

## From *The Life and Captivity of Miss Eunice Williams*

by Charles B. De Saileville (Eleazar Williams) - 1842

One of the Jesuits stationed in the canton visited the family at a certain time, and seeing the captive girl proposed to make her a Christian by baptism as he had done to others. Her adopted mother replied that she believed the child was as much Christian as he was. The father asked rather in an angry tone, how that might be? She replied, that she had been informed that the father of the child was an English minister, and that no doubt she had been baptized. "Minister, minister!" exclaimed the Jesuit, "he who is now with the Marquis De Vaudreuil of Montreal, and who Monsieur De Rouville mentioned in the report of his expedition, that he was looked upon by the captives as a saint!" . . . "Ah!" said he, "he is called a saint by his deluded followers, when he is nothing but an arch heretic. His baptism is nothing, as he is not a minister of the true Church – he has no authority to administer that holy ordinance. If he has baptized her, the holy Roman Church will never recognize it as a valid baptism."

Although the woman herself being in communion with the Church of Rome, yet she was unwilling at this time for the child to receive baptism – and for the reason above stated. . . The governor general and his lady . . . were among the number who made efforts to redeem Eunice from the hands of the Indians, but in the end all proved abortive. The Jesuits were far otherwise; no stone was left unturned, no stratagem however impious . . . was resorted to, with a view to detain the unhappy captives. They told the Indians, "that it was meritorious in the sight of God for any to be made an instrument in detaining, and making the members of the true Catholic Church. . ."

The subject of initiating Eunice into the Catholic Church by baptism was once more revived by the Jesuit Fathers, who were well versed in managing the Indians in the most difficult cases, and they now succeeded in obtaining consent of her mother. . . Eunice was therefore rebaptized by the name of Mary, and on the occasion a high mass to the Holy Ghost was celebrated, by the superior of the missions. An officer of the regiment of Carignan happened to be at the place, and hearing of what had transpired, was extremely exasperated against the Jesuits of that mission. A warm and obstinate debate ensued between them, for rebaptizing a child a Protestant minister and a prisoner. "To call ourselves Christians, an enlightened and polite nation, as we do," said he, "and to be guilty of such an ungenerous and illiberal act as this, we were unworthy of those high titles." "To you fathers as an order of Jesuits, I fear this act of yours will leave an indelible stain of infamy and disgrace upon you in the view of the Protestants and some of the Catholics. . ."

The instruction of the novitiates was consigned to one of the Jesuits in the mission who was borne down with ill health, whose appearance commanded respect and commiseration from all who approached him. Tall in stature, with a pal countenance, emaciated body, and his eyes only indicated there was life, and his whole demeanour so humble, gentle and condescending as to draw forth from his catechumen, both love and veneration. There was a strong indication in his deportment, that his thoughts were absorbed in things of eternity.

His religious instruction was limited principally confined to the creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the mutilated form of the Ten Commandments. His exhortations and reproofs were in accordance with the spirit and temper of Him who gave them.

With such a teacher was Eunice first initiated into the Romish Church, whose instruction in the first rudiments of Christianity were of course the same as that any of the Protestant ministers would inculcate upon his pupils, and much of what she heard from the Jesuit she recognized to be the same that she had been taught by her honoured father.

Comparing in this way what little she knew of the great principles of the Christian faith paved the way to the belief that the difference between Catholics and Protestants was not so great as some would believe; that both believed in the fundamental principles of the Christian religion, upon which they depended for salvation. With no other instructor than the Jesuits, and the knowledge which she acquired from them was but small indeed and living as she did at first, under the cloud of ignorance, she was incapable of discerning between truth and error. Hence she was gradually led to embrace those corruptions, both in doctrine and worship, which so abundantly abounds in the Church of Rome.