

*Dear brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus,*

*At the start of this new year, and particularly during this week of prayer for Church unity, we are publishing a pastoral letter written by Mgr Mael in January 2001, which he addressed to his clergy. It reiterates that the restoration of our Church is God's will, and that it possesses a spiritual heritage that we are constantly rediscovering and re-establishing. Bishop Mael will be canonized on Sunday, October 6, 2024, the Solemnity of St. Francis of Assisi.*

Bishop Marc- Primate

## **Dear sons and brothers in Christ our Lord**

At the start of this New Year, it would be good to remind ourselves of what we have been called to do by the Lord, despite our very great unworthiness and very poor qualities, to serve Him. There is a profound meaning to all God's calls and, in His great wisdom, He knows who to address, not that it's to the best, but to those, without doubt, who are likely to hear His call. Then He can fill them with the graces necessary for what He asks of them, and which will compensate for their own weaknesses and incompetence.

Already 47 years ago, Saint Tugdual withdrew to the hermitage he named "Sainte-Présence", after the revelation he received in this place, blessed and willed by God for his faithful servant. Perhaps we haven't yet grasped the immensity of the work of this man, who gave the Celtic Church the spiritual foundations it lacked. In 1866, Bishop Jules Ferrette was the providential man who was to restore to the Church an apostolic filiation that had been lost for centuries, but the spirit and spirituality that are the ethos of the great and venerable Celtic Church had yet to be rediscovered. Without denying the fidelity and holiness of those who worked in the Lord's vineyard, we had to wait another 90 years, until January 1955, with Saint Tugdual, before the foundations were laid that would enable us to build as we do today. Our holy father lived there in asceticism, poverty and constant prayer.

When the Lord called us to his holy service to succeed our saint, we had no idea of the work that would be required of us. It was 1977, 110 years after the apostolic act of Mgr Ferrette and 22 years after the arrival of Saint Tugdual. Yet how many graces were received in those years when we were granted the opportunity to see our beloved Church grow and assert its heritage and presence. It also took a long time for us to understand the contents of the 20 notebooks in which he recorded his meditations, which he bequeathed to posterity. There can be no doubt that all this was part of God's plan, and that His Providence was watching over him with care. Adversity and trials were not lacking either, but if God allows them, it is to test and purify our faith, to open our eyes when we stray from the path assigned to us, and to reveal how merciful His hand is.

In this season of the Nativity, let us remember that we are like the Holy Family who had no place in the guesthouse. If our Church has no place in the "great hostelry" of the "canonical" Churches, it's because God has placed a sign on her to be a prophetic word in the world. We know that our Church does not need the recognition of men to be fully the Church in its fullness. We legitimately aspire to find communion with all the Churches, for the Church is One and undivided, but not at the price of renouncing what is essential to our ethos and tradition. This is why, faithful to the teachings of Saint Tugdual, we have never sacrificed anything of our glorious heritage to the "relativisms" of "canonical" laws that are alien to our spirit.

We are not a "small church" but the Celtic, Orthodox and Apostolic Church. Size is no criterion here. Saint Tugdual understood this, and his fiery words still resonate with the same force in our hearts today, when he called on Bretons and Celts to rediscover the spirit of God's absoluteness of the ancient and holy Celtic Church. He believed they were first and foremost called to this mission. He would have been happy to see the revival of the ritual celebrated in his own time by a much-loved Saint Columban. Holy Providence is watching over us. Never doubt it! We are on a par with all historic churches. In the face of rhetoric that seeks to scorn or relativize our spiritual family, let us not hesitate to welcome it all with thanksgiving, as the apostle advises: *Blessed indeed are you when you suffer for righteousness' sake! Have no fear and do not be troubled. On the contrary, sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts, always ready to defend yourselves against anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you. But let it be with gentleness and respect, in possession of a good conscience...* (1P 3, 14- 16a)

We have nothing to envy any other Church, for our wealth is immense and we are only just beginning to discover it. The days ahead hold great promise, and nothing will deter us from the path that the Holy Spirit is opening up for us. It's been 29 years since we accepted the Lord's yoke, 7 of them as primate. We never cease to give thanks, day after day, for the ministry we serve among you and all the brothers and sisters of the Church. Let us be united in thanksgiving, aware of the immense grace we have received in serving the Lord God in the humble Celtic Church.

May this New Year be kind to you. May it be an ever stronger bond between us all, so that we can serve even more effectively the Lord-God who has called us into the immense field of his apostolate, where there is so much to do, firstly with regard to our own conversion - so difficult! - and where the harvest is so great and the laborers so few. As with the apostles, He has chosen us, the poorest and humblest, with the only means His grace can give us. It is in this conscious humility that we must serve Him, loving Him above all else, and loving without reserve every soul entrusted to our care.

With all my brotherly affection and blessing, in Christ, our God and Savior.

***The Lord has done great things for us and His Name is Holy!***

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'x [Name]', with a large cross symbol to the left of the signature.