



Generalate, Rome
Congregation of the Holy Spirit

1

May 2025

Pentecost Novena 2025



**The Marian dimension of
Spiritan Spirituality**



"Behold, I am doing something new" (Is 43,19)

Pentecost Novena 2025

THEME: “*Marian dimension of Spiritan
Spirituality*”.

30 May – 07 June



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by Philip Ng'oja.

Spiritan and Marian

Rereading our founding stories and reviewing the texts of our origins, we see a deep intertwining of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary in the birth of the work of Claude-François Poullart des Places and François Libermann. The Spiritans before the union of the two congregations consecrated themselves to the Holy Spirit under the gaze of the Virgin Mary, imploring her assistance, as Poullart des Places and his first companions had done on the evening of Pentecost 1703.

On Libermann's side, the Marian influence was such that Nicolas Eugène Tisserant said of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary: "*We are your work, O Mary! Enliven it*"¹. This Marian dimension is strongly reflected in the Provisional Rule, in which Libermann's missionaries distinguish themselves by "*a very special consecration that we make of our entire society, of each of its members, of all their works and undertakings to the Most Holy Heart of Mary, a heart eminently apostolic and all on fire with desires for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.*"²

With the union of 1848, the Congregation of the Holy Spirit effectively became a missionary congregation with

¹ *'Opus tuum nos, o Maria, vivificat illud'*. Cf. the beginning of Eugène Tisserant's memoir in 1842, 'Quelques notes sur l'établissement de la pauvre petite Congrégation des missionnaires du Saint Cœur de Marie' (Some notes on the establishment of the poor little Congregation of Missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary), in *Mémoire Spiritaine*, no. 19, first semester 2004, p. 19.

² *Provisional Rule of the Missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary*, Ch. II, art. 3.

a Marian spirituality. The profound significance of this major event could not escape a mind as contemplative as that of Father Libermann. For him, the union was not primarily a matter of a younger and more dynamic congregation bringing new blood to strengthen a declining structure. It was above all the work of Providence acting through the intertwining of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary in shaping the charism of Claude-François Poullart des Places and his own charism. After the union, the Spiritans would therefore have an even keener awareness of their double consecration to the Holy Spirit and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The novena that follows would like to recall this Marian dimension of Spiritan spirituality. At the origins of the congregation, in addition to the Holy Spirit, there is a Marian emphasis that goes far beyond devotion. It is a disposition to draw from the Heart of Mary a way of being missionary, a particular sensitivity to the whole person and to all people in their human makeup. It is a spiritual attitude that recognises the wonders that the Lord continues to work for the humble and the least, for the sinners whom Jesus loved to frequent.

The Holy Heart of Mary still accompanies us on our missionary journeys. From her *eminently apostolic* heart, we can draw our docility to the Holy Spirit every day, to renew our way of living the mission today and to respond to the calls of our time. The figure of Mary inspires in us the same sensitivity towards the poorest, a sensitivity so remarkable in Poullart des Places as in François Libermann.

Richard Fagah (Rennes, France)

Day 1: Friday, 30 May

In the beginning, a double consecration to the Holy Spirit and to the Virgin Mary

In the founding act of their work, Claude-François Poullart des Places and his group of twelve seminarians chose to consecrate themselves to the Holy Spirit in a Parisian church where the Black Madonna is venerated. It was no coincidence that it was Pentecost and that the figure of Mary was closely associated with their undertaking. The choice was deliberate and carefully considered. The Virgin Mary would facilitate their access to the Holy Spirit, under whose shadow her entire life had unfolded. This founding act heralded a Spiritan way of preparing oneself for mission so that God's work might be accomplished in us and through us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

1. Word of God (Acts 1:12-14)

The disciples in prayer with Mary

Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

2. Spiritan source

‘They consecrated themselves to the Holy Spirit under the invocation of Mary conceived without sin, and to whom they offered themselves. We cannot belong to a better master than the Holy Spirit, nor be under a better protection than that of Mary. Let us therefore consecrate ourselves to both of them according to the intention of our fathers... Children of Mary and of the Holy Spirit, we will strive, by our words and by our example, to make them known, loved and served; we will lead all our brothers and sisters to glorify the Holy Spirit and to honour his divine spouse.’

(Excerpt from the sermon of Nicolas Warnet. Cf. J. MICHEL, Claude-François Poullart des Places, 1962, p. 297.)

3. Brief reflection

“The work of Poullart des Places, which would become the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, has [...] as its first foundation, the certainty of the presence and action, in the Church of God, and especially in those who are destined for its service [...], of the divine Person, sent by Christ at Pentecost, who brings the fire of divine love, the light to work usefully, and who purifies from everything that could be an obstacle to the unique and unreserved service of God. [...] The founder has a special confidence in the Virgin’s prayer that poor schoolchildren may be especially devoted (that is, consecrated) to the Holy Spirit, or, in other words, that the Holy Spirit may take complete possession of their souls by inflaming them with the *fire of divine love*.”

(J. Lecuyer, ‘En relisant Poullart des Places’ [Rereading Poullart des Places],

in Ch. de Mare, *Aux racines de l'arbre spiritains* [At the Roots of Spiritans tree], pp. 258-259.)

4. Prayer

*“Holy Mary, my mother and my sovereign, ...
Humbly and piously prostrated at your feet, I implore your assistance.
Help me, your little servant, to dedicate myself,
consecrate myself and devote myself to the Holy Spirit,
your heavenly Spouse, in whose honour,
despite my weakness, I wish to make a very important commitment today.
My good Mother, hear me;*

Almighty Spirit, hear my good mother and, through her intercession, deign to enlighten my mind with your light and set my heart ablaze with the fire of your love, so that in this house consecrated to you, I may do all that pleases you, all that concerns your glory, my sanctification and the edification of my brothers.”

(According to the formula of consecration in use in the congregation until 1848.

Quoted by J. MICHEL, *Claude-François Poullart des Places*, 1962, pgs. 298-299.)

2nd day: Saturday, 31 May

The Spirit of Pentecost under the protection of Our Lady of Good Deliverance

The Spirit of Pentecost pushes the disciples out into the deep. It is the birth of the missionary Church. The Mother of Christ is present. She herself is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and witnesses the outpouring of this power from above. Claude-François Poullart des Places desires this maternal presence of Mary for his small community. Our Lady of Good Deliverance, invoked for women about to give birth, witnessed the birth of the work. Just as the child Claude-François had grown up under her protection, the work of Poullart des Places would be born under the maternal gaze of the Virgin Mary. The congregation must never escape the gaze of Our Lady of Good Deliverance, who watches over its development from yesterday to today.

1. Word of God (Acts 2:1-4)

The figure of Mary at Pentecost

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

2. Spiritan source

‘All schoolchildren will have a special devotion to the Holy Spirit, to whom they have been specially dedicated. They will also have a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin, under whose protection they were offered to the Holy Spirit. They will choose the feasts of Pentecost and the Immaculate Conception as their main feasts. They will celebrate the first to obtain from the Holy Spirit the fire of divine love, and the second to obtain from the Blessed Virgin angelic purity: two virtues which must form the whole foundation of their piety.’

(General and Particular Regulations, Art. 1, nos. 1 and 2)

3. Brief reflection

‘Mary’s role in the life of Poullart des Places appears most clearly at Pentecost 1703. Since March, Claude had been living with the students, for whom he paid rent. They expressed their desire to form a community of formation. Claude then chose the feast of Pentecost ‘because of his desire to consecrate the nascent work to the Holy Spirit.’ The celebration took place in the church of Saint-Étienne-des-Grès, where each one pronounced his commitment before the statue of Our Lady of Good Deliverance. Thus Claude ‘began the establishment of the said community and Seminary dedicated to the Holy Spirit, under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin conceived without sin’ ... He therefore placed their community under the protection of the Immaculate Virgin to whom he himself had been entrusted in his childhood.

(Unpublished, incorporating quotations from J. Michel,
Claude-François Poullart des Places, p. 139)

4. Prayer

Spirit of Pentecost,
you called
Claude Poullart des Places
to bring the Good News to the poor
by forming a community of priests
to live among them.
Help us to follow his example,
Make him a saint of the Church
and grant us the graces
we ask through him. Amen.

3rd day: Sunday, 1st June

Enriched by Marian prayer at Our Lady of Victories

In the past, the Spiritans in the Paris region made it their duty to go on pilgrimage every year on 2 February to the Marian shrine of Our Lady of Victories, seat of the Archconfraternity of the Most Holy Heart of Mary, Refuge of Sinners. We went there from our birthplace, on the Libermann side. Through the Archconfraternity, the Virgin Mary accompanied Libermann's work from its inspiration to its foundation. It was there, on the altar of the Holy Heart of Mary, that Father Libermann celebrated the founding Mass of his society on 25 September 1841. The figure of Mary never left the work.

1. Word of God (John 2:1-5)

Power of Marian intercession

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

2. Spiritan source

'From the early years of the Archconfraternity, she interceded for this little work before the Immaculate Heart of our good Mother. The principal members who were to begin the work had not yet been decided, the

obstacles they faced seemed insurmountable, but the fervent prayers of the holy confraternity of the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God obtained what seemed impossible. Therefore, I can assure you that, from the very beginning, our confidence in this difficult undertaking was in the goodness of the Heart of our most holy Mother. The difficulties far exceeded our weakness, and, considering things only in the light of reason, we regarded our undertaking as impossible, but at the same time we all had a strong assurance of success. On the one hand, I felt a deep sadness and did not dare to reveal our project to anyone, because it seemed to me to be madness according to right reason and must have appeared so to any wise person; on the other hand, I felt within myself a strong impulse and a feeling of great confidence in the most holy Heart of Mary, an assurance of success.’

(F. Libermann to Abbé Desgenettes, *N.D.* VI, pp. 37-38; *Anthologie spiritaine*, p. 542)

3. Brief reflection

In 1838, Eugène Tisserant and Frédéric Le Vavas seur discovered the Archconfraternity of the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary for the conversion of sinners, founded by Abbé Desgenettes. One evening on 2 February 1839, Abbé Desgenettes announced to the members of the Archconfraternity gathered for the service two prayer intentions entrusted to him by two seminarians from Saint-Sulpice, one for the abandoned people of Haiti, the other for those of Réunion. The Archconfraternity then took it upon itself to provide spiritual support for all efforts on behalf of the black populations of the two islands. It began to make regular

mention of these intentions in its prayers. A few years later, Abbé Desgenettes announced to the Marian prayer association the birth of the missionary society of Libermann, which had been inspired by his prayers: *'Another institution as precious as it is glorious to the Church of Jesus Christ, the Society of Priests of the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary, dedicated to the apostolate of the black races, was also born on the altar of the Holy Heart of Mary. It owes its existence to the prayers of the Archconfraternity.'*

(Annals of the Archconfraternity of the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary, No. 1, April 1842, p. 51)

4. Prayer

Heart of Mary,
Who moved
Francis Mary Paul Libermann
to respond to the Spirit
in his inner life and
his missionary zeal
give us that same generosity
and enthusiasm for
the spreading of the Good News.
Make him a saint of the Church
and grant us the graces
we ask through him. Amen.

4th day: Monday, 2 June

‘We are your work, O Mary!’

The Virgin Mary’s assistance was so evident in the launch of Libermann’s work that the first missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary could affirm without the slightest hesitation: ‘We are your work, O Mary, give it life!’ Such a claim of belonging to Mary could only accentuate the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in them. They gave themselves to Mary so that they could be entirely available, like her, to do God’s will. Since then, the congregation has never ceased to be Mary’s work in its way of responding to the calls, carried by the Holy Spirit, throughout the vicissitudes of its history.

1. Word of God (Luke 1:26-38)

‘Let everything come to me according to your word.’

In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.” “How will this be,”

Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.” “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

2. Spiritan source

‘To the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary, refuge of sinners and mother of all forsaken souls, and through Mary, to the greater glory of our Heavenly Father, in Jesus Christ our Lord, and in union with his divine Spirit! [...] The intention of the writer of these lines is not to give a history of the beginnings of the small society of which he, despite his great unworthiness, has the happiness of being a member, but to provide those who come after him with some material that may be of some use in showing that the work of the Missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary is truly the work of Mary. For, as one of the greatest servants of God of our time, Mr Pinault, said only a few days ago, such is the distinctive and particular character of our institute. Among the Jesuits, we see Ignatius as the founder and Xavier as the first missionary; St. Francis laid the foundations of his order by performing a thousand marvellous works and was followed by a crowd of disciples who were miracle workers, St. Dominic, St. Benedict, St. Bernard, St. Teresa, etc. Here, there is nothing similar. For a work that must be more daunting than any other in its scope and

difficulty, there are no men of miracles or great talents among us, only people of good will, gathered together they know not how, seeing divine blessing follow their every step, or rather forming no plan and unable to form any, and feeling themselves drawn by an invisible force that guides them and smoothes out beneath their feet the difficulties that seemed most insurmountable... *it is the hand of Mary!*'

(*Memoir of Eugène Tisserant*, written in 1842. See *Mémoire spiritaine*, no. 19, 2004, pp. 19-20)

3. Brief reflection

'Do you not know that the Holy Heart of Mary is a treasure? Jesus Christ has placed such an abundance of graces and favours in it that it will be enough to satisfy not only the whole world, but a hundred thousand worlds and much more; and why has our good Lord placed such abundance in the Holy Heart of Mary? Oh, that is easy to guess: it is because he knows the great misery in which we all find ourselves. [...] I seem to hear this holy Mother crying out to us all: 'Come, my dear children, come to me; if you are hungry for justice, I have enough to satisfy you; if you are thirsty, I will give you to drink of this life-giving water that gives eternal life; if you are tired, come and rest on my heart; my dear Son has placed such abundance there that I will have enough to satisfy you all.'

(F. Libermann to E. Farcy, *N.D.* I, p. 143)

4. Prayer

Heart of Mary,
Who moved
Francis Mary Paul Libermann
to respond to the Spirit
in his inner life and
his missionary zeal
give us that same generosity
and enthusiasm for
the spreading of the Good News.
Make him a saint of the Church
and grant us the graces
we ask through him. Amen.

5th day: Tuesday, 3 June

The eminently apostolic heart of Mary

The importance of the heart returns with force in Dilexit nos, the most recent encyclical of Pope Francis given in October 2024. More than a devotion, the Marian dimension of Spiritan spirituality refers in a special way to the heart, to our hearts drawing from the Immaculate Heart of Mary our source of inspiration for the mission. The apostolic heart of Mary is ‘Mary totally given to the love of God and the love of men.’ This heart burning with love is therefore ‘eminently apostolic,’ in the words of Libermann, because it is constantly turned towards all people, whom it draws to God. ‘The Holy Heart of Mary is given to us to be the light that guides us and the strength that sustains us in our work.’

1. Word of God (Luke 24:30-32)

Our hearts burn within us at the contact of the Risen One.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

2. Spiritan source

‘What distinguishes us from all other workers in the Lord’s vineyard is a very special consecration that we make of our entire society, of each of its members, of all

their works and undertakings to the Most Holy Heart of Mary, a heart eminently apostolic and all on fire with desires for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. We consider it a perfect model of the apostolic zeal with which we must be consumed and an abundant and ever-open source from which we must draw.’

(Provisional Rule of the Missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary, ch. II, art. 3)

3. Brief reflection

‘It should be noted that our Congregation is consecrated not only to Mary, but to the *Heart of Mary*. This choice of devotion to the Heart of Mary was not the result of calculation or reasoning, but of a powerful attraction and impulse. And yet there is nothing more motivated, better founded, or more in keeping with our vocation. We are called to the apostolate; now, to exercise the apostolate fruitfully, what do we need if not the apostolic spirit? And where can we find this apostolic spirit more perfect and more abundant, after Our Lord, than in the heart of Mary, who was filled with it, an eminently apostolic heart and all inflamed with desires for the glory of God and the salvation of souls? Certainly, she did not travel the seas and distant lands like Peter, Paul, and the other apostles. Why? Because that was not her destiny; but if such had been God’s will for her, she would have lacked nothing; the apostolic spirit that filled her would have put her into action according to all God’s plans for her. God did not will it; and Mary had to direct the apostles from her retreat, communicate her apostolic spirit to them, and draw upon souls the graces of conversion and satisfaction.

(F. Libermann on *The Provisional Rule*, ch. II, art. 3)

4. Prayer

Holy Father,
You are magnificent in your love;
grant us the grace to see confirmed
by the Church the beautiful testimony of faith
and holiness
that Francis Libermann has left us.
Grant us,
through the Holy Heart of Mary,
his beatification and the graces we implore through his
intercession.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(You may also use the prayer of Poullart des Places:

‘Spirit of Pentecost...’

6th day: Wednesday, 4 June

With Mary on our mission journey

Let us remember the debt of gratitude that Eugene Tisserant felt towards Mary in 1842. He saw the fingerprint of the Virgin Mother everywhere in the development of Libermann's young missionary society, both in its foundation and in the missions that presented themselves to it. 'It is the hand of Mary!' he said. 'Digitus Mariæ est hic!' *These were not empty words. That generation had a keen awareness of having given themselves to Mary, of being missionaries carried by her Holy Heart, which followed them everywhere, in their successes as well as in their failures.*

1. Word of God (John 19:25-27)

'Woman, here is your son. ... Here is your mother.'

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

2. Spiritan source

'Most holy and most august Virgin Mary, mother of my God, my Queen and my Sovereign Mistress, I come with confidence to pour out my heart before you, and I firmly hope that you will hear my prayer and grant me the special grace I come to ask of you. Called to the sublime

ministry of the Apostolate, and ardently desiring to devote myself to the service of your beloved Son for the salvation of souls, I have recourse to your Heart, so tender and compassionate towards sinners. See my poor soul as it is weak, miserable, full of imperfections and faults. Yet I am destined for such great things! I must evangelise the poor, heal the wounds of souls, snatch sinners from hell, preach the holy name of your Son, establish his reign and exercise all the other eminent functions of the Apostolate. How dare I undertake such great things, being so weak and miserable? O my Mother! O Sovereign of my soul! Come to my aid [...]

(Excerpt from the act of consecration to the Spiritan Apostolate,
N.D., X, p. 498)

3. Brief reflection

‘Mary gave Fr. Libermann peace in his distress, her presence in his solitude, fervour in his interior life, prudence as a leader and boldness as a conqueror. She recruited and brought together the Tisserants and the Le Vavasseurs, the Truffets and the Bessieux. She enabled him to plant the Church of her Son in Africa. With her, despite the accumulated obstacles, everything was possible; despite the ever-renewed contradictions, everything was rapid; despite so many disasters, everything was fruitful. Father Libermann is a figure who is the synthesis of the gentleness of John and the ardour of Paul, the radicalism of John of the Cross and the serenity of Francis de Sales.’

(Fr. Blanchard, ‘The Marian Experience’ in *The Venerable Libermann*, vol. i, p. 561)

4. Prayer

Please [O my Mother] accept the offering
I make to you of my whole self;
give me to the Holy Spirit,
your beloved spouse;
I want to devote and consecrate myself
wholly to the divine Spirit,
and wholly to your immaculate Heart.
I desire to live and die, to devote myself
and sacrifice myself in the footsteps of Jesus,
in the Society of Missionaries,
wholly devoted to the almighty
Life-giver of souls
and wholly consecrated
to your Immaculate Heart.

(Excerpt from the act of consecration to the Spiritan apostolate, *N.D.*,
X, p. 499)

7th day: Thursday, 5 June

Docile to the Holy Spirit, like Mary

The Marian dimension of our spirituality speaks of the docility we hold from the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This observation, already noted in Poullart des Places, even though he did not invoke the Virgin Mary under the same title, became a distinctive feature with Libermann. We take Mary as our model in the total gift of ourselves.

1. Word of God (Galatians 5:16-25)

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit

2. Spiritan source

‘We live our mission in in willing obedience to the Holy Spirit, taking Mary as our model. This condition of habitual fidelity to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is the ‘practical union’ of which Libermann speaks (cf. *N.D.*, XIII, 699-706). It is the wellspring of our ‘apostolic zeal’ and leads us to being completely available and making a complete gift of ourselves.’

(*SRL*, no. 5)

‘In every facet of our lives, but particularly in our prayer, Mary is our model of willing obedience and of faithfulness. We offer her veneration and prayer so that we may, as she did, welcome within us the Holy Spirit who dwelt in her Immaculate Heart, and he may be for us also the abundant source of our apostolic spirit.’

(*SRL*, no. 89)

3. Brief reflection

‘We must consider Mary’s heart as a perfect model of the zeal with which we must be consumed, and as an abundant source from which we must draw unceasingly. It is our model; and from it we learn what the spirit of our society must be: an interior spirit, a spirit of holiness; true apostolic zeal as it was found in Mary’s heart cannot reside in a dissipated spirit or in a heart attached to creatures; therefore, in order to imitate our model, we must apply ourselves to a life of prayer, detachment from creatures, and renunciation of ourselves, so that our hearts may become like the heart of our good Mother, so pure, so holy, so charitable.’

(F. Libermann on *The Provisional Rule*, ch. II, art. 3.)

4. Prayer

Heart of Mary,
Who moved
Francis Mary Paul Libermann
to respond to the Spirit
in his inner life and
his missionary zeal
give us that same generosity
and enthusiasm for
the spreading of the Good News.
Make him a saint of the Church
and grant us the graces
we ask through him. Amen.

8th day: Friday, 6 June

The interior life in the school of Mary

Whether it be interiority or the attraction to works without worldly splendour, Spiritan spirituality owes a great deal to Mary. To nourish and increase the interior life, Libermann recommends having ‘Jesus and Mary before our eyes... always looking within Jesus and Mary,’ and considering ‘the interior state of Mary in the various marvellous circumstances in which she found herself; the life of Jesus in her and her life in Jesus.’ (Cf. Petit traité de la vie intérieure, X and XI.)

1. Word of God (Romans 8:8-10)

If Christ lives in us...

Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.

2. Spiritan source

‘Jesus Christ sends us as he was sent. Our mission is his; it is Jesus who lives in his envoys, who suffers in his envoys, who draws souls to God his Father, and communicates graces to them through his envoys. But in order for Jesus to live in his missionaries and do all things in them and through them, it is necessary that they live in him, be united with him in their lives, their

sufferings and their apostolic action. [...] For this, our lives and works must be like his, for Jesus does not live in those who are not like him, and his merits are not communicated to them.'

(F. Libermann, 'Instructions to Missionaries,' in *Spiritual Writings*, pp. 374-375.)

3. Brief reflection

'Since the heart is the seat of inner feelings, we must concentrate in our own hearts all those feelings of Mary's heart that constitute apostolic zeal. If our heart is inflamed with the ardent charity that burned in Mary's heart, we will be able to spread this fire in the souls with whom we come into contact; whereas if we think only of action without first and foremost conforming our interior to that of Mary, we will be cold: for ourselves first, and the good we can do for others will be much less considerable.

(F. Libermann on *The Provisional Rule*, ch. II, art. 3.)

4. Prayer

(*O Jesu vivens in María*)

O Jesus,
come and live in your servants
as you lived in Mary:
in your Spirit of holiness
and in the fullness of your energy,
with the perfection of your ways

and the authenticity of your virtues,
and in communion with your mysteries;
master all that opposes them,
in your Spirit, for the glory of the Father.
Amen.

9th day: Saturday, 7 June

Spiritan and Marian

Two years after the union of the two congregations, Libermann published a Notice on the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and the Immaculate Heart of Mary and on its works. Was this coordinating conjunction, which connects rather than subjugates the younger congregation to the older one, a typographical error? *Nothing is less certain*. "Father Libermann sees no obstacle to uniting the words "Holy Spirit" and "Holy Heart of Mary". For it is not only through Mary that we come to the Holy Spirit, but it is also He who reveals Mary [...]. It is not possible to acquire perfect fidelity to the Holy Spirit without a very great union with Mary [...].’ (Cf. A. Gilbert, in *Cahiers spiritains*, no. 22, p. 69.)

1. Word of God (Galatians 5:22-26)

The fruits of the Holy Spirit.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

2. Spiritan source

‘The Congregation [...] consecrates [its members] especially to the Holy Spirit, author and consummator of all holiness and inspirer of the apostolic spirit, and to the

Immaculate Heart of Mary, filled superabundantly by the divine Spirit with the fullness of holiness and apostolate, and participating most perfectly in the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, her Son, for the redemption of the world. This double devotion is the special and distinctive devotion of the Congregation. They will find in the Holy Spirit, who lives in their souls, a source of interior and religious life and an all-powerful principle of that perfect charity which is the soul of zeal and of all other apostolic virtues. They will consider the Immaculate Heart of Mary as a perfect model of fidelity to all the holy inspirations of the divine Spirit and of the interior practice of the virtues of religious and apostolic life. They will find in it a refuge to which they will have recourse in their labours and sufferings, and they will pour out their hearts to it with childlike trust in their weaknesses and temptations.

(Regulations of 1849, Ch. VI, art. iii and iv, cf. *N.D.*, X, p. 568.)

3. Brief reflection

‘[...] You belong to the Holy Heart of Mary and you will always belong to her. Our union with the community of the Holy Spirit can only increase our devotion and love for this Heart which gave birth to our poor little Society. We have always placed our rest and happiness in the Heart of Mary filled with the eminent superabundance of the Holy Spirit, and if we have not expressed this fullness of the Holy Spirit in the Heart of Mary, it nevertheless formed the essence of our devotion to the Most Holy Heart of Mary; well then! we are not changing; only what was implied, what we previously assumed, we now express [...].’

(F. Libermann to Jerome Schwindenhammer, *N.D.*, XII, p. 133.)

4. Prayer

Heart of Mary,
Who moved
Francis Mary Paul Libermann
to respond to the Spirit
in his inner life and
his missionary zeal
give us that same generosity
and enthusiasm for
the spreading of the Good News.
Make him a saint of the Church
and grant us the graces
we ask through him. Amen.

(You can also use the prayer with Poullart des Places:
“Spirit of Pentecost...”

Happy Pentecost!



