

# "IF I WERE ABLE TO 'SEE' MY SON'S SOUL"

On November 27, 2015, the feast of the Miraculous Medal, Michel Perreault, 38 years old, left this earth for a better world after a long and hard battle against lung cancer. He leaves to mourn his passing, his wife Stéphanie and four young children, between the ages of 7 and 14 years.

In spite of his persevering battle against the illness in order to support his loved ones, he had long ago found peace in his heart because he had been able to give a meaning to his suffering. Throughout his illness, he was a model of courage and a source of inspiration for others.

Before dying, he addressed a message of faith to the members of the Work, asking his wife to send it to us

after his death. His posthumous letter which we are printing on the opposite page is preceded by a testimonial he gave at Spiri-Maria in September 2010, before he became ill. It has acquired all its meaning, now that he has accomplished his mission to the very end.

"If I were able to 'see' my son's soul, what would I see?" he wrote in July 2010. Today, he can not only "contemplate" his son's soul, "entirely turned to God", but also the fruit of his sufferings which he knew so well to offer up to God.



Editorial Staff

Michel's Testimonial given at Spiri-Maria in September 2010

## Offering All to God!

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Dear Mother Paul-Marie,

I have been thinking of writing to you for some time now, but I did not dare do so, knowing that you must bear many sufferings for all of us. So, I will understand if this letter goes unanswered or even if you cannot read it. My sister-in-law, Hélène Langlais, who had the opportunity to meet you in the past during a pilgrimage in Europe, insisted that I write to you.

So, I have a question to ask you and I think you are the only person who will be able to answer it, but first of all, allow me to introduce myself.

I am a young man, 33 years of age, married for twelve years already, and the father of a family of four children. The Lord really gave me good parents. The importance of prayer and the seeking of "things from On-High" were passed on to us at a very early age. Unfortunately, that did not prevent me from setting aside my relationship with God for a long time.

I am among those who went to Mass and who prayed because that was the "right thing" to do, because it was a good thing to do so. I always treated spiritual things in a more intellectual way without feeling anything whatsoever.

At one point I was even jealous of

those who had "experienced" the Lord's presence; this was unjust because it had never happened to me despite my "efforts". Nevertheless, I was always aware that the Lord was accompanying us and once events had passed, I could not at-



2010 - Michel and Stéphanie Perreault's four children. From left to right: Simon, Gabriel, Laurie and Nicolas (who was born autistic).

tribute them solely to chance or to our "talent".

Like many young adults, I went through what is known as the crisis of the thirties, but in my case it was on the level of the faith. When my little girl, who would have been 6 or 7 years old and whom we had taught to say her prayers at night, asked me, "You, daddy, do you love Jesus?", I

instinctively replied "yes", but this shook me.

So, I asked my father to bring me the first volume of *Life of Love*. My father would often talk to me about the Army of Mary when we would go fishing together and the hope he found in it, without, for all that, pressuring me into doing anything whatsoever. As it has for so many others, that reading deeply touched me and encouraged me to meet with a priest in private to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. That confession did me a world of good and I think I can say that my interior reform began at that moment. Even though the road ahead is still very long, I at least have the certainty that, with *Life of Love*, I am on the right track.

I am now reading the twelfth volume and I had the opportunity to participate in the triduum held last May at Spiri-Maria. The atmosphere strongly impressed me, as well as the providential events that took place there. I understand better what you mean when you say, in *Life of Love*: "How beautiful it is; what a wonderful Work, etc." So, I left Spiri-Maria with two questions

in mind:

"When would I be able to return? And how could I do my little bit (even though I cannot see what I could bring that you do not already have)?"

Since that time, all the members of my family have received the consecration through the holy picture. I could speak at length about all *Life of Love* gives me, but

I will be content with writing, with much emotion, thank you, thank you for everything, even for what I am unaware of.

So here now is my question. One of our children is autistic. Although it is not always easy to work with him, he brings us great joy. He is a smiling child, docile and obedient. His condition deeply saddens his grandmother (my mother)...

*Life of Love* teaches us to offer all to God and reminds us that we are very little without Him. That really was the answer I needed, because we truly feel that accompanying a handicapped child is beyond us. Do we have any other choice but to abandon our child to Mother Mary's good care?

If, what he will become on earth (on the level of his self-sufficiency, his learning, etc.) is one of our concerns, accompanying him on the spiritual level is something that worries me tremendously. How will I be able to help him develop a relationship with God? That is what is worrying me most today.

We are provided with many psychological and scientific explanations on autism, but I really wonder how our Father in Heaven sees him? I often ask myself the question: "If I were able to 'see' my son's soul, what would I see?" My wife has often prayed that he be cured, but I have difficulty praying for that, feeling that I am unworthy to make such a request. I probably lack faith... I entrust him to Mary and to the Lord, knowing that they will never abandon us and that the miracle which may take place will not necessarily be the one we expect.

For my part, I continue reading the Work's writings, and I no longer look for "supernatural" manifestations. I now know that with such graces there are also sufferings. All that you describe concerning the closeness with God, the perceptions, that is something that is completely foreign to me. I have offered it all up to the Lord if that is what He wants of me. I am prepared to never feel anything, to renounce that so very strong desire of feeling His presence in a tangible manner, if that can save some souls. I ask Mary to sustain my faith; I have such a great need of that.

In closing, I want to bear witness to certain marvelous things, divine thoughtful gestures, as you would say, which we received after I had been to Spiri-Maria.

1. In our prayer intentions, I had confided my precarious employment situa-

tion (I am a teacher). Now, a teacher with more seniority was transferred to Quebec City (the necessary conditions fell into place after more than three years of waiting on his part), so that I have been guaranteed stability for many years.

2. My wife became ill last winter and the doctors still do not know the cause of the problem. I asked her, when she had attacks during the night, to use your picture even if she did not believe in it. She later informed me that this was now the only means that brought her relief. Recently, she began to read *Life of Love*.

3. Before leaving for Spiri-Maria last May, we participated in a Marian novena at my mother-in-law's, before the statue of the Virgin. My autistic son participated in eight of the nine evenings during which he heard the rosary being recited. Shortly afterwards, we received the holy pic-

ture with the blessing that was meant for him. (I think it is Mary in her apparition at the Rue du Bac, reminding us that she was offering her graces to whomever requested them of her.)

The day after having received this, he was saying the "Hail Mary", and one would have thought he was a little angel. Now, he no longer says it, and he finds it difficult to listen to us pray. But we continue to hope, given that he appreciates religious music and especially a song entitled "Trinity".

I am sending you a picture of our little Nicolas and another of our family.

It would be wonderful if we could benefit from your advice and especially your prayers, but we would most certainly not want to add to your suffering. Thank you!

**Michel Perreault**

*When she looked at the picture of the family Michel had included in his letter, Mother Paul-Marie's gaze was immediately drawn to the smiling child on the right, certain that this was Nicolas. Reading the names at the bottom of the picture confirmed that she was right.*

*Through the child's eyes, she knew she could reassure the parents and tell them not worry about his soul. If physically and psychologically, Nicolas was locked in his own little world, his spiritual soul, on the contrary, was entirely turned to God.*

## Letter to the Army of Mary

I will die in a very short while, but I wanted to send you one last letter.

I was fortunate enough to be a member of the Work of the Army of Mary, fortunate enough to be able to join it, even if it was rather late, at a time when there are not many newcomers. What wonderful consolations I found in it! I suffered before dying but our Mother taught me the meaning of suffering. As she said: "Suffering passes, but having suffered well remains."

Thank you to all those who carried me in their hearts and prayed for me. Thank you also to all those who wrote to me to encourage me. I cannot begin to thank all those who accompanied me and my family, but we were the beneficiaries of so many acts of charity. For example, the visits by the Sons of Mary either at home or at the hospital for confession, the Eucharist and the last rites.

Thank you to all for your support. The

resulting benefits are spiritual and hard to evaluate, but without your prayers, it would have been difficult for me to deal with such a trial. Continue to pray for me, for the repose of my soul, for my large and wonderful family. Continue to carry us in your hearts.

Given that I am so young, I would have liked to participate actively in the establishment of the Kingdom. However, it would seem that my contribution was to be entirely different... As a consequence, I offered up my suffering for the coming of the Kingdom; what else could I do in my condition?

I am leaving you, but from On-High, I will have a wonderful view of the Work's future accomplishments.

I do not say "farewell" but "goodbye" as we shall see each other again...

United in prayer,

**Michel Perreault**