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Foreword

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FOREWORD

In response to a need felt in several of our Provinces and Mission Districts, it has been decided to establish a Spiritan Studies group. This group's role is to awaken and foster interest in our history and our spirituality among all the confreres. It is just beginning its work and various factors, in particular health problems, have slowed down its first steps. A little time will still be needed for it to find its regular pace. The "paper" being presented here is one of its first fruits. We are publishing it in the form of a supplement to our General Bulletin.

We have here, along with the history of the foundation of this Spiritan Studies Group, a study on "Libermann and the Local Churches". This was given as a conference at the Generalate but was judged likely to be of interest to all the members of the Congregation. The subject is one which was given prominence by the most recent Council of the Church and it is wonderful to discover flowing from Father Libermann's pen statements and principles whose force and precision remain very appropriate in our own day.

The year 1976 is the centenary of the official introduction in Rome of the cause for beatification of him whom we call "Our Venerable Father". Father Bouchaud devotes several pages to the celebrations organized at that time in 1876, especially the admirable panegyric preached in Paris by Monsignor Freppel.

It is our hope that we will be able in this way to stir up renewed interest in research about our religious family and thus contribute to a strengthening of its unity, in loyalty to the inten-

tions and the charisms of our founders and also in a spirit of living continuity with the ideals which animated our missionaries. That is a heritage which Vatican II asks us to guard faithfully and to make bear fruit. I believe that we still do not have sufficient realization of all its richness.

So it is our wish that this modest publication may prompt other research and may, above all, help Spiritans to have a livelier awareness of the value of our traditions and to draw inspiration from them for their religious and apostolic life.

Joseph Lécuyer, C.S.Sp.