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The Center for Spiritan Studies, inaugurated in September 2005, is a collaborative venture between the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and Duquesne University. Its purpose is to promote scholarly research into Spiritan history, tradition, and spirituality with a view to fostering creative fidelity to the Spiritan charism in a changing world. *Spiritan Horizons* is an annual publication of the Center for Spiritan Studies that seeks to further the Center’s aims. The journal combines articles of a scholarly nature with others related to the praxis of the Spiritan charism in a wide variety of cultural settings. Special attention is given in each issue to the Spiritan education ethos, in view of the university context in which the journal is published. It is hoped that the journal will provide a wider audience than hitherto with access to the riches of the Spiritan charism and spirituality.

Last year’s Spiritan Horizons celebrated the tercentenary of the death of Claude Poullart des Places. This year Francis Libermann reappears, no longer in the chapel, but now in the waiting rooms of the influential, hoping and maneuvering for a sympathetic hearing. Arsene Aubert reveals interesting details about Libermann’s adventures with “the authorities”. Luke Mbefo explores the meaning of the original 19th century missionary project, *L’Oeuvre des Noirs*. His parting challenge to reexamine the sense of the Spiritan motto, *Cor unum et anima una* (One heart and one soul), is taken up by Séan Kealy, who painstakingly examines its origin in the Acts of the Apostles. What is at stake is the importance of grasping how Jesus intends us to live. A concluding modern story shows how creeping familiarity can threaten the original inspiration.

Duquesne University comes alive in the presentation of university president, Charles Dougherty. It is a heartening story where a small fire of collaboration between the Spiritans and the people of Pittsburgh has grown to give scholarly warmth to a multitude of today’s students. The many struggles of the past ensure that nothing is taken for granted in the leadership of the present. The university’s emphasis on Africa is celebrated by Christopher Duncan, dean of the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts, in his reflection on the visit of the deans to Tanzania. With a penetrating and sympathetic eye, he brings the country to life in all its natural beauty as well as in its human struggle to take its place in the world without ambiguity. Collaboration with the Gumberg Library has always been a mainstay of the Center for Spiritan Studies. Laverna Saunders and Robert Behary give a fascinating reflection on how the aims of the Center and the concerns of the Library can combine to reach around the world.

Mgr Augustine Shao, bishop of Zanzibar and a member of the Vatican Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, describes the fruits of dialogue between Christians and Muslims in his diocese. Progress is slow and hard earned, but real and rewarding. Michael Kilkenny shows us how the procedures of canon law can involve high drama. His story begins with an adventure where the hero is an archivist.

Spiritan social concern is forcibly present in two articles. In the last century Joachim Alves Correia was obliged to leave Portugal and take refuge in U.S.A. because of his outspoken social criticism. He was a member of Trinity Hall (Duquesne) community when he died in 1951. Last year Edward Flynn went to Geneva to work with Vivat, a group of religious congregations formed in 2000 to lobby for social causes at U.N. His commentary is sharpened by his previous experience of life with the poor in Pakistan.
Arsène Aubert, C.S.Sp.

Arsène Aubert is a French Spiritan who worked for several years as a missionary in Africa and in Guadeloupe. A former Vicar-Provincial of the Province of France, he has been involved over many years in the biblical formation of future Spiritans and of laypeople. Currently residing in Paris, he continues to animate retreats centered on Scripture and on the spirituality of Francis Libermann. He is author of Prier 15 Jours avec François Libermann. (Montrouge: Nouvelle Cité, 2003) (Translation: Vincent O'Toole, C.S.Sp.)

Libermann in Conflict with the Authorities

Libermann had several controversies with civil and religious authorities: slave masters, ministers and commandants of the navy, even bishops! He put himself in the position of the defenseless who struggle for justice against the powerful.

But in some countries where democracy and freedom of expression are completely absent, prudence and discretion are the only way forward for those who struggle for justice. There are several places where declarations and demonstrations for “Justice and Peace” are useless, but the practice of Libermann could be a help to those who live in such unfortunate circumstances.

From the 4th to the 26th of October, 2009, the Synod of the Bishops of Africa examined the theme: “The African Church at the service of reconciliation, justice and peace.” Without reconciliation, justice and peace will always be precarious—and this is exactly what Libermann felt.

At first sight, his attitude could appear to show a lack of courage when he was dealing with slave masters, for example. But it was a realistic approach. Look at our own experience: it is not people who make the most noise and thump tables who achieve the most progress; very often, a more reserved and balanced attitude achieves better results in the long run. This approach fits in perfectly with the characteristics of Libermann’s own spirituality—peacefulness, gentleness and reaching out to others where they are at a particular time.

1) The relations of missionaries with the slave masters

In February, 1839, two seminarians—Frédéric Le Vavasseur from Reunion and Eugène Tisserant from Haiti—decided to form an association of priests to help the slaves in the French colonies. In France at that time, there was much talk of the abolition of slavery. Victor Schoelcher wanted it done immediately, but the government favoured a more gradual approach with what it called a “moralisation campaign,” so as to avoid the troubles and destruction of the economy that had been experienced in Haiti. Libermann, a Jew who had become a Christian, was the assistant novice master in the novitiate of the Eudist Fathers. Le Vavasseur asked him what he thought of their scheme:
"You have often heard me talk of the deplorable state of religion in Bourbon and the surrounding islands and the way the blacks, the freed slaves and the poor are totally abandoned. The black people, who make up about half of the population, are condemned to a state of ignorance, suffering and corruption that is impossible to imagine from here… Their future emancipation will do nothing to improve the situation; in fact it will make it worse, so they will never be able to escape from their present miserable state". (March, 1839. ND I 635)

Libermann encourages the project and adds: "It is almost essential that a Congregation should undertake such a task." (8 March, 1839. ND I 638) In 1840, he presented the plan to Rome and drew up the Rule of the Missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary. The first novitiate opened in September, 1840. He explained the Rule to the novices:

Chapter 9, Article 6: “The missionaries will be the advocates, the supporters and the defenders of the small and weak against their oppressors. When faced with such situations, the love and strength of Our Lord, Jesus Christ must increase in them. But their actions must be inspired by a gentleness and prudence which their Master will give them if they are faithful.”

Article 14: “They will do all they can to establish this Christian charity between the rich and the poor, the whites and the blacks, so that all will see one another as brothers in Jesus Christ and overcome the disdain and indifference on the one side and the jealousy and hatred on the other. But this requires great prudence or all could be lost.”

The explanation in the “Glose”, or commentary given by Libermann to the novices, can come as something of a shock:

“In the colonies and undeveloped countries, there is a huge number of unfortunate people who are dependent on others who treat them abominably. The missionary must take up the cause of the oppressed and defend the weak against those who abuse them. But he must guard against letting his anger run away with him when he sees their condition and the way they are treated; he must learn to be prudent and control his feelings lest he make their situation even worse. His sole aim must be to alleviate their sufferings by acting in a way that can bring this about. So he will use..."
authority, giving orders, begging, gentleness according to the attitude of the oppressors. If he has sufficient influence over them, he should speak strongly and reproach them for their injustice in a dignified way; but if this is not the case, it would be wise to speak to them in a pleading rather than an authoritative manner, avoiding words of condemnation for their unjust behaviour.

The missionary must strive to understand what makes these hard men act in such a way towards their dependents. He will try to discover what motivates them and gradually prepare them to be open to feelings of pity and moderation. This method will often lead to the desired effect, whereas if they are confronted brusquely with indignation, it will usually achieve nothing apart from annoying these people who are likely to increase their cruelty towards the poor souls we are trying to help and render the situation hopeless.”

This advice from Libermann could be seen as recommending duplicity of language and purely human prudence. But we must remember the context in which his missionaries were working. Slavery in the French colonies was regulated by the “Black Code”, written in 1685, revised in 1724, and implemented up until 1848. It gives the masters total power over the slaves, including branding, mutilation and using the lash. The Church in the colonies was run by Apostolic Prefects (not bishops), and they were appointed by the civil authorities which were also subject to the slave masters, because their plantations brought considerable profit to the “mother” country. Many priests were shipped back to France because the masters felt they were getting too close to the slaves. The missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary were preparing for the emancipation, but quietly, so as not to run the risk of being expelled from the colony; their expulsion would have deprived the black people of their most faithful supporters. At that time, their religious family lacked any juridical approval by either the Church or the state. So their situation was very precarious and they had many enemies. As Libermann himself put it, “The smallest breeze could destroy everything” (Memorandum to the Propaganda in Rome).

M. Bissette, a native of Martinique, launched a petition for the immediate abolition of slavery and sent a copy to Libermann, hoping for his signature and help in its distribution. Libermann replied that he was not prepared to do so because any intervention on his part could lead to the expulsion of his missionaries, who
were almost the only ones who mixed with the black slaves. His reply to Bisette reads as follows:

“I received your packet at the end of July. I am honoured by the trust you have put in me, for you rightly treat me as a friend of the black race and as one who desires their emancipation above all things. I am proud of this and I will be immensely happy if God in his goodness allows me to live long enough to see my desires fulfilled. I have forwarded the brochures to the priests to whom they were addressed. I would dearly love to have signed the petition myself, but I have declined to do this for very serious reasons which I will explain to you when I next come to Paris. I tried to find somebody else to take on the distribution of the petition but without success, but I am sure that the clergy of this diocese would be happy to sign. I am sorry not to be able to satisfy our shared desire, but I have given some of the brochures to M. Germainville who will distribute them to the clergy of Bordeaux.”

After the revolution of 1848, slavery was abolished and Libermann wrote: “It would have been better if the slaves had been properly prepared for it; but it is doubtful if any such preparation would have been successful because of the opposition of their former owners. Nevertheless, it (the emancipation) was a great blessing from God.” (from his Memorandum to the Bishops of French West Indies and Reunion, 1850).

The Church had also accepted the “Black Code”! Cardinal Etchegaray presided at a colloquium in Rome in 1998 entitled: “Slavery, a denial of humanity.” On that occasion he said: “This exchange of ideas must help us to understand why the Church…has not always been in the forefront of the opposition to slavery and was often more concerned about its humanisation than its abolition.” (Cf. Mémoire Spiritaine, no. 9, 1999, p. 6) Libermann would not have been able to propose a missionary project to Rome in 1840 that was opposed to the practice of the Church at that time.

2) The relations of missionaries with civil and military leaders

To Fr. Briot

In November 1843, the Minister for the Navy offered Libermann an “agreement” that would bring many advantages to his French missionaries—transport, indemnity, medical help, protection, buildings. Libermann knew full well that the motives behind this offer were political. Just as England supported its
Protestant missionaries in Africa, so France wanted to support its French Catholic missionaries to help in the spread of its influence. Bishop Barron, the Vicar Apostolic of the Two Guineas, was a victim of this policy: the naval commanders virtually ignored him because he was not French. The missionaries of Libermann did not like the arrangement on offer, fearing that their Superior had been taken in by the minister, putting their freedom of action in jeopardy.

At Libreville (Gabon) in 1847, for the opening of the Catholic church built for the missionaries by the French Admiralty, the Commandant turned up accompanied by a detachment of soldiers. Fr. Briot, a missionary of the Holy Heart of Mary at Libreville, refused to let “these Muslims and idolaters” enter the church! The Commandant was extremely annoyed and left, sending a report on these events to the minister. The minister sent Libermann a copy who then excused his missionaries with the words; “The best ones have died!”

Libermann subsequently wrote to Fr. Briot with some “rules of prudence”:

1) Don’t give the impression that you have doubts about their good intentions towards you. Let them feel your confidence and act as if you have no doubts about them; this can sometimes forestall them from showing their opposition, if they have any.
2) Be firm in doing your duty, but with humility and gentleness. It is of the nature of soldiers to use their authority proudly and aggressively: it is for us to calm down their aggression by our moderation, and their pride by our humility.

3) Try to avoid confrontations. These men are used to getting their own way from those subject to them… Once they have taken up a stance, they will not retreat and even if you get the better of them, they will make you pay dearly for it later on. If, despite all your precautions, a Commandant takes a decision that is beyond his competence, don’t get into an argument but let some time pass. Later, you can raise the problem again at an appropriate moment and talk things through in a calmer atmosphere.

4) When it becomes clear that you are in the right, don’t put on a triumphant air or give the impression that you have won the battle. Be sensitive and never steer the conversation back to this question. Be humble and charitable and avoid humiliating others, whatever the circumstances. Sometimes we want to emphasise that we are in the right and that they have overstepped the mark; this is a very bad way to proceed, because it simply increases our self-love and achieves nothing that is good.

5) When you have a request to make to the Commandant, do not normally put it in writing but go to see him and gradually steer the conversation round to the question. Prepare the ground and ask him in an atmosphere of relaxed conversation. For example, if you want to hold a liturgical celebration, or ask that the workers should not have to work on a Sunday, or that men and women should not be lodged in the same place in the workers’ camps, then go to see him and be prepared to modify your requests where necessary.

These “rules of prudence” show the realism and practical spirituality of Libermann. For him, if it was not practical, it would not be apostolic.

To Frédéric Le Vavasseur

Another example of Libermann’s approach to such situations can be found in a letter he wrote to Le Vavasseur. At that time, he was a missionary in Reunion, and he sent Libermann a
memorandum he had written to the Director of the Interior who had criticised Le Vavasseur for celebrating Mass for the black people in a chapel which was not legally authorised. Libermann replied to him as follows:6

I read your memorandum with great interest. I feel you adopted a rather harsh tone to the Director of the Interior. You would have done better to use more charitable words which were less wounding. You don’t say anything wounding as such, but you give the impression that you feel he is not being totally honest. There probably was some bad faith in what he had said to you, but a spirit of moderation and charity on your behalf would have been more in conformity with the spirit of our Congregation. The Lord sends us like sheep among wolves, but the sheep don’t bite the wolves when they are attacked! You would have done better to work on the assumption that the Director had been badly informed. For example, he could have picked up his information about you from people who were themselves either mistaken or malicious in your regard. Explain to him calmly and dispassionately that the information he had received was not exact. Peaceful and moderate language is what Our Lord always used. A sheep does not defend itself against an aggressive wolf. Moreover, humanly speaking, the sort of language that I am recommending will be much more successful in the long run.

Mgr. Truffet, the Vicar Apostolic of Dakar, refused all contact with the colonial administration. He was insistent on stressing the independence of the Church and wanted to abrogate the agreement that had been reached with the Minister for the Navy. He imposed a completely unsuitable diet on the priests working under him in the Vicariate. When he eventually fell ill as a result of his excessive mortifications, he refused to see the doctor of the French Administration, and he died after only a short time in Africa.

Libermann gives his views on the conduct of the bishop in a letter to Fr. Le Vavasseur:7

Despite his lofty ideals, Mgr. Truffet committed two mistakes which threatened the success of the whole Mission. They resulted from his extreme commitment to the glory of God and the exaltation of the holy Church—and his lack of experience; his undoubted holiness and virtue were no substitute for his naiveté.
His first mistake was one that cost him his life and which would have caused even more damage if he had lived. To give you some idea of the risks he took, I will tell you what happened to Fr. Briot. He was struck down by persistent dysentery in Gabon and went to Dakar to recuperate. He recovered almost completely, but fell ill again because of the stringent diet they were practising in Senegal. After the death of Mgr. Truffet, Fr. Briot continued to worsen, but the confreres were following the Vicar’s dietary principles and were unwilling to send him back to Europe to recuperate. They felt it was better for a missionary to die at his post than to withdraw for reasons of health. Finally, they decided to send him home and he made a complete recovery. The principles they had been following could have had catastrophic results for the whole Mission.

His second fault was in his administration and it came from his great purity of view and fervour. Having seen how the colonial clergy were impeded in their ministry, Mgr. Truffet blamed it on the government. He wanted to cancel the agreement with the government and all the missionaries were ready to back him. It would have meant refusing to accept the appointments that the government gave to nine missionaries and nine brothers. They would receive no free passage from Europe, no free transport from one post to another and no ration of bread and rice. In all, this would have meant a loss of 25,000 francs. But even worse than that, the missionaries would be seen as enemies of the government, resulting in many difficulties, arguments and sufferings.

I am sure (and the Nuncio agrees with me) that this would place the Mission in a perilous situation because it is still very fragile. So I wrote to our confreres that this was an administrative affair and they should not interfere in it; if they were having difficulties, they should let me know and I would try to do something about them. Missionaries can be very fervent, but moderation is not always their strong point. In general, they don't understand administration; they can only see the immediate difficulty and they want to get rid of it as soon as possible. They fail to see the hidden dangers.
For Libermann, fine principles are not enough; they must be applied “gently” and with discernment. He wrote to one of his missionaries, Fr. Lossedat:

Here is a very important principle for action that should always be applied: we must be on our guard against an “ideal” perfection. It is good to know how things should be arranged to lead to success and how to choose the best means for their implementation; but it is even more important to learn how to make adjustments, how to accommodate oneself to different people in whatever circumstance may arise.⁸

3) Mère Javouhey, a victim of the Bishop of Autun

Anne-Marie Javouhey (1779-1851) founded the Congregation of St. Joseph of Cluny in the diocese of Autun in 1827. In 1835, Bishop Héricourt of Autun imposed a new status on the Congregation, making the Bishop of Autun the Superior General. More difficulties ensued; he forced the postulants and novices to choose between following Mère Javouhey to Paris and staying at Cluny. To his great disappointment, 73 out of 80 decided to go to Paris. Finally, a sort of peace was restored between the bishop and the foundress. Her sisters went to Bourbon in 1817, Senegal in 1819, and French Guyana from 1828. But she was a strong character and wherever she went, there was often trouble between her and the local ecclesiastical authorities; in Guyana, the Bishop barred her from receiving the sacrament of confession and communion for 18 months!

On the other hand, Libermann was impressed by her. He wrote to Le Vavasseur on 26th May, 1844: “We have had contacts with the Superior which were useful. Several people speak against her, but I think most of it is just calumny and exaggeration. She has been through a great deal of suffering, but the gentle and humble way she has accepted it is much to her credit. The contacts we have had with her could help considerably in our work for the black people.”⁹

Libermann had written to Javouhey to benefit from her wide missionary experience. She was equally impressed by him, as is evident from one of her letters to a sister of her Congregation: “Within six months, I will travel to Rome with the saintly founder of a new order, dedicated to the conversion of the black people… You should see those wonderful priests!...The founder is a convert Jew…and he will become our spiritual superior; I intend to ask the Pope for this favour so that our holy bishops will have to agree to the arrangement.”
Mère Javouhey wanted to enlist the help of Libermann in her conflict with the Bishop of Autun, but he declined: “I think it would be better, Sister, if you did not mention our relationship to other people: you would attract the attention of all the enemies I have in the Archdiocese of Paris and elsewhere and expose me to the ire of your own.” He wrote to his confrère, Ignace Schwindenhammer: “As regards the question of superior, I am now even less enamoured of it: it would mean displacing both the Bishops of Autun and Beauvais and I have no desire to cross swords with either of them.”

He wrote to the Bishop of Autun on 13th September, 1845:

I have learnt from the Bishop of Amiens that the superior of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph intends to travel to Rome to ask that I be appointed superior of her Congregation. I want you to understand that I am in no way involved with Mère Javouhey in this affair. Two years ago, she came to see me for the first time and asked me to accept to be superior of her Congregation. Being ignorant of the situation and thinking that some good could come from it as regards our mission to the black people, I did not want to accept or refuse…But having now got to know the state of the Congregation of Saint Joseph, I can see that it is absolutely impossible for me to take on the role of superior. The work would be too heavy and the difficulties too great. I would have to neglect completely my own Congregation and I would run the risk of losing the good will of the Bishops. This would be the greatest affliction of all and the greatest danger to the work that God has called me to do.

4) Libermann’s difficulties with religious authorities.

Fr. Fourdinier, the Superior of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit had a monopoly for sending priests to the French colonies, but he refused to accept the missionaries of Libermann. Libermann wrote to Fr. Desgenettes on 17th. December, 1842: “We are given no territory…all doors are shut for us.” But Bishop Barron, the Vicar Apostolic of the Two Guineas, was looking for missionaries for West Africa and Desgenettes told Libermann. On the 20th December, 1842, Barron and Libermann drew up an agreement to send a group of Spiritans to Guinea.

“Fr. Fourdinier would block us completely if he had the power,” wrote Libermann to one of his missionaries. And to Le Vavasseur he said the same thing: “This holy man would be a great danger for us if he had the authority. He is doing everything he can to
destroy us, but from the very best of motives from his point of view. I think he is worried about the harm we could do to the Holy Spirit (Congregation).”

After the death of Fourdinier on the 5th January, 1845, Libermann made a suggestion to the Minister to unite the Holy Heart of Mary and the Spiritans. And to Mère Javouhey he wrote: “Not only have the Spiritans become useless in the Colonies; they are now very harmful. I feel ashamed to have to say this.”

The election of Fr. Leguay to succeed Fourdinier extinguished any hope of a union. Libermann wrote to Le Vavasseur:

I was thinking of a possible union of our Congregation with the Spiritans, but the new Superior, although a holy man, would be a total block to such a scheme; so there can no longer be any question of it as it would ruin our spirit. The Nuncio was very keen for us to take over the role of the Spiritans, but he is no longer intervening in this affair. So I fear that all the fine promises that the Minister made to the Nuncio concerning the colonies will now come to nothing.

Fr. Tisserant informed the Nuncio about the opposition of Fr. Leguay to Libermann:

He has declared open war on us. He accuses Libermann of bad faith and a lack of discretion…Finally, he is prophesying that as a punishment for the bad and indelicate manoeuvrings of Fr. Libermann (whom he refers to as an “intriguing hypocrite”), our society will come to a bad end. This is not an exaggeration and I could say a lot more.

Libermann wrote to Fr. Collin in Reunion:

There is no doubt that Fr. Leguay would do anything to get us out of Bourbon (Reunion), but he will not succeed…He has tried everything to get rid of us…But all his scheming against us has backfired, because the heads of departments are men of sound judgement and experience. Fr. Leguay has been lobbying incessantly against us, but I have never said anything against the Spiritans nor given the impression that I knew anything of Leguay’s moves against us. I have suffered enough in seeing this man of God act in such a way with the best of intentions: there is no way in which I want to insult God and cause scandal before men in the same way and interfere in the good that Fr. Leguay might achieve. So
"I will keep quiet, knowing that if God wants us to move out of Bourbon he will use this affair to bring it about. But if he still needs us there, the scheming of Fr. Leguay will not be able to move us. So let us abandon ourselves to divine Providence and remain in peace."¹⁷

So in spite of Leguay’s constant pestering of the Ministry, Libermann won over many “heads of department” by his continuous gentleness!

Libermann also had many problems in his dealings with Mgr. Dalmond, the Prefect Apostolic of Madagascar. Writing to Le Vavasseur, Libermann says:

“If the good Mgr. Dalmond had been a little more reasonable with us, a foundation for Madagascar could have easily been set up in Bourbon. I think he took me for an easy target, because I have always spoken to him with moderation, even when explaining things with which we were not happy. What you are telling me might be true in other circumstances – that I should be a bit more crafty and raise my voice if I want to get my own way - but I can’t go down that road. I prefer to explain my point of view in a calm and gentle way; then, if I am asked to agree to unacceptable conditions, I will refuse, and that’s that.”¹⁸

“Bishop Brady has deceived us”

Libermann did not know where to send his missionaries: Fourdinier refused to have them in the French colonies, Fr. Laval was on his own in Mauritius because the British did not want French priests working there, and nearly all of the first team of missionaries sent to Africa died after a very short time. Then he met Bishop Brady, the Vicar Apostolic of Australia. He painted a wonderful picture of his mission and, through his “beautiful promises”, convinced Libermann to send him some men. None of these promises were kept. Fr. Thévaux and his companions almost died and finally, the Bishop even forbade them to receive the sacraments!

Eventually, Fr. Thévaux took refuge on the island of Mauritius. Later on, Libermann wrote to him, urging him to learn from his sufferings in Australia:

“I want to say something about how you handled the problems in Australia.”
1) You did well in stressing that the agreement (with Bishop Brady) should be fulfilled in all its important points; for example, our insistence that we should be at least two in each community and that the superior should always be a member of our society. But perhaps you were a little too rigid regarding matters of less importance; in the circumstances in which you found yourselves, you should have given way as far as possible.

2) You didn’t always keep a cool head, but sometimes showed irritation and revulsion, probably because of the crying injustice of which you were victims. But we can commit many faults when we get too worked up and I hope you have learnt from the experience. Whatever the injustice that is committed against us, our souls must remain calm before God. Above all, we should avoid talking or acting when we feel our anger getting the better of us.

3) Perhaps, even probably, there was too much inflexibility in your conduct and words. You must be very wary of this fault of yours.

4) Finally, your letters to Bishop Brady were, in general, deferential and respectful, but sometimes, you were too sharp in the development of your ideas.

I feel that most of your faults were due to a lack of experience and that you will learn much for the future from what you have been through. You can learn a lot from sufferings and the fact that you have had to turn over everything that is in your mind many times will teach you lessons and help you to see your own defects more clearly.¹⁹

We can be amazed at the way Libermann urges Thévaux to profit from the injustices he suffered at the hands of Bishop Brady. But this is his normal spirituality: resentment can only paralyse, while humility is always a source of dynamism!

Archbishop Affre of Paris.

Shortly after the opening of the first novitiate, Libermann offered to vacate his position as Superior of the Society because of his bad relationship with the Archbishop of Paris. He wrote to Fr. Carbon, a priest of the Archdiocese:

We were hoping that after a little time, the obstacles that a new venture always comes up against would begin to
The only obstacle at the moment is myself...

...it does not matter if I am in charge or not.

The only obstacle at the moment is myself. From what I have heard from different sources, there has been a concerted effort to spread rumours about me amongst those closest to the Archbishop. I have no idea if these rumours have any substance. If you feel that this obstacle is insurmountable, you could tell the Archbishop that the work could progress perfectly well without me. If it succeeds in bringing glory to God, it does not matter if I am in charge or not. The important thing would be to find somebody acceptable to the Archbishop who would also have the confidence of those who have already joined us. I think Fr. de Brandt could fulfil this role, with God’s help.20 (Fr. de Brandt was a diocesan priest, a friend of Libermann and secretary to the Bishop of Amiens.)

Once the novitiate had opened at La Neuville after the uncertainties of 1841, Libermann believed that things would get better. But what could he do, faced with the Archbishop elect of Paris? “The only obstacle at the moment is myself.” he said, ready to step down in favour of Fr. de Brandt whom the Archbishop greatly esteemed. But Libermann soon recovered! Others were pushing him to seek a union with the Missionaries of the Holy Cross, but he remained faithful to the mission he had received from God, confirmed by Rome.

Archbishop Sibour of Paris

The next Archbishop of Paris threatened the legal status of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit after its fusion with the Holy Heart of Mary in September, 1848. Earlier in the year, Fr. Leguay, while he was still Superior of the Spiritans, obtained a decree from the Propaganda in Rome (11th March, 1848), modifying the 1824 statutes of the Congregation; amongst other things, it withdrew the authority that the Archbishop of Paris had enjoyed over the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.
Over the next two years, Libermann tried to explain to Bishop Sibour that since the Spiritans were now established in various dioceses in France and in many missions overseas, they could no longer depend on a single bishop but would now come directly under Rome. The Archbishop did not agree and he finally forced Libermann to sign a letter to the Propaganda, recognising the rights of the Archbishop. But at the same time, Libermann sent another confidential letter to the Propaganda, contradicting the one that Sibour had dictated to him. Rome dragged its feet on the subject, and the Nuncio invited Sibour to be patient. In the meantime, the Congregation was left a legacy of a chateau at Maulévrier and 2,000 francs, on condition that the Archbishop would testify to its legal status. The Archbishop agreed to do so as long as the Spiritans would recognise his authority over them and return to their former status. Libermann would not agree to these conditions and renounced the legacy that had been promised.

In conclusion, we can ask if the way in which Libermann dealt with disputes is still relevant to us today.

Our involvement in justice and peace cannot take the same form in a democracy with freedom of opinion as it would in a dictatorship, where any criticism of the regime could lead to a prison sentence or expulsion. Some discourses on justice and peace are not always relevant to situations where governments impose their will through injustice and violence. Moreover, foreigners have to be particularly discreet if they wish to remain in the country. Libermann, very much aware of the fragility of his young foundation, said that “the whole thing could be blown away by the slightest breeze.” (Memorandum to the Propaganda, 1846)

Some might say that the moderation and constant search for reconciliation of Libermann would simply help regimes guilty of injustice and stand in the way of more courageous and effective action. Others would reply that Javouhey and Libermann, in their historical context and in their own way, did a great deal to help the slaves while furthering the Christian mission in Africa.

The historical and cultural distance between us and the time of Libermann is very large. Our ecclesiology is not the same and neither is the role of NGOs or the weight of international or local opinion. Today, Libermann would not act in exactly the same way as he did in 1840. But his “spirit” is still very much a source of inspiration and dynamism for us. The Spiritan Rule
of Life says that "the charism of our founders…urges us to respond creatively to the needs of evangelisation of our time." (SRL 2)

Endnotes
1 Règle Provisoire, First Part, Chapter IX, art. VI (ND II p. 256), with an explanation in the Glose, pp. 50 f.
2 Glose. The Glose refers to a Libermann commentary on the Provisional Rule (1840) given in conferences to prospective members. This commentary is available indirectly through notes taken by Fr Lannurien. There is a presentation of this commentary in French: Règle Provisoire des Missionnaires de Libermann (règle de 1840). Texte et Commentaire. Introduction de F Nicolas, CSSp. Paris: 30 rue Lhomond, s.d. (1967), xxi et 229 pages ronéotypées, 21x31(pro manuscripto).
3 17th August, 1847. ND IX 253 f.
4 Bishop Barron was an Irish-born American.
5 2nd August, 1847. ND IX 239 f.
6 22nd August, 1844. ND VI 316 f.
7 24th. February, 1848. ND X 79-85.
8 15th April, 1846. ND VIII 112 f.
9 ND VI 206 f.
10 13th June, 1844. ND VI 235-237.
11 8th July, 1844. ND VI 264-265.
12 ND VII 302-304.
13 26th August, 1844. ND VI 330
14 9th March, 1845. ND VII 83 f.
15 6th September, 1845. ND VII 288.
16 5th. October, 1845. ND 478-480.
17 24th February, 1848. ND X 89.
18 10th December, 1845. ND VII 427.
19 24th February, 1848. ND X 94 f.
20 5th October, 1841. ND III 33 f.
Michael J. Kilkenny, C.S.Sp.

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**LeRoy discovered that he was not the fifth but the fifteenth Superior General...**

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**A MERGER, AN ATTEMPTED TAKEOVER...**

**TURNING POINTS IN THE SPIRITAN STORY**

**Introduction**

On 14th February, 1901, at a plenary session of the French Council of State, it was decreed that the civilly recognized Congregation of the Holy Ghost had ceased to exist. The reason given was that it had been replaced, since 1848, by the non civilly recognized Society of the Holy Heart of Mary. This judgment was based on what Congregation members themselves had publicly affirmed, namely, that Francis Libermann was their founder and first Superior General. They called themselves the Holy Heart of Mary Society in some official documentation and references were found to the ‘former’ Congregation of the Holy Ghost. The above decision by the French Council of State was akin to a Supreme Court decision today and thus seemed irreversible. For Congregation members, the scenario facing them was dispersal, a return to their dioceses of origin and the government taking over their property.

The Superior General of the time, Alexander LeRoy, had been a missionary in Africa and Vicar Apostolic of the Two Guineas when elected to leadership in the Congregation. He had no previous administrative experience in the Congregation. He read the government papers and believed them to be in complete conformity with the facts. However, the Spiritan archivist, Désiré Barillec, suggested to LeRoy that there may be more to the situation than met the eye. They made a detailed study of the historical documents and discovered that, not only did the Congregation of the Holy Ghost date back to 1703, but that it still legally existed both civilly and canonically. As part of a merger with the Holy Ghost Congregation in 1848, Propaganda Fide had suppressed the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary and told its members to join the Holy Ghost one. LeRoy discovered that he was not the fifth but the fifteenth Superior General of the Holy Ghost Congregation.

He immediately drew up a new memorandum for the Council of State with the correct documents, outlining its continuing civil legal status. After much lobbying, the Council of State reversed its original decision by a majority of just one vote. Incredibly, there were some within the Congregation who would have preferred suppression by the state than to accept that Libermann...
was not the founder of the Holy Ghost Congregation. In this article I hope to explore some of the reasons for the state of affairs that came to light within the Congregation in 1901.

1848 – The State of the Parties to the Proposed Union

In 1841 Propaganda Fide approved a project proposed by Libermann and his friends to establish a society for the evangelization and spiritual care of the Blacks of ‘Bourbon et de Saint-Domingue’. The new Society would adhere to the obligations of community life, obedience and poverty and it would be totally dependent on the Holy See. The approval was, legally speaking, ‘canonical praise’ from Cardinal Fransoni and Propaganda Fide, for a pious association of likeminded people to proceed with their plans. This was sufficient for Libermann and his friends. They launched their work in 1841 by opening a novitiate for the new Society in Amiens. They decided to call it ‘The Society of the Holy Heart of Mary’. Even though their numbers grew steadily over the next seven years the canonical status of the Society of the Immaculate Heart of Mary did not change. The political climate in France at that time was hostile to the Church and thus it would be very difficult to obtain civil recognition for this new work. The Holy Heart of Mary Society was comprised of thirty four priests, ten novices, twenty eight brothers and thirty four aspirants.

By 1848, The Congregation of the Holy Spirit had changed from being a Congregation of diocesan right at its foundation to one of pontifical right. It had managed to retain its civil legal existence in France. It remained in existence to train priests for the overseas French colonies, a different purpose than its founder had in mind. The Holy Ghost Congregation at this time had nineteen members. The seminary contained sixty aspirants. We must remember that this was a far healthier number than in 1845 when they had only about three members. The newly modified and approved Constitutions made conditions more attractive for others to join and for the first time all candidates were to be admitted as full members of the Congregation. Leguay had also received a special indult from the Holy See, dated 29th August, 1847, in which he was given permission for a period of one year to admit to the Congregation as full members people who had not passed through the seminary.
Context for the Proposed Union

Soon after Libermann presented his project to Propaganda Fide, on 11th May, 1840, it was pointed out to him that the foundation of another institute to work in the French colonies would only create tension with the Holy Ghost Congregation already working there. As a result, the idea of joining up with the latter Congregation was sown from an early stage. Also, Holy Heart of Mary missionaries often worked in the same territories as the Holy Ghost Congregation with mixed results as regards mutual acceptance. Libermann's missionaries were noted for their dedication to the poorest in the colonies, as well as their community discipline. It became clear to its leadership from an early stage, however, that the future growth of the Society could not be guaranteed without civil legal recognition. In the anti-Church atmosphere of the time in France, this was a very remote possibility. Libermann saw a solution to his problem in the union of the two Societies.

In 1842, Amable Fourdinier, the then Superior of the Holy Ghost Congregation, presented a ‘project of congregation’ to Propaganda Fide, this was a plan to renew the Congregation as well as the life of the clergy in the French colonies. Therefore, when Libermann approached Fourdinier about forming a union, the latter was not interested. His immediate plans for his Congregation's future did not include a union with Libermann's Society. The Holy Ghost Congregation intended, on its own, to supply personnel to work in the colonies, thus honouring its commitments to Propaganda Fide and the French Ministry of the Marine.

First Attempt at Union: 1845

Amable Fourdinier died in 1845 but, according to Libermann, things were as bad as ever in the Holy Spirit Seminary whilst the morale of the clergy in the colonies was at rock bottom. Libermann was convinced his Society could rectify many of the ills affecting the Holy Ghost Congregation and decided to propose a union to the new superior, Alexander Leguay. The latter had other intentions however and embarked on a project to form a second order of Holy Ghost members as well as relaxing the demands of the vow of poverty for its permanent members. The principal motive in renewing the Constitutions was to renew the Congregation and to retain jurisdiction and control over the provision of clergy to the French colonies. Libermann had obtained jurisdiction for his missionaries in West Africa, not from the superior of the Holy Ghost Congregation, but directly from Propaganda Fide. Needless to say, the relationship between
Libermann and Leguay remained cold and distant and thus not conducive to creating the trust necessary for union. The Holy Ghost members had a serious distrust of Libermann's intentions and wanted as far as possible to keep him at arms' length. This was not unconnected to his Jewish background. The Holy Ghost Congregation did not want to negotiate a union from a position of weakness either. By the end of 1845, the idea of union was shelved and indeed the whole project degenerated into name calling and mutual blame for the failure to come together. The time was not yet ripe.

Second Attempt at Union: 1848

Revolution was back in the air of French politics in 1848. There were two revolutions, one in February and the other in June. In the February revolution, the monarchy was abolished and the Republic proclaimed; those who supported the abolition of slavery won the day. Victor Schoelcher became Director of the Colonies and was determined to destroy the Holy Ghost Congregation. He was convinced erroneously that this Congregation had worked against the proposed freedom of the slaves. He attacked Leguay as an enemy of the new order. Worse still, Propaganda Fide told Leguay that they were going to entrust Guadeloupe and Martinique to the Vincentians because they were not satisfied with the Holy Ghost Congregation. With both Church and State losing confidence in him, Leguay decided that he was left with no other option but to resign immediately, which he did on March 2nd, 1848.

Alexander Monnet becomes Superior

The threat to annihilate the Holy Ghost Congregation still remained after this resignation. Cleverly, the Congregation chose Alexander Monnet as Superior and successor to Leguay. He had been a missionary in Reunion and a recognized champion for the freedom of the slaves there. He had received the honorary title of ‘Knight in the Legion of Honour’ from the French government for his work in the colonies. Ironically, he was so impressed with the work of the Holy Heart of Mary missionaries in Reunion that on one occasion he had asked to join them. Le Vavasseur, one of Libermann’s founding group, rejected him on the grounds that he was unsuited to community. Instead he joined the Holy Ghost Congregation in 1847 and a year later found himself dealing with Libermann on an equal footing as Superior. Even Victor Schoelcher reluctantly welcomed Monnet’s nomination because his abolitionist credentials were well known. Monnet worked to broaden the scope of missionary works beyond the French colonies as Leguay had wished to do. However, it soon
became clear that he was not cut out for life as an administrator. He also lacked many of the diplomatic skills necessary to deal with government officials. He felt ill at ease outside of the missionary pastoral context. He appealed to his friend Libermann for help in dealing with Schoelcher and others. Libermann replied that not only did he want to help Monnet but that for years he had desired to form a union of the two institutes. Monnet immediately went to see Libermann and suggested that negotiations begin to bring about the merger. From the beginning of May, 1848, it seemed the time was ripe.14

First Steps

Monnet appointed his assistant Loewenbruck to negotiate an agreement with Libermann. Loewenbruck had returned from Rome only a few months earlier with the newly approved Constitutions for the Holy Ghost Congregation. Libermann came to the seminary in Paris a few days before Pentecost Sunday, 1848, with the outline of an agreement on forming a union. Monnet was under intense pressure from many of his members and had to be very careful not to be seen to be giving in to the demands of Libermann. On the Feast of Pentecost, June 10th, 1848, both parties met in plenary session and unanimously accepted the principle of a merger. The details were to be worked out later. The one outstanding thorny issue was who would be the superior of the new institute. Most agreed that it should be Libermann but then how could Monnet step down without giving the impression that he was being pushed aside by Libermann’s Society?15 Libermann had a face-saving idea. He was aware that Propaganda Fide was looking for a candidate to be appointed Vicar Apostolic of Madagascar. If Rome could be persuaded to accept the nomination of Monnet for that post, then that would leave the way open for himself to become the Superior of the Congregation. They decided to go to Rome together to consult with Propaganda Fide. However, because of an impending revolution, Loewenbruck was sent in their place, with two letters: one from Monnet outlining the desirability of the merger and the other from Libermann recommending Monnet for the Vicariate of Madagascar.

Detailed Private Agreement on Union Reached

The two Institutes met and on August 24th of that year came to the following agreement regarding the precise conditions under which they agreed to unite:
Article 1: The Congregation will remain dedicated to the Holy Ghost, under the invocation of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Article 2: The Constitutions of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost, already having been approved by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, will be retained, save the modifications outlined in the following article.

Article 3: As regards poverty, all the members will bind themselves:

1° To renounce, for all the time they remain in the Congregation, the use of every good and revenue that the above mentioned Constitutions had allowed to be retained and be at their disposition.

2° To never have in their possession any money without the authorization of their Superior.

3° In the case where the Superior would give them money for their expenses, once the time and the circumstances of this authorization has expired, they will render to him an account of these expenses and return to him whatever has been left over.

Article 4: The members of the Congregation who, every time that, either by signature or otherwise, wish to indicate the name of the Congregation to which they belong to, will express the double title named in article one.

Article 5: The admission of members to the second order will be suspended until a new decision [is taken] by Propaganda.

Article 6: A copy of this accord will be sent to the members of the two Institutes who from now on will consider themselves as brothers and love one another as such. Any points not foreseen in these Constitutions will be instituted in future rules voted on by the majority.16

Monnet’s Letter17

In his letter, dated 5th July, 1848, Monnet says that since he was elected Superior of the Holy Ghost Congregation, he had
received overtures from Libermann about forming a fusion of the two institutes. “I desire this fusion with all my heart, I believe it will be very useful for the good of both institutes which have the same aim, and which are both already present together in a number of areas such as Bourbon and Senegal.”

We now get a glimpse of what was agreed by both Libermann and Monnet regarding the fusion: “Of course, it is understood that the congregation [Holy Hear of Mary] will accept our Constitutions, already approved twice by Sacred Propaganda and the French Government, which gives us privileges that we wish to retain.”

**Libermann’s Letter**

In his letter, dated 7th July, 1848, Libermann is responding to an earlier letter from Propaganda Fide in which he was asked to suggest names that could be considered for the office of Vicar Apostolic of Madagascar. He speaks about the project of union between the two institutes and how close they are to making it a reality, with the approval of Propaganda Fide of course. He says, “In effect, the spirits and the hearts are already united and the project is well advanced. Fr. Loewenbruck, the one carrying this letter, is charged to give an account of our plan to Your Eminence.”

Later in the letter he outlines the one remaining problem to be overcome before union can be achieved. Who will be the superior after the union! He says that the two superiors discussed the possibility of their resigning and asking the new united Congregation to elect a new superior. Libermann says that, as the majority of the members of the new society would be from the Society of which he is Superior, his members would not accept any superior other than himself. Monnet had offered to resign but the members of his Congregation would not countenance the associated dishonour. The solution Libermann proposes to Propaganda Fide is that of promoting Monnet to the vacant office in Madagascar: “I have already spoken about this to the members of the Holy Ghost Congregation who believe unanimously that their Superior is worthy and capable of fulfilling the duties of this responsibility and they think that this would be the surest means of removing the last remaining difficulty to the union so desired by both Institutes. I am therefore making the proposal to Your Eminence.” He concludes that whatever decision is taken in this matter will be seen by him as an expression of the divine will.

**Loewnebrook’s Memo to Propaganda Fide**

This ‘memo’ contained six points outlining the principal motives for seeking to unite:

...which gives us privileges that we wish to retain.

...this would be the surest means of removing the last remaining difficulty to the union...
1) The two Institutes, according to their Rules and Constitutions, have the same aim.

2) By the fusion, the Congregation of the Holy Ghost would benefit from the entrance of excellent and numerous personnel; and the society of the Holy Heart of Mary would be better protected by the shield of legal existence, which it could never obtain in France, but which the Holy Ghost Congregation possessed.

3) In Senegal and Bourbon, the missionaries of the two societies are already in some conflict; the same situation could arise later elsewhere and result in serious problems, while the fusion would infallibly prevent such conflict.

4) M. Libermann is a man of reconciliation, he has the full confidence of the members of both Institutes, and is consequently totally suitable to direct the whole work; M. Monnet seems more suited to the missions for which he has a particular aptitude.

5) The two Institutes, united under the same superior such as M. Libermann, will form a more solid body, and will be better able to sustain itself in the great difficulties of the current situation in France.

6) The House of the Holy Ghost Congregation in Paris is big enough to accommodate all the personnel of both Institutes when dissolved and united into one; consequently there will be a great reduction in expenses; [this is] something which is very important during this period of financial crisis which may continue for several years, thus compromising the existence of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary whose current resources are almost nil, while those of the Holy Ghost are at this time superabundant.  

The Decision of Propaganda Fide

When Loewenbruck reached Rome, he found an air of political unrest there also so he managed to complete his business speedily with Propaganda Fide. He had the authorization of the two Superiors to negotiate an agreement with the Holy See. We may recall that it was this same person who had returned to Paris in February, 1848, with the newly approved Constitutions of the Holy Ghost Congregation. Among the changes made, we can mention the new full pontifical status accorded the Congregation. Loewenbruck made a decision that, given the circumstances he
found in Rome, it would be more expedient not to mention the modifications to the Constitutions that were agreed upon verbally between Libermann and Monnet. This would only slow up the decision making process within Propaganda Fide and he was anxious not to remain too long in Rome lest he get caught up in another revolution. In a general meeting of Propaganda Fide, dated 4th September, 1848, the union of the two Institutes was approved as well as the nomination of Monnet to the Vicariate Apostolic of Madagascar. The decision was approved by the Pope at an audience given on 10th September.23 Henry Koren comments, “A young and vigorous heart had been transplanted into an aging body. Would the two fuse into a single whole giving promise of many years of life or prove to be incompatible and lead to final disintegration?”24

The Notification of the Decree of Union
Cardinal Fransoni wrote to Monnet and Libermann on 26th and 28th September respectively informing them of the decision that had been taken to unite the two Institutes. A major surprise rested in what was said in the second paragraph of that decree: “It is your task to bring about this merger of your two Institutes in such a way that from now on the one called the most Holy Heart of Mary ceases to exist and its associates and members are aggregated to the Congregation of the Holy Ghost, thereby becoming its associates and members, sharing the same rights and privileges and being subject to the same disciplinary rules.”25 There was no mention of the conditions that had been agreed by the two Institutes because they had not been submitted as part of the dossier by Loewenbruck.

Reaction to the Notification
Libermann was stunned. He deplored not so much the way the union was brought about but especially the absence of the fundamental conditions under which they had agreed to unite with the Holy Ghost Congregation.26 Shortly before the arrival of the decision of Propaganda Fide, Libermann had written that it was not true that they were being dissolved into the community of the Holy Ghost. He understood that they were uniting their community with the Holy Ghost one and that he would remain Superior of the new community or the Institute resulting from the two.27 His own members reacted angrily, some of whom accusing him of treason.

Michel Legrain correctly points out the absence of canonical clarity in the request to Rome for union. In speaking about the possibility of the two original Superiors resigning to allow...
the election of a new one after union, it suggests they were requesting a union whereby the two original Institutes would be suppressed in order to form a new one. Yet, they also spoke about the need to retain the advantages that civil recognition gave the Holy Ghost Congregation. This implied that it had to remain in existence because its civilly recognized constitutions had to be retained. The canonists at Propaganda Fide had to examine the civil and ecclesiastical position of both Congregations and according to Legrain, they chose the only option that would not have compromised the future of either Institute.28

**Unfinished Business for Libermann**

All of Libermann’s renowned leadership and diplomatic skills were called into action at the news of the extinction of his community. On reflection, and after calming the spirits of his own members, he accepted the union as it was presented by Rome. He felt certain also that he could convince the Holy See to make the necessary changes to the Constitutions that had been agreed by both Superiors but which were not submitted by Loewenbruck. He immediately set out for Rome.

The first item on his agenda was confirmation of his election as Superior in place of Monnet. At the 24th August meeting, it appears that he was nominated by Monnet as his successor even though he was not a member of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost then. He wanted the Holy See to give a ‘sanation’ to what Libermann considered an illegal decision by Monnet. His election as Superior was confirmed by the Holy See on 3rd November, 1848, replacing Alexander Monnet who resigned in order to take up the office of Apostolic Vicar of Madagascar.

He then set about discussing with Propaganda Fide the core points agreed by each Institute on 24th August. Libermann received a verbal agreement that all his requests would be eventually met. In a decree of 3rd November, 1848, the Holy See authorized the Holy Ghost Congregation to have as its full title, “The Society of the Holy Spirit under the invocation of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary.”29

In 1849, Libermann wrote the Rule of Life for the Congregation. This complemented the Constitutions in that it outlined the way the community was to live out its religious community life. The Holy Heart of Mary community structure and customs were thus largely introduced into the Holy Ghost Congregation even though the old Constitutions were retained.30 This fact calmed the hearts of many of Libermann’s more
vocal dissenters as it confirmed for them many of his previous assurances that, apart from the change in the title of their Society, little would change in their customary religious lifestyle.\(^{31}\)

On 4\(^{th}\) November, 1848, Libermann wrote to Propaganda Fide requesting the suppression of the second order\(^{32}\) of Holy Ghost members and the introduction of a strict religious poverty into the Constitutions as had been agreed at the 24\(^{th}\) August meeting with Monnet.\(^{33}\) Eventually, Libermann received a positive reply to both these requests in a decree dated 10\(^{th}\) July, 1850.\(^{34}\)

Perhaps it is a bit too harsh to agree with the comment made by Michel Legrain that, “Ce que le Saint Coeur semblait canoniquement perdre dans l’acte d’union lui même était réintroduit par la petite porte.”\(^{35}\) (What the Holy Heart of Mary seemed to lose canonically in the act of union itself was reintroduced by the back door.) Libermann spent nearly two years putting in place the previously agreed conditions for union, which may not have been necessary had John Loewenbruck included them in his dossier to Propaganda Fide in the first place. What can be said without fear of contradiction is that the strict religious poverty insisted on by Libermann and his community, would have been warmly applauded by a person called Claude Francis Poullart des Places.

Conclusion

Let us return to Alexander Le Roy. Having confronted the anti-clericalist elements within the French government in 1901 and saved the Congregation from suppression, Le Roy set about clarifying the historical facts surrounding the Congregation of which he was Superior General to identify the source of the confusion. It appears that after Libermann’s death in 1852, his successor, Ignatius Schwindenhammer and fellow former Holy Heart of Mary members created the myth of a ‘new’ Congregation born of the ‘merger’. This was spread as the ‘truth’ both inside and outside the Congregation but not interestingly in their dealings with the government.\(^{36}\) The ‘myth’ backfired badly on the Congregation in 1901.

Feelings ran very high as regards the interpretation of what exactly happened in 1848. At a General Chapter of the Congregation, in 1906, it was agreed that a document be prepared outlining the full facts of its history with supporting documentary evidence. This was published in 1917, for private circulation, by the Mother House, Paris, under the title: *Notes et
...to bring closure to a debate that had raged for almost twenty years.

Documents Relatifs à L’Histoire de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit Sous la Garde de l’Immaculé Coeur de la B. V. Marie. It clearly shows that the Holy Heart of Mary Society ceased to exist in 1848 and that the present Congregation was founded by Claude François Poullart des Places in 1703.

The General Chapter of 1919 returned to the subject and attempted to bring closure to a debate that had raged for almost twenty years. It declared the founder of the Holy Ghost Congregation to be Claude François Poullart des Places, dating from 1703. Francis Libermann was to be honoured “as the second founder and spiritual Father, to whom not only do we owe the prolongation of our existence, but our development as well as our religious life, our apostolic vigour and spirit.” In its declaration, covering seven points, the conclusion drawn was: “Consequently, the Chapter, verifying that the history of the Congregation has been explained with all desired impartiality in the work entitled: Notes et Documents, etc., declares that the question is closed.”

Rumblings of discontent lingered on, however.

There can be little canonical discussion about what occurred in 1848. The Society of the Holy Heart of Mary, as yet not formally recognized by Propaganda Fide, was declared to no longer exist from 4th September, the date of the decree from the Holy See. In the same decree, the former members of this pious association were aggregated into the civilly and canonically recognized Congregation of the Holy Ghost. These are the principal facts. However, I believe that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that had times been different and the civil anti-clericalist atmosphere not been all pervasive, ideally Monnet and Libermann would have asked Propaganda Fide to suppress both institutes and to form a new one. Circumstances dictated that the decree handed down by Rome suppressing the Holy Heart of Mary Society was the only viable option. Libermann, the superior of the suppressed Society, was nominated the Superior General of the Holy Ghost Congregation with the agreement of the members of both parties. This is not the usual outcome of a fusion but more likely the outcome of a union. The fusion/union certainly gave new life to an ailing tree judging by the fruit it produced.

Endnotes

1 Propaganda Fide is the Vatican Congregation that oversees missionary work. It was sometimes referred to simply as Propaganda. Today it is known as the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

2 H. Koren, To the Ends of the Earth, Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1983, pp. 349-351.
Notes et Documents relatifs à l’histoire de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit sous la Garde de l’Immaculé Cœur de la B.V. Marie, Paris : Maison Mère, 1917, (Subsequently ND Histoire) p. 41: “[…] bien que la Sacrée Congrégation ait résolu d’examiner cette affaire avec plus de maturité et de réserver son approbation pour une autre époque, elle a cru néanmoins devoir, en attendant, vous répondre, pour vous exhorter à persévérer avec vos associés dans votre dessein, et ne rien négliger, chacun en particulier, pour répondre à votre vocation.”

Koren, To the Ends of the Earth, pp. 204-205.


H. Koren, To the Ends of the Earth, p. 200.


Koren, To the Ends of the Earth, pp. 154-165, for a more detailed discussion of the principal problems affecting the colonial clergy at this time.


Koren, To the Ends of the Earth, pp. 150-151.


ND IX, Appendix, p. 184, for an account of the deliberations of the General Council prior to admitting Monnet to membership.

Koren, To the Ends of the Earth, p. 152.


ND Histoire 52-53: the following signed the agreement: Monnet, Superior of the Holy Ghost Congregation; Libermann, Superior of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary; Warnet, priest of the Holy Ghost; Gaultier, honorary canon; Vidal, priest of the Holy Ghost; Briot, priest of the Holy Heart of Mary; Boulanger, priest of the Holy Heart of Mary; François, priest of the Holy Heart of Mary; Schwindenhammer, priest of the Holy Heart of Mary.

H. Le Floch, (ed), L’acte d’union du vénérable Libermann et ses disciples à la Congrégation du Saint Esprit, d’après les actes et les documents de la S. Congrégation de la Propagande (=L’acte d’union), Pour distribution privée, Rome, Séminaire Français, 1915, pp. 31-32. Among the documentation in this booklet is a letter from C. Laurenti, Secretary to Propaganda Fide, dated 10th May, 1915, confirming that every document emanating from that Congregation and published in this booklet
Le Floch, *L’acte d’union*, p. 32: “Je désire cette fusion de tout mon coeur, je la crois fort utile pour le bien des deux congrégations, qui ont le même but et qui se trouvent déjà en présence dans plusieurs endroits, notamment à Bourbon et au Sénégal.”

Le Floch, *L’acte d’union*, p. 32: “Il est bien entendu que la congrégation admettrait nos constitutions, déjà approuvées deux fois par la Sacrée Propagande et le Gouvernement Français, ce qui nous donne des privilèges que nous devons garder.”

Le Floch, *L’acte d’union*, p. 33: “En effet, les esprits et les coeurs sont déjà unis et le projet est fort avancé. M. l’abbé Loewenbruck porteur de cette lettre est chargé de rendre compte de notre plan à Votre Éminence.”

Le Floch, *L’acte d’union*, p. 33: “[…] j’ai donc parlé de cet objet aux membres de la communauté du Saint-Esprit qui tous unanimément croient leur supérieur digne et capable de remplir les devoirs de cette charge et pensent que ce serait le moyen le plus sûr d’obvier à la dernière difficulté qui reste à l’union tant désirée des deux sociétés; je me suis donc offert à en faire la proposition à Votre Éminence.”


Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth*, p. 58: “Qua propter vestrum nunc erit negotium istud unionis duarum congregationum vestrarum ita perficere, ut, cessante ex nunc ea quae sub titulo est Sanctissimi Cordis Beatae Mariae Virginis, istius Socii et Alumni aggregentur Congregationi Sancti Spiritus, ejusque Socii et Alumni fiant eorumdem jurium et privilegiorum particeps, necnon ipsidem disciplinae Regulis subjecti.”


Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth*, p. 60: “Sodalitium Sancti Spiritus sub invocatione Immaculati Cordis Beatae Mariae Virginis.”


The second order was approved by Rome in the revision of the Constitutions approved in 1848. The plan was that those priests in the colonies who would not opt to become full members of the Holy Ghost Congregation, by undergoing a two year novitiate, would become part of a second order after the model of the Third Order of Franciscans. These would be spiritually affiliated to the Spiritans. Through the second order, the Spiritans hoped to influence for the better the lifestyle of many clergy in the colonies and to bring an element of control and vigilance to a situation where these were markedly absent.
33ND *Histoire*, pp. 61-66, for the full letter.
34ND *Histoire*, pp. 73-74, for the complete decree.
38*Le Chapitre Général de 1919*, p. 5, no. 1, 7º.
Adélio Torres Neiva, C.S.Sp.

Fr. Torres Neiva was a former member of the Spiritan General Council. A history graduate of the University of Coimbra, he was a member of the Academy of History (Portugal). He taught missiology at the Catholic University of Lisbon. He was director of the revue “Missão Espiritana” and also of the journal of the Conference of Religious in Portugal, “Vida Consagrada.” He died in 2009 and his study of Joachim Alves Correia has been adapted by José Costa, CSSp.

(Translated by John Kilcrann, C.S.Sp.)

JOACHIM ALVES CORREIA, C.S.SP.  
CHAMPION OF THE POOR ON THREE CONTINENTS

Fragments of a Life

Father Joachim Alves Correia (1886 – 1951), a Spiritan missionary, was one of the most prominent figures in Church circles and social life in Portugal during his lifetime. He studied theology in France, in Chevilly-Larue, and was ordained to the priesthood on October 28, 1910, just a few days after the setting up of the Republic in Portugal. He requested to be sent as a missionary to Angola, but because of the political situation the country was facing, he was sent to Nigeria, which was then a British colony, to work in Eke on Bishop Shanahan’s project. Some time later he left for Enugu with a group of emigrants who were working there in the coal mines. He remained with this group for about eight years. There he set up a secondary school that still functions. His name is still remembered today in Nigeria; he stayed there until 1919.

Around this time Bishop Moisés Alves de Pinho began the restoration of the Province of Portugal, and Father Alves Correia was one of his chief collaborators. He founded and directed a missionary magazine, Missões de Angola e Congo (The Missions of Angola and the Congo), and in 1922 he became mission procurator. He held this function until 1945. Working as procurator, he cared for missionaries as they arrived and departed; he worked at mission promotion; he gave talks all over the country and wrote a few dozen books and over a thousand articles in various journals and magazines.

Seara Novo (The New Harvest) was the magazine he most frequently wrote for. This publication provided a link between various writers focusing on the values of democracy and the Metanóia group whose membership was largely of university-linked Catholics, who wanted to renew the Church from within because they believed it was out of touch and was overly Tridentine in its approach for that time. He encouraged them to hope for a Church council which would bring renewal.

Alves Correia was a young priest with a passion for the gospel and a passion for the poor. He knew how to read the signs of the times. He used his ability as a gifted writer to alert the sleeping consciences of a people who had not only been hoodwinked but
also oppressed. His articles and his talks intensely annoyed the dictatorial regime of Salazar, which maintained the people in ignorance and poverty and gave no indication of wishing to open itself to democracy.

An article that he wrote in 1946 and published in the A República entitled O Mal e a Caramunha (Evil and Murmuring) was the straw that broke the camel’s back and provoked the process that led to his expulsion and exile. The Congregation of the Holy Spirit now faced a dilemma: either it would have to encourage him to leave the country discreetly, or he would be arrested and thrown into Tarrafal prison where political prisoners were held. With considerable fear that governmental vindictiveness would bring negative consequences for the congregation, especially for the missionaries working in Angola, the Portuguese Province, with the support of the Mother House, decided to send him to the United States in February 1946.

He received a warm welcome from the American confreres. He was also intrigued with social progress in the United States. However, Father Alves Correia had difficulties in finding a pastoral ministry where he would feel that he was useful to the people and be fulfilled as a Spiritan. He was sent first to San Diego, California, to be assistant pastor in a parish of Portuguese immigrants. The impression given was that there he found life too easy and without much purpose. The work that he took on did not fulfill him. He tried to fill the void by preaching some retreats and by writing for a Portuguese newspaper based in New Bedford called Diário de Notícias (Daily News). His articles were very widely read and commented on and the Portuguese government again began to take notice. An angry Salazar demanded that the superiors silence him. The provincial contacted the Generalate to notify it of what was happening. The response from the Superior General was not the expected one: “Having consulted the Council, I prohibit him in the name of the vow, to write anything for the newspapers.”

He humbly accepted the decision of the General Council but felt useless as an assistant pastor. Angered with the prohibition to write, Father Alves Correia considered leaving the congregation. He wrote to the Prefect Apostolic of Portuguese Guinea, who accepted him. Becoming aware of the situation, the U.S. Provincial, Father Collins, offered him a professorship at Duquesne University. He very willingly accepted this proposal.
Between 1947 and his death in 1951, Father Alves Correia taught politics and ethics at Duquesne University. The peace that he now enjoyed allowed him to engage in an extensive correspondence on social questions with Portuguese and American friends. During vacation periods he gave conferences and retreats to immigrants. In this way he made contact with Dorothy Day, a Christian anarchist who became a driving force in the Christian renewal of society. Day was the founder of the Catholic Worker. Here, Father Alves Correia contributed articles where he presented his social thinking. He wrote over 500 articles during the period he spent at Duquesne.

The historian of the Congregation, Henry Koren, who was also a professor at the same university, commented about him: "I always had a great admiration for him and his intrepid criticism of the Salazar government. He was an excellent professor even with the Portuguese accent which characterized his use of English." In the dining room of Trinity Hall in Duquesne there is a mural of the last Supper. The talented painter placed known faces on the apostles around Christ. One of these apostles has the head of Father Alves Correia.

He died in a Pittsburgh hospital on June 1, 1951, from cancer. He had been unable to return to Portugal to say a final farewell to his loved ones, to his confreres and friends. His funeral took place on the fifth of the same month in the university church and was presided over by the rector, Father Vernon Gallagher, joined by almost fifty priests as concelebrants. To perpetuate his memory, the Portuguese Spiritans gave the name Center Father Alves Correia (C.E.P.A.C.) to the center of welcome and support for immigrants and refugees, which they founded in 1992. His political rehabilitation came about in 1980 when he was decorated posthumously with the Official of the Order of Liberty (Oficial da Ordem da Liberdade) medal by the then-President Mário Soares.

**Principal Ideas in his Thinking**

It is above all through his writings that we can glimpse the richness he left us: the magazine, journal and newspaper articles; the conferences he gave were the pulpits where he announced the Reign of God. His literary work is characterized by two great thought lines: the goodness of God and the dignity of the human person. Father Alves Correia was a missionary, and being a missionary meant announcing the gospel in the new context of his day: a context without liberty of thought and a Church which accepted this and had absolutely no impact on society. He was in
fact an evangelizer in the society of his time in the difficult space of the intellectual world and culture.

**The Goodness of God**

His thinking immersed itself in the Gospel of the Beatitudes where the poor in spirit, the pure of heart, mercy and love, and the persecuted for the cause of justice are all exalted. As a point of departure, Father Alves Correia plunged deeply into the love of God. For him, everything emanated from the true image of God. In defining this image, the attributes and adjectives most commonly used were infinite goodness, love, infinite love, omnipotent love, and goodness without limit, mercy, divine mercy, infinite truth and supreme truth. For him, God was Father. When God made us children, God’s manner of being was communicated to us: goodness, mercy, compassion and heart. For him, the Christian was someone who inherited the heart of God.

**The Extent of the Reign of God**

Father Correia, at the request of various readers, gathered into one volume a series of articles that he had written, which he called *A Larguez do Reino de Deus* (The Extent of the Reign of God). Two further books were published: *De que Espírito Somos* (Of What Spirit are We) and the *Vida Mais Alta* (The Higher Life).

In his broad vision, the Reign of God surpassed the horizons of time and space and was something much greater than the Church. The Church was the privileged historical and visible setting of the Reign of God, but this Reign extended itself to all people of good will. The Holy Spirit works intensely in many souls that the prejudices of race and the errors of history separated, but here Christ also works, even though in a mysterious way. All people are children of God, and God sees them and loves them despite the walls history constructs to divide peoples and religions.

The Reign of God takes in not only separated Christians, but includes all people of good will. Father Correia commented “Those in the Reign of God and His Christ, by divine grace are all those who are sincere, good, and loyal, even though they are lost or have gone astray without fault, or because of stubbornness in the mists of ideological confusions, even though they distrust the official Church and its clergy, or even if they have been tempted by the illusion of heresy and revolt. True adversaries of Christ are those who are selfish, sensual by principle, the cynical and hypocrites and all
those who consciously subscribe to lies or injustice, no matter what sect they belong to, even no matter if they wish to be regular Catholics or party members.” For Father Correia, the Reign of God was the open arms of a father for whom all are children.

This largesse of the Reign of God was characterized by a profound respect and love for the poor and the rich, for Catholics and non-Catholics, and for believers and non-believers. He commented “The Heavenly Father commands the sun and the rain to visit the fields of the just and sinners.” (Matthew 5:45) For this reason he made numerous references to Saint Francis of Assisi, the poverello, whom he admired, a person who sang the praises of God, who included all creatures: Brother Sun, the rain, the wind and even Sister Death.

**The Reign of God and the Church**

Alves Correia drew a distinction between the Church and the Reign of God. The Church exists in time because of divine initiative, divine gifts and human structures, and is situated in history. The Reign of God is God’s plan for the salvation of humanity; it is heavenly, eschatological and is greater than time and history. The Church, inserted as it is in the world, is marked by sin.

The Reign of God is holiness: the values of the Reign of God are bigger than the Church. During the course of history, the Reign of God has become visible in the Church, but this presence of God’s Reign in the Church, even if it is destined to grow, is always mysterious and germinative. The Church is not identified with the Reign of God; it is the sign and sacrament of this Reign.

**The Dignity of the Human Person**

A second element that demonstrates the extent of the Reign of God is the dignity of the human person. For Father Alves Correia, humanity created in the image and likeness of God was as sacred as God. For him, democracy consisted in liberty of spirit, in fraternity and equality -- all of these as seen from on high, from the heart of God. Respect for the individuality and dignity of the human person was seen as contrary to authoritarianism, which smothers individual initiative.

Father Alves Correia was passionate about the dignity of the human person. His writings are eloquent expression of this. He commented: “*The dignity of the human person is so great that compared to it, all other understandings of dignity invented by*
human beings melt into insignificance. Before God, that is before Supreme Truth and Reality as Saint Paul said, there is neither slave nor free, Greek nor barbarian, Jew nor Gentile, there is neither man nor woman. What exists are children of God who have rights, and if these are harmed it is God who will feel the injury.”

All humans should be respected because their dignity comes from God, and this dignity cannot be attacked or ignored by anyone. An offence committed against a fellow human being is an offence committed against God. In the Reign of God there is neither small nor great; there is no difference in the rights of men and women. All are children of God, all are brothers and sisters. For this reason every human being should be treated with humility and love, and their liberty should be respected. It is from this liberty that true love and each individual personality emanate. This demands respect for those who may think differently or indeed for those who err. Father Correia lived at a time when all truth was one and came from the regime in power; it was for this reason that he suffered persecution.

**Human Rights**

**The Right to Liberty**

The dignity of the human person demands that each person’s rights be respected. Human rights were promulgated by the Gospel. Amongst these rights, Father Alves Correia emphasized liberty since this was the most commonly attacked right in his day. We all have the right to defend our liberty as well as a sacred duty to respect the rights of others. Rights and duties are sacred spaces that mutually interact, and nobody in the name of their own liberty has the right to oppress the liberty of other people. However, Father Alves Correia did not speak from abstract theory. The doctrine he outlined was for human governance in the context of earthly realities. For this reason he spoke of democracy as a regime of liberty. He commented: “When we exalt democracy as the most human, perfect and Christian form of organizing social life, nobody sees us as fools who do not comprehend the defects in democracies. To err is also human. The truth is that democracy is an effort at liberty in equality and for fraternity.”

In spite of the defects of democracy, it permits liberties that are an untouchable right whenever such liberties are for the common good, when they favor and defend equal opportunities and serve to promote the full capacity of humans in society. Obviously, defending democracy during a dictatorship had political implications.
The Right to a Dignified Life

To respond to poverty, which impedes a dignified life, an evangelical response is necessary that will focus not only on ourselves, but also on our goods -- bread shared for a new world. A vast multitude of brothers and sisters, nearby and far away, await our open hands in order to feel and proclaim that “God is Lord, the only and true Lord of the goods of all the earth.”

Already during his time, Father Alves Correia, attentive to the social and political reality as well as social inequalities, denounced in a prophetic style: “We do not know if we ourselves will be the witnesses of the noisy and painful fall of the admirable civilization which capitalism constructed. But when we see the ever more numerous and wretched victims of this civilization, we don’t need to be prophets to imagine the force of the storm which is coming.” Without the collaboration of all - poor and rich, developed countries and underdeveloped countries, it would be impossible to leave the infernal circle that is the poverty of the masses.

The right to human dignity cannot be used as an excuse to give to the poor only what is left over. There is no justice when spending on that which is superfluous amounts to what could resolve the hunger of so many brothers and sisters. There is no justice when confronted with the most elementary needs of others; we engage in blind consumerism with the desire to have more and more, thus forgetting that material goods are for all humanity and not only for this or that person.

The Church cannot involve itself directly in concrete political action, but it has the duty to pass judgment on equity and justice. Prophetic denouncement is the mission of the Church. The silence of the Church because of fear, opportunism or vanity arising from rubbing shoulders with the powerful is not the Church of the Beatitudes of the Reign of God.

The Church must be a light: announcing and denouncing to rich and poor is its mission. This mission is both an imperative and a duty. Its duty is to call on the rich and powerful not to be slaves of riches, not to forget the family of God to which they belong, and to remember that they administer their earthly goods as people who have brothers and sisters with the same rights to life and joy. It needs to say to the poor that they also are people -- free and children of God, and that they should never sell their souls and their liberty for pleasure or for bread; that they are brothers and sisters of all humanity and that they cannot, if they want to...
avoid humiliating themselves, give up their rights as children of God for a plate of beans or for “bread and circuses.” For Father Correia, the poor have a voice and they have the right and duty to shout out. The encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XIII and *Quadragesimo Anno* of Pius XI were both sources of inspiration and reflection for him.

The Right to Political Participation -- the Church in the Modern World

A problem as big as poverty could not be solved by individual initiatives alone. A public social and political initiative would be necessary. Such an initiative on the part of Christians could provide an extraordinary dynamism to force those responsible to resolve the problems.

The right of participation could not be ignored by Christians, who neglect a duty and disobey God when they place themselves at the edge of social and public life. It is as a citizen and in the name of temporal interests that the Christian cares efficiently for public life, and so is always ready to protest whenever rights are taken away. Whether a political viewpoint loses or is accepted, Christians will collaborate with their co-citizens, will support the demands made by life in society, will obey the laws and those who enforce the laws, in full consciousness that they are doing their duty and obeying God. In this way Father Alves Correia questioned the thinking of many Christians who, with a certain amount of anxiety, believed that their participation in the Reign of God was limited to the Church and didn’t understand very well the earthly reality in which they lived. Christians in the Church and lost in the social, political and economic spheres, they frequently felt divided and tormented within. The human political and social undertaking is an affirmation of obedience to God, who, as Genesis states, commanded humanity to construct the world and civil society. The vocation of the Christian is to illuminate every earthly reality with the Gospel. Vatican II’s pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) came very close to the thinking of Father Correia.

Human Conscience and Tolerance

This was a theme very dear to Father Correia, which he develops especially in his work entitled *Cadernos da Metanóia* (Metanoia Notebooks). The Church believes completely in the truth that it announces, but it does not impose it on anybody. In other times it was held that the Church could impose its doctrine. Alves Correia explained this point as follows: “Jesus is not a master
who imposes blind obedience. He does not want followers whose consciences have been forced like subjugated slaves. He seeks decided and loving wills, disciples with open eyes who are transparent and sincere.”

Human conscience demands respect because of convictions held. It is because of this sincerity and human freedom that the Good Shepherd gave his life so that they might be free; so that fear would not drown or kill the soul. It was to respect liberty of human conscience that Jesus did not refuse to die as a rebel, being perceived as a seducer of the crowds.

Human conscience is the voice of God in us; this voice demands that we respect our convictions. Conscience is our judge, even when it is wrong. If error does not have rights, the person who errs has rights. The only attack that we can direct towards such people is to try to convince them through dialogue and sharing. If we do not arrive at this point, we must respect such people because they have the same rights as us, because they, like us, must follow their consciences. If only the saints merit respect, even we might not gain such esteem. If we need to be good only to those who have the same ideas as we have, we would be like people who only love those who appeal to them. Intolerance and violence are the arms of the weak, of the short-sighted and of the selfish who wish to share their own shortcomings. Those who really believe in God love all people and respect their "divine rights."

Tolerance is not a concession to the timidity of the orthodox … it is an exercise of a fundamental right; the respect of human conscience, the respect for a person we think is wrong.

We Christians he said, must be the champions in defending a conscientious stand that we do not agree with and in our love of oppressed and downtrodden people, not because today democracy demands this, but because it would be hypocrisy to have the Gospel as our flag and be in accord with selfish and pride-filled tyrants.

**Father Alves Correia -- Precursor of Vatican II**

In the literary work of Father Alves Correia, we encounter a new way of dealing with some central themes in theology: the Reign of God and the Church, the Church in the world, the Church and its relationship with our separated brethren, and the Church and human rights. In a country which opposed the
right of free thinking, Alves Correia is one of the very few who rowed against the current with sensitivity for history and already defending the fundamental lines that Vatican II would support.

Some of the Father Alves Correia’s thoughts that converge with Vatican II are as follows:

- The Reign of God is not identified with the Church -- it transcends the Church and embodies it as Father Correia held. The definition of Church by using the concepts of sign and sacrament of the Reign of God is found throughout Lumen Gentium.

- The mission of the Church in history and in the construction of the earthly kingdom is outlined in Gaudium et Spes. The Church in today’s world was the focal point dominating Father Alves Correia’s entire life.

- The articles he wrote in Metanóia, especially the work A Consciência Cristã (The Christian Conscience), defended ideas that Vatican II later consecrated in three decrees: the decree on religious liberty, the decree on ecumenism, and the declaration about the relationship of the Catholic Church with non-Christian religions.

- The renewal of the liturgy was another area that had his support. He was never comfortable with the use of Latin: “What should be a live and dynamic school of illumination and fervor, what is the official catechetics - the Mass of the catechumens - has been converted by the abstruse official cultic language into a formalized memory of the sacred mystery. The faithful cannot say Amen when the living and pulsating language which is the mystery of God means nothing.” For this reason, he published the Missa dos Pequeninos (The Mass for Little Ones); Cantai ao Senhor (Sing to the Lord) with simple hymns in Portuguese and the Manual de Oração (The Prayer Manual), so that people could pray with greater ease; he also published a series of articles in the Lumen magazine.

**Conclusion**

Father Alves Correia possessed goodness and sensitivity and gave significant attention to the poor and the disinherited. Many of those who knew him tell numerous stories showing how he loved to welcome people and to share, giving away even what he needed. He lived between the two world wars, during the time of the Spanish civil war when poverty in Portugal was immense and the dictatorial regime was oppressive. His art as an attractive
writer, his courage and his forthrightness made him unwanted in
a country in which liberty was only a dream. Today he is seen as a
precursor and is admired and remembered with nostalgia.

Endnotes

1The quotations in this article are taken from Francisco Lopes, *P. Joa-
quim Alves Correia, ao serviço do Evangelho e da Democracia* Editora Rei
dos Livros
Mgr. Augustine Shao

Bishop Augustine Shao is a Spiritan and Bishop of Zanzibar diocese, Tanzania. He was ordained a priest on June 4, 1983 at Usa River, Tanzania. He did pastoral ministry in Zambia (1983-6), then missionary animation at Knechtsteden, Germany (1986-89). On two occasions, he started studies in Counseling Psychology at Duquesne University but in each case they were interrupted. The first time in January 1990, he was elected Provincial Superior of the then East African Province of the Spiritans (1990-1996). Having completed his mandate, he then returned to Duquesne University to complete his studies. While at Duquesne, he was appointed by the Holy See to be the Bishop of Zanzibar on February 7, 1997 and ordained on April 27 the same year.

The diocese of Zanzibar consists of the two islands of Zanzibar, where the population is about one million - 99% Moslem. Bishop Augustine’s ministry is mainly a witness to the Christian faith and a dialogue of life with the Moslems. In June 2009, he was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI to be a member of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue and is currently serving the Tanzanian Episcopal Conference as Chairman of Planning and Finances.


(The following is the text of a public lecture given by Mgr Augustine Shao, Bishop of Zanzibar, at the Power Center, Duquesne University, on the occasion of his visit to the University for Founders’ Week 2010.)

Your Excellency, Mr. President, Members of Faculty and Students, Dear Spiritan Confreres, Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great honor to be here and I would like immediately to articulate two of the many reasons for which I am so happy to be standing before you today:

• First of all, I am humbled and very encouraged by your inviting me to come all the way from the tiny islands of Zanzibar to share with you my personal reflections regarding the Spiritan involvement in inter-religious dialogue.

• The second reason for which I am so happy to be here is very personal. Twice I made an attempt to earn a degree from this great University and twice I went back home without one. In 1989, before I could finish my studies, I was recalled to Tanzania to become the Provincial Superior of the then East African Province. When I finished my six-year mandate, I returned with the intention of completing my studies here. But before I could do so, the then Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, nominated me Bishop of Zanzibar. It gives me great pleasure to know that most likely this time around I will not go back empty handed.

The Spiritans

As some of you already know, the Holy Ghost Congregation is a Roman Catholic Religious institute of over three thousand members, founded in 1703. We are ministering in over 60 different countries worldwide. Although historically we have been engaged in many diverse ministries, we have dedicated ourselves...
to working with the poor and especially in those situations where the Church has difficulty in finding ministers. (SRL 4)

We are involved in evangelization, especially first evangelization, the building up of local Churches and the formation of a local clergy. Spiritans are also involved in different types of education, (and Duquesne University bears witness to this) in health ministry and the development of associate lay membership in our Congregation. We are committed to working for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, ministering to refugees, and dialogue with the various cultures, traditions, including Islam and other religions.

While my personal experience, especially as Bishop of Zanzibar, includes all the above ministries, my presentation here will be focused almost entirely on our commitment to inter-religious dialogue, with particular emphasis on Spiritans and Islam, an area where the Church finds difficulty in getting workers. In a way, therefore, this emphasis has been an integral part of our Spiritan mission and charism, not so much through our Spiritan deliberations and resolutions but rather out of sheer necessity.

**What is dialogue?**

Dialogue is a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons with differing views. The main purpose of each participant is to learn from the other so that he or she can change and grow. The document of the Secretariat for Non-Christians states that “Dialogue implies concern, respect, and hospitality towards the other.”1 This very definition of dialogue implies that the primary purpose of dialogue is to change and grow in the perception and understanding of reality and then to act accordingly. We enter into dialogue so that we can learn, change, and grow, not so that we can force change on the other, as one hopes to do in debate. On the other hand, all parties involved undergo conversion in a wider sense of the word because, in dialogue, Christians challenge others and are challenged by them.

This spirit and understanding of dialogue is clearly reflected by the nature and goals of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, the beginning of which goes back to Pentecost Sunday, 1964, when Pope Paul VI instituted a special department of the Roman Curia for relations with the people of other religions. It was known at first as the Secretariat for Non-Christians, and in 1988 it was renamed the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue (PCID). Last year His Holiness Pope...
Benedict XVI appointed me one of its members. The PCID is the central office of the Catholic Church for the promotion of inter-religious dialogue in accordance with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, in particular with the declaration Nostra Aetate. The first of the three main responsibilities of this Council is the promotion of mutual understanding, respect and collaboration between Catholics and followers of other religions.

The word dialogue can have multiple interpretations, but in the context of religious plurality and according to the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, it means “all positive and constructive inter-religious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment, in obedience to truth and respect for freedom. It includes both witness and the exploration of respective religious convictions.” Speaking to the members, consultants and staff of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue during its plenary assembly in Rome on 30th October, 1998, the late Pope John Paul II repeated his personal conviction that dialogue calls for conversion of heart. He reiterated that conviction, “The human heart is the starting-point of this interior journey and has an essential role in every religious dialogue.” This need of a personal conversion is one of the basic instructions and the necessary exercise that our Co-Founder, Fr. Francis Mary Libermann, passed on to his members as a precondition for any meaningful dialogue with other faiths and cultures.

**Spiritans in dialogue with Islam.**

The Spiritan history of evangelizing reveals that from its outset, our mission has always found itself in the midst of traditional religions and Islam. For most Spiritans who went out of Europe and America as missionaries, the majority of people they worked with were people of African traditional religions and Muslim brothers and sisters, except those who decided to ignore their religions! Thus for Spiritans, dialogue with other faiths, and especially with Islam, is not only an integral part of our mission but a matter of urgent priority. In nearly all recent General Chapters of the Congregation, the importance of dialogue with Islam has been stressed as an essential part of our missionary activities. For more than three hundred years, we Spiritans have maintained a tradition of dialogue with the different peoples and cultures that we encounter in our missionary endeavors. It is this determination to promote understanding and respect for other peoples’ cultures that has provided a good basis for our work of evangelization. We also do this because we are convinced wholeheartedly that dialogue is the sure basis for peace.
Spiritans in East Africa

Spiritans were the third group that ventured to start a mission on the East coast of Africa. The first two groups had failed and many of their members had been assassinated. Perhaps the Spiritans succeeded due to the clarion cry of their founder, “Forget about Europe, its ways of thinking, its customs, its conventions. Be African with the Africans and you will learn how to judge them as they should be judged.” This achievement not only opened the way to other religious communities when they came later to East Africa, but Spiritans assisted them to penetrate into the interior of East Africa. This was indeed the result of a successful ministry through dialogue.

Spiritans arrived in Zanzibar in 1863, a time when almost the whole of the East coast of Africa was virtually an Arab World. “In 1862, the Congregation took charge of the Prefecture of Zanguebar or Zanzibar, which stretched from Cape Guardafui, near Arabia, to Cape Delgado in Mozambique, a distance of nearly two thousand miles, again without limits to the interior.” When they came to the Islands, what the Spiritans did first was to establish a working relationship with the Sultan of Zanzibar, a process which went on for the first three years. After establishing that relationship with the Sultan and the local Muslim religious authority (the Mufti) and having won their trust, the Spiritans went ahead and bought from one Arab landlord the property where the present residence of the bishop is located. Eventually they asked the Sultan to allow them to buy slaves from the slave market and proposed to buy the weaker slaves, those who could not be exported.

Education as means to dialogue.

In their mission of first evangelization, those early Spiritans faced the reality of new cultures, languages and religions which were different from their own. Far from fighting to destroy them, the missionaries sought to understand and promote them. In the eastern region of Africa, they produced the first dictionary and the first grammar of the Swahili language, which initiated the development of Swahili. That is how they faced the challenges of new cultures and languages and managed to communicate with the people. It was after this struggle that schools and workshop centers were established. The first two teachers’ colleges in the region of East Africa were built by the Spiritans. During the East African Provincial chapter of 1999, the first President of Tanzania, Julius Kambarage Nyerere, said, “I know the Holy Ghost Fathers (Spiritans). I taught with them. If then you want to liberate Africans, provide them with good education.” The
Spiritans do not doubt at all that education is the key to dialogue and liberation. Fr. Franken, who founded a teachers' college in Tanzania, died in Holland and our government ordered his body to be brought back for burial in Tanzania. This was in recognition of what the Spiritans did in the areas of education and liberation, as the following testimony of a government minister illustrates: “I was a Muslim in a Catholic college and I never experienced loneliness or segregation in the college.” He continued, “I therefore ask all the religious schools and institutions in the country to emulate the example of these great missionaries.”

The dialogue continued in a whole variety of other areas. Spiritans established homes for liberated slaves, schools and workshop places, hospitals and plantations. Spiritans are the ones who brought coffee to East Africa, and the first cotton granary in Tanzania was built by Spiritans. All these humanitarian activities were to support the education of the indigenous people, because from these cash crops people were able to meet their social needs. These activities also promoted mutual understanding, respect and a sense of unity, which are central to any meaningful dialogue.

**Spiritans in relation with the local authority.**

Due to the unwavering care rendered by the Spiritans to the poor people of every faith, the Sultan of Zanzibar was very impressed. Humbled by the work that Spiritans were doing in the islands, he became a steady visitor to the Spiritans, and they were the only Europeans allowed to enter the Sultan’s palace freely to confer with his majesty about the royal enterprises. In 1875 the Sultan of Zanzibar (Saiyd Baragash) made a visit to the Spiritan Mother House in Paris. It was unprecedented to have a leader of a virtually Muslim state visit the headquarters of a Catholic religious institute. It was after this majestic visit of the Sultan that free passage to the interior of Tanganyika, specifically through Bagamoyo, was made official.

In the year 2000, during the political tensions in the islands of Zanzibar, I received a delegation from the President’s office. He, a Muslim, was asking me to be one of his private political advisers with all the rights of the state house. I respectfully declined to take the post. I knew exactly that the President wanted to have the expertise of the two leading religious leaders in the Islands, but this would have identified me with the ruling political party as well as limiting my stand on issues of justice.

From the very beginning, members of our Congregation had been instructed by our Founder “to pay particular attention to which customs and habits are characteristic of the people and the land, and to avoid disturbing these customs (unless they are against
God’s law).” They were also to try to make the people more perfect in their own way of life and in accordance with their own customs. Thus the people of Africa and many other parts of the world where we work will not be converted by the work of some clever and capable missionaries, but “through the holiness and sacrifices of their missionaries.”

Just as Libermann had insisted on his members adapting themselves to the people they were evangelizing and to their cultures in order to perfect and sanctify them, transforming them slowly and gradually into a people of God, so did John Paul II exhort all the agents of evangelization to engage in dialogue and to discover the seeds of redemption existing in other religions, cultures and customs of peoples.8

Spiritan Influence on Inculturation and Dialogue.

The large presence of Spiritan bishops at the second Vatican Council made a unique contribution in opening the Catholic Church towards other faiths. These bishops in large numbers came to Rome with their lived experience in dealing with other faiths/religions. Because of this experience they were able to share with other participants the values and urgency of interreligious dialogue. Spiritans were not the only ones who understood the values of dialogue, but their contribution towards this understanding was a very significant one.

Synod for Africa.

Libermann demanded of his missionaries what the First Synod for Africa would ask from all the agents of evangelization in Africa more than a century and a half later when it pointed out in 1994 that inculturation is no longer an option but a necessity. And we know that no inculturation is possible without genuine dialogue with other civilizations, cultures and religions. The just-ended October 2009 second Synod for Africa very strongly reiterated the importance of dialoging with Islam. The Synod heard the testimony of many Synod Fathers who have successfully walked the road of dialogue with Muslims. They gave witness to the fact that dialogue works and collaboration is possible and often effective. We Catholic Bishops have clear guidelines for dialogue, holding firm to our faith but leaving others to freely choose. The Synod received good news of Islamic communities which allow the Church to worship freely as in Zanzibar, but, while the Synod Fathers commend this, they also insist that this is not enough. Freedom of religion also includes freedom to share one’s faith, to propose, not impose it, to accept and welcome converts.
Some may still be tempted to think that Spiritan dialogue with Islam has not really produced significant fruits and that the undertaking is a waste of resources and personnel. But if, as St. Paul says in his letter to the Galatians, “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trust in others, and gentleness,” then despite the limited results and our shortcomings in the areas of dialogue, I am confident that we are on the right path.

**Spiritans and inter-religious dialogue today**

Spiritans continue a variety of works in a number of countries, both in Africa and Asia, where Muslims form the majority of the population. Such countries are Algeria, Mauritania, Pakistan, Kenya and the Tanzanian Islands of Zanzibar. In all these situations the Spiritans try to do what in our modern language is termed “a dialogue of life,” that is, living with people by sharing their daily events of life and allowing a chance for questions. I was once asked by a schoolgirl, “Why are you a Kafur and not a Muslim and you are doing so much to help us?” This was indeed an opportunity to say who I am and why I am not a Muslim. Many Spiritans find themselves in similar situations where Islam is predominant. My presence in Zanzibar where Muslims are about 98% is but one example. In trying to describe our Spiritan presence in countries that are almost entirely Muslim, we find ourselves up against the limitations of language.

To distinguish ourselves from a “catechumenal” style of mission with responsibility for substantial Christian communities (which is the lot of most Spiritans), we would prefer to be described as people engaged in “inter-religious dialogue.” But then people might get the idea that we spend most of our time discussing religion with some wise Muslim theologians. If we use the words “simple presence,” this could depict us as silent witnesses in the midst of a people, isolated in an invisible cultural and religious enclosure, or havens of contemplative Christians in an ocean of indifference or even hostility! So people are amazed when we Spiritans in predominantly Muslim countries claim, like every other Spiritan, to be consecrating our lives to “evangelization” and not, as is often said, to a simple “preparation for evangelization”—as if the word “evangelize” were reserved exclusively for those who announce the Gospel through catechism, Catholic action meetings, homilies, preparation for the sacraments and the like.

If there are some Spiritans who, despite the inspiring texts of Vatican II on religious liberty and inter-religious dialogue, still believe that our only justifiable objective is to lead individuals and groups to confessing that Jesus is the Son of God, to baptize...
new Christians and to increase the size of the visible Church, then in their view we would have to wrap things up without delay or, to use more biblical language, “shake the dust from our feet” and leave!

Having said that, one must not get the impression that we Spiritans who are working in predominantly Muslim countries let pass opportunities to share with Muslims about our religious convictions, especially where there is an atmosphere of trust and friendship. Nostra Aetate, the declaration of the Second Vatican Council on the Church’s relationship to other religions, stresses the importance of inter-religious dialogue. But at the same time, it clearly recalls that the Church is duty bound to proclaim without fail Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, in whom all people find their fulfillment. What we reject out of hand is any type of sterile conflict that can only increase our religious differences or create the belief that any kind of convergence of our different ways towards God is an impossibility. My experience has shown that the two great civilizations of Christianity and Islam can find a common ground on many religious and social issues while their faithful continue to worship in their respective ways. And in addition, there are still many opportunities in which we can pray together.

One such example is our meeting as religious leaders of different faiths together with our people to pray for particular needs as when we pray for peace. During such gatherings there is a genuine sense of unity and shared purpose. Another good example is the swearing in of national leaders. Muslims and Christians are all invited to pray for their leaders and we do that without any serious difficulty.

Rene You, a Spiritan who worked for many years in Algeria, was visited by an Imam who wanted to pray with Christians in the lead up to the second Gulf War. This man did not become a Christian but he saw absolutely no problem praying with Christians for peace. Yet another touching example was the impressive moment at the funeral of Bishop Pierre Claverie when Christians and Muslims shared a profound silence, holding each other’s hands in a sign of longed-for peace. This symbolic gesture of communion replaced the Eucharistic communion, for the Christians imposed a “Eucharistic fast” on themselves that day so as not to exclude their Muslim brothers and sisters who had come to join them in prayer.
Recognizing the contribution of the Spiritans in this line of dialogue, the Tanzanian Episcopal Conference appointed Fr. Gallus Marandu C.S.Sp. to lead the commission of inter-religious dialogue, culture and itinerant people. His efforts are to some extent witnessed in his brochures and calendars that depict different occasions of Christian dialogue with Islam. His efforts were recently recognized by an award from the national inter-faith forum group when they openly declared him to be a champion of inter-religious dialogue.

Zanzibar Peace Building Commission

I am currently a vice chairman of the Peace Building Commission of Religious Leaders in Zanzibar (Catholics, Muslims, Anglicans and Lutherans). We meet five times a year and whenever there is a burning issue that calls on our leadership. Some of the issues we discuss are peace, HIV/AIDS and the growing trafficking and use of drugs. The chairman of the commission is the Mufti of Zanzibar, a Muslim. There is always a cordial discussion and genuine need to address issues which affect our people regardless of their faith.

Platforms for meeting

Other opportunities for dialogue with our Muslim brothers and sisters come in the form of what Bishop Pierre Claverie used to call “platforms for meeting people.” There are so many such meetings where dialogue and solidarity are gradually deepened: a baby, sitting on a bench in one of our schools, proudly producing his/her first intelligible words in Swahili or English; a doctor or a nurse in one of our health centers silently going about his/her work without thinking that he/she is a Muslim in a Catholic institution; a divorced or abandoned woman in one of the many organized women’s groups intended for self-empowerment where women meet together to explore their talents and how they can become productive. Then there are all the friendships built up over the years. Even if we do not know all the inhabitants of the areas covered by our parishes, it is rare that we step out of the door without being greeted by somebody. We visit each other; invite each other to tea, to festive meals to celebrate Muslim and Christian feast days. There are so many spontaneous gestures like this that have no hidden agenda, particularly when they come from the poor. There is a whole variety of things we talk about: the cold, the heat, the rain, which is always late in coming, the difficulties and the simple joys of life, love, birth and death, and frequently we talk about God. How many joys and sorrows we have shared together! How many people have said to me, after
relating some long and sad story, “I know that there is nothing you can do about it, but it is good to share it with somebody.” How many times I would love to have been able to murmur the words of absolution! How often have I quoted words of consolation from the Gospels without being able to reveal their source!

Communion through suffering.

Finally, on the subject of “opportunities,” we can point to the intense communion that has united our Spiritan Confreres to their Muslim brothers and sisters in Zanzibar. For the last 15 years there has been a troubled relationship between the two main political parties in Zanzibar (CCM and CUF). A deep mistrust between these two parties has continued despite the international community’s efforts to facilitate a peace process through a combination of financial incentives and imposed sanctions. This pressure from the international community led to the signing of a peace agreement in 2001, but it was never honored. After all the ramblings, continued demonstrations and persistent violence, finally the religious leaders decided to get involved and met to discuss the need for peace and development in the Islands. This attempt was accompanied by several common meetings as well as prayer gatherings leading to the leaders of the major political parties signing an agreement for peace of their own will with no external influence or assistance. Thus peace finally came to the Islands of Zanzibar, thanks to the determination of leaders of different religious faiths (Catholics, Anglicans, Muslims and Hindus) and their willingness to work together in the interest of peace. The national political leaders were deeply grateful to us religious leaders for what we managed to achieve together.

Challenges.

Before mentioning some of the challenges of inter-religious dialogue it is important to emphasize that inter-religious dialogue, especially with Islam, remains a serious and an urgent undertaking. The recent tragic events in Jos, Nigeria, draw our attention to the importance of dialogue with Islam. As we all know, there has been in the last decade frequent violence between Muslims and Christians, and despite the government’s effort to quell religious extremism in this West African country, violence has continued to resurface with devastating consequences: hundreds have died, property has been destroyed and thousands have fled to makeshift camps. I believe that there cannot be a lasting peace unless there is a genuine dialogue, an inter-religious dialogue between Christians and Muslims.
In general, the primary challenge facing the Catholic–Muslim dialogue anywhere is to articulate the purpose of the dialogue. We Spiritans face the same challenge on the ground wherever we are engaged in inter-religious dialogue. We try to set goals which we hope will be understood by both the Catholics and our Muslim brothers and sisters, but we don’t always succeed. My experience has shown that when the purpose of the dialogue is not clarified, there is confusion on both sides and the dialogue is confined to generalities which finally don’t produce any useful results.

The second challenge is to overcome suspicion and fear on both sides. There are those who fear that to engage in dialogue with other faiths is to betray the fundamental principles of their own religion. To persuade some Catholic believers, for example, that it is useful to engage in a dialogue with other faiths, and especially Islam, may sometimes be an impossible task. Another very challenging reality is where Christians or Muslims find themselves to be in the majority. The tendency then is that the majority, whether Christian or Muslim, think that they have the right to dictate to the minority and quite often limit the rights of the minority. In these situations issues of justice are limited to one’s religion. In Zanzibar, for example, where the majority are Muslim, the minority non-Muslims are a tolerated group in many ways. This situation is the same in predominantly Christian countries. Let us ask ourselves, “How do we treat the minority non-Christians in our midst?”

How do we as Spiritans in Zanzibar try to minimize these uncalled for attitudes? Despite the fact that we are the minority in the society, through the spirit of non-retaliation we have managed to dialogue with the majority on our basic rights. While walking in the footsteps of our Spiritan forefathers, we have adapted the vision of “Education” in every sense of the word. In our 26 mission stations where Christians are in the minority, we have struggled to establish centers of child education and centers for meetings. For us, our schools and dispensaries and all our social work are the platforms of meetings and dialogue. We believe that when Mary and Zainabu, Peter and Mohamed, play, study, and eat together in school they build friendships and thus a future peaceful coexistence. Right now the diocese runs a big school from Kindergarten/Pre-school to high school with an average number of 600 pupils. The majority are our Muslim brothers and sisters. As we were struggling to build this school 12 years ago, our neighborhood did not like it for fear that we are geared towards converting their children. I still remember that in
2004 they burned our school bus to ashes! The atmosphere at the moment is different, and many are vying to join our school.

The work of inter-religious dialogue with our Muslim brothers and sisters must continue, and I thank this prestigious university for acknowledging my humble contribution and what is yet to be done. I see the honorary doctoral degree being awarded to me today as recognition of the urgency and the importance of dialogue between and among civilizations. It is also an affirmation of a crucial contribution that Spiritans continue to make in this area. It is a challenge which can’t be met by any one individual bishop or any one religious institute alone. The Church calls upon all men and women of good will, each one in their own way, to make their contribution in creating a more peaceful world, a world in which people learn to respect each other and see diversity as enrichment and not as an excuse for hatred and conflict.

Three days ago, I had an opportunity to share with the bishops’ permanent council to which I too belong, that I would be travelling to the U.S.A. to receive an honorary Ph.D from our Catholic University of Duquesne. They all said, “You deserve it for the tremendous work you’re doing with our Muslim brethren.” These words of recognition were a great consolation to me. I therefore accept your offer, my dear brothers and sisters, with a great sense of pride and humility on behalf of my Spiritan brothers and all people of good will who continue to believe and work for a better understanding among people of different faiths. It has been said in various ways that the saddest tragedy of all times is an illusion that our differences are more important than our common humanity. By accepting this honor bestowed upon me by this great university, I want to affirm that our common humanity is far more important than anything that divides us, be it religion, color or nationality. Thank you very much and may God bless you all.

Endnotes

1Secretariatus Pro Non Christianis, The Attitude of the Church towards the followers of other religions, reflections, and orientations on dialogue and mission, 1984, p. 17.
2Nostra Aetate (The Vatican II declaration on the relations of the Church with non-christian religions, 1965) gave guidelines of a practical order on the specific relationship between the Church and members of other religions.
7Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth*... p.260
9*Lumen Gentium* No. 16, which is dedicated to non-Christians. See also *Nostra Aetate*.
10Mgr. Pierre Claverie O.P., Bishop of Oran, who was assassinated with his Moslem driver on August 1, 1996.
Christopher M. Duncan, Ph.D.

Christopher M. Duncan was named Dean of the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts at Duquesne University in July of 2009. He received his PhD in Political Science from Wayne State University in 1992. He has published two books on American political thought: The Anti-Federalists in Early American Political Thought (1995) and Fugitive Theory: Political Theory, The Southern Agrarians and America (2000). His current research agenda includes work on the relationship between religious belief and political activism in American politics and thought in a tentatively titled book: Radical Conversion: Catholic Social Thought and the American Liberal State. His published work has also appeared in American Political Science Review, Polity, The Review of Politics, Public Administration Review and numerous other journals, as well as the magazine Commonweal.

INTO AFRICA

The Continent of Africa will receive special focus, as well as the global African diaspora.

– Duquesne University Strategic Plan 2010-2015

Introduction

As I sat waiting for my name to be called to receive my dose of Yellow Fever vaccination, I wondered what in the world I had gotten myself into. Prior to my turning thirty I had only flown on a plane twice: once to Florida with my family when I was eleven and once to my first professional job interview in Mississippi at the age of twenty-nine. Since my academic career began, I have travelled much more widely, but still I remain a relative neophyte compared to so many of my peers when it comes to international experiences. As a middle-class kid growing up in Detroit, exotic for us was venturing thirty minutes south over the bridge into Canada, or taking our yearly family jaunt “up north” in Michigan. Even in college, as my worldview expanded dramatically and my sense of adventure grew, there were no significant foreign excursions or immersion experiences beyond my national borders. My thirteen year-old-son already has almost as many stamps in his passport as I do at the age of forty-seven. European travel was daunting and anxiety filled for me the first two times I went and so you can only imagine what the prospect of journeying to Tanzania might have meant. However, once that needle pierced my skin and the vaccine flowed into my veins, reality set in.

Although I have sent a number of my students to various parts of the African continent over the years, all of whom who have all returned both safely and dramatically changed by the experience for the better, it is simply the case that twenty-year-olds are braver and bolder than forty-year-olds. Everything about this trip made me nervous, from the sheer amount of time spent getting there (about thirty hours total including over twenty in the air), to the developing and unpredictable nature of the country itself, to my own ignorance and irrational prejudices about the culture, the people and, for lack of a better term, the politics of the place. To say that I was leaving my comfort zone would be a vast understatement. However, to say that none of my concerns turned out to be legitimate is also not true.
Seeking the Lived Mission

As I set out to write this essay about three weeks after returning safely to Pittsburgh, the terms that have stuck with me more than any others are “contrasts” and “scale.” Everything in this part of Africa seemed vast and big, from the beauty and geography to the problems and pathologies. It is at once a place of breathtaking landscapes and picturesque vistas and a place of chaotic and pollution marred public spaces. It is a place of great cultural and spiritual depth and a place of the crassest and most mercurial modes of petty capitalism. It is a place of strong and robust communal traditions and practices and a place of social disintegration and cultural fragmentation. It is a generous and friendly place that simmered with the possibility of violence and danger around its edges. It is a place of vast wealth and crushing poverty. And so on the list could go. I am well aware that this all could be applied to places across the developmental continuum, not the least of which might be my own city or nation. But that was not my charge in this piece.

While familiarity may indeed breed contempt, it most certainly fosters complacency. Training your various senses on a place and focusing intently on how it looks, sounds, tastes, smells, and feels makes what is always present more vivid and stark than it may otherwise appear. Seldom do most human beings look at what surrounds them all the time with the same level of scrutiny, intensity or sense of inquisitiveness as they do in a place that is foreign and fresh. Everything in this new place was both fascinating and disconcerting at the same time. While I have seen plenty of big-city traffic and dangerous driving in my life, none of it compared to what I can only characterize as a Hobbesian state of nature of the streets of Arusha—a place where, to steal a phrase, I was routinely convinced that life would be nasty, brutish and short. Though I have attended Mass in a number of different settings and seen it conducted in very different liturgical styles, I have never heard or felt a Mass like the one I attended with the Maasai people on Pentecost Sunday in rural Tanzania. Although I have tried to understand the Spiritan charism and mission since my arrival at Duquesne, it was not till I spent time with the priests and their various partners that I had a real sense of how those things were enacted and lived out beyond a university campus. To be some place so new and different is to be more fully conscious of every hour of every day, to be, in some sense, more alive and open to life’s gifts—and challenges.
In mid-May of 2010, a small group of Duquesne deans and faculty set out from Pittsburgh and travelled to Tanzania in order to build relationships and explore the various missions and work of the Spiritans in that region of Africa. Among those making the trek were Deans Duncan, Frazer, Miciak, Seybert, Welch and Zungolo along with Father McCloskey, Jim Swindal, Sister Rosemary Donley, and our faithful guide, Anne Marie Hansen. Organized through the Office of Mission and Identity, the trip lasted roughly ten days, with seven nights spent in country. For everyone except Dean Frazer, Vice-President McCloskey and Professor Hansen, this was their first time in Tanzania. For half of us, it was the first time on the continent itself. Although we did spend a little time with Dean Frazer, his primary task was taking care of the thirteen Duquesne students he had brought on an extended study abroad trip to explore healthcare. The students, Dean Frazer and Sister Donley stayed at the Spiritan House in Arusha. The rest of us stayed in a hotel just down the street, except for Dr. Swindal, who spent most of his time at the Njiro Hill Seminary and College a few miles away. While there, all our travel was made possible by the Spiritan run Spirit Missionary Travel headed up by Father Honest Munishi. Most of the time our driver was a wonderful and patient young man named Nicholas.

Landing at the Kilimanjaro Airport in the evening of May 19th, we were met by Anne Marie and carried by car to our respective accommodations about an hour down the road. Among the first things I noticed on that initial trip was how little light there was due to the modest amount of rural electricity and, correspondingly, how many stars you could actually see. It was warm, but not as warm as I expected. We all peered out the windows trying to see through the dark night whatever there was to be seen in this new land. As we approached Arusha, the traffic picked up and the lights got brighter. The hotel, called Naura Springs, was fairly modern and quite comfortable even without air conditioning. The exhaustion of the trip caught me quickly once I was in the room and settled, and I slept hard and fast through the night.

Unpacking Tanzania

After breakfast the next morning our real work began. The group’s first stop was Njiro Hill Seminary and College where we met with a number of Spiritans from the province for an introductory session on the Spiritans in Tanzania and to the work of the school itself. The Tanzanian Spiritans present included the Provincial, Fr. Joseph Shio, the Rector, Fr. Justi Tarimo, Fr. Paul
Chuwa, Fr. Paul Flamm, Fr. Joseph Mshaka, and Fr. Amandeus. We learned that the first Spiritans arrived in the country in 1863 and were tasked primarily with an educational mission. Viewing education as a form of evangelization, the Spiritan teachers emphasized practical skills for self-reliance as a principal focus for a holistic education. In 1967, when African socialism came to the nation, this mission was interrupted as the government assumed control over all education. In the 1990’s socialism waned and private schools reemerged, and once again the Spiritans could vigorously pursue their mission. In keeping with this focus, the Spiritans present at this session were in significant agreement that the next iteration or moment of “creative fidelity” with regard to their work should be in the direction of teacher training and education itself. Noting that there were no unemployed teachers in the country, our hosts saw great need and potential for this next logical step. A later visit to Mwenge University would help confirm their reading of the times.

It was at Njiro Hill where what at first seemed unusual now seemed emblematic. At the hotel, the Spiritan House, and now at the seminary itself, I had noticed that each place was situated in a gated compound. Indeed, almost everywhere we would travel within the city limits—from schools and hospitals, to commercial sites and even restaurants—would be encircled by large walls with limited access through large hinged and guarded gates. It was never made explicit what or whom the walls were meant to keep at bay, but their presence was both reassuring and disconcerting at the same time. Their very existence implied an ongoing struggle between the calm and predictability needed for sustained growth and development and the human propensity to destabilize and undermine our own accomplishments. Whether well-founded or not, there is a noticeable psychological shift that takes place upon entrance and departure from such places. Once through the gates there is a sense of having “made it” and a certain psychic sense of exhaling that takes place, at least for me. Upon departure, however subtle and unpronounced, one’s sense of danger is heightened. It is certainly the case that subsequent trips will diminish this reaction, but the juxtaposition and latent subtext will remain. Furthermore, I cannot help but wonder in an existential sense which is the real Tanzania?

The superficial answer to that question is, of course, both are real but partial attributes of the country. However, my true question is concerned with aspiration. The songwriter Tom Waits sings of a woman who is a “diamond but wants to remain coal.” Like any developing country, Tanzania is situated in the midst...
of great and competing historical valances and narratives vying for dominance. A visit to the Tanzanian Cultural Center and Art Gallery provided a small window through which to view this phenomenon. Though it was billed as a museum and art gallery, the architecturally intriguing “Cultural Center” turned out to be a large and somewhat garish gift shop owned and operated by an entrepreneurial gentleman from Pakistan. Each picture, painting, and sculpture on display—though beautiful and well rendered—had its price prominently affixed and displayed for easy sale. There was little in the way of organization or thematic insight, let alone an attempt to place the works in any sort of historical or aesthetic context. It was my own impression that there was a supply of pieces somewhere in storage waiting for any space opened up by a purchase. Indeed, the most important business of the Center’s operator appeared to be the sale of tanzanite stones.

The above is not meant to be disparaging—I spent my money there along with my colleagues. Rather, I note it to raise the question of ownership and appropriation. Expecting to learn something at the Center and finding out that this was not its true purpose, I was left to wonder where the master story of the nation or the area did in fact reside. Admittedly, it is a large country and we saw such a small sliver of it such that the question itself is unfair. Coming from the city of Andy Warhol, it is probably a little hypocritical to complain about mass produced authenticity. And yet, I can’t help myself. The sight of traditionally dressed Maasai men walking down the streets in high-top basketball shoes, smoking cigarettes, while talking on their cell phones as rap music blasted from one of the ubiquitous street-side bars decorated by Coke or Pepsi produced what might be called signifier overload for this traveler. Sleep that night became more elusive as the physical exhaustion of the previous day’s travel was replaced by the swirl of images and questions of our first full day on the ground.

A Prayer for the Sick and Soft Landings

While the morning brought no resolution to the mix of competing thoughts and images that I had wrestled with during the night, the day itself would bring me back to some fundamental truths about the nature of the human experience. The most rudimentary of those truths is that any collective story is at best a composite or melding of so many personal narratives. To find any general sense of the place, we would have to explore the particular.
Our second full day took us first to two Spiritan affiliated healthcare missions, the Usa River Health Center and the Dream Project. The Dream Project is a wonderful example of collaboration and Christian praxis. The Project’s primary purpose is to provide treatment and counseling for H.I.V. patients. It also serves as a food distribution center. The Spiritans, who were doing AIDS ministry, supplied the land for the building and worked in conjunction with the Episcopal Conference and the Belgium Corporation, Accentus, along with the World Food Program, to deliver practical information, anti-retroviral drug treatment, blood testing, nutritional education, food and counseling for patients and families free of charge. To understand the critical role the Project plays, it is important to understand that transmission from mother to child is the second leading cause of HIV infection in the country. In the United States, the rate of such transmission has been reduced to almost zero. Led by Italian volunteer Dr. Michele Bartolo, who resides predominantly in Rome, the facility is well equipped by local standards and makes extensive use of technology. A functioning lab in its own right, the facility is equipped to transmit results and data via satellite to the doctors in Rome who can then make diagnosis and treatment decisions remotely. We were told that this is the best equipped lab in the entire region. The evidence suggests that the work is bearing fruit and that the rate of HIV transmission is being slowed radically.

The Usa River Health Center is connected to the Dream Project in terms of physical proximity, but functions as a general health clinic for the local community. All services are provided free of charge, and our principal guide to the work of the clinic was a nurse, Sister Honorata. Depending on the season, the clinic serves approximately thirty patients a day. For the Spiritans, this ministry is viewed through the lens of the charism and the call to be of service to society’s least well off. Like so many similar ministries all over the world, one cannot help but be struck by a certain perceptual tension between the often ominous scale of the problems and the relatively small capacity of such entities to make a real difference. It often seems that many of the dedicated professionals we met were trying to empty out a swimming pool with a thimble in a rain storm. And yet, each day people were served, and lives were changed and saved. Throughout our visit the words of Oscar Romero played in my head:
We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord’s grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

That prayer is a lived reality for so many people we met on this visit—men and women who saw a need and began to work, not out of a misguided optimism that what are often intractable issues will be resolved, but out of the hope that their work will matter and that grace will abound more fully. As we ended our long drive to our next stop for the day at the Olkokola Mission, this thought stayed with me. Again at the Mission my own quasi-Germanic sense of order was tested as things that seemed not to fit together naturally were put together as a matter of course. It was also here that my own understanding of the notion of a “vow” would begin to deepen.

Our host at the Mission was Fr. Pat Patten. A fascinating priest who had an air of politics about him from an earlier age, Fr. Patten augmented his rural parish work with a real passion for the Flying Medical Service he oversaw and flew for. Using small aircraft to bring health services, medicine, education and emergency transportation to over 22 thousand people living in remote villages each year, Fr. Patten and his dedicated group of volunteer pilot-paramedics fill a crucial role in a nation of 42 million souls where there are only 50 practicing surgeons and 1 doctor for every 45 thousand people. Pilots in the service come from many different parts of the world and make a three-year commitment. They must be highly skilled insofar as they often must fly where there are no maps, and landing strips are often makeshift, to say the least. Aside from being able to fly and perform emergency medical procedures, the pilots must know how to service and repair their own aircraft. If the stories about Fr. Patten are true, they must also be able to crash well and walk away every once in a while too.

Contextually speaking, it is estimated that fifty-percent of all healthcare in Tanzania is provided by people and groups...
affiliated with the Catholic and Lutheran churches. At the crossroads between healthcare and education sits the other piece of the mission at Olkokola: the Vocational School. Directed by a Lutheran partner named Zablon, the vocational school is a residential program that provides practical training for handicapped students in carpentry, tailoring, agriculture, and animal care. Students finishing the program return to their villages with the necessary skills and the tools for their particular trade in hand. Aside from the material component of this education, there is also a highly significant social aspect to it. While the intensity varies from tribe to tribe, there is often an ingrained social stigma attached to physical deformity in the country’s villages where such handicaps are often viewed as a form of divine punishment for previous familial sins or transgressions. Returning to their respective villages with useful and often marketable skills as well as valuable tools in their possession, these students deconstruct archaic prejudices and dangerous social practices by their very presence and work in the community. Our day ended with an extended conversation with an associate of Fr. Patten’s, Dr. Dilantha Ellegala, Director of the Center for Global Health, which is run out of the University of South Carolina Medical School. The conversation was intense and involved, but must wait for another time to relay.

Creative Fidelity

Our next day was spent in Ngorongoro Parish, which is situated in and around a giant crater filled with all manner of African wildlife. We were hosted for lunch by Fr. Joe Herstein, a Spiritan priest who has served in Tanzania since 1966! The next day we would be in Endulen Parish with Fr. Ned Marchessault, who had also been in the country for decades. Both men exemplified for me the depth and discipline of a committed religious life, as they carried out their missions in relative isolation among the rural Tanzanians and the Maasai year in and year out. While our time with Fr. Joe was both entertaining and enjoyable, the Pentecost Mass we would celebrate the next afternoon with Fr. Ned was for me the spiritual high point of the trip.

Set in the midst of breathtaking mountains and hills, the small, sparse cinderblock church was filled to capacity and then some with colorfully dressed Maasai and other local parishioners. Conducted in both Swahili and Maasai, the Mass featured dance, a Gospel enactment of the story of Babel by the children, and some of the most joyful and effusive music and singing I have ever heard in a Catholic church. As the obvious strangers in the room, we were received with a warmth and fellowship that was...
Although Spartan by American standards...the university...has doubled in size in the last few years.

...there is not a single psychiatrist in the entire city of Arusha.

both moving and endearing, especially by the numerous children. While it is one thing to know that you are part of a world-wide church, this experience with all its liturgical distinctiveness made that reality more fully present than any other I could imagine. It was to be both “away” and “at home” at the same time. After a lunch of roasted goat with Fr. Ned, we set out on the long drive back to the city.

The next day took us to the city of Moshi where some of us visited Mwenge University, a Catholic teacher preparation school. Others explored healthcare education at KCMC Tumaini University. Those of us in the former group met with Fr. Donge, the Deputy Principal, who showed us the university’s grounds and facilities. Although Spartan by American standards and severely underfunded, the university is experiencing tremendous growth and has doubled in size in the last few years. Students at Mwenge earn a B.A. in Education Studies and specialize in two subjects, predominantly from the areas of math and science. Given the severe teacher shortage in Tanzania, the school plays a vital role and will no doubt continue expanding as rapidly as space and resources will allow. Despite the significant challenges at the school, the deputy’s pride and passion were clearly evident as he showed us new buildings and facilities.

Grace in Translation

The following day was a very full one that took us first to the Arusha Mental Health Trust to meet with Sr. Shelia Devane of the Medical Missionaries of Mary, a clinical psychiatric nurse who came to Tanzania in 1973. To underscore the difficulty of her work, it is important to note that there is no good translation in the Swahili language for psychotherapy. The closest term is something like “advice.” Indeed, there is not a single psychiatrist in the entire city of Arusha. In turn, there are very few mental health programs or providers. Simply put, the idea of mental health treatment is a taboo subject, and those seeking it are often severely stigmatized. There is very little in the way of government support, and what work is done in the area is provided mostly by the churches. Unfortunately, there are serious problems, including significant instances of abuse and domestic violence. Sr. Devane thought that a very high number of those in prison should in fact be in hospitals. Beyond all this, there is still a strong presence of witchcraft among a number of Tanzanian tribes and its attendant belief in “pills, potions, and lotions” that competes with contemporary psychiatric practices in often ineffective and sometimes horrific ways. It is unclear who will carry on her work when she leaves, thus creating an even larger shortage of an already far too scarce resource.
The next stop for the day for half of us was a very important and impressive Spiritan mission at the Tengeru Boys School, where our host was Fr. John Assey. A residential school for what would be middle-school age boys in the U.S., the school was a well-kept and creatively designed environment, providing serious education for what seemed like highly motivated young men. Here we met with some faculty and a group of deans, spending time with one class answering questions and talking with them about their future plans. The hit of this visit was Dean Welch, who used sign language in her discussion with the boys, much to their amazement (and mine, too). In total the school serves about 350 students at a time, with 13 faculty members and two Sisters. The goal of the school is to train the non-wealthy students of the area so that they will be successful in a college preparatory program when they are done. The school’s motto seemed to be lived out among the members of the institution: “Knowledge, Integrity, and Discipline.” Attached to the school was a vocational training school for older boys who were not college bound. Here the motto was “Knowledge, Skills, and Discipline.”

Close to the schools was our final stop for the day at the home of the Spiritan Provincial. This beautifully appointed residence contained offices and an almost completed 20-plus room retreat center sitting high in the hills with marvelous views and in a serene ambiance. Here with numerous priests and some sisters we shared a wonderful meal and began some of the conversations that would conclude our visit the following day back at the Seminary.

On our final day, we met with a number of Spiritans with whom we had spent time during our visit, including the Provincial, as well as some of the Spiritan faculty members of the seminary to debrief a little and talk about future prospects. Though pleasant and civil, this conclusion was not without some tension. Like most familial partnerships at the early stages, expectations varied widely and a shared sense of the possible was not fully present, yet. Nascent friendships had formed and a few older ones were renewed, but it will no doubt be a while before, pace Aristotle, we have all things in common. However, a start was made, the imagination was fed, and grace entered in its own way as it is wont to do.
Conclusion

One day, near the middle of our stay as we drove through the Maassai lands, we stopped to take some pictures of one of the larger villages. Two Maasai men in traditional garb approached Dean Seybert and me curiously and then smiled and held out their hands in welcome. They agreed to have their picture taken with us. After saying our goodbyes, we got back in the Land Rover and immediately checked our BlackBerrys and iPhones for messages and email. From what I observed during our stay, there is a very strong possibility that the Maasai men with whom we had posed were doing the very same thing as they walked off together. Although Africa in general, and Tanzania in particular, had both seemed so distant and far away to me before last May, it is the case that the world has simply gotten smaller, and with it my own world has gotten much larger.

I do not want to speculate here on what the future holds for the relationship between Duquesne and the Spiritans in Africa except to say that this visit by six deans, three faculty members and our stalwart Vice-President for Mission and Identity represents a critical first step. While Duquesne has had an important presence in parts of the continent before this trip, it is clear that this is a beginning of its own kind. In the coming months I believe a robust conversation will ensue and the promise of the new strategic plan will take on a more concrete form—form, with real substance to be born out of a new partnership and set of friendships that asks for everyone to bring their talents and gifts to the common table and embrace the work our mission and the Spirit calls for.
Charles J. Dougherty, Ph.D.

Charles J. Dougherty, Ph.D. became the 12th president of Duquesne University on the feast of the Assumption in 2001. He holds degrees in philosophy from St. Bonaventure University and the University of Notre Dame and is a nationally recognized expert in health care ethics.

He has led Duquesne University through two successful strategic planning processes and significant expansion of campus facilities. During his presidency, Duquesne has been recognized as a first tier national university in the United States and a leader in community service. He has placed new emphasis on academic excellence and on the mission and identity of Duquesne as a Spiritan and Catholic university.

He has received many awards including the Diamond Award from the Pittsburgh business community, the Tree of Life Award from the Pittsburgh Jewish National Fund, the Nelson Mandela Award from the Afrika Yetu organization, and the Humanitarian of the Year Award from the Jerome Bettis Foundation.

Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit

I am honored to serve as the twelfth president of Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. In that capacity, I work to help shape the future of a community of men and women - students, faculty, and staff - dedicated to the Spiritan educational mission. We are a significant expression of that mission. Founded in 1878 with next to nothing but faith in God and six Spiritan faculty members, in 2010 we are a University of 10,300 students served by almost 1,000 faculty and 2,000 administrators and staff members. Our students come from every state in America and from 81 nations around the world. The University is located on 50 urban acres, constituting 3.5 million square feet of space. We have 154 academic programs in 10 separate schools. More than 3,350 students live on campus. Our annual operating budget is over $250 million. Across the United States and around the world, there are more than 81,000 living alumni of Duquesne University. Our name is known for academic quality in university circles around the globe. In the U.S., we are recognized as a first-tier national university and one of the leading Catholic universities. We are, I believe, an institutional accomplishment that Spiritans around the world can be properly proud of.

Our full name is Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit, blessed to be founded and continually sponsored by the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. The motto of the University is “Spiritus Est Qui Vivificat” (It is the Spirit Who Gives Life). Because of the historic and contemporary influence of the Congregation in the University’s administration, board, and sponsoring corporation as well as in the classroom, campus ministry and our many service activities, we are Catholic with strong ecumenical commitments. There is a special place among us for our partnerships with men and women of other religions and with all people of good will—students, faculty, and staff. Protestant Christians have been integral contributors to Duquesne for generations. Jews are important to us for the wisdom of the Torah, the founding role of Francis Libermann in the Congregation, and because of the long history of contributions by Jews to the University. Spiritans have a long association with Islam, especially in Africa. There are increasing numbers of Muslim students studying at Duquesne and using the campus prayer room we have created for them. In our times in America, there are also numbers of men and women of good
will who do not identify with any religion but who share many of our University's core educational values. We believe the Holy Spirit is alive in all these expressions of Duquesne University.

But our core religious faith is Catholic, carried in a special way for us by our Spiritan sponsors. This means that there are moments in the University's life when concerns that are especially Catholic dominate. These can arise, for example, in health insurance (no abortion coverage), in some hiring (of campus ministers) and in the curriculum (required theology). It also means that our religious life on campus centers on our chapel and on Catholic liturgy; always open to others, of course, but Catholic nonetheless. It means that while respecting the highest norms of academic freedom for our faculty, we are institutionally committed to respect for human life and human dignity everywhere. It means that we are specially focused on Spiritan priorities of peace, justice, and respect for the integrity of creation. These themes show themselves in the University's strategic planning, in academic course offerings and faculty research projects, and in the service projects of students, faculty and staff. Finally, our Spiritan Catholic tradition gives us a reverence for the Holy Spirit as that Person of God among us who gives us the gifts required for salvation, the fruits of conversion, and the comfort needed for the trials along the way. We believe that it is the Holy Spirit who gives Duquesne its life and who has allowed us to shape the lives of six generations of students.

What is the future of Duquesne as a Spiritan University? The future of a university community, like the future of each individual, is shaped to a great degree by how we think about ourselves. What kind of a community are we? More to the point, what kind of community should we be? Let me offer five characteristics of what I hope the Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit is becoming and will be.

A Community of Concern for Others

Striving to be a community of concern for others is the religious and ethical root of our educational mission; to lift up lives through learning. Duquesne University was founded by Spiritans from Germany and Ireland who came to Pittsburgh in the 1870s to serve the children of immigrants facing prejudice, exploitation, and poverty in a new land. Duquesne's work today can mean service to those who share the material poverty of the first generation of Duquesne students. Or, it can mean work with the many others who are less than what they can be as persons for lack of the education we provide. It is also the basis
of the University’s concern for our neighbors here and abroad, especially our disadvantaged neighbors.

Concern for others also animates our commitment to service in volunteering and in service-learning. Each year Duquesne assists over 1,100 agencies and organizations. More than 8,000 university students and employees donate over 200,000 volunteer hours with an estimated value of $4 million. Every Duquesne undergraduate must complete a service-learning course in which service to others is integrated into an academic framework for the benefit of both. About $850,000 of the University’s annual budget supports this activity, and Duquesne secures an additional $11 million dollars annually in external grant support for such community engagements. Service is such a distinctive part of the Duquesne experience that the University is ranked among the top American universities for its emphasis here.

Our students are our first responsibility and the first focus of our concerns. Our religious sponsorship makes this concern highly personal. Duquesne students never have been and can never be numbers or faces in a crowd. Each is a single, unique individual whose hopes and spiritual destiny we have the honor to shape. They too must face the accountabilities of living in our community—following rules in the classroom, in our student activities, in residence halls, in our neighboring communities. But in every instance we owe them our very best personal efforts. And our students are changing. Over the last decade, while our students have become brighter than ever, they have also become more diverse—larger numbers of African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and international students. And our students are intent on being Duquesne students. We have been named one of America’s most popular colleges because of the high percentage of applicants accepted to Duquesne who actually do attend. Called “yield,” this ratio indicates the strength of applicants’ preference for a university and it predicts how successful they will be there. Our students are also seeking to live on campus in larger numbers than ever. We routinely fill our traditional residence halls to capacity with freshmen and sophomores. Recently we purchased an apartment building (and named it for Daniel Brottier) to give upper-class students additional on-campus living options. We are now constructing a new twelve story residence (to be named for Claude Poullart des Places) to keep pace with student demand to live on campus.

Concern for others is also evident in our University strategic plan that places new stress on educational and service links...
to Africa and to “the Hill,” an African American community near campus. These strategic stresses were chosen to mirror the Congregation’s long links to Africa and to communities of African descent around the world.

Less obvious, but of great significance, is the care for others that is apparent in the teaching and research interests of our faculty. Teaching for our faculty is service to students and concern for their growth and development. Equally important is the concern for others embedded in our faculty’s research. We attract and retain faculty whose work contributes to building a better world. The methods used in our research are the same objective ones used by scholars around the world. But the motives for our faculty research spring from engaged hearts and souls who care about others and the world we share. Even a cursory review of our annual list of hundreds of faculty publications displays these profound commitments. This is the result of careful hiring, a well-structured tenure and promotion system, and ongoing self-education about our Spiritan institutional character promoted throughout campus by our Office of Mission and Identity.

Finally, we are and must be concerned for one another. Duquesne University is the place where the paths of the lives of students, faculty, and staff cross in lengthy and significant ways and where the intensity of relationships can so enrich human experience. Ours is and should be a community of mutual support. No complex organization is free of conflict, but racial, gender-based, or other invidious biases are wholly incompatible with our mission and should have no place among us. Indeed, Duquesne is building with pride on the fact that African-Americans were students here in the early 1920s, well before the end of the racial discrimination that barred them from most American universities. No one is sure why this is so, but the obvious guess is that the leadership of Spiritans, with missionary experience in Africa and commitments to the dignity of all persons, freed Duquesne earlier from the racial blinders that distorted so much of American history. It is a matter of pride too, that the very first woman to attend an American Catholic university was here at Duquesne in 1909, Sister Mary Fides Shepperson of the Sisters of Mercy. She received a bachelor’s degree in 1911 and a master’s in 1913.

Overall, our Spiritan roots should make us a community with a universal presumption of good will; a community of reciprocal civility. It should be a source of deep satisfaction to be at Duquesne, and a privilege to share our working lives together.
Sometimes in each of our lives we rely on one another in special ways. Recently, the University took a new step to express our concern for those with special needs by the establishment of a program in which employees in temporary crises can receive significant one-time financial support from the University with no strings attached and no expectation of repayment. And, of course, we regularly remember one another’s spiritual intentions at daily Mass and on a University prayer list.

A Community of Academic Excellence

Duquesne University is a community of academic excellence; which means we are committed to the best in dedicated teaching, instructing our students in and out of the classroom. We want to be the professors that our graduates remember for making a difference in their lives. We want to be a faculty who motivates our students with intellectual insights and helps them find their way in life. We are also committed to the best in scholarship, proving ourselves in the publication of books and articles, in grants and patents, arrangements and performances. We want to be the scholars who make a difference in our disciplines. We want to be the faculty cited by others in our fields, invited to address national meetings, serving on the committees and the editorial boards that steer the academy. Some American universities are immense research institutions where many faculty members regard teaching as a distraction best left to graduate students. At the other extreme are small liberal arts colleges where teaching is prized but significant research is uncommon. Duquesne University’s is the harder path to academic excellence: not just quality teaching, not just quality research; but quality teaching and quality research.

Teaching has been a central focus of our academic life since 1878. It has meant and still means excellence in the classroom and availability for support outside the classroom. It has meant smaller classes when possible. Now it means new methods of teaching, sometimes at a distance, and the use of new technologies in support of teaching. Committees of faculty and information technology professionals have annual budgets to add or replace technologies to our classrooms on a regular basis to keep them up to date. As technologies continue to evolve, more will have to be done here. Teaching also means in our case emphasis on the importance of interdisciplinary teaching, where students can benefit from the interactions of faculty with differing academic worldviews. Quality teaching is supported and rewarded at Duquesne.
Scholarship is the hallmark of a leading, mature university. It is a university’s contribution to the growing life of the mind, to our understanding of creation. In the one hundred and thirty-two years of Duquesne University, scholarship is a relatively recent emphasis; the first few generations necessarily focused on teaching. But scholarship is now exceptionally important to Duquesne and to our future. We cannot be the great University we aspire to be without a very strong emphasis here and very strong results going forward. The University now insists on scholarly promise in the hiring of faculty. We have institutionalized clear standards regarding academic publication in our school and university’s tenure and promotion processes to guarantee the ongoing success of scholarship at Duquesne. We are taking steps to regularize sabbatical leaves, providing faculty members more focused time for scholarship. We are spending more on support for labs and related scholarly supports. The University’s strategic plan places emphasis on further development of our graduate programs; this supports scholarship as well. Many of our graduate faculty members are among our most productive scholars, and they have the help of graduate students anxious to be involved in their research.

A Community of Accountability

We are accountable first and foremost to the students we serve. We must provide them with the very best education, the very best all around experience that we can. We are accountable to those who pay our substantial tuition and to the generous benefactors who make a Duquesne education possible for those who cannot pay the tuition. (Average tuition now is more than $27,000 annually; annual gifts to the University are about $11 million.) We must assure that they get the very best return on their investments. Finally, in order for us to satisfy these other obligations, we must be accountable to one another. As members of a Spiritan academic community, we must hold each other responsible for the highest performance, and then we must express the gratitude to one another that such performance deserves.

One of the ways we accomplish this is through mandatory annual performance reviews for all employees, with annual pay raises tied to the results of these reviews. These moments of personal accountability in the year are not comfortable for any of us but they are essential for clarifying goals and making progress against them. Because of the remarkable complexity of Duquesne, we are also living with a highly structured set of
budgetary and administrative controls. Again, none of us likes these burdens or the bureaucracy that they entail. We would prefer to presume that each of us is doing the best job possible and using all university resources wisely. But no human community can operate effectively with this kind of naïveté, no less a contemporary university. Moreover, this level of accountability has paid off handsomely for Duquesne. Despite the many hardships experienced by other American universities and businesses in the last several years, the downturn in the U.S. and world economies has not forced the University into any program cuts or lay-offs. Instead, we are growing and adding programs. Nor have we cancelled any annual increases in pay for employees; indeed, through this recession Duquesne’s salaries have continued to advance against the regional cost of living. One of the marks of a Spiritan university must be how it treats its least well off, so special attention has been given to increases for the lowest paid during this recession. In 2008, Duquesne set a minimum hourly wage of $9.50 to create a University living wage. In 2010, this was raised again so that there is now no hourly employee at Duquesne—full or part-time—earning less than $12 an hour.

Accountability works for Duquesne as a complex academic community. But we must try always to maintain a life-giving spirit throughout it. Annual performance evaluations should also be times in which we reflect more deeply on our mission and our appreciation for one another. They should be moments when supervisors say thank you on behalf of the University to those who report to them. But saying thanks is not only the responsibility of supervisors. A moment’s thought on how much we depend on the help and good will of others to do our own jobs well should lead us to end all our meetings, phone calls and emails with a “thank you”. The poet John Donne never worked at a Spiritan institution, but if he had his famous insight that no one of us is an island might have been made with even more compelling force.

**A Community of National Standards**

Duquesne University endeavors to be a community of national standards, which cannot continue to improve by being content with doing things “the way they have always been done” or in trying not to “rock the boat.” In all of our institutional choices - everything from the design of academic programs, student life programming, athletic competitions, media relations, to budgeting - we must look to the national norms of American
Charles J. Dougherty

...we are aware of our budgetary limitations, sometimes painfully so.

universities as our guides. We must always challenge ourselves with the best in our class in the U.S. in the handling of each issue we face. Every program, every office among us should have a list of the nation’s best at what they do, and a list of the nation’s best Catholic universities at what they do. When choices are made, two considerations should be uppermost. First, which choice ahead of us moves the University closer to these national leaders; how do we emulate the best among us in this moment? Second, how do we institutionalize the decisions we make so that the University builds a continual approach to the highest national norms into our Duquesne culture itself; how do we build a habit of improvement?

At Duquesne, we are aware of our budgetary limitations, sometimes painfully so. Unlike many leading American universities, Duquesne does not have a large endowment to draw upon. But it is important to remember that there is no university—probably no institution—that does not feel constrained in what it wants to accomplish by the shortage of resources at hand. It is certainly true that Duquesne will not be able to afford to follow the best national norms in every case. Sometimes when excellence is genuinely impossible, ending a program is the only honest answer. But when the University does move forward with a program or policy, Duquesne cannot afford to be ignorant of the best national norms; we cannot fail to set our sights on them. Despite the inevitable shortage of funds, we must struggle to be national leaders in all we do. The alternative of accepting the status quo leads only to mediocrity, something Duquesne can truly never afford. Capitulation to mediocrity would undermine Duquesne’s ability to recruit the best students and faculty. More importantly, it is incompatible with the striving for excellence—despite scant resources—that is a recurring theme in the history of the Spiritans.

A Community of Distinction

Duquesne University is the only Spiritan university in the world. There are some Spiritan high schools that bear the name ‘college’ but they are not colleges as the term is widely used in the U.S.; here they would be called high schools. There are small Spiritan institutions in nations in the developing world that use the term ‘university’ but they lack the complexity of universities on the American scene. Duquesne, then, is the only comprehensive Spiritan university in the world. This provides endless opportunities for us to define our mission and identity in unique ways, calling on over three hundred years of Spiritan
history and tradition. We have an active program of self-education on our Spiritan mission and a robust Spiritan campus ministry. Our new emphasis on Africa in our strategic plan is also an expression of this. So is our long tradition of openness to other cultures and traditions. Duquesne hosts an annual lecture on the theology of the Holy Spirit which is now established as a major scholarly event; the text is published and distributed as a research contribution to pneumatology. The University's Center for Spiritan Studies is digitizing Spiritan classics and publishing an annual journal, *Spiritan Horizons*. Throughout the University, students, faculty, and staff are engaged in service activities that express and support the Spiritan mission. We value the contributions of our Duquesne Spiritans and welcome more Spiritans among us. The University Strategic Plan calls for increased attention to ways in which Duquesne can become a greater asset to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.

We are also the largest and most comprehensive Catholic university in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, one of America's largest and most populous states. There are other universities in the eastern part of the state that are nearly as large as us, but we are the only Pennsylvania Catholic university listed in the national category of the *US News and World Report* rankings. We are the only Catholic university in the state that has the complexity of ten schools. These are considerable distinctions since, after New York State, Pennsylvania has more private universities than any state in the U.S. As a consequence, Duquesne is a leader in Catholic education in Pennsylvania. As one of only fifteen Catholic universities in the *US News* national category, we are leaders in our tradition in the United States.

Duquesne has its home in the City of Pittsburgh, and the University is a model urban campus. We are a short walk from all the benefits of the downtown of one of America's great cities, with endless employment and service opportunities, artistic and cultural activities, and nationally significant sports teams all at our doorstep. Yet on our Bluff—the University sits on a cliff high above one of Pittsburgh's three rivers—we have the serenity of a world apart. And our campus is beautiful. On our fifty acres, we have some of the most attractive green space, landscaping, and scenic views of any urban university in the nation. Classically, beauty is the constant companion of truth and goodness. All three should flourish together at an institution of learning. Moreover, every year we are in an intense competition with other universities for the best and brightest new students and faculty. The beauty of our campus helps to assure our ongoing recruiting

...we have some of the most attractive green space, landscaping, and scenic views of any urban university in the nation.
success. And in our peace and isolation, we are safe. Our two institutional neighbors abutting campus underscore this point: a first-class hospital and a fire department.

Duquesne was founded in Pittsburgh and has been here for one hundred and thirty-two years. It will be here—God willing—as far as we can even imagine. Challenging ourselves constantly with national norms is not incompatible with appreciating the distinctiveness that our hometown has and will give to everything Duquesne does. And it gives us great advantages. We are a place of big city opportunities and amenities with small town accessibility and friendliness. Pittsburgh is a city that knows and respects hard work—of all kinds. The city has grown from a small fort in the center of a clash of colonial empires, to a melting pot of ethnicities in a major steel manufacturing region, to a center for the new U.S. economies of education, medicine, and eco-friendly ventures. Pittsburgh has shed its old image as a polluted city for one that receives repeated recognitions as America’s most livable city. Our aging population, emerging technologies and the discovery of large deposits of natural gas in the region give us unique opportunities for study and for service. Native Pittsburghers at the University bring a “can do” attitude to work—“can do” with energy, cooperation, and a smile. And Pittsburgh is a city to which it is easy to attract and retain talent from across America and around the world.

The last and most distinctive ingredient of Duquesne is our people. Recently, the University has enjoyed the largest and most diverse Spiritan community that we have had in years, working in partnership with our laity as never before. We have more living Duquesne alumni than ever, spread around the nation and the globe. Because of conscious efforts on our part, they are connected to us more closely than ever—through communications, events, and athletics. They care about our common future and give of themselves—in time and treasure—as never before. They have helped boost our capital campaign—our major fundraising effort—past the $100 million mark. Duquesne students are the best we have ever had academically and they are the most diverse. Their own sense of ownership of the University is intense and inspiring. Their parents follow events on campus and opportunities for their sons and daughters closely and with great care. And I hope the many talented generations who came before will forgive the possibility of conceit in the judgment that Duquesne now has the best faculty and the best staff that we have ever had.
In 1878, after three earlier attempts had failed, Duquesne became the first Catholic university in Pittsburgh because of the commitment of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Since then, five generations of Spiritans and lay men and women working with them have struggled to preserve and improve the University—despite prejudice, financial hardships, world wars, and natural disasters. Today, Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit is a worldwide leader in higher education and one of the major educational works of the Congregation. The University hopes for a future in which our Spiritan identity is enhanced and our educational mission thrives. We pray that the Spirit Who Gives Life continues to bless Duquesne University and ever deepens our commitment to lifting up lives through learning.
Creating a Spiritan Library

Luxury and refinement must be avoided in the acquisition of books. Each house, however, shall have a library in keeping with its needs.¹

In support of its Spiritan mission and identity, Duquesne University’s Gumberg Library has always collected books and journals by and about the Spiritans. Over the years we have accepted donations from individuals and from other libraries, such as St. Mary’s Seminary in Connecticut, for our collections. The library also has a goal of acquiring all new books by Spiritan faculty and scholars at Duquesne and elsewhere. Therefore, when Rev. Timothy J. Hickey, C.S.Sp. (then Executive Director of Mission and Identity for Duquesne University), and Rev. John Fogarty, C.S.Sp. (then Director of the Center for Spiritan Studies), asked in 2005 for assistance in creating a Spiritan library, there was no hesitation in saying yes. The concern, however, was whether to pull together print materials that would reside in Pittsburgh, or to think about the needs of a global congregation and work toward a digital library. The choice was easy, but it included locating print editions and developing a multi-year strategy and plan for digitization.

Books are organic objects, subject to destruction by insects, environments that are too dry or too damp, improper shelving and handling, and chemical reactions in paper and bindings. It is a challenge for libraries, even in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to maintain appropriate climate control for the long-term preservation of print texts. In some areas of the world, catastrophic events such as wars and major storms threaten libraries and private collections. The potential loss of print materials combined with the goal of providing 24/7 global access made a compelling case in favor of creating a digital Spiritan library.

Identification of Spiritan writings in print

The actual identification of titles to be digitized took place in several phases. The initial role of librarians at Gumberg Library was to identify Spiritan print resources spread throughout the library and bring them together in one place. Fr. John Fogarty augmented the local collection with material from the USA Eastern Province headquarters in Bethel Park. The collection at the current time consists of 1,032 book volumes representing 856 titles, seven periodical titles, and related materials written or published by or about the Spiritans.

Laverna Saunders, Ed.D. & Robert Behary, MLS.

Laverna Saunders has served as University Librarian at Duquesne University since 2002. She holds a doctorate in Educational Administration from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas; an M.A. in English Literature from Drew University; and the M.L.S. from Rutgers University. She has worked in academic libraries more than 30 years and has edited three books on the development of the virtual library.

Robert Behary has served as Reference Librarian and Systems Librarian at Duquesne University since 2003. He holds an M.B.A. from Wheeling Jesuit University and the M.L.S. from the University of Pittsburgh. He has worked in academic libraries developing Web based content for 13 years.
In addition to organizing the print collection, the library also took responsibility for clearing and renovating an existing space to create a physical home for the print collection. The University president, Dr. Charles J. Dougherty, provided funding to furnish the room in support of the programs and scholarly work of the Center for Spiritan Studies (CSS), a joint endeavor between the Spiritan Congregation and Duquesne University. On September 5, 2006 the Gumberg Library hosted the dedication of the Fr. Edmund Supple C.S.Sp. Room and Spiritan Collection. The dedication took place during a meeting of the International Spiritan Advisory Board of the Center for Spiritan Studies.

The Fr. Edmund Supple C.S.Sp. Room and the Spiritan Collection may be used by Spiritans, Duquesne University graduate students and faculty, and by visiting scholars for the purposes of research and reading in the area of Spiritan studies. Groups may use the space for seminars on topics related to the aims of the Center for Spiritan Studies. Materials in the room circulate according to general library collection policies. However, fragile and rare items are stored in an adjoining room and are restricted to library use only.

Considerations for building a digital library

The Spiritan Collection was among the earliest ventures into digital publishing undertaken by Gumberg Library. To make content available online, the library identified five concurrent streams to develop digital content. The five streams continue to this day as development on the digital library is ongoing.

1. Select the most appropriate materials while respecting intellectual property
2. Create a Web site suitable for distributing materials
3. Partner with experts to create digital copies of materials
4. Build appropriate indexes and search functionality for the materials
5. Make the digital copies available in a variety of formats

Selecting the most appropriate materials while respecting intellectual property

In the beginning, Fr. Fogarty developed a list of important materials for digitization. Copyright laws of the United States require that before any digitization can take place, materials need to meet certain conditions, including permission from the copyright holders. Therefore, Fr. Fogarty secured a letter from the Spiritan General Superior permitting the digitization of any material for which the Congregation could claim copyright.
Copyright and intellectual property concerns are becoming common throughout the world. In the early stages of the Spiritan Collection, the latest date for legally creating digital copies of materials was 1923. Because of copyright law, many important biographies and histories published by major publishing houses could not be included in the digitization project.

As copyright law continues to evolve in the age of digital publishing, authors might pay special attention to the digital publishing rights afforded by increasingly copyright savvy publishing houses. Ideally, authors would negotiate the rights to have a copy of their work included in the Spiritan Collection.

**Creating the Web site**

When deciding which platform to use for making digital materials available through a Web site, Gumberg Library needed to consider which tool to use. The Web platform needed to be sustainable, easy to use, and functional enough to meet the needs of a worldwide community of users. The library had the advantage of being the first digital effort undertaken by Duquesne University, so several platforms merited consideration.

The library decided first to make the documents acquired by Fr. Fogarty available via Duquesne University’s content management system. Duquesne’s content management system allowed users to access simple PDF files from a Web site at Gumberg Library. Before the Web site, Fr. Fogarty had filled each request by either emailing or physically mailing a compact disc to users who needed digital versions of the materials that would become the Spiritan Library.

While the simple Web site provided rudimentary access to the online collection, the growing number of documents in the collection called for a more powerful platform. Other collections, including Duquesne’s Dissertations and Theses collection, needed a technology that could support very large documents, full-text searching, and similar features. The simple Web site was no longer sufficient to support the needs of users.

More and more options for digital publishing continue to emerge. Full-service digital publishing platforms range from full-service systems that control everything from the look of the Web site to the way content is stored. Other options give maximum control to site developers relying on a community of users for support. Full-service platforms are attractive because they require little or no expertise on the part of customers. However, full-
service platforms are also the most expensive. On the other end
of the spectrum is open source software which gives complete
total control to end users, but requires a dedicated staff of developers
and programmers to create and customize every aspect of the
software. While less expensive initially than the full-service
option, open source options are difficult to sustain over long
periods and require significant investment in personnel.

Gumberg Library selected an online platform that was
neither full-service nor open source. By selecting OCLC’s
CONTENTdm, a product supported by the largest library
software company in the world, Gumberg Library could enjoy
the flexibility of open source and the support of a large sponsoring
company. Gumberg Library purchased an introductory license
that allowed enough space to post Fr. Fogarty’s documents. The
PDFs were processed using optical character recognition software,
permitting full-text searching across all of the documents.

When Gumberg Library first purchased CONTENTdm in
2007, OCLC hosted the content of the Spiritan Collection on its
servers in Dublin, Ohio, USA. This arrangement provided a secure
and reliable way to access digital content, but was not without
some drawbacks. The CONTENTdm software restricted how
many items could be loaded into the Spiritan Library. The cost
of storage on the hosted server proved prohibitively expensive.
Once again, the Spiritan Library needed to be moved to a new
home.

At Duquesne University, the Computer and Technology
Services (CTS) department was busy developing expertise in a
new technology called server virtualization. This allowed CTS
to purchase and maintain servers at a fraction of the cost of
traditional servers. Gumberg Library took advantage of the
expertise at CTS and moved the CONTENTdm software to
the local servers. Purchasing the fastest available storage, fiber-
channel drives, insured that anyone in the world with Internet
access could access the content of the Spiritan Library.

Sustainability is always a question when building a digital
library. The precious digital copies in the Spiritan Collection are
backed-up to Duquesne University’s storage area network (SAN).
The SAN creates a copy of the Spiritan Collection both within
Duquesne’s server room and at an off-campus backup facility.

To accommodate the growing collection, Duquesne needed
an unlimited license for CONTENTdm. The President of
Duquesne University, Dr. Charles Dougherty, has always supported the effort to build the Spiritan Collection, and nowhere was his support more instrumental than providing the $30,000 needed to purchase an unlimited CONTENTdm license.

In the summer of 2010, a graduate student from Duquesne University’s Multimedia program contributed his expertise to enhance the physical appearance of the Spiritan Collection’s Web site. The student created new graphics for each collection interweaving Spiritan and Duquesne University icons to create an attractive new layout.

With the unlimited license in hand, the cost of both virtual server technology and storage dropping each day, and an attractive new design, the current Web environment positions the Spiritan Collection to continue to grow for the foreseeable future. While the Web environment can now accommodate a large collection, the attention to how content is made available for the Web continued to develop as the second parallel stream.

**Partner with experts to create digital copies of materials**

User expectations for high-quality digital content can greatly affect the use of digital collections. If users encounter illegible, out-of-focus, or even off-center digital images, they can immediately make qualitative judgments about a site without even attempting to use the content. Fortunately, partners who understand the importance of high-quality digital images were identified early in the life of the Spiritan Collection. Fr. Fogarty began working with OCLC Preservation Services to obtain a high-quality digital version of *Notes et Documents*. Funded by a private donation, the digital version of *Notes et Documents* was available on Compact Disk by 2006.

In 2007, Fr. Fogarty began a new project; to digitize the *Bulletin Général*. The *Bulletin Général* is a chronicle of the Spiritan Congregation from 1874-1975. Much of the material in the *Bulletin* required the special handling of seasoned digitization professionals. Fortunately, OCLC Preservation Services had worked with rare materials in the past, including such famous objects as the Gutenberg Bible. OCLC created a digital copy of the *Bulletin Général* which preserved the foldouts included in the publication, and which did not necessitate the *Bulletin Général* to be unbound prior to the scanning process.

High quality scanners used by companies such as OCLC Preservation Services are equipped with special lights that will
not expose materials to radiation that would damage brittle paper. At the same time, the scanning techniques allow for high-volume and high-quality image processing. For inexperienced scanners, creating a digital copy could destroy the original copy while taking a long time to scan. Expertise is also needed to determine the best resolution for image scanning and adjusting color settings accordingly.

One bonus feature of working with OCLC Preservation Services was that since OCLC also produces the CONTENTdm software, those responsible for creating the collection delivered the finished product directly to Duquesne's CONTENTdm server. The 45,000 page collection included an index and OCR (optical character recognition) searching approaching 80% accuracy, a very high rate.

By virtue of a grant project, the library contracted with another institution with an excellent reputation for creating digital content. Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey, USA, collaborated with a regional library consortium, Lyrasis, and with an international provider of digital content, the Internet Archive, to provide subsidized scanning services to regional libraries. Quickly recognizing the opportunities, Gumberg Library pledged $20,000 to produce digital version of even more materials from the print Spiritan Library.

Princeton proved to be an outstanding partner for digitizing many more items. Complete runs of such important documents such as *Our Province* and *Information Documentation* were among the first scanned by Princeton. Other documents from the Congregation such as the Spiritan Rule of life and the reports of General Chapters soon followed.

**Build appropriate indexes and search functionality for the materials**

Traditionally, the only way to access material in library collections was through an index. At times, researchers could only search the title, author, and subject of an item. For periodical literature or larger monographic sets, researchers could avail themselves of a more in-depth index. However, the expectations of modern readers have changed significantly. Access to full-text searching has become almost as important as access to the research materials themselves.

With those general principles in mind, it soon became apparent that the Spiritan Collection needed full-text search...
...there is a need for more basic indexing functionality.

...three levels of metadata are available beyond the aforementioned full-text index.

capabilities. Fortunately, CONTENTdm software provided a way to index all of the materials in the Spiritan Collection in full text. CONTENTdm software collects the transcripts of each digital object. For professionally scanned items, the preferred format for digital access is PDF. This format maps each page to its associated full-text, even highlighting the search words within the full text of a page.

When constructing the digital library, we enabled each collection with an individual search box feature. CONTENTdm software indexes the English, French, and Portuguese of each document, accommodating all official languages of the Congregation. Rebuilding the full-text index occurs on a periodic basis to insure inclusion of new material in the full-text index.

Still, there is a need for more basic indexing functionality. The concept of metadata standards allows for libraries around the world to share data interchangeably. While many library systems cannot accommodate full-text indexing, most rely on mature library standards to provide at least rudimentary discovery of materials.

For the Spiritan Collection, three levels of metadata are available beyond the aforementioned full-text index. First, there is the collection level. The collection level shares a single record with the world describing that Duquesne University has a collection of Spiritan materials available for searching. The library shares the collection level record with the largest international database available, WorldCat.

WorldCat also includes the second level of indexing. For each title in the Spiritan Collection, Gumberg Library creates a MARC (machine readable cataloging) record suitable for contribution to WorldCat. MARC has been used in the library community since the 1960s, and provides title, author, and subject indexing for the books and journals included in the Spiritan Collection.

The third level of metadata is known as Dublin Core. While very useful within the library community, MARC records are not flexible enough to accommodate all of the metadata contained in digital objects. Simple Dublin Core, however, can accommodate the required metadata in digital objects. While Gumberg Library does not yet share the Dublin Core metadata with the rest of the world, initiatives are underway to join larger Catholic consortia interested in sharing digitized content. For instance, Gumberg Library recently joined the Catholic Resources Research Alliance,
...other groups of Spiritans have neither broadband, Internet access nor modern computing equipment.

a group of Catholic libraries interested in promoting Catholic scholarship through the sharing of unique digital collections.

Make the digital content available in a variety of formats

The Spiritan community worldwide is extremely diverse. Many Spiritan communities enjoy access to the latest technologies including broadband Internet access, new computer equipment, and emerging mobile technologies. However, other groups of Spiritans have neither broadband, Internet access nor modern computing equipment. In fact, some communities do not have a continuous power supply.

A major challenge in creating a Spiritan collection is to accommodate all users while at the same time anticipating future needs of the Congregation. Fortunately, the seemingly diametrically opposed goals at times can prove complementary. To anticipate current and future use, the answer so far has been to take advantage of many formats.

To insure preservation of the original digital documents, Gumberg Library stores collections of archival TIFF files on numerous external devices. TIFF as a standard holds the most promise of preserving content for future generations of researchers; however, files generated in TIFF format are very large, even by modern standards. For instance, a 1 terabyte hard drive is needed to store the TIFF files for the Bulletin Général. Making TIFF files available online would make collections barely accessible even to users with broadband Internet access, so the best option available currently is to convert the archival TIFFs into PDF format. PDF allows users with modest connections, including ISDN, to access all of the materials in the Spiritan Collection at reasonable download speeds. To assure access to as many users as possible, CONTENTdm includes a special version of PDF for all collections. Known as PDF compound objects, CONTENTdm allows for full-text access to items without requiring users to download very large PDF files. PDF compound objects load only the pages a user needs, highlighting the full-text search results on the individual pages.

In addition to the PDF compound objects, the metadata files for each page within CONTENTdm include a full-text transcript. Researchers who need to copy and paste selections into their own research projects may use the full-text transcript feature of CONTENTdm. The text-based full-text transcripts also hold the yet unrealized promise of accessibility for users with the slowest Internet connections.
By virtue of our partnership with Princeton University, many objects are now available in emerging formats on the Internet Archive’s search pages. During the scanning process, Princeton University created files suitable for use on the newest generation of hand-held reading devices. For instance, the General Chapter documents are now available on the Internet Archive site in Kindle format, the native format required for the popular reading device the Amazon Kindle. In addition, less proprietary formats suitable for other readers including EPUB, Daisy, and DjVu are also available.

The flexibility of formats opens new possibilities for the future of the Congregation. For instance, in areas with only limited electricity, a reader might load the content of the entire Spiritan Collection onto a high capacity e-reader. E-readers are available with batteries that support up to 2 weeks of continuous reading. Other e-readers run on inexpensive AA batteries. By having the Spiritan Collection available in new publishing formats, many users without Internet access could potentially access the same scholarly content as those with broadband Internet connection.

Overview of the Current Spiritan Collection

The current online Spiritan Collection consists of nine discrete collections with materials in English, French and Portuguese. Researchers may search or browse each collection individually or as a whole. For new users, a series of video tutorials are available to help with basic search mechanics for the site.

While all collections share the umbrella of documents of interest to the Congregation, collections are divided to enhance access for researchers. Many materials are grouped because of the relative similarity of their print counterparts. Other collections consist of only one title.

The following provides a brief overview of each component part of the Spiritan Collection. The arrangement of collections may change as new material is added to the collection. Also, the basic functions may evolve according to the conventions of accessing digital collections.

Notes et Documents Relatifs à la vie et à l’OEuvre du Vénérable François-Marie-Paul Libermann

A thirteen volume set, Notes et Documents, selectively documents Venerable Libermann’s life from his birth through his late writings. Using materials culled from the archives of the Congregation, Notes et Documents contains transcribed letters,
narratives documenting Libermann’s life, and other primary documents associated with the co-founder. The work is entirely in French.

Fr. Fogarty provided the digital version of Notes et Documents for inclusion in the Spiritan Collection. Fr. Fogarty derived the digital copy from the print run that Fr. Koren had collected. The full text of Notes et Documents was scanned using the optical character recognition software in CONTENTdm. In the spring of 2010, a graduate student working for Fr. Bernard Kelly, C.S.Sp., renumbered the collection for page number consistency.

**Bulletin Général**

The largest of the individual collections within the Spiritan Collection, the *Bulletin Général* chronicles the history of the Spiritan Congregation from 1857-1975. The *Bulletin Général* begins with several handwritten volumes that limit the search features of CONTENTdm. The later materials in French, English, and Latin report on Spiritan activity throughout the world.

With the financial support of the President of Duquesne University, Dr. Charles Dougherty, Fr. Fogarty worked closely with OCLC Preservation Services to produce the digital copy of the *Bulletin*. The entire set took several months to complete, but in September of 2008, the digital version of the *Bulletin Général* became available online.

**Spiritan Papers**

Spiritan Papers was created to “stir up renewed interest in research about our religious family.” Produced by the Generalate in Rome through the Spiritan Research and Animation Center, Spiritan Papers covers the years 1976-1988. At the beginning of the Spiritan Collection, Fr. Fogarty already had digital copies of the first twenty-two volumes of Spiritan Papers. These volumes added to CONTENTdm originally as non-searchable PDFs, but were later reloaded to enable full-text searching of the collection.

**Our Province**

Described as a “modest monthly letter” to promote “a greater spirit of unity and co-operation amongst us,” Reverend C.J. Plunkett established *Our Province* for the “American Province and its foreign missionaries.” Gumberg Library held volumes 1-39 of *Our Province* and used funds from the Lyrasis grant project to digitize and load *Our Province* into CONTENTdm.
Spiritan Horizons

The last of the discrete collections to be added to the Spiritan Collection was *Spiritan Horizons*. PDF versions of *Spiritan Horizons* had been available on the Web site of the Center for Spiritan Studies for some time. Loading *Spiritan Horizons* into CONTENTdm added full-text search functionality to the collection. Volumes 1-3 are available through the Spiritan Collection.

Non-Discrete Collections

Three sections of the Spiritan Collection represent collections of digitized materials grouped according to genre. *Spiritan Articles* contains a collection of 86 articles in French, English and Portuguese. Fr. Fogarty gathered the articles for the *Spiritan Articles* collection from a variety of sources. The articles represent the first material to be added to the Spiritan Collection.

Spiritan Books contains full-text books either collected by Fr. Fogarty or scanned as part of the Lyrasis digitization project. The five books included in the collection are, the *Birth of Missionary Spirituality*, *Le Feu sur la Terre*, *Where are You*, *Life Began at Forty*, and Riaud’s biography, *Claude François Poullart des Places*. Physical copies of all books still reside in the Fr. Edmund Supple C.S.Sp. Room and the Spiritan Collection at Gumberg Library.

Finally, the Congregation of the Holy Spirit collection includes 21 books. The General Chapter Documents, *l’Acte d’Union*, *Handbook for the Spiritan Rule of Life*, and other documents related to the Congregation are all available in this section. All of the materials were added through the Lyrasis digitization project in 2010.

Conclusion

The Spiritan Collection provides a unique opportunity for anyone wishing to access the core documents of the Congregation. Even with the limits imposed by copyright law, technology costs, and end-user accessibility, the Spiritan Collection has grown to the scale of a full-fledged library over a few years. With the continued growth of the collection, the Spiritan Community as a whole will have unprecedented access to its major documents in formats that allow for new opportunities for research, education, and personal formation.
Endnotes

1Francis Libermann (Koren, Essays on the Spiritan Charism and on Spiritan History, Spiritus Press, Bethel Park, PA 1990, p. 25; N.D. 10, 560)

2Spiritan Papers, v. 1 p. 3

3Our Province, v. 1, p. 9

4Our Province, v. 1, p. 10
THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE MULTITUDE OF BELIEVERS WAS ONE
THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES AND THE SPIRITAN MOTTO

Introduction

In composing the Acts of the Apostles, Luke has given us one of the most exciting books in the Bible. It is worth repeating E.J. Goodspeed’s comment:

Where, within eighty pages, will be found such a varied series of exciting events – trials, riots, persecutions, escapes, martyrdoms, voyages, shipwreck rescues – set in that amazing panorama of the ancient world – Jerusalem, Antioch, Philippi, Corinth, Athens, Ephesus, Rome? And with such scenery and settings – temples, courts, prisons, deserts, ships, barracks, theater”. Has any opera such variety? A bewildering range of scenes and actions (and of speeches) passes before the eye of the historian. And in all of them he sees the providential hand that has made and guided this great movement for the salvation of mankind. (Quoted in Robert Smith’s review of Krodel’s Acts in Interpretation, July 1988, p. 302).

The title of this article is a literal translation of Acts 4:32. The heart and soul of the multitude of believers was one. This has given us Spiritans our often quoted motto Cor Unum et Anima Una (One heart and one soul). An exploration of this text and its context in the Acts of the Apostles can bring to life again the spirit of the early church and the challenge this holds for today’s believers and especially for Spiritans.


...both assumes and forwards the notion that the Christian community has four marks that have become classical: oneness, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity. Naturally, he suggests these marks appear more clearly in Acts than in the Gospel, since the Gospel is more concerned with the second phase of salvation history, where Jesus is more
important than the Church. Still one can see even in the Gospel an assumption that the community which Jesus initiated has its center in this one Lord and his Spirit; that the community’s doctrines and sacraments nurture holy life in the kingdom of grace; that the community is open to all people willing to accept its message and in fact is spreading rapidly throughout the world; and that the community derives from the twelve, the original witnesses of Jesus, who participated in the second period of salvation, when the most crucial things happened.

The Augustinian Tradition

Very little reference to Acts from the first five centuries has survived (see J. Cramer, 1838 and P. Stuehrenberg, 1987). Valuable is Chrysostom’s *Homiliae in Acta* (11:1-328, P.G. 60: 13-384), fifty-five sermons preached in Constantinople, c.400, where he repeated his well-known complaint that Acts was little known in the Church:

> To many persons this Book is so little known, both it and its author, that they are not even aware that there is such a book in existence. For this reason especially I have taken this narrative for my subject, that I may draw to it such as do not know it, and not let such a treasure as this remain hidden out of sight. For, indeed, it may profit us no less than even the Gospels, so replete is it with Christian wisdom and sound doctrine especially in what is said concerning the Holy Ghost. Then let us not hastily pass by it, but examine it closely. Thus the predictions which in the Gospels Christ utters, here we may see these actually come to pass.

According to Francis Martin, who edited the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Acts* (Inter Varsity Press, Illinois, 2006, p. 55) our text comes from the favorite of the summaries in Acts among the early interpreters as is evident from “the sudden abundance of available commentary.” Thus Augustine quotes this passage more than 50 times in his writings often “to show the binding power of love among believers as a reflection of the love of the Trinity”:

> Others such as Basil and Chrysostom, reflect on the peace of mind that comes from seeing nothing as one’s own or on how it is simply the truth about this present life. One can catch a glimpse of the enthusiasm of the Fathers as they contemplate Luke’s description of what Christian community can
Those of one heart can be separated in body but not in affection (Fulgentius). They are as one born of the same mother (Bede). What belongs to God belongs to all (Cyprian) so they lacked nothing (Chrysostom). To show that they were willing to trample on covetousness, they laid their possessions at the Apostles’ feet. They laid up treasures where there can be no loss (Arator). The spirit of Barnabas, the son of encouragement, was empowered by the Spirit of consolation (Bede).

Particularly important for our Spiritan text is the tradition of St. Augustine, or more precisely The Rule of St. Augustine based on his own community at Hippo. There is in fact a long history of debate concerning The Rule of St. Augustine, which, over many centuries, proved to be adaptable at different times and places to quite a number of congregations. This development produced three basic texts; the regulations for a monastery, the Precept (for men) and Augustine’s Epistula 211, which is addressed to women. After monastic life in N. Africa came to an end, the Rule was little used until the end of the 11th century when it was adopted by the Augustinian Canons, especially at St. Victor in Paris, a precursor of the University of Paris. Then it was used by the Dominicans, the Augustinian Hermits/Friars, the Premonstratensians, the Lateran Canons, the Servites and later by the Ursuline and Visitation nuns. It was a time when the Papacy was insisting that newly founded religious orders should be based on existing rules such as the Rule of St. Augustine, known for its sanity and adaptability.

What is interesting is that the Rule is grounded on Gospel values and based in particular on Acts 4:32 as it insists that: “The main purpose for your having come together is to live harmoniously in your house, intent upon God in oneness of mind and heart” (1:1). The community of Augustinian Canons at St. Victor in Paris were with the Cistercians expressions of a passionate 12th century evangelical awakening. However, they were not precisely a monastic order but ordained clergy, who desired to live the common life of poverty/celibacy/obedience to a superior but without withdrawal from the world. It was quite natural that, somewhat uncritically, such communities returned to the guidance of St. Augustine who, himself, probably did not compose a formal community rule. Some 36 sources and commentaries on Acts from the High Middle Ages (1100-1350) have survived but are unstudied, often fragmentary and unpublished. However, more than 150 societies follow the Augustinian Rule today with its characteristics of love and discretion, common life, authority,
abstinence and care for the sick. It is by this Parisian tradition that the Spiritan Rule of Life has been influenced.

**The Background of 4:32 in Acts**

The aim of Acts was to defend the early Church against the accusation of political subversion and to show its essential unity in its world-wide mission. But above all, Acts wished to describe a picture of the real Christianity and to show how it spread from Jerusalem to Rome. The early chapters of Acts, in fact, contain some seven summary descriptions of the early Christian community (2:42-47; 4:4; 4:32-35; 5:12-16; 5:41-42; 6:7; 8:1b-3). Scholars such as G. Theissen conclude from the considerable number of *hapax legomena* involved that Luke did not formulate the summaries freely. Others came to different and even opposite conclusions.

The first summary is a somewhat idyllic Lucan composition (2:42-47) which describes their devotion to the teaching of the Apostles, to a communal way of life, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. These four chief elements of early church life are an important way for talking about the life and consciousness of the Church in every age. Luke has begun Acts 2 with the Pentecost experience, then Peter’s sermon explaining the events, and then a summarizing overview of the way of life of the baptized in Jerusalem. He then describes the impression which the community made on those around them. Reverential awe characterizes each, and (for the first time in Acts) miracles are worked. They lived together and held all things in common as “they ate their food with glad and generous hearts” (2:46). Luke describes the Jerusalem community’s “spontaneity, harmony and unity, its devotion to prayer and Temple worship” (Fitzmyer, Acts p. 268). This description of glad and simple hearts, respected by all the people, is a foil to the scandal and squabble in chs.5-6. Some scholars attribute these summaries to Luke himself with 2:42-47 emphasizing the spiritual community of the believers, 4:32-35 emphasizing their material community and 5:12-16 showing how the community developed through the apostles’ signs and wonders.

The brief second summary (4:4) continues the idea of increasing numbers (to about five thousand) found in 2:41.

The third summary (4:32-35) is introduced with the striking description of the believers “one in heart and soul” and concentrates on how their possessions are dealt with in the community, so that “there was no needy among them” (cf.
The fourth summary (5:12-16), which follows the account of Ananias and Sapphira, describes the idyllic community, meeting “with one mind” (1:14; 2:46; 4:24) and its bulwark, the Twelve, responsible for distributing the money. It concentrates essentially on the miracle-working of the apostles and stresses their charismatic power to heal the sick and those troubled by unclean spirits. The result was that from the Patristic period until Luther, the Church considered usury to be immoral and quoted Levitical texts to prove it.

The fifth summary (5:41-42) describes how the advice of Gamaliel did not save the Twelve from scourging. Yet, they return to the community rejoicing. The community meets each day in the temple and in homes (2:46), teaching and preaching that Jesus is the Messiah (2:36, 42).

The sixth summary (6:7) uses the word disciple, which becomes the normal word for the increasing members of the messianic community. A surprising remark is that “a great many priests”, despite the constant opposition from the priests (4:1, 6; 5:17, 21, 24, 27; 6:12; 7-1), became members – the Qumran Essenes were quite critical of the Jerusalem priests, who amassed money and wealth by plundering the people (1QpHab. 9:4).

The seventh summary (8:1b-3) describes the execution and burial of Stephen and the result, “a great persecution of the church in Jerusalem,” so that the Jerusalem Christians, especially the Hellenists, flee the city. This adversity leads to the fulfillment of 1:8, as the expelled go about preaching the word.

“The heart and soul of the multitude of believers was one” (4:32).

With this generalizing summary, Luke idealizes the time of the apostles’ ministry in Jerusalem, while concentrating on a community of goods as evidence of unity of heart and soul. Like the summary in Acts 2:42-47, it shows that the formation of community is one of the primary results of preaching, the gift of the Spirit which led to conversion. Some six times Luke describes the early Church in Acts as unanimous – homothumadon (1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25). In Paul this is the goal to which the Christian community must work (Romans 15:6; 16:17-20; Phlm 17; Phil 1:27-8).
Heart and Soul are often found together in the Old Testament, especially in Deuteronomy 6:5 “with all your heart and with all your soul” (Note also Dt. 10:12; 13:4; 26:16; 30:2, 6,10, etc). Together they describe the inmost seat of the human person. The Greek phrase “one soul” (mia psyche) is found in the Septuagint translation of 1 Chronicles 12:39.

The heart, which suggests to many of us the affective life, is in Hebrew the seat of the intellect, the inside of a person in a much wider sense and the integrative center associated with wisdom (hokmah) and knowledge (da’at – Prov. 2:2; Deut. 29:4). It is the source of personality, the place of key choices and the mysterious action of God, where in fact one meets God.

Soul is the inner person separable from the body – in Hebrew it is nephesh and in Greek psyche, words which can be translated as person or life.

These words bring to mind such common Greek moral proverbs about friends as “friends have one soul” and “the goods of friends are common property” (Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 9:8,2; Cicero De Officis; Plutarch On Brotherly Love 490 E.) Such sharing “in common” is mentioned by a wide variety of ancient writers, including Euripedes, Menander, Theophrastus, Martial, Cicero and Seneca. Aristotle did not accept that common ownership of property would lead to harmony. Neither did he believe that common property would be looked after properly (Politics 2.1.8-10).

Luke is perhaps suggesting that the early Christian community is fulfilling the ideals of both Jews and Greeks alike. Some scholars insist that phrases like “one soul” would remind Luke’s original readers of the idea of friendship which was prevalent at the same period in the Greco-Roman world and is found in Cicero and Pythagoras. Writings like the Didache and the Epistle of Barnabas examine much further than Luke, the deeper relationship between union of heart and soul and the community of goods. Surprisingly, Luke carefully avoids describing the early Christians as friends and neither does Acts employ the vocabulary of love. The Essenes were described in like manner by such observers as Philo Quod omnis probus liber sit 85 and Josephus J.W. 2:122:

Riches they despise, and their community of goods is truly admirable; you will not find one among them with greater property than others. They have a law that new members on
In the Qumran Community Rule (1QS 6:13-22) it says that after a candidate's probationary year, his property and earnings (2 words in Acts 2:45) are to be handed over to the one in charge but not amalgamated with the goods of the community until the successful completion of a second year of probation. Community of goods was a hallmark of some Greco-Roman philosophical associations. Total community of goods is found in the Qumran Rule of the Community but not in the Damascus Document. The Damascus Document insists that the salary of two days a month at least, are put into the hands of the Mebagger (Inspector) and the judges, who will distribute it to the orphans, the needy, the poor, the dying old, the prisoner of foreign people, girls who have no protector, unmarried women who have no suitor. Luke is concerned more than the other evangelists with the rich/poor divide and both the danger of owning property and the beatitude of poverty (6:20,24; 16:13, 19-31) in both of his volumes. He interprets it in the light of Dt. 15:4 on the exclusion of poverty in Israel, as he describes the community in action. The actual phrase “heart and soul” is not found in pagan Greek literature but seems to be a development of the shema, Dt. 6:5 (LXX); also Dt. 10:12; 11:13; 13:4; 26:16; 30:2, 6, 10; also Jer. 32:39; Ez 11:19; 1 Chron 12:39. For some scholars the notion of sharing with those of unequal rank is rather Jewish than Greek.

Two examples (a positive and a negative) are given from the well-to-do in a community of more than 8,000 to show how Jesus’ followers lived their ideal of one heart and soul, especially holding all things in common (Note the similar teaching in Did. 4:8 and Barn. 19:8). The first is Barnabas from Cyprus, a Levite – Luke will describe many priests (from the tribe of Levi) coming to believe in Jesus (Acts 6:7). Later Barnabas will accompany Paul as a missionary to Cyprus (Acts 13:1-4).

In the second example of Ananias and Sapphira, many readers and commentators are often shocked by the immediacy and severity of the punishment for something which was purely voluntary (Acts 5:4 and 2 Cor 9:7) in contrast to Mt. 18:15. One wonders why Peter is so harsh in not offering the pair an opportunity to repent. Can God really be like this? There is
an allusion to the sin of Achan (Joshua 7) who kept back some of the booty which had been dedicated to Yahweh. In contrast, at Qumran (1QS 6:16-24) such property deception is severely punished, but not, however, by death. The reference to the young men recalls the word for junior members at Qumran. Ananias and Sapphira seem to have deceived the Holy Spirit and also the community with a pretense of generosity without suffering. We are told that Satan entered into Ananias to lie to the Holy Spirit – here we find the first use in Acts (5:11) of the term “Church.” Peter recognizes the deception and denounces Ananias for lying not to human beings but to God (5:4). Yet he explicitly tells Ananias that he was not obliged to sell his property and that neither was he obliged to give any of it, whether all or in part, to the Apostles. This leads to salutary fear in the Church in contrast to the consolation which resulted from Barnabas’ action. According to Fitzmyer, if the incident “makes us uncomfortable, it should. For one it deals with money” and Luke of all the gospel writers gives the strongest description of the dangers of money (cf. Fitzmyer, Acts, p.320). However in Acts we no longer find the vocabulary of poor/rich but those in want (4:34) and the infirm (20:35). Further there is no program for eradicating the poverty of the masses or even slavery. According to R.E. Brown:

No story captures better the Israelite mentality of the early community. The Twelve were meant to sit on thrones judging Israel (Lk. 22:30); here through Peter judgment is exercised on the renewed Israel. In the O.T. (Josh 7) Israel’s attempt to enter victoriously beyond Jericho into the heart of the Promised Land was frustrated because Achan had secretly hidden for himself goods that were to be dedicated to God. His deception caused God to judge that Israel had sinned and needed purification. Only when Achan was put to death and his goods burned could Israel proceed as a people who had to be perfect as God is perfect. So also the renewed Israel has been profaned by the deceptive holding back of goods which were claimed to have been contributed to the common fund (An Introduction to the New Testament, New York, Doubleday 1997, pp. 291-2).

One interesting suggestion is that the well-known Semitic hymns in Luke – Acts, the Magnificat (1:46-55), the Benedictus (1:67-79), the Gloria in Excelsis (2:13-14) and the Nunc Dimittis (2:29-32) were originally Jewish hymns of the Jewish Christian Anawim community so prominent in Acts 2-6. This was a community filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking prophecy (Acts 2:18). According to R.E. Brown, who concludes that
the idealism of Acts exaggerates ("all goods"), (The Birth of the Messiah, New York, Doubleday, 1993 p. 354n.46):

It is not reasonable to consider these Lucan summaries as totally fictional idealization. Luke’s description of the structure and ideals of the Jerusalem community comes remarkably close to what we know of Qumran structure and ideals, and so Luke was describing a way of life that was entirely plausible in early first-century Judaism.

Nevertheless, Brown, (p. 287) in a comment on Paul’s reference to poor Christians in Jerusalem for whom he was collecting money (Rom. 15:26; Gal. 2:10; 1 Cor. 16:1-3) asks a very incisive question: “Did such “Christian socialism” impoverish the Jerusalem community?” Unfortunately, as scholars have pointed out, the Gospels and Acts do not contain any explicit examination of poverty. Nevertheless, no writer in the New Testament speaks as bluntly concerning the use of material possessions as Luke, apart from the Epistle of James. We do not know how long the rather idyllic life, described in Acts, lasted. In his special Lucan material, Luke suggests a two-fold attitude toward material goods; a moderate attitude of assistance to the less fortunate (Lk. 6:30; 16:1-8a) and a radical attitude recommending the absolute renunciation of all wealth (14:33; 16:13; 6:20 ff). I always find it significant that the first “row” in Acts concerns the neglect of poor widows (Acts 6:1), the type of argument which every Christian Church should have. I am surprised by the rather unsubstantiated claim of James D. G. Dunn (Unity and Diversity In The New Testament, Second Edition, London, SCM Press, 1990, p. 324):

It is almost certainly written within the context of such eschatological enthusiasm that we have to understand the so-called ‘community of goods’ (Acts 2:44; 4:32-37) – that is, not as a careless enterprise (they disposed of their capital goods, not merely their income) on the part of those who anticipated many years of evangelism ahead of them, but as a policy which disdained the needs of the present age in view of the imminent end of the present age itself.

Rather, it seems solidly based on the teaching of Jesus as in his Jubilee vision (Lk 4:16-30) and in such texts as Lk 5:11, 28; 8:3; 9:3; 10:4; 12:21,33; 16:9, 27-31; 18:28, not to forget 1:46-55; 6:20-26; 16:19-26. In such texts, Luke directs his advice to the rich members to distance themselves from wealth in the

The Heidelberg scholar Gerd Theissen finds three possibilities in dealing constructively with riches in Luke: total renunciation of possession (Lk 5:11,28; 9:3; 12:22); giving away some possessions (8:1-3; 16:1ff; 19:1-10); and the communism of property in the primitive community:

The ethics of possession in Luke – Acts has been interpreted in different ways. Does Luke require only those in office to renounce their possessions, while others need engage only in charitable activity? Is he writing for a situation in which many people had lost their possessions as a result of persecution and is now pleading for people to share what they have? Is he formulating an appeal to the rich for donations with an exaggerated rhetoric? None of this fits his ethics of possession. Luke wants to put not the rich, but everyone under an obligation to support one another. He knows that the ideal of sharing possessions cannot be practiced without difficulty. His last statement on the topic is probably his own recommendation. Paul in his farewell speech presents himself as a positive example in saying that he works with his own hands to earn a living – and to have the means of supporting others. For it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:32-35) (Gerd Theissen, The New Testament, Minneapolis, Fortress, 2003, pp. 116-7).

Clearly for Luke, one of the main characteristics of the first ideal community on Jerusalem was a sharing of possessions, where each received according to their need. Luke aimed not only to comfort and encourage the poor but to challenge the rich with the blunt demand to provide for the needs of all in a radical redistribution of possessions. Luke was concerned to show that the teaching of Jesus was no mere ideal but also practical. The early Christians were model Christians who, when tensions arose, were practical and concretely willing to work through them without dividing (6:1-7; 10:1-11:26; 15:1-35; 21:17-26). The later chapters in Acts seem to show that such practices were not universal and perhaps did not endure. It seems evident that the early Christian communities had different types of economic solidarity. Jesus’ own lack of selfishness and his concern for others was not always realized. Yet Luke insists on holding up an example of the challenge of Jesus for later generations (Lk.
While Jesus can be described as *absent* in Acts, yet in a very real sense he is present with his challenge throughout the whole book.

**Conclusion: The Parable of the Lifesaving Station**

On a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks often occur there was once a crude little lifesaving station. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea, and with no thought for themselves, they went out day or night tirelessly searching for the lost.

Many lives were saved by this wonderful little station, so that it became famous. Some of those who were saved, and various others in the surrounding areas, wanted to become associated with the station and give of their time and money and effort for the support of its work. New boats were bought and new crews were trained. The little lifesaving station grew.

Some of the new members of the lifesaving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and so poorly equipped. They felt that a more comfortable place should be provided as the first refuge of those saved from the sea.

They replaced the emergency cots with beds and put better furniture in an enlarged building. Now the lifesaving station became a popular gathering place for its members, and they redecorated it beautifully and furnished it as a sort of club.

Fewer of the members were now interested in going to sea on lifesaving missions, so they hired life boat crews to do this work.

The mission of lifesaving was still given lip-service, but most members were too busy or lacked the necessary commitment to take part in the lifesaving activities personally.

About this time a large ship was wrecked off the coast, and the hired crews brought in boat loads of cold, wet and half-drowned people.

They were dirty and sick, some had skin of a different color, some spoke a strange language, and the beautiful new club was considerably messed up. So the property committee immediately had a shower house built outside the club where victims of shipwreck could be cleaned up before coming inside.
At the next meeting, there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's lifesaving activities as being unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal pattern of the club.

But some members insisted that lifesaving was their primary purpose and pointed out that they were still called a lifesaving station. But they were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save the life of all the various kinds of people who were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own lifesaving station down the coast. They did.

As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that had occurred in the old. They evolved into a club and yet another lifesaving station was founded.

If you visit the seacoast today you will find a number of exclusive clubs along that shore. Shipwrecks are still frequent in those waters, but now most of the people drown!
Human Rights – A Simmering Pot.

Getting a letter here in Switzerland at the end of last May was a surprise. It was a journey into the past. Usually, my contact with people is through e-mail, Skype, texting or phone. Electronic gadgets have replaced the post. This was the first letter I received since coming to Geneva… a sign of the changing times! The fact that the letter came from a confrere in America gave my pulse a stir. Could this be the hoped-for financial support for the Vivat project? Alas, it was a request to write for Spiritan Horizons about my experience over the past twelve months. So here I am, at my laptop, scanning my hard drive and trying to make sense of the year gone by.

Into the...

A whole new adventure opened up for me last September with the accreditation badge of Vivat International. When I was asked, a few months previously, to take up the new role of Human Rights lobbyist in Geneva for Vivat, I knew little about human rights, and less about advocacy. Still, I was prepared to give this fresh area of activity a go. At sixty, there is nothing like discovering a new expanse of sea in front of one, inviting you to explore its depths. Yes, in many ways this past year has been like jumping into unknown waters and exploring all the hidden wonders and challenges. So far, it has been an eventful dive, and I’m still in the water, swimming among its murky shadows.

Vivat International will be ten years old in November 2010. While the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS) and the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) are the founders of this new organization, we Spiritans became permanent members in January 2009. Prior to that, we had associate membership for a few years. At present, ten Congregations, mostly missionary, are members of Vivat. As a Non-Government Organization, it is accredited by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. The website: www.vivatinternational.org will give you plenty of information about our membership and work.

For me, the novelty of a NEW role also carried a great sense of freedom. No one had this job before! It was new, a welcome opportunity to think ‘outside the box,’ as the saying goes. That in itself was a challenge as there was no box to fit into or to ‘think outside’ of. The freedom to give shape and direction to
a new venture is exciting: no living up to the expectations of an established audience, no looking over one’s shoulder to see who is checking on me. It is also a moment for me to check my vision of world and service and to test my own readiness to live out that vision of service that inspires my life. My basic approach has been the Kiss principle – “Keep it Simple, Stupid”.

**Finding my way**

My best experiences of ministry have been when I have been given a job to do and then allowed to get on with it. In Pakistan I had that experience and now, here again with this job, I had another such opportunity. For the first year I set myself the goal of getting to know in a general way the UN system in Geneva and, more specifically, learning about the Human Rights Council and how it functions. Later I would establish links with people in the field and share with them some of my learning. I proceeded to give my short-term goals my best shot. My initiation into Swiss life was helped by living with two Spiritan confreres, Jean Varone and Patrice Gasser, who had been active for a couple of years in pastoral ministry in the Vernier Commune of Geneva. Our home in Bouchet is convenient to the public transport system, something that is very important for my work.

**Focus, Focus, Focus.**

In my early days in Geneva, I learned one very good lesson from a Christian brother. Someone had given me his name before leaving Ireland so we arranged to meet. After listening to me patiently as I explained in very vague terms what I PLANNED TO DO, HE pointed out in clear and unambiguous language that I NEEDED TO HAVE A FOCUS.

I discovered that all NGOs have a clear mandate. Some concentrate on training, others on policy formation or report writing. The smaller ones will focus on one issue, such as disability, development or formal education—to name a few. This specific focus enables them to become more professional in their chosen subject. This is how they have chosen to work, and by doing so they are providing what the UN system calls “added value.” As you can see, a new terminology began to creep into my life.

In the absence of a readymade office in the city, I decided to work with a laptop on a daily basis. With this mobile office tucked into my knapsack, I began to attend meetings in Room XX of the Palais des Nations, the principal UN building in Geneva. (There are basic facilities for laptop use in the chamber—but not up to

For the first year I was working alone...and deciding where to put my energies.

21st Century standards.) This was to be my centre of operations for many weeks during the year. This is where the Human Rights Council (HRC) meets three times during the year, having two 3 week and one 4 week session in all. The meetings of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) are also held in this room. All the heavy jelly discussions regarding Human Rights are conducted within this circular space. There are many different conference rooms within these buildings where a great variety of multi-lateral negotiations and decisions take place. The following two websites will give you a good introduction to the HRC and UPR listed above. http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/ http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx

A tentative start

For the first year I was working alone, making the introductions, contacting other NGOs (secular and religious), taking initiatives, and deciding where to put my energies. There were many helpful voices along the way. It was usually the most recent arrivals who were prepared to sit and share the difficulties, frustrations and challenges they were facing. Mandat, a Swiss government funded NGO, has been the most supportive, offering helpful information on getting settled in this multi-national city and learning how to negotiate the complex UN system. Not all NGOs have a backup office like Amnesty, Human Rights Watch and International Federation for Human Rights. With other Catholic NGOs, such as Pax Romana and Franciscan International, I was able to have a few meetings during the winter months, where we shared some of our questions and learning. I have also been involved in the organizing of a monthly meeting of Catholic religious working at the UN in Geneva. These gatherings have been much appreciated by all involved.

The positive aspect of not having an office is the great flexibility it gave me to be out and about a lot more than if I had a fixed location where I would meet people. It usually meant that I arranged to meet people in the cafeteria at the UN building or some other public place convenient to both of us. Another benefit was that my time was not taken up with a lot of administrative work related to maintaining an office. It is possible to work in such a way while I am on my own. Rather than a daily trip to the office, I was making a journey to a meeting room in the Nations building, going to another conference centre or spending time in the extensive library at the UN.
The setting for my work is very different from the Pakistani towns and villages of South Punjab and North Sindh, where I learned about extreme poverty and oppression over many years. Exploitation and a total lack of concern for the rights of the people were and probably still are ingrained practices among the feudal class of the Indus plains. And there are not many working to change that situation. Child labour, violence against women and the inadequacies of health and educational facilities were so widespread that they were an accepted part of life. Too many people are still struggling for survival while too few concern themselves with the common good. I am hoping that these same struggles of the weakest and poorest in society would inspire my work here. Working among state representatives and professionals in the field of diplomacy is not the easiest context for someone like myself. I feel an uneasiness about their secure and comfortable lifestyle while trying to encourage them to address the injustices in their countries.

A few weeks ago I heard a longtime Swiss campaigner for human rights compare the Human Rights Council meeting to a Liturgy—a place you go regularly, a place where you meet your friends, share stories, enjoy their company, hear a lot of words, don’t remember anything and nothing changes as a result. This may be a cynical view of the proceedings, but no doubt it sums up accurately how some members of the house relate to events there. They know nothing about victims of human rights violations, have no knowledge of or interest in the subject of Human Rights and have never dreamed of changing the situation. They have a duty to represent their country at this body, and they will do so with politeness, charm and efficiency.

For whatever reason, the Catholic Church has in the past been cautious when it comes to the work of promoting Human Rights. It seems that it was easier to be involved in works of charity and establishing institutions for health and education than to campaign with and for those who were denied their rights. Is the Human Rights movement too questioning of the status quo for the Church? Is it seen as too confrontational? Might involvement in this important area of human activity be too much of a challenge to the Church itself? The reluctance of the Church to be involved in the murky political world of international relations may have many causes. These days that situation is changing fast and may continue to do so over the coming years. There are now several religious congregations...
...I have come to have a clearer picture and a greater appreciation of the system.

The Holy See itself has an observer seat at the Human Rights Council.

The UN System—A muddle seeking clarity?

At first contact, the world of the UN sounds very complex and complicated. But first impressions can change. With some patience, study and reading I have come to have a clearer picture and a greater appreciation of the system. There are six principal organs in the organization: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat. (The Trusteeship Council is defunct.) This is the basic structure, and all other related bodies fit into this schema. Each section has its own mandate and independence.

Here again a couple of websites can help our understanding of how the UN works. This is the main website, http://www.un.org/, so it is good to start here. When you enter the site, you are welcomed with the words: “United Nations—It’s your world!” And it’s certainly a challenge to make it “our” world! The following site provides an organizational chart of the principal organs. It also lists the bodies under each section and shows how they are interconnected within the UN system: http://www.un.org/aboutun/chart_en.pdf

My World—Human Rights

The Human Rights Council is the main body within the UN system where issues of human rights violations are addressed. Forty-seven state representatives make up this body and are responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights around the world. Vivat International has chosen to locate itself in Geneva to do advocacy work with this council and its related bodies. Human rights is about establishing just and fair relationships between people. It is involved in setting standards for working and collaborating with and among people the world over. It takes time to establish these standards, partly due to the fact that our world is made up of citizens from different socio-economic backgrounds, cultures and religions. They have different histories and values. Discussions and the approach to discussions across all these divides take time to develop. There are no short cuts when it comes to building trust. Awareness about human rights is a process rather than an event, and involves engagement with the various instruments and conventions of the UN Human Rights system. As stated in a recent brochure from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “The
Human Rights programme works to promote and defend the human rights of everyone all over the world.”

Standing in the square in front of the UN building in Geneva can be a hugely significant experience. As you face the rather unattractive buildings, you look down a colourful avenue of one hundred and ninety-two national flags. Pausing here for a moment, you can sense the seriousness of the task that is undertaken within the assembly halls ahead. On the square itself, there is this very large piece of sculpture, the Broken Chair. It is there to commemorate those who have been injured in landmines. They were painting it recently so my attention was drawn to it once more. The street between the “square with the chair” and the UN building is called Avenue de la Paix (Avenue of Peace). This is noteworthy because one of the founding aims of the UN is to work for the advancement of peace among all peoples around the world.

If you ‘Google’ the words Human Rights you will come up with 348,000,000 sites with information on the topic. That was the number last June when I did a trial trawl. Allowing for the rapid multiplication of information on any subject nowadays, the number of related sites will be around half a billion at the moment. How are we to cope with such volumes of information, you may enquire. And do we need to? Can all of it have relevance to our work or lives? This work with secular organizations, and with people who do not necessarily have a faith perspective, demands that we upgrade our learning. The more knowledge we have about human rights, oppression and injustice, the better equipped we may be to engage with them to effect positive change. For those of us who are overwhelmed, there are online resources to help us manage the libraries of information about human rights stored on the net.

Where are WE?

As Spiritans, our approach to human rights appears to be ambiguous; we like to benefit from the rights enshrined in our constitution and legal documents, but we are slow to engage with the topic on a sustained basis. Our overall attitude is negative rather than positive. We haven’t made any serious statement of commitment to the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples, for example. Many confreres work in situations where abuse and violations of human rights is extensive. We work extremely hard in solidarity with the people. But do we speak out sufficiently in their defense? My own experience is that we don’t. We are not opposed to the idea of human rights, but we seem

happy to have other people do the campaigning and advocacy work. Human rights is about the betterment of the lives of those who are trampled upon in our society—so why are we not more vocal in our denunciation of situations of violations? I am hopeful that our involvement with Vivat will enable us to add our voice to that of the multitude of victims on this ravaged planet. The Distance Learning Project in Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation developed by John Kilcrann with the cooperation of Duquesne University during this past year will, one hopes, provide a major stimulus to all our students in formation to become knowledgeable and skilled in this neglected area. To repeat an old saying: “The Church’s social teaching is its best kept secret.”

Beset by questions

As I have sought to locate myself within this new context of government representatives and international NGOs, I have at times questioned our engagement with this topic. For instance, how interested are we, Spiritans, in human rights? As an international organization, what level of interest do we have in the world of international affairs? When did we last organize a gathering with human rights as its principal focus? When was it an item on the agenda of our meetings, Community, Provincial or at the international level? Worldwide, do we have anyone experienced in the recent human rights movement? Has any confrere obtained a qualification in International Humanitarian Law? How involved are we in seeing that people’s rights are respected and protected? At a local level, are we ready to take a human rights approach to our work? What might this mean for us? How will such a focus change the way we function in the world? How would it impact on our work with children? As a first step, we would need to read the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Knowing about children’s rights is essential if we wish to comply with the standards set out in this Convention. We may have a lot of ground to make up, but let’s make a start.

This absence of human rights on our agenda is surely a major gap in our efforts to position ourselves on the side of the disenfranchised in a globalized world. We talk a good story and we are very involved in development work and education. Are we ready to walk our talk? I think it is time for us to educate ourselves about the UN, its Declarations and Conventions, and make a substantial and enthusiastic contribution to the Human Rights movement.
Changing perceptions

My own impression of the UN has changed in this past year. Prior to coming to Geneva, I considered it to be a large, amorphous body—doing some good work in the area of humanitarian aid, development and peacekeeping operations. It seemed like a big overpaid bureaucracy in need of serious reform. Now I see it as an indispensable organization for the human communities on our planet. Its range of activities is extensive, including serious involvement in setting standards for relations between peoples; its concern for victims of our society is being addressed through the various mechanisms of the Human Rights Council. The Human Rights movement has been mostly a secular enterprise. Since the Second World War, it has developed within the ambit of or closely related to the UN. As such it has been an intergovernmental endeavour, providing a forum for all nations of the world to engage in a conversation about standards and values in the human community. This is one of its strengths, and at the same time, one of its weaknesses. If it didn’t exist we would need to create it; yet it sometimes works against itself, when a political agenda takes over from principled action in favor of the most vulnerable in our society.

The values expressed in the various foundational documents of the Human Rights System are universally accepted. Respect, equality, human dignity, peace and security form the basis of all the Charters, Conventions and treaties that have been developed over the years. These principles and values haven’t fallen from the skies but have been developed slowly over the centuries. In the past 60 years they have been systematized into international and regional human rights instruments. A well-codified system of values needs protection and implementation. This is one of the challenges facing us.

Democracy, for instance, has taken firm root in many countries and cultures, not to the same extent in all. We cannot afford to be casual about this shared value in our midst. We need to develop it where it is weak, protect it where it is threatened and deepen it in nations where it has strong roots. The incessant desire for participation in the decision making process of human affairs is not about to stop at the beginning of the 21st century, yet there is always a need for us to be attentive to ways to improve existing institutions and structures in our world.
Where to begin?

There is need for all of us to concretize our involvement, and so I make a few tentative suggestions about how we may engage with the world of human rights.

Today’s reading from Amos seems like a good place to begin. Amos tried to get the kings and people in authority (of his time) to face up to the reality of their situation. They were tampering with the weights and inflating the price of goods. In our day the banks have caused a financial crisis and governments get the people to pay. Awareness of the realities of our world is a first step. Responding to those realities can lead us to the world of human rights for assistance. The various instruments and standards developed in the area of human rights can be used to address violations and abuses. So, a second step is to become more knowledgeable about the system of treaties and conventions to which we can make an appeal. At a very local level we can write factual and accurate reports about real violations. These materials can be sent to me or to a variety of UN offices here in Geneva. It is important to remember that in all our reporting, we must first protect those who are victims and those who report. We should not put them in danger. Awareness, Knowledge and Reporting are the three steps that I propose. More information on how civil society can engage with the UN can be found online at the following website: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/CivilSociety.aspx The civil society handbook that can be downloaded from this page has sufficient information in a clear format to engage with the system. If you have questions contact me: geneva@vivatinternational.org

Endword—to begin again.

The 1st Article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads:

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood.”

(italics mine)

Let me conclude with a quote by Seamus Heaney on this Article. “So even if this FIRST ARTICLE cannot guarantee what it declares, if its writ cannot be made to run in China or Zimbabwe or Guantanamo, it nevertheless gestures so confidently towards what human beings desire that it fortifies a conviction that the desirable can in fact be realized.” (cf: From the Republic of Conscience, page 16.)
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The Intentions of Venerable Francis Libermann

Introduction:
The following reflection is an attempt at a personal appropriation of the second founder’s goal, namely the so-called oeuvre des noirs and how it could be understood in the context of contemporary developments. We are living at a time and under conditions unforeseen by Francis Libermann. The call for renewal that defines the Church of Vatican II has implications for the thoughts of Libermann as well. On the tombstone of Bishop Joseph Shanahan at the Holy Trinity Basilica at Onitsha is inscribed this epitaph from the Letter to the Hebrews: “Remember your leaders, who preached the word of God to you, and as you reflect on the outcome of their lives, take their faith as model” (Hebr. 13:7).

I came to know Venerable Francis Mary Paul Libermann through the Irish missionaries of the Spiritan Congregation he led. This intrepid band of men descended on Eastern Nigeria braving the inclement ecological conditions of Nigeria at the beginning of the twentieth century. They were passionately driven by their zeal to achieve the goal of the founder of their Congregation. They were led and inspired by the now Servant of God Joseph Shanahan. The achievement of these missionaries of the first hour, namely the establishment of the church in Eastern Nigeria, a church that has not only produced many missionaries for the universal church but is the home of Blessed Cyprian Iwene Tansi and a curial cardinal, certainly questions Libermann’s scepticism about the Irish temperament’s availability for mission. He is reported to have observed: “The Irish are not generous enough to renounce everything to the extent that is necessary for our vocation.”

While I was in the Junior Seminary, the biography of Libermann written by Helen Walker Homan, Star of Jacob. The story of Venerable Francis Libermann (1953), was read during meals in the refectory. In this biography a lot of emphasis was placed on what was called l’Oeuvre des Noirs. What was this Oeuvre that fired the imagination and informed the Herculean labours of these early missionaries? Whatever it turns out to be, it was the motive force that drove many of them to an early death on the West African coast which, because of malaria fever, was then dubbed “the white man’s grave.”
Meaning Not Lost in Translation

The term, however, bristles with exegetical and hermeneutical difficulties. A few examples taken from the writings of the members of, and/or sympathizers with, his Congregation suffice as evidence for this observation. If the authors fail to agree on Libermann’s intention, then evidently there will be a problem in executing their founder’s primary insight. Homan in her imaginative but historical biography mentioned above left the phrase in the French original untranslated. Bernard Kelly \(^2\) translated it as “the Work for the Blacks”. Joseph D’Ambrosio, when translating Arsène Aubert’s retreat booklet, *Coping with the Darkness* (2006), into English renders it as “Project for the Blacks.”\(^3\) But Rogath Kimaryo, in the title of his book, denotes it as “Project of the Blacks.”\(^4\) Left in its French original, we may perhaps have no ambiguity about the founder’s intention; in English, however, the prepositions “of” and “for” make a world of difference. What was Libermann’s intention? Did he undertake a “work” or a “project”? Was it to be “for” or “of” the Blacks? In other words, are we to understand a task conceived in Europe by whites for the well-being of the Blacks outside the European Continent? Libermann himself co-ordinated operations without ever travelling to the southern hemisphere. Or was it a service thought out for the Blacks to carry out by and for themselves for the good of their race? The originators, Tisserant and Le Vavaseur, for instance, went back to the Blacks to implement the conception. This lack of clarity needs further exploration if a hermeneutic of suspicion is to be avoided in its ultimate understanding. Hence a background analysis would offer us some light.

Sources of Libermann’s Compassion for the Blacks

In the first place, Libermann’s concern for the Blacks was not original with him. He was recruited to the cause by two diverse creoles from Atlantic and Indian Ocean islands, who approached him because of his apparent leadership qualities. The two creoles were convinced that he was well equipped to organize and give direction to an idea that had occurred to them: to recruit missionaries who were generous enough to bring the Gospel of freedom and human dignity to their fellow Blacks. The Gospel message would, they were convinced, fashion self-esteem, confidence and self-respect for the liberated slaves in the islands of Haiti and Reunion. These people had lost a sense of self-esteem and of meaning in their humanity as a result of their slavery experience.
Francis Libermann’s own life-experience had eminently endowed him with appropriate credentials, namely the solidarity in suffering which would enable him to spearhead this proposal. Like Jesus, his Jewish brother and the supreme high priest, as presented in the reflection of the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews (4: 15), Libermann, not unlike the Blacks, was no stranger to being marginalised and sidelined. In leading the crusade to re-conquer the Blacks’ humanity, he would be bringing to bear the social teaching of the church. What was happening to a part of humanity was not what should be.

Clearly, on the one hand, the fate of the Blacks immediately found echo in his personal experience. He knew what it meant to be abandoned. As a Jew he was brought up in the history of the Hebrew suffering in Egypt. As a Jew living in France during an anti-Semitic period of French history, he had the experience of ghetto exclusion. As a Jewish convert to Catholicism, he had been disowned by his own father who was a rabbi. He aspired to join the Catholic priesthood but he was rejected because of his epilepsy. He thus saw the Blacks’ situation as reflective of his own personal experience; he found solidarity with this desolate situation as presented to him by both creoles, Eugene Tisserant and Le Vavasseur.

On the other hand, his Jewish upbringing and his earlier rabbinical studies had imbued him with a sense of the dignity of man. Without doubt, the Hebrew Scriptures, especially the anthropology of Psalm 8, understand man as, in the words of Houston Smith, a “blend of dust and divinity”; 5 there is even a rabbinic saying that when a man or woman walks down the road an invisible choir of angels go before shouting, “Make way, make way! Make way for the image of God”. 6 His study as a rabbinical acolyte of the medieval teacher of Judaism, Moses Maimonides, (see his The Guide for the Perplexed), must have imbued him with the ultimate purpose of Judaism’s mysteries namely, and in the words of the chief rabbi of Britain and the Commonwealth, Jonathan Sacks, “to honour the image of God in other people, and thus turn the world into a home for the divine presence.” 7

The task of the rabbi, which he had aspired to become, according to R. Hayyim of Brisk, the greatest Talmudist of the late nineteenth century is: “To redress the grievances of those who are abandoned and alone, to protect the dignity of the poor, and to save the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor.” 8 In his study titled Francis Libermann’s Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John, 9 Michael Cahill undertook to examine the influences
his rabbinical studies had in his attitude when he became a Catholic and a Founder of a Christian religious Congregation. Without a doubt, Libermann's rabbinical background convinced him that even the Blacks were embodiments of the image of God. He did not, as a convert to Catholicism, leave behind his Jewish convictions about Yahweh’s compassion for the poor and oppressed. It is therefore correct to affirm that his interest in the situation of the Blacks was informed by a crusading ambition to reassure them of their dignity as images of God. How was this task to be achieved?

Distinguish Two Types of Blacks: The Enslaved and the Free.

I mentioned at the very beginning of this discourse that I learnt about Francis Libermann through the work of the band of Irish missionaries led by Bishop Joseph Shanahan. Evidently, his success is traceable to the gigantic school system which he set in place. He further developed the missionary strategy of the first French missionaries of Alsace from whom he took over the mantle of leadership. He realized what freedom meant for the Igbo people, the *Ndi nwe obodo*, that is, “the owners of the land.” Slaves had no rights as encased in the Igbo name, *Ohuabunwa*. Without having comprehended the Igbo cultural disdain for the slaves, the original French Spiritans were frustrated by the lack of success of their effort to found a local church on the foundation of the slaves they had ransomed with aid of the subsidies from the Vatican. Shanahan, popularly known as “Onye ishi”, “the chief” or the “commander” had penetrated the psyche of the Igbo social hierarchy, discovered the Igbo disdain for enslaved people, their fierce defense of their freedom and their love for the “white man’s knowledge.” As a result, he decided to build the schools to give them the white man’s knowledge, and hopefully in the schools to gain converts to Christianity.

Since the elders felt that they could not abandon the traditional religion of their ancestors, they encouraged Bishop Shanahan to start with their children. So zealous for knowledge were the Igbos that they built the schools and asked Shanahan to provide the teachers. Informed by this insight, he found the key, the Archimedean screw to win both the *ndi nwe obodo* of the Igbos and the liberated slaves, ostracised as *ohuabunwa*. In the schools both the freeborn and the slaves would sit side by side, learn together, develop friendships through interaction and in that way grow up together as free citizens of a new Nigeria. With this conviction, Shanahan had no crisis of conscience in diverting...
the subsidy sent from Rome to building schools. Under him, these schools have now become a melting pot for every child without discrimination. In his last testament regarding the projected book on his mission activity in Nigeria, he insisted that the book above all must report “about the schools, especially about the schools.”

It would seem that Shanahan, through his option for the medium of the schools, effectively gave Libermann’s intention a concrete embodiment. Namely, it is through education that the blacks were to rediscover their self-confidence and existential meaning. Some Igbo village elders on the outskirts of Onitsha clearly rebuffed Shanahan’s effort to convert them to Christianity. His evangelical program did not seem to have impressed them. They told him that they wanted his school but not his religion. “We have our own God”, they assured him. That signalled a turning point in Shanahan’s missionary strategy. His Episcopal motto was: “Domine, ut videam”. In the resistance of the Igbo elders to his proselytizing efforts and in their preference for the school, he saw the light he sought from the Lord. It was through the schools that he eventually broke the native resistance. Not only did he gain the youth of the land but brought freedom to the slaves. It was through his schools that the erstwhile despised slaves attained self-respect and became respected and respectable members of public polity. Because of the knowledge they acquired in the schools they could now be consulted as resource persons; they could henceforth vote and be voted for in society without discrimination. Through the intelligence displayed by their academic laurels and technical achievements exhibited in the structures they erected, they no longer were regarded as second-class citizens to be deployed in the service of the gods and their shrines. Every office in the land was open to them. His foresight in building the schools made it possible for Igboland to provide for the colonial power a large source of its educated man-power and the elite group that tried to secede as Biafra from Nigeria on the basis of the “Ahiara Declaration”, one which, in many ways, rivals America’s document of the declaration of independence from Britain.

A Contemporary Model of Libermann’s Vision of the Blacks

Libermann, mutatis mutandis, wanted through the preaching of the Gospel to achieve for Africans the same sense of belonging and equality as Europeans enjoyed in Europe. Thus the white man’s cynicism and abuse of African humanhood would be seen
for what it was, namely racial prejudice. Rephrasing the campaign slogan of President Obama, Libermann would unapologetically concur with: “Yes, Africans can!” Shanahan, through the schools, prepared the blacks in his mission territory to shoulder that responsibility.

The *Negro Spirituals* sung among the African Americans in their Christian assemblies had imbued them with the hope of deliverance from the slavery and oppression orchestrated by the white slave owners. Their trust in the God of the Exodus, about whom they learnt in the Bible readings, fed them with hope. “We Shall Overcome Some Day”, they confidently sang. It was in the spirit of this Bible reading that Obama based his book, *The Audacity of Hope*. His election to the highest political office in the land cannot but be seen otherwise than as the response of the Yahweh of the *Spirituals* to the cry of despair surging heavenwards from the black population. Libermann’s letters of instructions bear witness to the faith he reposed on the capability of the Blacks:

*Inspire them with self-respect. Help them to understand that they are free; help them appreciate this freedom – the beauty of the freedom and equality which they share with all the children of God. Try to remove from their minds any idea of inferiority. This would exacerbate their natural weakness and give them a low self-image.*

*Once they come to realize that they are in no way inferior by nature to Europeans, when they become convinced in a practical experiential way, in the depths of their souls, they will be all the more inspired to work for the salvation and advancement of their own people. If they come to be convinced that their own race can and will become equal to Europeans as regards development of the mind, they will be inspired to rescue their people from the sad condition they are in.*

*Make a study and penetrate into the character, the mentality and the basic attitudes of the black people. Avoid judging them by outward appearances. This leads to superficial judgments that led many astray... there is no doubt the Africans have their faults, just as the Europeans have theirs. They have their strong points too, like the Europeans have [ND IX, 359f].*¹⁴
The tone of Libermann’s instruction would today give the impression of condescension. The *Sitz-im-Leben* of his time warranted it. If Europeans could teach Africans, he calculated, the educated Africans would then pass on their enlightenment to their fellows. Then there would be no more racial abuse and injustice nor the oppression of one race by another. The Messianic times would have been realised.

Elsewhere he writes:

> Those who have a low opinion of themselves and who have no grasp of their dignity nor of the destiny to which they are called cannot have the determination to advance. Their minds must be enlightened, their hearts and wills strengthened by what the faith teaches regarding their origin and destiny.\(^{15}\)

Thus he exhibited a strong faith in the African’s capability to be master of his own destiny if given the chance to perform. He thought this was possible if only the African was well educated in European ways. Hence he proposed to the Vatican the worthwhileness of bringing some African clerics to Europe to be educated and then to be sent back to educate their own people. In a sense some African nationalists today would see this plan as a version of the colonial arrogance enshrined in their self-given task of showing the Blacks how human life is to be lived, the so-called “white man’s burden,” the colonial policy of the British or to “moralise” the *noble savages*,\(^ {16}\) as the French articulated it. The Africans resisted this colonial imposition of an alien interpretation of human life. But what could their bows and arrows do against the lethal sophistication of the European machine guns and their ideological battery represented by their schools? One of the early missionaries, commenting on some missionaries’ arrogant attitude at least warned against such an assumption. Africa before the Europeans arrived was not a *tabula rasa*. In a reflection in his journal entry of November 1947 at Kalimoni, Kenya we read: “I have sent you ‘to reap that in which you did not labour’ – a very useful subject of remembrance for all who may think that the salvation of Africa has only begun on their arrival in the Continent.”\(^ {17}\)

**The True African.**

It is certainly very important for understanding Libermann’s intentions to lay crucial emphasis on the specific type of the
Blacks which Libermann’s plan presupposed, involved, and to which it was designed to respond. He was concerned with the Blacks of the Diaspora, those who had been robbed of their self-confidence and their self-esteem by the experience of slavery. The Blacks of mainland Africa who had not been exposed to white slavery activity were fiercely proud of their freedom in spite of the disruptive influence of colonialism; they still maintained a certain element of self confidence and tended to bring up their offspring on indigenous models of what it meant to be a human being. The Igbo, for example, educated their people to embody the ideal of the Dimkpa, namely a master of one’s destiny. With Robert Bolt we might say, “a man for all seasons.”

The Dimkpa was a person who knew how to cope in face of the unexpected, in hours of tragedy. Anyone who has gone through tests and trials without bowing his head became, in their hierarchy of anthropological values, a Nwoke teghete, namely “nine times a man.” The emergence of Obama as president of the United States would qualify him for that honorific title. Obama was encouraged by the gospel messages of such pastors as Martin Luther King Junior and his own (now former) pastor in Chicago. In campaigning and winning the presidency of the world’s largest economy and military power against considerable discriminatory odds, he displayed the type of courage and confidence which existed among Africans long before the colonial and slavery episodes of Africa’s history. It is this model of self-confidence which Libermann did not know, but which he was intending for the blacks as his oeuvre des noirs. He did not and does not want Africans to be black-skinned Europeans. He was convinced that his goal for the Blacks could and would be achieved through education and by handing on the Catholic faith that moves mountains.

This inference brings us back to our initial question. How do we understand Libermann’s motive in founding his missionary Congregation: l’Oeuvre des Noirs? It is clear that both interpretations at the beginning of this discourse have a legitimacy of reciprocity. At its conception, it was the work which Europeans undertook to help the Blacks regain self-confidence after the psychological and cultural ravages of slavery experience. Therefore it was a project for the Blacks. That is why he asked that Blacks be trained in Europe and then later to be sent home to their Continent as was the case with Tisserant and Le Vavasseur. At its maturity, the project has become the work of the Blacks, namely for all the African members of his
Congregation. Perhaps, this explains partially why vocations have dried up in Europe. Europeans consider their work of forming Africans to have been completed. Africans are now missionaries to themselves as Pope Paul VI urged. We have been enriched by our European contact. It is now left to the African genius and insight to creatively deploy with wisdom our twofold heritage—foreign and indigenous—to the benefit of our people and of the global human community.

Further Reflections.

The above exposition raises further questions. Our Church today lives from the teaching of Vatican II. This Council recommends a threefold criteria for the renewal of Religious Congregations. We are not only to return to the original insights of the Founders; we are to be sensitive to the signs of the times and, above all, we are to embody the spirit of Jesus of the Gospel. Nobody doubts that reflections on ecclesiology and missiology have not remained static since the days of Libermann. Neither has the situation of the Blacks marked time. The question arises as to whether, in the context of post–Libermann developments and of all we have come to accept as true and valid today, Libermann’s concept of l’oeuvre des noirs still has legitimacy in the twenty-first century. Today, mission is said to be everywhere. Mobility and globalization define our historic epoch. Church is communion and solidarity. The secular notion of interdependence has become a working theorem for church people as well. The Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican urges us to think of the church as the pilgrim people of God. Recently in the year of Saint Paul we were reminded of why he rebuked the nascent Corinthian community for its party spirit and clique mentality. In his letters to both the Ephesians and the Galatians he unfolds the great mystery hidden from the beginning of creation; namely that in Christ the wall of division has been broken down. Since the former wall of separation erected between Jew and Gentile, between Greek and barbarian has been erased, do we still have to continue to rebuild the fictive, and speculative “Berlin Wall” between Europeans and Africans within our one Congregation? Is paternalism to continue to define the relations of the whites to the blacks in the one Christian community? Is it really convenient, even for administrative purposes within the Spiritan Congregation to fragment personnel into provinces and circumscriptions based on place of origin? How should we today understand the Congregation’s original motto: Cor Unum et Anima una?
Endnotes


3 A. Aubert, *Coping With the Darkness*, Dublin: 2006, p. xi.


6 Smith, p. 281


8 Sacks, p. 5.


13 Jordan p. 245


15 In Burke, p. 90


Spiritan Horizons seeks to further research into the history, spirituality, and tradition of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. In line with the aims of the Center for Spiritan Studies at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, its overall goal is to promote creative fidelity to the Spiritan charism in the contemporary world. The journal includes articles of a scholarly nature as well as others related to the praxis of the Spiritan charism in a wide variety of cultural contexts. Special attention is given in each issue to the Spiritan education ethos, in view of the university setting in which the journal is published.

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Spiritan Horizons is an annual publication. ISSN: 1933-1762.
It is also published online at http://www.duq.edu/spiritans/publications.cfm
ISSN: 1935-0759

Subscription rate: $10.00 (postage extra)

Published by the Center for Spiritan Studies, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA 15282, U.S.A.

Cover design: Matthew John Walsh, Campus Minister, Spiritan Campus Ministry, Duquesne University.