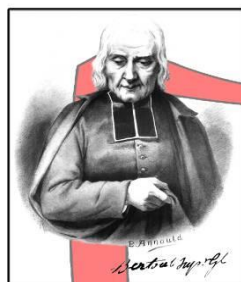




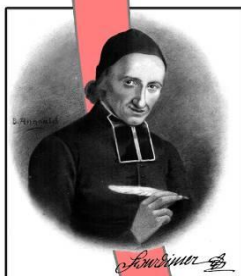
CONGREGAZIONE DELLO SPIRITO SANTO  
CLIVO DI CINNA, 195 - 00136 ROMA, ITALIA

**HOLY SPIRIT, Life in the Spirit**  
02 FEBRUARY 2015 – 15 May 2016  
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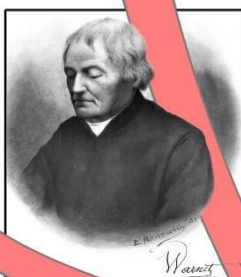
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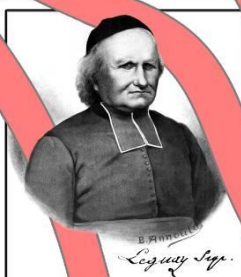
**Jacques-Magdeleine Bertout**  
6° superior gerald  
(1805 - 1832)



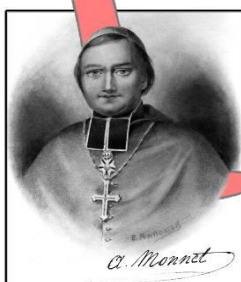
**Amable Fourdinier**  
7° superior gerald  
(1832 - 1845)



**Nicolas Warnet**  
8° superior gerald  
(1845)



**Alexandre Leguay**  
9° superior gerald  
(1845-1848)



**Alexandre Monnet**  
10° superior gerald  
(1848)

**Day One: "To live by Faith":****(James Magdalen Bertout: 1753 - 1832) 6th Superior General (1805 - 1832)**

Father James Magdalen Bertout was born on 3rd May 1753 in Northern France. He entered the diocesan seminary and started Philosophy in October 1773. This period of his life was for him one of discernment concerning his deep desire to enter the foreign missions. His Bishop, Pressy, to whom he confided his wishes, advised him to first of all try the colonial missions. So he was ordained priest and entered the Seminary of the Holy Spirit in July 1777.

Bertout then set out on his first missionary journey, for French Guiana, together with Fr. Deglicourt. He never arrived. Soon after leaving Le Havre, they were shipwrecked off the coast of Africa. They managed to touch land in their frail lifeboat, but were captured by the Mauretians. They suffered much hardship in the two months of their captivity. They were treated as slaves, and suffered from the intense heat, dysentery and a lack of sufficient water. This crucifying experience finally came to an end when the governor of an English fort in Senegal paid a ransom for their release. Before finally getting back to France they threw themselves into pastoral ministry, baptising up to 200 people, and celebrating marriages and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Back in France, Bertout fell ill and had to give up the idea of being a colonial missionary. But he was sent as a professor of theology to the Seminary of the Holy Spirit in Paris and also to the Diocesan Seminary of Meaux. This was the time of revolution in France, and relations became strained between the Church and the revolutionary regime, who wished to control the Church, specifically by means of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Father Bertout saw the Spiritan Seminary subject to the same restrictions as other seminaries in France, including the dispersal of students and teachers. In August 1792, like so many other priests refusing to take the civil oath, he found himself a refugee in England

He did not lie down under his trials. He learned a new language and studied the culture of his new homeland. Fourteen instructions written in his own hand attest to his apostolic zeal which he practised in the County of York. He never forgot the Congregation, while he spent himself in these ten years for the good of souls. In 1801, with the Concordat signed between the Church and the French Government, he felt duty bound to return to France.

On his arrival at the Spiritan Seminary, he was shocked at the state of the place, still in the hands of strangers. Father Duflos, his uncle, and his Superior General, was almost senile. The other directors of Spiritan Seminary were either dead or engaged elsewhere. Although deprived of a house, personnel and financial security, Fr. Bertout did not give way to despair. He saw everything with the eyes of Faith, and trusted once again in Our Saviour as he had always done during his past privations. He was able to find in Jesus the necessary resources for the reestablishment of the Institute.

**Bible Reading: Heb. 6: 13 - 20;**

God is very concerned about the salvation of humanity. This salvation became a reality with the coming of Jesus Christ. How do we feel called to witness to the new hope within us? What kind of maturity must be cultivate with the hope within us?

**Benedict XVI: General Audience 5 December 2012.** "What, then is an Act of Faith? It is man's response..... Faith means welcoming the vision of God concerning what is real, into our own lives. It means that we let God guide us by his Word and Sacraments. In this way we will understand what we must do, what road we must take, and how we must live. At the same time, we understand everything from God's point of view, seeing with his eyes, and this is what makes our life solid, and which allows us to stand upright and not fall by the wayside".

***Evangelii gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel) n.278:*** "Faith also means that we believe in Jesus, and that he really loves us. Also, that he is alive, and capable of intervening in our lives in a mysterious way. That he will not abandon us, and that he can draw good out of evil by his almighty power and infinite creativity. It means that we believe that he marches triumphantly on throughout history with his own, the called, the chosen, the faithful ones".

**Prayer:** In these days of Pentecost, O Holy Spirit, grant us the gift of power so that even amidst the difficulties arising from the world we inhabit, we will obtain like Father Bertout the courage to overcome all trials. O Holy Spirit, open us to the future, give us what comes from the Father and the Son, so that prophets will arise in your Church, and that our dreams of a more fraternal world will not be in vain. Amen.

## **Day Two: "Hope will not deceive us":**

### **(James Magdalen Bertout: 1805 - 1832)**

When the Congregation of the Holy Spirit was re-established in March 1805, Father Bertout, now having become the 6th Superior General, found himself at the head of a work abandoned by its members, deprived of funds, and only having at his disposal a house in the countryside. However, this serious situation does not seem to have discouraged him in the least. He was never without the hope that the work of evangelisation of the French colonies would grow again .

In order for this to happen, it seemed to him that he had to recover the property in the rue des Postes,(now rue Lhomond), and had also to get sufficient funds from the Government for the undertaking of the work once again. With this in view, he got in touch with an important Chaplaincy which had as its aim the spread of the Faith once more both in France and in the colonies. However none of his requests were granted. Far from being discouraged by this rejection, he joined up with two priests who owned a college. 25 out of the 130 students were hoping to be priests. Something at least seemed to be happening that was positive, but everything swung the other way on 26th September 1809 when Napoleon once again suppressed the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Father Bertout continued for some little time teaching at the college, but the "state of war" finished by the closure of that college as well. At the age of 62, after nine years of seemingly fruitless labour, Bertout retired in 1814 for some little time to the MEP (Parish Foreign Missions Society).

On 3rd February 1816, a Royal Edict of Louis XVIII re-established the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Still, Father Bertout could not obtain the house in the rue des Postes, now occupied by a teachers' training college. But, at the expense of the Ministry of the Interior, he was able to rent a house and re-open a seminary . In 1819, there were 15 students, and 18 in 1821. In 1822, the teachers' training college was closed, and this allowed him to enter once again the house on the rue des Postes. He had Father Boudot, the only other Spiritan alive, as his companion. They both managed to employ six professors to teach the 43 seminarians. Now things were really beginning to happen. In August 1823, the Government agreed to help the Congregation to the tune of 50,000 francs per year, and authorised it to create a Junior Seminary as well. In addition, this occasion favoured the recognition in February 1824, of the Rules and Constitutions of the Congregation by Propaganda Fide in Rome. The Congregation of the Holy Spirit at that moment ceased to be a diocesan institute and achieved Pontifical Status, being now directly dependent on the Holy See.

### **Bible Reading: Rom. 4: 17 - 20;**

To have the Faith, and to give one's life totally to God, invites us to hope against hope. What do we need to do in order to make this hope take root in our pastoral activities? How do we make the Faith in our communities more alive?

### ***Evangelii gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel) no.276:***

"The Resurrection is not just something which happened in the past. It has a life-force which has penetrated the world. There where everything seems to be dead, or totally mixed up, the Resurrection appears again. It is a force without equal..... Each day, in the world, beauty is born again, a beauty which revives, transformed by the dramas of history. Resurrection values tend always to reappear, even if under different forms, and in actual fact, humanity is often born again in

situations which seem to be at the time irreversible. This shows the powerful force of the Resurrection, and each evangelizer is an instrument and a witness of this dynamism."

**Prayer:**

O Holy Spirit, you are the one who initiates and supports the Christian Vocation. Reawaken in every Catholic the ardent call to serve the Gospel. As you did in the past for Father Bertout, grant that at this Pentecost time our hope may be re-enchanted, and that we feel once again the breath of your Love. Make the calls of the Church for everyone to live with God's Life, reach to the ends of the earth. Amen.

### Day Three: "The Love which will not pass away"

#### (James Magdalen Bertout: 1805 - 1832)

In 1830, Father Bertout was 77 years old. He was to die only two years later. But in July 1830, a revolution once more took place. Times were very unstable, and Holy Spirit Seminary was pillaged by the insurrectionists. This led to the dispersal of the members, and the cutting off of Government funds. The Seminary re-opened in 1831, but from its own moneys the Congregation could only accept a small number of aspirants.

Following an outbreak of cholera in 1832, the house in the rue des Postes was requisitioned. The occupation was only to be temporary, but the Government Ministry concerned had the intention of holding on to the property. Father Bertout became very angry, and his health began to suffer. He was struck down with gout, and the attacks were long standing and painful. But the pious old man showed at this time an unalterable love and calm. Always thinking of the Faith, he scarcely mentioned his trouble. There was no sign of moaning or impatience. Keeping his spiritual outlook, he received the Last Sacraments with great piety, and died during the night of 9th - 10th December 1832.

To those who knew him, Father Bertout was a man of straight-forward heart, and pure zeal, who had put in hand everything necessary for the revival of the work to which he had consecrated his life. Wishing above all to be able to send workers into the Lord's vineyard, he had, in spite of so many difficulties, managed to send 97 priests to the colonies between 1817 and 1832. By the time of his death, three quarters of all priests working in the colonies had either been trained or sent by the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Apostolic Letter of Pope Francis to all Consecrated People - 2 December 2014**

*"This Year of Consecrated Life, also calls us to **live the present with passion**. Grateful remembrance of the past leads us, as we listen attentively to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church today, to implement ever more fully the essential aspects of our consecrated life. From the beginnings of monasticism to the "new communities" of our own time, every form of consecrated life has been born of the Spirit's call to follow Jesus as the Gospel teaches (cf. *Perfectae caritatis*, 2). For the various founders and foundresses, the Gospel was the absolute rule, whereas every other rule was meant merely to be an expression of the Gospel and a means of living the Gospel to the full. For them, the ideal was Christ; they sought to be interiorly united to him and thus to be able to say with Saint Paul, "For me to live is Christ"(Phil.1.21). Their vows were intended as a concrete expression of this passionate love.*

*The question we have to ask ourselves during this Year is if and how we too are open to being challenged by the Gospel; whether the Gospel is truly the "manual" for our daily living and the decisions we are called to make. The Gospel is demanding; it demands to be lived radically and sincerely. It is not enough to read it (even though the reading and study of Scripture is essential), nor is it enough to meditate on it (which we do joyfully each day). Jesus asks us to practice it, to put his words into effect in our lives."*

**Bible Reading: Rom.5: 1 - 5;**

We are at peace with God through our Faith in Jesus Christ. This hope of our salvation is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit. What are the sufferings we endure, which demand of us a renewal of our hope? Are our relations with others stamped with the love which is given by the Holy Spirit?

**Prayer:**

O Holy Spirit, instead of sterile lamenting, you inspire us to pray to the sole Lord of the Harvest. Make of us people who awaken and accompany all the Christian vocations which you need for the service of life in the world. Following the example of Father Bertout, may we be able to love and serve our brothers and sisters with an undivided heart. Amen.

## Day Four: "Perseverance in Fidelity"

### (Amable Fourdinier: 1788 - 1845) 7th Superior General (1832 - 1845)

Amable Fourdinier was the nephew of Father Bertout and succeeded him as Superior General on Christmas Day 1832. There were only two Spiritans in the Seminary, namely Fathers Fourdinier and Hardy. No election could be organised without the agreement of the Archbishop of Paris. For the previous 15 years, Fourdinier had been the right hand man of his uncle, in his dealings with the Government and with Propaganda Fide. So it was perfectly natural that he would be chosen as the next Superior General. He well knew the greatness of the task facing him, in particular the problem of recovering the use of Holy Spirit Seminary. He said of himself: "My task was difficult.... I knew I would have to struggle against powerful enemies who wished to take back the house after we had lent it to them, at the time of the cholera outbreak. But I trust in God.... the weaker I am, the more I hope." In 1833, the Army offered another house in exchange for the Seminary, but they had reckoned without the strength of character which Fourdinier possessed. He wrote, "I refused the exchange which they offered and said that they would have to remove me by force". It took another two long years before the Seminary was finally restored to the Congregation. In 1836 the Archbishop of Paris paid tribute to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit in these words: "Thanks to the courage, skill and perseverance of the new Superior, the Seminary is once again standing upright, after so many shocks and difficulties. It is now flourishing, and will cause once again the flowering of the Catholic Faith in our French colonies."

But a house alone is not enough for the formation of missionaries. Father Fourdinier began by strengthening the teaching staff, hoping thereby to have additional students and to be able to give them the proper course of studies. He arranged for the rapid advancement to the diaconate of one of his most brilliant students, Mathurin Gaultier, and without waiting for his ordination as priest, he appointed him Professor of Moral Theology. It was an inspired choice, for Father Gaultier was to show himself one of the ablest critics of Gallicanism and all "the friends of Rome", came regularly to the Seminary to discuss with him. However there was still something which prevented the Seminary from functioning in peace. Since 1830, the State had ceased to subsidise the Seminary, and they had to depend on charity. To assure the future, they needed to be sure of their finances, and only the State could supply what was necessary. Father Fourdinier went to great lengths to reach a happy conclusion in this matter. In 1839 a special annual budget was approved by the Government, allowing for the upkeep of 60 seminarians. Father Fourdinier's constancy in the face of difficulties thus greatly improved the situation of Holy Spirit Seminary.

### ***Evangelii gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel) no. 85***

*"One of the most serious temptations, which results in a loss of fervour and boldness, is the sense of defeat. This turns us into discontented pessimists and we go around with long faces. Nobody can take part in a battle if in advance he sees no possibility of victory. A person with that attitude has already lost half the battle, and his talents melt away. Even if one is sure of his own weaknesses, one must advance boldly, without any thought of defeat, and remember what Our Lord said to Saint Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you because my power shines forth in weakness." ( Cor. 12: 9)"*



**Bible Reading: James 1: 2 - 5, 12**

For Saint James, trials help the Christian to discover the sense and value of his witness and fidelity. Faith is an undertaking which invites us to take seriously the transformations taking place in and around us. Which road of fidelity am I called to march on in greater depth? What examples of self-sufficiency are we invited to set aside in order to give more space in our lives to God's plan for us?

**Prayer:**

Come, Holy Spirit, when trials and tempests engulf us, when a desert wind blows upon us, or evil assails us. Help us when the dryness of doubt attacks us, and when people laugh at us behind our backs. At those times, make my love dig deep into the wells of Faith, and nothing will uproot it. Come, Holy Spirit, help us to put down deep roots in hope, that following the example of Father Fourdinier, we may know how to obtain your love and witness to your kindness. Amen.

## **Day Five: "On a Road of Communion and Holiness"**

### **(Amable Fourdinier: 1832 - 1845)**

Father Fourdinier worked continually for the furnishing of priests to the colonies. At that time of reconstruction concerning the French clergy, recruiting for the colonies was extremely difficult. Those seminarians who re-applied to join Holy Spirit Seminary, were often refused permission by their bishops. Father Fourdinier therefore made an open appeal to the French clergy, but the bishops were determined to hold onto those who wished to heed his call. On the other hand, they were quite happy to see the departure of those who in one way or another were troublesome to them. Only half of the colonial clergy at this time had been through the formation of Holy Spirit Seminary. The other half came directly from their dioceses. Some of them were interested only in money, others were ambitious, or insubordinate, and often caused scandal where they went. Everybody laid the blame for this at the door of the Spiritans, who were actually powerless to stop this situation, since they had no authority over such clergy. This was because the Prefects Apostolic in the colonies were directly dependent on the Government.

Father Fourdinier thought long and hard about this problematic situation. He foresaw only one answer. The clergy must be separated from all other authority apart from himself, and must form one body of men. Speaking of the great problems to be expected with the forthcoming emancipation of the slaves in the French colonies, he said, "Surely it is necessary for such work that there be one sole congregation where all the members support one another and where the new members continue what previous missionaries have started." He elaborated on this plan in 1836, proposing that all new recruits to Spiritan Seminary become members of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. With this in mind, he submitted a project for a religious rule to the colonial clergy who appreciated the practical benefits of obedience, poverty and the common life. Both Propaganda Fide and the French Government were sympathetic to this idea but there was great opposition from the priests in the colonies and from the Prefects Apostolic there. God's time had not yet arrived. Father Fourdinier meanwhile was determined to admit into the Seminary only those who desired to join the Spiritans, and he waited patiently for things to get better. He repeated his project for the re-organization of the colonial clergy in 1840, and again in 1843 when the time seemed right. However, the plan was not put into action because of his death. This vast project would be taken up again by his successor.

### ***Evangelii gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel) no.114:***

*"To be Church, means to be the people of God, following from the great project of love by God the Father. This plan calls us to be the yeast of God in the heart of humanity. It means also to bring the salvation of God into our world, which is often lost since it needs responses which give courage and hope, as well as a new vigour for the march forward. The Church should be the place where people find mercy free of charge, where everybody can feel themselves welcomed, loved, forgiven, and encouraged to live according to the good life of the Gospel."*

### **Bible Reading: Phil. 2:1-6;**

In the Christian community, there is no place for the spirit of competition, or for any self-seeking. It is a place of harmony, which is built on the foundation of mutual humility. How in our community do

we look for ways to give a just and proper place to our brothers and sisters? In what way is the Holy Spirit the principle of communion among us?

**Prayer:**

O Holy Spirit, be our consolation and our support on the rough roads of this world. Lead us to the truth, so that we ourselves become true in love. As you did for Father Fourdinier, bring us joy even when our souls are flooded by doubts. Liberate us from whatever prevents us following your road. Stay with us so that we will be able to find our unity in serving, together, the Body of Christ. Amen.

## Day Six: "Do Everything for the Work of God"

### (Nicholas Warnet: 1795 - 1863). 8th Superior General (1845)

Father Nicholas Warnet is not the best known of our Superiors General because he was only 4 months in office. His health was weak, but he was a man of deep humility, and agreed to accept the post only until a more capable Superior could be found. But this Superior General deserves more recognition than he is generally given. He entered Holy Spirit Seminary in 1819 at the age of 27, having already studied Philosophy and having taught it as well. He was ordained priest in 1823 and Father Bertout appointed him in 1824 as a curate in Saint Denis, Bourbon (now Reunion). He was asked to teach religious instruction at the Royal College of Saint Denis. There he met a student to whom he remained attached for the rest of his life, and who played a pivotal role in the relations between the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and the Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary. He was the future Father Frederick Le Vasseur. In 1829 Father Warnet was forced by ill health to return to France, where he strongly recommended Le Vasseur to Fathers Bertout and Fourdinier. "For me, he is like an only son" he said of Frederick. He helped the young man financially, and regularly wrote to him.

Father Warnet spent some time ministering in different dioceses in France, and then in 1834 he requested to join the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. He was a very zealous director, and professor, and knew how to collaborate effectively with Father Fourdinier. He helped him to draft the *Project of a Rule of Life for the Priests of the Holy Spirit exercising the Sacred Ministry in the French Colonies*. Father Warnet assisted in the interview in 1840 between Father Le Vasseur and Father Fourdinier, but was disappointed at the result. Thanks to his young protégé, he met Father Libermann to whom he became immediately attached. In his brief spell as Superior General, he allowed three of Libermann's men to sail to Reunion.

He was very favourable disposed to the projected fusion between the Spiritans and the Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary, but could not confirm it since he was only interim Superior General. In 1848 he wrote to Frederick Le Vasseur, "I am sending you these few lines to renew my friendship with you, and to express the joy I feel at the projected fusion between our institutes now more or less complete". After the fusion he even became the second assistant of Libermann to whom he always felt devoted.

In 1850, the persecutions he suffered from Father Hardy made him ill, and he was forced on health grounds to leave his beloved Seminary. He became chaplain to a respectable family in Brittany until 1858, then he retired to Notre Dame de Langonnet, where he spent his time in prayer, directing priests' retreats, as well as retreats for the junior scholastics and the brothers. He also spent much time in study. In 1863 his health deteriorated seriously, and he left for Saint Ilan. There the scholastics took turn in looking after him, and wrote down the last actions and gestures of this their father whose life was so greatly marked by poverty, humility and gentleness. He really loved those young men and a few days before he died he remarked to one of them: "Oh, if only I had the strength to be able to go back to Langonnet before the winter comes. I could die there without any regrets, among my beloved scholastics and brothers."

**"Rejoice!" - Circular Letter of Pope Francis to Consecrated Religious Men and Women:**

*"In our world dominated by mistrust, discouragement and depression, and in a culture in which men and women allow themselves to be harmed by fragility, weakness, individualism and personal concerns, we are asked to introduce confidence in the possibility of real happiness, and a possible hope, which does not rely merely on our talents, qualities or knowledge, but actually on God. Everybody can meet God; all that is required is to seek him with a sincere heart.*

*The men and women of our day are waiting for words of consolation, the proximity of pardon, and true joy. We are called to bring to all people the embrace of God, who leans over us with the tenderness of a mother. We are consecrated in order to be the sign of a fulfilled humanity, to be facilitators and not controllers of grace, bending over humanity in a gesture of consolation."*

**Bible Reading: Jn. 3: 25 - 30;**

John the Baptist did not try to be a rival to Jesus. Instead, he constantly sent his disciples to meet him. It is Christ alone who gives us true life in the Spirit and who sets us free from our idols.

*How do we react when faced with the challenge of Love? Do we really believe in love for God and our neighbours? Do we allow ourselves to be affected by their troubles, or do we close in on ourselves, in our communities, which become merely comfort zones? (Pope Francis)*

**Prayer of Father Warnet:**

"Holy Mary, you are my Mother and Queen. Humbly prostrate at your feet, I beg for your assistance. Help me, your little servant, to dedicate, consecrate and devote myself to the Holy Spirit, your Heavenly Spouse. In his honour, despite my feebleness, I wish to undertake today a very important engagement. Good Mother, hear my prayer. All-powerful Spirit, listen to my good Mother and through her intercession, deign to enlighten me with your light, and embrace my heart with the fire of your love. In this house which is consecrated to you, may I always do what pleases you, what redounds to your glory, to my sanctification, and to the edification of my brothers." Amen.  
*(This prayer to be recited daily in the Seminary of the Holy Spirit, Paris, 1845).*

## **Day Seven: "God always wishes the Good for those who love Him"**

### **(Alexander Leguay: 1794 - 1865) 9th Superior General (1845 - 1848)**

Alexander Leguay was ordained priest in 1820, and was passionate for the evangelization of the popular masses. He asked to be part of the Society for the Mission in France, founded in 1817. Soon after he fell sick, and became chaplain in a hospital and then a parish priest. He was completely bowled over by the revolution of 1830, and became a missionary to the city of Paris, where he helped to organize and minister to congregations of sisters for the next eleven years. For the last four years of this work he was given accommodation in Holy Spirit Seminary, and got to know the Spiritans very well. In 1842, he was appointed as Vicar General to the diocese of Perpignan in the south of France.

After the resignation of Father Warnet, the four priests still remaining at Holy Spirit Seminary saw in Alexander Leguay the man chosen by Providence to restore the Congregation out of its situation of decay. They elected him as 9th Superior General on 29th April 1845.

Alexander Leguay set to work immediately, wishing to construct a congregation entirely devoted to the missions. All new candidates from then on had to make a novitiate before entering the Congregation. He planned to have a college entirely given over to formation for the needs of the missions, and it was to include sisters and brothers. He did not live to see these ideas coming to fruition.

In June 1845, he sent to Rome a seven point programme for the re-organization of the colonial clergy. The Holy See asked him to be more precise concerning some of his ideas. In a second missive he called on the missionaries in the colonies either to join as full members of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit or at least to become official associate members. A fund was to be set up to help the colonial clergy on their retirement. He saw himself as the spiritual father of all those missionaries.

In the two following years, he used his time to give a positive image to the Seminary, by travelling all through France speaking of the missionary vocation. The Apostolic Nuncio said of him, "He is a man full of holy zeal for the salvation of souls in the missions". Even Libermann was to say, "It now seems that the Seminary of the Holy Spirit is working much better than before."

### ***Evangelii gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel) no.275;***

*"Some persons do not give themselves to the missions, because they believe that nothing can be changed, and therefore it is a waste of time to make any efforts..... With this mentality it becomes impossible to be a missionary ..... If we think that things cannot be changed, let us never forget that Jesus Christ conquered sin and death and that he is all-powerful. Jesus Christ is truly alive. In other words we can say with Saint Paul, "If Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain"(1 Cor.15:14;). The Gospel tells us that the first disciples went forth preaching the Word, "the Lord acting with them and confirming what they said"(Mk. 16: 20;). This is still happening in our days. He invites us to get to know him, and to live with him. The Risen and Glorified Christ is the profound source of our hope, and his help will not be lacking for the accomplishment of the mission confided to us."*

**Bible Reading: 1 Cor. 12: 4 - 13;**

The diversity of the Gifts of the Spirit is for one service and for one body. Do I recognise the gifts and talents present in my neighbour? Do I recognise them without falling into jealousy? Do I see the gifts in others as an enrichment or as a threat?

**Prayer:**

O Holy Spirit, Spirit of the Apostles, Spirit of the Church, give force and constancy to the prayer which we make in the name of the whole world. Give your vigour to our apostolate, you who wish us to reach out to every man and every nation. Following the example of Father Leguay, may there be nothing petty about us. May we show promptitude in service, authenticity in seeking your Kingdom, and the sacrifice of ourselves in a true love of our neighbour. Amen.

## **Day Eight: "We are only useless Servants"**

### **(Alexander Leguay: 1845-1848)**

Since 1842 there had been a more and more serious demand for democracy throughout France. The right to vote, and the abolition of slavery had all been written down, but had failed to see the light of day. It was only with the abdication of King Louis Philippe on 24th February 1848 that the Republic was proclaimed and a new page of history was turned over. But this was also a time of trouble between the Vatican and France. The Spiritans suffered because of all these tensions.

Immediately after the February Revolution, the Minister in charge of the colonies, Victor Schoelcher, decreed the abolition of slavery in the different French colonies. Although this situation was generally accepted by the universal Church, French Catholics were rather less impressed. They thought that the change should be brought in gradually, in order to avoid unrest in the colonies. Father Leguay also held to this position, and let it be made known over and over. Unfortunately everyone who held these views were deemed disqualified by the Government. Including Leguay.

The Prefects Apostolic who had been promoted by Leguay were immediately called back to France by the Government, and other missionaries whom he had recalled for various misdemeanours were re-instated by the Government. The Government and the Spiritans were totally at loggerheads. In order to avoid himself being an obstacle to the administration of the missions, Leguay resigned as Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, which, on his departure, was composed of 60 novices, 13 full members, and 30 associate members.

Soon afterwards, Leguay left the Seminary and returned to his home diocese of Bayeux where he died at the age of 71. The new Rule of Life which he had submitted to Rome was approved on 11th March 1848, by which time he had already ceased to be the head of the Spiritan Congregation.

### ***Evangelii gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel) no.180:***

*"Reading the Scriptures, it appears moreover quite clearly that the proposition of the Gospel does not consist only in having a personal relationship with God. And our loving response must not be understood in any way as meaning a simple sum of little personal gestures in favour of a particular individual in a situation of need. This could be called a la carte charity, a collection of actions with no other reason than to set our consciences at rest. The proposition I am talking about is the Kingdom of God (Lk. 4:43;). It is all about loving God who reigns in and over the world. Only according to the measure in which he succeeds to reign among us, can social life be a space of fraternity, justice, peace, and of dignity for all people. We must be very much aware that the Christian experience tends to bring about social consequences. Let us seek his Kingdom." "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and its justice, and all the rest will be given to you in addition" (Mt.6:33;). Jesus' project was to install the Kingdom of his Father. He demanded of his disciples, "Proclaim that the Kingdom of Heaven is near at hand"(Mt. 10:7;).*

### **Bible Reading: Acts of the Apostles 16: 5 - 10:**

Once again Luke places mission under the sign of the Spirit of God. For Luke, it is evident that from the beginning, everything is in God's hands. Luke speaks of the Spirit as the principal actor in the announcing of the Word. The Spirit participates, and anticipates very often the action of men in



order to make known the Word of Jesus. How do we follow both personally and in community the promptings of the Holy Spirit?

**Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, take far from us all seeking to appear special, and teach us how to reach true humility, true fear of God, and generous courage. Following the example of Father Leguay, may no earthly attachment prevent us from bringing honour to our vocation. May no personal interest, because of laxity on our part, infringe the demands of justice. May no calculation on our side lessen the immensity of charity, because of the narrowness of our petty egoisms. Give us your Spirit so that we may serve your Church. Amen.

## **Day Nine: "A Liberating Love"**

### **(Father Alexander Hippolytus Xavier Monnet: 1812 - 1849) 10th Superior General (1848)**

Alexander H.X. Monnet, tenth Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, was born on 4th January 1812, near Lille, in Northern France. He was ordained priest at the age of 25, and immediately made known his desire to work on the missions. His bishop refused, instead appointing him curate of a parish in which the parish priest was sick and infirm. However, his wish was to be realised sometime later on the recovery of the parish priest. He left for Bourbon (Reunion) on 9th June 1840 together with his brother Louis, and he was appointed to Riviere des Pluies. His principal apostolate was to prepare the Black slaves for their liberation. To achieve that, he constantly spoke of the infinite goodness of God towards them, that God was always a Father near to those in misery and therefore very close to them. According to Monnet, God made absolutely no difference between people. In addition, he told them that Jesus, Son of the Father, was born in ordinary circumstances, just like them. He had been sent to take away the sins of people. He was misunderstood, he was unjustly put to death on a cross by men. Through these words of Monnet, the slaves encountered a new way of approaching God, and they found in this white missionary a friend and brother, because he treated them as equal to any white man or woman.

During visits made in France, Father Monnet got to know Francis Libermann and also Alexander Leguay. Following from this, he became a member of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit on 2nd June 1847. He was sent back to Bourbon as vice-Prefect Apostolic. On reaching Bourbon, he came under attack from the slave owners, who accused him of being an accomplice in the freeing of the slaves. He had to go into hiding, and fled in a hurry back to France.

When he arrived back in France, he found the Congregation of the Holy Spirit on the point of disappearing. Father Leguay had resigned. Father Monnet was elected to replace him and became Superior General on 2nd March 1848. His acceptance of office saved the Congregation. Almost immediately, he began negotiations for union between the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and the Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary. He was in complete agreement with Father Libermann, and after preliminary discussions, the two institutes were united on 26th September 1848. Father Libermann became the new Superior General. Soon afterwards Father Monnet was named Vicar Apostolic of Madagascar. After his episcopal ordination, he boarded ship for his new mission land. But he had scarcely arrived, when he died in December 1849 at Nossi Be, near Madagascar. We can sum up his missionary life by focussing on two important events, namely, the emancipation of the slaves and the fusion of the two Congregations.

### **Spiritual Rule of Life (SRL 14)**

We count the following as constitutive parts of our mission of evangelisation:

- the "integral liberation" of people,
- action for justice and peace,
- participation in development.

It follows that we must make ourselves "the advocates, the supporters and defenders of the weak and the little ones, against all who oppress them" (Rule of 1849; ND X, 517)

**Bible Reading: 2 Cor. 3: 13 - 18;**

The Spirit of the Lord invites us to live in a new alliance, following a new law written in our hearts by the finger of God in order to make of us promoters of his Life. From which forms of slavery does the Lord wish to free us? To which kind of vigilance does the Lord invite our community so that we may be witnesses of his life and of his freedom?

**Prayer:**

O Holy Spirit, you are present to us. You come to breathe life into our existence and make of our life a dance of joy. Holy Spirit, you who are everywhere, come down on us to make us listen to your voice. Following the example of Father Monnet, may we by your grace put our lives at the service of the liberation of our brothers and sisters who share in our common humanity. Where there is the Spirit of God, there is liberty. Where there is the Spirit of God, there is truth. Help us to be completely credible witnesses of the abundance of the Father's love and of his plan of salvation wherever we find ourselves. Amen.