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Editorial

Dear Friends of FIAT,

Some of you knew Monsignor Paul Lanneau, Emeritus Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Mechelen-Brussels. Indeed, he was actively involved in the FIAT apostolate for a very long time. Aged 91, he passed from life to life on January 26, 2017.

Like so many others, we were touched by his spiritual depth, simplicity, sense of humor, and tenderness: all a reflection of the Father's tenderness.

At the end of 1995, Cardinal L.J. Suenens, who had accompanied the FIAT Apostolate since its founding in 1984, asked Bishop Lanneau to take over this ministry. It was thus that he made his way with us until 2008. If the founders - Veronica O'Brien and Cardinal Suenens - gave the characteristic elements of the FIAT apostolate, it was indeed Bishop Lanneau who organized this spiritual richness, into a harmonious whole.

It is clear that the life of Bishop Lanneau far exceeded his spiritual contribution to the FIAT Association. Among other things, up to a few weeks before his death, Bishop Lanneau remained pastorally active in the "Sainte Monique" House (Brussels) where he had lived for 3 years as a very happy man.

In the following pages, you will find the homily Cardinal Jozef De Kesel gave at the funeral of Bishop Lanneau on 4 February in the cathedral of Saints-Michel-et-Gudule in Brussels. Close to 600 people gathered for a thanksgiving celebration for his life serving the Lord. This homily gives us the spiritual foundations of Bishop Lanneau's life, as his memory prayer card is a summary of this life.

Very fraternally

For the FIAT Association,
Roger Matthys

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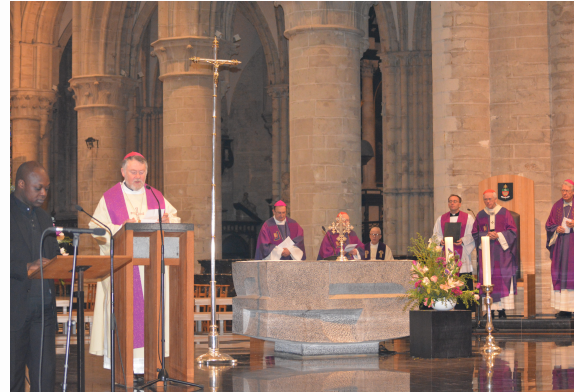


"Even today, Jesus is born of Mary and the Holy Spirit".

+L.J. Cardinal Suenens

Homily of Cardinal De Kesel at the funeral of Bishop Lanneau

Brothers and sisters. The text of the Gospel (Lk 10: 21-23) that we have just heard was chosen by Bishop Paul Lanneau himself, for his funeral today. It is a text that, at first sight, might be surprising. Jesus exults in it because his gospel has not been welcomed: *"Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I proclaim your praise: what you hid from the wise and the learned, you revealed to the humble and simple."* Astonishing, for shortly before, in the same Gospel of Luke, Jesus had just cursed cities like Bethsaida and Capernaum. He cursed them because they had not welcomed him because they had not converted. And now Jesus exults with joy. Why? Luke says that it is through the action of the Holy Spirit. It's as if all of a sudden Jesus saw clearly. There is nothing surprising. That's normal. God is not accessible like anything or anyone. No one has ever seen God. No one can know God. Nobody, except the Son. Hence the joy of Jesus. Joy that comes to him from this intimacy with his Father. It is in this intimacy that Jesus also wants to welcome his disciples. To them too, God will be made known. They too will know God. On one condition: that they have the heart of a poor man, the heart of a child. For God reveals Himself only to little ones.



This is not the only time we hear Jesus speak of toddlers and children. *"Verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter into it."* (Mk 10, 15) How does the child bring us closer to God? Not so much because the child remains dependent on the father and must obey him. God calls us to be free and responsible. But in the child's experience there is something indispensable and even a determining factor, not only for becoming an adult and growing in our humanity but also for our discovery and encounter with God. It is because the child is loved without having deserved it. The child has not yet had the opportunity nor the time to deserve anything. And yet the child is loved, infinitely loved. He is even loved before being born. It is this certainty which is at the heart of our faith: we are known and loved by God, infinitely loved, without having deserved it. It is this experience that leads to life and joy: we are loved without having deserved it, loved unconditionally. For there is nothing dearer to parents than their child. That is why we can only accept the Kingdom of God as a child. For he the one who does not know love and being loved cannot know God. The first letter of John (4: 7-16) emphasizes this: *"Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."*

And he concludes: *"We have acknowledged the love God has for us, and we have believed in it. God is love: who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."* This was the intimate conviction that animated Bishop Lanneau, and throws light on his entire life. We are therefore very grateful to him for having chosen these texts for his funeral. Not only do they belong to the finest pages of the New Testament, but they express so deeply what animated him and what the meaning and mission of his life and vocation were and how he was able to live them. *"Nobody knows the Father"*. Indeed, it is the experience of so many of our contemporaries; *"Nobody knows the Father except the Son and the one to whom the Son will reveal it."*

Throughout his life, his happiness and grace were to discover the Father. And this intimacy with the Father Bishop Lanneau was able to live as a disciple of Jesus with whom he had lived in communion since his baptism and throughout his life as a priest and bishop as a shepherd for his brothers and sisters. This search for God and intimacy with the Father, the friendship with Jesus and his imitation, the welcome to the wonderful action of the Spirit were very precious to him. He was a man of prayer and naturally lived a deeply spiritual life.



The year he spent at Tamanrasset, at the place where Charles de Foucauld also lived, deepened and confirmed this spiritual life. Brother Charles was not only a searcher of God in total surrender. He also wanted to be a brother, a little brother, a universal brother. These two dimensions - God and your brother or sister - can not be separated.

We see it also in the 1st reading chosen by Bishop Lanneau for his funeral: *"If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God remains in us, and His love is perfected in us..."* (1 Jn 4: 7-16).

We want today with all affection and gratitude to remember this man who was so good, this man so loving, and so attentive. He assumed many responsibilities in the service of the Church: 20 years as bishop here in Brussels, a faithful collaborator of the Cardinal and the other bishops.

Of course, Bishop Lanneau faced his own suffering. But through all, until the end of his life where he resided for three years at the 'Maison Sainte-Monique' (Monica House), he was a happy and joyful man. *"Who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."* Here is our trust and prayer for our dear brother Paul: that he abides in God and that God abides in him forever.

And it is with him and for him that we pray to the Lord God with the words of Brother Charles who were so dear to him: *"I put my soul in your hands, I give it to you, my God, with all the love of God in my heart, because I love you, and need the love you give me, to put me in your hands without measure, for you are my Father."*

In memory



Monsignor Paul LANNEAU

Emeritus Auxiliary Bishop of Mechelen-Brussels

Entered into the joy of the Father on January 26, 2017.

Born in Anderlecht on 22 July 1925,

Ordained priest in Mechelen on 24 July 1949 and

Ordained bishop in Brussels on 20 March 1982.

A few weeks before his death, Monsignor said:

"If God calls me, I am ready, I have given myself entirely to Him.

You can imagine what a great, great moment it will be!

I aspire so much to meet Jesus who loves me so much. I have received so much!"



"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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