Stephen Larigaudelle Dubuisson (1786-1864): A Catalyst for the Reform of the American Jesuits

Stephen Larigaudelle Dubuisson was a French-American Jesuit priest who played a pivotal role in the reform of the American Jesuit order in the 19th century. Born in France in 1786, Dubuisson joined the Society of Jesus in 1809 and was ordained a priest in 1816. He arrived in the United States in 1821 and quickly became involved in the administration and education of the American Jesuits.

At the time of Dubuisson's arrival, the American Jesuit order was in a state of disarray. The order had been suppressed worldwide by Pope Clement XIV in 1773, and it was not until 1814 that it was restored in the United States. The American Jesuits were struggling to reestablish themselves and to adapt to the changing religious and cultural landscape of the United States.



Stephen Larigaudelle Dubuisson, S.J. (1786–1864) and the Reform of the American Jesuits by Miriam Battye

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Dubuisson was a strong advocate for the reform of the American Jesuits. He believed that the order needed to be more responsive to the needs of the American Church and that it needed to adopt a more modern approach to education. He also believed that the Jesuits needed to be more closely integrated into the American Catholic community.

In 1829, Dubuisson was appointed the superior of the American Jesuits. He immediately began to implement his reforms. He established a new system of education for the Jesuits, which included a focus on the natural sciences and modern languages. He also founded several new Jesuit schools and colleges, including Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

Dubuisson's reforms were not without their critics. Some Jesuits resisted his changes, and there were also some bishops who were suspicious of the Jesuits' growing influence in the United States. However, Dubuisson persevered, and his reforms eventually led to a revitalization of the American Jesuit order.

Dubuisson's legacy is still felt today. The American Jesuits are one of the largest and most influential religious orders in the United States. They run some of the nation's most prestigious universities and high schools, and they are active in a wide range of social and pastoral ministries.

Stephen Larigaudelle Dubuisson was a visionary leader who played a key role in the reform of the American Jesuits. His reforms helped to make the Jesuits a more relevant and dynamic force in the American Catholic Church.

Early Life and Education

Stephen Larigaudelle Dubuisson was born in La Rochelle, France, on March 12, 1786. His father was a merchant, and his mother was a devout Catholic. Dubuisson received a classical education at the Jesuit College in La Rochelle. He was a brilliant student, and he excelled in his studies.

In 1809, Dubuisson joined the Society of Jesus. He studied philosophy and theology at the Jesuit seminary in Montrouge, France. He was ordained a priest in 1816.

Arrival in the United States

In 1821, Dubuisson was sent to the United States as a missionary. He arrived in Baltimore, Maryland, where he was assigned to teach at the Jesuit college there. Dubuisson quickly became involved in the administration of the American Jesuits. He was appointed the superior of the Maryland mission in 1823.

In 1829, Dubuisson was elected the superior of the American Jesuits. He served in this position for two terms, from 1829 to 1833 and from 1837 to 1840.

Reforms of the American Jesuits

Dubuisson was a strong advocate for the reform of the American Jesuits. He believed that the order needed to be more responsive to the needs of the American Church and that it needed to adopt a more modern approach to education. He also believed that the Jesuits needed to be more closely integrated into the American Catholic community. Dubuisson implemented a number of reforms during his time as superior. He established a new system of education for the Jesuits, which included a focus on the natural sciences and modern languages. He also founded several new Jesuit schools and colleges, including Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

Dubuisson's reforms were not without their critics. Some Jesuits resisted his changes, and there were also some bishops who were suspicious of the Jesuits' growing influence in the United States. However, Dubuisson persevered, and his reforms eventually led to a revitalization of the American Jesuit order.

Later Life and Legacy

Dubuisson retired as superior of the American Jesuits in 1840. He continued to be active in the order, however, and he served as the rector of Georgetown University from 1843 to 1848.

Dubuisson died in Washington, D.C., on August 12, 1864. He was 78 years old.

Stephen Larigaudelle Dubuisson was a visionary leader who played a key role in the reform of the American Jesuits. His reforms helped to make the Jesuits a more relevant and dynamic force in the American Catholic Church.

Stephen Larigaudelle Dubuisson was a remarkable man who left a lasting legacy on the American Catholic Church. He was a brilliant scholar, a dedicated priest, and a wise leader. His reforms of the American Jesuits helped to make the order a more vibrant and effective force in the United States.

Dubuisson's legacy is still felt today. The American Jesuits are one of the largest and most influential religious orders in the United States. They run some of the nation's most prestigious universities and high schools, and they are active in a wide range of social and pastoral ministries.

Stephen Larigaudelle Dubuisson was a true pioneer who helped to shape the future of the American Catholic Church. He is remembered as one of the greatest leaders in the history of the Society of Jesus.



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