

Father Victor Lelièvre, O.M.I. (1876-1956)

Born in Brittany (France) on March 4, 1876, from a poor but very devout family, Victor owes his faith above all to his mother. At age ten, he makes his first communion and hears a voice telling him: "Come and follow me". His parents don't have the money to send him to school. He therefore finds a job as an apprentice in a printing house. When he turns seventeen, the new vicar of his parish, who had noticed his piety, encourages him to go on a pilgrimage with his mother to ask the Virgin Mary what to do. At this occasion Victor meets the rector of Montmartre's Basilica who believes in his vocation and finds a benefactor willing to pay his schooling. Victor is then able to enter the noviciate of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary in 1896.



Not very brilliant in his studies, clumsy, distracted, the designated victim of his brothers' jokes, Victor doesn't consider himself worthy of priesthood. But in the end he is ordained a priest on June 24, 1902, on the feast of Saint John the Baptist and he takes his perpetual vows on the following July 26, feast of Saint Anne. A few days later he leaves for Angers where he joins the group of preachers of parish retreats guided by Father Grelaud. Thanks to him, Victor is able to overcome his shyness.

In 1903, when the anticlerical laws in France force the Oblates to leave the country, he is sent to Canada. He is assigned to Saint-Sauveur's parish in Quebec City, a big community counting 13000 people, mostly workers of the shoe factories. From his very arrival he begins preaching the Gospel. His deep faith allows him to gather every year big crowds of people for the procession of the Feast of the Sacred-Heart. And every first Friday of the month, for twenty-five years, he succeeds in assembling for an hour of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament two thousand workers, in their working clothes.

In 1923 he founds the house for retreats, Jesus-Ouvrier, where he meets thousands of men and young people, of which he makes several apostles: more than two hundred priests and religious consider him at the origin of their vocation. He dies on November 29, 1956.

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