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Presenting This Issue

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PRESENTING THIS ISSUE

Our Congregation, in full spate of renewal, is continuing its aggiornamento by revising the text of the rules and constitutions. A new draft is in all Spiritans' hands at present, to be assessed and improved. The subject-matter for this issue of Spiritan Papers, then, went without saying: different themes relevant to our rules and constitutions. The stakes are high!

Fr. Tom Farrelly, who was moderator at the Carcavelos meeting and drew up the questionnaire accompanying the draft, unravels the threads of the long process of revision that has led to the actual draft and will close with a definitive text in 1986. Fr. Henri Littner traces the development of our rules and constitutions throughout our history from Fr. Poullart des Places to our own day. Fr. François Nicolas, in a long exegesis, introduces us into the heart of Fr. Libermann's prophetic inspiration, where we can find the combined thought of our two founders on what our charism is. Fr. John Daly writes of the place of the Congregation in the Church today according to its lived tradition. "Tradition is good only on condition that it encourages the never-ending renewal of life that can draw from within itself the strength to control threatening sclerosis and break old habits" (*Etudes*, November 1962).

There follow Western, African and South American approaches to the problems inherent in our contemporary missionary period. No doubt what will strike the reader most is the emphasis the contributors give to a world Church, cultural diversity and the internationality that is strongly marked today in the Congregation. These new facts will give the Congregation a new image, rejuvenated and variegated. Our rules and constitutions must take this into account. French and Canadian Spiritans speak: Frs Georges-Henri Thibault and Antoine Mercier; South American Spiritans: Fr. Pedro Iwashita from Brazil and Fr. Michel de Verteuil from Trinidad; African Spiritans: Frs James Okoye and Eugene Uzukwu from Nigeria — each from his own point of view casting a different light on

our common calling. It is both surprising and moving to see ourselves so thoroughly one and multiple!

Finally, a Scripture reflection on St. Paul's "law of the Spirit" by Fr. Felix Gils brings us to the source of Love and invites us to follow the law under the breath of Him who inspires it, the Person of the Holy Spirit.

Naturally, the author of each article is responsible for his own ideas, which commit himself alone. But it will be clear throughout these pages how seriously the draft of the rules and constitutions is being taken. In our own providential circumstances, they must be the faithful echo of what we are called to be and the prophetic word that binds us and our successors in loyalty to our Spiritan vocation. The unassuming aim of this *Spiritan Papers* is to help towards a more lively grasp of all this in the Church and world of our time.

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