

Canonization Cause for Mademoiselle de Lamourous

[*Editor's Note:* The material is taken from Antonio Gascón, SM, "Causa de canonización de la señorita de Lamourous," located in *Vida Marianista*, no. 74, Nov. 2012, p. 16. Translated by Roser Williams.]

The *Positio* about the virtues of Marie Thérèse Charlotte de Lamourous, Founder of the Sisters of the Miséricorde, is an enormous volume of more than a thousand pages that was written by Father Joseph Verrier, SM, and presented to the Congregation for the Cause of Saints in 1978. The *Positio* is Father Verrier's masterpiece. In those pages he presents all the people of Bordeaux who collaborated with Father Chaminade. The historical development of this cause was long and detailed. At the time the cause was opened (1911) there were no living witnesses left that would have known this Servant of God during her life; furthermore, the canonical process was very complicated in those days. But even while still living, Lamourous was venerated as a saint, and when she died—September 14, 1836—her funeral was an event attended by multitudes. A few years after her death, in 1843, there already appeared a biography written by the Jesuit Father Pouget.

The Sisters of the Miséricorde did not open her cause until 1911. The informative process was extended until 1914. Afterward, the *Positio* of introduction of the cause was deposited in the Congregation of Rites in 1923. This Congregation gave a favorable verdict on November 13, 1923. So the Bishop of Bordeaux then was able to establish a diocesan tribunal to take the deposition of witnesses regarding the virtues and miracles of Mademoiselle de Lamourous. The tribunal started work on April 27, 1926, but because such a long time had passed since the death of Lamourous, it was impossible to develop a *Positio* based on oral testimonies. The cause had to go to the Historical Section of the Congregation.

The development of the *Positio*, for various reasons, was not able to begin before 1967. Because the Sisters of the Miséricorde greatly had been reduced in number by that time, the General Administration of the Society of Mary decided to take up the cause (January 30, 1969).

Thus, the Marianist historian Joseph Verrier took over the cause in May of 1971. He went through fifty-eight French archives that were located in thirty different places. From there, he gathered comprehensive historical information. With this bulk of material he was able to compose the *Positio*, which was turned in to the Congregation for the Cause of Saints in 1978. When this was examined in the Historical Section during the session of May 9, 1979, the eleven counselors widely recognized its historical value. After that, the Congress of Theologians of January 24, 1989, handed down a positive verdict. Furthermore, the plenary Congress of Cardinals, held on October 17 of the same year, was favorable to it. Thus, the following December 21, Pope John Paul II signed the decree of approval for the heroic virtues. Marie Thérèse Charlotte de Lamourous was recognized as *venerable*.