

OUR LADY OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY
CAP DE LA MADELEINE

America's principle shrine of the Rosary is in Quebec, at the place of the Three Rivers. The banks of the St. Lawrence River were settled by pious Frenchmen, lay and religious, who wished to build a Christian community in the wilderness, among the fiercest Indians of the North American Continent. In their constant struggle against the elements and the savage attacks of the Iroquois Indians, these people set up a double protection for their homes. They had to establish guards and they had to fortify their homesteads wherever possible, and at the same time, they built shrines dedicated to their Heavenly Protectress. They named their shrines after the beautiful and ancient cathedrals and holy places of France. The memories of the wonderful places of the old country never faded, and they found fresh expression in the people's veneration as the people established themselves in the new territory. Fully aware of the dangers of their role as pioneers, the people accepted the dreadful challenges with a deep religious faith.

The history of the settlers in Canada is filled with the most moving episodes of their unlimited confidence in Our Lady. The names of the rivers, villages, and their homesteads prove it. Our particular interest in this historical sketch is centered upon a tiny settlement on the St. Lawrence River which was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. Our Abbey of Christ the King in Cullman, Alabama, has a special interest in the same place. The reason for our interest is a Statue of Our Lady of the Rosary – Our Lady de la Madeleine. Several years ago a kind and pious family were the fortunate owners of this statue. These good people donated the statue to our Abbey. The monks have very serious evidence proving that this particular statue of Our Lady is one of eleven statues originally cast by the Carli Petrucci House in Montreal in the year 1854. These statues were based on a wood carving. The statue represents the Virgin with delicate features, eyes lowered, in the posture of the Virgin of the Miraculous Medal, as revealed to the great Saint Catherine Laboure in Paris in 1830. The proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in the year 1854 brought these statues to the foreground.

Three Rivers was the site of a shelter for Christian Indians who found it a hardship to remain in the paganism of their own tribes. With the aid of the early missionaries, among them being Saint Isaac Jogues, the settlement grew, even though the struggle for existence never stopped.

After almost two centuries of beautiful growth and religious constancy, there came a serious relapse. The people grew indifferent and most of them deserted the Church. For more than a hundred years there