longed to his church. There is no fixed date for turning over the *dîme* to the *curé*. Most farmers give him his grain in the spring, around March, as they thresh all winter.

The growth of a nonfarming group in the parish has necessitated the establishment of another kind of tithe—a head tax. Depending upon the size of the household, this yearly head tax ranges from $3.00 to $5.00 per family. This form of tithe is usually paid earlier in the year, as it is in cash, not grain. The tithe supplements the money the parishioners pay the *curé* to have special Masses sung.

The financial affairs of the church are handled by the *fabrique*, a sort of church board composed of three *marguilliers*, who meet with the *curé*. The *marguilliers* are elected for a three-year period, and the terms are staggered so that one is elected each year. They normally come from different quarters of the parish. The senior member is the *marguillier en charge*, the highest prestige office in the parish organization. The retiring *marguillier* consults with the *curé* and nominates his successor, who is rarely opposed. The *marguilliers* are unpaid but sit in a special pew in the front of the church. They also have religious ceremonial roles at various times during the year. The *fabrique* is responsible for the upkeep and improvement of the church property, including the church, *presbytère*, and cemetery. It may take on special functions even of a nonreligious nature. Thus, the *fabrique* of St. Denis owns a hearse; a small cannon for celebrations; and a grain-sifter, used by all the farmers for a small fee. To discuss particularly momentous problems all of the retired *marguilliers* may meet with the three active ones. The *fabrique* gets its funds from the yearly "sale" of pews, from part of the money paid for Masses, and from the sale of cemetery lots. The money is used to pay off indebtedness on the church structure itself, to heat and repair it, to insure it, to pay

the boys' and men's choirs, and to pay the *bedeau*. The auction of pews brings in about $400, $300 of which goes for insurance, so that there is not a large working balance.

The boys' choir consists of some thirty boys between the ages of seven and fifteen. These boys sit in the sanctuary in black and white vestments during all Masses of obligation, but they never sing. Chosen in rotation, they serve as acolytes throughout the week and receive a few cents for their services. Those not serving as acolytes follow the Masses of obligation from their sanctuary pews just like the parishioners. Boys are admitted to this choir as soon as they have learned the routine of the Mass from their schoolteacher, who decides when they are capable of participating. They may continue in the choir until they choose to leave, which is usually about the time they finish school. Not all the children in the parish are members of the boys' choir. Those families which have children in the choir consider it a mild honor; those that do not, simply lack interest in having their children serve the Mass. This ambivalent attitude is based on the necessity of seating all the children of large families in the church. Masses are sung only once a day, and pews must be "bought," so that seating a large family is a real problem.[5]

The men's choir has no relation to the boys'. It sits in the church loft without ceremony and sings the responses of the Mass. This choir is headed by the *maître chant*, designated by the *curé* to this almost permanent position. Traditionally this place is also one of parish prestige. The *maître chant* passes on the capabilities of applicants to choir membership. In addition to the *maître* there are ten

[5] The twenty families represented by the choir boys average 8.7 church-going persons, well above the parish average. Boys from larger families tend to stay in the choir longer. This reason for putting boys in the choir is never explicitly stated. It is too close to a religious matter to have commercial attitudes attached.

chants in St. Denis, all over twenty-five years of age. Members of the choir rotate for singing the Masses of the week. Two sing each day of the week and receive twenty-five cents the day they sing. None is paid for the Sunday Masses, which is also true for the boys' choir. For funerals all eleven sing; but only six, chosen in rotation, are paid the seventy-five cents received for first- and second-class *services*. For third-class funerals four *chants* are paid. The class is determined by the amount paid the church for the funeral and is evidenced in the elaboration of the service.

Exemplifying the close interrelation of religious and civil matters, the *bedeau* is paid a salary by the *fabrique* but is furnished a residence in the lower floor of the *salle publique*, the parish civil center located beside the church and cemetery on top of the Coteau. The *bedeau* is responsible for the heating and cleaning of the church, the ringing of the church bells, and the preparation of the paraphernalia and vestments for the Masses and sacraments. He sits with the choir boys during Masses and keeps them in order. There is no prestige attached to his role. The *bedeau* is selected by the *curé* and *fabrique* and usually holds the position for life. There is no tendency for the office to remain in one family. The present incumbent is the son of the long-established blacksmith.

The parish is not only a religious but also a civil unit. The village is in no way formally separated from the rest of the parish. All the parish constitutes a municipality directed by the mayor and *conseil*. This body consists of six councilors, presided over by the mayor, who votes only in case of a tie. The *conseil* elects a nonvoting secretary-treasurer from outside its own membership, who is paid around a hundred dollars a year for his services. The bachelor carpenter-banker has filled this post for thirty

years. The mayor and councilors are chosen in January by popular vote of the property-owners and the adult sons of farm-owners. This special stipulation is supposed to balance the higher tax evaluation of the property of the farmers in comparison with that of the villagers. Here, again, is a special adaptation to the growth of a new type of economic household in the parish. Mayor and councilors are elected for two-year terms, three councilors being chosen each year.

The *conseil* decides evaluations and taxes parishioners accordingly. The money is largely used for road upkeep and improvement, primarily of the *route*. The *conseil* lets a contract for keeping snowdrifts on this road scraped down in winter. The *chemins* are maintained from provincial funds, and each farmer scrapes and levels the snow along his own frontage. Large projects are rarely undertaken by the *conseil*, as there is strong resistance to taxation. An important role of the *conseil* is to act as a contact with the provincial government. All government announcements reach the people through the secretary-treasurer. Although the province levies no direct taxes on the parishioners, it occasionally has money to spend in the parish. A $5,000 relief project was requested by the *conseil* in 1936. There was also an effort to secure a wood lot in the mountains to the south to furnish building material for public projects. The *conseil* meets monthly in the *salle* over the rooms of the *bedeau*. The meetings open with a prayer on the knees, led by the mayor. They are open to the public, and there is general banter and argument between spectators and councilors. Really important problems evoke long sessions, marked by lack of initiative in suggesting plans.

Provincial money is spent in the parish mainly through the *cantonnier*. This individual is appointed by the pro-

CHAPTER VI

THE MASS

SUNDAY morning the Angelus rings as usual, but at eight o'clock the bells ring out again and every quarter-hour thereafter until time for the Mass at nine.[1] The tolling from the church spire hastens the tardy and keeps all informed as to the passing of the final hour of a busy early morning. The animals must be fed, the cows milked, breakfast eaten, and the dishes washed. Then all must change from work to Sunday clothes and walk or ride to church. Most of the men of the parish, including all the males out of school, go up to the church at least a quarter of an hour early. A few of them must remain at home to drive the buggy for the women and children; but any small boy is glad to drive, so most of the men are free to go on ahead.

Many of the parishioners, both men and women, go to the sacristy even before eight o'clock to confess to the *curé*. After confession they say the prayers they have been given as penance and take Communion. In particular, parishioners who live at a distance from the church come to confess and take Communion before the Sunday Mass, as they can seldom come during the week.

In front of the church the men stand in groups smoking and discussing items of current public interest—politics, crops, or some unusual incident in the life of the parish. As a particular discussion grows in fervor, voices rise and attract other men, who join the crowd around the principal figures in the argument. On the periphery of this group

[1] The Angelus rings at five o'clock in summer, six o'clock in winter.

men start talking among themselves, possibly starting another knot of listeners. While the men talk quietly or argue heatedly, buggies drive up to the side of the wide church steps. Women and small children get out and walk silently along the edge of the crowd of men and on into the church. Salutations between acquaintances of the two sexes on these occasions are rare but permissible, and are seldom more than a nod. After the buggies stop at the door, the drivers go off to near-by barns and hitching rails to tie up the horses. Then they are free to join the men outside the church.

As the hour of the Mass approaches, the old doorman fulfils his duty. Distinguished by a broad red band and the five-foot black baton he holds, and supported by strong public sentiment and the frequent remarks of the *curé*, he admonishes the men to enter, since the Mass is about to start. Theoretically a guardian of the peace, empowered to eject a person from the church or separate brawlers without, he actually plays the role of a final bell. No one enters the church at his warning because he tells them to; his activity simply brings the realization that the Mass is about to start and discussions must end. The doorman's seeming authority rests in the general social acceptance of the fact that it is bad to be late to Mass.

Only a small group of men remains outside until this final call. The rest drift into the church singly or in groups. As they pass the portals, all social intercourse ceases. Everyone takes holy water from the font by the door and crosses himself to keep away the devil during the Mass. When, on occasion, the font is empty, the gesture of putting the hand into the font is continued. The act has social significance even when the holy water, which gives it meaning, is absent. Even when the men join the women of the family in their pews or pass good friends, there is no

word or look of recognition. Upon reaching the pew, each worshiper does a genuflection before entering. In the pew he kneels on his prayer bench and settles himself. Overcoats are never removed; but pocketbooks and gloves are set on the little front shelf by the women, and hats and pipes are similarly disposed of by the men. The sign of the cross is made. Until the priest and choir boys enter, one is free to look around to see who is at church and, after kneeling awhile, to sit back. A few read papers secured at the post office on the way to church. Almost everyone is at church except those who are too sick or old to come. In every household some women has had to remain at home to look after the small children. If there was an early Mass, some have attended it instead of the High Mass.

The more reverent remain kneeling for a longer time, occupying themselves with religious thoughts. A few go forward and light candles before the holy statues. Some young men, whose fathers are long dead and who are, therefore, less completely dominated by the social controls, may giggle with others for whom the hereafter is still too distant a threat to suppress such enjoyment. The *bedeau* enters in his red and black cape and lights the altar candles. The men's choir in the loft starts to sing, and the harmonium tries to follow the singers. A score or more choirboys in their black-and-white vestments enter in two single files from the doors at either side of the main altar. They walk to the front of the sanctuary platform, turn toward the center, and join, so that they return to the altar two abreast. Arriving at the foot of the altar, they execute a genuflection by pairs and proceed to the benches along either side of the sanctuary, where they remain during the Mass. The choirboys are followed by the priest, carrying the sacred vessels and accompanied by his four acolytes, selected from the *enfants de chœur*.

The Mass of the catechumens begins. Most of the parishioners follow the prayers of the Mass in their prayer-books, which give both the Latin and French versions in parallel columns. The French prayers are read silently as the priest recites the Latin. Once the Mass has begun, there is no looking about. All eyes are on the prayer-books or the altar. Every adult knows the significance of the particular color of the priest's vestments. The saint, or *fête*, to which the Mass on this day is dedicated, was announced the preceding Sunday and is marked on the large religious calendars which hang conspicuously in the kitchen of every home. The parishioners follow the movements of the Mass, which they have known since childhood—kneeling, rising, sitting as common participants in the ceremony. The choirboys execute the movements also but do not sing. Only the men's choir in the loft sings. The *bedeau* is responsible for the good behavior of the choirboys, with whom he sits.

The Mass is followed by the parishioners largely according to Catholic ritual procedure. The worshipers have always knelt during the Credo and after the Elevation, and the choirboys have stood during these parts of the Mass, following proper ritual procedure.[2] A boy in the choir sounds a wooden clapper for each movement of the Mass. Beside traditional differences of the sort just mentioned, the parishioners vary in the precision with which

[2] Local variations of this sort show the extent of parish isolation and the traditional continuance of early errors in ritual. These particular variations were just corrected by the *curé* at the bishop's request. The people felt that their religion was changing along with all the other changes in customary modes of behavior. After the *curé* announced the change, the *marguilliers* and schoolteachers were the first to make the proper movement, the other parishioners following their example. It was only recently that the church, through traveling instructors, brought consensus into the manner of singing the ritual songs. Each locality had its own peculiarities, continued through its *maître chant*. "Now we can go to another parish and sing in its choir just as in ours," remarks one *chant*.

they follow the Mass. These variations follow socially determined lines. In the balcony an old-maid schoolteacher and a religious old bachelor always rise or kneel at exactly the proper instant, leading the other people. This difference is more striking in the balcony, where the less desirable pews are located, for here there is more laxity in following the Mass. Downstairs there is more precision, so that no persons are such obvious leaders, although those in the front tend to rise first. Differences between the balcony and main floor are noticeable. The balcony usually follows the people below them, the downstairs executing the movements first. It is not that the people in the balcony do not know the ritual; it is simply traditionally different behavior distinguishing these separate groups in the same church, the balcony composing about a fifth of the entire congregation. These groups do not feel any unity outside the church. Families may even be divided between pews in the two places.

The distinction between the groups is regularly shown at various points during the Mass. When the priest comes forward to asperse the choirboys and parishioners with holy water, he comes out to the front of the sanctuary three times. The first two times he turns to sprinkle the choirboys on either side; the last time he sprinkles the worshipers. When he comes out the first time, the choir, the downstairs, and a few in the balcony rise. There is a scattered rising thereafter until all have risen by the time he comes forward a second time. Those in the balcony who rise with those downstairs make themselves conspicuous by doing so. They separate themselves from the group, and such is their intention. They feel themselves "right" and occasionally win unsolicited converts. The social position of the schoolteacher both requires her to be a leader and causes others to follow her. No child would think of preceding his parents. It is true that there is a slightly less religious element in the balcony—younger men without their parents and day-laborers—but the unity derived from the isolation of the balcony includes many who are equally as faithful as those below. During the *prône* the balcony seats itself as soon as the priest leaves the altar, with the exception of the few who wait for the clapper, as do the choir and downstairs.

As the *curé* passes out of the choir to go to the pulpit, the people in the pews which he passes rise, out of deference to his position. In the pulpit the *curé* begins by a discussion of practical matters. The amount of the collection the previous Sunday is given, and the parishioners are thanked for their donations. Then follow general announcements: the place and time of the meeting of the Cercle des Fermières, the date for the auction of pews or for the election of a new *marguillier*, a request for bedding for priests in the new land settlements, reassurance as to the character of an itinerant insurance salesman, the hours the public health doctor will be at the *salle*, a request that wood for the church be hauled from another parish, religious calendars for sale after Mass in the sacristy. These are typical of the two or three statements each week. Religious announcements follow. The Mass the following Sunday is in honor of a particular saint or *fête*. The passage in the Roman ritual appropriate for that occasion is read. If any days of fast or abstinence occur during the coming week, except Friday, when abstinence is always observed, the days are announced and the regulations specified. Times and dates for confession are given. A short moral lesson may be preached on some incident in the parish during the past week: a man having cruelly beaten his dog on the public road, or strange girls in bathing suits having ridden bicycles through the parish. The priest gives

verbal attention to these incidents. It is his duty to adjust all irregularities in the life of the parish. "The school children are not doing their work properly. Look at the bulletin on the wall at the school; and if your child is mediocre or below, he is not doing his best. It is up to the parents to watch their children. Children are children, and they think October is just another month of vacation." Thus are the parents taken to task before the very children they are supposed to correct.

The *curé* reads from slips of paper the dates of funerals and anniversary services to be held in neighboring parishes. "I recommend to your prayers Marie Langlais, wife of Henri Pelletier, who died yesterday at Kamouraska at the age of seventy-nine years and four months. The funeral will be Monday at nine o'clock. Relatives and friends are invited." Such announcements are followed by the Masses for the ensuing week with their donors: "The Masses of the week: Monday, for Claire Dionne, given from the money of the funeral;[3] Tuesday, for Amanda Garon, by the succession; Wednesday, anniversary service for Marie Langlais at nine o'clock instead of the usual time; Thursday, for Georges Garon, by his wife; Friday, an act of thanks by a parishioner; Saturday, a Mass of thanks and prayer by M. and Mme Joseph Gagnon on their fiftieth anniversary."

The whole kneeling congregation says a *pater* for Spain, led by the *curé*. There is a short Gospel-reading, and the priest begins the sermon. If the Mass is one of particular church significance, such as those during Lent or near Christmas, the sermon is apt to deal with the Catholic doctrine pertinent to the particular *fête*. Some of these religious topics have general appeal, particularly stories of

[3] Money from the collection taken at her funeral, to be used for subsequent Masses.

miracles and martyrs. The Sunday devoted to the propagation of the faith and dealing with missions never fails to draw feminine tears. Philosophic sermons have little interest value, but those dealing with human behavior and current events find ready listeners. The most frequent sermons of this latter type are attacks on communism, illustrated with atrocity stories from Spain. There is continual preaching against the threat of communism in Canada. The communist is associated in the public mind with the blackest of deeds and motives. Ethnic pride and unity are fostered. Quebec for the French, not for the communists, Jews, and English, is the vein of discussion. This does not mean separatism but rather the securing of ethnic rights due the French majority in the province. Such discussions often have very direct political bearing. The priest does not commit himself as to party preference, but he does feel free to support the men or the platform. The merits of the newspaper *L'Action catholique* are expounded and its policies given support. Religious and social weaknesses of the parishioners are attacked. They are told how to treat their spouses, how to rear their children, how to correct their manners. City ways are attacked, and disasters and catastrophes are pointed to as God's punishment for sin. Dancing, drinking, and superstition are attacked. The published number of foundlings in the Quebec orphanage is the basis for a morality talk. Parents are advised to watch their children more closely. Girls are advised to withhold their kisses. Mixed marriages are warned against for those who travel away from the parish. The current news in *L'Action catholique* is frequently the text of the sermon. Editorials in that paper may be cited from the pulpit. As both the paper and *curé* have the same outlook, and they are the two most potent factors in the formation of new ideas among the adults, they present a unified front against

the entrance of ideas and modes of behavior which will weaken the patterns of life. The *curé* says that there are too many unmarried adults and tells the young men to get married. If they have no means of earning a living locally, they are advised to leave the parish and look for work.

The sermons are about twenty minutes long and are presented in a matter-of-fact tone of voice, rising to an angry scolding when the *curé* is put out about something. The social control exerted from the pulpit is great. Although names are not mentioned, the community is so small that any individual referred to by deed in the sermon is soon generally known. No greater social reproof can be made. "If the hat fits, pull it down on your head," is the tone in which the sermons are presented and heard. When the *curé* attacked the unmarried, bachelors of sixty flushed crimson. When the sermons deal with unapplied theology, they fall on duller ears. There are not infrequently men sleeping during the sermon but not during the Mass. Periods of great farming activity, especially during the spring, keep the farmers tired; but an ethereal sermon has the same effect on the parishioners as heavy plowing. Wives never awaken their sleeping spouses.

The *curé* leaves the pulpit after his sermon and returns to the altar for the Sacrifice of the Mass. The faithful take out their rosaries, even the youngest children carrying them, and begin telling the beads as the Mass progresses. Some glance at little cards requesting prayers for some deceased member of the family. The collection is taken by the three *marguilliers* at the proper time, but the worship continues through it. Beads slip through fingers and eyes stay on the altar. The average donation is a penny per person, change occasionally being made from the collection

plate. Some of the most respected men give nothing, possibly bowing their heads over the collection as it is passed.

The Mass finished, the men in the balcony begin to file out before the priest leaves the altar. The men and boys throughout the church rise and go out silently, leaving the women in the pews. They cross themselves with holy water as they pass the fonts by the door. The *bedeau* extinguishes the tall altar candles as a few people light votive candles before statues. The women and girls follow the men out of the church. Without, on the front steps, the men are already crowding around the parish secretary and the *crieur*.

The secretary usually has something of interest to say. It may be that a house, covered by a mutual insurance company, has burned and he is distributing assessments to the company members in St. Denis. Again, there may be some official communication from the provincial government, the announcement of the date parish school taxes are due, the time of the parish council meeting, or the days on which cattle may be inspected for tuberculosis. The *crieur* then begins to cry out his information of general interest. He announces the time and place to see a visiting veterinarian, a benefit card party in a neighboring parish, the meeting of the *beurrerie* committee, or the date by which the farmers must have the roads clear of snow. More important than these announcements is the *crieur*'s function as auctioneer. He acts in a public capacity, receiving bids for the heating of the schools, selling the hay on the school grounds, auctioning the church pews and the garden produce given on All Souls' Day to be sold for Masses for the dead. He will also auction things for private individuals after church for no charge. The actual goods are not usually in evidence at this time. A man tells the *crieur* that he wants to sell a three-week-old pig, and the

crieur calls out the offer and receives bids. He even bids himself when he finds something going for a low price. "One dollar—one dollar, one—one dollar, two—one dollar —one dollar—one dollar—three, to Monsieur Raymond. Monsieur Raymond now deals directly with the owner of the shote, discussing when he can get it. The *crieur* also handles other commercial matters which have grown out of his role. He handles the buying of a shipment of chemical fertilizer for all the farmers who want it, taking their orders at the church steps or wherever they encounter him during the week. Every Sunday he quotes the amounts a butcher in the next parish is paying for various kinds of meat, and the prices the storekeeper in that parish is asking for flour, cement, or some other special offer. These larger stores in the larger parishes even have handbills distributed after church for their special sales.

The *crieur* having finished, the men drift away from the church, talking of parish or personal affairs or some current incident which the newspaper or the sermon has made common knowledge.

CHAPTER VII

THE CONTROL OF NATURE

NATURE furnishes a livelihood, but her forces are often unkind. Sickness and death, fire and storm, drought and earthquake, constantly strike terror into the heart of man. But he is not entirely at the mercy of these rampant forces, for there are traditional controls at his disposal. Some of these are religious procedures, some are magical, while some are simply traditional acts rationally or nonrationally used.

All the techniques of living involve making use of natural forces to man's advantage. The fire in the stove and the grain growing in the field are, in a sense, controlled forces of nature. They follow natural laws, rationally used, in conjunction with other natural forces, to guide them to useful ends. A discussion of the control of nature in that sense would involve the whole technology. What we shall consider here is the knowledge and control of nature gained by supernatural and nonrational means and the relation of these procedures to rational ones.

Sickness is a natural phenomenon which is horrifying and must be continually controlled. In St. Denis there are a number of healing acts to perform for the sick or hurt which are known as "secret" cures. These have one character in common—they may be told only to someone of the opposite sex. If they are told to a person of the same sex, they lose their potency. In the whole parish there are about a dozen people who know secret cures for some malady or other. One individual usually knows only one or two. He has no personal power other than that derived from the