



La Mission de l'Esprit-Saint

Author: Dell J. Rose

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Introduction

In late nineteenth-century Québec, Catholicism flourished through Marian devotion, Eucharistic adoration, and apocalyptic expectation. Parish brotherhoods swelled during First Fridays and feast days of Our Lady, whilst processions and rosary services filled the liturgical seasons with anticipation of Christ's imminent return. Within this fervent atmosphere, small Protestant and *Zététique* societies formed "investigative" Bible study groups, bypassing priestly intercession to engage scripture directly. These Zetetic pilgrims gathered in homes and tenements, searching for apocalyptic signs in earthquakes, wars, and eclipses. The Zetetic movement, from the Greek meaning to "proceed with inquiry," was a modern skeptical approach that applied the scientific method to investigate even the most universally accepted truth claims. Within its own literature it is often described as "the art of doubt." Their hunger for visions and miraculous cures blended seamlessly with Catholic fervour, transforming Québec into a hotbed of millennial hope by 1900. From this charged religious landscape emerged La Mission de l'Esprit-Saint.

La Mission de l'Esprit-Saint (hereafter 'the Mission') stands as one of Québec's most notorious and misunderstood religious movements. Beginning as a Marian prayer group, the Mission came to believe their founder, Eugène Richer dit La Flèche (1871–1925), hereafter referred to by his initials ERL, was the Holy Spirit incarnate, as foretold in Christ's promise: "the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you" (John 14:26, NRSV).

The Mission's theology wove together *Zététique* speculation with Catholic devotionism and millennial expectation. Its central mission was producing 'anointed children' through the blessing of expectant mothers, believing these blessed offspring would help overthrow Satan's dominion on earth. For a fuller discussion of what follows, see Rose 2015.

Marian Prayer Group to "The Mission"

ERL was born on April 17, 1871, in Saint-Georges-de-Windsor, Québec, to a devout Catholic family. The Mission's followers later recounted his youth as filled with miraculous events. According to these legends,

ERL possessed extraordinary spiritual sensitivity and once healed a neighbour with a simple touch. (For more on the transformation of the group, see Palmer & Rose [2020].)

After relocating to Montreal, ERL joined his brother Israël and friend Abbé Godbout to found a Marian devotional group called Notre Dame du Sacré Cœur de la Régénération, holding their inaugural meeting in 1913. Whilst it remains unclear whether ERL or his brother provided leadership, the group attracted a modest following through its healing ministry. It resembled other Marian prayer groups of the era and might have continued along conventional lines until a pivotal event transformed everything in winter 1915.

In November 1915, group members Joseph-Marie Haché and Magloire Gosselin claimed they received a new revelation from the Virgin Mary. At Montreal's Blessed Sacrament church, they witnessed her lifting the Christ-child into ERL's cloak whilst proclaiming that the Holy Spirit must incarnate to renew all wombs for God's pure children. This pivotal moment, known as *la Consécration*, marked the end of a two-thousand-year "silence of the Spirit." It called on believers to consecrate expectant mothers, launching a final harvest against Lucifer's legions. This event changed Notre Dame de la Régénération into the Mission de L'Esprit Saint, with ERL—*le maître*, "the Master" (within the Mission, ERL is most often referred to as "the Master")—serving as the living channel of the Paraclete (the Holy Spirit).

ERL's Role in the Mission's Theology

The Mission's theology stands on two foundational pillars:

- Unique teachings about divine incarnation, redemption, and consecration.
- A cosmology where the visible universe conceals an infernal design that spiritual renewal must overturn.

ERL's consecration ushered in a new apocalyptic era, intertwining salvation with end times. For God's children to inherit the kingdom, they must emerge from consecrated wombs, whilst Satan's forces face confinement to limbo, stripped of their earthly bodies. To understand this theology fully, we must examine ERL's most important interpreter: Auguste Robitaille.

Auguste Robitaille (1901–1977), sometimes referred to in the Mission as either *le Prince* or *Le principe*, rose in the early 1920s as Eugène Richer dit La Flèche's closest collaborator, scribe, and theological architect. Born into a devout Québécois family in 1901, he encountered Richer's healing mission in Montreal at age twenty. Captivated by Quebec's esoteric and conspiratorial intellectual circles and moved by Richer's magnetic presence, Robitaille abandoned his medical studies to serve as his secretary, translator, and organiser. He was also the author of the Mission's definitive book of divine legend, *Les Témoignages* (The Testimonies). Given the narrative way that Mission teachings developed, often through question-and-answer sessions, or through remembering individual actions or miracles, *Les Témoignages* form part of the definitive scriptural canon of the Mission.

Robitaille carefully transcribed Richer's writings into thematic collections that became the Movement's doctrinal foundation and hymnal tradition. Following Richer's death in 1935, he safeguarded this archive

and transformed it into *Le Questionnaire*, published in 1962 to codify the Mission's core message. He guided the group until his death in 1971.

Between 1920 and 1923, ERL's letters and homilies evolved into a systematic vision of the Godhead. No longer satisfied with his roles as healer or prophet, ERL reframed his mission as a living expression of the Trinity. By the early 1920s, his followers recognised three distinct "hypostases" or Persons:

-Jehovah: the eternal, invisible Creator, whose work creating worlds and angels transcends mortal understanding.

- Jesus of Nazareth: the perfect "Child of God," born without original sin, who—in ERL's words—"showed us what it looks like to arrive on earth pure."

- ERL: newly revealed as the flesh-and-blood embodiment of the Holy Spirit—God's own breath made human for a final flood of grace. (My paraphrase)

In *Le Questionnaire* (c. 1962), Robitaille transformed the classic Christian creed into a call to recognise each Person's distinct earthly role. This wasn't mere poetic metaphor but an urgent theological imperative:

1. "Who is God?"

"Jehovah, the Source of all being—Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. "Who is Jesus Christ?"

"The example of a Child of God, born without this world, that we might see what perfect humanity can look like."

3. "How many hypostases are in the Godhead?"

"Three: Jehovah, Jesus, and now Eugène Richer dit La Flèche, Incarnation of the Holy Spirit."

4. Who is the Incarnation of the Holy Spirit?"

"Eugène Richer dit La Flèche, whose flesh bears God's name amongst us." (My paraphrase)

Every question flows from this central revelation. Robitaille makes clear that knowing God truly requires calling upon Jehovah, following Jesus's example, and venerating ERL as the living Spirit at work in the world.

The *Questionnaire* insisted that deliverance hinges on this triple recognition, as it was explained to the author: "when you baptise, you invoke the Father's creation, the Son's sacrifice, and ERL's presence. When you bless a child's womb, you call on the Holy Spirit to fill that child as ERL once filled his own mortal frame. And when you pray, you appeal to Jehovah's sovereignty, Jesus's intercession, and the Spirit-power that the Master left in the Mission's hands" (conversation with J.A.B., Toronto, 2017).

This radical Trinitarian rearrangement emerged not from abstract theology but from hundreds of ERL's personal letters. He applied biblical passages—like the angel Gabriel's words to Mary and John's promise that the Spirit would "guide you into all truth"—directly to his mission: if the Spirit was to be "with you forever," another incarnation had to come. Robitaille then transformed these doctrines into hymns, so every assembly ended with the faithful singing "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit incarnate," united as one.

The result was a triune church where the "incarnation principle" brought life to every sacrament. Through *Le Questionnaire*, Robitaille trained followers to recognise each divine person in daily life: Jehovah guiding nature's order, Jesus in consecrated motherhood, and ERL's Spirit in miracles after his death. Salvation became embracing three Persons ruling from the centre of the cosmos. By worshipping all three, the faithful believed true deliverance flowed through body, soul, and Spirit, until "the reign of the Father" would arrive on earth as in heaven.

The Hellish Earth: Mission Cosmology

Mission cosmology asserts that Earth is not a planet floating in space but rather a pear-shaped enclosure—essentially a spiritual prison. Gustave Robitaille ("Le Prince") developed this distinctive worldview for the group. Mission teachings dismiss other planets and outer space as mere "optical illusions," insisting that only Earth exists, shaped like a pear. The narrow tip at the bottom represents Hell's flames, whilst the broader upper section houses the human world.

The Mission's theology equates Earth with Hell itself, created by God as a prison for fallen angels—Lucifer's defeated legions—who were incarnated here as punishment. Human and animal bodies serve as vessels for these exiled spirits. Earth functions as a cosmic gaol for disobedient souls, which sharply contrasts the traditional Christian view of Earth as a temporary waystation. For the Mission, it's Lucifer's domain—a penal colony where souls endure suffering.

Children raised in the sect learn that Earth is "pear-shaped...not flat... *pear-shaped*," as one former member recalled (italics used to indicate emphasis; conversation with J.A.B., Toronto, 2017). The Mission also teaches its members to deny the existence of other planets, believing the universe remains empty except for Earth. This radical geocentric view distinguishes the Mission from other creationist groups, though interpretations vary amongst members. Some view the pear-shaped Earth literally, whilst others see it as allegory. Regardless of interpretation, it symbolises humanity's confinement under Lucifer's influence.

This cosmology reinforces the belief that mortals inhabit a purgatorial realm, cut off from the true heavens until they achieve redemption. Mission writings claim God created this world to discipline and purify the souls of rebellious angels. Through successive lifetimes, souls can either ascend through virtue or descend through sin. The Mission's leader, Gustave Robitaille, believed the sun merely reflects those hellish flames, making Earth's sunshine a constant reminder of the infernal punishment burning below.

This worldview sees everyday reality as saturated with Lucifer's presence. The Mission's texts frequently associate the Catholic Church—which rejected the group's founder—with both the sun and Lucifer himself. Citing Matthew 23:13, they accuse the Catholic hierarchy of blocking access to heaven, much like the false

sun (Lucifer) blinds humanity trapped within the pear-shaped prison. The Mission views the Roman Church as part of Lucifer's grand deception—a misleading beacon of false light.

The sun, as the Mission teaches, isn't a distant star but a reflection of Hell's fires. According to the Mission's doctrine, the sun's light emerges from an open hellish pit on Earth. An ex-member explained that the Mission believes "the sun represents the flames of hell, reflected in the polar ice." Sunlight is Hell's fire bouncing off an icy firmament at Earth's edges, making the sun a Luciferian mirage—false light born from damnation.

According to the Revealer, the sun is the reflection of the pool of fire situated under the earth. Its light is nothing but a flamboyant lie, just like the theology and papal infallibility. Isaiah calls the sun Lucifer. And that is its real name. Even though it resides in the abyss of the sarcophagus fire, its devouring flames, its calcinating heat emanate from Hell itself (Robitaille 2013: 298).

The Moon holds central importance in the Mission's cosmology. Rather than a celestial body, followers see it as "a simple reflection of the sea in the sky." They claim the moon mirrors Earth's oceans on the firmament, reflecting water instead of sunlight. Like the sun, the moon has no independent reality—it's merely a trick of perspective. The sea is reflected in the moon as Earth's distorted echo, reinforcing their belief that everything beyond our world is pure illusion. The Mission's followers view the moon as a powerless reflection of this earthly realm. The moon is also taken to be a spiritual reminder of the state of motherhood, as was also taught by Robitaille:

There is an important moral to retain from this spectacle (the phases of the moon), for the moon is the mirror of maternity with its characteristic phases, the conception or first quarter, the plentitude or pregnancy and the decline corresponding to the partition and its sequels. The mother's womb is a train, a carriage which vehiculates (sic) souls from nothingness to existence. Up until the Master, except for Jesus, call the travelers, who have taken the maternal train, have been children of Satan, born from cults, en (sic) route towards the grave. They came out of a nothingness to direct themselves towards another nothingness. This nothingness however is prickled with tortures and grieved. By appearing in the moon the Master wanted to demonstrate that the time has come where the mother can vehiculates the Lord in her Womb, instead of demons that she bears in her entrails for the rottenness of the graves. (Robitaille 2013: 203)

The Mission's doctrine gives stars a spiritual interpretation too. Instead of distant suns, they see them as "dead souls" suspended in the sky. This belief fits their view that the universe is entirely spiritual—if planets don't exist, stars must be spiritual entities. By calling them "dead souls," the Mission sees stars as spirits awaiting reincarnation, trapped in limbo. The starry sky becomes a moral landscape, echoing mystical traditions that view stars as angelic beings. For the Mission, stars prove that material astronomy is an illusion. They explain everything in the heavens theologically, connecting it to human souls and the eternal battle between divine truth and demonic trickery.

Within Mission cosmology, the sun, moon, and stars embody the sect's spiritual narrative. The sun's false light represents Lucifer's worldly dominance: seemingly bright, it blinds humanity to God's true light. One

key Mission teaching is “Règne de Soleil et de Lune” (“Reign of Sun and Moon”), suggesting that ages governed by these celestial bodies are deceptive and must be overcome. Divine truth lies beyond these deceptive lights—similar to Christ’s light or the new light promised at the end of the age.

The moon reflects earthly matters (the “sea” of human affairs) as heavenly, confusing human concerns with spiritual truth— which is described in Mission documents as “chasing the moon’s illusion. This deception would continue eternally unless one receives the Mission’s direct revelation. The stars as souls motif emphasises souls awaiting salvation. Each star overhead represents a soul that “lost” the last war in heaven and must wander until it takes on a new body. Rather than inspiring scientific curiosity, the stars create spiritual urgency for the Mission: they highlight the high stakes of salvation, since those souls need bodies and redemption, or else they remain distant lights, forever imprisoned in the night sky.

This treatment of the sun, moon, and stars also shields the faith from external influence. By declaring all astronomical bodies illusory, the Mission builds a wall between their community and modern science. This radical reframing of cosmology exemplifies the Mission’s zetetic approach—they trust their own revealed interpretation over all empirical evidence, which they consider a satanic trick. In doing so, the Mission aligns the entire cosmos with their theological narrative: every sunrise, moonrise, and starry night silently preaches the sect’s message that our world is Lucifer’s lie, and one must look beyond it for truth.

L'Eugénisme and the Work of the Mission

A cornerstone of the Mission’s cosmology is its doctrine of reincarnation, and their ideas about the principle of *L'Eugénisme*. An English translation of the Mission’s main objective might be: “the rejuvenation of the world through the principle of Eugénisme (eugenics). This appears on the sign outside of the Crabtree hall of the Mission, and was previously on their website (<https://missionespritsaint.org/>) circa 2014. Now their mission is stated as: “Notre Mission est de rendre disponibles les révélations et principes de vie énoncés par Eugène Richer dit La Flèche. Nous souhaitons établir les bases d'un monde meilleur au sein d'une communauté active qui supporte la maternité et la famille.” Eugénisme, or eugenics in this context, has nothing to do with the negative associations this term has now, but is a play off the founder’s name. This is a spiritual process of rejuvenation, involving the incarnation of new, spiritually evolved souls. In Mission theology, this represents spiritual eugenics: the selective reincarnation of higher souls to gradually improve the human stock. Every child should be better and more spiritually advanced than their parents, pushing humanity steadily towards perfection. This generational progress hinges entirely on reincarnation—the highest angelic souls must be recycled into new babies within the Mission community.

The Mission teaches that human souls repeatedly incarnate in new bodies, and notably, this transmigration can occur across species (a concept called metempsychosis when human souls migrate into animal forms). The group believes that the souls of the faithful “slip themselves into the embryos of good mothers” upon rebirth.

When Gabriel went to Mary, what was that? Was it simply that he was going to tell her that something is going to happen? No, he was showing something about what could happen to all human kind. Jesus shows us what could happen if someone was not born with the impulses of this

puny world, and that is exactly what we want to do here, to help children to be born without the corruption of the flesh. (Conversation with G.B., St Paul, QC, 1 August 2014)

To facilitate this process, Mission leaders perform a specific ritual: a Serviteur (priest) lays hands on a pregnant woman's abdomen to bless the uterus, ensuring a virtuous soul enters the foetus. This sacrament-like practice lies at the heart of their mission to "regenerate humanity." The ritual stems from their belief that only by populating the world with increasingly pure souls—the "Children of God"—can redeem the fallen world.

Mission cosmology establishes a rigid hierarchy of souls within the reincarnation cycle. Spirits that reach high levels of merit earn reincarnation back into human bodies, allowing them to continue their upward spiritual journey. But "weak or wicked" spirits meet a harsher fate: they transmigrate into "vermin"—rodents, snakes, insects, and other lowly creatures. "Vermin" in Mission teachings also bear certain signs as to their cursed nature, as was the mistaken belief that only Butterflies were the incarnation of negative souls discussed by the French-Canadian media. The following quotation from *Les Témoignages* gives us a sense of the idea:

The rat's tail is ringed, that is to say divided into rings or segments, which symbolize in a striking way the successive rebirths of the deceased in his posthumous metamorphoses. With caterpillars, it is the body which is divided into twelve rings, or segments, for, if I am not mistaken the caterpillar has no tail. The body of this crawling abomination thus becomes a terrifying symbol of reincarnation, in which one can catch a glimpse of the pitiful fate of the twelve tribes and twelve apostles. From the caterpillar comes the butterfly, as we saw from the twelve apostles, the birth of legions of false postiche "saints", false divinities and priests, archbishops, cardinals, and popes, who under the appearance of multicolored butterflies shimmering and superb, dissimulate the body of a repulsive work of a cloacal reptile. From the twelve tribes of Jacob we also saw appear legions of billionaires, dressed in ermine and jewels, but hiding perverse sub-layers and crapulous ambitions. (Robitaille 2013: 85)

This spiritual devolution serves as punishment for lives marked by evil or disobedience. Mission teachers readily wield this concept as a threat to ensure compliance. Ex-members remember being told repeatedly as children that disobeying the sect's rules would result in "reincarnation as vermin" in their next life.

The term metempsychosis appears explicitly in Mission literature to describe these downward reincarnations. The ultimate endpoint of metempsychosis in Mission teaching reaches the lowest possible state: a soul that continues sinning might fall so far that it loses any incarnation at all. The "ultimate punishment for a soul would be to be left without a body, wandering indefinitely" in disembodied torment—essentially a ghost trapped in the pear-shaped hell with no escape (conversation with J.A.B., Toronto, 2017). This terrifying outcome underscores the urgency the Mission places on following their path of spiritual improvement.

By weaving together reincarnation and metempsychosis, the Mission connects its cosmology to a moral narrative built on hope and fear. Reincarnation offers hope: the fallen angels (human souls) receive

multiple lifetimes to work their way back towards God. Each blessed birth creates an opportunity for an advanced spirit to incarnate and for humanity to progress. The sect's intense emphasis on fertility and large families connects directly to this belief—more babies mean more opportunities for high souls to enter the world. Women face pressure to marry and bear many children, specifically so that “Enfants de Dieu” (God's children) can be born in great numbers.

In the Mission's cosmology, every pure child born strengthens Heaven's forces on Earth and draws the community closer to the prophesied 144,000 just souls destined for salvation at the End Times. This doctrine connects directly to the sect's apocalyptic expectations—they believe they're breeding the generation that will survive Armageddon and populate the New Era. Reincarnation fuels this millenarian hope by allowing souls from past ages (perhaps Old Testament figures or early saints) to be reborn now and join the final battle between good and evil.

This belief also justifies their separation from mainstream society. Since outsiders who live “bad lives” by the Mission's standards will return as vermin, members must avoid outside influence to keep their souls ascending. Members shun contact with the secular world and its vices, homeschool their children, and create an insular social universe. The cosmology reinforces these communal boundaries—only within the Mission can souls find proper guidance (and blessed wombs) to ascend rather than degenerate (conversation with J.A.B., Toronto, 2017). Still, they welcome others who wish to convert and help achieve this goal.

Additionally, the Mission's reincarnation doctrine creates a symbolic parallel to Catholic concepts—but turns them upside down. Whilst traditional Catholicism rejects reincarnation, the Mission found a way to partially root this idea in Christian teachings by comparing their consecration of pregnant wombs to the Gospel Annunciation. Just as the archangel Gabriel blessed Mary's womb to receive Jesus (in their interpretation), Mission Serviteurs bless women so their wombs can receive holy spirits. They even describe Jesus as an “Enfant de Dieu,” a perfect example of humanity brought through a blessed womb, suggesting Jesus himself was a supreme soul incarnated (though the Mission explicitly rejects the Virgin Birth doctrine). By this logic, Jesus's incarnation was simply one special instance of the general rule that great spirits can enter the world through prepared mothers.

Eugène Richer's own birth in 1871 gets framed as another such instance: it marks year 1 of a new era in the Mission's chronology since they believe the Holy Spirit incarnated in him at that moment. In the Mission's calendars, we are living in “Year 154 ERL” rather than 2025, for example. All these elements connect: the cosmology of multiple eras, incarnations of divine persons, and cycling souls create a grand narrative that weaves cosmic time together with soul-making. The Earth may be a prison, but through successive lives and proper rituals, it can produce perfected children of God who will ultimately escape the cycle and help bring about God's Kingdom.

Consecrated Wombs and the Apocalyptic Architecture

Within the Mission's cosmic schema, Earth's hollow shell functions as Lucifer's vast prison-factory, churning souls like ore destined for damnation. Against this infernal machine, consecrated wombs emerge as sacred workshops where the Heavenly Planet's light can begin to pierce through corruption.

Consecration transforms ordinary pregnancy into a divine counterstrike. Ritual anointing of expectant mothers, coupled with strict observance of consecrated rites, shields the developing soul from hell's claim. In the Mission's theology, the union of spirit and flesh within a sanctified womb births more than a child—it forges a vessel of resistance. Each new life becomes a luminous spark, immune to the sulphurous chains that bind fallen spirits.

Rituals throughout the community—baptisms, marriage vows, healing ceremonies—deliver precise strikes against Lucifer's infernal machinery.

- Baptism cleanses not only with water but with memory itself, washing away ancestral shadows that have crept into family bloodlines.

- Marriage vows, spoken before the gathered faithful, forge a domestic covenant that blocks demonic intrusion.

- Healing miracles, witnessed by doubters and believers alike, shatter the lies of secular science and ignite faith's revolution.

These sacramental acts work together to fracture the planetary shell. Each communal celebration, each whispered prayer, widens the cracks in our cosmic prison. As light from the Heavenly Planet pours through these openings, it floods the Earth's core, melting the molten bars that trap lost souls. The more faithfully these rituals are performed, the cooler the infernal furnace grows, drawing Creation closer to its original harmony.

The prophesied "children of the good will" emerge as both inheritors and messengers of restored Creation. Raised within these consecrated rites, they carry a spiritual inheritance sealed by divine grace. When they step into their destined roles, unmarked by corruption, they will widen the celestial breach, dismantling Lucifer's apparatus from within and guiding the Heavenly Planet home.

References

Most of the information used in this article came from materials I collected for my Masters' thesis. In the interest of brevity I have greatly condensed some theological lines of argument, and at times have present what might be called a standard opinion which in reality is quite complex. I invite the reader to see my thesis for a longer treatment of the material.

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