

Seek humility/Accept our weaknesses.

I will first emphasize how fundamental humility is in Pierre Goursat's spiritual journey, and then I will show that he was deeply moved by the "little way" of the spiritual childhood of Saint Therese of Lisieux.

Pierre Goursat and humility

In 1933 Pierre Goursat went to the Plateau d'Assy to cure his tuberculosis. He was 19 years old and was torn between a strong spiritual call and a desire for human success. One day, he felt strongly the presence of his brother Bernard who had died at the age of 11. Pierre later recalled: "It was as if he had said to me, 'You don't think about me much anymore. That's because you are taken by pride. And he added: "I found myself on my knees at the foot of my bed and when I got up, I was completely transformed"¹ This realization was the origin of Pierre's conversion, which guided the rest of his life. He understood that all his desires, ambitions and projects had to be ordered to God, and the path of humility became his priority.

1) WHAT HUMILITY IS AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

After having clarified what humility is and recalled that it is the Christian virtue par excellence, I will then endeavor to show how Pierre Goursat placed humility at the heart of his life.

The word "humility" comes from the Latin "humilis" which means "small", "low", "servile". Humility situates us in truth towards God, ourselves and others.

First of all, be true to God. Humility allows us to recognize and love God as the One who is the fullness of being and the infinite perfection of good; it gives us to understand that he is the "Holy One", the "All-Other", that he infinitely surpasses us. Humility is therefore the virtue by which God reveals to us who he is, and consequently, who we are, which leads us to lower ourselves before him: "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." (Is 2:11-12).

Humility therefore stems from the acceptance of our condition as creatures and the recognition of our radical dependence on God. We possess nothing that we have not received from Him and we exist only through Him. Humility awakens in us the sense of God's transcendence and makes us grow in familial fear which leads us to adoration: "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honor, and life." (Pr 22:4). It does not only involve our intelligence, but also the adhesion of the heart which expresses itself towards God through gratitude and thanksgiving.

Secondly, humility places us in the truth about ourselves. It shows us what we really are and makes us recognize our limitations, but also our qualities and the gifts we have received. It preserves us from pride, from the illusion that we are "good people" and that we can rise to God by our own efforts. It allows us to progress in a just esteem of ourselves, without devaluing or belittling ourselves.

Finally, humility places us accurately in relation to others. It allows us to see the good that is in them, to consider them at their true value, and makes us capable of admitting their qualities, such as they are, without seeking to compare ourselves to them: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." (Phil 2:2-3). Humility opens us up to others and fosters charity and communion among people: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;"

(Col 3:12-13). We are thus encouraged to imitate the movement of abasement of Jesus, the Son of God, who took on our humanity, accepting out of love to be humbled and to give his life for us on the Cross (cf. Phil 2:6-11). Humility invites us to be more modest ourselves and to follow this same movement of self-abasement, not only before God, but also before our brothers and sisters.

All of the saints consider that humility is essential. Here is what some said about it. Saint Gregory the Great presents it as “the teacher and mother of all virtues”. Cassian says: “Humility is the teacher of all the virtues; it is the most solid foundation of the spiritual edifice”. For St. Basil, “the progress of the soul is humility” and St. Augustine affirms: “Our very perfection is humility”. It makes divine action possible in us, as St. Thomas Aquinas states: “Humility makes man docile and open to the demands of grace. He thus becomes submissive in all things to the designs of God, whatever they may be. St. Bernard affirms: “Only humility pleases God”. St. Teresa of Avila adds: “As long as we are on this earth, nothing is more useful to us than humility. The Pastor of Ars expressed its importance for our Christian life in a simple and graphic way: “Humility is to the other virtues what the chain is to the rosary. Remove the chain, and all the beads escape. Take away humility, and all the virtues disappear.

2) HUMILITY IMPLIES THE ACCEPTANCE OF OUR POVERTY: “WE ARE POOR PEOPLE”.

When he was young, Pierre was passionate about history and archaeology, interested in ancient civilizations and his greatest desire was to become a museum director. He then gave up these projects to put the Lord in the first place in his life, he understood that he was small in relation to God, but that his weaknesses were not an obstacle to welcoming the love of God who has a special love for the poor: “He lifts the poor out of their misery” (Ps107/106, 41). This realization “revolutionized” his whole life, which was radically changed: Pierre accepted his weaknesses and limitations (his personal poverty, his lack of physical strength...). He chose to live the way of humility: “And let it be well understood that the essential thing is humility, poverty, awareness of one’s own misery”².

In the Bible, the Lord says: “I am with the contrite and humbled man” (Is 57:15) and “I have set my eyes on the poor and humble” (Is 66:2). Pierre Goursat always sought to humble himself before God and to humble himself before others: “He who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbled himself will be exalted” (Lk 18:9-14). Pierre lived intensely the first of the Beatitudes which sums up all the others: “Blessed are the poor in spirit” (Mt 5:3). After meditating on this verse from the prophet Isaiah, “Fear not, thou worm Jacob,” (Is 41:14), Pierre repeated to his household brothers: “Yes, I am a poor worm, but I am not afraid.” In this way he put into practice the exhortation of St. Paul: “Do not think too highly of yourselves” (Rom 12:3). He considered himself to be “a poor man” and often said to those close to him: “Until you realize that you are a poor man, you have not understood anything”.

During a Fraternity of Jesus retreat, Pierre explained his thoughts: “We are poor people. And the poorer people we are, the more wonderful it is. Because it gives us humility, it humbles us and it is only in humility, as Silouane said, that we receive the Holy Spirit. This is extraordinary, it is really the Holy Spirit. So let us try to have humility.”³

St. Paul writes: “Jesus Christ became poor for your sake, even though he was rich, so that he might enrich you with his poverty” (2 Cor. 8:9). Poverty was not just a spiritual attitude for Pierre; it was translated very concretely in his life. He was disinterested, very detached from material goods, from money. When he was Secretary General of the French Catholic Film Office, he was satisfied with a small salary. His lifestyle, of great simplicity, surprised the visitors who met him in his apartment or later on the barge. He lived very sparingly and owned almost nothing. He was very generous and gave what little he had. A relative who had given him a new, warm sweater was surprised that Pierre was not wearing it; he realized that he had given it to someone who needed it.

3) BECOMING HUMBLE REQUIRES A LONG JOURNEY OF LEARNING

Pierre Goursat was well aware that humility is the fruit of a long apprenticeship and that it would be presumptuous to want to acquire it by oneself, without counting on the action of grace. He emphasized that it involves a long journey of learning: “It [requires] an act of humility, that’s true. It’s a matter of habit. It’s second nature. And then you get used to it. And you do acts of humility. By performing acts of humility, well, little by little, you will get humility.”⁴

If the action of divine grace shone through in Pierre Goursat, especially at the end of his life, it is because he had always fought the temptation of pride. He would beg God in his times of prayer to change him. Pierre, who had a strong personality and was very independent of spirit, knew from experience that to detach oneself from self-love and vanity, to renounce the will to power, requires a permanent process of asceticism. Indeed, it is through all the situations of daily life that we learn to live humility: “To acquire humility, we must do acts of humility,” said Pierre. And to do acts of humility, there are often humiliations. So, our self-esteem takes a good blow, it’s a bit annoying. So, we have to start with very small things!⁵

2 WE first engagements at Chevilly-la-Rue, 18-19 June 1977 (E023).

3 Retreat Fraternité de Jesus, Paray-le-Monial, 31 December 1979 (E043).

4 Retreat Fraternité de Jesus, Paray-le-Monial, 30 December 1977 (E027).

5 Community weekend, 14-15 June 1980 (E046).

Acquiring humility implies that we learn to accept frustrations, failures and contradictions. Pierre gave concrete examples: “[Some monks in the desert complain] that it is very hot, and then while the mice are noisy, ‘they keep us awake’. But [the Fathers say], “Everything is suitable for the humble one. He does not hear the mice. He does not, ever, find it too hot. Everything is fine. He is always happy.”⁶”

Pierre had a strong personality, a particularly developed spirit of independence; the detachment from his own self-love, from vanity, the renunciation of the will to power was not easy for him, as he would testify on several occasions: “[The Lord] continues to love us in spite of our imperfections and even if we have made a joke, well, so much the better, we come to be humbled and then he makes amends much better than if we had not sinned. But it gives us humility. The important thing is to be poor before him, really. And it’s always our self-esteem: we’re not happy when we’ve sinned, but is it mainly because we’ve hurt Jesus’ feelings that we feel sorry? Or is it because our self-esteem says to us: “Darn! I’ve sinned again!” So, in the end, it’s always us that we’re searching for.”⁷”

Pierre also said: “We committed [a sin]. Then self-love gets involved: “How could I, such a good guy, how could I... oh but it’s really terrible”, well there you go. Then one turns back to oneself, to one’s belly button, to one’s little self and that’s it. (...). If each time *If you sin, you have gained humility - humility is the queen of virtues - automatically you win every time*”⁸ *Living in communion with the Heart of Jesus, Pierre said, is the best way to acquire humility: “And truly the way of the Lord is Jesus, meek and humble of heart.”*⁹”

4) HUMILITY IS ACCEPTING TO BE IN THE PLACE THAT GOD WANTS FOR US

Pierre understood that the only way to progress along the path of sanctification was to accept total dependence on the Lord and to let himself be guided by Him, in trust. Taking up a word of St. Teresa of Avila, he often said: “Humility is truth”. The most important thing for Pierre was to do the Will of God: “The essential thing,” he emphasized, “is not to choose our path, but to take the path that the Lord indicates to us... So that is humility. Humility is truth. To be in truth is to take the path that the Lord gives us.”¹⁰ And he added: “The way of the Lord is really Jesus, gentle and humble of heart. It is an extraordinary way. If we are meek and humble of heart, He will pierce our hearts peacefully.”¹¹”

It was in this spirit of humility and obedience to the will of the Lord that, after much hesitation, Pierre accepted the responsibility of the Community. Here is the explanation that Pierre gave later: “After all, the Lord chooses a poor man; he knows what he is doing. (...) Yes, I thought [that since I was poor, it was the Lord who was acting; and that I was such a poor fellow that people would realize that [it was] not me, but that it was the Lord [who was acting]. So, I was very quiet. And that’s why I took the place behind the flock. And the grace of the Lord advanced, more and more.”¹²” This humility of Pierre was particularly evident when, in 1985, he decided to leave his position as Moderator because he had had a heart attack and the Lord had made him understand that he had to “pass the baton” in preparation for the final face-to-face meeting with Him. The last stage of his life began for Pierre, that of total immersion in silence and prayer, which he lived with great self-denial, in a certain solitude.

5) HIS HUMILITY IN GOVERNING: A BROTHER AMONG BROTHERS

The simplicity of Pierre. He acted as a brother among brothers.

A great discretion and self-effacement. Pierre had a natural, or rather “supernatural” authority, but he did not behave like an authoritarian “leader”, like a “guru”, but like a humble “servant”. He sought to listen to his brothers and was willing to change his mind when, after praying, he was convinced that he had been mistaken.

Pierre never wanted to put himself first. During the sessions at Paray-le-Monial or the Renewal gatherings, unlike most of the leaders of the other communities, he did not like to take the podium. Pierre preferred to remain discreetly at the back of the room. At prayer meetings he liked to stand at the entrance to greet people as they came in.

Pierre knew how to recognize his wrongs and ask for forgiveness when he thought he had hurt someone. During a session at Paray-le-Monial, he went up to the podium, and in front of a

He publicly asked for forgiveness from all those he might have hurt by his clumsy attitude or his words.

6 Community weekend, 17 April 1982 (E062).

7 Community weekend, 1 April 1979 (E034).

8 Retreat the « trois semaines », teaching about sexuality, 26 September 1976 (E016).

9 Retreat for the Fraternité de Jesus, 30 December 1977 (E027).

10 Week-end first engagement for the community at Chevilly-Larue, 18-19 June 1977 (E023).

11 Retreat for the Fraternité de Jesus, 30 December 1977 (E027).

12 Community weekend in the Netherlands, December 1988 (E081).

6) MAKE THE CONNECTION WITH HUMILITY.

Pierre had a great natural distinction, and in his youth, he was very attentive to the way he dressed (at that time he was always very chic, even a little “dandy”). Later on, he did not care about his outward appearance. Many people have recounted how, when participating for the first time in a prayer group or a session at Paray-le-Monial, they noticed an old man sitting discreetly in a corner, poorly dressed, always wearing a thick coat and a woolen scarf. They were surprised to learn that this man, whom they had taken for a poor man, a misfit, was in fact the head of Emmanuel! In fact, Pierre Goursat refused to put himself in the spotlight. He did not want to be treated as an important person, even when he became the leader of the Community and had a certain notoriety in the Church: “Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant” (Mk 10:43).

Pierre Goursat was deeply detached from the image he could give to others, from what people would say about him, from what they would think of him. He did not take himself seriously and did not like to be taken seriously. And when he had in front of him people who were a bit stuffy or too preoccupied with their appearance, he tried to lighten the atmosphere by making jokes and funny faces! All his life Pierre practiced humor. He explained that in this word there was both “humility” and “love”. Unlike irony, which magnifies the shortcomings of others and can be hurtful, humor arouses sympathy for others because it expresses a certain distance, even mockery, in relation to events and to oneself.

Pierre Goursat has always shown great interior freedom, not hesitating to put his brothers in awkward situations to help them not to be prisoners of the gaze of others and to grow in the interior freedom that is a fruit of humility. One summer, while on vacation at “Les Genets”, a house of the Community in Aix-en-Provence, Pierre asked a brother to accompany him into town to buy sneakers. When he arrived at the supermarket, claiming to be tired, Pierre got into a shopping cart and let himself be driven through the various departments of merchandise like a child in a stroller in front of the astonished people, while the brother who was pushing him, red with confusion, tried to go unnoticed! Once out of the supermarket, Pierre jumped out of the cart, fresh as a young man, as if nothing had happened. The brother who witnessed this episode understood the importance of being simple in all circumstances and not being afraid of the gaze of others.

Pierre ate little, but because he was lacking in strength, he needed to snack all day, wherever he was. His diet was surprising: mostly yogurt and crackers with Gouda cheese, which he loved, and jam on top. He didn't drive, and on several occasions, I drove him to appointments with bishops. Once, as we were taking the elevator to be received by one of them, Pierre kept nibbling his cheese and tasting his yogurt while we were in the elevator. When the doors opened, we were surprised to arrive directly in the large living room of the bishop who was there to welcome us. Quietly, without seeming to be embarrassed by this situation, Pierre put the gouda and the yogurt back into his coat pockets before extending his hand (a little sticky!) to his host to greet him.

As a young man, Pierre had suffered from speech impediments and he stood out among the “leaders” of the Renewal: he was not a speaker who sought to shine with structured or emphatic speeches. He spoke with simple words; his pronunciation was awkward and his unacademic syntax! When he spoke in public, Pierre did not hesitate to emphasize his shortcomings to show that he was only an instrument in the work that God was doing through him. He saw himself as a servant, as a mere channel of God's grace, taking up Jesus' words: “When you have done all that has been commanded you, say, ‘We are useless servants’” (Lk 17:7-10).

Humility and trust in God: the “little way” of spiritual childhood

I would like to show you how much the spirituality of Pierre Goursat is similar to the spiritual doctrine of the little Thérèse. Pierre Goursat was close to many saints, but he was particularly marked by the “little way” of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, as the many times he spoke of it can attest¹³. To do this, let us first summarize what she experienced.

1) THE STAGES OF THE “LITTLE WAY” OF SAINT THERESE OF LISIEUX

For those of you who are discovering St. Therese of Lisieux, I will first recall the stages of the search that led her to find this “little way.”

-1) She had a great spiritual ambition: As a child, Therese was emotional, sensitive and stubborn, and sometimes threw tantrums when she did not get her way. She was cured of her hypersensitivity on Christmas night in 1886, but she was always stubborn. Her entire spiritual journey began with a desire and was accompanied by great determination: “I have always wanted to be a saint,” she wrote (Manuscript C, 2v°).

-2) She was clear about herself, aware of her limitations: With great realism, she immediately adds: “But alas, I have always found that when I have compared myself to the saints, there is between them and me the difference between a mountain whose summit is lost in the heavens and the dark grain of sand trodden under the feet of passers-by. When she compares herself to great saints like Teresa of Avila, she realizes that holiness is inaccessible to her. She compares herself to the tiny grain of sand that goes unnoticed compared to the mountain peak that majestically dominates the horizon. Realizing that she would never be able to reach her goal, Thérèse of Lisieux could have left it at that and given up her

desires. But her love for the Lord and her tenacious temperament were the strongest; she is convinced that there must be another path to holiness that corresponds to her personal vocation.

-3) She did not get discouraged and continued to seek ways to fulfill her spiritual desires: Thérèse did not give up, she was not discouraged, she understood that her limitations were not an insurmountable obstacle: "Instead of being discouraged, I said to myself: The Good God cannot inspire unattainable desires. And she concludes her reasoning with this hopeful affirmation: "I can therefore, in spite of my smallness, aspire to holiness. But how to get there? Certainly not "by force of arms"!

-4) She abandons herself in complete trust in the arms of God: Thérèse then seeks a small, straight, short way, a "short-cut" to reach heaven (end of 1894/beginning of 1895). But how to do this when one is weak and does not feel capable of competing with the great saints? She realized: "To grow up is impossible. (...) I must bear with myself as I am, with all my imperfections. Having accepted her powerlessness, she mobilized all her capacities to find the means adapted to her smallness.

As a child, Thérèse could not climb the stairs of the large staircase in her family's home in Alençon and would beg her mother to take her in her arms to go upstairs. As she reflected in her convent in Lisieux, Thérèse remembered that when she was 14, she went with her family on a pilgrimage to Rome. In Rome, she had asked Pope Leo XIII for permission to enter the Carmelite convent despite her young age. While passing through Paris, Thérèse, who was a curious young girl, attentive to the novelties of her time, had been fascinated by the escalators and elevators that she had seen for the first time in the "department stores" of the capital. So, the young nun said to herself:

"We are in a century of inventions, now it is no longer necessary to climb the steps of a staircase, among the rich, an elevator replaces it advantageously. And she immediately applied her discovery to her desire to climb "the stairs of holiness". She writes: "I would also like to find an elevator to lift me up to Jesus, because I am too small to climb the rough staircase of perfection".

With determination, Thérèse began to consult the holy books and the Bible to find the solution, and when she came across a passage in Isaiah, chapter 66, she wrote: "I continued my search, and this is what I found: 'As a mother caresses her child, so will I comfort you, and carry you in my bosom, and swing you on my knees'" (cf. Is 66:12-13). But how do you cuddle up to Jesus when you are an adult? Thérèse's answer is simple: "For that, I don't need to grow up; on the contrary, I need to remain small, to become smaller and smaller."

Finally, she arrives at the goal and let's burst her joy: Ah! never words more tender, more melodious came to rejoice my soul, the elevator which must raise me to the sky it is your arms O Jesus! (Ms, 3r°). Thérèse rejoices like Jesus who, bursting with joy under the action of the Holy Spirit, says: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Lk 10, 21-22).

For Thérèse, her poverty and her trust in God are closely related. Her "little way" is based on the paradox that St. Paul emphasized in his writings (in 2 Corinthians 12:9 and Philippians 4:13): the weaker and smaller we are, the more God can unfold his power in us. The acceptance of one's weaknesses, far from being an obstacle, an impediment, can on the contrary become an asset if we hand them over to the Lord in complete trust. This is an essential key to understanding the "little way" of spiritual childhood.

Thérèse explained that the "little way" "consists in a disposition of the heart which makes us humble and small in the arms of God, conscious of our weakness, and confident to the point of boldness in his goodness as Father"¹⁴ (Novissima Verba 3-8-5b). On September 17, 1896, she wrote to Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart: "What pleases [the Good Lord] is to see me love my lowliness and my poverty, it is the blind hope that I have in his mercy" (L7 197). She also says: "The enlightenment on my poverty does me better than the enlightenment on God" (CJ 13-8).

Thérèse of the Child Jesus proposes a path of holiness accessible to all. When Mother Agnes asked her what she wanted to teach souls, Thérèse replied shortly before her death on July 17, 1897: "It is the way of trust and total abandonment."¹⁵

To enter into this process of abandonment, it is important to live fully the "present moment", which for little Thérèse has a unique, irreplaceable value; it is the moment when God reveals himself, when she can love him and her neighbor. In one of her letters, she wrote: "A moment is a treasure" (LT 89). At the end of her life, when she was very ill, Thérèse confided to Mother Agnes, her prioress: "I only suffer one moment at a time: it is because we think of the past and the future that we become discouraged and despair" (Yellow Notebook). Living in the present moment allows us to progress in our union with God and gives a new flavor to everything we do.

14 Edition of Derniers Entretiens published in 1927.

15 cf. Novissima Verba, edition of Derniers Entretiens published in 1927.

2) THE INFLUENCE OF THE “LITTLE WAY” OF SAINT THÉRÈSE ON PIERRE GOURSAT

Pierre had made his own the “little way” of St. Thérèse, whose foundation is humility, and he recommended it to his brothers and sisters in community: “Then, following her, one has a clear path, *which is very simple, saying: “Love the Good Lord as I love him”.* And let us give ourselves to this little way of trust and abandonment.”¹⁶ Pierre gave many teachings on spiritual childhood. He said: “Thérèse of the Child Jesus (...) really came to teach us this way, a very simple way for people as small and weak as we are (...). We are the Lord’s poor, in a very poor age.”¹⁷ Or again: “You know very well that we are rather weak people (...). The Lord has sent us Thérèse of the Child Jesus, who is a prophet for our time...”¹⁸.

Pierre was born 17 years after the death of Thérèse of Lisieux. He was 10 years old when she was canonized on May 17, 1925, and 13 years old when Pius XI, who considered St. Thérèse of Lisieux to be “the star of his pontificate” and “the greatest saint of modern times”, proclaimed her “the principal patroness of the missions of the whole universe on a par with St. Francis Xavier”.

Pierre’s youth corresponds to the period when the spiritual doctrine of the little Thérèse began to be widely known thanks to the very rapid diffusion of The Story of a Soul. At that time, Pierre often visited cousins in Brittany, and he was close to Marie-Hélène, his eldest by three years, who would later become a Benedictine nun. Recalling her youthful memories with Pierre, she wrote in 1991, shortly after his death: “We invited Pierre and his mother to come to our property in Haut Sévigné, 10 km from Rennes. I knew Pierre very well then, and we socialized a lot. One of our great topics of conversation, during our long walks, was Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, about whom we spoke a lot at the time. However, he had not yet made his great conversion.”¹⁹ This was before 1933, before Pierre was 19 years old.

Pierre Goursat had a great admiration for Cardinal Suhard whom he met regularly when he was Archbishop of Paris and who was his spiritual advisor from 1943 to 1949. When he was named Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux in 1928, he wanted to place his episcopate under the protection of St. Thérèse. In 1929, the year in which he undertook the construction of the Basilica of Lisieux, Bishop Suhard dedicated his first pastoral letter to her under the title: Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, model of Christian life and apostolate. He was at the origin of two great missionary initiatives that he wanted to place under the patronage of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus: The Mission of France and the Mission of Paris.

Pierre was deeply marked by the “little way” of the youth of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. Like her, he had a great desire for holiness and an awareness of his inability to achieve it on his own. He sought to live concretely that attitude of abandonment which led him to consent to what God asked of him, even if it was not what he wanted or if he felt unable to do it. Pierre believed that the “little way” of childhood was the answer to the Jansenism that had influenced his generation and which was characterized by a rigid, austere and dolorous conception of the faith: “Many of us have been affected, marked by a dreadful heresy in Catholicism, which is called Jansenism. It may have been condemned, but it is still alive everywhere. It is always this intellectual side of pride with which one thinks one is going to become a hero. But we have to be told that we are poor people and little children. And the only one who has given us an antidote to this heresy is Thérèse of the Child of Jesus.”²⁰

What were the fruits of the practice of this “little way” in Pierre’s life? How did this translate concretely into his life?

-1) Joy, the fruit of humility and trust in God : “We are joyful because we are loved. We love Love and we are transformed by Love.”²¹ Pierre also wrote: “Jesus makes me live! How happy I am, how happy I am! I no longer belong to myself, I have given everything!”²² Through the testimony of his life, Pierre allowed many to rediscover the joy of being Christian: “Christianity is joy. Without joy, we are not in the truth, because we are not in love.”²³

-2) Another fruit of humility: gratitude to God which translates into praise : Pierre Goursat recommended practicing praise in all circumstances, first when everything is going well, and then to continue to do so in the most difficult moments. Pierre had discovered the power of praise during the international gathering of the Renewal in Rome, at Pentecost 1975: “We understood praise. It was a people in praise.”²⁴ He was further convinced of its importance when he visited American charismatic communities in the summer of 1976. He then encouraged the members of Emmanuel to live this joyful praise in prayer groups and every morning in the family or in the household. To praise God is to manifest his Lordship, his active presence in our lives: “Praise is contact with the Living God. So, I would like us to literally explode with joy.”²⁵

The prayer of praise also allows us to experience the joy of heaven in anticipation: “When there are many of us prais-

16 Community weekend, 14-15 June 1980 (E046).

17 Retreat of « trois semaines », teaching about sexuality, 26 September 1976 (E016).

18 Community weekend, 17 April 1982 (E062).

19 Testimonial of Mère Scholastique (Marie-Hélène Goursat), 2 juillet 1991.

20 First summer session at Paray-le-Monial, 16 July 1975 (E006).

21 Community weekend, 20 September 1981 (E058).

22 Prayer written by Pierre Goursat, no date (P 078).

23 Letter to a young girl that Pierre followed (L007).

24 Testimony of Pierre Goursat, may 1977 (T1).

25 Intervention during the Pentecost assembly in Lyon, 28-30 may 1977 (E022).

ing, we feel the glory of God with all these brothers who pray and praise the Lord together. You feel like you are already in Heaven! It is magnificent!"²⁶

Pierre emphasized the link between littleness and simplicity: "[Therese of the Child Jesus] says to us: 'But listen, I am a very small child. You must not complicate your life. Let's be simple. And then, everything will work out very well.'²⁷ Pierre lived this "little way" of childhood and it deeply impressed the members of the Community whom he encouraged to put themselves in the school of little Therese, because it is in perfect agreement with the spirit and the vocation of the Community. In fact, Pierre explained: "The vocation of Emmanuel is 'God with us', I have told you this more than once. God with us, but he is small, he is very small. And he concluded: "My friends, really, let us be very small, very small".²⁸

And little children do not worry because they trust their parents. To conclude, I invite you to accept this other word of Pierre: "So humility is if you are without worry. The humble person is the one who does not worry because he is a child and he knows that he has a Father, that he is all powerful and that he loves him. God is everything, he is all powerful and he loves me... So, we are at peace!"²⁹

26 Retreat Fraternité de Jesus, Paray-le-Monial, 31 December 1979 (E043).

27 Retreat Fraternité de Jesus, Paray-le-Monial, Easter 1982 (E061).

28 Day «Emmanuel» inter-assembly of prayer, Paris, 13 mars 1976 (E011).

29 Retreat Fraternité de Jesus, Paray-le-Monial, 30 December 1977 (E027).

Pierre Goursat
and his brothers and sisters