

Funeral Mass of Brother Léopold Marie:
 His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie's Sermon
 during Holy Mass at the **HOLY NAME OF JESUS** and
MARY MOTHER OF MERCY AND MOTHER OF THE CHURCH
SHRINE in Detroit, Michigan; in the United States
 of America – Monday April 14th, 2025

+ *Very dear Brethren, very dear Sisters, my Friends:*

Nearly 24 years ago, Fraternité Notre Dame took into its Mission in Mongolia: a sweet, parentless and cheerful little boy, suffering from neurofibromatosis, a rare and incurable disease that leaves only a few years to live.

This little boy wanted only one thing: to play with his friends in his new family and run with all his might.

The Sisters taught him the faith and made him love Jesus and his Most Holy Mother, the Virgin Mary.

This dear child loved to give a hand to the Nuns, making himself the older brother to the little ones, and not hesitating to put others first, before himself, with an immense courage which he was going to demonstrate, his entire life through.

During a trip to Mongolia, I christened him with the name: Léopold.

His health was a major concern to me at the time, especially in a country like Mongolia, which had no medical facilities capable of caring for and dealing with such a difficult case.

So, I sent a nun to accompany him from Mongolia to the United States, in order to consult renowned specialists.

Medical visits and surgeries followed in close succession, which meant a great deal of suffering and hardship for the 8-year-old boy, who never complained but always wore a beautiful smile illuminating his entire face, imbued with the Image of Jesus.

Every effort was made to prepare his meals with organic food, and at the same time, ensure his education. He strove to become fluent in French, and literally devoured books in that language.

As the years passed, surrounded and cherished by the religious men and women of Fraternite Notre Dame, our little Léopold grew in faith, and in the love of God and the Most Holy Virgin Mary, whom he considered as his own Mother.

On many occasions, Léopold expressed his desire to become a religious, to wear the cassock, and to become a priest.

As a teenager, his desire to serve God became obvious.

Absolutely intolerant of idleness, he loved to keep busy and help others. Thus, he rendered many small services to the Nuns, at the bakery facility.

The doctor had told us that we were holding this child in our hands, just as one carries a very fragile vase, which the slightest fall could break... due to his surgical operations.

Yet, the years elapsed in joy, in prayer and united with the suffering Jesus, his rosary beads in his hands; quite charitable with all his fellow Friars. He told them:

*"When God loves a soul very much...
he sends suffering and pain her way."*

He had such a desire to dedicate himself to God, that I decided to allow him to take his first steps in the Religious Life and gave him his religious name, which was chosen by Our Lady Herself:

Brother Léopold Marie of Mercy.

He also had the opportunity to come here to Detroit, so as to help the poor and provide many services to the church.

His pleasure was practicing charity; serving the poor; preparing food parcels; and baking cookies with Sister Marie Camille – always with that smile, kindness, spirit of renunciation, and his eagerness to accomplish his task.

Faithful to his Hour of Adoration close to the Blessed Sacrament, he was absorbed in prayer.

What was admirable in Brother Léopold Marie was the self-denial that he demonstrated, in not being able to do what his fellow Friars accomplished; this was truly the sacrifice he made to God. A silent sacrifice accepted with a smile; his eyes set on the Cross of Our Lord.

Later, I gave him the Tonsure and conferred on him the orders of Porter, Lector, Exorcist, and Acolyte. He was radiant with joy!

His health deteriorated very quickly due to a particularly aggressive cancer related to his illness, which neither the repeated treatments or cancer protocols could stop.

"Brother Léopold Marie never complained..." confided his fellow Religious & Nurse, Brother Marie Maximilien of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, who looked after him night and day and whom his dear patient nicknamed *'Simon of Cyrene!'*

Always charitable, Brother Léopold Marie, whenever in need of particular care, would even wait until his fellow Religious and Nurse was awake, so as not to disturb his rest...

Toward the close of his final moments, his voice became weaker and weaker, and as I visited him daily to give him Holy Communion, I called him:

"- *My Little Acolyte,*" and with a smile, he replied:

"- *I love you very much;*" thus really summing up all his gratitude and love!

Brother Léopold Marie of Mercy left this earth peacefully and quietly...

Very early that morning of Friday, April 11th, after having worked with all his might in order to save the souls and support the work of Fraternité Notre Dame, his beloved Religious Family.

I am happy to have been his Spiritual Father, thus showing him the path to Heaven.

Brother Léopold Marie chose the Religious Life, which truly embodied what he desired in life:

Answering God's Call and responding to His Love.

What a wonderful example for those who wonder about the Religious Life, for he too left his country;

Accepting his own, fragile and humiliating health, which constantly reminded him to prepare to pass from this life onto Life Everlasting!

The evening before his death, very late, while bringing him Holy Communion, I told him:

"The Blessed Virgin will watch over you tonight."

And a few hours later, Brother Léopold Marie of Mercy gave up his beautiful soul to God; his Heavenly Mother had come to take him away!

Amen

