

Francis Kohn

## Learning from the Heart of Jesus, and Mary, our mother

Pierre Goursat's mother transmitted to her son a great love for Mary. She also gave him a great love for the 'Heart of Jesus' – the term Pierre used to refer to the 'Sacred Heart'. At his birth, on 15th August 1914, he was consecrated to Our Lady by his mother, and on the following year, she consecrated her second son, Bernard, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Pierre was born on the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, and died on the 25th March 1991, date of the feast of the Annunciation, which that year fell on the Monday of Holy Week: these dates, concerning his earthly and heavenly birth, signify Mary's presence in his life, and her particular protection over him.

We cannot understand who Pierre is, without first recognising his profound attachment both to the Heart of Jesus, and to Mary. Firstly, I will take the time to develop the subject of Pierre's love for the Heart of Jesus, then, in the second part of this talk, I will look at Pierre's trust in Our Blessed Mother.

### -I) Learning from the Heart of Jesus

When Pierre was younger, he couldn't bear to look at a crucifix, so he took refuge in the Heart of Jesus, where he instead found peace. He explains:

*"In my youth, I was really frightened by the cross. In the Church of St. Philippe [du Roule], there were two different altars, one with the cross, and one with the Sacred-Heart, I always went straight to the side with the Sacred Heart! And I would say to myself: 'But it's horrendous this cross. It's a scandal, it's horrendous!'. How can people accept that? And with all this blood dripping down, I said to myself: 'No, no, it's really appalling!' But the Heart of Jesus, is a shining heart. There wasn't any blood. There was just light, and fire. I said to myself: 'I would really like to burn, but I couldn't let people cut me up [...]. And it gave me peace. It gave me the peace from his Heart, and I was trusting and peaceful"*<sup>1</sup>.

After his conversion, Pierre had an even greater love for the Heart of Jesus. He says: *"I loved the Heart of Jesus with a great love. I lived for adoration and would practise oration in Eucharistic Adoration and in the Sacred Heart [...]. St. Augustin's doctrine, with his intuitive approach, went well with St. Bonaventure's, and then with the Heart of Jesus"*<sup>2</sup>.

In this first chapter, I will address four main points.

### -1) THE SUMMER SESSIONS AT PARAY-LE-MONIAL AND THE SANCTUARY WITHIN, ARE ENTRUSTED TO THE COMMUNITY

After the first gathering of prayer groups and charismatic communities at Vézelay in July 1974, Pierre Goursat received an inspiration in prayer; the following year, he should organise the convention of the French Renewal at Paray-le-Monial, the place where Christ appeared to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in the XVII Century, revealing his Merciful Heart to the world. Pierre described his intuition to Hervé-Marie Catta, saying: *"At Vézelay, we were at the Lord's feet, like Mary-Magdalene, now we must go to Paray-le-Monial, to his Heart"*. Hervé-Maria was astonished, he had just finished reading St. Catherine of Siena's *Dialogue* in which the Lord speaks of three specific steps in the spiritual life, three levels in coming to him: the feet, the heart, and the mouth. Pierre took this as confirmation for his project, but he still had to convince the leaders of other communities in the Renewal, who were reticent to go to Paray-le-Monial. At this point, almost no one knew of the little town in Bourgogne. The sanctuary, which had been popular with visits at the end of the XIX century, as well as between the World Wars, was now deserted, left to be abandoned. The cult of praying to the Sacred Heart fell out of practise. In 1975, not one of the French bishops brought a group on pilgrimage to the site, even though it was the 300th year anniversary of the "main apparition" of Jesus to St. Margaret-Mary.

<sup>1</sup> Retreat with the Fraternity of Jesus at Paray-le-Monial, August 1979.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Pierre Goursat, May 1988.

Roughly 1200 people attended the two, week-long conferences which offered prayer and formation, and ran from the 12th to the 23rd July. They were organised by Emmanuel and animated by other communities from the Renewal. During these two weeks, the “City of the Sacred Heart” rediscovered its youth. The teachings and evening vigils took place under a great marquee erected in the sanctuary park, right next to the Roman Basilica where the Masses were celebrated, along with Vespers. All night long, pilgrims came before the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the chapel of the Sisters of the Visitation, the place where St. Margaret-Mary had lived and received great mystical graces.

A few months later, Msgr. Gaidon was named superior of the Chaplains in residence at Paray-le-Monial. Up to this point he had been auxiliary bishop of Besançon, suffering from depression caused by the great crisis tearing through the Church during this period. He had just received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and was profoundly transformed by it. Upon meeting Pierre Goursat, Msgr. Gaidon was moved by his wish to renew the cult of the Sacred Heart, and he welcomed the idea of continuing, each summer, the conferences animated by the Emmanuel Community. As the years passed by, these conferences would attract increasingly bigger crowds of people, of families and the youth in particular. In just a few years, the sanctuary was given a new breath of life, attracting a multitude of pilgrims as it became increasingly well-known in the Catholic world.

In the summer of 1984, Msgr. Le Bourgeois, bishop of Autun, met Pierre Goursat, to entrust the management and welcome of pilgrims at Paray-le-Monial, to the Emmanuel Community. A convention was signed on the 20th of October 1985. I was then named co-superior of the chaplains under Msgr. Gaidon, in preparation for the following chapter in the story.

## -2) MEETING WITH JOHN-PAUL II AT PARAY-LE-MONIAL, 5TH OCTOBER 1986

The very same year, in 1985, John-Paul II announced he was coming to France in a year’s time and planned on visiting several different towns. But the programme prepared by the French bishops did not include Paray-le-Monial. Pierre Goursat suggested to Msgr. Le Bourgeois that he invite directly John-Paul II, knowing he had a great devotion to the Sacred-Heart. The Pope decided to incorporate two more stops into his visit: Taizé and Paray-le-Monial.

On the 5th of October 1986, roughly 150,000 people were present at a Mass celebrated by John-Paul II at Paray-le-Monial. In his homily, he commented on the readings chosen for the Mass of the Sacred Heart, for families. After the Angelus, in a few improvised words, the Pope thanked “Emmanuel”. He then went to pray at the Basilica, the Chapel of Apparitions, and on the tombs of St. Margaret-Mary and St. Claude La Colombière in the Jesuit chapel. In the monastery of the Visitation, John-Paul II met the sisters, the chaplains of the sanctuary, as well as Pierre Goursat and Gérald Arbola, who had succeeded him as Moderator of the Community. Turning to Pierre, the Pope said: *“Thank you for founding Emmanuel!”*. Pierre humbly received these words, as confirmation of all that he had undertaken in reawakening the cult of the Sacred Heart, and making known the love of the Heart of Jesus to the greatest number of people. He was at the origin of the sanctuary’s renewal, which enabled the town of Paray-le-Monial to be profoundly transformed and renewed also, as the mayor would tell me years later, in writing.

When Pierre Goursat died, the texts for the feast of the Sacred Heart were chosen for his funeral Mass in Paris, the 27th March 1991. The following day, on Holy Thursday, Pierre Goursat was buried at Paray-le-Monial in a part of the cemetery the town wanted to give to the Emmanuel Community, and where numerous other members or those close to the Community have asked to be buried since, close to Pierre.

## -3) THE HEART OF JESUS IS A “CONDENSED SUMMARY” OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

Pierre was adamant the Emmanuel Community was being called to serve at Paray-le-Monial, to make the Heart of Jesus and the Love of God more widely known. He explains:

*“From a mystical point of view, the XVII Century, with the French school, was a very solid period. Then, in the XIX Century, we drew a caricature of God’s love, and the Heart of God. The Sacred Heart is not a devotion, it’s the very essence of God’s love. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son to save it. It’s really this mystery of love which was revealed, which the Jesuits and Fr. La Colombière really understood in depth, and which was spread around the whole world”<sup>3</sup>.*

When the Bible speaks about the “heart”, it’s shown as the seat of emotions and of love. And believers, for the most part see the “Sacred Heart” as a symbol of this divine charity. For Pierre however, it is much more than this; it is the highest expression of God’s love for us, and a condensed summary of the Christian faith. He says: *“When you come to Paray-le-Monial, it’s not to resurrect an “extra devotion”. The Heart of Jesus is something essential, it’s the whole of the Gospel of John. And it’s also already the Acts of the Apostles. So, it’s really something very important”<sup>4</sup>.*

Pierre also writes, in an edition of *He Is Alive!*: *“The Sacred Heart is so much more than a simple devotion. It’s the very essence of our faith, because it’s about the Heart of Jesus, the Love of God, trinitarian love”<sup>5</sup>.*

In these few lines, Pierre Goursat echoes the words of Pope Pius XII, from his encyclical published on the 18th May 1856, for the 100-year anniversary of the institution of the Feast of the Sacred Heart, where he presents the cult of

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Goursat speaking during the first session at Paray-le-Monial, 16th July 1975.

<sup>4</sup> Session at Paray-le-Monial, July 1977.

<sup>5</sup> Editorial, *Le Cœur de Dieu, Les Cahiers du Renouveau- He Is Alive!*, n° 17, February 1978, p. 2.

the Sacred Heart as “the most effective school of divine love”<sup>6</sup>. Its title, *Haurietis Aquas in Gaudio* is taken from a verse in Isaiah (Is. 12:3): “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation”. Pope Pius XII develops the New and Old Testament scriptural sources for the cult of the Sacred Heart. The key text being this passage from St. John: “But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out” (Jn. 19:33-34).

From the open of Heart of Jesus on the cross, flowed the outpouring of the Spirit, promised to all who are thirsty (cf. Jn. 7: 37). The wound in his side manifests the **authenticity of his incarnation, but equally, of his divinity**. And as a wound made after death cannot heal itself, this wound stays open, eternally. It is the **sign of God’s infinite love for mankind**, as Jesus explains to **St. Catherine of Sienna** when he tells her the wound in his side is the symbol of divine love, infinite, unlimited, and which address itself to all, all the time. **St Bonaventure** describes the mystery like this: “When your heart was injured, it was so that through the visible wound, we would see the invisible wound of love”<sup>7</sup>.

In his encyclical, Pius XII indicates that in the Heart of Christ, his human and divine sentiments coexist. He distinguishes **three degrees of love**: firstly, **emotional human love** (the domain of feelings that every human being expresses, and Jesus proved to have); next, **human spiritual love** (the ardent charity which infuses his human will); and lastly, **divine spiritual love**, which is the love the Son has in common, for all eternity, with the Father and the Holy Spirit. These three degrees, he explains, form a “**mystical ladder**”. In this way, we see how we can only access divine love by going through the human love of the Heart of Jesus. Through veneration and contemplation of the Heart of Jesus, we are mysteriously introduced into the heart of the Trinity.

#### -4) THE APPARITIONS OF JESUS TO ST. MARGARET-MARY (1673 - 1675)

Jesus appears to St. Margaret Mary for the first time, on the **27th December 1673**. She writes: “The divine Heart was represented to me as upon a throne of flames, it shone rays brighter than the sun and was transparent, with this beloved wound, and it was encircled by a crown of thorns, symbolising the pain our sins cause him, and above it, a cross, showing how from the very first days of his incarnation, meaning the moment this sacred Heart was formed, the cross was already planted”<sup>8</sup>. During the apparition, Jesus also said to her: *My divine Heart has so much love for mankind, and for you in particular, that it cannot contain the flames of its burning charity, it must spread them through you, and manifest itself to others to make them rich in its precious treasures which I now reveal to you*”.

**In June 1675**, Christ reveals his heart once again to the young sister of the Visitation, saying: “Here is the Heart, who so loved mankind, that it held nothing back, until it exhausted itself and consumed itself, in testifying its love for them”. He continues: “And in recognition, for the most part I receive ingratitude, with their irreverence and sacrilege, and their coldness and the disregard they have for me in this sacrament of love”. Here, Jesus was making a reference to the Eucharist.

Already in 1674, Jesus raised this subject with his confident, speaking of receiving so little of the great love he testifies to, in return, despite all that he endured to save us. In a time when mankind’s heart had grown so cold that it weakened the faith and fervour of Christians, he chose to communicate the “burning fire” of divine charity that his heart could no longer contain, to St. Margaret-Mary. Jesus raises a cry of love for us. He says **mankind’s greatest sin is indifference**, and the greatest evil is forgetfulness, the denial of charity. Christ wants us to understand that **the immense “thirst for love”** he has for all mankind, can only be quenched by us becoming aware of this ‘crazy’ love he has for us, which he manifests to the highest degree in giving his life for us on the cross.

Pierre Goursat felt Jesus’ suffering deeply, and writes these lines in 1975: “The Heart of God has become a heart of flesh, and suffered for us until eternity. This love, which suffers from seeing it is misunderstood, and which chokes from the love it wants to give to each soul but is refused, asks at least to be poured into those who accept an understanding of it and who accept to receive it”<sup>9</sup>. The following year he published an article inviting us to give back to Jesus “love for love”. He writes: “Love is being choked in the heart of God, and mankind doesn’t want to let itself be loved; because it is afraid of love. Nothing can be more painful to God than our fear of his merciful love. It’s impossible to be afraid of mercy: of God’s heart moved by our misery”<sup>10</sup>.

Pierre Goursat often spoke of Jesus’ Heart, and, listening to what he says, we see just how much love he has for it, this deep intimacy he has with the Lord. Pierre disassociated himself from older forms of devotion marked by rigorism or Dolorist practices, which he did not like. Pierre consistently sought to transmit the burning love he felt for the Heart of Jesus. When Pierre urged us to catch on fire with God’s love, it was always connected to the Sacred Heart. Jesus revealed his flaming heart to St. Margaret-Mary several different times. Pierre invites us to dive into this “**blazing furnace of Charity**”. He says: “We must ask the Lord to put a fire in our heart. **We have to go into his Heart, the ardent blaze which is communicating with us!** So then we’ll burn like an ember. And when we burn with love, everything is different!”<sup>11</sup>.

Pierre says **the surest way of acquiring humility is to learn from the Heart of Jesus**: “Truly, the way of the Lord, is Jesus

<sup>6</sup> Pius XII, encyclical *Haurietis aquas in gaudio*, n° 72.

<sup>7</sup> St. Bonaventure, *The Mystical Vine*.

<sup>8</sup> Letter to Fr. Croiset, 3rd November 1689.

<sup>9</sup> Emmanuel weekend, 23rd November 1975.

<sup>10</sup> *He Is Alive!*, n° 10, December 1976.

<sup>11</sup> Retreat with the Fraternity of Jesus at Paray-le-Monial, August 1979.

meek and humble of heart. It's an extraordinary path. When we are meek and humble of heart, he can penetrate our hearts more easily. And we'll be soaked in waves of the living waters of compassion. Which will transport us to eternal life"<sup>12</sup>. He often quoted this Gospel passage (Mt. 11:28-29): "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls". One day, when Pierre was praying before the tabernacle, the Bible open on his lap, a community brother asked him what he was doing. Pierre replied: "I am reading this verse: "learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart", you see, that's what I'm doing, I am learning from the Heart of Jesus, I'm trying to learn".

## -II) Entrust yourself to Mary, our mother

The immense love Pierre Goursat had for the Heart of Jesus was, in his eyes, indissociable from the love he had for Our Lady, just as it was inseparable from his attachment to the sanctuary at Paray-le-Monial and the Lourdes grotto, where he went to pray every year.

### -1) UNDER THE PROTECTION OF MARY, DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

As a child, Pierre was touched by the love his mother had for Mary: "She always prayed with a rosary", he says. He was educated at St. Marie in Monceau, a private school run by the Marian Fathers, where he received the essentials of his religious education. Pierre says: "I wore a beautiful silver medal of Our Lady of Rue de Bac, which I was given for my First Holy Communion. This is how Mary protected me"<sup>13</sup>.

After the conversion he had at 19 years old, Pierre Goursat didn't yet realise the importance of Mary. One day he said to his cousin, Abbot Jacques Goursat: "I have the Sacred Heart, I don't need Mary". The Abbot replied: "You've just had a conversion, you have received the Heart of Christ, Mary will come little by little into your life". Pierre adds: "And that's what happened. She came in, little by little, so gently into my heart. But she entered in much more, following the events of 1944". He was evoking something which happened during the summer, when Paris was still occupied by the German army. He was walking back home, with a friend, Elizabeth Dumont, and here follows his testimony:

"I was crossing the road when a German car with military personal came out of nowhere and passed us by. I jumped back and being cross, I spontaneously said out loud, "Idiot!". I didn't know that the same word exists in German but with a stronger meaning. I continued crossing the road, when I heard the car braking to a halt. I had reached the pavement and didn't want to look back, but I heard the German getting out of the car, and coming after me, he put his hand on my shoulder saying: "Idiot! Kommandatur!" I freed myself [from his grasp] and started running as fast as I could. People told me afterwards that at this point he took out his pistol and pointed it at me. He was about to shoot when a woman screamed. It surprised him, he didn't shoot but started running after me, the gun still in his hand. I had a small head start and ran so fast I lost my shoes. Using the street corner to my advantage, I slipped inside the gate entrance to my house and shut it behind me. All you had to do was push it to open it. He was pushing it open as I was climbing the stairs as fast as I could. I wanted to hide where I lived, on the first floor. But he had already opened the gate and I wasn't far enough ahead of him do to it without him seeing me. At that moment, the doorman came out onto the stairs, having heard the noise, and found himself face to face with the German and his pistol. For a split-second, he distracted the attention of the German, so he didn't see me going to the first [floor]. But obviously, I didn't know this. I was in my apartment. I considered jumping out of the window, but in socks, it seemed difficult. And I looked down at the street. It was full of people. So I hid in the toilet cubicle, or rather I tried to, as it didn't really conceal where I was. I waited for the German and I was sure he was going to find me. **At that moment I heard an interior word spoken, very clearly, from Mary: "be at peace, you are saved". It was so clear; I couldn't doubt it.** Humanly speaking, I thought the absolute contrary. I heard footsteps in the corridor, coming and going. It was Elizabeth. She told me: "He's gone"<sup>14</sup>.

Élisabeth Dumont explained how Pierre's escape was providential, and how after it he was safe until the liberation of Paris:

"He went back home; I was in my house, when he opened a door you couldn't see, a door in the wall that opened onto the neighbour's courtyard, and there was a ladder; and that's how he managed to escape. His escape was providential, thanks to this ladder. There were tall railings which separated the courtyard in two, the courtyard of the two houses, which enabled him to leave by a porch which opened onto a different street, opposite the metro. That's how he was able to rush onto the metro and disappear. He went to the house of one of my aunts, who lived on rue de la Pompe, and he stayed there for two or three weeks, waiting for things to settle down, and then he came back to the hotel. It was just before the liberation [of Paris] [...]. I have always thought of the whole affair as miraculous"<sup>15</sup>.

This event was ever present in Pierre's memory and intensified his love for Mary. He had this tangible experience of her presence, convinced that Mary had intervened that day to protect him. Henceforth, Pierre had a deeper intimacy

<sup>12</sup> Retreat with the Fraternity of Jesus at Paray-le-Monial, 30th December 1977.

<sup>13</sup> P. Goursat's Testimony, July 1986.

<sup>14</sup> Retreat with the Fraternity of Jesus, August 1979.

<sup>15</sup> Élisabeth Dumont's Testimony, 14th April 1991.



with Our Lady, and relied on her in total confidence.

**-2) PIERRE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY ARE INTIMATELY UNITED.** He tells us: “So I had more and more love for Our Lady; and with St. Jean Eudes, I understood there was only one heart, that of Jesus and Mary”<sup>16</sup>.

Pierre Goursat invoked this subject in his final public teaching, in Barcelona the 29th May 1988, when he was speaking about the Annunciation and the prophecy of the elderly Simeon to Mary during the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple: “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too” (Lk. 2:34-35).

Pierre explains: “At the Annunciation, Jesus was a little embryo. Some days after his conception, his heart started beating. From that moment on, he says: “Here I am Father, to do your will”. The Father’s will is that his Son offers himself as a sacrifice. There is a deep intimacy between Mary and Jesus. Mary understands that her Son offers himself as a sacrifice. Shortly after his birth, they go to Jerusalem. And there, the elderly Simeon says to Mary a sword will pierce her heart. In reality, what these words show us, is the unity between the Heart of Jesus and the heart of Mary. This is why St. Jean Eudes, says the Heart of Jesus and the heart of Mary form one heart. It’s difficult to understand because there is a human heart, Mary’s, and a divine heart, Jesus”<sup>17</sup>.

**-3) INVOKE MARY, SHE IS CLOSE TO US AND BRINGS US TO HER SON**

Pierre Goursat frequently spoke of Our Lady. I will now briefly present you with six themes developed by Pierre in his teachings, explaining how Mary gives tangible help to us in our lives.

**-1ST THEME: MARY TEACHES US TO PRAY AND MEDITATE ON THE WORD OF GOD**

Pierre meditated on the Word of God, with Mary. In his personal notes, he writes:

“Mary meditated all these words in her heart, or went over them again in her heart, [the place] where we meditate on how he’s speaking to us. We remember, we seek, we try to understand them”<sup>18</sup>. He also says: “I ask you to carry all these things in your heart, like Mary did. And you will feel and experience just how much the Lord loves us with a love, both tender and strong”<sup>19</sup>.

**-2ND THEME: MARY TEACHES US HUMILITY**

Pierre was profoundly touched by the **humility of Mary**. He addresses her in this way: “Mary, teach me humility. You are the triumph of humility”. Explaining to us: “**Mary is very important to us because she is a model of humility, of purity and humility. And that brings us closer to the Lord and it shows us how to come closer to him**”<sup>20</sup>. Pierre also says: “Mary is humility itself; she is purity itself. So then, if we ask Mary for help, she will help us. But we do have to ask her. And she’ll hide us under her mantle, and we’ll pass through this world”<sup>21</sup>.

**-3RD THEME: MARY TEACHES US TO LIVE COMPASSIONATELY**

Pierre reminds us that Mary is a model of compassion for us. He writes: “by guiding us to her son Jesus, crucified, Mary, the Mother of God, invites us to live compassionately, with her”<sup>22</sup>. Our Lady accompanies us in our difficulties: “She wants to fortify us, console us and help us [...]. Whilst Jesus was in agony, Mary was there. She suffered with him on the cross. A sword of pain pierced her heart and she offered it for all the sins [of the world] [...]. All the suffering, she knows what it is”<sup>23</sup>. He further says: “Ask the Lord to burn in you, to transform you, to give you a soul to exercise compassion, together with Mary”<sup>24</sup>.

Pierre developed this theme in other teachings. Here, I quote: “**Ask Mary, the mother of compassion, to teach you compassion**”<sup>25</sup>. Or again: “It’s so important for us to ask Mary, who lives at the foot of the Lord’s cross, who suffers and sympathises with him continuously... **to teach us to have compassion. And this compassion [is] when the little sacrifices we do, we do for the sanctification and the conversion of souls [...]. That’s why we have to ask Mary. Because it’s the mystery of maternity. Truly, she raises us as her children, in suffering**”<sup>26</sup>.

**-4TH THEME: MARY PROTECTS US DURING SPIRITUAL COMBAT**

Pierre Goursat was conscious of spiritual combat in the world, and often explains that we will be victorious through Mary. Making reference to chapter 12 of the Book of the Apocalypse, he says: “It’s clear we have increasingly more combat on a

16 Pierre Goursat’s Testimony, May 1988.

17 Community Weekend at Barcelona in Spain, 29th May 1988.

18 Preparatory notes for a teaching at the School of Prayer, late 1971.

19 Fraternity of Jesus, Christmas 1983.

20 Community Weekend, 14-15th June 1980.

21 Retreat with the Fraternity of Jesus, Paray-le-Monial, 24th July 1983.

22 Editorial in the magazine He Is Alive!, n° 6-7, February - May 1976.

23 Pierre Goursat’s Spiritual Reflections, summer 1980 (M22).

24 Interview 23rd May 1976.

25 Community Weekend, 21st June 1981.

26 Community Weekend, 20th September 1981.

universal level. It really is a combat with the Dragon. It's the woman against the dragon, it's Mary who is fighting the dragon and is fighting him throughout the entire world"<sup>27</sup>. He says: "We will have spiritual combat because Satan will unleash himself upon us, but Mary will protect us"<sup>28</sup>.

Pierre was focussed on the future of families, and invited us to pray, "so that families may be renewed in charitable love". He continues like this: "It's clear that today there are attacks on the family, that's why we must pray. But we do have to pray... Mary takes care of the Devil's attacks; Mary takes care of it and she does it very well"<sup>29</sup>.

Pierre had a great faith in the powerful intercession and protection of Our Lady. When he encountered obstacles on his path, he would stay serene, saying: "Mary will deal with it all". When situations became blocked up, and spiritual combat was intense, he invited people to go and pray with him in the basilica Notre Dame des Victoires, or at the chapel of the "Miraculous Medal" in Rue de Bac. He explains to us: "It is Mary who built the Community, and Mary who is the guardian of the Community [...]. We all feel it, we said that Mary is the watermark on everything we're living, she is our mantle, we are protected"<sup>30</sup>.

Pierre prayed the rosary intensely and said it "is like a lasso which binds the mouths of dogs". He was making a reference to the Devil, who -he says- "is terribly frightened of Mary and has a fearful panic over her"<sup>31</sup>. Pierre also says: "**We are sure to be victorious, and to be victorious through Mary** [...]. We forget that the Devil exists". Adding: "And God [...] chose a child, the humblest of creatures, and the most magnificent in humility, to be the Queen of Heaven and Earth, and to dominate over this dirty beast of a creature, the Devil [...]. **So, in leaning on Mary, we have nothing to fear.** And more than that, it's with maternal grace, so she'll look after us with the greatest delicacy and a mother's heart"<sup>32</sup>.

#### -5TH THEME: ABIDE WITH MARY, TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AND EVANGELISE

Pierre reminds us how the Apostles were gathered in the upper room with Mary, waiting for Pentecost, when they received the outpouring of the Spirit which renewed them, and this was so they could evangelise. He says: "After his (Jesus) Ascension, it was a catastrophe and the disciples felt alone, and so they went to the upper room and they prayed with Mary, mother of Jesus, and their brothers. These brothers are the Fraternity of Jesus! And they prayed all together in the upper room. But after this, the Lord pushes them outside. He doesn't leave them [in the upper room]. All they had to do was pray! And then, the Holy Spirit will come, of course. But they had to pray"<sup>33</sup>.

In 1979, Pierre Goursat published an article explaining the objectives of the international gathering of the Renewal he organised at Lourdes. He wrote this: "I hope that by persevering in prayer with Mary, mother of Jesus, we will receive the Holy Spirit, who will come down on us and make of us witnesses of Christ also, "until the ends of the Earth", like those who came out of the upper room in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost [...]"<sup>34</sup>.

#### -6TH THEME: WELCOME MARY AS OUR MOTHER AND TRUST IN HER

Every day, Pierre entrusted his life to Jesus through Mary, by praying the consecration of St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort. He introduced us to this prayer and invited us to pray it every morning. A young medical intern, discovering the Community, visited Pierre Goursat who was in hospital nearing the end of his life. Pierre quoted entire passages from St Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort to him, which he knew by heart. This brother testifies: "It was a joy to visit him, but it was really him who visited my soul, he took care of it, did it good, and somehow spread an anointing sweetness there, through his words, inspired entirely by Mary".

Pierre liked to meditate these verses in the Gospel of John (Jn. 19:25-27): "**Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother** [...]. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." **Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother."** And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home". Pierre explains: "John had followed Jesus to the end! He was at the Cross [...]. He was close to Jesus and close to his Mother. **The secret to John is that the Mother of Jesus, is his Mother. He had followed Mary,** [him] the disciple whom Jesus loved, who saw the lance piercing Jesus' Heart; he is the sole to give testimony of the Spirit, the water and [the] blood. (cf. 1 Jn. 5:8). We pierced his side and it flowed. And Jesus gave his Mother to John"<sup>35</sup>.

Pierre urged us to **become Mary's children**, as she loves us like a mother. I quote him here again: "The Lord tells us: "You cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven unless you become like a little child again". So, all we have to do is become little children. **What do little children do? Well, they listen to their mother.** We have a mother that the Lord has given to us, that he gives to us particularly in this era. **Mary has become Mother of the Church officially**, so she really is our mother. And if we listen to her, it simplifies a lot of things"<sup>36</sup>. Pierre was referring to that fact that during Vatican II, on the 21st November 1964, Paul VI declared Mary "Mother of the Church".

Following the first gathering of the Charismatic Renewal organised by him in Lourdes in 1976, Pierre wrote this in an edition of *He Is Alive!*: "That which the Spirit rekindles in the Renewal, concerning the mystery of the Virgin Mary, is not a

27 Community Weekend at Neuilly, 12th May 1979.

28 Retreat with the Fraternity of Jesus, Easter 1978.

29 Community Weekend, April 1983.

30 Retreat with the Fraternity of Jesus, 10th August 1978.

31 Community Weekend 30-31st May 1981.

32 Community Weekend, 15th March 1980.

33 Retreat with the Fraternity of Jesus, Easter 1982.

34 Editorial in the magazine *He Is Alive!*, n° 23, March 1979.

35 Retreat with the Fraternity of Jesus, late December 1980.

36 Community Weekend, Spring 1979.

sentimental piety, but the sense of realism in facing oneself. If Mary is just a symbolic image, then all excesses of credulity or scepticism are permitted. However, if she is met in faith as a living person, **as the Lord's Mother, as our Mother**, then all our worries evaporate because we are not dealing with an idea, but with a person<sup>37</sup>.

In 1979, to illustrate **the trust we must have in Our Lady**, Pierre evoked an event from his childhood that had marked him: "When I was little, he says, I had a great trust in my mother and I had to have an operation for appendicitis. My little brother had been operated on before. He told me it was serious, that he had nearly died. A few months later, I was nervous about being operated on. Maman had arranged it so she would come to the operating theatre and hold my hand at the moment they put me under [anaesthetic]. I felt good and afterwards she said to me: "But you were so relaxed". And I replied: "Yes, I know! Because you told me I wasn't going to suffer, so I trusted you". Pierre concludes with this: "**With Mary, we have confidence; she really is our mother, and so with her, everything is simple**"<sup>38</sup>.

**Here I come to the end of my talk and would like to conclude in the following way.**

The heart of Mary and the Heart of Jesus are indissociable in the eyes of Pierre Goursat. In these various teachings, I wanted to show you how, according to Pierre, a life of prayer and one's missionary zeal are deeply fused together. It was by contemplating the Heart of Jesus that Pierre managed to live a unified life, orientated towards God and towards others. The close relationship he had with Jesus, through prayer, always drove him towards evangelisation. Just like every human heart, **the Heart of Jesus continuously contracts and dilates** to irrigate blood around the body, and ensure life. In a physiological double-movement we call "systole" and "diastole". We can apply this image on a spiritual level. For Pierre, these two states are indispensable in diffusing divine life within us, and within the whole Body of the Church. During **adoration**, Pierre let himself be renewed by Jesus and was filled with **compassion** for the salvation of souls. And this pushed him to **evangelise**.

I suggest we conclude this workshop with Pierre, by praying together. We shall invoke the Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and you can pray the following phrases with me:

« Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like yours ».

« Heart of Jesus, blazing furnace of charity, burn us with the fire of your love ».

« Sacred Heart of Jesus, we trust in you! ».

« Immaculate heart of Mary, we trust in you! ».

We shall finish by praying the consecration to Mary, received by St Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, that Pierre so loved, and taught us:

*"Today, we choose you, Mary,  
Standing before all the saints,  
To be our Mother and our Queen.  
We dedicate ourselves to you,  
In humility and love;  
Our bodies and our souls,  
Our gifts and our possessions,  
The merit of good deeds,  
Those present, past, and still to come.  
We freely give you the right,  
To deal with us  
And everything we have,  
As you see fit,  
For the greater glory of God,  
Both now and for eternity.  
Amen."*

37 Editorial in the magazine He Is Alive!, n° 8, July 1976.

38 Retreat with the Fraternity of Jesus, Paray-le-Monial, August 1979.

**Pierre Goursat**  
and his brothers and sisters