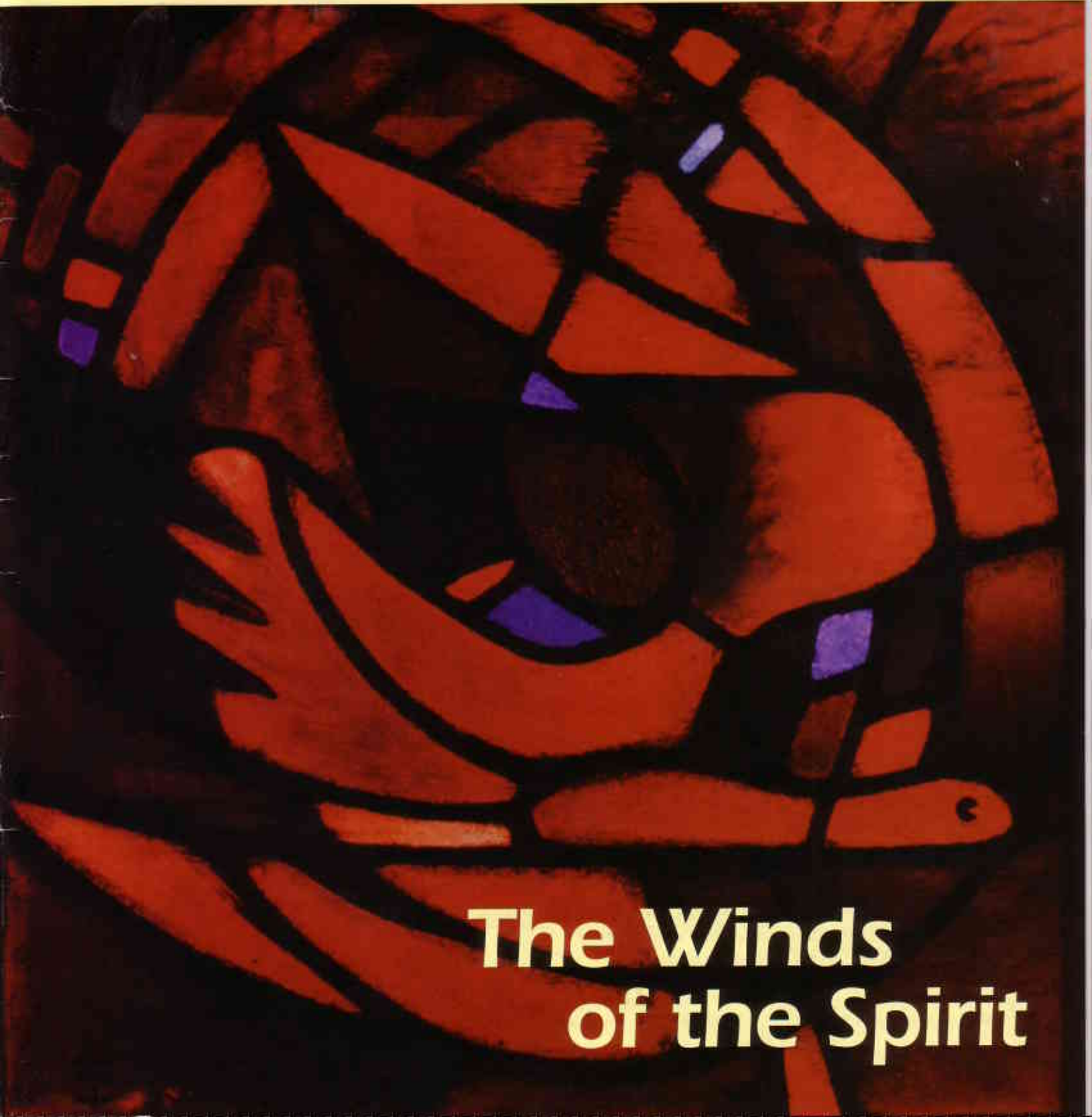


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The Winds
of the Spirit

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The Holy Spirit at work in our world

1998 is the year of the Holy Spirit. May 31st, Pentecost Sunday is the feast of the Holy Spirit. So it is not surprising that the theme of this issue of *Spiritan Missionary News* is God the Holy Spirit, the life force of the created world.

As John Geary, CSSp wrote in the editorial of our November 1997 issue, "Today as much as in Apostolic times, the Spirit is on the move, renewing the face of the earth." And it is our role as Spiritans to play an active part in this renewal. In this issue of our magazine we attempt to identify some manifestations of the Spirit's operation in our contemporary world and the roles which Spiritans play in it.

A recent visit to Canada by Pierre Schouver CSSp, Superior General of the Spiritans, afforded my co-editor Pat Fitzpatrick and myself an opportunity to obtain the ideas and vision of someone who has visited almost every Spiritan work around the globe. His insights on pages 19, 20 and 21 articulate the essence of Spiritan service as he has observed it.

Pierre was born in Lorraine, France, the middle child of a family of five. One of his uncles was a Spiritan in Senegal for forty years and from an early age Pierre wished to follow in his footsteps. After a year of spiritual training in the novitiate at Cellule, where he lived with French, Belgian and English aspirants, he began his studies for the priesthood. Like all young Frenchmen in that postwar period he did two years of military service, in Germany and Algeria. He remembers that among the soldiers, most of whom were non-churchgoing, there was always a certain respect for the seminarians who stood out as different from the others in many ways.

Pierre went to the Gregorian University in Rome, and later to the Biblicum University for his studies in theology and scripture. The courses in the former he found too theoretical to be fulfilling, but in the Biblicum and later in the Institut Catholique in Paris he was exposed to a theology rooted in the social and spiritual experience of his generation. Theology and Bible studies became relevant when studied in the historical context of the time: the human, social and spiritual condition of the post-war world.

Pierre found that theology is liberating when it is based on the interpretation of human experience. His newfound insights opened up the Scriptures to him in the same way that Jesus opened up the scriptures and explained the recent happenings in Jerusalem to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. As the Jewish people realised so clearly, it is through our experience that the Holy Spirit communicates with us, which is a constant theme in the writings of Francis Libermann CSSp., who was Jewish himself.

The notion that the Holy Spirit acts through the circumstances and events of our lives, and can be found in them by prayerful reflection on their meaning, is a theme that will be found running all through the articles in this issue, binding them together. The biblical image of seeing only the back of God comes to mind. We do not see God coming to us. We see God departing as we examine the experiences we have had and realize that they represent part of the action of the Holy Spirit at work in our world.

Gerald FitzGerald CSSp

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Woman of Cana, Woman of Calvary

Deirdre McLoughlin, Sioux Lookout, Ontario

Sister Susan had a dream, and worked hard to make it a reality. She dreamt constantly that the homeless of Toronto would have a place where they would be welcome, find shelter and have a bowl of hot soup in the cold of winter. Their situation embarrassed her; she wanted to do something about it. She sought help from her community, Our Lady's Missionaries, her friends and students. The beginnings, like the signs of

Illustration by David Mysolski



the twenty seater Metro Airliner would land shortly in Winnipeg. Suddenly there was a major mechanical malfunction. The nose of the plane pointed upward at a 50° angle, we went from 4,000 to 7,000 feet in seconds. The engines stalled, we rolled around in the sky. They got the engine started again and we nose-dived towards the ground. Never have I felt such terror — so helpless and out of control. Thanks

God's reign, were little, fragile and weak. Starting simply in one place on a Saturday morning "Out of the Cold" has, like the mustard seed, grown and spread to encompass hundreds of people in many places even as far as my hometown of Sioux Lookout.

As I reflect on Susan I think of the marriage feast of Cana in the gospel of John (John 2:1-11). Wine at a Jewish feast was of great importance. To run out was a dreadful embarrassment to the host. It was as crucial as a bowl of soup to a homeless person in mid-winter.

Susan's plea, "they have nowhere to go, they have nothing to eat", echoes Mary's plea to Jesus, "they have no wine" (John 2:4). As the Mother of Jesus directed the stewards towards her Son, so also, as patroness of Our Lady's Missionaries, would she point Susan in the same direction and say, "Do whatever He tells you". Susan prayed, pondered and waited, was led and followed.

At Cana, Jesus refers to His mother simply as "woman". Not only is she the mother of Jesus but mother of all His followers, mother of you and me, continuing to save us from embarrassment, pointing to her Son, and saying, "Do whatever He tells you".

Woman of Calvary

Much has happened in my life in the past six months. On a clear blue August day, the captain had just announced that

to the sheer physical strength and teamwork of the crew, we landed despite our brush with death.

Along with the other passengers I have suffered some drastic effects as a result of this incident. Yet! I am alive and have reached the stage of asking what does all this mean? Lord, your hand was in the event and consequences, help me to understand. As I ask I am drawn to contemplate the scene at the foot of the cross. (John 19:25-27) Rather than being a struggle, this scene has brought me peace. Why do I find it so comforting to be with the women at the foot of the cross where Jesus is dying, witnessing Mary's struggle and the beloved disciple's pain? There is so much more than a Son making sure His Mother is taken care of when He dies. Again He calls Mary, "Woman" and does not name the disciple whom He loves. Not only is Jesus saying, "Mother, this is your son", "Son, this is your Mother", but He is welcoming us all into his family: Mary our Mother, Jesus our Brother, and each of us a beloved disciple. It is a scene of welcome, of compassion, of mutual acceptance and it happens despite the tragedy which is occurring. No wonder it is comforting but also challenging.

I hope when I understand what my next step is, I can say 'yes' like Mary the young woman of Nazareth and Mary the older woman of Calvary: pondering much, living into the uncertainty of her answer and remaining faithful, hopeful, compassionate and welcoming, whatever the circumstances. ❖



I Believe in

Looking back through the years, I believe I have been most conscious of the presence of the Spirit of God in my times of greatest doubt, darkness and confusion. The years I spent in the seminary were years of great upheaval in the church. Priests and seminarians were abandoning their vocations. In the midst of my turmoil I joined a Pentecostal prayer group and found the clarity and peace that only the Spirit can bring. My faith was strengthened, my enthusiasm renewed, my sacramental and prayer life enriched. These were the gifts of the Holy Spirit to me.

When I encounter signs of discouragement, I renew the intensity of my prayer life and always the Holy Spirit hears me from the turmoil, and restores me to peace and joy. I know the action of the Spirit of God from my own personal experiences. Yes, I certainly do believe in the Holy Spirit.

*Locky Flanagan CSSp
Toronto, Ontario*

I believe in the Holy Spirit — the third, and most intangible member of the Trinity and yet often the presence most felt in my life. I believe the Spirit is with me in all my roles — as woman, spouse, parent, friend, teacher, member of society. I recognize the Spirit in the quiet times in Church, in the struggles of life, in the ordinary moments of the day. It is the Holy Spirit who guides me in discerning the truth in matters of complexity, in determining the right course of action, and in interacting with concern for others. Grade One students are puzzled by the Holy Spirit and ask many questions. To answer, I refer to the classroom mobile that moves ever so slightly with the unseen air current — so the Holy Spirit moves in our lives, unseen and gentle, encouraging us in all our movements. It takes time to know, to understand, to believe.

*Mary Jane Gowans
Waterloo, Ontario*

Quite a long time ago, while sitting in a restaurant, I noticed on a nearby table a chubby kind of candle sitting comfortably in an attractive holder. The candle was burning brightly but the flame was quite still: no movement at all. I continued to wonder why. As the restaurant slowly filled with people the activity on the part of the waiters increased. The table with the candle was now occupied. Almost immediately the flame 'came alive'. Why? Slowly it dawned on me: it was the *movement* of the servers and the family sitting at the table that brought the candle to life. The candle had been there all the time waiting for something to happen. Is it not so with us? The Holy Spirit dwells within each of us, but it is only when I respond, when I move my heart toward, or deliberately focus my heart on the "Who" within me that the Spirit of God is really free to come alive.

*Garry McCarthy CSSp
Toronto, Ontario*