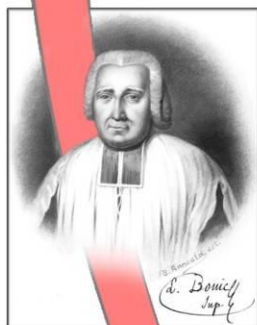


## “Sow with confidence”

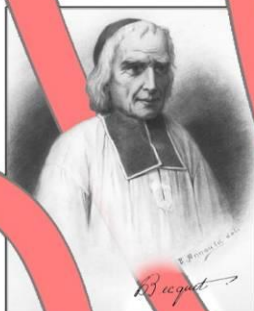
### Pentecost Novena



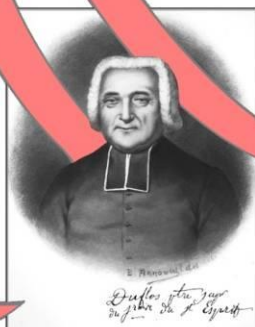
Jacques-Hyacinthe GARNIER  
(1709-1710)



Louis BOUÏC  
(1710-1763)



François BECQUET  
(1763-1788)



Jean-Marie DUFLOS  
(1788-1806)

30 may - 07 june 2014

## Introduction

From the Superior General on his 2013 Christmas message we highlight the following:

*The first phase of our Congregation-wide Animation Plan is precisely a call to go back to our beginnings, to allow Poullart des Places and Libermann to reshape our spirituality, our personal and community lives and our missionary commitments today.*

*A pilgrimage into our past will reveal that our beginnings as a Congregation were very humble indeed but that God accomplished wonderful deeds through the lives of simple, committed Spiritans who were aware of their limitations but were open to the power of the Spirit. Reflecting on the founding of the 'poor little' Congregation of the Missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary, Eugene Tisserant pointed out that, unlike the Jesuits and the Franciscans, we have 'no remarkable figures or men of great talent; all we have are people of good will, unsure as to how they were brought together ...without the ability to put any project together but feeling themselves led by an invisible force who directs them and who removes from their path difficulties which seem truly insurmountable...' (E. Tisserant, *L'Oeuvre des Noirs*, 13 October 1842, N.D.I, 589-90).*

This is why, during the coming years, for our Pentecost Novena, we will remember confreres and moments of our spiritan history, especially from our Superior Generals and their initiatives. Doing this we hope these past experiences will help us on our pilgrimage today, leading us into the future. It is also an occasion, this novena, for each one of us *to add other more contemporary names of Spiritans who have provided personal inspiration to us on our Spiritan journey and who have helped us to remain faithful to our Spiritan ideals.*

Have a good novena for Pentecost and let us know some of your experiences.

Roma, 27 April 2014 – Day of the canonisation of S. John XXIII and S. John Paul II.

Animation Team

## Prayer

O loving God, who in the mystery of Pentecost sanctifies the Church in the midst of all people, spread the gifts of the Holy spirit to the ends of the earth. Through our Spiritan communities, may we make knoww the joyful blessings of preaching the Gospel. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Day One:

### “WE HAVE DONE NO MORE THAN OUR DUTY”.

[Garnier (1709 – 1710)]

Father James Hyacinth Garnier was born at Janzé, near Rennes, on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1683. He joined the community of Claude Poullart des Places in 1705 while still a student of theology. Not long before the founder died on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1709, Claude’s boyhood friend and right hand man, Michael Le Barbier, went back to his diocese in Brittany, having been recalled by his bishop. That is how Reverend Garnier, while still a deacon, ended up taking charge of the Seminary of the Holy Spirit . He would be ordained priest the following Christmas.

James Garnier had lived with Claude for four years, and that made him one of the senior members of the Society. He was only at the head of the Congregation for a very short time, and directed the Seminary without any great lustre, for he died a few months after his election as Superior. He passed away in March 1710 being only 26 years old, and probably for the same reasons as Claude, namely exhaustion and a lack of life’s necessities. We therefore know very little about him. We could say that he probably knew how to instil courage and confidence into his companions who were undergoing privations of every kind. Doubtless it is thanks to him that the unity of the Society was preserved during those extremely difficult times: they did not know from one day to another whether or not they could survive as a Congregation, and food was in very short supply due to the terrible winter of 1708 – 1709. They had also just rented a new house on rue Neuve St. Etienne.

**Torre d’Aguilha 1.2:** *Our charism has to be lived and incarnated to be effective..... We learn from those with whom we live. Confreres will be role models for young people with regard to the lived out reality of the Spiritan charism. The charism is carried forward in the way we live, the way we pray and participate in the mission of the Church and the whole Congregation. That which began through the power of the Spirit with the founders must be received, followed and developed by each succeeding generation in the different historical, social and cultural situations in which they find themselves. It is not a question of returning to the time of our foundations, but rather of living the charism today as the founders would live it if they were in our place; to dare to take new initiatives and run certain risks – in fidelity to the grace that has been given us”.*

**Bible reading:** (Luke:17:7-10). The fundamental attitudes of a disciple of Jesus are forgiveness, sturdiness in faith, fraternal correction and detachment. How do I live my mission as a member of the Congregation? How important for me is the praise of others? Have I reached the stage of fully living humility and detachment, while at the same time entering wholly into the work which has been confided to me?

**Prayer:** Lord, help us to bring our contribution to life in community, giving the best of our abilities, talents and gifts which have come to us from you. Make us realise the riches which each member brings to the community and which together are the foundation of both their witness and missionary activity. Wipe away from our hearts, bitterness, the desire for domination, pride and the pursuit of empty praise. Keep us in humility, and the spirit of service, you who inspired Father Garnier in his discreet action as head of the nascent Congregation of the Holy Spirit.

**DAY 2:****PERSEVERE UNTIL RECOGNITION IS GRANTED****Louis Bouïc (1710 – 1763)**

Louis Bouïc was born on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1684. He entered the Holy Spirit Seminary two months after the death of Claude Poullart des Places, while still a deacon. He was chosen to succeed Father Garnier in March 1710. Until then, the Congregation had no official recognition, neither from Church nor State. In his thirteenth year as Superior of the Seminary, on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1723, an opportunity arose to begin what was to be a real struggle for official recognition. A priest who was friendly towards the Congregation left in his will a large sum of money for the Seminary. To be able to receive this inheritance, it was necessary to have official recognition. Father Bouïc and his confreres obtained Letters Patent from the King, giving legal recognition, in May 1726. However, the Archbishop of Paris showed himself to be less than favourable. He was unhappy at being forced to take part in this financial transaction. At the same time, the University, which was under the influence of the Jansenists and was very concerned that it might lose its monopoly of third level education. The Congregation obtained other Letters Patent from the King in December 1726. Other opposition arose which necessitated the obtaining of a third set of Letters Patent in July 1727. Influenced by the Jansenists, the Archbishop of Paris hardened his approach, and insisted that the Seminary was completely under his jurisdiction. He wished to rewrite the rule of the Seminary, name its Superior, and admit and expel seminarians. Father Bouïc and his confreres found these conditions completely unacceptable, and feared that the Seminary would become a seed bed of heretics. However, the Archbishop died in 1729. His successor, on being informed of the situation, gave his agreement to the recognition of the Seminary, under acceptable conditions. In order to see the matter through, the Seminary renounced its right to the inheritance. As a result, Parliament registered the Letters Patent in March 1731.

But that was not the end of the affair. The matter was brought to the attention of the Ministry of Finance. This ministry asked the Archbishop to confirm his agreement, and then began an inspection of the Seminary. It came to the conclusion that the Letters Patent of 1726 were null and void. The Congregation once more had to approach the King, who confirmed the Letters Patent in 1733. The Archbishop gave his confirmation in June 1734. On 30<sup>th</sup> July 1734 the Ministry of Finance registered the Letters Patent. The Congregation had finally achieved recognition from both Church and State. The struggle had lasted eleven years.

**Bagamoyo 1.5:** *The example of our predecessors, particularly those who died so young and so soon after their arrival in Africa, reminds us that mission cannot be carried out without a real gift of oneself, a joyous missionary zeal, a capacity to continue in the places to which we have been sent, and also a real disposition to be at the disposal of the Congregation. These qualities embody the Spiritan apostolic way of acting which we must deepen, transmit and sometimes even find again.*

**Bible Reading:** (Luke 11, 5-13). The Gospel insists on persevering and confident prayer. This consists of an intimacy with God, a commitment to one's life-work and an undertaking which makes us live out new relationships among ourselves. How do we as a community witness to forgiveness and sharing? How does the Holy Spirit help us to work towards a just and fraternal society?

**Prayer:** Lord, sometimes we find ourselves in difficult situations. Send us your Holy Spirit to inspire us with discernment, patience and perseverance. As with Father Bouïc, may your Spirit help us to know how to get rid of whatever is weighing us down in our work of mission.

**Day 3:****LAUNCH OUT INTO THE DEEP****[Louis Bouïc (1710 – 1763)]**

One of the noteworthy facts of the epoch of Louis Bouïc is that during his mandate as Superior, the priests formed in the Seminary of the Holy Spirit began to be open to the idea of working in foreign lands. The students of the Spiritans studied at the College of Louis Le Grand, and surely must have met Jesuits who had returned from work in the Americas and in the Far East. The desire to imitate these missionaries was in a sense a throwback to the dream which the young Claude Poullart des Places had of being a missionary far away from France. This also fell in with the desires of the Spiritan Seminary, so much so that the Rules of 1724 specifically mentioned working abroad. Father Bouïc defined the work and aims of the Congregation in the following words: *“The desires of Father Desplaces and of those who have succeeded him in establishing the Seminary of the Holy Spirit, are first of all to train ecclesiastics who are hard working, capable and uninterested in personal advancement. They are to be ready to fill voluntarily ecclesiastical positions which are the least rewarding, and the least desirable, such as chaplaincies in hospitals, curacies, and service in little countryside parishes. They will also be devoted to Missions in France, in the King’s colonies, and everywhere else: they will be engaged in running seminaries, and humble works in small provincial towns. They will undertake the direction of Religious, and other similar employment.”*(SCHWINDENHAMMER, Biographies 1703 – 1803, p.53)

The first Spiritan to go abroad was certainly Adrian Vatel who left France in 1715 but his ship was wrecked on the journey and he returned to France. Later, the Spiritans became associated with the work of the Paris Foreign Missions Society. In 1732 there were Spiritans working in Canada (Francis Frison de la Mothe) and from 1733, in the Far East - in Cochinchina, at Tonkin (Vietnam), in Cambodia, in Su-Tchuen (China), in Siam (Thailand) and in India. Among them one should note the presence of four bishops, one of whom, Mgr. Urban Lefebvre, was later Beatified. So we can say that fairly soon after their Foundation, the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit received appeals from foreign lands and had the courage to answer the call.

**SRL 4:** *The evangelisation of “the poor” (cf. Lk. 4.18) is our purpose (cf. N.D. XIII, 170). Therefore we go especially to peoples, groups and individuals who have not yet heard the message of the Gospel or who have scarcely heard it, to those whose needs are the greatest and to the oppressed (cf. N.D. II, 241). We also willingly accept tasks for which the Church has difficulty in finding workers.*

**Bible Reading:** (Lk. 5, 1-11). Jesus calls his first disciples and shows them their mission. This demands clear-headedness and a solid union with the Person of Christ. What must we leave behind us in order to be more completely his disciples? How is the Holy Spirit making me enter more deeply into the mission of Christ?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, you call us to follow you in announcing the Kingdom. Send your Holy Spirit upon us, to make us ready to detach ourselves from our habits, and our culture, so as to be able to join ourselves with all those people who are awaiting your Good News of salvation. Just as in the days of Father Bouïc, pour out your Spirit on us so that we will always walk according to your will.

**Day 4:****ABANDONMENT TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE****[Louis Bouïc (1710 – 1763)]**

One of the most unforgettable figures of the time of Father Bouïc was Father Pierre Caris. He was born in November 1684 and entered the Seminary of the Holy Spirit on 11 October 1704, being received by Claude Francis Poullart des Places himself. Later he was admitted into the Society. He became First Assistant and Bursar of the Seminary. So he was the one to supply all that was necessary for a Community which was growing day by day. He had no source of revenue himself, and so had to spend his time seeking for help and begging for financial assistance. Before joining the Spiritans, he was already well known as a person getting aid from the rich for the poor and for orphans; now he was asking for help for the Spiritan Community.

Trying to get money from a person who was intrigued by his approach, Pierre described himself in the following words: "I am Caris, the poor priest. I have eighty poor boys to feed and I have not an ounce of bread to give them; that is why you see me in the streets of Paris begging for alms." Untiringly, he wandered up and down, sometimes suffering the greatest humiliations, in order to provide food for the Seminary Community. In spite of his zeal, financial help was not always forthcoming. Nevertheless, he trusted Divine Providence completely. An extract from his *Life* proves it. *"It happened that one day, the community owed a lot of money to the butcher and the baker and there were no funds to cover the debts, so much so that both these trades people refused further goods until they were paid in full. Father Caris spent the whole morning begging, and came back to the community empty-handed. After Particular Examen at noon, the community went to the refectory; they said the Grace before Meals and having nothing to eat, they then said the Grace after Meals and went to the chapel for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Just as they were beginning, food arrived in abundance, from where they knew not. It had been a long time since the community ate as well as on that day. When they had finished eating, they recited the Te Deum. That same day money was donated which covered what they owed to the butcher and the baker."*

The epitaph on his tomb sums up his whole life: "Here lies the poor priest, Peter Caris, Slave of Mary, Bursar of the Seminary. Every day he lived for God and for his neighbour, and never for himself! He died on 22 June 1757. Pray for him – imitate him!" (SCHWINDENHAMMER – *Biographies 1703 – 1803*, p.45 – 47)

**SRL: 70.2:** *In witnessing to poverty, we place ourselves in the hands of Divine Providence, accepting cultural uprooting and the degree of separation from our family that is entailed. We accept even that insecurity our apostolic activities may impose.*

**Bible Reading:** (Mt. 6.19 – 34) Every man has one fundamental value in his life, absolutes which determine his manner of being and of living. What is the absolute in our lives: God or wealth? What injustice must be removed among us in order to encourage sharing and fraternity? The justice of the Kingdom shows itself in an effective solidarity with the poor. What poverty must we fight against?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, we do not always know what tomorrow will bring. Send your Holy Spirit on us, to increase our confidence and abandonment to Divine Providence. Let us in this way be more free to serve you in our brothers and sisters. Wishing as we do, to follow the example of Father Caris, may the Holy Spirit pour out on us pure water, and liberate us from all our idols.

**Day 5:****PASTORS IN THE SERVICE OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD****[Louis Bouïc (1710 – 1763)]**

We know that the plan of Claude Francis Poullart des Places was to found a seminary to form priests, giving them a high quality of theological formation; but, at the same time, implanting a spirit of humility which would lead them to accept the most difficult of mission appointments. The quality of the formation, although not leading to recognition with degrees and diplomas, was very quickly appreciated by the bishops and institutes which received priests formed by the Spiritans. So we can see that the project of Poullart answered a crucial need of its day, namely, how to provide pastors completely dedicated to the people of God. But no sooner had the Spiritans met this need, than their very success provoked a yet greater thirst for priests who were upright, and totally devoted, and who would be particularly interested in the least important people. Very quickly, the Spiritans were asked to carry out their formation policy in other places apart from Paris. Francis Frison de la Mothe, left for Canada in 1732 and was then called to join the formators of the seminary of Quebec. In France, in 1736, the Bishop of Meaux, a friend of Louis Bouïc and a faithful supporter of the Spiritans, asked the Congregation to restore the reputation of his seminary. Six confreres took on the responsibility of both the junior and senior seminaries of this diocese in April 1737. This was the first time that the Spiritans as a community had replied to this type of appeal. The buildings were modernised, the debts cleared, the number of students grew apace and the level of formation was improved. All the while, the Spiritan formators were instilling in those future priests the same spirit of humility that was implanted in the Seminary of the Holy Spirit in Paris. Unfortunately, this collaboration was interrupted by the closure of the seminary during the French Revolution. This was not the only example of such service to dioceses. The bishop of Verdun asked the Spiritans for similar help a few months after they had gone to Meaux. The community replied in 1737, but then there arose violent opposition from the Jansenists. It seems that the Royal Government had also formulated a similar plan for the Spiritans to train the clergy of Corsica. The Spiritans accepted the work but in all probability it came to nothing.

**SRL 18:** *In local Churches the following are our principal activities:*

- *fostering Christian communities and the education of a committed and responsible laity:*
- *vocations' ministry: training for ministry and the missionary and religious life:*
- *engaging in social and educational work in line with our Spiritan calling:*
- *awakening an understanding of the universal mission of justice and of kinship between peoples.*

**Bible Reading:** (Acts 13, 1-3) A new stage begins in the history of the Church with its outreach to the pagans. The Holy Spirit is the force for organisation and for a new expansion of the community. What are the activities in our community which need to be more clearly defined? What is the part which we leave to the Holy Spirit in our community discernments?

**Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, you alone are the good shepherd and you have pity on the crowds who are like sheep without a shepherd. Send your Holy Spirit upon us, so that he will help us to increase the faith and humanity of all those to whom we have been sent. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, just as in the time of Father Bouïc, make us apostles of your Gospel and ministers of Jesus Christ to the nations.

**Day 6.****THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPS****[Francis Becquet (1763 – 1788)]**

Francis Becquet was born on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1705, in the Diocese of Amiens. He was educated at Holy Spirit Seminary, entering as a student on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1728. He joined the Staff of the Seminary on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1735. He was a theologian of repute, and was appointed a Councillor of the Congregation in 1754 and then Second Assistant on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1758. He was elected Superior General on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1763 when 58 years old. This election was approved and confirmed the next day by the Archbishop of Paris, Christopher de Beaumont.

The Congregation numbered seven persons at that time, and Becquet had the consolation of seeing the Congregation being widely known, not only in the Kingdom of France but elsewhere too. The members continued ever faithful to the spirit of the Founder, as we can see from the rule of the Seminary and the importance given to the spiritual life. The programme of studies encouraged the students to apply themselves to the learning of philosophy and theology. There was widespread praise for the standard of examinations and the studious character of the seminarians. They were destined to work as parish priests or curates, or in seminaries as teachers of philosophy and theology.

Up until then, the Congregation had only worked indirectly in foreign lands by forming secular priests, who, from the beginning, could take up work wherever they wished. However, in 1766, Rome confided the evangelisation of the islands of Saint Pierre et Miquelon (present day Canada) to the Spiritans, making it into a Prefecture Apostolic. In 1775, The Congregation took over the mission of French Guiana, which in 1768 had been vacated by the Jesuits when they were suppressed. Then Senegal was confided to the Spiritans in 1777. So it was the task of Father Becquet to give an official organisation to this colonial apostolate, to turn the attention of the small Congregation towards works outside of France, and to ensure that the Spiritans themselves took part in this mission outreach. He made every effort to provide good priests for the Missions and, after the death of the Abbot of Isle Dieu, he was the official intermediary between *Propaganda Fide* and the French Government in all matters concerning the Missions in the Colonies.

**Extract from the Memorandum of the Abbot of Isle Dieu, on the plan for replacing Religious Orders in the American Colonies: -**

It must be admitted that the Spiritans show *“unity and perfect understanding among themselves; the witness to a spirit of self-renunciation and evangelical poverty which they have always proclaimed and practised; their perfect obedience to the persons in France to whom they are answerable... I can safely say that in the entire Kingdom, only the Holy Spirit Seminary is capable of providing the type of priests that are required (...). That Seminary trains subjects for the most difficult, most laborious and least financially rewarding in abandoned situations.”* (KOREN, *The Spiritans*, p.99)

**Bible Reading:** (1 Cor. 12, 4-11) The Blessed Trinity is the foundation on which we build community. How can we improve our respect for the gifts which each community member has received? How can we bring growth to the practise of service among ourselves?

**Prayer**

O Holy Spirit, you bestow your gifts for the common good of the entire Church. We beg of you: that the different charisms and ministries reinforce the unity of the whole Body, so that each of us may feel that we are loved in the Church for the particular work which we carry out. As in the time of Father Becquet, gather us into the unity of your children and place within us, Lord, a new Spirit.



## Day 7

**BUILDING FOR MISSION****Fr. François Becquet (1763-1788)**

François Becquet was more at ease as a theologian than as a contractor. He was one of the most reliable theologians of his time, famous for his lucidity and strength in the struggle against the Jansenists. But it also fell to him to expand the existing buildings to accommodate the rising number of future missionaries for the Congregation. Fr. Bouïc had noted that the seminary lacked classrooms, a chapel and a library, but it was not until the arrival of Fr. Becquet that any action was taken. Plans and inspections by experts, architects and contractors were there in abundance. Money was short but this did not discourage the community and eventually courage triumphed over procrastination.

The construction of the chapel and the building facing the rue des Postes (the rue Lhomond today) began without any cash available. There was a procession of interruptions and numerous setbacks, court cases and compromises, but nothing could discourage Fr. Becquet with his total trust in God and the Blessed Virgin. The building of the chapel lasted from 1769 to 1778 and it was finally consecrated in 1780.

The apostolate to which the Congregation felt called from the very beginning developed slowly but continuously. François Becquet effectively became a works contractor for a task which was challenging but necessary. And the lack of funds was a constant torment for him. At his death, the 400,000 livres debt had been reduced to 18,000. He started several missionary commitments which were pivotal in the French colonies. This good, courageous son of Poullart des Places died on October 27<sup>th</sup> 1788, at the age of 83. All his life, both as a famous theologian and a humble contractor, he tried to build everything on Christ in fidelity to the Church.

**Extract from a letter written by Fr. Becquet in 1768 to M. Berlin de Blagny, the official in charge of the personal funds of the King:** *“The purpose of this house, established with Patent Letters in 1726, was to provide priests for the most abandoned places in the Kingdom and in our colonies. From 1703, when the work began, this aim has been accomplished to the enduring satisfaction of the Bishops and the Ministers. For the last 30 years, nearly all the missionaries who worked in Acadia were formed here, and we know that Fr. Le Loutre, another former student, has also had a great impact. Many other past students went to work in China, Cochinchine (present day Vietnam), Siam and Tong-King (also Vietnam today), some of whom became Vicars Apostolic. By their work and sufferings, they supported and continue to support religion in these remote countries.”* (J. Schwindenhammer. “Biographies”, 1703-1803, p. 54).

**Bible reading:** (Mt 7, 24-27). To build a house on a rock means to live and act according to the justice of the Kingdom which was preached by Jesus. What do we need to do in our communities to announce his arrival amongst us? Where can we see his Holy Spirit in action?

**Prayer:** Spirit of Jesus, you make us into holy temples to the glory of the Father. Help us to glorify God in our bodies. Through your grace we can say: “Jesus is the Lord!”; as you did with Fr. Becquet, grant us to live in holiness and thus announce the royalty of Christ Jesus.

**Day 8****TENACITY DURING HARD TIMES****Fr. Jean-Marie Duflos (1792-1806)**

The fifth superior of the Congregation of the Seminary of the Holy Spirit, Jean-Marie Duflos, was born on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1726 in the diocese of Arras in northern France. His elder brother, Jacques, had entered the Seminary of the Holy Spirit to complete his studies and, subsequently, to join the ranks of the professors. Jean-Marie was to follow in his footsteps ten years later and entered as a professor of moral theology. His contemporary seminarians and confreres were struck by the devotion he showed to the students and his readiness to help the poorest amongst them. In 1781, he became the assistant to Fr. Becquet and eventually succeeded him as Superior General in November, 1788. From the start, he was intent on dealing with the long-standing debts of the house, but the students were always his first priority. He looked after their needs and catered for their temporal and spiritual interests. Each Sunday, he gave them a talk aimed at strengthening them in the Christian and priestly outlook. Education was always close to his heart.

As well as his immediate concerns regarding the seminary and its students, he made a point of keeping in close contact with former students who were now working on the missions. François Pottier, the Bishop of Suchen in China, was one of many who cherished strong memories of his time in the rue des Postes: *“May God grant that I may never forget what I received from the Seminary. This holy house is always present in my prayers and in my Masses. It is through what I received there that I have been able to follow the vocation to which God had called me”*. Working for the universal Church, he gratefully recalled the fruitfulness of their apostolic work that also enabled them to face up to the persecution that they had to suffer in France.

The French Revolution broke out in 1789 and gave birth to several anti-Christian measures. All the privileges that the Church had received over the centuries were revoked. One of their first steps was to promulgate the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy*, placing the Catholic Church under the control of the civil authorities. All the clergy had to take an oath of allegiance to the Nation and no longer to the Church and its hierarchy. Many who refused to do so were assassinated or deported. Fr. Duflos, the confreres of the Seminary and the seminarians now had to live a life of secrecy and concealment. It was a time of great suffering for the community, but they still did what they could to help the poor and outcasts, and kept their solidarity with each other by their shared faith and hope.

**SRL 85:** *“It is the Spirit of Christ who ‘comes to help us in our weakness’ (Romans 8: 26) who leads us along missionary paths and who prays in the depths of our hearts. We are genuine apostles to the extent that, in our daily living, we entrust ourselves entirely to him”*.

**Bible reading:** Mark 13, 9-13. Just as Christ experienced resistance to his message, his disciples will also have to face up to persecution. But they must not be preoccupied with what they will say in their defence: the Holy Spirit will speak through them. How can we be more courageous in announcing the Word of God? How can we, as a family, be stronger in our faith?

**Prayer:** Holy Spirit, you banish fear from our hearts and you assure us that we are sons of God. We beg you to rid us of the spirit of slavery and replace it with the spirit of adopted sons, which makes us cry out *“Abba Father”*. As you did with Fr. Duflos, imprint in our hearts today the stamp of your courage and hope.

**Day 9****PASSING THROUGH FIRE****Fr. Jean-Marie Duflos (1792-1806)**

The history of France now rushes into the disastrous effects of the French Revolution. After the fall of the royal family, it was no time before the freedom of the press and the freedom of conscience were declared, quickly followed by “*the Rights of Man and the Citizen*”. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1789, the National Assembly decreed that henceforth, “all ecclesiastical possessions were now at the disposal of the Nation”. The Congregation of the Holy Spirit now had no houses or dependencies.

All attempts to recover the Seminary proved abortive so the seminary and its country house were now national property. The community had to move out and the seminarians were dispersed and were obliged to wear civilian clothes. The building was acquired by a Mrs. Angar on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1796. She rented out their former rooms to the directors of the seminary, where they remained unknown and ignored throughout the worst years of the revolution. Other rooms were rented to religious sisters living in the vicinity.

Risking their lives, Duflos and a few other confreres carried out a widespread ministry in Paris, visiting the sick and administering the sacraments. They were admired for their dedicated work during that terrible period. They helped many sisters and practising Catholics who were in hiding in the Latin Quarter. This time of persecution produced many brave people who were giving humble and discrete service while waiting for the Good Lord to intervene on their behalf.

In 1797, another savage persecution broke out against priests who had remained faithful to their commitment. Fr. Duflos and three other confreres left the seminary building and moved into a small but safer house in the vicinity. In 1800, the chapel was opened once more to the public. Frs. Boudot, Pichon and Guérin began celebrating Mass there but Fr. Duflos did not have that consolation; he died on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1805 at the age of 79, in the house to which he had withdrawn. The Spiritans continued their work, remaining faithful witnesses to the Risen Christ throughout the persecution.

**Extract from a document addressed to the National Assembly by Fr. Duflos:** “*The Seminary of the Holy Spirit is an establishment which is useful both to the Church and the Fatherland. From the start, its sole purpose was to educate young clerics who were penniless, without charging anything, so that they could work in the most difficult and abandoned situations .... Its only aim was to help a poor Community which was dedicated to caring for poor children ....*”. (F.A LEFEBVRE: ‘A Memorandum on three priests from the Boulogne area, superiors of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit’, p. 25).

**Bible reading:** Luke 24, 36-53. We are called to bring continuity to the plans of God through our witness. In what way does the Holy Spirit want us to live the mission of Christ? How does the Spirit make our communities a living Word for the world of today?

**Prayer:** Spirit of the Lord, come and give us your breath of life and inspire us with the confidence you gave to Fr. Duflos when faced with the distresses of the Revolution. Give us the same courage and determination in announcing your Good News. Give us a heart that can love and recognise you in all our brothers and sisters. Help us to understand your Word and take away all our doubts. Come, Holy Spirit, the breath of God, blow into the sails of our communities and revive the missionary audacity that is within us.