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Dear Friends of FIAT,

Time passes ... Summer time takes its final steps, and all of us are invited to take up the threads of what makes our lives important.

In response to repeated questions, in this Newsletter we would like to share with you some elements of the historical church lines of the FIAT apostolate.

It is true that since its foundation by Veronica O'Brien and Cardinal L.J. Suenens, the FIAT Association has always been animated by the great desire to work at the heart of the Church.

The few pages that follow, extracts from writings by Father Abbot Frederic Testaert of the Abbey of Postel (Belgium), take us to the "*life in the Holy Spirit*" and to the beginnings of what we call "the Charismatic Renewal". They help us discover the current of grace that to this day has been with us, since 1984 the establishment of the FIAT apostolate.

May these words be a beautiful discovery of the gift of the Holy Spirit, this gift of love for the Church. And so also for every one of us in the service of proclaiming the Good News.

Good reading and warmest regards.

For the FIAT team

Cecile Matthys-Ryckaert

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

+L.J. Cardinal Suenens



“THE HEART OF JESUS, SOURCE OF THE EFFUSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, HEART OF OUR LIFE OF WITNESS ” THE INITIAL GRACE OF THE FIAT APOSTOLATE

Father Frederic Testaert, Abbot of Postel Abbey

The prophet Joel announced for the last time the outpouring of the Spirit over every human being, “over every being of flesh” (3,1). It seems that a beginning of realization of this prophecy was accomplished in the 20th century, through the new Pentecost. Indeed, the 20th century was marked by a very special outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Between 1895 and 1903, Sister Helena (Elena) Guerra, founder of the Oblates of the Holy Spirit in the city of Lucca in Tuscany, felt urged to write to Pope Leo XIII to urge him to renew the Church in a rediscovery of the Holy Spirit. His intuition was that in this difficult period of history, the Church had to return to the Cenacle to demand a new Pentecost. The Pope heard this call. He replied by publishing the apostolic letter *Provida Matris caritate* in which he asked the whole Church for a solemn novena to the Holy Spirit between the Feasts of Ascension and Pentecost. In 1897 he published an encyclical devoted entirely to the Holy Spirit, *Divinum illud munus*, so that it might be honored throughout the world. Finally, on the advice of Sister Helen, he invoked the Holy Spirit on 1 January 1901, the first year of the 20th century, singing the *Veni Creator Spiritus* in the name of the whole Church.

The Pope’s prayer to the Holy Spirit was to have an unexpected result: on the same day, on January 1, 1901, in Topeka in the United States, Agnes Ozman, a faithful Protestant member of a biblical school asked Pastor Charles Parham, to lay hands on her and pray that she receive “baptism in the Holy Spirit.” She began to speak in tongues and in the days that followed, several of her comrades and Pastor Parham lived the same experience. Agnes Ozman would spontaneously use the symbolism of Saint John to describe her spiritual experience: “It was as though rivers of living water proceeded from the depths of my being” (Cf. René LAURENTIN, *Pentecôtisme chez les catholiques*, 1974, p. 21-26).



These events are seen as the birth of the Pentecost movement and, more broadly, of the “pentecostal” movement which, during the 20th century, spread to the Protestant churches (Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Lutheran) and the Catholic Church itself.

Saint John XXIII, when he opened the Second Vatican Council in 1961, would offer this astonishing prayer:

*“Renew in our time,
as by a new Pentecost, your wonders
and grant to the holy Church
that, in a unanimous and persevering prayer,
with Mary, the Mother of Jesus,
under the guidance of St. Peter,
extend the Kingdom of the Divine Savior,
a kingdom of truth and justice, of love and of peace.
Amen ”*

(Prayer of Pope John XXIII to the Holy Spirit for the Ecumenical Council. The last paragraph is reproduced in the Constitution *Humanae salutis* of December 25, 1961, convening the Second Vatican Council)

The first person whom the good Pope John Beatified would be Elena Guerra, whom he called “Apostle of the Holy Spirit”.

At the Second Vatican Council, the Council fathers evoked explicitly the charisms (Cf. LG 12; *Apostolicam actuositatem*, 4; *Ad gentes*, 4,23; *Presbyterium ordinis*, 9), under the impulse of Cardinal Suenens (Cf. Léon-Joseph SUENENS, *The Holy Spirit, Life-Breath of the Church* Vol. I, p. 38-40). Shortly after the closure of the Council, in February 1967, a group of students and Catholic professors from Duquesne University in the United States were to experience “the effusion of the Spirit.” This was the birth of the Charismatic Renewal, which would spread very quickly in the United States and then throughout the world, through many prayer groups. In the early 1970s Veronica O’Brien heard about this phenomenon and spoke with Cardinal Suenens. Intrigued, she traveled to the United States to “study” this phenomenon in various universities. She met the main leaders and had long conversations (...).



His overall reaction to the Charismatic Renewal in the United States was: “We must say yes to the grace of Pentecost and not to Pentecostalism (Protestant)” (*The Hidden Hand of God*, p. 218-222) The Cardinal also travelled to the United States to see what was happening on the spot. Veronica and Cardinal Suenens would promote the integration of the Renewal into the Catholic Church.

The Cardinal would become “the great protector of the Charismatic Renewal.” This is how Pope Francis described Cardinal Suenens in a speech to the members of the Charismatic Renewal on July 3, 2015. In this speech Pope Francis also quoted Veronica. Cardinal Suenens explained “the Renewal to the Pope (Paul VI) and to the Curia” and made the Renewal leaders realize what Cardinal Levada, a friend of Cardinal Suenens, called “their amnesia” concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church:

the Eucharist, the Virgin Mary, the Pope, as the visible center of unity, the wealth of Catholic teaching and practice” (*The Charism of Cardinal Suenens in Retrieving Charisms for the Twenty-First Century*, p. 165).

One could hope that this pentecostal experience, which corresponds to that described by St. Luke and St. Paul, has only just begun. Did not Blessed Paul VI announce on 25 December 1975 the triumph of the civilization of love?

“The wisdom of brotherly love, which has characterized the Church’s historical journey, blossoming into virtues and works which are rightly called Christian, will explode into new fruitfulness, triumphant happiness, regenerative social life. It is not hatred, it is not struggle, it is not avarice that will be its dialectic, but love, the love that generates love, the love of man for humanity (...). The civilization of love will prevail over the fever of implacable social struggles and will give the world the transfiguration of finally Christian humanity” (It was precisely on the Feast of the Transfiguration on 6 August 1978 that Blessed Paul VI left our world).

In order that the new Pentecost which had accompanied the Council, would arouse a new and unexpected dynamism (*Address given by Pope John Paul II to ecclesial movements and new communities*, 30 May 1998), and bear all its fruits, it was necessary that all the movements, fruits of this “effusion of the Spirit (Ibid.)”, should constantly deepen the gift they have received.

Is it not necessary to go back as St. John, to the source of the gift, the pierced Heart of Jesus on the cross? This is what Patti Mansfield suggests: “If we want to deepen our life in the Spirit, we must go to the pierced Heart of Christ” (Cf. Patti G. Mansfield, *Comme une nouvelle Pentecôte*, p. 267). The teaching of Saint John provides an ever-present teaching which, without opposing that of Saint Luke or Saint Paul, comes to bring a deepening of our understanding so necessary today as yesterday.

The spirituality of the Heart of Jesus thus allows us to go beyond just a physical pentecostal experience, and to enter into the mystery of the cross. The gift of the Heart of Jesus allows an experience of the effusion of the Spirit rooted in the very life of the Church. As a spirituality of love, the mysticism of the Heart of Jesus makes it possible to better situate the importance of the charisms (necessary for the construction of the ecclesial body), (cf. 1 Cor 12: 7, LG 12) in relation to charity and ecclesial communion (cf. 1 Jn 4: 6, LG 12).

The mysticism of the Heart of Jesus allows us to go beyond the sensitive level of spiritual experience, often necessary in the time of conversion, to reach faith (cf Jn 20:29) and love, the inner life , contemplation, and a life of service. It is by placing us as the beloved disciple at the school of Mary and the Heart of Jesus that God will enable us to remain faithful to this grace of the “new Pentecost.” The Holy Spirit gives us, with the gift of a burning heart (cf. Lk 24:32), the grace of evangelization, that is, the grace of living “as faithful witnesses of Christ and the Love of his Divine Heart. The Holy Spirit, who lives in our hearts, encourages us to witness ardently to Christ “in words and deeds, always and everywhere” (FIAT prayer).

So I take up my question, a question for each one of us: “Am I for those with whom I live, for those I live with, a living source of living water? Do I make these torrents of wisdom and love flow over my brothers and sisters? Do I ever live, ‘in words and deeds, always and everywhere’, as a faithful witness ‘of Christ and the Love of his Divine Heart’?” (FIAT-prayer).

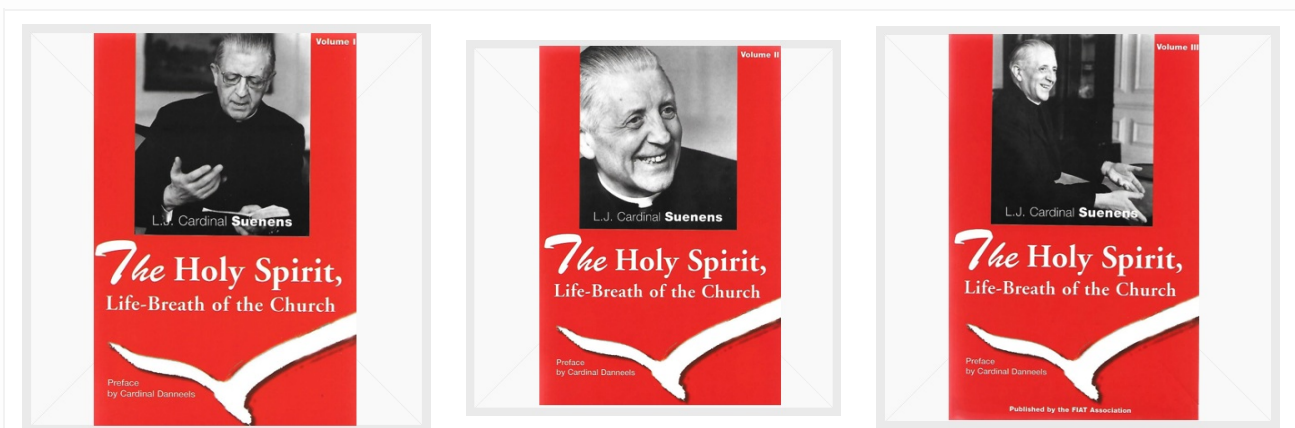
Let us make this question a resolution, a prayer:

*“Most Holy Spirit, (...)
Grant that we may be
inspired by the faith of our Baptism,
nourished by the Eucharist,
renewed in the grace of Pentecost.
So as to live,
in word and deed,
always and everywhere,
as faithful witnesses of Christ and
of the love of His Divine Heart”.*



In his exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, "The joy of the Gospel", Pope Francis speaks of Mary as the mother of evangelization and he says: "With the Holy Spirit there is always Mary among the people. She was with the disciples to invoke her (cf. Acts 1:14), and thus made possible the missionary explosion at Pentecost, she is the Mother of the Church, evangelizing, and without her we do not arrive not fully understand the spirit of the new evangelization" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, nr 284).

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"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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