

Pierre Goursat

Second session at Paray-le-Monial

23rd July 1975

Exhortation on the Holy Spirit

Fr. Albert-Marie from Monléon introduced this talk given by Pierre Goursat with these words: “Pray a moment for Pierre who will talk to us of this spirit of Pentecost which he is so passionate about. Pray whilst he is speaking that we may be truly touched and filled with the Spirit so as to announce the name of Jesus.”

I would say, in all modesty, as St. Paul does, it was asked of me, the one “untimely born”¹, to speak of the Spirit of the Lord. So, Lord please speak, because my vocal cords don’t work anymore.

So, you see, you have to pray then, pray without ceasing, you know this well, everything is in the doing. Secondly, you must love one another, it’s easy to say, it’s not so easy to do.

And thirdly, you must announce the Lord because we have received a spirit of Pentecost, a spirit of power and audacity. You really must believe this and pray for one another that you have it. Because if we stay nice and warm in our communities, we’ll rot in our communities².

[This is what happened to one of our] prayer groups – Out of charity I won’t say which one, because I have an immense charity! (*laughs*) But this group, which was one of the first³, dried up like the fig tree because the Lord was saying non-stop in prophecies: “Go, announce my Name, go out to the squares.” And everyone said: “Yes but, it’s a symbol.” The fact is, we had a terrible case of the jitters. So, I remember that the first time at Vézelay, everyone gave reasons [to not go evangelising]: “I’m going to look after my grandmother, I’m going to look after my sister-in-law, I’m going to look after my little dog...” (*laughter*). And then the following day [someone] said: “But I’ve got the jitters!” So, everyone said: “Us too!” (*laughter, applause*). And they all went out to the square and it worked very well because it was Jesus speaking and people were waiting precisely for Jesus to speak.

So, here’s our current problem. It’s that, you see these students at Duquesne⁴, they had prayed so hard for the Pentecost (asked for by John XXIII) to come, saying it was the sole certitude we [had] in prayer: that if we prayed to receive the Spirit, we were sure to receive it. They prayed for days and weeks, they fasted for [days], and the Pentecost landed on their noses, on their heads, and it was extraordinary. So, it spread everywhere. But in order for it to continue spreading, we must announce it, as St Paul says: “Woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel⁵!”

So, we [must] go onto the streets but we know well that in all the small countries⁶ it doesn’t happen like this. It doesn’t happen like this not because the ladies in green hats⁷ don’t go evangelising in the streets, that’s very clear! But then there aren’t just all the little countries. There are middle-sized towns, the big towns. And then, in the really small countries, you know the butcher, you know the baker and also all the little problems which occur because everyone knows everyone. Only, we don’t know Jesus, nor the Holy Spirit. So, when we’ve [received the Holy Spirit], well we say: “I have some good news to announce, I’ve got some good news”-

1 cf. 1 Cor. 15:8.

2 Pierre often urged the prayer groups to evangelise so as not to turn in closed circles.

3 It concerns the prayer group at *l’Assomption* in Paris, as Pierre explicitly states elsewhere: he often cited this example.

4 A group of Christians from United States from the University of Duquesne in Pittsburgh decided to spend a weekend in prayer in 1967 asking for the coming of the Holy Spirit. They received an “outpouring of the Holy Spirit” which would profoundly renew them. Then other groups had the same experience, like at the University of Notre-Dame, in South Bend. These were the origins of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (cf. Patti Mansfield-Gallagher, *Comme une nouvelle Pentecôte*, Éditions de l’Emmanuel 1997).

5 1 Cor. 9:16.

6 Villages

7 Allusion to a novel featuring Ladies from the French middle class.

“Ah, you’ve won the national lottery?” (*laughter*) – “I’ve discovered the Holy Spirit!”

And then there are the really small groups too. We say: “You know, it’s annoying because Mrs. So-and-so, and another person, [what will they think?]” We all know each other, and we are respectable, so we don’t dare to speak together. So, the simplest thing for us, is to go along the hedges⁸ – because you have them in the countryside, no? – and then find miserable individuals and then you speak to them about Jesus. And then, they say:

“But Jesus is magnificent, ok, I’ll come.” Well, you’ll have a group of homeless people, that’ll do very well; and then the well-to-do will come as well because they’ll be converted by the homeless (*applause*).

So, the parish will change, it’ll take on another character, it’ll be a bit livelier, there’ll be fewer ‘stoup frogs’⁹, even though nowadays there aren’t many left because there’s no more holy water, they’re all dried up¹⁰. (*laughter*)

So, if I’m telling you all that, it’s because it’s very serious. It’s very serious because actually it’s going quite badly at the moment, as someone said I can’t remember who, we’ve been chloroformed. I believe it was Jean-Michel¹¹ who said that. We’ve been chloroformed, there are toxic fogs which put us to sleep entirely, just as much in the countryside by the way. So, we really have to wake up; and it’s in our little communities we can wake up by praying to the Lord and asking him to send us, to give us this power, to go and really announce his kingdom.

Currently you know, it’s said there are perhaps between 7 or 8% of practicing faithful. Now this, all the priests, theologians, all the religious dispute this 7 or 8% and explain what we must do to transform them. But no one cares at all about the other 80% of baptised Catholics (*applause*). So, you, if you don’t know how to start a prayer group, well, go and have a look at the others. Leave the good parishioners that are left, to the parish priest, and go and see the others, and as you are good and faithful, you’ll bring those ones to him next. But not at all straight away! Transform them, but truly ask that of the Lord. You can do nothing yourselves, it’s the Lord alone who can act.

And you know, at Teen Challenge¹² – you all read *La Croix et le Poignard* – well they went into the ghettos and they prayed all morning before going there. They said: “If we go, if we announce the Word of God, and we haven’t prayed it’s a sermon that we’ll make, whereas if we’ve prayed before, it’s the sword of the Holy Spirit passing by.” It’s the sword of the Holy Spirit passing by and, these individuals are transformed. It’s fantastic.

So, on another point, not only is it up to us to evangelise, but it evangelises us also. We are transformed, filled with the Lord, we find him in our mouth, we find him in our heart and we are transformed. And we come back like the apostles saying: “The demons ran away, we healed everyone, people were transformed.”¹³ Voila, you see. That’s true. So, if you don’t do it, well you’re not on the right road, you’re not obeying, you’re not obeying the Spirit.

Please, my brothers, understand that the Renewal is a charismatic renewal – we didn’t use the word Pentecost because we’re too afraid of the Pentecostals! But truly, it’s a spirit of Pentecost, you must really understand that.

And all your problems will truly be simplified if you are turned towards your brothers. I will give you an example. Currently, there are a lot of healings, a lot of people who, very sad, have become much, much happier, they are all snug here, it’s going really well. But you know what happens when a woman with three children loses her husband: well, she has to look after her children, feed them, work hard for them, and so she manages to stay upright, but another friend who doesn’t have children, who’s more from the *bourgeoisie*, well she has nervous depression after three months. You see, it’s terrible but it’s true. We’ll never cope with what happens if we don’t think about turning towards others and helping others. There it is, that’s what’s essential, but truly, understand this.

Furthermore, if I’m telling you this, it’s because it’s not going very well at all. Don’t believe that the Lord is going to neatly resolve things today. He is preparing us for arduous¹⁴ days to come, as my friend Laurent¹⁵ says. In Rome¹⁶, they came out with some quite good stuff: “A time of darkness is coming over the world – but wait also – but a time of glory is coming for my Church, a time of glory is coming for my people, I will spread over you all the gifts of my Spirit. I will prepare you a spiritual combat, I prepare you for a time of abandonment such as the world has never known. Be ready, my people. Be prepared; when you have nothing more than me, you’ll have everything: land, houses, fields, brothers, sisters, love, joy and peace more than ever. Be ready, my people, I want to prepare you¹⁷.”

Truly, you can only be ready if you pray, only if you ask the Spirit, if you pray without ceasing. So, do all that you are told, but please, do it.

8 Probable allusion to the Gospel (cf. Luke 14:23).

9 Familiar term meaning the women who are very attached to religion and its practices, who spend all their time in Church.

10 Humoristic comment about the « holy water frogs » making an allusion to the decline of « sacramentals » after the liturgical reform in France.

11 Jean-Michel Rousseau (founder of a community at Poitiers) was speaker during this session.

12 Movement of evangelical origins, founded in 1959 by the pastor David Wilkerson (cf. E002 note 26) who evangelised those on the margins of society, drug addicts...

13 Cf. Luke 10:17.

14 Pierre was expecting our country soon to suffer a period of religious persecution.

15 Fr. Laurent Fabre, founder of the Community of Chemin Neuf, was present at this session.

16 During the gathering of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Rome, Pentecost 1975.

17 Quotation of a prophecy given during this gathering at Rome, Pentecost 1975.

Pierre goursat
and his brothers and sisters

www.pierregoursat.com