

Pierre Goursat

Community weekend

25th January 1981

Burning with love

During this Community weekend, Pierre Goursat is probably addressing the novices and committed members of the Community. His teaching particularly touched people's spirits¹.

Today is an historic day.

We will look at the Cross, face to face. Until now, this has scared us a bit, we've reassured ourselves, we take a bit of distance. But now we're members, because we're novices and committed members. The Lord is guiding us and is saying to us: "Here we go! In the end, I'm asking you to choose if you agree to choose the cross. If you want to see me, you must go through the cross. You won't be alone, I will be with you, the Spirit will be over you, and Mary will be close to you; but abandon yourself to merciful Love."

And Therese of the Child Jesus said this to us: abandoning yourselves to merciful Love, is quite different to abandoning yourselves to divine Justice. Offering yourselves as a victim to divine Justice is terrifying, when we can truly in all confidence abandon ourselves to this merciful Love. On another point, we can ask the Lord to make us burn with love for the conversion of our brothers². We have to ask the Lord, every day of our life, from now on, to give us this burning fire for the conversion of sinners. And it's clear that, in his agony, Jesus' greatest suffering, is not all the [physical] suffering he could [endure], which must have been terrible however, it is above all in saying to himself: "Will my sacrifice be useless for a certain number who will refuse to accept Love?" And if they really refuse Love, we can't do anything, we are completely stopped, because they refuse it.

So, it's clear that people, feeling how much, through their martyrdom, [they] can save souls, become supernaturally joyful, because it's given by God, through charity. So, you'll say to me: "Yes, but we're not there yet!" Well, we're not there because we haven't asked the Lord. So, I'll tell you straight away what's going to happen: it's this, I will speak for a little bit, and then we'll go and pray³ for each other, for us to accept, in trust and abandonment this cross which the Lord will give us; we don't know what it's going to be like, but we ask the Lord to make us burn with love for our brothers the sinners. You know that St Dominic spent his nights saying: "But Lord, what will become of sinners?" He pleaded constantly. On this point, by the way, this facilitates prayer a lot, because instead of falling asleep or staying in a dry patch, when you see that people are suffering, you're no longer in a dry patch. You say: "Lord, Lord, have mercy, have mercy, I ask you to help me to suffer for them. My small sacrifices, take them in your love, transform them by your strength, to convert sinners."

So, the Lord has given us great graces. We really have to realise that they are much bigger even when we don't believe it. We really have to realise that, because [otherwise], well, we are "wasters", because we have extraordinary graces and we don't even recognise them. And if we recognise them, we must understand that the Lord gives them to us to⁴ transform us.

1 The recording being of very bad quality, this teaching has been rebuilt and completed using notes taken by Marie-Claire Vinet.

2 Pierre adds here an allusion (inaudible) to possible martyrdom.

3 Pierre emphasises this word.

4 Pierre emphasises again this word.

And if pagans received half the graces that we receive, they would flagellate themselves, they would transform so as to try and save the others. And on judgement day, they'll say to us: "But how? You received these graces? And you didn't distribute them, you kept them for yourself? And what have you done with all that?" So truly, we say to ourselves: "But Lord, have mercy on us, truly, we are weak, but burn us with your love!"

This is why I am telling you today that the Holy Spirit is "a devouring fire", but at the same time, peace and gentleness. And this gentleness comes into us, gives us a peaceful strength of abandonment to this love; that we may burn with love for the Father and the Son, that we may burn for sinners. And this is a supernatural love, a love which is given to us. That's why we must pray, that it may be given to us. And if two or three of us pray together, it is said that the Lord is amongst us; when we are two hundred or three hundred, at which point the Lord will again be amongst us, he will help us because that's what he asks of us⁵! And you know well that the only prayer which is sure to be answered, is the prayer of asking for the Holy Spirit, of asking for this merciful Love, this strength in us.

So, you see, all of this, it's important. But you'll tell me: "We'll make a straw fire: we'll pray, then we'll go back to our little affairs, professional or familial, we'll have little trials and then, we'll go back to the dreariness of every day." Well, this dreariness of every day can be transformed through Love of the Lord. Therese of the Child Jesus was sent to us especially for that. She said: "Instead of extasy, I prefer the mediocrity of every day." And the mediocrity in a Carmel where it's cold, where it's ugly and where there are little sisters who are sometimes more, sometimes less, successful, it isn't much fun, you know! Especially when we get a handkerchief of dirty water⁶ – they didn't have bubble baths yet – and in the end, [getting splashed] with dirty water, she said: "Thank you Lord, too many blessings! Thank you, Lord." (*Laughter*) She was transformed entirely into love, that's what's magnificent. Well, we must transform everything, in our family life – it's the life of Nazareth – [in] the office life, in the metro, everywhere. So, if we are to do this, it's a question of habit: these small sacrifices which we'll [do] engender a presence of the Lord in us; we thank the Lord for [everything] and little by little we manage to be in continuous prayer. It's a concrete prayer, it's no longer a prayer made up of feelings, impressions, sensations or self-centeredness and all those things! It's simply love. And we'll burn more and more. It'll be fantastic, you know, it'll get communicated! Thank you, Lord!

Whispered praise

For this to happen, it's important to meet together in little teams of a human size, where we can see each other, we ask ourselves: "How has it been this week? During these 15 days? What have you done in your family? Have you prayed? Have you made some small sacrifices?" You see, we encourage one another to wake up, to not fall asleep. And this is what will help us. Because if we see one another once a month, once every two months, [we can't help each other as much]. Whereas here, we [see one another] regularly. And the more we are, the more we can be in little teams of four or five, who feel responsible; at this point, we are sentinels: these are the "sous-off"⁷. An army holds the cup with the "sous-off" and then the little lieutenants: [it's them who] set the fires in general (*laughter*). You see, those who stay in the field, they say: "No, we won't pass." [We should reply]: "No, no, we are more stubborn than you." [If we let ourselves get stopped by an obstacle] we won't advance. You know that the best defence, is the offense. Not to [use] military language – others have employed it before us, but anyway that's nothing – but really love the Lord and burn with love for him. Amen!

Pierre Goursat
and his brothers and sisters

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5 To be together to pray.

6 Allusion to an episode in the life of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, which she recounts in her «Autobiographical manuscripts»: when she was doing community laundry, her neighbour splashed dirty water in her face when lifting up the handkerchiefs; and Therese ended up seeing it as a source of blessings.

7 The under-officers