

Fall 2010

A Merger, An Attempted Takeover... Turning Points in the Spiritan Story

Michael Kilkenny C.S.Sp.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/spiritan-horizons>



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kilkenny, M. (2010). A Merger, An Attempted Takeover... Turning Points in the Spiritan Story. *Spiritan Horizons*, 5 (5). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/spiritan-horizons/vol5/iss5/7>

This Wellsprings is brought to you for free and open access by Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spiritan Horizons by an authorized editor of Duquesne Scholarship Collection.

A MERGER, AN ATTEMPTED TAKEOVER...

TURNING POINTS IN THE SPIRITAN STORY

Michael J. Kilkenny,
C.S.Sp.

Michael Kilkenny joined the Irish Spiritans in 1975. Following ordination in 1985, he spent nine years working in Angola. A graduate of University College Dublin, in 2003 he obtained a JCL degree in Canon Law from St. Paul's University Ottawa and a Masters in Canon Law from Ottawa University. He acted as General Secretary to the General Chapter in Lisbon in 2004 before graduating from University College Dublin in 2007 with a BCL in civil law. Michael is currently Community Leader in Kimmage Manor Dublin and teaching Canon Law at the Milltown Institute, Dublin.

LeRoy discovered that he was not the fifth but the fifteenth Superior General...

Introduction

On 14th February, 1901, at a plenary session of the French Council of State, it was decreed that the civilly recognized Congregation of the Holy Ghost had ceased to exist. The reason given was that it had been replaced, since 1848, by the non civilly recognized Society of the Holy Heart of Mary. This judgment was based on what Congregation members themselves had publicly affirmed, namely, that Francis Libermann was their founder and first Superior General. They called themselves the Holy Heart of Mary Society in some official documentation and references were found to the 'former' Congregation of the Holy Ghost. The above decision by the French Council of State was akin to a Supreme Court decision today and thus seemed irreversible. For Congregation members, the scenario facing them was dispersal, a return to their dioceses of origin and the government taking over their property.

The Superior General of the time, Alexander LeRoy, had been a missionary in Africa and Vicar Apostolic of the Two Guineas when elected to leadership in the Congregation. He had no previous administrative experience in the Congregation. He read the government papers and believed them to be in complete conformity with the facts. However, the Spiritan archivist, Désiré Barillec, suggested to LeRoy that there may be more to the situation than met the eye. They made a detailed study of the historical documents and discovered that, not only did the Congregation of the Holy Ghost date back to 1703, but that it still legally existed both civilly and canonically. As part of a merger with the Holy Ghost Congregation in 1848, *Propaganda Fide*¹ had suppressed the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary and told its members to join the Holy Ghost one. LeRoy discovered that he was not the fifth but the fifteenth Superior General of the Holy Ghost Congregation.

He immediately drew up a new memorandum for the Council of State with the correct documents, outlining its continuing civil legal status. After much lobbying, the Council of State reversed its original decision by a majority of just one vote. Incredibly, there were some within the Congregation who would have preferred suppression by the state than to accept that Libermann

Michael J. Kilkenny,
C.S.Sp.

*They launched their work
in 1841 by opening a
novitiate for the new
Society in Amiens.*

*...had also received a
special indult from the
Holy See...*

was not the founder of the Holy Ghost Congregation.² In this article I hope to explore some of the reasons for the state of affairs that came to light within the Congregation in 1901.

1848 – The State of the Parties to the Proposed Union

In 1841 *Propaganda Fide* approved a project proposed by Libermann and his friends to establish a society for the evangelization and spiritual care of the Blacks of ‘*Bourbon et de Saint-Domingue*’. The new Society would adhere to the obligations of community life, obedience and poverty and it would be totally dependent on the Holy See. The approval was, legally speaking, ‘canonical praise’ from Cardinal Frasoni and *Propaganda Fide*, for a pious association of likeminded people to proceed with their plans.³ This was sufficient for Libermann and his friends. They launched their work in 1841 by opening a novitiate for the new Society in Amiens. They decided to call it ‘The Society of the Holy Heart of Mary’. Even though their numbers grew steadily over the next seven years the canonical status of the Society of the Immaculate Heart of Mary did not change. The political climate in France at that time was hostile to the Church and thus it would be very difficult to obtain civil recognition for this new work. The Holy Heart of Mary Society was comprised of thirty four priests, ten novices, twenty eight brothers and thirty four aspirants.⁴

By 1848, The Congregation of the Holy Spirit had changed from being a Congregation of diocesan right at its foundation to one of pontifical right. It had managed to retain its civil legal existence in France. It remained in existence to train priests for the overseas French colonies, a different purpose than its founder had in mind. The Holy Ghost Congregation at this time had nineteen members. The seminary contained sixty aspirants. We must remember that this was a far healthier number than in 1845 when they had only about three members. The newly modified and approved Constitutions made conditions more attractive for others to join and for the first time all candidates were to be admitted as full members of the Congregation. Leguay had also received a special indult from the Holy See, dated 29th August, 1847, in which he was given permission for a period of one year to admit to the Congregation as full members people who had not passed through the seminary.⁵

Context for the Proposed Union

Soon after Libermann presented his project to *Propaganda Fide*, on 11th May, 1840, it was pointed out to him that the foundation of another institute to work in the French colonies would only create tension with the Holy Ghost Congregation already working there. As a result, the idea of joining up with the latter Congregation was sown from an early stage.⁶ Also, Holy Heart of Mary missionaries often worked in the same territories as the Holy Ghost Congregation with mixed results as regards mutual acceptance. Libermann's missionaries were noted for their dedication to the poorest in the colonies, as well as their community discipline. It became clear to its leadership from an early stage, however, that the future growth of the Society could not be guaranteed without civil legal recognition. In the anti-Church atmosphere of the time in France, this was a very remote possibility. Libermann saw a solution to his problem in the union of the two Societies.

...when Libermann approached Fourdinier about forming a union, the latter was not interested.

In 1842, Amable Fourdinier, the then Superior of the Holy Ghost Congregation, presented a 'project of congregation' to *Propaganda Fide*; this was a plan to renew the Congregation as well as the life of the clergy in the French colonies. Therefore, when Libermann approached Fourdinier about forming a union, the latter was not interested. His immediate plans for his Congregation's future did not include a union with Libermann's Society. The Holy Ghost Congregation intended, on its own, to supply personnel to work in the colonies, thus honouring its commitments to *Propaganda Fide* and the French Ministry of the Marine.⁷

First Attempt at Union: 1845

Amable Fourdinier died in 1845 but, according to Libermann, things were as bad as ever in the Holy Spirit Seminary whilst the morale of the clergy in the colonies was at rock bottom.⁸ Libermann was convinced his Society could rectify many of the ills affecting the Holy Ghost Congregation and decided to propose a union to the new superior, Alexander Leguay. The latter had other intentions however and embarked on a project to form a second order of Holy Ghost members as well as relaxing the demands of the vow of poverty for its permanent members. The principal motive in renewing the Constitutions was to renew the Congregation and to retain jurisdiction and control over the provision of clergy to the French colonies. Libermann had obtained jurisdiction for his missionaries in West Africa, not from the superior of the Holy Ghost Congregation, but directly from *Propaganda Fide*. Needless to say, the relationship between

...Libermann...decided to propose a union to the new superior, Alexander Leguay.

Michael J. Kilkenny,
C.S.Sp.

The time was not yet ripe.

Libermann and Leguay remained cold and distant and thus not conducive to creating the trust necessary for union. The Holy Ghost members had a serious distrust of Libermann's intentions and wanted as far as possible to keep him at arms' length. This was not unconnected to his Jewish background. The Holy Ghost Congregation did not want to negotiate a union from a position of weakness either. By the end of 1845, the idea of union was shelved and indeed the whole project degenerated into name calling and mutual blame for the failure to come together.⁹ The time was not yet ripe.

Second Attempt at Union: 1848

Revolution was back in the air of French politics in 1848. There were two revolutions, one in February and the other in June. In the February revolution, the monarchy was abolished and the Republic proclaimed; those who supported the abolition of slavery won the day. Victor Schoelcher became Director of the Colonies and was determined to destroy the Holy Ghost Congregation. He was convinced erroneously that this Congregation had worked against the proposed freedom of the slaves. He attacked Leguay as an enemy of the new order. Worse still, *Propaganda Fide* told Leguay that they were going to entrust Guadeloupe and Martinique to the Vincentians because they were not satisfied with the Holy Ghost Congregation. With both Church and State losing confidence in him, Leguay decided that he was left with no other option but to resign immediately, which he did on March 2nd, 1848.¹⁰

*He had been a missionary
in Reunion and a
recognized champion for
the freedom of the slaves
there.*

Alexander Monnet becomes Superior

The threat to annihilate the Holy Ghost Congregation still remained after this resignation. Cleverly, the Congregation chose Alexander Monnet as Superior and successor to Leguay. He had been a missionary in Reunion and a recognized champion for the freedom of the slaves there. He had received the honorary title of 'Knight in the Legion of Honour' from the French government for his work in the colonies. Ironically, he was so impressed with the work of the Holy Heart of Mary missionaries in Reunion that on one occasion he had asked to join them. Le Vasseur, one of Libermann's founding group, rejected him on the grounds that he was unsuited to community.¹¹ Instead he joined the Holy Ghost Congregation in 1847¹² and a year later found himself dealing with Libermann on an equal footing as Superior.¹³ Even Victor Schoelcher reluctantly welcomed Monnet's nomination because his abolitionist credentials were well known. Monnet worked to broaden the scope of missionary works beyond the French colonies as Leguay had wished to do. However, it soon

Libermann came to the seminary in Paris... with the outline of an agreement...

became clear that he was not cut out for life as an administrator. He also lacked many of the diplomatic skills necessary to deal with government officials. He felt ill at ease outside of the missionary pastoral context. He appealed to his friend Libermann for help in dealing with Schoelcher and others. Libermann replied that not only did he want to help Monnet but that for years he had desired to form a union of the two institutes. Monnet immediately went to see Libermann and suggested that negotiations begin to bring about the merger. From the beginning of May, 1848, it seemed the time was ripe.¹⁴

First Steps

Monnet appointed his assistant Loewenbruck to negotiate an agreement with Libermann. Loewenbruck had returned from Rome only a few months earlier with the newly approved Constitutions for the Holy Ghost Congregation. Libermann came to the seminary in Paris a few days before Pentecost Sunday, 1848, with the outline of an agreement on forming a union. Monnet was under intense pressure from many of his members and had to be very careful not to be seen to be giving in to the demands of Libermann. On the Feast of Pentecost, June 10th, 1848, both parties met in plenary session and unanimously accepted the principle of a merger. The details were to be worked out later. The one outstanding thorny issue was who would be the superior of the new institute. Most agreed that it should be Libermann but then how could Monnet step down without giving the impression that he was being pushed aside by Libermann's Society!¹⁵ Libermann had a face-saving idea. He was aware that *Propaganda Fide* was looking for a candidate to be appointed Vicar Apostolic of Madagascar. If Rome could be persuaded to accept the nomination of Monnet for that post, then that would leave the way open for himself to become the Superior of the Congregation. They decided to go to Rome together to consult with *Propaganda Fide*. However, because of an impending revolution, Loewenbruck was sent in their place, with two letters: one from Monnet outlining the desirability of the merger and the other from Libermann recommending Monnet for the Vicariate of Madagascar.

If Rome could be persuaded...

Detailed Private Agreement on Union Reached

The two Institutes met and on August 24th of that year came to the following agreement regarding the precise conditions under which they agreed to unite:

Michael J. Kilkenny,
C.S.Sp.

Article 1: The Congregation will remain dedicated to the Holy Ghost, under the invocation of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Article 2: The Constitutions of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost, already having been approved by the Sacred Congregation of *Propaganda*, will be retained, save the modifications outlined in the following article.

Article 3: As regards poverty, all the members will bind themselves:

1° To renounce, for all the time they remain in the Congregation, the use of every good and revenue that the above mentioned Constitutions had allowed to be retained and be at their disposition.

2° To never have in their possession any money without the authorization of their Superior.

3° In the case where the Superior would give them money for their expenses, once the time and the circumstances of this authorization has expired, they will render to him an account of these expenses and return to him whatever has been left over.

Article 4: The members of the Congregation who, every time that, either by signature or otherwise, wish to indicate the name of the Congregation to which they belong to, will express the double title named in article one.

Article 5: The admission of members to the second order will be suspended until a new decision [is taken] by *Propaganda*.

Article 6: A copy of this accord will be sent to the members of the two Institutes who from now on will consider themselves as brothers and love one another as such. Any points not foreseen in these Constitutions will be instituted in future rules voted on by the majority.¹⁶

Monnet's Letter¹⁷

In his letter, dated 5th July, 1848, Monnet says that since he was elected Superior of the Holy Ghost Congregation, he had

...which gives us privileges that we wish to retain.

received overtures from Libermann about forming a fusion of the two institutes. *"I desire this fusion with all my heart, I believe it will be very useful for the good of both institutes which have the same aim, and which are both already present together in a number of areas such as Bourbon and Senegal."*¹⁸ We now get a glimpse of what was agreed by both Libermann and Monnet regarding the fusion: *"Of course, it is understood that the congregation [Holy Hear of Mary] will accept our Constitutions, already approved twice by Sacred Propaganda and the French Government, which gives us privileges that we wish to retain."*¹⁹

Libermann's Letter

In his letter, dated 7th July, 1848, Libermann is responding to an earlier letter from *Propaganda Fide* in which he was asked to suggest names that could be considered for the office of Vicar Apostolic of Madagascar. He speaks about the project of union between the two institutes and how close they are to making it a reality, with the approval of *Propaganda Fide* of course. He says, *"In effect, the spirits and the hearts are already united and the project is well advanced. Fr. Loewenbruck, the one carrying this letter, is charged to give an account of our plan to Your Eminence."*²⁰ Later in the letter he outlines the one remaining problem to be overcome before union can be achieved. Who will be the superior after the union! He says that the two superiors discussed the possibility of their resigning and asking the new united Congregation to elect a new superior. Libermann says that, as the majority of the members of the new society would be from the Society of which he is Superior, his members would not accept any superior other than himself. Monnet had offered to resign but the members of his Congregation would not countenance the associated dishonour. The solution Libermann proposes to *Propaganda Fide* is that of promoting Monnet to the vacant office in Madagascar: *"I have already spoken about this to the members of the Holy Ghost Congregation who believe unanimously that their Superior is worthy and capable of fulfilling the duties of this responsibility and they think that this would be the surest means of removing the last remaining difficulty to the union so desired by both Institutes. I am therefore making the proposal to Your Eminence."*²¹ He concludes that whatever decision is taken in this matter will be seen by him as an expression of the divine will.

...this would be the surest means of removing the last remaining difficulty to the union...

Loewnebrook's Memo to Propaganda Fide

This 'memo' contained six points outlining the principal motives for seeking to unite:

Michael J. Kilkenny,
C.S.Sp.

- 1) The two Institutes, according to their Rules and Constitutions, have the same aim.
- 2) By the fusion, the Congregation of the Holy Ghost would benefit from the entrance of excellent and numerous personnel; and the society of the Holy Heart of Mary would be better protected by the shield of legal existence, which it could never obtain in France, but which the Holy Ghost Congregation possessed.
- 3) In Senegal and Bourbon, the missionaries of the two societies are already in some conflict; the same situation could arise later elsewhere and result in serious problems, while the fusion would infallibly prevent such conflict.
- 4) M. Libermann is a man of reconciliation, he has the full confidence of the members of both Institutes, and is consequently totally suitable to direct the whole work; M. Monnet seems more suited to the missions for which he has a particular aptitude.
- 5) The two Institutes, united under the same superior such as M. Libermann, will form a more solid body, and will be better able to sustain itself in the great difficulties of the current situation in France.
- 6) The House of the Holy Ghost Congregation in Paris is big enough to accommodate all the personnel of both Institutes when dissolved and united into one; consequently there will be a great reduction in expenses; [this is] something which is very important during this period of financial crisis which may continue for several years, thus compromising the existence of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary whose current resources are almost nil, while those of the Holy Ghost are at this time superabundant.²²

The Decision of *Propaganda Fide*

When Loewenbruck reached Rome, he found an air of political unrest there also so he managed to complete his business speedily with *Propaganda Fide*. He had the authorization of the two Superiors to negotiate an agreement with the Holy See. We may recall that it was this same person who had returned to Paris in February, 1848, with the newly approved Constitutions of the Holy Ghost Congregation. Among the changes made, we can mention the new full pontifical status accorded the Congregation. Loewenbruck made a decision that, given the circumstances he

A young and vigorous heart had been transplanted into an aging body.

found in Rome, it would be more expedient not to mention the modifications to the Constitutions that were agreed upon verbally between Libermann and Monnet. This would only slow up the decision making process within *Propaganda Fide* and he was anxious not to remain too long in Rome lest he get caught up in another revolution. In a general meeting of *Propaganda Fide*, dated 4th September, 1848, the union of the two Institutes was approved as well as the nomination of Monnet to the Vicariate Apostolic of Madagascar. The decision was approved by the Pope at an audience given on 10th September.²³ Henry Koren comments, “A young and vigorous heart had been transplanted into an aging body. Would the two fuse into a single whole giving promise of many years of life or prove to be incompatible and lead to final disintegration?”²⁴

The Notification of the Decree of Union

Cardinal Frasoni wrote to Monnet and Libermann on 26th and 28th September respectively informing them of the decision that had been taken to unite the two Institutes. A major surprise rested in what was said in the second paragraph of that decree: “It is your task to bring about this merger of your two Institutes in such a way that from now on the one called the most Holy Heart of Mary ceases to exist and its associates and members are aggregated to the Congregation of the Holy Ghost, thereby becoming its associates and members, sharing the same rights and privileges and being subject to the same disciplinary rules.”²⁵ There was no mention of the conditions that had been agreed by the two Institutes because they had not been submitted as part of the dossier by Loewenbruck.

Reaction to the Notification

Libermann was stunned. He deplored not so much the way the union was brought about but especially the absence of the fundamental conditions under which they had agreed to unite with the Holy Ghost Congregation.²⁶ Shortly before the arrival of the decision of *Propaganda Fide*, Libermann had written that it was not true that they were being dissolved into the community of the Holy Ghost. He understood that they were uniting their community with the Holy Ghost one and that he would remain Superior of the new community or the Institute resulting from the two.²⁷ His own members reacted angrily, some of whom accusing him of treason.

His own members reacted angrily...

Michel Legrain correctly points out the absence of canonical clarity in the request to Rome for union. In speaking about the possibility of the two original Superiors resigning to allow

Michael J. Kilkenny,
C.S.Sp.

*On reflection...he
accepted the union...*

the election of a new one after union, it suggests they were requesting a union whereby the two original Institutes would be suppressed in order to form a new one. Yet, they also spoke about the need to retain the advantages that civil recognition gave the Holy Ghost Congregation. This implied that it had to remain in existence because its civilly recognized constitutions had to be retained. The canonists at *Propaganda Fide* had to examine the civil and ecclesiastical position of both Congregations and according to Legrain, they chose the only option that would not have compromised the future of either Institute.²⁸

Unfinished Business for Libermann

All of Libermann's renowned leadership and diplomatic skills were called into action at the news of the extinction of his community. On reflection, and after calming the spirits of his own members, he accepted the union as it was presented by Rome. He felt certain also that he could convince the Holy See to make the necessary changes to the Constitutions that had been agreed by both Superiors but which were not submitted by Loewenbruck. He immediately set out for Rome.

The first item on his agenda was confirmation of his election as Superior in place of Monnet. At the 24th August meeting, it appears that he was nominated by Monnet as his successor even though he was not a member of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost then. He wanted the Holy See to give a 'sanation' to what Libermann considered an illegal decision by Monnet. His election as Superior was confirmed by the Holy See on 3rd November, 1848, replacing Alexander Monnet who resigned in order to take up the office of Apostolic Vicar of Madagascar.

*In 1849, Libermann
wrote the Rule of Life...*

He then set about discussing with *Propaganda Fide* the core points agreed by each Institute on 24th August. Libermann received a verbal agreement that all his requests would be eventually met. In a decree of 3rd November, 1848, the Holy See authorized the Holy Ghost Congregation to have as its full title, "The Society of the Holy Spirit under the invocation of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary."²⁹

In 1849, Libermann wrote the Rule of Life for the Congregation. This complemented the Constitutions in that it outlined the way the community was to live out its religious community life. The Holy Heart of Mary community structure and customs were thus largely introduced into the Holy Ghost Congregation even though the old Constitutions were retained.³⁰ This fact calmed the hearts of many of Libermann's more

vocal dissenters as it confirmed for them many of his previous assurances that, apart from the change in the title of their Society, little would change in their customary religious lifestyle.³¹

...Libermann wrote to Propaganda Fide requesting...the introduction of a strict religious poverty...

On 4th November, 1848, Libermann wrote to *Propaganda Fide* requesting the suppression of the second order³² of Holy Ghost members and the introduction of a strict religious poverty into the Constitutions as had been agreed at the 24th August meeting with Monnet.³³ Eventually, Libermann received a positive reply to both these requests in a decree dated 10th July, 1850.³⁴

Perhaps it is a bit too harsh to agree with the comment made by Michel Legrain that, “*Ce que le Saint Coeur semblait canoniquement perdre dans l’acte d’union lui même était réintroduit par la petite porte.*”³⁵ (What the Holy Heart of Mary seemed to lose canonically in the act of union itself was reintroduced by the back door.) Libermann spent nearly two years putting in place the previously agreed conditions for union, which may not have been necessary had John Loewenbruck included them in his dossier to *Propaganda Fide* in the first place. What can be said without fear of contradiction is that the strict religious poverty insisted on by Libermann and his community, would have been warmly applauded by a person called Claude Francis Poullart des Places.

...created the myth of a 'new' Congregation born of the 'merger'.

Conclusion

Let us return to Alexander Le Roy. Having confronted the anti-clericalist elements within the French government in 1901 and saved the Congregation from suppression, Le Roy set about clarifying the historical facts surrounding the Congregation of which he was Superior General to identify the source of the confusion. It appears that after Libermann’s death in 1852, his successor, Ignatius Schwindenhammer and fellow former Holy Heart of Mary members created the myth of a ‘new’ Congregation born of the ‘merger’. This was spread as the ‘truth’ both inside and outside the Congregation but not interestingly in their dealings with the government.³⁶ The ‘myth’ backfired badly on the Congregation in 1901.

Feelings ran very high as regards the interpretation of what exactly happened in 1848. At a General Chapter of the Congregation, in 1906, it was agreed that a document be prepared outlining the full facts of its history with supporting documentary evidence. This was published in 1917, for private circulation, by the Mother House, Paris, under the title: *Notes et*

Michael J. Kilkenny,
C.S.Sp.

*...to bring closure to a
debate that had raged for
almost twenty years.*

Documents Relatifs à L'Histoire de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit Sous la Garde de l'Immaculé Coeur de la B. V. Marie. It clearly shows that the Holy Heart of Mary Society ceased to exist in 1848 and that the present Congregation was founded by Claude François Poullart des Places in 1703.

The General Chapter of 1919 returned to the subject and attempted to bring closure to a debate that had raged for almost twenty years. It declared the founder of the Holy Ghost Congregation to be Claude François Poullart des Places, dating from 1703. Francis Libermann was to be honoured “as the second founder and spiritual Father, to whom not only do we owe the prolongation of our existence, but our development as well as our religious life, our apostolic vigour and spirit.”³⁷ In its declaration, covering seven points, the conclusion drawn was: “Consequently, the Chapter, verifying that the history of the Congregation has been explained with all desired impartiality in the work entitled: *Notes et Documents*, etc., declares that the question is closed.”³⁸ Rumblings of discontent lingered on, however.

There can be little canonical discussion about what occurred in 1848. The Society of the Holy Heart of Mary, as yet not formally recognized by *Propaganda Fide*, was declared to no longer exist from 4th September, the date of the decree from the Holy See. In the same decree, the former members of this pious association were aggregated into the civilly and canonically recognized Congregation of the Holy Ghost. These are the principal facts. However, I believe that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that had times been different and the civil anti-clericalist atmosphere not been all pervasive, ideally Monnet and Libermann would have asked *Propaganda Fide* to suppress both institutes and to form a new one. Circumstances dictated that the decree handed down by Rome suppressing the Holy Heart of Mary Society was the only viable option. Libermann, the superior of the suppressed Society, was nominated the Superior General of the Holy Ghost Congregation with the agreement of the members of both parties. This is not the usual outcome of a fusion but more likely the outcome of a union. The fusion/union certainly gave new life to an ailing tree judging by the fruit it produced.

*...I believe that there
is sufficient evidence to
suggest...*

Endnotes

¹*Propaganda Fide* is the Vatican Congregation that oversees missionary work. It was sometimes referred to simply as *Propaganda*. Today it is known as the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

²H. Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth*, Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1983, pp. 349-351.

³*Notes et Documents Relatifs a L'histoire de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit sous la Garde de L'immaculé Cœur de la B.V. Marie*, Paris : Maison Mère, 1917 , (Subsequently ND *Histoire*) p. 41: “[...] bien que la Sacrée Congrégation ait résolu d’examiner cette affaire avec plus de maturité et de réserver son approbation pour une autre époque, elle a cru néanmoins devoir, en attendant, vous répondre, pour vous exhorter à persévérer avec vos associés dans votre dessein, et ne rien négliger, chacun en particulier, pour répondre à votre vocation.”

⁴Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth*, pp. 204-205.

⁵*Notes et Documents relatifs a la Vie et à l'œuvre du Vénérable François-Marie-Paul Libermann, Supérieur Général du Saint-Esprit et du Saint-Cœur de Marie*, Paris: Maison Mere, 1939, (Subsequently ND) Vol. IX Appendix, p. 186: “Ex audientia Ssmi, habita die 29 augusti, 1847. Ad humillimas preces R. D. Joannis Baptistae Leguay, Superioris Seminarii Sancti Spiritus, Lutetiae Parisiorum, Ssmus Dnus Noster Pius Divina Providentia PP. IX, referente me infrascripto Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Pro- Secretario, facultatem ad unum annum tantum benigne concessit admittendi in Societatem personas quae nullo modo studiis in Seminario vacaverint.”

⁶H. Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth*, p. 200.

⁷M. Legrain, “Une Union de Congrégations au XIX Siècle, le ‘Saint-Esprit’ et le ‘Saint Cœur de Marie’”, in P. Coulon, P. Brasseur et Col-laborateurs, *Libermann 1802-1852*, Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 1998, pp. 700-701.

⁸Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth*, pp. 154-165, for a more detailed discussion of the principal problems affecting the colonial clergy at this time.

⁹Legrain, “Une Union de Congrégations au XIX Siècle”, pp. 702-706.

¹⁰Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth*, pp. 150-151.

¹¹Legrain, “Une Union de Congrégations au XIX Siècle”, p. 707.

¹²ND IX, Appendix, p. 184, for an account of the deliberations of the General Council prior to admitting Monnet to membership.

¹³Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth*, p. 152.

¹⁴Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth*, pp. 153-154. Also Legrain, “Une Union de Congrégations au XIX Siècle”, p. 707.

¹⁵Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth*, p. 201. Also, Legrain, “Une Union de Congrégations au XIX Siècle”, pp. 707-708.

¹⁶ND *Histoire* 52-53: the following signed the agreement: Monnet, Superior of the Holy Ghost Congregation; Libermann, Superior of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary; Warnet, priest of the Holy Ghost; Gaultier, honorary canon; Vidal, priest of the Holy Ghost; Briot, priest of the Holy Heart of Mary; Boulanger, priest of the Holy Heart of Mary; François, priest of the Holy Heart of Mary; Schwindenhammer, priest of the Holy Heart of Mary.

¹⁷H. Le Floch, (ed), *Lacte d'union du vénérable Libermann et ses disciples à la Congrégation du Saint Esprit, d'après les actes et les documents de la S. Congrégation de la Propagande (=Lacte d'union)*, Pour distribution privée, Rome, Séminaire Français, 1915, pp. 31-32. Among the documentation in this booklet is a letter from C. Laurenti, Secretary to *Propaganda Fide*, dated 10th May, 1915, confirming that every document emanating from that Congregation and published in this booklet

Michael J. Kilkenny,
C.S.Sp.

conforms with the original copies in their archives.

¹⁸Le Floch, *L'acte d'union*, p. 32: "Je désire cette fusion de tout mon coeur, je la crois fort utile pour le bien des deux congrégations, qui ont le même but et qui se trouvent déjà en présence dans plusieurs endroits, notamment à Bourbon et au Sénégal."

¹⁹Le Floch, *L'acte d'union*, p. 32: "Il est bien entendu que la congrégation admettrait nos constitutions, déjà approuvées deux fois par la Sacrée Propagande et le Gouvernement Français, ce qui nous donne des privilèges que nous devons garder."

²⁰Le Floch, *L'acte d'union*, p. 33: "En effet, les esprits et les coeurs sont déjà unis et le projet est fort avancé. M. l'abbé Loewenbruck porteur de cette lettre est chargé de rendre compte de notre plan à Votre Éminence."

²¹Le Floch, *L'acte d'union*, p. 33: "[...] j'ai donc parlé de cet objet aux membres de la communauté du Saint-Esprit qui tous unanimement croient leur supérieur digne et capable de remplir les devoirs de cette charge et pensent que ce serait le moyen le plus sûr d'obvier à la dernière difficulté qui reste à l'union tant désirée des deux sociétés; je me suis donc offert à en faire la proposition à Votre Éminence."

²²Le Floch, *L'acte d'union*, pp. 34-35. Mémoire produit à la Sacrée Congrégation par l'abbé Loewenbruck, premier assistant de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit, dans lequel sont énumérés les motifs qui peuvent être invoqués en faveur de l'union demandée des deux sociétés.

²³ND *Histoire*, pp. 56-57: for the original decree signed by the Cardinal Prefect Franson, of *Propaganda Fide*.

²⁴Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth*, p. 206.

²⁵ND *Histoire*, p. 58: "Qua propter vestrum nunc erit negotium istud unionis duarum congregationum vestrarum ita perficere, ut, cessante ex nunc ea quae sub titulo est Sanctissimi Cordis Beatae Mariae Virginis, istius Socii et Alumni aggregentur Congregationi Sancti Spiritus, ejusque Socii et Alumni fiant eorundem jurium et privilegiorum participes, necnon iisdem disciplinae Regulis subjecti."

²⁶Legrain, "Une Union de Congrégations au XIX Siècle", p. 713.

²⁷Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth*, p. 208, footnote 9.

²⁸Legrain, "Une Union de Congrégations au XIX Siècle", pp. 712-713.

²⁹ND *Histoire*, p. 60: "*Sodalitium Sancti Spiritus sub invocatione Immaculati Cordis Beatae Mariae Virginis.*"

³⁰J. Daly, *Spiritans Wellsprings*, Dublin, Paraclete Press 1986, pp. 63-157 for a complete version of the 1849 *Règlements*.

³¹Legrain, "Une Union de Congrégations au XIX Siècle", p. 715.

³²The second order was approved by Rome in the revision of the Constitutions approved in 1848. The plan was that those priests in the colonies who would not opt to become full members of the Holy Ghost Congregation, by undergoing a two year novitiate, would become part of a second order after the model of the Third Order of Franciscans. These would be spiritually affiliated to the Spiritans. Through the second order, the Spiritans hoped to influence for the better the lifestyle of many clergy in the colonies and to bring an element of control and vigilance to a situation where these were markedly absent.

³³ND *Histoire*, pp. 61-66, for the full letter.

³⁴ND *Histoire*, pp. 73-74, for the complete decree.

³⁵Legrain, “Une Union de Congrégations au XIX Siècle”, p. 717.

³⁶Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth*, p. 350.

³⁷*Le Chapitre Général de 1919*, Circulaire no. 21, March, 1920, official promulgation of the acts of 1919 Chapter, Maison Mère, Paris, p. 3, no. 1, 1°.

³⁸*Le Chapitre Général de 1919*, p. 5, no. 1, 7°.