

Pierre Goursat

First summer session at Paray-le-Monial

16th July 1975

I felt in the Lord that we should come to Paray

After the first gathering of the prayer groups and communities of the French Charismatic Renewal, which was held at Vézelay on July 1974, Pierre Goursat created the initiative of sessions at Paray-le-Monial, which were organised for the first time during the summer of 1975. Two sessions were held: from the 12th – 17th and from the 18th – 23rd July. During the first session, on the 16th July 1975, Pierre Goursat spoke, before the morning teaching, given by paster Thomas Roberts. He explains why he chose Paray-le-Monial as the place of meeting.

I would be happy if, without dividing you, those who were at Vézelay¹ would raise their hands.

Thank you... I think that's about half of you, you see, who were at Vézelay last year.

So, I'll tell you honestly, I felt² in the Lord that we should come to Paray. So, it's formidable when we have an idea because we ask ourselves: "My God, is this an idea coming from me or is it really the Lord?" So naturally, we spoke to our brothers and sisters, we discerned together and there were several confirmations. The idea that I really had, I believe in prayer, was that we came to Vézelay (and Fr. Albert strongly encouraged us to, he himself felt it strongly) like Mary Magdalene came to the feet of the Lord for a conversion. And you know about the graces received there. At Vézelay, it was truly tremendous.

This year I felt the Lord was asking us to come to Paray, to come close to his Heart. Yet, upon opening the Dialogues of Catherine of Sienna who Fr. Marie-Dominique Philippe³ spoke to you about the other day, there is precisely a dialogue where the Lord, the Father, talks to the Son saying the first level is at his feet, and the second is on his Heart. It corresponds exactly to what I had felt, and what we had both felt.

Yet, the Devil always resolves to disfigure, deform, the most magnificent things that God is doing.

In the XVII century, in the French school, we had a very strong era, very solid from a mystic point of view. Then, in the XIX century, everything was ruined and we had made a caricature of God's love, of God's Heart. The Sacred Heart, is not a devotion, it is what's essential in God's love. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son to save it⁴. Yet, that's it, it's really this mystery of love which was revealed, which the Jesuits along with Fr. La Colombière⁵ truly understood in depth and which had been spread around the whole world. And now, we've made a thing that drips with blood, ah it really makes you nauseous.

Yet, if we've come here, we haven't even been able to tell you why we've come, because we were scared that some people wouldn't come because they'd take us for fundamentalists or stragglers, or senile. Yet, it's despicable, it's despicable, it's diabolical that that which is the greatest of God's love we manage to disfigure to such a point. We've come because the Lord has asked us really to come all together to bear witness to his love, and to repair this caricature which has been created.

1 During the summer sessions of 1974.

2 The word « feel », employed a lot at the beginning of the Renewal, means to receive an intuition in prayer which appears to have come from the Holy Spirit.

3 Fr. Marie-Dominique Philippe o.p. had probably given the morning teaching on one of the preceding days.

4 Cf. Jn. 3:16.

5 St Claude La Colombière, French Jesuit who spread the message of the Sacred Heart, received by St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, to whom he was confessor and spiritual director.

So, actually, what is this Renewal and why come here? This Renewal is a Pentecostal renewal. By calling ourselves “Charismatic Renewal”, we perhaps wanted to differentiate ourselves from the Pentecostals who were getting a bit excited. But the true thing, is that it’s a renewal of Pentecost, it’s what John XXIII asked for. You know well that these brothers and sisters from the University of Duquesne in the United States, people committed to answering social questions, Catholic Action, students and professors who are truly living their Christianity, they said: “Because the Lord tells us that the only petition sure to be answered is that of the Holy Spirit, because John XXIII asked for a new Pentecost to come upon the world, we’ll pray until this Pentecost comes.” And it came, to Duquesne, you know under what circumstances⁶, then it spread to Notre-Dame, to the other American universities and to the whole world.

But one thing, which is very serious, is that in our catholic culture, we get everything, we crush everything, because we are scared, out of prudence, we are so scared of the Spirit. And currently, there’s not much excitement – the French aren’t really excitable types – on that level, you know well that we rationalise everything: the worst thing currently, it’s to crush the Spirit, to extinguish the Spirit. And, that all our theologians⁷ are telling us the contrary. They tell us: “But careful, you’ll get hysterical, you’ll end up as sorry individuals”, when in reality the sorry individuals, [are those who] don’t speak about God’s love. It’s terrible that. Today, the only ones doing something, are converts⁸. By the way, the JOC, if at one point it managed to be something – and not just this current thing of syndicalism – it’s thanks to the young people who found the Lord and who spoke about him to those around them. So, we’re disfiguring everything, we’re crushing everything. Péguy says: “Everything begins with the mystical and everything finishes with politics.” And in ‘politicaille’⁹.

So, really what I’m asking of you is, you especially the people of the West, of traditional countries, good Catholics, well, is to wake up; don’t listen to what they’re telling you everywhere, believe in this love, the Lord’s crazy love for us.

So, what is very important is that lots of those amongst us have been touched by, scarred by so many generations of a despicable heresy in Catholicism, called Jansenism. It was strongly condemned; it’s reviving everywhere. It’s still this intellectual pride with which we think we’re going to become heroes, that we’ll be [heroes]. It’s to say that we are sorry individuals and we are so small. And the only person who has given us this antidote¹⁰ is Theresa of the Child Jesus [applause]. So, pastor Boegner who was a saint, an extraordinary man [who worked] for union within the churches, spoke to his protestant friends about Theresa of the Child Jesus. And the others asked him: “But really how are you going to talk about Carmel?” [And he replied]: “It’s not about Carmel, it’s about a soul who gave everything to the Lord.”

You know that Pius XI named her the patron of missions, even though Therese was in her little Carmel [for] nine years. And she appeared everywhere and she helped the missionaries. So really, you know, she said: “I would have wanted all the vocations and in the end I found one single vocation, it was the heart, because when we have the Heart, we have everything.”

Well, that’s what the Lord is asking of us. Yet, we’re still talking about the pierced Heart of Jesus, but I would like you to remember that it’s essentially linked to Pentecost, when Peter goes out in the power of the Spirit, when he starts speaking and he says: “‘Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.’ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart¹¹.” And that’s why we’ve come here, to get this pierced heart, repentant, but not from a simple exterior conversion, because like St John, we’ll lean on the Lord’s Heart and we’ll listen to its secrets of love. We’re here to listen, like the prophecy made to you a few minutes ago. We really must keep silent.

And if certain people see that we’re dancing, that we’re singing, that we’re clapping, know also the number of conversions and profound transformations that have happened since we’ve been here. Those with the red stickers¹², and the priests, can tell you. Some people say to us: “Ah, you know you’ve completely failed, it’s all entirely exterior...” So, leave these prophets of doom behind! I beg you, believe that the Lord is here, so close to us, and come ever closer to him.

6 A group of Christians from the United States, from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, decided in 1967 to spend a weekend in prayer, 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. This was the origin of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (cf. Patti Mansfield-Gallagher, *Comme une nouvelle Pentecôte*, Éditions de l’Emmanuel 1997).

7 As in interview E002 (note 16), Pierre is not criticising theology but theologians who don’t pray enough.

8 Pierre is not only making an allusion here to people who, having discovered the Christian faith after a sudden conversion, asking for baptism as an adult, but also more generally to Christians who, after having had a personal encounter with Christ (following a similar experience to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, such as was being had in the Charismatic Renewal in this period), rediscovered the depth and flavour of their faith, committing to serving the Church and to evangelising, in a more radical way.

9 The term “politicaille” is pejorative and means, in familiar terms, all which is dubious and harmful in politics.

10 Against Jansenism and intellectual pride.

11 Acts 2:36-37.

12 The spiritual welcome team for the sessions wore a red sticker on their badge to be identifiable.

My friends, truly, become really small, really small. The Lord will guide us to the cross... "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom¹³." And he says later: "and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom¹⁴."

So, look at the Cross: a lot of us are afraid. We're all afraid of the Cross, when we see it from the outside. I had a spiritual director in my youth, at the time of my conversion, who would say that to me: "Don't worry about the Cross: as long as you don't desire it, you won't have it. Right now, rest on the Heart of Jesus, love it, learn to be loved, and let yourself be loved." We ask Jesus to make us simple, to become really small and to bear witness for him. He will put such a fire in our hearts to carry his message everywhere, and then, well, we'll see very well what happens next. Perhaps he'll transport us suddenly

into Heaven, or ask us if we accept martyrdom, all that, is of no importance. It's a question of love. Amen.

Pierre Goursat
and his brothers and sisters

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13 Lk. 12:32

14 Perhaps also an allusion to Lk. 22:29.