

CONSECRATION TO THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY IS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR INSTITUTE (Art. 2)

Introduction

We have several reflections on our consecration. This one may not add much, but it is in line with our concern to re-read each time the foundation of our being as Sacred Hearts.

Without this consecration, we are like a boat without a compass. Without this consecration, we are just empty barrels making a lot of noise. Consecration to the Sacred Hearts is really the "marrow or backbone" of our commitment in the Church and in the world for the good of mankind and our humanity. There is no place on earth that does not need this love manifested in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. **Our consecration is at once "ecumenical, synodal and ecological"**. Ecumenical, because the heart unites and unites as one. Synodal, because the heart is the centre of love, and love does not live alone, but with others. Love always accompanies the other (poor, marginalised, rich, migrant, old, young, victim of war, etc.). Ecological, because the whole of creation is God's work of love and deserves to be loved in its turn. Without the love of creation, man builds his own tomb.

Let's start by saying a word about the history of spirituality linked to the Sacred Heart.

1. FRENCH SCHOOL OF SPIRITUALITY

Without getting into the controversy about whether there really was such a thing as a French school of spirituality, for many researchers deny the existence of such a school for three reasons:

- This term appeared around 19^{ème} century following the publication of a book entitled "A literary history of religious sentiment in France"¹
- Others think that the "French" concept is inadequate insofar as Saint François de Sales played a major role in this spirituality and he is not really French (French Switzerland).
- And still others want this spirituality to take the name of "Berulle". In other words, a "Berullian" school.²

In short, the "**Ecole Française**" was a movement that was *both* "**spiritual**" AND "**apostolic**". Bérulle, François de Sales, Jean Eudes, Olier, Vincent de Paul and others were at once men of

¹ From Abbé Bremond in 1920

² Pierre de Bérulle was a theologian whose theological thought and spirituality dominated the first half of the 17^{ème} century in France.

prayer and prodigiously *active* men. And these two dimensions of their lives are not simply *juxtaposed*: they are intimately *linked*.³

Here we have, as it were, the **two fundamental sides of Berulle's spiritual teaching**: he insists on the importance of ***working on oneself***, which he sometimes calls "renunciation", sometimes "abnegation"; but this work on oneself is only a *preparation*, as it were, for *God's* work, and its sole aim is to **make us available to God**: it is a question of "*letting* Jesus Christ invade our soul".⁴

Here we can discover the spirituality of our Founders (adoration and apostolate).

Bérulle uses the term "**fondement**" (principle, origin) to show that the Spirit of Christ is the principle of all spiritual life and apostolic action.

"We are here at the **heart of the French School**: it is a question of *welcoming* this life of Christ within us; of allowing ourselves to be "*inhabited*" by it; of allowing the Spirit of Christ to *work* within us and *transform* us from within, so that it *redirects* all our energies and all our activities *in the service of* God and our neighbour".⁵

Some figures from this "French school": Saint François de Sales, Pierre de Bérulle, Jean Eudes, Jean Jacques Olier, Saint Vincent de Paul,

It is important to note that although Jean Eudes was a disciple of Bérulle, he developed a spirituality linked to the Heart of Jesus and Mary. "In 1643, while still officially an Oratorian, he and six companions founded their own congregation, which he called the *Congregation of Jesus and Mary*, better known as the "Eudists". Its main activities were *popular missions*, the *training of priests and the running of seminaries*. (Its first constitutions were very similar to those of the Oratory.) Taking up Bérulle's intuitions about Jesus and Mary, he himself took up and developed the ancient devotion to the Heart of Jesus (dating back to the 13th^e century), to which he added devotion to the Heart of Mary.

In 1648, during a mission to Autun, he had the liturgical feast of the Holy Heart of Mary celebrated for the first time, and on 20 October 1672 the first liturgical feast of the Heart of Jesus.

The devotion to the Heart of Jesus disseminated by John Eudes followed a very traditional line, but would later undergo significant changes, starting with the Visitation of Autun".⁶

Bérulle **created a new face of the priest**: a man of the field (apostolate) and a deeply spiritual man (interior life). And Berulle and his disciples invite us to live on three levels for all religious life (life linked to God):

- Union with Christ (he lives in us, in each one of us)
- Community life (where Christ makes us brothers)
- Mission (where we are sent in the name of Christ, through our Superiors)

³ Picpus Session 2005 (Beaumont)

⁴ Ditto

⁵ Ditto

⁶ Op. cit, p. 16

(You can already guess what our mission will be: to contemplate, live and proclaim in line with the spirituality of Bérulle for all consecrated persons)

With regard to the Virgin Mary, Berulle makes three essential contributions:

- Mary as a model of "yes" (Annunciation) where every Christian is called to bring Christ to birth in him or her
- Mary carrying Jesus in her womb (intimate bond between Mary and Jesus)
- Mary contemplating her newborn baby (Model of contemplation)

"For the French School, therefore, Mary is the very model of the Christian, welcoming ***the Son of God into herself, allowing him to "dwell" in her, and allowing herself to be transformed by his presence in her.***⁷

Origin of the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary

Although the spirituality of the Heart of Jesus goes back much further than that of the French school (as far back as 13^{ème} with Saint Gertrude of Helfta), the French school intimately links the heart of Jesus with that of Mary (thus the congregation founded by Jean Eudes was called the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary). For Eudes, this profound union formed a single heart.

This spirituality was to reach Paray-Monial, where the idea of "reparation" was added. (With Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque).

Bérulle and his followers (extended) the spirit of the Council of Trent **on the Eucharist**. They asked priests to preside at the Eucharist every day. Let the Eucharist be at the centre of the life of the priest, and today of the Christian.

LET'S TALK ABOUT CONSECRATION

It is a polysemous concept. In our context, it means dedication, giving, setting ourselves apart, with the primary and final goal of loving God through his son Jesus Christ.

Another meaning is the gift of my whole being and my whole life.

Consecration as participation in the Paschal Mystery

Consecration, as a place of "identification" with Christ (in our case, with the attitudes and feelings of Christ, of his heart).

⁷ Idem, p. 39

Consecration means espousing Christ's passion for his People (God suffers in his heart when he sees the evil in man).

Consecration, as "aggregation" to a thing in a firm manner.

Our founders wanted to tell us that: our dedication, our gift, our gift of life, our identification with Christ's mission and our way of embracing Christ's mission is to look at, contemplate, live and proclaim **the Hearts of Jesus, and Mary** was associated in a special way with this redemptive mission of her Son.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

We have just received the Pope's encyclical on the Heart of Jesus (*Dilexit nos*). We can read it and discover its richness. The Pope shows us that the Heart is the centre of desire and the place where important decisions are made; it's the only place where sincerity is experienced, because there's no room for deceit or concealment. And when we no longer have a heart, we shut ourselves away, we live individualism and self-reference.

God is precisely the "Heart par excellence". His love gives itself and gives itself in abundance. His Heart is the place where we discover "admirable favours". In such a way that Saint Paul is able to tell us that "nothing can separate us from the love of God". This is why the Good Father will tell us that outside the Heart of Jesus, we can find nothing but bitterness.

We are consecrated to the Heart of Jesus to discover the Father's unfailing love for the world and for each of his creatures. God's measure of love, it is said, is to love without measure. This love of God can be seen on every page of the Bible, from its origins to the present day. God calls each of us by name, like a Father who knows and loves his children. "To speak of *the Heart of Jesus is to speak of the centre of Jesus, the source of his choices, his passion for his Father and for the Kingdom.*"⁸

Contemplation, espousing the sentiments of Christ, undoubtedly leads us towards the apostolate (towards proclamation, or being inflamed with zeal). The more we discover the Heart of God (in Jesus), the more we can say, like **the Good Mother**, "*My God, here I am... I want what you want, yes, my God. You know that I love you with all my heart and I am ready to die if you want me to. Yes, I want to love you forever. My God, I give you my heart.*"⁹

"The Heart of Jesus calls us to look at all things with God's loving gaze..."¹⁰

In the first regulations drawn up by **the Good Father** (in 1797), he told us: "In Jesus we find everything: his birth, his life and his death: that is our Rule. His divine Heart

⁸ The Lord has led us as by the hand, p. 35

⁹ The Lord has led us as by the hand, p. 32

¹⁰ Idem, p. 36

will be our refuge and our exile, the solitude to which we will often withdraw so that he may deign to speak to our hearts".

From Mary we learn that to consecrate oneself is to live in humility, to accept God's plan, to serve the poor, in short, **to serve and carry out God's will.**

When we take both hearts, we join in the design of God's plan for the love of his Heart to invade the world and every human being. In this way, we are chosen to "show this love of God" to the world. The Heart is the greatest symbol of this love.

As Paula Teck shows us, we want to live out these three dimensions of our mission:

1. **Contemplation:** growing in a profound inner life of the mystery of salvation
2. **Living:** building a universal community of love around us where God reigns supreme
3. **Announcing:** living out this missionary dimension so that the world may believe in the One whom God has sent.

Pablo Fontaine, a Chilean confrere, tells us: "You who are consecrated to the Sacred Hearts, this consecration being the foundation of our Institute, ask yourself, with humility and hope, if you are really living your commitment with the dynamism of saving Love that should fill you with zeal for the mission".¹¹

As Pope Francis says in "**Dilexit nos**": "the world can change from the heart. Our heart, united to that of Christ, is capable of this social miracle" (no. 28). If our hearts were transformed and converted, many things in this world would lead us to social bliss. The world today no longer seems to have a "social beatitude".

"heart". We no longer feel each other's suffering. We no longer share the joys, sorrows and sufferings of others, as the Second Vatican Council invites us to do. Everything revolves around "me". Yes, the world can change from the heart. Pope Francis is quite right.

"Passion for God, which leads us to have the same dispositions and feelings towards humanity and which is transformed into missionary zeal, into passion for humanity, as the Good Father says in his memoir: *"We need a name that reminds our brothers every day of their duties and obligations, that makes them remember at every moment that they must sacrifice themselves out of **zeal** for the Lord; that they will fail in their most essential vow from the moment they want to live for themselves alone and not work for the salvation of their brothers ; that they should not return to the silence of the cloister except to draw new strength from it in order to fight the enemies of religion with greater courage; that their vocation is all **zeal**, and a **zeal** that is fervent. This is what the members of our Society must think, and this is what they will not be able to forget as soon as they call themselves **Zealots**. Their very name would cry out against them, like the stones of the sanctuary, if they did not fulfil the duties it imposes on them. It would be a reproach*

¹¹ The Lord has led us as by the hand, p. 44

In this memoir, quoting a book of piety of his time, he adds: "... souls are invited to unite themselves to the Heart of Jesus. Again in this memoir - quoting a book of piety of his time - he adds: "... souls are invited to unite themselves to the Heart of Jesus. They are represented under the symbol of the different feelings that devotion to the Heart of Jesus should produce. We find the loving soul, the compassionate soul, the enffamoured soul and especially the zealous soul."¹²

This name, which reminds us every day of who we are, is the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. They are the Sacred Hearts that urge us to obey our "most essential vow": to serve our brothers and sisters, human beings, and to build a just world. To do this, our hearts are called to "imitate" that of Christ.

I came across an article by Father Kerrien¹³ "who talks about our spirituality. Father Kerrien tells us that our spirituality is to "retrace the 4 ages of Jesus". Except that these ages are an invitation to every Christian (birth, childhood, hidden life and public life). This is why the Founders added as a "specificity" the consecration to the Sacred Hearts. Father Kerrien says: *"Our family professes to give itself to the Sacred Hearts, to belong to them, to be at their disposal in everything they want, in life and in death. Obviously, the origin and purpose of such a gift is love for the Sacred Hearts, but it also consists essentially in loving them. Love is self-giving, and the more we love, the more we are given.*

It is also true that our Founders tell us that the Heart of Jesus is the place, par excellence, **of God's love**. God's will, through this Heart, is that we should be He wants us to be "holy as our Father is holy" (Lev 19:2). It is God's will that we all "have a heart of flesh and remove the heart of stone from our lives" (Ezek 36:16-28). God's plan is fulfilled in his Son, who became obedient to the point of death and the death of the Cross. Our spirituality touches the "heart", that is, the person in his or her innermost being: his or her heart (obedience, compassion, mercy, justice, peace, forgiveness, humility, truth, love, unity, etc.).

This is how we have the 'practical' side of our spirituality, which is the "A Sacred Heart must always ask: **"What does Jesus want for me and for the world? A Sacred Heart must always ask the question: "What does Jesus want for me and for the world? The constant gap between God's will and our actions in the world encourages us to adopt this attitude of "reparation".**

By repairing, in my opinion :

1. We seek to reconnect with the love of God that our sins have broken
2. We seek to "appease" the ardour of God's anger that our selfishness has provoked.
3. We seek to put people back at the centre of God's love, which is Mercy
4. We invite people to welcome God's love
5. We pray that the world will return to the heart of God and to his plan.
6. We pray that what was disfigured may become "beautiful in God through Christ".

¹² Cf. Julio Garcia, Picpus 2007 session on Zeal.

¹³ Kerrien Jean Yves: "Our spirituality

7. We listen to God telling us to widen our tents so that no one is left outside without shelter.
8. We ask God to "reduce" the gap that the man (woman) causes by his or her actions so that we can meet God's unconditional love.
9. We implore God's grace to change us and our world
10. We are ministers of love.

Conclusion

Father Kerrien says: "It is through and in this pierced Heart that the Father's merciful love is manifested, offered and communicated to mankind to rescue them from death. It is through him and in him that people become capable of welcoming this love and responding to it. How can we fail to see that, in this dual capacity, he himself is entitled, on the part of all, to a humbly grateful love and to the worship that his dignity as Son of God deserves?"

To "build a civilisation of love, humanity today needs the heart of Jesus" (Dilexit nos, 184). The builders, propagators and translators of this civilisation of love are the Sacred Hearts (a great claim). We have no right to fail in our mission: to contemplate, live and announce God's love to the world.

Through us, God will extend his infinite tenderness, his mercy without measure and his divine love to the world and to the whole of humanity. **For God**, we are the channel through which God's living water and life are conveyed to his people. **In him**, we are We are the "instruments" of his perfect music, singing of love, peace, joy and justice. **With him**, we join our hearts to his so that God's love may be loved, and so that man may regain his dignity, whatever his origin or status. This will be our mission forever.

In short, the more you know about who you are, the better you can live out your mission.

Father Camille SAPU MALANGU, ss.cc.

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