



CONGREGAZIONE DELLO SPIRITO SANTO  
CLIVO DI CINNA, 195 - 00136 ROMA, ITALIA

HOLY SPIRIT, LIFE IN THE SPIRIT  
2 february 2015 – 15 may 2016

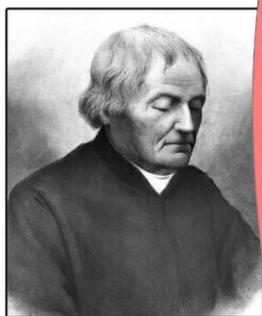
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## Novena to the Pentecost 2016

**Fusion :**

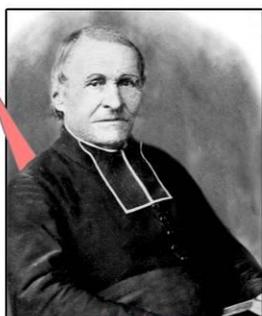
**Dedicated to the Holy Spirit, under the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary  
for the evangelization of the poor**



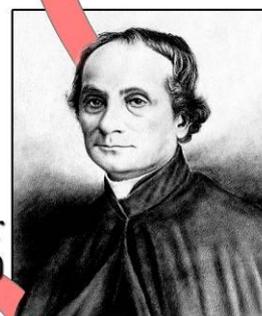
Nicolas Warnet  
8<sup>th</sup> superior general  
(1795 - [1845] - 1869)



Eugène Tisserant  
(1814 - [1841] - 1845)



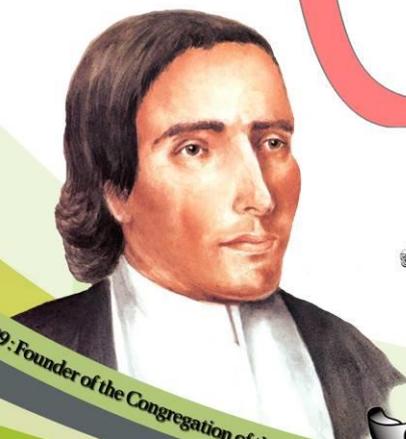
Jean-Baptiste Loevenbruck  
(1795 - [1847] - 1876)



Frédéric Le Vavasseur  
(1811 - [1841] - 1882)



Alexandre Monnet  
10<sup>th</sup> superior general  
(1812 - [1848] - 1858)



1703-1709: Founder of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit

**Claude Poullart des Places**  
(1679 - 1709)



1841-1848: Founder of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary  
1848-1852: 11<sup>th</sup> Superior of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit

**Francis Mary Paul Libermann**  
(1802 - 1852)

**1848**

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit under the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

## INTRODUCTION

### ***Cor unum et anima una***

The unity of our Congregation is like the unity in a human body: it manifests itself in our important common activities - the evangelization of the poor, and in the concrete, the evangelization of the Black slaves - this shows a bodily unity. It also manifests itself in a common spirituality, by the particular charism which animates us: the consecration to the Holy Spirit under the invocation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary - this is a deep unity in our hearts.

We Spiritans fall into a particular category: we are heirs of two Founders, Poullart des Places and Libermann. In 1848, the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary of Libermann was fused with the Congregation of the Holy Spirit of Poullart. The prevailing reasons for this fusion can be sought in the juridical plan of the constitutions and rules of life - this was the object of the thesis of Michael Legrain, and it grew from a common missionary aim: the evangelization of the peoples in the same territories - the slaves and the Black peoples in the colonies. These motives certainly influenced Propaganda Fide in Rome, who wished to prevent conflict between missionaries in the same lands.

### **A Common Charism**

However, it is not sufficient to rest with this plan alone: Libermann did not accept the fusion of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary and the Spiritans solely because of a missionary strategy. There were also very deep spiritual affinities, a common charism which the Holy Spirit had sown in the hearts of our two Founders, and which has remained very much alive across the centuries, in spite of the changes in situations and missionary works. This affinity is one of a common consecration to the Holy Spirit under the invocation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the evangelization of the poor. In spite of differences in social and religious situations, of historical contexts and changes in personnel, it is impressive to see the profound harmony between Poullart's Society and that of Libermann, this communion of our two Founders in a double and unique consecration. Our Pentecost Novena of 2016, consecrated to the time of the fusion, wishes to help us to better understand how to live out this unity together in a better way today: "**Cor unum et anima una**". At the time when Libermann was looking for a name for his Society, Libermann wrote in 1844, commenting on the Provisional Rule of 1840: "*I was thinking that the Society needed to find in its consecration all the devotions and a perfect model of all the fundamental virtues of the apostolate*" (p. 39 - 40)

We shall cite at length the letter which Libermann wrote on 20th December 1848, immediately after the Fusion, to the communities of Bourbon (Reunion) and Mauritius, Dakar and Gabon, in order to reassure his missionaries, who were the first members of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary. It shows us ***the heart of Libermann, how he lived the project of the union of the "Holy Heart of Mary" with the "Holy Spirit.***

We shall also cite the ***Notice on the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and the Immaculate Heart of Mary and on their works***<sup>1</sup> written by Francis Libermann in 1850, fifteen months after the Fusion. In this NOTICE, Libermann shares with us his point of view, **how he lived these events**: the history of

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<sup>1</sup> We use the title **NOTICE** in the version edited by P. Coulon in his book *Claude-Francois Poullart des Places et les Spiritans*: P. COULON (dir.) ed. Karthala 2009 pp. 647 - 660.

the Congregation of the Holy Spirit since its beginnings - the only text in which he refers to Poullart des Places - and the history of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary: his initial inspiration, the missionary beginnings, and the reason for the union between the two Congregations. "*When these things are better known, it can prevent perhaps quarrels from ulterior motives over the Fusion*"<sup>2</sup>.

In this the Year of Mercy, these two texts express very well ***the compassion of Libermann, Le Vavas seur, Tisserant, and Laval*** for the slaves and the Blacks of Africa and of the Islands.

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Coulon - Presentation of the Notice *ibid.* p. 649

## 1. Friday 06 May 2016: The Charism of the Foundation with Poullart - Pentecost 1703

Father Libermann started his **NOTICE** concerning the Foundation of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, by mentioning Poullart des Places, "the Venerable Founder" - the only time he mentions him in his writings: *"The Congregation of the Holy Spirit was founded on **the Day of Pentecost 1703** by Mr. Poullart Desplaces (sic.), of the Diocese of Rennes, with the aim of training clerics destined to consecrate themselves to the most abandoned works. For a long time the Society existed only thanks to charitable donations: the Venerable Founder had to go out begging himself, then he waited on his students with his own hands, rendering them the most humble service."*<sup>3</sup>

At the beginning, there were only one or two "scholars", then soon there were twelve. By Lent 1703, Poullart left his room at the College of St. Louis the Great, in order to live with them at the house of the Large Rosary. This little group, according to the *Gallia Christiana*<sup>4</sup> expressed "from its very beginnings" the desire "to found their small community as an association of clerics." That was his dearest wish.

### ***The Foundation on Pentecost Day 1703***

The young Poullart at that time had a profound experience of the Holy Spirit (August 1702 - December 1703), including the graces of affective prayer and a great and childlike devotion to the Immaculate Conception. It is certain that he prayed to the Virgin Mary, in order to have the interior lights of the Paraclete Spirit. He proposed to his "poor scholars" to consecrate themselves to the Holy Spirit, on Pentecost Day, at the foot of the statue of the Black Virgin, in the chapel of Our Lady of Good Deliverance, in the Church of St. Stephen, in Paris. According to certain sources, that very evening, he preached a conference to them on the theme *"The Spirit of the Lord rests upon me. He has consecrated me with oil. He has sent me to preach the Good News to the poor...."* (Lk. 4.18). In the Spiritan Archives we can read: *"Mr. Claude Francis Poullart des Place, in the year 1703, on the Feast of Pentecost, he himself being only a seminarian, started the above mentioned community and Seminary consecrated to the Holy Spirit, under the invocation of the Holy Virgin conceived without Sin...."*<sup>5</sup>

This was on 27th May 1703: this celebration is considered to be the Foundation of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. It shows forth the three essential elements of our Spiritan Charism:

- a) Consecration to the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost
- b) *"Under the invocation of the Holy Virgin conceived without sin,"* at the feet of the Black Virgin
- c) consisting of poor seminarians destined for the evangelization of the poor

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<sup>3</sup> **NOTICE** ....p. 651

<sup>4</sup> *Gallia Christians*, t. VII, 1744, col. 1042

<sup>5</sup> The Register of the Associates started in 1734 reproduced the exact words of the "former register", Spiritan Archives: see Sean P. FARRAGHER, *Led By The Spirit*.....p. 126

### ***Particular and General Rules (1705 - 1707)***

Poullart inscribed this Foundational Charism in his *Particular and General Rules (1705 - 1707)*. The commentary of Fr. Lecuyer, noted at the bottom of the page, are important if we are to understand the force of the words of Poullart.

1. *All of the students will adore in a particular way the Holy Spirit to whom they have specially offered themselves.<sup>6</sup> They will also have a special devotion to the Holy Virgin, under whose protection they have been offered to the Holy Spirit.<sup>7</sup>*

2. *They shall choose the Feasts of Pentecost and of the Immaculate Conception for their principal feasts. They shall celebrate Pentecost first of all in order to obtain from the Holy Spirit the fire of Divine Love<sup>8</sup>, and secondly to obtain from the Most Holy Virgin an angelic purity<sup>9</sup>: and these two virtues were to be the foundation of their spiritual lives.*

**This choice inspired by God was to be seen in the whole history of the work**, soon to be called the Seminary of the Holy Spirit, and then the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. The disciples of Poullart should take great care to be faithful to the charism of their Founder.

### **Bible Text: *With Mary, like the Apostles in the Cenacle (Acts 1.13 - 14; 2.1 - 4)***

John Paul Hoch, Superior General, in his message for Pentecost 2011, preparing for the Bagamoyo Chapter, reminded us: "*Our consecration to the Holy Spirit is inseparable from our filial devotion to the Virgin Mary*"<sup>10</sup>. For the evangelization of the poor, the Spirit makes us contemplate and love Mary. The Virgin helps us to discover and welcome the Spirit. What about my spiritual journey? Am I faithful?

### **Prayer: - Consecration Formula - Preces diurnae 1845**

We do not know for certain the formula of consecration used by Poullart in 1703. It is highly probable that which we find in the prayer book of the students of the Seminary of the Holy Spirit reprinted in 1845: *Preces diurnae in Seminario S. Spiritus recitandae*, Paris, 1845. Twice yearly, at Pentecost and on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception - and this right up until the Fusion in 1848 - the Spiritans, in a solemn ceremony, shall renew their consecration to the Spirit through Mary. We possess the text of two conferences given in the Chapel at rue Lhomond, more than 130 years after the Foundation, by Fr. WARNET, the seventh successor of Poullart des Places.

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<sup>6</sup> **Vowed: consecrated.** The House was inaugurated on the Feast of Pentecost, but the Special Consecration to the Holy Spirit contains much more meaning than that (*Lecuyer*)

<sup>7</sup> The Founder counted on the Protection of the Virgin Mary so that the students would belong entirely to the Holy Spirit to whom they had been *Consecrated* (*Lecuyer*)

<sup>8</sup> At the very outset of his work: charity..... which the Holy Spirit pours into hearts like fire (*Lecuyer*)

<sup>9</sup> The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is one of the two principal feasts of the House. Poullart and the Spiritans were prophetic, a long time before 1854... *Angelic purity* is not only corporeal chastity, but a purity which is as close a copy of that of Mary as possible, She who was exempt from every taint of sin. (*Lecuyer*)

<sup>10</sup> Letter of Pentecost 2011. "*Moving towards the General Chapter of Bagamoyo 2012, simply and solely Spiritans*" 16 May 2011. BNS No.268

On 8th December 1837, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Fr. WARNET said, "*The whole object of this ceremony, which is held twice a year, consists in an act of Consecration which we make of ourselves to the Holy Spirit under the invocation of Mary conceived without sin.*"

On 26th May 1839 on the Feast of Pentecost he said, "*Let us clearly understand the meaning of these three words: se dedicantem, consecrantem et voventem. By saying, "I **dedicate myself, I consecrate myself**" we are really dedicating and consecrating ourselves to the Holy Spirit; like temples dedicated to his worship, like vases consecrated to his honour....*"<sup>11</sup>

Let us recite this prayer on the first day of our Novena.... 313 years after the Foundation of the Spiritans: -

**"Holy Mary, my Mother and my Queen..... humbly and piously prostrate at your feet, I implore your assistance. Help me, your little servant, to dedicate, consecrate and devote myself to the Holy Spirit, your Heavenly Spouse, in whose honour, despite my frailty, I wish today to enter into a very important engagement.**

**My good Mother, listen to me; All-powerful Spirit, listen to my good Mother, and by her intercession, deign to illumine my soul with your light, and fill my heart with the fire of your love, so that, in this house consecrated to you, I may do everything which pleases you, whatever concerns your glory, my sanctification, and the edification of my brothers....."**<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Extracts from the sermons of 8th December 1837 and 26th May 1829, Spiritan Archives 10 B-I - cited by J. MICHEL, Claude Francis Poullart des Places , pp. 300 - 301.

<sup>12</sup> *Preces diurnae in Seminario S, Spiritus recitandae*, Paris, 1845. Quoted by Joseph MICHEL, Biography 1962

## **2. Friday 07 May 2016 - 1840 - 1845 - The Decline and Agony of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit - Attempts at Restoration by FOURDINIER and LEGUAY**

### **1710 - 1763: The "Congregation of the Holy Spirit" has mission territories entrusted to it.**

Fr. Bouic, Superior for 53 years (1710 - 1763) consolidated the work of the "poor scholars". The *"important service which the priests coming out of the Holy Spirit Seminary performed in the dioceses of France"*<sup>13</sup> earned official recognition from both the Church and the State in France. In 1726 Letters Patent of King Louis XV authorised the establishment of a community of students under the title of Holy Spirit and the Immaculate Conception - *"6 Directors .... and about 80 persons."* Fr. Bouic acquired in 1731 a house in the rue des Postes (30, rue Lhomond) which became his official residence on 1st January 1732. Many priests formed in Holy Spirit Seminary left with the MEP (Paris Foreign Missions) to Canada and then to Asia. Certain territories, St. Pierre et Miquelon (1765), French Guiana (1768) and St. Louis in Senegal (1779) were confided to "The Congregation of the Holy Spirit". However, there is one surprising remark to make: Poullart had founded his work with the seminarians, but only those who had the responsibility of running the Seminary were viewed as members of the "Congregation of the Holy Spirit". The other priests, sent to the Missions, even though they called themselves *Spiritans* were in fact secular priests.

### **1789 - 1832: The earthquake of the French Revolution - the boat of the "Holy Spirit" in the tempest**

*"At the time of the Great Revolution in 1792, the Congregation of the Holy Spirit shared the lot of all the other religious establishments in France. Its seminary was suppressed, its priests dispersed, its house sold by the State..... As soon as peace took place in France by the Concordat of 1801, Fr. Bertout, alone, and without a roof over his head - started the work of Fr. Poulart Desplaces (sic.) amidst innumerable difficulties."*<sup>14</sup>

Napoleon re-established the Congregation of the Holy Spirit on 23rd March 1805, but suppressed it again four years later. *"In 1816, a Royal Edict gave the Congregation legal approval."* Fr. Bertout could buy back the house on the rue des Postes and in 1822 the Congregation took possession once again of the Seminary.

### **1830 After the Revolutions: A seriously weak work, in decline, and with an impossible mission**

Beginning in 1830, France envisaged a progressive emancipation of the slaves, and the Government charged the Holy Spirit Seminary with the formation of the colonial clergy:

*"The Holy Spirit Seminary is the only Congregation, which, considering the reasons for its inception, is today able to form and send to the colonies suitable clerics... Therefore it is you, dear Sir, to whom has been confided the exclusive instruction, choice and general direction of priests called to work in the laborious and delicate service of the moralisation of the Blacks in our colonies."*<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> NOTICE p. 651

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem p. 651

<sup>15</sup> Letter of the Minister of the Marine to Fr. Bertout, 22 November 1839, Arch. CSSp, *Biographical Notices* No. 21, March 1911, p. 294

This was indeed a heavy responsibility for a very much weakened Congregation, lacking both directors and priests:

*"In spite of all the efforts of Fr. Bertout and of his successors ..... **the Seminary lacked directors, and was obliged to have recourse to outsiders....** The Dioceses of France, themselves short of priests, were not willing to give the number of priests demanded by the needs of the colonies. In 1830, the subsidies from the Government were withdrawn from the Seminary... In this state of distress, the Seminary felt it was necessary to accept priests without being able to get to know them very well, and this was the cause of all the sorrows which our holy religion had to deplore in our colonies."<sup>16</sup>*

#### **Fr. Fourdinier, 7th Superior General (1832 - 1845): An ambitious project ending in failure**

Fr. Amable Fourdinier, became Superior of the Seminary of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit in 1832, but lacked both personnel and the necessary means. There was a further problem, with the outbreak of cholera in 1832: the Seminary was confiscated to be a military hospital, and found it hard to recuperate from this in 1835.

In 1832, Fourdinier conceived an ambitious plan: to regroup in one congregation all the former priests of the Seminary. He presented this in a circular to the Prefects Apostolic, and in another to the Colonial Clergy. Nearly all of them refused his offer, and the Prefects Apostolic in Martinique, Guadeloupe and Bourbon (Reunion) opposed it firmly. There was only one gleam of light in the middle of the darkness: in the Holy Spirit chapel, the first three African priests were ordained, all Senegalese, namely Frs. David Biolat, Arsene Fridoil and John Peter Moussa, all of them having been sent to France for their studies by Blessed Mother Javouhey.

#### **WARNET, 8th Superior General (January - April 1845) - A congregation in Agony**

On the death of Fourdinier on the 5th January 1845, the Congregation of the Holy Spirit was in its death throes: it consisted of only three members. Fr. Nicholas Warnet succeeded Fourdinier, but resigned soon afterwards (January to April 1845). Writing to (Blessed) Mother Javouhey, his confidant, on 9th March 1845, Libermann could not hide his grave concerns over the situation of "Holy Spirit" with its bad reputation.

*"The evils of the Holy Spirit Seminary are so great, including its near destruction, that its resurrection appears impossible. All this arises in great part from its universal discredit, into which this Congregation, once so excellent in itself and in its members, has fallen. From that, they have been obliged to increase the numbers in the Seminary with a multitude of young men and of old priests whom the dioceses of France have rejected as either incapable or unworthy to exercise the holy functions of the priesthood: following on from that, the colonial clergy is held in contempt, self-concerned and little edifying as it is, and other complaints could be laid at their door. Their parishioners .... devoted though they be, have nowhere to turn for help."<sup>17</sup>*

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<sup>16</sup> NOTICE p. 652

<sup>17</sup> ND VII, p.111 Letter of Libermann to Blessed Mother Javouhey, 9 March 1845

### **With Fr. LEGUAY, 9th Superior General (1845 - 1848). A failed attempt at restoration.**

Fr. Alexander LEGUAY, became Superior General on 29th April 1845. His ambition was to restore "Holy Spirit Seminary". He picked up the plan of Fr. Fourdinier - to constitute a Congregation with all the colonial clergy - but with strong demands - they must make a Novitiate, live in community, and practice true Poverty. He sent his Rule to Rome, which demanded certain corrections.<sup>18</sup> However, an outside event spoiled his dreams. The Revolution of February 1848. *"deposed Louis Philippe, and established the Republic ....M. Schoelcher, named as Director of the Colonies, immediately proclaimed the total emancipation of the slaves in all of the French colonies. This Director of the Colonies was very hostile to Fr. Leguay and to the Directors of Holy Spirit Seminary, whom he accused of being anti-Black, and opposed to their emancipation. He publicly threatened to break the Seminary and even replace the Spiritans with another Congregation. He recalled the Prefects Apostolic to France, as well as the Missionaries whom Fr. Leguay had appointed to the Colonies, and sent to the Colonies those clerics whom Fr. Leguay had recalled, and who said they had been victimised by Leguay because of their love for the Blacks. Finally, Fr. Leguay ..... resigned, despite the resistance of his confreres, and, in order to save the Seminary Fr. Monnet was named in his place, a former Missionary in Bourbon (Reunion) who had the reputation of being completely devoted to the Blacks."*<sup>19</sup>

### **Acts 16. 1 - 8 The Holy Spirit prevented them from.....**

In our missionary life, ambitious projects fail. It is nevertheless necessary to persevere and overcome the obstacles. Sometimes, it is the Spirit who blocks our way, in order to open other paths afterwards.... Is this what happens in my missionary life? What is my reaction? What does my faith read into such events?

### **Biblical Prayers (L. Deiss)**

Holy Spirit, you led the deacon Philip along the road to Gaza, in order to meet the official of the Queen of Ethiopia; we beg you, lead the steps of your missionaries, towards all of those who search for the truth.

Holy Spirit, you mark out the way for your disciples to follow, in order to announce the Gospel; we beg you, as in the time of the Apostles, to guide your messengers of the Good News.

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<sup>18</sup> Rome thought that the mass entry of all the Colonial Clergy into the Congregation was a utopian idea. The project was only approved on 21st February 1848, after the resignation of Fr. Leguay

<sup>19</sup> ND X 414 Extract from the Autobiography of Fr. Leguay

### **3. Sunday 08 May 2016: - LIBERMANN and the "Holy Heart of Mary"; a young Missionary Society continually expanding**

#### **1839 - Le Vavas seur and Tisserant, initiators of the "Work for the Blacks".**

In 1839, Le Vavas seur and Tisserant, creole seminarians from Bourbon (Reunion) and Haiti, shared together their cares about the evangelization of the Black slaves in their countries and in the French colonies.

*"At the same time, certain priests coming from the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, profoundly affected by the degradation and abandonment suffered by the poor slaves in the colonies, who formed up to two thirds of the population, agreed on a project together to come to their aid. Recognizing the difficulties of this work which they wished to undertake, and their own inability to carry it out, they decided to join **the Archconfraternity**<sup>20</sup>, convinced that their work would overcome all obstacles through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so full of mercy towards sinful and abandoned souls."*<sup>21</sup>

On 2nd February, they shared their missionary preoccupations with Fr. Desgenettes, the Parish Priest of Our Lady of Victories, who started that same day a crusade of prayer for the Blacks. Le Vavas seur, then Tisserant, wrote to Libermann, who was still working in the Eudist Novitiate at Rennes. During the summer vacation at Issy, Libermann helped them to organise the "**Work for the Blacks**". Mr. de la Bruniere, who joined the project, was chosen to be the Superior of the nascent association. On 28th October, on the Feast of the Holy Apostles Simon and Jude, Libermann received "some little light" which pushed him to join the Work for the Blacks.

#### **1840: Steps taken at Rome - Libermann becomes responsible for the Project**

Libermann and Mr. de la Bruniere decided to go to Rome. Passing through Lyons, Libermann received graces of strength and peace at the church of Our Lady of Fourviere. On 6th January 1840, Libermann and de la Bruniere arrived in Rome.

*" In order to be sure of following the Divine Will, they offered their plans to Propaganda Fide .... Fortified by the words of encouragement they received from that Roman Congregation they set about taking the practical steps of organising the work."*

Libermann drafted his little *Memorandum concerning the Foreign Missions* and presented it to Propaganda Fide on 27th March 1840. However at the end of March. Mr. de la Bruniere, tired by now of waiting around, gave up and left Rome. Libermann was left all on his own to bear the project of "The Work for the Blacks": he was forced by his lack of means to live in a poor attic.

On 6th June, Libermann received a favourable reply from Propaganda Fide, but they said he had to be ordained priest first of all! However his epilepsy, still with him, barred his way to the priesthood: he abandoned himself to God. Up until May he found it very difficult to draft a *Provisional Rule*: but as soon as he thought of consecrating the work to the Most Holy Heart of Mary, he saw clearly what

<sup>20</sup> We are talking here of the Archconfraternity of the Holy Heart of Mary, Refuge of Sinners, started by Father Dufrique-Desgenettes, Parish Priest of Our Lady of Victories church in Paris on 3rd Sunday of Advent 1836. cf. N.D. I, pp. 641 seq.

<sup>21</sup> NOTICE. p.652. They were both still seminarians, Tisserant being ordained priest on 21 December 1840 and Le Vavas seur on 18 September 1841.

to do and rapidly completed by the end of July the *Provisional Rule of the Missionaries of the Most Holy Heart of Mary*. In the middle of November, Libermann went on pilgrimage to the shrine of the Holy House of Mary at Loreto, and then he visited Assisi. On his return to Rome in the middle of December, he learned that Mgr. Raess, the newly appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Strasbourg, agreed to ordain him priest.

### **25 September 1841: Mass at the Foundation of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary**

At the beginning of January, Libermann left Rome. In Paris, he met up with Le Vavas seur, Tisserant and some others who wished to join the Work for the Blacks. On 9th June, Fr. Laval boarded ship for Mauritius. On 18 September, Libermann was ordained priest at Amiens. **On 28th September 1841, at the feet of Our Lady of Victories**, in the presence of Fr. Desgenettes, Libermann with Le Vavas seur and Tisserant, celebrated the first Mass of their Community, now considered to be **the Foundation Mass of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary**.

*"They formed a Congregation, and, as much in recognition of the graces which they had received and which they attributed to the fervent prayers of the Archconfraternity, aiding them to follow the interior attraction which had been given to them, they decided that the Congregation would be given the title of the **Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary**.*

Two days later, on 27th September, they opened the Novitiate:

*"The new-born Congregation opened its first house at la Neuville, in the diocese of Amiens, in September 1841; Fr. Libermann was named Superior.... the beginnings of the new Society were extremely feeble, and they were totally without any means of existence; God alone was its strength and its support; God's Divine Providence, its unique resource, and the Holy Heart of Mary, its hope ..... The grace of God..... enabled them to take the resolution to sacrifice everything rather than abandon the work which the Divine Goodness had inspired in them."<sup>22</sup>*

### **The sending of the first Missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary - the trial of the Cross**

Very quickly, the new Society had many fervent vocations joining it. Libermann was able to send his first Missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary. Laval had already left for Mauritius (9 June 1841), Le Vavas seur for Bourbon (Reunion) (6 February 1842), and Tisserant for Martinique en route for Haiti (12 November 1842). On 21 November, seven members of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary made their Consecration to the Apostolate. But where could they go? Libermann went to pray at Our Lady of Victories and shared his concerns with Fr. Desgenettes. On the next day, 18th December, Bishop Barron appointed Vicar Apostolic of the Two Guineas, arrived at the church, looking for co-workers. Fr. Desgenettes informed him of Libermann's Society of the Holy Heart of Mary. Libermann accepted the mission of Guinea, a vast territory. *"Towards the end of that year (September 1843) .....seven missionaries of the new Society left France to begin their work in the mission of the Two Guineas".* Bessieux and his companions went ashore at Cape Palmas (Liberia) but found themselves in a very unhealthy place.

The young Society of the Holy Heart of Mary was about to know the Cross through a long series of sufferings:

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<sup>22</sup> NOTICE p. 653

- a) 1844: *"The death of five of the young missionaries within the first few months of their arrival because of malaria. When Libermann got the news, he could not stifle the exclamation, "Poor Guinea!"*
- b) 1844: the expulsion of the five first missionaries soon after their arrival in **Haiti (San Domingo)**
- c) 8 December 1845: **Tisserant** *named Prefect Apostolic of the Two Guineas* perishes in a shipwreck off the coast of Morocco.
- d) January 1847, *Death of Bishop Truffet, first Vicar Apostolic, due to the austerity of his life.*

### **1846 - 1848 - The rapid expansion of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary**

Vocations were coming more and more: there were 23 in theology, 10 in philosophy, 10 Brothers. In November 1846, the Novitiate moved from La Neuville to Notre Dame du Gard near Amiens. Libermann was considering accepting the vast mission of Australia... *"But Guinea will always be our first love"*.

*"Finally, the sacrifice of the lives of seven fervent missionaries and of a great number of pious souls has drawn down on us the favourable regard of God for the Work for the Blacks. In 1848, the Holy See gave the Congregation two bishops for the Two Guineas and for Senegambia. They have the happiness of organising at last this mission, abandoned for so long and so sadly deprived."<sup>23</sup>*

### **Acts 13. 1 - 4; The Holy Spirit says: Set apart.....**

The Holy Spirit uprooted Paul and Barnabas, for a fruitful ministry among the community in Antioch. What about myself - am I "installed" in a "ministry of maintenance", gratifying myself, or am I in the habit of heeding the missionary call to *"the poor, the nations, groups, persons, who have not yet heard the evangelical message or who have scarcely heard it, to those in greatest need, and the oppressed"* (SRL - Spiritan Rule of Life no.4)? What availability is the Spirit of Pentecost demanding of me today?

**Prayer** of Pope Francis for the Year of Mercy (part two):

*You wish that your servants be themselves clothed in weakness in order to feel **true compassion** for those who are in ignorance and error: make it happen that all who approach your servants may feel that they are expected, loved and pardoned by God.*

*Send your Spirit and consecrate all of us with his unction, so that the Jubilee of Mercy be a year of the grace of Jesus, and that your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may announce the Good News to the poor, liberty to prisoners and the oppressed, and may the blind receive their sight again.*

*We ask this of you, Jesus, through Mary, the Mother of Mercy, you who live with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.*

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<sup>23</sup> NOTICE pp. 654 - 655

#### 4. Monday 09 May 2016 - The Union of the Two Societies - First Steps and Obstacles

From 1840 some people in Rome told Libermann that there was no need of a new Society:

*"This thought was seriously told to me **ever since 1840, at Rome**, by zealous individuals.... The Society of the Holy Spirit was already engaged in such a work: we were not needed"*<sup>24</sup>

However, Propaganda Fide were of a different opinion, and encouraged the foundation of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary.

#### **1843 - 1845 - Obstacles to the first steps towards union from Fr. FOURDINIER**

The Society of the Holy Heart of Mary, had just been born on 25th September 1841: Mgr. Garibaldi, the Nuncio in Paris, advised Libermann in 1842 to unite with the Spiritan Congregation:

*"Fr. Le Vasseur and myself, tried to facilitate this union with Fr. Fourdinier.....; we offered to him that we would enter his Congregation, on condition that we could continue to live **in community** and also that we would not be working in parishes but **with the Blacks**."*<sup>25</sup>

In the NOTICE, Libermann spoke about what really mattered to him: the *salvation of the Blacks.... poor and abandoned souls, whose terrible situation moved them to a profound compassion and community life following a Rule*" in order to *"maintain the fervour of the priestly and religious life....and the apostolic spirit"*. But Fr. Fourdinier, who was always concerned about another project, refused these two conditions:

*"The moment of Divine Providence had not yet arrived.....Fr. Fourdinier, refusing every precondition, the Spiritan Society continued with the project in which they were occupied."*<sup>26</sup>

*"This holy man did everything in his power to destroy us"; he "would have wiped us out had it been in his power".*<sup>27</sup> Fr. Fourdinier died on 5th January 1845. Holy Spirit Seminary seemed to be at death's door: *"There are only three Holy Spirit Fathers left. Fr. Warnet is the interim Superior.... The decay of Holy Spirit Seminary has brought its affairs into total disorder."*<sup>28</sup>

#### **January to April 1845: A gleam of light thanks to Fr. WARNET**

Watching the decline of Holy Spirit Seminary, the Nuncio in Paris submitted a project to Propaganda Fide:

*"The Nuncio ..... wants with all his heart that Holy Spirit Seminary be handed over to us. That frightens me. I have taken no steps for that to happen; I have done nothing about it.... I do not dare to ask for anything, I do not dare to refuse anything. I am leaving everything to Providence..... I am keeping myself in a state of perfect indifference."*<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> ND X p. 339. Letter to the Communities of Bourbon (Reunion), Dakar and Gabon 20 December 1848

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p. 339

<sup>26</sup> NOTICE p. 653

<sup>27</sup> Libermann to Fr. Le Vasseur 26 August 1844, and to Fr. Collin August 1844

<sup>28</sup> ND VII p.33 Fr. Libermann to Fr. Le Vasseur January 1845

<sup>29</sup> ND VII ibidem pp. 32 - 33

This "**mystical indifference**"<sup>30</sup> did not prevent Libermann from intensely taking steps as a courier. In February 1845, he was totally for the idea of a union of the two Societies, as he wrote to the Minister for Foreign Affairs:

*"My project would be to reunite our Society with that of the Holy Spirit, in order to form one and the same Society, so that we could act in concert in the work of the moralization of the Colonies."*<sup>31</sup>

To Fr. Schwindenhammer, he makes it clear that he is not talking of substitution but of union: he even foresees the loss of the title "Holy Heart of Mary":

*"It would hurt me terribly to bring about the destruction of Holy Spirit Society in order for us to take its place. It is painful to thus build on the ruins of another.... **Therefore I am thinking once again of our union with the Holy Spirit Society. This reunion of two Congregations** would bring great advantages on one hand, and great difficulties on the other hand.... We shall lose our name in peoples' eyes, who will not fail to refer to us as Spiritans: but let us not be attached to words, but to realities."*<sup>32</sup>

What really mattered to Libermann above all, Libermann clearly described to Cardinal FRANSONI:

*"It would cost me a lot to work at establishing ourselves on the ruins of a Congregation older than ours. The reunion of the two Societies into one would seem to me to be more in conformity with the Divine Will, but only if there is no risk to us of losing the spirit of piety, fervour, zeal, devotion and charity which I have sought to establish among our Missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary."*<sup>33</sup>

In all of his correspondence from the beginning of 1845, Fr. Libermann never talks of fusion, even less of substitution, but of union, of reunion. However, on 5th April, he spoke clearly to Mother Javouhey about his hesitation in *taking the first steps with Fr. Warnet, not knowing his attitude sufficiently*".<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately Warnet resigned in April 1845.

#### **With Fr. LEGUAY (1845 - 1847) - The (provisional) abandonment of the idea of union**

Fr. Leguay, the new Superior General of the Holy Spirit Congregation, had an ambitious project of restoration, and submitted his Rule to Rome for approval. Libermann was not convinced: he, Libermann, was by now only interested in the union of the two Societies. On 26th June 1845 he wrote to (Blessed) Mother Javouhey:

*"**There must be a perfect union, a complete fusion:** but the agreement must take place between the two parties, with conditions favourable to both."*<sup>35</sup>

This is the first time that Libermann speaks of "fusion". However, he was soon to be disappointed. On 6th September 1845, Libermann told Fr. Le Vasseur:

<sup>30</sup> Expression of Peter BLANCHARD, *The Venerable Libermann* vol.2, Desclee de Brouwer, 1960, 518pp., p. 28

<sup>31</sup> ND VII, pp. 52 - 53 Fr. Libermann to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 7 February 1845

<sup>32</sup> ND VII, p.69 Fr. Libermann to Fr. Schwindenhammer, 24 February 1845

<sup>33</sup> ND VII, p. 95, Fr. Libermann to Cardinal Frasoni, 19 March 1845

<sup>34</sup> ND VII, p. 111, Fr. Libermann to Blessed Mother Javouhey, 5th April 1845.

<sup>35</sup> ND VII, pp.226 - 227. Fr. Libermann to Blessed Mother Javouhey, 26 June 1845.

*"I was having the idea of reunion with Holy Spirit Society..... but their Superior, although a holy man, has placed insurmountable obstacles..... The Nuncio wants us actually to take the place of the Spiritans, but he refuses to get directly involved in that matter."*<sup>36</sup>

On 11th October 1845, Libermann described to Cardinal Fransoni two serious incidents. Rome had confided the mission of the Two Guineas to The Holy Heart of Mary Society. Libermann was dreaming of a "reunion of Senegal with the Prefecture Apostolic of the Two Guineas" but imprudently had mentioned this to the Government. Unfortunately, "the Minister of Foreign Affairs had shown this plan to the Superior of the Holy Spirit Fathers, to the Governor of Senegal, and to the clergy of Gorey and of Saint Louis in Senegal."<sup>37</sup>

**Tisserant** newly returned from Haiti, and named Prefect Apostolic of the Two Guineas, went to Fr. Leguay to ask *permission to enter Senegal*.

*"Fr. Leguay seriously reproached him, **accusing us of encroaching on the jurisdiction of the Spiritans, like invaders**, saying that we wished to be independent of the legitimate ecclesiastical superiors..... He said that all jurisdiction in the colonies belonged solely to the Spiritans, and that we should have dealings with him alone...."*<sup>38</sup>

This question of jurisdiction paralyzed the idea of union, but really showed the urgent need for it. The following week, on 18th October 1845, Libermann alerted the Nuncio in Paris to another aspect of the problem:

*"I have known for a long time that the Minister of Foreign Affairs has wished to encroach on the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Colonies..... The Government is actually the master of the Superior of Holy Spirit Seminary and so naturally seeks to have all power in its hands in order the more easily to dominate the ecclesiastical affairs in the colonies. Fr. Leguay is trying to retrieve a power which the Holy See has never given him."*<sup>39</sup>

On 6th November 1845, Libermann sorrowfully confided to Le Vavas seur:

*"**Everything is destroyed..... I abandon the whole matter to Divine Providence and pray for Fr. Leguay.**"*<sup>40</sup>

**Scripture Reading: Acts 1. 4 - 8; Wait for what the Father has promised.... It does not belong to you to know**

So obviously, this year of 1845, so promising in its beginning with Warnet, came to nothing . Libermann would have to wait patiently for the hour of God, through two long years (1845 - 1847).

Am I able to wait for God's moment. Can I invoke the Holy Spirit, even to bless my opponents?

<sup>36</sup> ND VII, p.288, Fr. Libermann to Fr. Le Vavas seur, 6 September 1845

<sup>37</sup> ND VII, Fr. Libermann to Cardinal Fransoni, 11 October 1845. The Prefecture Apostolic of Senegal, (St. Louis, and Gorey) had been confided to the Spiritans since 1779.

<sup>38</sup> ND VII, *ibid.* p. 320

<sup>39</sup> ND VII, pp. 334 - 335. Fr. Libermann to Mgr. Fornari, 18 October 1845.

<sup>40</sup> ND VII, p. 368. Fr. Libermann to Fr. Le Vavas seur, 6 November 1845

**Prayer - Veni Sancte Spiritus (Sequence of the Mass of Pentecost)**

1. Come, O Holy Spirit come  
And from Thy celestial home  
Shed a ray of light divine

3. Thou of all Consolers best  
Thou the soul's most welcome guest  
Sweet refreshment here below

5. O most Blessed light divine  
Shine within these hearts of Thine  
And our inmost beings fill

7. Heal our wounds, our strength renew  
On our dryness pour thy dew  
Wash the stains of guilt away

9. Thou, on those who evermore  
Thee confess and Thee adore  
In Thy sevenfold gifts descend

2. Come Thou Father of the poor  
Come Thou source of all our store  
Come within our bosoms shine

4. In our labour, rest most sweet  
Grateful coolness in the heat  
Solace in the midst of woe

6. Where Thou art not, man has nought  
Nothing good in deed or thought  
Nothing free from taint or ill

8. Bend the stubborn heart and will,  
Melt the frozen, warm the chill,  
Guide the steps that go astray

10. Give them virtue's sure reward  
Give them Thy salvation, Lord,  
Give them joys that never end. Amen. Alleluia!

## 5. Tuesday 10 May 2016 - The Hour of God - towards realizing the Fusion -

### The Hand of God in Bourbon (Reunion) and in Paris - steps to the fusion or reunion

In Bourbon (Reunion), **Warnet** and **Monnet** had got to know Le Vavas seur, and greatly admired his mission among the Blacks. Monnet was expelled from Reunion in September 1847 by those who opposed the abolition of slavery. He became Superior General of the Spiritans on 2nd March 1848. Soon enough, Leovenbruck judged him to be incapable "of raising up, supporting, and helping to walk well the obsolete Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Father Warnet is of the same opinion. We often discuss this. This is when took place the germination and development of **the idea of fusion or reunion with the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary**. Fr. Monnet liked it..... The projected plan was to **graft the new Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary on to the old trunk of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.**"<sup>41</sup>

### With Monnet: May 1848 - "the First Meetings"

Monnet was having trouble with the "despot Schoelcher", the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, who wished to impose on him two Superiors for Martinique and Guadeloupe. Libermann confided to Le Vavas seur:

*"Monnet wrote to me a very worried letter. I sought to reassure him: I told him that for a long time I had the very sincere desire of seeing our two Congregations united. This phrase angered Fr. Monnet very much. But the very next day after the sending of my letter, he came to see us at Notre Dame du Gard, and asked that we seriously go into the question of reunion. I could not ask for more."*<sup>42</sup>

On 8th May, Monnet sent Fr. Loevenbruck to Notre Dame du Gard to act as negotiator. Libermann went to consult the Nuncio.

Rome did not wish "that the Community of the Holy Spirit appointed by itself alone all the leaders of Mission for the Colonies: even less that the Colonial Clergy all belong to the Spiritans."<sup>43</sup>

Fr. Monnet, on the other hand, sought to convince Libermann that "his Society of the Spiritans had full control over the missions in the colonies." He was shocked by Libermann's visit to the Nuncio and reacted violently:

**"The patrimony of the Spiritans is in no danger. We have no intention that the acceptance of reunion will result in such a distressful situation that we shall cry for help! The arrangement which you envisage for the end of our Congregation is not at all clear. The Spiritans will never be weakened or compromised while I am Superior General."**<sup>44</sup>

It is evident that Monnet and Libermann were not in agreement regarding the jurisdiction of the Spiritans.

<sup>41</sup> ND X 416 Memoire of Fr. Loevenbruck

<sup>42</sup> ND X 218 Letter from Libermann to Fr. Le Vavas seur, Notre Dame du Gard, 14 June 1848: cited here many times

<sup>43</sup> ND X 184 seq. Letter of Libermann to Fr. Loevenbruck, 15 June 1848. This letter is probably really of the middle of May 1848, after his visit to Notre Dame du Gard

<sup>44</sup> ND X p.339, Letter of Fr. Monnet to Libermann, Holy Spirit Seminary, Paris, 29 May 1848

### **Pentecost 11 June 1848: Libermann at Holy Spirit Seminary. An important step.**

Monnet invited Libermann to Holy Spirit Seminary for Pentecost. They both agreed to the union of the two Congregations. Full of enthusiasm, Monnet had to write to Le Vavas seur:

*"It has happened. **From now on we are of one heart and one soul, in that we now form one sole Congregation. Our reunion and fusion were yesterday announced.!!!**"<sup>45</sup>*

Libermann also wrote to Le Vavas seur: "At Last we were united yesterday. We have unanimously concluded the reunion." PS. (added in another hand) "**Fr. Libermann and Fr. Monnet are of one heart and one soul.**"<sup>46</sup> However Monnet insisted that Libermann give him a copy of that letter! In the second letter, Libermann was a bit more reserved in his description of the state of the negotiations:

*"I wish to tell you now that **I hope that the reunion will take place, but not exactly in the way that Fr. Monnet may have spoken or written to you about it.**"*

At the beginning, Libermann had thought and proposed that he and Monnet would both be Superiors together, and that they would govern together. This now seems to Libermann to be impossible: *Having seen Fr. Monnet at work, even before we had finally made all our proposals, I was disconcerted.*<sup>47</sup> It is true that at Pentecost the reunion was decided, but the question of a Superior is still in limbo. On 19th June, Libermann urgently brought this matter up with Monnet:

*"In order to make this union effective, **it is vital that we have the approval of Rome, as we decided at Pentecost. 1st: we have to write down all the conditions of the agreement already discussed at Pentecost last. 2nd: Both of us together must sign the accord: and both of us must join to this accord a letter signed by both of us. 3rd: Someone must be sent to Rome.**"<sup>48</sup>*

### **Libermann proposes Monnet to be Vicar Apostolic of Madagascar**

The thorny question of who would be the Superior had to be solved in Rome. Propaganda Fide asked Libermann to propose someone to be Vicar Apostolic in Madagascar. He thought of Monnet, "*who has passed some time on that island*"; Libermann consulted Loevenbruck, who was enthusiastic: he replied that the best thing would be "**to immediately send Fr. Ignatius Scw.**<sup>49</sup>**to Rome with your letter containing the Madagascar proposition. As soon as we have Rome's reply, the resignation of Monnet will take place, and your nomination of him to Madagascar will be unanimously accepted. All of us believe that Fr. Monnet is able for that Mission, but not to direct our work here.**"<sup>50</sup>

But at the end of June, Paris experienced four days of violent insurrections. At the beginning of July, the negotiations started again, and finished on 3rd July with the following important decisions: "*Monnet is proposed to be Vicar Apostolic in Madagascar*", and Loevenbruck is chosen to go quickly to Rome. On 5th July, the two Superiors wrote their joint letter officially asking for the fusion.

<sup>45</sup> ND X p.339, Letter of Monnet to Fr. Le Vavas seur, Seminary of the Holy Spirit, 11 June 1848

<sup>46</sup> ND X p.214 Letter of Libermann to Fr. Le Vavas seur, Holy Spirit Seminary, 11 June 1848

<sup>47</sup> ND X p.222, Letter of Libermann to Fr. Le Vavas seur, Notre Dame du Gard, 14 June 1848

<sup>48</sup> ND X pp.241 - 242: Letter of Libermann to Monnet, Notre Dame du Gard, 19 June 1848

<sup>49</sup> Fr. Ignatius Schwindenhammer

<sup>50</sup> ND X p.400, Letter of Loevenbruck to Libermann, 19 June 1848

Straightaway Libermann wrote to Cardinal FRANSONI for the nomination of a Vicar Apostolic to Madagascar and proposed Monnet who had once worked there. This thus avoided the humiliation of a resignation without any compensation. Monnet considered the election of a Superior General and said he was willing to offer his resignation:

*"Immediately after receiving the approbation of Your Eminence, Fr. Libermann and myself will offer our resignations, and we shall then proceed with the election of a new Superior General." This union will be "a powerful means of ensuring the perseverance of our two hundred missionaries scattered throughout the different colonies...."<sup>51</sup>*

This statement was rather offensive, and must have both astonished and impressed Propaganda Fide.

### **Loevenbruck at Rome**

On 12th July, Fr. Loevenbruck left for Rome to present the dossier on the union. Two days later, he had already met the Prefect and the Secretary of the Roman Congregation; he wrote about his satisfaction to Libermann: *Rome is pleased both with the fusion and the appointment of Fr. Monnet as Vicar Apostolic of Madagascar....*<sup>52</sup>

But this did not fully answer Libermann's concerns. On 3rd August 1848, Loevenbruck wrote to Libermann from Paris: *"Here I am back in Paris from Rome; you will be surprised.... before my departure everything was bogged down in the minor Council, and to preserve the formalities, it appeared that the matter had to be referred to the major Council, which will take place before the 15th of this month, and then yourself and Fr. Monnet will both be official notified of their conclusions."*<sup>53</sup>

### **Monnet's Step Backwards**

Loevenbruck's letter however ended with a note of concern: Loevenbruck is more clear in his Memoirs.

***"Fr. Monnet , at the instigation of two opponents of the fusion (Frs. Gaultier and Hardy) has changed his mind....."***<sup>54</sup>

Monnet was always easily influenced by others, and was either *"so much for, so much against"* the fusion. Then he let it be known that *"he wanted to work in the West Indies"*. Loevenbruck had to remind him that *"very soon the official announcement of his elevation to Bishop and Vicar Apostolic of Madagascar would be promulgated"* in order to bring him to accept a decision previously agreed upon. Writing to Libermann on 9th August , Monnet spoke as if he had always believed in the fusion: ***"The fusion will be approved.... I told Loevenbruck that nothing else could be done about it."***<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> ND X pp.370 - 371, Letter of Fr. Monnet to Cardinal Fransoni, 5 July 1848

<sup>52</sup> ND X pp. 404 - 405. Letter of Loevenbruck to Fr. Libermann, Rome 14 July 1848

<sup>53</sup> ND X p.407 Letter of Loevenbruck to Libermann, Paris 3 August 1848

<sup>54</sup> ND X pp.416 - 417 Memoirs of Fr. Loevenbruck

<sup>55</sup> ND X 408 Letter of Monnet to Fr. Libermann, 9 August 1848

On Sunday 20th August, Libermann went to consult with Fr. Desgenettes and with the Sulpicians. He wrote to Le Vavas seur:

*"Here I am back in Paris .... I have no need to see the Spiritans in order to conclude the matter definitively. **The whole matter is far advanced, and must end as I foresee.** However, I must repeat to you once again, that even from the position in which we now find ourselves, **I remind you that there is no certainty that, once the fusion has taken place, the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary will maintain its fervour and perfect regularity.... As for the rest, I I repeat, that the matter has not yet been concluded....**In Rome, they are all very delighted that we are reuniting with the Spiritans, and that I will be in charge. The particular Council of Propaganda Fide has agreed to **my proposal of making Monnet bishop in Madagascar.**"<sup>56</sup>*

**Scripture Reading - Acts 2,33 - 38;** Jesus, now raised to the heights at God's right hand.....What must we do? Be converted.....

Libermann was concerned that "***the fusion once achieved, will the Congregation keep its fervour and perfect regularity?***"

Have I personally maintained the fervour of the Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary in my Religious life? How faithful am I in keeping the Rule of Life?

**Prayer: *Veni Creator Spiritus* or *Prayer for the Enlarged General Council p. 22***

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<sup>56</sup> ND X pp. 288 - 289, Letter of Libermann to Le Vavas seur, 20 August 1848

## 6. Wednesday 11 May 2016: The Union of Spiritans and Holy Heart of Mary Societies

*"All the difficulties, which, up until now, worked against any possible fusion disappeared, and towards the end of 1848 the reunion between the members of both the Spiritans and the Holy Heart of Mary Society was accomplished."<sup>57</sup>*

### 24 August 1848: Signing of the (Provisional) Accord for the Fusion

At the beginning of August, Loevenbruck returned from Rome with the assurance that the fusion would be approved. The discussions continued, however, for the whole month of August, in order to make precise certain modalities of the fusion. Finally, the Spiritans and the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary achieved a common text. On 24 August 1848, they signed the verbal process of the agreement of the two parties to the fusion: the text contained some important clauses, which Libermann wanted, in particular concerning Poverty:

*"The two Superiors of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and of the Holy Heart of Mary, bringing about **the fusion of the two Congregations**, in the name of their respective confreres, have put their signatures to the following articles:*

*Article 1 - The Congregation will remain consecrated to the **Holy Spirit under the invocation of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary.***

*Article 2 - **The Constitutions** of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, which have been approved by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, will be retained except for the following modifications signified in the following Article.*

*Article 3 - As regards Poverty, all the members commit themselves*

*1) to renounce, while they remain members of the Congregation, the use of any goods or revenue which the above mentioned Constitutions allow them to keep as their own property or for their own use*

*2) to have no money in their possession without the express permission of their Superior*

*3) in the case where their Superior gives them money for particular expenses, when the time or circumstances of this authorisation expires, they will give an account of their expenses and will give back to the Superior any money remaining*

*Article 4 - **Whenever the Members of the Congregation** sign their names or at any other time, and wish to give the name of the Congregation to which they belong, they will always use the **double Title** given in Article 1 above*

*Article 5 - The admission of members to the **Second Order** is hereby suspended until such time as Propaganda Fide makes a new decision on the matter*

*Article 6 - A copy of this agreement will be sent to every Member of the two Congregations who from now on will regards themselves and love each other as brothers*

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<sup>57</sup> NOTICE p. 655

**Finally, a decision shall be made on any points foreseen in the Constitutions by Rules approved by majority consent.**<sup>58</sup>

In the general enthusiasm, Monnet hailed Libermann as the new Superior General. This accord in principle, did not as yet form the fusion. They awaited Rome's agreement. That is why Libermann, writing that very evening of 24 August to Fr. Arragon at Dakar, spoke of "our future confrere".

*"A little word in season. Fr. Vidal, who will bring this letter to you, is a member of the Community of the Holy Spirit, and a warm supporter of the reunion of our two Congregations. Receive him with all the charity and affection which he deserves, as our future confrere, and as a fervent priest full of zeal. Introduce him to all our dear confreres who should welcome him with affection and charity. Fr. Vidal is the Prefect Apostolic of Senegal ..... Have no worries about the reunion of our two Communities: **be assured that we shall preserve the regularity and spirit of our Community.**"<sup>59</sup>*

#### **4 - 10 September 1848: The Fusion is approved by Rome**

Propaganda Fide was supposed to meet on 15th August. It actually met on 4th September. The General Congregation carefully examined the projected union. The texts of the private accords of 24th August were not available to them. At the end of August, Loevenbruck presented to Propaganda Fide the request letters of the two Superiors General, and a six point memorandum, which listed the major reasons for the fusion:

*"1) - According to their Rules of Life, both Congregations have the same end in view*

*2) - The fusion will bring the following benefits: **The Congregation of the Holy Spirit** will be consolidated by the acquisition of many excellent personnel; **The Society of the Holy Heart of Mary** will be more secure under the legal status of the Spiritans, which it could never receive in France*

*3) - The missionaries of both Societies are somehow rivals in Senegal and Bourbon (Reunion); later on this sad state of affairs could be present in other parts of the world, and could bring unwelcome results: all this will be obviated by the fusion*

*4) - Fr. Libermann is a very conciliatory person, and has the total confidence of all the members of both Societies, thus making him very apt to direct both Congregations. Fr. Monnet, on the other hand, appears more able for missionary work, for which he is highly qualified*

*5) - Reunited under one Superior General like Fr. Libermann, both Congregations will form a body in every way more solid and more capable of facing such great difficulties as they will surely face in the France of the present day*

*6) - The Holy Spirit house in Paris is large enough to hold all the personnel of **both Societies united and founded as one**, thus making things more economical, which is an important consideration in these times of financial crisis, for such a state of affairs could easily continue for many years. This*

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<sup>58</sup> Register of the Deliberations of the Council, p.34, No. 30, Archives CSSp, B 47., ND X 412. There were ten signatures, those of the two Superiors General, Monnet and Libermann, then of the members present: Warnet, Gaultier, Hardy and Vidal, for the Spiritans, Boulanger, Francois, Briot and Schwindenhammer for the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary. Loevenbruck did not sign.

<sup>59</sup> ND X 291, Letter of Libermann to Fr. Arragon at Dakar (Senegal) 24 August 1848

would put in danger the very existence especially of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary, which has hardly any resources, whereas the Congregation of the Holy Spirit is wealthy.<sup>60</sup>

The cardinals approved the fusion, and Cardinal Fransoni submitted their conclusions to (Blessed) Pope Pius IX. (Blessed) Pope Pius IX ratified the decision of Propaganda Fide on **10th September 1848**. "That is the date when **the Fusion became effective in Rome**".<sup>61</sup>

In Paris, the Official Approbation of the fusion by Blessed Pius IX was not yet known. ***It was not until the 26th September 1848*** that the decision regarding the Fusion was sent to both Superiors General, Monnet and Libermann by Propaganda Fide. On 10th September, Monnet wrote to Libermann decrying the silence from Rome, and informed him about certain reactions on the part of some against the Fusion: "*I hereby acquaint you with an astonishing letter I received from Rome today, saying that a fusion is out of the question..... three ecclesiastics met the Nuncio trying to persuade him that I am sacrificing the Congregation on the altar of my ambition ..... the Nuncio did not tell me that he believed them. My dear Father, these trials prove that God really wants the Fusion! I accept with resignation this accusation of ambition, for it has happened five times already!.... But as for the motives which make me accept the Fusion unreservedly, I have no fear of having to meet God on the matter! These gentlemen have gone to tell the Nuncio that I am the vendor and you are the buyer! Good heavens! Alas! Would you perhaps like the both of us to go together to the Nuncio, to convince him that all our confreres are just as convinced as we are concerning the necessity of the Fusion..... The devil is trying his best to stop our fusion, you can be assured of that.*"<sup>62</sup> So, finally, Monnet recognised in the Fusion the will of God, and saw the trials and the calumnies as agitations on the part of the devil to "prevent our fusion"!

**Biblical Text:** Acts 15. 23 - 29; Council of Jerusalem: "**The Holy Spirit and we have decided**"

In our international multi-cultural Congregation, there are bound to be differences in our approach to Mission. Only the Holy Spirit can maintain in us a spiritual communion, based on what is essential, namely the Gospel and our Rule of Life. Where in fact do we differ? How can we improve our communion together? To discover what is essential, do we know how to first of all listen to the Holy Spirit?

**Prayer for the Enlarged General Council of 2016** (Original - for Bagamoyo Chapter 26 Oct 2011 No. 276) "Father, you once sent the Spirit of your Son on our Ancestor Founders, Claude Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann. Thanks to them and to many generations of Spiritans, our Congregation has never ceased to devote itself to the service of the evangelization of the poor. Now that we are preparing to celebrate our Enlarged General Council, after the General Chapter of Bagamoyo, we ask you once again to pour out your Spirit on our Congregation. May he gather us into one great family, so that we can hear the appeals of our times! May he give us a new fervour in order to deepen, in your Church, our consecration and our missionary witness! After the example of Mary and by the power of your Spirit, may we continue to give birth to your Son, for your glory and for the life of the world which you created and liberated. Amen!

<sup>60</sup> ND X pp.371 - 371, S.O.C.G. 1848, Volume 970, fol. 564 - 565

<sup>61</sup> Fr. Legrain, From the concurrence of the union.... in P. COULON *Claude Francis Poullart des Places and the Spiritans*, p. 627

<sup>62</sup> ND X p. 411

## 7. Thursday 12 May 2016 - Before Rome 's Decision: to Die in order to Rise again

### Notification of the Fusion by Rome - 26 September to 9 October 1848

The decision in favour of the Fusion was sent by Rome to the two Superiors General on 26 September 1848. Monnet and Libermann received the letter on 9 October, and thus got to know of Rome's decision:

*"The Cardinals have decided to approve your proposition. Now it is up to you to carry out well this union of your two Congregations, so that, **the Congregation which bears the name of the Most Holy Heart of Mary ceases to exist from this moment, and the Members and Associates of that Institute are joined to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, and they share the rights and privileges of the Members and Postulants of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit , on condition that they observe the same Rules.**"<sup>63</sup>*

Rome insisted on a fusion without any exceptions: Libermann put forward the reaction of the Missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary, who were about to lose everything, and who felt betrayed. He did not oppose the dissolution of his society, but did not turn a blind eye to the spiritual demands which were being made. Fr. Loevenbruck had a lot of explaining to do:

*"On his arrival in Rome, out of a nameless fear, which I do not feel able to explain, Loevenbruck did not dare to speak of the conditions we had put forward, **and Propaganda Fide ordered the fusion unconditionally.**"<sup>64</sup>*

Libermann welcomed the outcome in faith. But, without revealing the text of the letter of Propaganda Fide, he immediately left for Rome with Loevenbruck in order to ask for necessary amendments. In fact he very quickly obtained the majority of his requests.

### 1) Irregularities in the Election of Libermann as Superior General.

In the euphoria of the Accords of 24 August, Fr. Monnet had acclaimed Libermann as Superior General, *"before Rome's approval of the fusion"*; in addition, Libermann could not *"be named as Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit before he was actually a member of the same Congregation"*; finally, *"according to the Constitutions, the Superior General could only be elected by a secret vote."*<sup>65</sup>

In a benevolent manner, on 3 November 1848, Propaganda Fide replied by granting a *"sanatio"*: Libermann was confirmed as *"the new Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit under the Invocation of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary."*

### 2) The Title of the Congregation

The Spiritans were *"consecrated to the Holy Spirit under the invocation of the Holy Virgin conceived without sin"*. Libermann and his sons were very much attached to "the Holy Heart of Mary", to

<sup>63</sup> **Agregeretur** in the Latin - **Agrégés** and not agréés as put in note 83 p. 628 in P. COULON, Claude Francis Poullart des Places. The original of the letter addressed to Fr. Monnet can be found in the Arch. CSSp., B 21, dos.A, chem. 3.:8

<sup>64</sup> ND X, p. 341. Fr. Libermann to the Communities of Bourbon (Reunion) and Mauritius, 20 December 1848

<sup>65</sup> ND X, pp. 329 - 330. Fr. Libermann to Cardinal Fransoni, 28 October 1848.

whom they were consecrated and who had obtained so many graces for them. The Accord of 24 August, foresaw "Art.1 - *The Congregation will remain consecrated to the Holy Spirit under the invocation of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary*". Propaganda Fide in its reply of 3rd November, accepted and decreed the new title: "*Congregation of the Holy Spirit under the invocation of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary*".<sup>66</sup>

### 3) Return to the true Practice of Poverty and Modifications to the Constitutions

Libermann insisted on true Poverty, and the "Spiritans" had accepted and signed Article 3: so now there was a need to modify the Constitutions. The change was difficult to obtain. In the response of 3rd November, it was not granted. Libermann wrote immediately to Propaganda Fide to better justify himself:

*"An imperfect practice of Poverty, as is expressed in the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, appears to us to be incompatible with the Common Life which we must everywhere practise. It appears absolutely insufficient for preserving the fervour and zeal of our Members ..... scattered throughout the Missions"*.<sup>67</sup>

On his return to Paris on 15 November 1848, Libermann gave new clarifications to Cardinal Fransoni:

*"I have asked the Members of our Society to promise to renounce the use, for themselves, of all goods and revenues which the Constitutions grant them to have as property or to dispose of, and that they must not have any money in their hands, even if it is for the benefit of others, without the permission of their Superior. In this my supplication, I do not wish to ask the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide authorization to put the members of our Society under the vow of Poverty, but only to promise to practice this virtue."*<sup>68</sup>

In the following Summer, 27 July 1849, he insisted once again: "*We really want very seriously the practice of Poverty, and we ask with insistence of Propaganda Fide to establish among us the practice of Holy Poverty.*"<sup>69</sup>

In the face of Rome's silence, he wrote once again on 30 December, joining with his letter, "*a file containing the Accord between the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary.*"<sup>70</sup> This perseverance on Libermann's part resulted in supplementary questions on the part of Propaganda Fide. Rome was surprised that everybody in the Congregation, - remember that Monnet spoke of "*two hundred missionary*" Spiritans - wished to depart from a broad concept of Poverty to a radical Poverty. Libermann replied on 20th February:

*"The actual Members of the Spiritans amount to no more than **seven members**. Six of them signed the Accord. The **Members of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary who have joined the Spiritans, amount to forty-nine Members, all of whom, without exception, wish this change to be made.**"*<sup>71</sup>

<sup>66</sup> ND X, p.377, The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide to Fr. Libermann 3 November 1848.

<sup>67</sup> ND X p. 332. Libermann to Cardinal Fransoni, 4 November 1848

<sup>68</sup> S.O.C.G., vol. 971, fol. 96. ND do not mention this letter.

<sup>69</sup> ND XI p. 331, Fr. Libermann to Cardinal Fransoni, 27 July 1849

<sup>70</sup> ND XI p. 331, Fr. Libermann to Cardinal Fransoni, 30 December 1849

<sup>71</sup> ND XII p. 80, Fr. Libermann to Cardinal Fransoni, 21 February 1850.

Rome finally agreed on 10 July 1850: "*Above all, considering the explanations sent to us on 20 February of this year*", the Cardinals "*decree that this point regarding Poverty passes into the Rule.*"<sup>72</sup>

#### 4) The Question of a Second Order

This is connected with that of Religious Poverty. In his *Plan for the Reorganization of the Colonial Clergy*, Fr. Leguay instituted a Second Spiritan Order. Members were expected to live the Common Life, and follow the same spiritual exercises, but there was no question of Religious Poverty. The abrogation of this Second Order was agreed by Propaganda Fide without discussion in the same letter of 10 July 1850.

#### 5) The Question of the Rules and Constitutions

The Accord of 24 August, foresaw that the Constitutions of the Spiritans would continue to be followed, given their Legal and Ecclesiastical Recognition. It added, "*Agreements regarding changes can be made **later on**, in matters foreseen by the Constitutions, by means of **rules** approved by majority vote.*" The Holy See insisted on the continued observance of the Constitutions, and authorised the redaction of more particular rules. In bringing this about, Libermann used ***The Provisional Rule of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary.***<sup>73</sup>

#### Conclusion

What the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary seemed to have lost by the act of union, was reintroduced in the Rule of Life of the Spiritans. Fundamentally, the strategy of Fr. Loevenbruck proved amply justified: "*Fr. Loevenbruck said that once the union had been consummated, it is certain that I would obtain everything I wanted.*"<sup>74</sup> Libermann was sticking to what was essential, leaving the details until later. Libermann was not showing himself rigorous by his silence.

**Bible Reading: Acts 4. 32 - 35; "They held everything in common".** This text describes an idyllic situation in the primitive Church, and which theoretically, takes place in all our communities. But in practice, do we not sometimes act like Ananias (Acts 5;): "*He and his wife, Sapphira, agreed to sell a property, but with his wife's connivance he kept back part of the proceeds, and brought the rest and presented it to the Apostles.*" Must we not listen to what Peter said to him? "*Ananias, how can Satan have so possessed you, **that you should lie to the Holy Spirit? ..... It is not to men that you have lied, but to God ..Sapphira, so you and your husband have agreed to put **the Spirit of the Lord to the test?*****

#### Prayer of Pope Francis: *The Joy of the Gospel.*

*Mary, Virgin and Mother, Moved by the Spirit you welcomed the Word of Life in the depths of your humble Faith: as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One help us to say our own "yes" to the urgent call, as pressing as ever, to proclaim the Good News of Jesus..... you joined with the Disciples in awaiting the Spirit, so that the evangelizing Church could be born ..... Star of the New Evangelization, help us to bear radiant witness to communion, service, ardent and generous Faith, justice and love for the poor, that the Joy of the Gospel may reach the ends of the earth. Amen.*

<sup>72</sup> ND XII p.556. Cardinal Fransoni to Fr. Libermann, 10 July 1850.

<sup>73</sup> The approbation by Rome of these Rules did not happen as quickly as one would have wished: in 1878, the Spiritans received a letter of encouragement from the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide, and the official approbation only took place in 1909.

<sup>74</sup> ND X, p.352. Fr. Libermann to Fr. Le Vasseur, December 1848

## 8. Friday 13 May 2016 - Later Convulsions

The Fusion was accomplished, at least canonically speaking. However, it still had to be made concrete, between the Spiritan and Holy Heart of Mary personnel. *"From now on it is up to you to bring the completed negotiations( vestrum negotium) to fruition, in this union of your two Congregations"*, as Rome wrote at the time. In addition, Fr. Monnet was now named as Vicar Apostolic of Madagascar. The whole burden (*vestrum negotium*) was now being carried by Libermann. the new Superior General. He was sowing in tears, and going through a real Calvary, which no doubt cut short his life. Bishop Gay, said with real justice:

*"Libermann had to take into account the susceptibilities of the Spiritans, and at the same time, calm the fears of the priests of the Holy Heart of Mary, many of whom saw in the Fusion the sad collapse of a former fervour."*<sup>75</sup>

### 1) Taking into Account the Susceptibilities of the Spiritans

After the Fusion, Holy Spirit Seminary had in fact three communities: the Novices, and the Seminarians of the Congregation, ready to accept a demanding regime as well as the strict observance of Poverty, and the "secular" Seminarians for the Colonial Clergy, of a more independent frame of mind. Libermann had to dismiss several of the latter. At the beginning of the 1849 semester, Libermann shared with Le Vasseur the difficulties he was experiencing:

*"The Seminarians have caused us a lot of trouble.....: most of the older ones have left, but there are still remaining several who are embarrassing us by their way of acting. You cannot imagine the amount of disorder reigning in this house at present."*<sup>76</sup>

Worse still, there was a group of "seculars", seminarians who aimed at having the Seminary subject to the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Paris. The impetus was from outside the Seminary, but the leader of the "mutiny" - which was Libermann's description of what was going on<sup>77</sup> - was Fr. Hardy, who had signed the Accord of 24 August, but who had composed a 20 page memorandum against Libermann, and had sent it to the Vicar General of Paris. All sorts of nonsense was contained in it: "As soon as Rome had decreed the dissolution of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary, Libermann wished to absorb the Spiritans; Libermann's Society wished to impose on everyone the rules of Religious Life, and Libermann was using the money given by the Government for the upkeep of the secular seminarians, to feed his own students; Fr. Monnet had sold his Seminary down the river and his own position as Superior in order to become a bishop...." Libermann and Warnet both had to stand up to Fr. Hardy, *"who was suspicious of everything, a shady character, not frank, a lover of discord, a lover of intrigue and rebellious."*<sup>78</sup> Fr. Hardy left the Seminary, and died a tragic death. Among the "Spiritans" working abroad, many were happy with the Fusion, as in Senegal where they knew the "Libermannists" very well, and were happy to work with them. Others were worried by the stories which were being circulated: the Seminary had been "captured", and the "Spiritans" had been expelled; a new Congregation was now in charge of mission work in the Colonies, and we would all soon have to take a vow of Poverty, etc., etc.

<sup>75</sup> Mgr. John Gay, *Libermann*, Desclee de Brouwer, Paris, 1955, p. 92

<sup>76</sup> ND XI 210 seq. Letter of Libermann to Fr. Le Vasseur, 26 October 1849

<sup>77</sup> ND XI 267 Letter of Libermann to Fr. Schwindenhammer, 29 November 1849

<sup>78</sup> ND XII 139, 666 - 667

When two rivers meet, the waters are always turbulent, before becoming one strong river. Libermann was well aware that the work of fusion between two Congregations must go through stages of reaction and conflict. He had to stand firm, "*being docile before what he saw was the will of God, and being tenacious in the face of obstacles and opposition*" (Fr. Legrain). He reminded the Spiritans of the suppression of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary: "*The two Congregations have now become one, namely, that of the Holy Spirit, following the Spiritan Constitutions,*" and "*We have abandoned our own Congregation in order to unite with the Congregation of the Holy Spirit*" (to the Vicar General of Paris, 5 May 1850).

## 2) Calm the Fears of the Priests of the Holy Heart of Mary

By way of contrast, in his letters to the Priests of the Holy Heart of Mary, terrified at the thought of their disappearance, Libermann had to minimise the consequences of the Fusion. Losing the title of "The Holy Heart of Mary", and following the Constitutions of The Spiritans, could be seen as the end of everything. The words of Kobes, the sub Novice Master, summed up the thoughts of many - "*We have been betrayed*". So Libermann had to calm the fears of his friends, and reassure the Communities in Bourbon (Reunion), Mauritius, Dakar and Gabon, in a long letter of 20 December 1848, often quoted since.<sup>79</sup> Le Vasseur had not as yet received it, when he wrote on 13 March 1849:

*"I am very sad. I have a great fear, which I might call a certitude, that **this Fusion will bring nothing but confusion.**"*<sup>80</sup>

These remarks affected Libermann deeply, and he replied immediately on 28th March, delicately excusing Le Vasseur:

*"Your letter moved me greatly. I see your poor soul suffering because of certain reports brought to you by four ecclesiastics sent to you before the Fusion. You cannot imagine how much suffering I endured while reading your letter.....If you are still in pain and in doubt regarding the Fusion, rest assured that I have even more than you have, and in fact my pain and doubt could not be any deeper. My work on the Rule is finished. I put it to our Council, and they all accepted it joyfully. They did not make me change a single syllable. In fact, everything in this new Rule, is actually our own Rules under a different name."*<sup>81</sup>

Warnet also wrote to reassure Le Vasseur. "*You have nothing to fear from the Spiritans..... there are only three of us here... Gaultier, Hardy, myself..... I remain your poor servant, who has contributed to the Fusion more than anybody else, with the aim of putting everything into your hands.*"<sup>82</sup> Le Vasseur received Libermann's letter of 20th December, and replied on 15th May, saying: "*I fully approve of the Fusion .... I can assure you that all our Confreres in Bourbon (Reunion) and Mauritius will adhere to it perfectly.*"

<sup>79</sup> ND X, pp. 339 - 342. Letter of Libermann to the Communities of Bourbon (Reunion) and Mauritius, 20 December 1848. The same letter, with some additions, was sent to the Communities of Dakar and Gabon.

<sup>80</sup> ND XI p. 587, Letter of Le Vasseur to Libermann, 13 March 1849.

<sup>81</sup> ND XI, p. 87. Fr. Libermann to Fr. Le Vasseur, 26 March 1849

<sup>82</sup> ND Complement p. 138, Letter of Warnet to Le Vasseur, 4 May 1849

However, Libermann recalled Le Vasseur to France to be his First Assistant. Le Vasseur soon found something to change his mind about the Fusion: in the Seminary they were living in too luxurious surroundings! Libermann sent him to travel round France, seeking volunteers for the Colonial Clergy in the different dioceses. Libermann wrote the "*NOTICE concerning the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and the Immaculate Heart of Mary and its Works*". for Le Vasseur to carry with him on his journey. But Le Vasseur soon discovered that the reputation of the Spiritans was very bad in the dioceses of France. On 16th May he wrote a terrible letter to Libermann in which he demanded **abandoning Holy Spirit Seminary and the Colonies**. Libermann replied very forcefully on Pentecost Day, 19 May 1850: "*That would be one of our most serious sins [.....] which our little Congregation could commit before God*", such abandonment, and he added: "*I can see from your letter that my NOTICE does not please you.*"<sup>83</sup> Later, Le Vasseur would ask Libermann's forgiveness for this way of acting, and would see things differently, agreeing with Libermann.

**Bible Text: Acts 4. 25 - 31. *Why are the Nations in tumult....they were all filled with the Holy Spirit***

Sons of Poullart, sons of Libermann! Our older Provinces have known this oscillation between our two Founders with different traditions, missionary choices which have marked indelibly our Spiritan integrations. Am I faithful to the will of God, which Libermann recognized in the Fusion desired by Rome? What is my fundamental choice: is it a unilateral exclusive option which makes me breathe with only one lung and walk with one foot only? Or is it a communion from a heart docile to the Spirit which brings into play the traditions coming from our two Founders?

**Prayer for the Enlarged General Council of 2016.** Original text for the Bagamoyo Chapter<sup>84</sup>

"Father, you once sent the Spirit of your Son on our Ancestor Founders, Claude Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann. Thanks to them and to many generations of Spiritans, our Congregation has never ceased to devote itself to the service of the evangelization of the poor. Now that we are preparing to celebrate our Enlarged General Council, after the General Chapter of Bagamoyo, we ask you once again to pour out your Spirit on our Congregation. May he gather us into one great family, so that we can hear the appeals of our times! May he give us a new fervour in order to deepen, in your Church, our consecration and our missionary witness! After the example of Mary and by the power of your Spirit, may we continue to give birth to your Son, for your glory and for the life of the world which you created and liberated. Amen!

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<sup>83</sup> ND XII, pp. 199 and 203.

<sup>84</sup> Original text for the Bagamoyo Chapter, 26 October 2011 - BNS No. 276

## **9. Saturday 14 May 2016 - 1849: Interior Rule and Prayer of Consecration to the Holy Spirit under the Invocation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary**

The Act of Fusion of 24th August foresaw an application of the Constitutions in the future Rule. Libermann assumed and strengthened the "Spiritans" tradition in the Rule and Consecration of 1849.

### **1) Rule of 1849 inspired by the Provisional Rule of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary**

On 20 December 1848, Libermann wrote to the Communities in Bourbon (Reunion) and Mauritius: *"I have full powers to compose the Rule for the application of the Constitutions ..... The Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide has received this proposition with much satisfaction. I have already completed the work, and it only needs touching up. For a long time, I have wanted to correct the **Provisional Rule of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary**. So, there was work to be done. .... You can see there, my dear Confreres, that nothing has been lost which would have maintained the fervour, the regularity and spirit of our Congregation. When we have practised this Rule for a few years, we shall only need to propose it to Propaganda Fide and it will be approved."*<sup>85</sup>

Libermann in this way grafted the vital sap of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Society onto the trunk of the Spiritans.

### **Rule of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit under the Invocation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (1849)**

We find again the strong affirmation of this Rule (in **bold face**) in SRL (Spiritans Rule of Life) [1987]

#### **Option for the Poor, and for Foreign Missions**

Article, III<sup>86</sup> *The special purpose for which the Congregation was founded is **the salvation of the poorest and most abandoned souls**.*

Art. IV - *God has guided the Congregation "to exercise its apostolic ministry **in distant lands**" and "the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide" has "determined **its Missions**."* [SRL 4]

#### **Consecration to the Holy Spirit and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary**

Art. I<sup>87</sup> *The "apostolic life" is that life of love and of holiness lived on earth by the Son of God in order to save and sanctify people. By it He continually sacrificed Himself, thereby glorifying the Father and saving the world.* [SRL 3]

<sup>85</sup> ND X p.342 Letters from Libermann to the Communities of Bourbon (Reunion) and Mauritius, Dakar and Gabon, Paris, 20 December 1848. The approval of the Rule did not happen as quickly as was expected. Libermann did not see the approbation. It was the work of his successors, Frs. Schwindenhammer and Archbishop Le Roy: in 1878, there was a letter of encouragement from Propaganda Fide, and the approbation was officially granted only in 1909.

<sup>86</sup> Rule of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, Paris, Gauni Brothers, Bookshop, rue Cassette, 4. 1849. ND X - Part I, Constitutive and Organic Rule - Section I, Apostolic Life - Chap. I - Concerning the Ends of the Congregation

<sup>87</sup> Rule, PART II The Spirit of the Congregation. SECTION I. Apostolic Life - Chapter I - Concerning the Apostolic Life in General - art. I ND X 505 - Chapter VI. The Devotions of the Congregation, art. 3 seq. ND X 568

Art. III - ***We are dedicated to the Holy Spirit, author of all holiness and "source of the apostolic spirit". We place ourselves under the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, who was filled beyond measure by the same Spirit " with the fullness of holiness and apostolic zeal".*** [SRL 6]

*This double devotion (consecration) is the special and distinctive devotion of the Congregation.*

Art. IV - ***They will find in the Holy Spirit, who lives in their souls, a source of interior and religious life and a most powerful principle of that perfect charity which is the basis of zeal.*** [SRL 9, 76, 85]

***They will consider the Immaculate Heart of Mary as a perfect model of fidelity to all the holy inspirations of the Divine Spirit and as a perfect model of the practice of the virtues of the religious and apostolic life.*** [SRL 5, 89]

Art. VI - ***The Holy Day of Pentecost and that of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary will be the principal Feasts of the Congregation.*** [SRL 99.1]

## **2) The Prayer of Consecration to the Holy Spirit through the Intercession of Mary**

Libermann foresaw Religious Profession for the Congregation, with the Three Vows: consecration under the form of vows.

Article I. *In order to promote..... the desire to bind oneself to God in the Congregation by a more holy and perfect engagement, all Members are authorised to make in perpetuity outside of the above mentioned consecration, the three Vows of Religion, in the presence of the Superior General or of another confrere delegated by him.*<sup>88</sup>

But the members of the Congregation lived a consecration without vows. Libermann here makes it a right in Chapter 1, to this engagement under the mode of a promise, a true "**Consecration to God by the Religious Life**".

Article I. - ***The Congregation wishes once again to be specially consecrated (to God), and that by Religious Life, under the auspices of the Holy Spirit and the invocation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.***

Art. II - ***All its Members are consecrated to God under the auspices of the Holy Spirit and the invocation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary ..... by a Religious Act.***

Art. III - ***That is why no Member will be received into the Society unless he has made to God the consecration of his whole being concerning the use of external goods, by Evangelical Poverty; in the enjoyment of his senses, by Chastity; and in the action of his will, by Obedience.***

Art. IV - ***Although it would be more perfect to make an engagement under the form of vows, nevertheless ..... for the Members of the Society, it will be enough to consecrate themselves completely to God by a solemn and permanent resolution under the form of a promise.***<sup>89</sup>

Article V adds: "*This consecration will be made according to the following form*". Libermann goes back to and adapts the Act of Consecration of Poullart to the Holy Spirit. He preserves the same

<sup>88</sup> Rule of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit Section - Religious Life - Chapter II - The Vows ND X 500

<sup>89</sup> ND X 498 - 499

spiritual process: to the Holy Spirit through the Heart of Mary; but he gives a missionary introduction, drawn from Luke 4.18;

*"Being called to the **sublime ministry of the Apostolate**, and ardently desiring to consecrate myself to the service of your well beloved Son for the salvation of souls, I have recourse to your Heart, so tender and compassionate towards sinners..... I must **evangelize the poor, heal the wounds of souls** ..... **preach the holy name of your Son**, establish his reign. How dare I work at such a great vocation, I who am so weak and miserable? O my Mother! .....Come to my Aid.*

**O my Mother**, be pleased to accept the offering of my whole self which I make to you. **Present me to the Holy Spirit**, your well beloved Spouse. I wish to **devote and consecrate my whole self to the Divine Spirit, and myself whole and entire to your Immaculate Heart**. I wish to live and die by devoting and immolating myself while following Jesus, in **the Missionary Society totally consecrated to the Almighty Life-Giver of souls, and totally consecrated to your Immaculate Heart**.

*O most holy Mother of my God, if I obtain from you this special favour, if I have the happiness of being received into this Society, I make the firm and unshakeable resolution to serve in it your well beloved Son, Jesus Christ my Lord, for the remainder of my life! I give you my soul, so that it may belong to you as a child belongs to its mother: I will cherish you all my life with a tender and childlike love, and I will preach on your glories..... I **open my heart, and abandon it to the Holy Spirit: may He fill it, may He possess it, and may He act in it like its Sovereign Master**. I promise under his guidance to spread his holy love in all the souls confided to me, through the goodness of your well beloved Son".*

*I promise you once again, that if I am received into the Society consecrated to the Holy Spirit and to your Immaculate Heart, I will observe the rules which are practised in it, and **particularly Holy Poverty**, as it is prescribed in the Rule: I will obey exactly and faithfully all my Superiors; as if I were obeying you yourself and Jesus Christ, your Son and my Sovereign Lord. It is on these conditions that I request to be received into the number of the **faithful servants of the Holy Spirit, well beloved children of your Immaculate Heart** ..... so that I may live, and die, and be, for all eternity, **the child of your Immaculate Heart, consumed in the love of the Holy Spirit, for the glory of the Father and the Son**. Amen.<sup>90</sup>*

### **Conclusion: Prayers and Supplications for a Miracle through the Intercession of Libermann**

Two years after the Fusion, Libermann wrote joyfully to Laval: *"I do not speak of mere success following our Union with the Spiritans. We have surpassed all our expectations. God has blessed us, in a way we never merited."*<sup>91</sup> But as Fr. Legrain pointed out, *"It took someone of the calibre of Libermann to bring success to such an enterprise, because it was he alone who really wanted the Union, and he paid the price."*<sup>92</sup> At the end of this Libermann Novena, we could say with Fr. Blanchard, *"the greatest miracle performed by Libermann was the Fusion of the Spiritans with the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary."*<sup>93</sup>

### **Bible Text - Luke 4. 16 - 18; The Spirit of God is on me**

For us Spiritans, sons of Poullart and of Libermann, the Gospel takes flesh in our Spiritan Rule of Life: Can I truly say like Jesus, today, the words of SRL are fulfilled in me? - Do I see my religious profession as a consecration to the Holy Spirit through the hands of Mary?

**Prayer:** Let us repeat Libermann's Prayer of Consecration (in the box above).

<sup>90</sup> ND X 499 - 500

<sup>91</sup> ND XIII p. 43 Letter from Libermann to Laval, 20 February 1851

<sup>92</sup> Fr. Legrain A Union of Congregations .... in *Libermann* 727

<sup>93</sup> P. BLANCHARD, *op. cit.* T. II, pp. 437 - 438

## VIGIL OF PRAYER FOR PENTECOST

### Waiting for the Holy Spirit in the Light of the Fusion

Hymn to the Holy Spirit.

#### 1. Poullart and Libermann - Two Founders "set apart" - but with the same Charism

A quick overview: be inspired (freely) by the table below - to be read by three persons

Animator: - use the titles and left hand columns

Reader 1 - Poullart

Reader 2 - Libermann

	Poullart des Places	Libermann
<b>Two Different Roads Followed</b>		
Family	Formerly a noble family now middle class from Rennes	Jew, son of Rabbi, raised in the ghetto of Saverne
Education	Studied Rhetoric and the Humanities with the Jesuits at Rennes: then Theology at the Jesuit College of Louis the Great	Studied the Talmud at Metz: Studied Theology at Saint Sulpice in Paris, then at Issy
Founder	Founded the Seminary and the Society of the Holy Spirit - 1703	Founded the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary 1841
<b>What was common to both of them</b>		
A Father's Ambition leading to separation	His father was rich middle class - dreamed of become a noble family once again through Claude being a Lawyer - the robe scene when Claude announces his wish to be a priest - becomes a priest without a title and without any means of support	His father's whole ambition was for his son Jacob to become a rabbi like himself - Libermann rejects this idea, goes to Paris - becomes a Catholic - is rejected and cursed by his father
Difficult beginnings as a priest	Poullart had to wait three years for ordination after the tonsure - becomes priest 17 December 1707 (28 years old) and dies 2 October 1709 (30 years old)	His epilepsy stops him being ordained - ordained at the age of 39, dies 2 February 1852 at 49
Spiritual Zeal - were members of "secret societies"	"Association of Friends" in Louis the Great Paris	The Friends of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (St. Sulpice), the Friends of the Apostles (Issy)
<b>A Common Mysticism</b>		
<b>A Strong Experience of the Holy Spirit</b> <b>"He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire"</b> <b>(Mt. 3. 11)</b>	18 months (August 1702 - December 1703) - Affective Prayer - "spiritually enraptured" <i>I received very many consolations; I had the gift of tears, when I could be alone to meditate on my faults and the mercy of God. If I took the least step towards Our Lord, this tender Master</i>	13 November 1826: Enlightenment at the moment of his conversion - <i>"I remembered the God of my Fathers, and threw myself on my knees. Immediately I was enlightened, and saw the truth; the Faith penetrated my mind and my heart."</i> 24 December 1826: the Globe of Fire

	<p><i>immediately lifted me up and carried me on his shoulders all the way. I could think of nothing else except God..... I wished for nothing else except to love Him. I prayed nearly all the day, even when I was walking in the city. I desired to eat the Holy Bread so intensely, that when I took Communion my eyes wept unceasingly. I thought the whole time of Jesus crucified, and I felt his tenderness for all who were suffering, and so I had an ardent zeal to meet sinners and bring them back to God.</i></p>	<p>at his Baptism.  <i>"When the water ran over my head, it seemed to be that I was immersed in an immense fiery globe"</i>  15 November 1828: his father curses him  1828 - 1833: "seized by Our Lord"  <i>"Our Lord gave me the grace to resist my father who wished to uproot me from the Faith.</i>  <i>After this, our Good Master came unexpectedly to uproot me from myself, and he held my faculties absorbed and captive for nearly five years; I only wanted to be with him, and that was very easy for me. God grasped me without my permission, and with a violence I have never seen him use towards anyone else up until now".....</i></p>
<b>Docility to the Holy Spirit</b>	<p>"Allow yourself to be filled and consumed by the Spirit of Love"  <i>All-powerful Spirit, please illumine my mind with your light, and embrace my heart with the fire of your love.</i></p>	<p>Docility to the Spirit is the principle of holiness and of apostolic zeal  <i>I open my heart and abandon it to the Divine Spirit, so that he will fill and possess it, and act in it as Sovereign Lord</i></p>
<b>Pentecost</b>	<p>Consecration to the Spirit of Pentecost 1703  General and Particular Rules 1705  1. <i>All our students will adore particularly the Holy Spirit to whom they have been specially consecrated</i>  2. <i>They will have the Feasts of Pentecost and of the Immaculate Conception as their main feasts. They will celebrate the former to obtain from the Holy Spirit the fire of Divine Love</i></p>	<p>Rule (Provisional Rule) 1849  Art. III - <i>The Congregation consecrates (its Members) specially to the Holy Spirit, author and consummation of all holiness, and inspirer of missionary zeal</i>  Art. VI - <i>The Holy Day of Pentecost and that of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary shall be the Principal Feasts of the Congregation</i></p>
<b>Love for the Virgin Mary</b>	<p>Mary Immaculate conceived without sin  " ..... and the Hail Mary, to ask for the light of the Holy Spirit and the protection of the Blessed Virgin"  1703 - before the Black Madonna, Our Lady of Good Deliverance  <i>"Holy Mary, my Mother, help me, your humble servant, to dedicate myself, to consecrate myself, and to devote myself to the Holy Spirit</i></p>	<p><i>When the water ran down my Jewish head, at that very moment I loved Mary, whom before I had hated</i>  <b>The Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary - Our Lady of Victories</b>  <i>My Mother, deign to accept the offering I make to you of my whole self: present me to the Holy Spirit, your well-beloved Spouse. I wish to <u>devote and consecrate myself completely to the Divine Spirit and wholly and entirely to your Immaculate Heart</u> .....</i></p>

	General and Particular Rules 1705 <i>They shall also have a particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, under whose protection they have been offered to the Holy Spirit</i>	Rule (1849) <i>Art. III - The Congregation consecrates (its Members) particularly to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, filled abundantly by the Divine Spirit, and with the fullness of holiness and the apostolate</i> <i>Art. IV - They shall consider the Immaculate Heart of Mary as the perfect model of faithfulness to all the holy inspirations of the Divine Spirit and of the practice of the virtues of the Religious and Apostolic Life.</i>
<b>The Evangelization of the Poor</b>	The mysterious meaning of Poverty The Spirit our only treasure The sick - the Little Children of Savoy - the Poor Students	The Black Slaves (Reunion, Haiti) Native Populations in the interior of the country - in the countryside
<b>Missionary Orientation: The Evangelization of the Blacks</b>	Train poor students for the evangelization of the poor Very quickly, "Spiritans" working in the Colonies	"The Work for the Blacks" Evangelization of the Slaves in Bourbon (Reunion) and Haiti The Vicariate of the Two Guineas in Black Africa - " <i>Become Africans with the Africans</i> "
<b>Concern for the Training of the Clergy - Faithfulness to Rome</b>	Holy Spirit Seminary: a solid and sure formation Attachment to Rome	Holy Spirit Seminary - French Seminary in Rome - Indigenous Clergy - Seminaries in every Mission Country

### **The Word of God: Acts 13. 1 - 3                      Set Apart**

We can truly say with Fr. Blanchard: "*The greatest miracle performed by Fr. Libermann was the Fusion of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit with the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary.*"

### **Prayer for the Enlarged General Council of 2016.      Original text for the Bagamoyo Chapter**

"Father, you once sent the Spirit of your Son on our Ancestor Founders, Claude Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann. Thanks to them and to many generations of Spiritans, our Congregation has never ceased to devote itself to the service of the evangelization of the poor. Now that we are preparing to celebrate our Enlarged General Council, after the General Chapter of Bagamoyo, we ask you once again to pour out your Spirit on our Congregation. May he gather us into one great family, so that we can hear the appeals of our times! May he give us a new fervour in order to deepen, in your Church, our consecration and our missionary witness! After the example of Mary and by the power of your Spirit, may we continue to give birth to your Son, for your glory and for the life of the world which you created and liberated. Amen!

## **2. The Cross at the Heart of Missionary Life - The Paschal Mystery**

### **1) For Libermann at the Time of the Fusion**

#### ***(1) Decision of Propaganda Fide: "The Society of the Holy Heart of Mary ceases to exist":***

*"The Eminent Fathers have decided to approve of your proposition. Following on from that fact, it will be from now on up to you to lead well this union of your two Congregations. From now on the Society which bears the name of the Most Holy Heart of Mary ceases to exist from this moment : the Members and Associates of that Institute are joined to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, with all the rights and privileges of the Members and Postulants of this Congregation, and all are bound to observe the same Rules."*<sup>94</sup>

To Die: Libermann and his sons had to accept the death of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary. But this was to lead to resurrection: *The Congregation of the Holy Spirit under the invocation of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*"

#### ***(2) After the Decision of Rome: Shock and Incomprehension***

Libermann very much sowed in tears, and lived out a real Calvary, which doubtless cut short his life. Bishop Gay said with justice:

*"Libermann had to take into account the susceptibilities of the Spiritans, and at the same time, calm the fears of the priests of the Holy Heart of Mary, many of whom saw in the Fusion the sad collapse of a former fervour."*

But as Fr. Legrain pointed out, *"It took someone of the calibre of Libermann to bring success to such an enterprise, because it was he alone who really wanted the Union, and he paid the price."*

**NOTICE** *"The Society of the Holy Heart of Mary has passed through all the trials which Divine Providence has decided it would."*

Paul COULON has commented that this history is " in the form of a Paschal recitation": "Having passed through all the trials", like the Person Unknown on the road to Emmaus beginning his explanation with the words, " Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer in order to enter into his glory?" (Lk. 24. 26;)

**Bible Text: Lk. 24. 25 - 49; The Paschal Mystery**

**Hymn: Keep in Mind, that Jesus Christ has died for us, and is risen from the Dead.....**

### **2) The Cross at the Beginning of the Mission ( in essence, extracts from the NOTICE)**

#### **(1) 1844 - Death of 5 Missionaries at Cape Palmas - the First Mission to Cape Palmas**

*"But a very sorrowful trial was reserved for these beginnings, a trial which seemed to result in the end of all the hopes of the Society. The inexperience of the missionaries and the lack of precautions*

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<sup>94</sup> In essence, these testimonies are taken from the NOTICE.....

so necessary in that burning climate, caused **the deaths of five among them in the first few months of their arrival in that land**. Our Society, frightened by these misfortunes and not knowing exactly the reason for them, felt the need to suspend this mission until we received more reassuring information."

When he learned of these events, Libermann could not stop himself crying out, "Poor Guinea". But the Mission would continue. On 26 July 1844, Bessieux left Cape Palmas with Brother John Fabe, met Brother Gregory at Grand Bassam, and went to Gabon.

## **(2) The Expulsion of the first 5 Missionaries soon after their arrival at Haiti (San Domingo).**

"Five priests of the same Society were placed at the disposition of Propaganda Fide, for the mission **of Haiti (San Domingo)**. In Haiti there are 500,000 souls filled with excellent qualities, who were and who still are left at the mercy of a few unworthy priests drawn from different dioceses in France. These priests live scandalous lives in the eyes of the inhabitants of that poor country. But the moment of Providence to right this situation has not yet arrived. The Haitian Government at present is not well disposed towards us. The danger of a schism **obliged the missionaries, almost immediately after their arrival there, to quit the country**. They did this to the consternation of the poor inhabitants who had realised that these were true priests of Jesus Christ."

## **(3) 8 December 1845 - Tisserant dies in a shipwreck off the coast of Morocco**

On 16 January 1845, after Haiti and Bourbon (Reunion) Rome confided the Mission of the Two Guineas to the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary. **Tisserant** was named Prefect Apostolic of the Two Guineas.

"During this time, exact news from Guinea convinced us that these coasts could be inhabited by European Missionaries, on condition that proper precautions were taken due to the tropical climate. The Society of the Holy Heart of Mary had the consolation of taking on this Mission towards the middle of 1845. This new effort was also to cost us dear: one of the three members, **Fr. Tisserant**, named by Propaganda Fide to lead the Mission, died before he could reach there in the shipwreck of the Papin, on 8 December 1845."

## **(4) 23 November 1847 - Death of the First Vicar Apostolic, Bishop Truffet, at Dakar**

God has once again put us to the test in Guinea. He wished to have one more victim, and has chosen the largest of the flock. Bishop Truffet left for Africa on 15 April, and arrived at Dakar on 7 May, with the six companions he brought with him. All were full of fervour. Their diet of food was exactly that of the local inhabitants. They refused to eat bread, meat and wine. They ate only rice (watery and salty), couscous, cassava, potatoes and yams, and fish now and again. They drank only water. Within six months, all had fallen ill. Then it was the turn of their Bishop. On 17 November his illness became aggravated. On 21st, after Mass, he went back to his house to lie down, and never left it. It was too late. He had violent fever. The sick man became unconscious on 23rd. There was just time to give him Extreme Unction, the Sacrament of the Sick, and he died.

## **(5) 1st December 1849 - the Death of Monnet before he reached Madagascar**

Monnet was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Madagascar and left France by boat. He died at Mayotte, 1st December 1849 without reaching Madagascar.

*"We have felt thunderstruck on learning of the death of Bishop Monnet. I had left him for a moment on the Island of Reunion, in the interest of religion, and then on 19 December, arriving at Mayotte, we heard to our surprise that the Bishop had died suddenly on 1st December soon after landing. The Minister of the Marine knows the details of this terrible catastrophe.*

#### **Several other tragedies:**

January 1920 - Bishop Jalabert, Vicar Apostolic of Senegambia, died in the shipwreck of the mailboat "Africa", off the island of Oleron, near the reefs of the Island of Re.

**Bible Text: Acts 4 - Why are the Nations in tumult?**

**Hymn: - *Keep in Mind, that Jesus Christ has died for us.....* verse 2**

### **3) The Cross in our Missionary Lives today**

"The grace of God is not abandoning them, **and it will make them resolve to sacrifice everything rather than abandon the work which the Divine Goodness has inspired them to undertake.**

Many missionaries have died young: the grain of wheat falling on the ground.

Sickness, ill health, imprisonment, persecutions, tortures.

Testimonies, and sharing.....

**Bible Text: Acts 5. 26 - 33, 40 - 42; "Happy to have been judged worthy of suffering for Christ"**

**Hymn: - *Keep in Mind, that Jesus Christ has died for us .....* verse 3**

**Prayer** (Opening prayer of Pentecost Sunday) - *Today, Lord, by the Mystery of Pentecost, you make your Church holy among all peoples and nations; Pour out the gifts of the Holy Spirit on the immensity of the world, and continue in the hearts of believers, the work of love which you undertook at the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel.*

### **3. Today - In the Cenacle with Mary**

**Today:** Poullart: The Black Madonna - 27 May 1703 - Pentecost

Libermann: Mass for the Foundation of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary - 25 September 1841 at Our Lady of Victories Church, Paris

**Bible Reading: Acts 1. 4 - 8, 12 - 14: The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Cenacle**

**Today as yesterday:** Wait for what the Father has promised. Read slowly with times of silence, our Spiritan Rule of Life: (SRL): OUR SPIRITAN VOCATION

2. Called by the Father and "set apart", we respond to this appeal in a Religious and Missionary Institute, the Congregation of the **Holy Spirit** under the protection of the **Immaculate Heart of Mary**. The charisms of our Founders, **Claude Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann**, and the fidelity to our tradition, make us respond in a creative way to the needs of evangelization in our days. (cf. Nos. 4 and 12).

#### OUR MISSION IN THE CHURCH

4. - We go in particular to people, **groups and persons who have not yet heard the evangelical message** or who have scarcely heard it. We go to those whose needs are greatest, and **for the oppressed** (cf. ND II, 241). We also voluntarily accept those tasks for which the Church finds it difficult to get workers.

#### THE SPIRITAN APOSTOLIC SPIRIT

5. - Taking **Mary** as our model, we live our mission in **docility to the Holy Spirit**. This habitual state of **fidelity to the inspirations of the Spirit** - "practical union" as it is called by Libermann (cf. ND XIII, 699 - 706) - is the source of our "apostolic Zeal", and leads us to be ready for any work and for the total giving of ourselves.

#### CONSECRATION

6. - We are **consecrated to the Holy Spirit**, the author of all holiness, and "inspirer of the apostolic spirit" (ND X, 568). We live also under the protection of the **Immaculate Heart of Mary** filled by the same **Spirit** with the fullness of holiness and of the apostolate. (ibid.)

**We sing: - Our Father, "united in the same Spirit"**

Prayer of Pope Francis in "**The Joy of the Gospel**"

***Mary, Virgin and Mother, Moved by the Spirit you welcomed the Word of Life in the depths of your humble Faith: as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One help us to say our own "yes" to the urgent call, as pressing as ever, to proclaim the Good News of Jesus.***

***Filled with Christ's presence, you brought joy to John the Baptist making him exult in the womb of his mother. Brimming over with joy, you sang of the great things done by God. Standing at the foot of the Cross with unyielding faith, you received the joyful comfort of the Resurrection and joined with the Disciples in awaiting the Spirit, so that the evangelizing Church could be born .***

***Obtain for us now a new ardour born of the Resurrection, that we may bring to all the Gospel of Life which triumphs over death. Give us a holy courage to seek new paths, that the gift of unfading beauty may reach every man and woman.***

***Star of the New Evangelization, help us to bear radiant witness to communion, service, ardent and generous Faith, justice and love for the poor, that the Joy of the Gospel may reach the ends of the earth, illuminating even the fringes of our world.***

***Mother of the living Gospel, wellspring of happiness for God's little ones, pray for us. Amen. Alleluia!***

**PLAN OF THE PENTECOST NOVENA 2016**

- 1) POULLART: Charism of the Foundation, Pentecost 1703: Consecration to the Spirit through Mary
- 2) The Congregation of the Holy Spirit in Agony - projects of FOURDINIER and LEGAY for restoration
- 3) LIBERMANN - and the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary, young and expanding
- 4) Libermann thinks of unity with the Spiritans - obstacles to unity
- 5) 1848 - Towards the realization of the Fusion in 1848
- 6) Union of the Spiritans and the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary: Rome's decision: Propaganda Fide
- 7) Receiving Rome's decision - The strength of Libermann - agree to die in order to resurrect
- 8) Subsequent shocks following on from this
- 9) 1849 - Rule of the Interior Life and Prayer of Consecration to the Holy Spirit under the Invocation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

**VIGIL OF PENTECOST**