I was expecting decent lodging.)

However, starting from this isolated corner, the reputation of Quertier began to spread. At Saint-Denis, he would fulfill the main work of his career, the Foundation of the Society of Temperance, called the Black Cross. Since 1839, eminent preachers, among which were Mgr Charles-Auguste-Marie-Joseph de Forbin-Jason and Charles-Pascal-Telesphore Chiniquy, stood up against the scourge of alcoholism. *But praise is due to Quertier, for having, in 1842, formulated the statutes of the Society, the oaths of his new Society members and, of giving to them as a symbol, a bare Black Cross.*

The year following, Quertier could write (the temperance reigns everywhere. Every home bears a blessed cross as memory of our engagements). In 1844, the same happy conclusion (all is peaceful here. I can only attribute our real peace amidst the discord of our neighbors to our Society of the Cross. This blessed cross speaks for itself.

From 1847 on, Father Alexis Mailloux assisted Quertier. He would be considered as his strongest collaborator, even as his master. Little by little, under the influence of Quertier, the preaching of complete abstinence expanded well beyond the limits of Saint-Denis and even the Diocese of Quebec.

The marvelous eloquence of Quertier rendered him renowned; in the pulpit, he became both a man of fire and a vigorous judge (the man of vivacity), the impetuous democratic leader, the smooth preacher of the learned bible teacher (often you will find more people in his catechism class than at the mass the church was so crowded you could hardly pass), said the Pastor. The fidelity, popular faith attributed to the Black Cross, a wonderful virtue, and the Rosary of Quertier is said to have extinguished fires and healed the sick.

Although the memory of the Priest is still venerated, history has to admit that he was a difficult man. Unstable and always complaining, by character, violent, and of a quarrelsome attitude towards the other Parish Priests. He was judgmental or critical towards the politicians of his time.

Quertier, himself, received many blows from the leaders of the Diocese and he made life hard for some of his contemporaries, of whom were the Lord of la Bouteillerie, Pierre-Thomas Casgrain, the Deputy Pierre Canac, surnamed Marquis, and the merchant, Jean-Charles Chapais (father).

After 15 years of venerable ministry at Saint-Denis, Father Quertier, (advanced in years (and) broken), obtained his retirement, which he spent in quietness and serenity. Beneath his white hair, the violent man mellows without losing his faith and his zeal as Priest. He died at Saint-Denis and was interred beneath the sanctuary of the church. His statue dominates, today, the bare hill he used to climb over 100 years ago.

Julienne Bernard.

NOTE: For most of the members of the Ariail family of the same age and generation as James Patterson, this individual is our 1st cousin, 4 generations removed. His mother was Marie Anne Ariail, 2nd child of John Ariail and Marie Louise Allard from Quebec City, Canada. She was born on Feb 3, 1763, St. Charlesbourg, Quebec, Canada.