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Dear friends,

The Holy Year of Mercy ended at the end of November 2016, on the feast of Christ the King. On the other hand, God's mercy for humankind goes beyond the infinite limits of one year.

If this Year was an opportunity to realize how important it is for every Christian to put oneself or others on the road to bring this mercy to others from one's place in life, to discern how to act ... Let us dare to say: if we rely only on our own strength, it is lost in advance!

The supreme guide for our life journey is the Holy Spirit; and no one better than Mary can lead us to the Holy Spirit. This is the whole dynamic of our FIAT spirituality.

Therefore, we propose in this N ° 57 to examine some extracts from the testimony of a priest, Father Joel Guibert. In his book "Reborn from Above - A Life Renewed by the Holy Spirit" he shares his experience of life in the Holy Spirit, inseparable from his strong bond with Mary.

May these few passages offer a kind of resonance with the Spirit to accompany you on your Lenten journey and beyond.

Very cordially for the whole team,

Sabine de Villenfagne

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"Even today, Jesus is born of Mary and the Holy Spirit".

+L.J. Cardinal Suenens



Entering into the Spirit gives 'spice to life'



As Father Joël Guibert says in his preface to his book "Renaïtte d'en haut," he wanted "to share just a few discoveries of the Spirit found in the thick fabric of a life of shades and lightness, helped by the wisdom of the great witnesses to the faith who have gone before us." Speaking of "his second breath in the Spirit" and "his first steps in life in the Spirit," he points out that he "entered it through the pure mercy of God" and that "it is not just a preserve for consecrated persons. This dynamic is inscribed and 'delivered up' with baptism itself." So here we are: it concerns all of us!

Through many small elements rooted in his own experiences, Father Joël Guibert moves us forward in understanding of total gift to God:

"To be simple, we can say that love wants everything, not to stifle the other but to satisfy the beloved." God wants everything. "The Spirit of love wants to lead us through all our being, in everything we live and this in the smallest detail." (p.290). At the same time, he reminds us that "we do not have to change our vocation to live the gift of self to the Spirit, nor do we have to disparage our state in life...."

It is in our state of life duties, however simple and routine they might be, that the Spirit calls us to dedicate ourselves to him." (p.291).

And by way of encouragement, the Spirit reminds us: *"The Holy Spirit is not primarily concerned about our moral or spiritual perfection at the moment. The obsession with our perfection is the great obstacle to life in the Spirit. God is simply waiting for our generous and joyful yes at the heart of our life as it is, however poor and sinful it may be"* (p.292).

Further on, he tells us how not to be mistaken in the gift of self:

"In order to give oneself radically to the Spirit, it is therefore necessary to operate according to the grace of the Spirit in a profound conversion: to decenter oneself to give oneself from our Center that is God. From oneself to self-giving from God, from the gift of self from our will to the gift of self from the will of God whose impenetrable paths are seldom spontaneously ours." (p.299) In order to rely on the experience of great witnesses of the Spirit like Louis-Marie Grignon De Montfort, Maximilien Kolbe, Marthe Robin, Father Marie-Eugène ... Fr Joël Guibert dedicates an entire chapter to Mary's place in this journey: "To give oneself to the Spirit, to live in Mary." Elsewhere (p.326) these words of Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, which are extracts from the "Treatise on true devotion to the Blessed Virgin" (No. 43): "I do not believe that anyone can acquire intimate union with our Lord and perfect fidelity to the Holy Spirit without a very close union with the most Blessed Virgin and an absolute dependence on her support."

And here he gives us a beautiful image of Mary: *"According to God's plan, the Virgin Mary is the 'fountain' of Trinitarian grace for the world."* (p.314) and a little further on (page 327), we find the words of John Paul II: *"The devotion of my childhood, and even of my adolescence, towards the mother of Christ paved the way for a new attitude --- devotion from the depths of my faith, as from the very heart of Trinitarian and Christological reality."*

Father Guibert recalled "How to concretely live in Mary in the Spirit":

... "It is not therefore a Marian piety greatly amplified but a true dependence of love towards Mary and, through her, towards the Spirit. Consecration to God through Mary cannot be reduced to a mere 'ceremony' of consecration done several years ago. Consecration to Mary is never done, it is always to be done. The consecration is not behind us, it is always before us! It is here and now that I am invited to live everything in Mary" (p.327) .

And *"life becomes what it simply is"* we read in the last pages of the book.

"Life in the Spirit is really that, having great desires, consenting to one's inability to realize them, and letting the Spirit exert its power in our lives and in the world to fulfill these great desires. Not at all in kind of resignation from life but in real sense of mission. ...

This shifting into the Spirit is not spontaneous, but becomes easy once, so to say, one throws oneself into the water. Besides, we do not want to go back. We even wonder how we were able to live before. Once entered into the Spirit, we understand that everything becomes simple in the Holy Spirit because God is simple." (pp. 334-335).

And in relation to time: *"When we truly live our time in the Spirit, it gives us its lightness, its strength and its own freedom in the present moment. If our relation to time is so painful for us, it is often for two fundamental reasons: unconsciously, we carry our work and our concerns too much by ourselves without giving ourselves to the Spirit. And on the other hand, we often live the present moment already too burdened by concerns for the next moment. The present then becomes very crushing. The person who lives in the Holy Spirit accomplishes his or her work and confronts his or her encounters and cares without having, as they say, one's 'the nose in the handlebars.' "* (p.333).

And in relation to the Church: *"To experience the Spirit is to experience the One who is the very soul of the Church. If we resolutely move to the Spirit, the Spirit will introduce us into the very depths of his love at work within the Church. "* (p.340). *"This discovery of the mystery of the Church in the Spirit leads to a greater love for the Church."* (p.341).

"Entering the Spirit gives a kind of spice to life." Without the Spirit, one risks living a so-so rather bland life as an apostle. To taste this spice, you must be prepared to be shaken a bit and not settled down...it has to bring you into the missionary spirit of God. " (p.346).

Concluding this little sketch about the author, and afraid of not being able to give you all the impact of his testimony, I invite you especially to read his book, if you have the possibility, because we are all like Nicodemus, called sooner or later to be reborn of the Spirit.

Consecration to God through Mary according to Father Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort

*This day, with the whole court of heaven as witness,
I choose you, Mary, as my Mother and Queen
I surrender and consecrate myself to you
body and soul,
with all that I possess, both spiritual and material,
even including the spiritual value of all my actions,
past, present, and to come,
I give you the full right to dispose of me
and all that belongs to me,
without any reservations,
in whatever way you please,
for the greater glory of God,
in time and throughout eternity.
Amen*



Aged 91, Bishop Paul Lanneau, Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Malines-Brussels entered the joy of the Father on January 26, 2017. At the request of Cardinal Suenens, Monsignor was the companion of the FIAT apostolate for fifteen years. In the next issue we will share some of the fruits of this close collaboration.

“Regardless what gift you would offer to God, do not forget to entrust it to Mary, because the grace to the donor flows back along the same path from which that grace has come.”

(St Bernard, 12th century)

The entire FIAT apostolate relies on volunteer work. The functioning of the International Secretariat, however, requires adequate funding. Moreover, we are often asked to offer significant discounts in sending rosaries and other outreach materials to countries that are economically not well off.

Any financial contribution will be gratefully accepted.

Here are our bank details:

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