

For the glorification of the Servant of God
Marie-Joseph Lagrange

(1855 - 1938)

**founder of the Ecole Biblique
of Jerusalem**

Biography



1880
Salamanca

Albert Lagrange was born in Bourg-en-Bresse, in the diocese of Belley-Ars, the 7 th of March 1855. When he was three years old he received a blessing from the holy Curé d'Ars.

After traditional studies in the junior Seminary of Autun, he continued his studies in Law at Paris, obtaining a Doctorate. Attracted to the ideal of St Dominic - a "pure soul" - he entered the Seminary of Issy-les-Moulineaux (1878-1879) and then the Novitiate of the Order of Preachers in St Maximin where he received the Dominican habit from the hands of the Provincial Prior, Br Hyacinthe-Marie Cormier, since beatified by Pope John Paul II.

At the end of the Novitiate in 1880 the decree of expulsion of Religious obliged all the Dominicans to leave France. The Spanish Dominicans gave them shelter in their house of Saint Stephan in Salamanca where Brother Lagrange studied the theology of St Thomas Aquinas and the mystical doctrines of St Teresa of Avila. He was ordained priest at Zamora on the 22nd of December 1883.

Motivated by an enthusiasm for Biblical Studies, he was sent to the house of St-Etienne, the Ecole Biblique, opened in Jerusalem on the 15 th of November 1890. Henceforth and to his dying day his life was consecrated to the service of the Bible: researcher, professor of exegesis, director of the Ecole Biblique and of the *Revue Biblique* (1882), author of many books and articles, preacher... He spent 45 years of his life in Jerusalem. His best known work remains *L'Evangile de Jésus Christ* translated into several languages.

His work as an exegete had the merit of winning a place for Catholic thinking in the world of research. He was not without opposition and trials in this field of apostolic combat for the salvation of souls. Faithful and fervent, Father Lagrange went all the way in his service of the Church.

In 1935 he returned to France permanently for reasons of health, back to the house of Saint Maximin and it was from there that he returned to the Heavenly Father on the 10 th of March 1938. His remains were returned to Jerusalem in 1967 buried in the choir of the Basilica of St-Etienne.

Texts of Father Lagrange

On Charity

- ‘Amongst the most effective means for touching the heart of children and to combat their egoism and selfishness, before instructing them privately or publicly, I think I would make them visit the homes of the poor. In the junior Seminary there was a St Vincent de Paul group who were very faithful in doing this and it was an honor to be a part of it.’

On the scientific study of the Bible

- ‘History is made of documents and monuments.’
‘It’s not enough to blame criticism for everything. Only criticism can combat criticism.’
- ‘In the Bible God has given an unending labor to the human intelligence and, take note, He has opened wide the field of progress in the Truth.’
- ‘Only Scripture gives us the viewpoints on God that are both profound and consoling and which make us love Him.’

- ‘I’d dare to say that Holy Scripture is, like the sacraments, a holy thing.’

On the apostolate of the intelligence

- ‘We do not want souls to be lost because they refuse to believe something that the Church does not even ask them to believe.’

On fidelity during trials

- ‘Neither bitterness nor failure! No soldier worthy of the name even questions the order that throws him into combat let alone hesitates or deserts.’

(Farewell to the Ecole Biblique of Jerusalem the 3rd of september 1912).

On Prayer

- ‘I like to hear the Gospel sung by the Deacon at the lectern surrounded by clouds of incense: the words enter my soul more profoundly than when I find them in scholarly discussion.’





Texts of Father Lagrange

On prayer to Our Lady

- *'It's fitting to be shy, as Origen was. Let us dare to say it : the Gospels are the chosen part of all Scripture and the Gospel of John is the chosen part amongst the others. No-one can receive the spirit of it if he has not laid his head on the breast of Jesus and if he has not received, from Jesus, Mary as Mother.'*
- *'Mary is the mould where souls become like Jesus. Enter into this mould!'*
- *'The Rosary is a resume of the Gospel, orientating us towards that end that the Incarnation and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ make us hope for. But the Rosary as a reflexion of the life of Jesus is incomplete. We see there a large hole because nothing is said directly from the Gospel - that's to say of the teaching of the Savior. What then, the Rosary renders the reading of the Gospel unnecessary? Let us say, rather, that the Rosary makes us desire this reading, makes it necessary if we really want to have before us the mysteries which we have to meditate.'*

The diocese of Fréjus-Toulon has finished the diocesan process for the cause for the beatification of Fr Lagrange. Amongst the many witnesses to the benefits of the life, work and intercession of Fr Lagrange, Popes Paul VI and John Paul II praised this scholar who brought together faith and knowledge.

To let us know of graces received

To become a member

Association des Amis du Père Lagrange

Couvent des dominicains

9 rue Saint-François-de-Paule - 06357 Nice Cedex 4 – France

Site internet : www.mj-lagrange.org

E-mail : pere.marie.joseph.lagrange@gmail.com

E-mail of the president : manuel.rivero@free.fr

Site of the Ecole Biblique of Jerusalem : <http://ebaf.edu>

