



MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY APOSTLES

**The co-founder
Mr. HECTOR DURAND
1892 – 1972**



Mr. Hector Durand was born April 25, 1892, in Saint-Jean-de-Matha in the county of Joliette (Canada). He went to grammar school there and began his classic studies in Joliette Seminary. Following the example of his father, a small industrialist, Mr. Durand had a stronger liking for construction than for studies.

Before deepening his aptitudes, he needed experiences, one of which was his stay in western Canada. There, he met a nurse, Miss Clara Farrell, to whom shortly thereafter, he married. They returned to Montreal with a little money saved from the west. It is then that Mr. Durand built houses.

His spirit of initiative, his talent and his untiring work, always backed by his excellent wife, that allowed Mr. Durand to become, in a time of great economic difficulties, a champion in the construction of house.

At the end of the second world war, in 1945, Mr. & Mrs. Durand had a few hundred apartment houses, besides what they had built for their brothers and sisters. However, the tough Hector Durand, carried in the deepest part of his interior life, a seed that was only waiting for the providential occasion to grow and blossom.

This opportunity took place when Mr. Durand went on a closed retreat with the Franciscans of Chatauguay. The preacher of this retreat for businessmen was a young 29 year old priest, Father Eusebe Menard. His preaching, centered on the Word of God and more specifically on the Gospel, produced a shock whose effect was felt right up to the death of Mr. Durand.

Rightly, Father Menard always repeated that he realized his work thanks to Mr. Durand, who he always referred to as Co-Founder. In spite of ups and

downs, the Menard/Durand relationship produced, in 27 years, fruits that could be compared with any priestly work.

Above, we have pointed out that the Biblical preaching of Father Menard in a time when the Sacre Scriptures where far from being found in every house. We have to also underline, with no less emphasis, the originality of the priest/lay collaboration, 15 years before the 2nd Vatican Council.

The great strength of Mr. Durand was above all, his faith: his faith in the priest, his faith in the Church, his faith in Christ. Not only did he read the Imitation of Christ (the book on his night stand), he imitated Christ. For him, faith without works did not make sense. There's where we see why he spend his entire personal fortune not only to organize the Society of the Holy Apostles, but to work unceasingly, and persevered, almost with rest, for the last 27 years of his life in order to give more priests to the Church.

The last paragraph of his Testament, written by hand, and signed November 13, 1971, is significant for breadth of his intentions, and which could very well be, for us, a great opportunity to reflect: "I am sorry for not having built more houses to form priests."

He who has just died was a giant and those who knew him will only slowly discover the immense grace that the Lord gave them by letting them have interacted with a man such as he. His detachment and generosity could not have reached their heights without his determination and his dedication. Not only his works live on, but also, for some time now, his apostolic actions go beyond the frontiers of our country. Africans, South Americans and Asians benefit from his generosity.

May God be praised forever for having given us Mr. Durand. May He give us from on high, a bit of his charity.

(Pierre Bouchard's Homily, March 9, 1972)