

Our Spiritual Identity

Pius X Secular Institute

Translated from French – July 2, 1999 – G. Larochelle

Foreword

Will there still be faith on earth?

“But when the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?” Jesus himself asks us this embarrassing question. Will there still be faith in future generations? Will this generation’s grandchildren be baptized? Will they participate in the Eucharist, and will they be able to receive communion? These are troubling questions!

Of course there will still be faith! Yes, if, when the angels come begging us to be mothers of God, new Marys can answer “Yes, I want to!” Yes, if new believers say yes to the visiting angels, then the Word of God will come to put up its tent among us. Yes, on condition that in response to the visits and surprises of the Holy Spirit he finds open and audacious hearts to generously answer: “Where do you wish to take me, Lord?” And who consent wholeheartedly! Yes, as long as new deliverers of God in the hearts of our people are able to bring about this delicate but so special work of bringing him into this world!

“Will there still be faith on earth?” Such a question is also asked of each of us, members of the Institute. Can our vocation still attract today’s Christians? Can our lifestyle still draw new vocations among our ranks to answer, in a new fashion, the call to the most thrilling mission? To put it differently: “In which ways do members of the Pius X Secular Institute still have something interesting and worthwhile to say to our present-day world?”

Yes, of course there is still hope! But on condition that we are willing to let ourselves be completely renewed inside out and fall in love again! We must let ourselves be re-ignited again! And come back to the essentials, retrieve our spiritual identity and plunge into it wholeheartedly!

Yes, all of this certainly! However, we must accept, now and unceasingly, to let ourselves be transformed into something new and young. We must also let ourselves be re-invented by the Holy Spirit into a new, living edition of the Gospel, revised and corrected, and printed in large and indelible characters which are readable by the greatest number of people. We must also be willing to remain ordinary people but who are uplifted by audacious, dazzling and dynamic intuitions and who allow new intuitions to come forth from others, too.

And, what should we expect from all this, from this act of going back to our deepest roots, from this plunge into our spiritual identity and this return to essentials? What will come forth, in each of our own workplaces, when such generous witnesses giving 100% of themselves come about?

It will be as when Jesus came in his own time to this world of ours. The blind shall see. The deaf shall hear, and the dumb shall speak. The poor shall be evangelized. Prisoners shall come out of obscurity and from their prisons towards the dazzling lights. Their hurts shall be changed to tenderness. The chains of injustice shall fall from their hands and feet.

And when these witnesses come, people will start asking questions : “Who is this woman, this man? Who is he that the winds and storms obey him? Who is he who can walk on the waters of today’s problems and move the mountains of difficulties that bar the way? Who is he who can multiply bread, change water to wine and can bring about such miraculous fishing?”

Who can imagine the incalculable consequences of such an inner, personal renewal and conversion? Who can foresee the fallout of such self-giving? Who can foresee the number of stars which will come out into the starless night of the lives of so many of our sisters and brothers.

Hence, may this text on the **Spiritual Identity of the Pius X Secular Institute** be a step forward in this effort of renewal and extend the influence of our Family.

May each and every one of us be as yeast which makes the dough rise, the salt of the earth and the light of humankind.

Father Christian Beaulieu
Director General

Charlesbourg, QC, Canada
December 8, 1998

Introduction

“The Pius X Secular Institute was born of a great desire : to make Christ Jesus better known, loved and served.”

This was Father Henri Roy’s affirmation on September 8th, 1957 in a circular letter to the members of the apostolic family he had founded. Were we to ask different members of the Institute about their deep motivations for belonging to this Family, many of them would most likely revert to the mention of this basic intuition that nourished our Founder’s life.

A Definition from Life Itself

Alas, the Pius X Secular Institute will not find its true place in the Church and in the world as long as its spiritual identity is not firmly established, with real foundations in which members both consecrated and associate, recognize themselves. People interested by our way of being and living within the Church wish to see something concrete useful for guiding them in their own faith journey.

The members of the General Council, backed by a team of consecrated members during the past two years took time out for reflexion that permitted them to bring more precision to our spiritual identity. This is something that takes time and that must unceasingly be revised. As shared exchanges took place on the subject, there were lively discussions until we were finally able to identify five points that concretely manifest our way of being within the Church and the world.

The Five Major Points of our Spiritual Identity

1. A personal encounter with Jesus Christ, Savior and Apostle;
2. A desire to make Jesus Christ known by means of intense apostolic zeal;
3. A need for total self-giving that requires the whole person in the service of Jesus Christ;
4. An apostolic mission that gives us a real concern for the welfare of ordinary people, especially the poor and lowly, helping them to better know, love and serve Jesus Christ;
5. An apostolic spirituality that nourishes our whole life in the service of Jesus Christ.

In the following pages we will try to precisely define each of the five points individually. May they sustain us in living out our apostolic mission. May they also be a useful aid in making the vocation of the Pius X Secular Institute better understood and implemented in the lives of all members.

The Story of the Rabbit and the Dog

We sometimes ask ourselves this question : “Why do so many consecrated people, after years of consecrated life, decide to leave their community or their institute? And why do so many of our own faith leave the practice of it, their marriage commitment, their family commitment or their involvement in the parish? Why is it that so many leave everything, let their arms fall and abandon ship during a storm?”

The story of the rabbit and the barking dogs may enlighten things for us. Once upon a time a monk met a monk wiser than he and asked him, “Why is it that so many leave the monastic life? Why?” The wiser monk gave him this answer :

“Monastic life is like a dog chasing a rabbit. He runs after the rabbit, barking, and the other dogs seeing and hearing him, join in the chase. But after a while all those dogs who are chasing, but who do not see the rabbit, tire out and leave the chase one after the other. Only those who still see the rabbit keep on chasing it and barking to the end of the chase.”

It’s quite a lesson, isn’t it? Those who easily leave are those who don’t see the rabbit! So then, this brings us to another question which is worth asking ourselves individually :

The one for whom we are running, is he still “in sight”? Are we still one and all “captivated,” “seduced” by Christ Jesus? Is he still really in our sight, our main objective? Is he still the passion of our lives?

“How wonderful it is for us to remain with You, to give ourselves to You, to exclusively concentrate our existence on You,” says John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation on *Consecrated Life* (No. 15). Is this still as true and good for us?

When they first set about to clarify their spiritual identity, the members of the Pius X Secular Institute met more than once in order to bring more precision to their vocation and the motivation that still sustains them. One of the first meetings brought an answer to the following questions and opened up fruitful discussion. It is now your turn to try the experience!

Our Experience of Jesus Christ

1. I try to identify an experience of Jesus Christ that marked me “as with a red-hot iron” which seized me and pushed me to total dedication to the mission. Where, when, how, did this happen?
2. I try to identify the sentiments that this experience provoked inside me....
3. I try to identify the fruits and the fallout that this experience has had on my way of living out the mission...
4. How does this experience of Jesus Christ that is still alive in me today, bring me ever closer to total dedication and to the mission?

1

A personal encounter with Jesus Christ, Savior and Apostle : He is first!

“My heart desires one thing : that you, Jesus, be better loved and better served; that I may be more ‘like you’; ‘as you are’ and that when others see me they may see you. I wish to repeat this prayer with each breath of my being, day and night! That is my heart’s desire!”

Father Henri Roy

Paul of Tarsus lived a poignant encounter on the road to Damacus that brought him to cry out the following words : “Brothers, I do not think of myself as having reached the finish line. I give no thought to what lies behind me but push on to what is ahead. My entire attention is on the finish line as I run toward the prize to which God calls me – life on high in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3, 13-14)

So many who followed him and who were seized by him could also confess : “On my bed at night I sought him whom my heart loves—I sought him but I did not find him. I will rise then and go about the city; in the streets and crossings I will seek him whom my heart loves. I sought him but I did not find him.” (Song of Songs 3, 1-2)

St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus carved the following sentence on the wall of her cell with a nail as her way of expressing this thought from the Song of Songs : “Jesus is my only love!” And so, each one of us could also cry out : “I want to know nothing else but Jesus Christ”!

Here is an experience that Henri Roy lived for the first time when he was just about 9 years old. Having taken communion, he heard Jesus in his young heart asking : “Give me your heart...” This encounter had a profound impact on him that lasted year after year : “May all those who see me see You and find You for ever.”

The encounter with Jesus, the Savior, in each Institute member’s life, is never finished but goes on and is renewed on a daily basis.

It’s every day that we must repeat : “I belong to Jesus and I give myself to him”! “Love can only be paid back with love” said St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus. “To love is to give all, day after day, 100%, blood for blood”! Father Roy wrote it this way : “We answered your love with love.”

The Gospel is a personal call to always go further in self-giving, always hearing Christ calling us to give more of our life to Him. As for Zacchaeus, the good thief, Mary Magdalene or Peter, their life can never be the same again. All of us are branded with a red-hot iron, burnt with a love that will never leave us.

This love will nourish us from day to day, never ending. As a matter of fact, the more we receive of this love, the more it will grow. The more we share it to nourish others around us, the more this love will multiply and grow.

In the thankfulness that is manifested in other persons, I meet Jesus. In regular, energetic and disciplined prayer, I meet Jesus. In the apostolate, I meet Jesus. In the poor and lowly I meet Jesus. In the Word of God I meet Jesus. There are so many ways of discovering and so many sources from which to draw in order that this encounter with Christ the Savior may bear the most fruit possible in each member's life in the Institute.

“To bring to or to bring back to Christ, that's the whole of it....”

Isn't it the experience of all the saints to try to give themselves to Christ while trying to reproduce the life of Jesus in their own existence? Isn't it also our own challenge to take up, in order that our life not be our own anymore but his, who gave himself up for us?

Father Roy, as any other founder, had a preference for some particular aspects of the life of Jesus. In the search for the lost sheep, the return of the lost son and the encounter with the Samaritan woman we see some of many situations where Jesus showed his apostleship. These were also the particular situations where Father Roy recognized his charism. The opening statement of the Constitution of the Institute clearly recalls this :

“The Institute's Founder had great zeal for souls, especially for the poor, the workers and the young. Father Roy's only preoccupation was to enlighten and bring back 'lost sheep' by every possible means.”

In fact, experiencing Jesus, the Savior, is also experiencing Jesus, the Apostle. It's an impossibility for us to accept that Jesus enter into a relationship with us without also wanting the same for so many men and women around us. As Jesus the Apostle tried in his own time and by all means to announce the Love of the Father to all peoples, so are we haunted by the 100,000 means we could discover for our sisters and brothers today so they can have the experience we have had. It's Jesus the Apostle within us who wants to reveal himself as Jesus the Savior to so many of our sisters and brothers.

Thus, the basic experience of each one of the members of the Pius X Secular Institute must first be a **profound personal experience of Christ Jesus**. This is the condition for becoming an occasion for growth in sanctity and a call for many other women and men to, in turn, give themselves trustingly to Jesus, who takes us to the Father. Our experience of Christ thus becomes the foundation statement, the instruction manual for living our whole life following “Him, whom my heart loves,” “He who is Love.”

Nothing in this life, neither studies, nor instruction, nor intellectual nor apostolic differences could take the place of this basic requirement : that is, an experience of Christ for everyone who desires to become a member of the Institute. This is the “condition” by which all life within this “Family” can become meaningful.

It's through the daily search for this experience of Christ Jesus in our lives that sanctity becomes more than a vague and abstract concept. It is like a ripe fruit that is given to each person by the Father. It is useless to seek this sanctity solely through forced prayer and moral willfulness ; sanctity is pure grace from God who wants to perfect each one of his children.

It's up to each person to correspond to this grace so that it may be established with full force in life. That's why Father Roy so often repeated the following phrase : **“The only error in life is not to become a saint.”** And how many times did he repeat that we can't be satisfied

with personal sanctity but that we should seek the sanctity that comes through seeking to help others to open up to sanctity.

Here, we are ready for the next step toward our identity.

“You are really blessed if such a grace come to you. You will never be the same if you are touched by Christ Jesus. Know that you carry a secret that must shine forth to the dimensions of the universe. Even if you are buried in the heart of the world and have no means of crying out to your sisters and brothers that the face of Christ is burning you; still, your faith will reach the ends of the earth.”

(Jean Lafrance)

Some of Father Roy's Thoughts

“Jesus, I am yours. This is the most exalting thought that my soul can experience. I am consecrated and exclusively reserved for the Father's business! What an honor! What joy! What a responsibility!”

(March 19, 1965)

“Everything must be centered on Christ. Christ the Apostle...Christ anxious for souls, Christ loved with an intense personal love. This is the thrilling mystical experience that sustains the apostle through everything.”

(August 26, 1957)

“May I always be the one who announces Christ for all. May all who see me see Christ Jesus.”

(April 5, 1965)

“Lord Jesus, my all! Everything for you! I love you : I want to rejoice your heart and have you loved by a great number of people! The most urgent is to make you known! Give us the means to do it well and quickly: sanctify us.”

(January 12, 1965)

“If Christ's cause isn't worth our being tired out and exhausted for it, then it's really worthless.”

(August 29, 1958)

“If there isn't enough intimacy between Jesus and myself, it's because I don't see well enough Christ in my neighbor.”

(1938)

2

**A desire to make Christ Jesus known
through intense apostolic zeal :
*“I really desire Jesus”!***

“A characteristic trait of the Institute and a particular distinguishing mark is its zeal for souls. God’s love becomes zeal, and zeal is the thermometer of our love for God.”

Father Henri Roy

Of course this encounter with Christ Jesus is something we remember always! Blessed are they who are on the way... those who rise to the occasion, visited by this grace of graces and who keep on course to follow him.

Who, like Moses, Jeremiah, Mary, Peter, Paul, Henri Roy and all the others, know how to let themselves be visited day after day, year after year, in a constant, burning contact? How could one not be lit up and become a burning bush? Branded on bare skin! Branded as with a red-hot iron! Branded for time and for eternity! For life and through death! For better or for worse until death comes!

But, such a grace having come to us, we should know that we are the bearers of a secret that must be given to the whole universe. Such a secret cannot be hidden under the stairs, but must be proclaimed on the housetops. Such a flame must not stay under the bushel basket but must light up a great fire of love on earth. “I have come to bring fire to earth, and how I wish that it were already burning”!

“Fire burns; water wets; the sun heats.” Father Roy often repeated this phrase, he who was a man of fire and had made this encounter of Christ Jesus!

It’s apostolic zeal and the fire that burns within us that prompt us to repeat to each person we meet “I greatly desire Jésus! Do you also want to meet him”? This ardor and apostolic dynamism radiates through all dimensions of our being. We then want to share our love forever so that as many people as possible may experience the certitude of the love of Christ.

If certain religious groups are more attached to Christ in the poor, or to Christ as the teacher, or to his Eucharistic heart or his Trinitarian relationship, or yet, to another particular aspect of the thousand faces of Christ, our Institute first develops a vision of our dedication to God in view of apostolic service. This is our reason for living and the driving force of our apostolic lives.

This experience of Jesus burning with love and wanting to reach a great number of people and giving us this apostolic zeal must sustain the members of the Pius X Secular Institute. It is a relationship to Jesus the Savior, to this Jesus who comes to bring salvation to each one of us, body and soul, who comes to bring dignity to women and men, who comes so that human beings may stand up!

“Renew all things in Christ.”

For each of the members, it is inadmissible that salvation be only for the “elite.” Christ came to save **all** women, **all** men, **all** young people, **all** children, **all** of creation. And how can Christ not profoundly desire that **everybody** experience this? “May **everyone** be saved,” cried Saint Paul.

Isn't the Institute's motto “**Renew all things in Christ**”! It is also the cry of each member of the Pius X Secular Institute.

Therefore, it's impossible to be content with a personal conversion...and to let others make their own discovery. We would become empty and incapable of continuing to seek God were we not to first invite others to join us in walking together toward this divine project of happiness and sanctity. It is a “communal” process that evidently needs to be done in a sound and fraternal way with those close to us, all seeking Jesus together. We are “on the way” with others, always seeking the face that burnt our heart. “Were not our hearts burning inside us as he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us”? (Luke 24, 32)

This apostolic zeal obliges us to become inventive, ever seeking new ways and means to answer new challenges in our time. This invites us to a deeper joy that will mark our enthusiasm for the true life in God. This same zeal translates into concern for making the salt, the light and the leaven of Christ penetrate all aspects of life. The apostolic urgency that all may know, live and have the desire to deepen relationships with Christ becomes the real thermometer of my own encounter with Christ.

“A spiritual family really becomes one and resplendent when all its members have that sentiment of urgency. In the world, there are too many hopeless people, too many cries that are not answered, too many persons dying in solitude, alone. A spiritual community or family must be a light in the world of darkness, a source in the Church for all people. We don't have the right to be lukewarm.” (Jean Vanier)

May the members of the Pius X Secular Institute, women and men of a 100,000 means, be found in the most ordinary, workaday world. May they be fueled by the most emotional momentum of evangelization : whether it be the mother or father of a family who takes on the problems of their children or grandchildren; whether it be a priest who has to make pastoral choices in our Church; whether it be a need for reflexion to bring about changes in mentalities, in culture or in politics....These are so many places or situations (and there are so many others) where each one must act and not hesitate to get their hands dirty.

“We don't need good little boys and girls,” Father Roy often said. “We need fighters.” This truth at the time of the JOC is still a hundred times more true for the needs of our mission today.

Whether we are in the full force of our youth or well advanced into adult age; even if we are in the winter of our life, our heart must unceasingly be concerned, preoccupied that “others” be reached. They are hundreds, thousands who are counting on us. We might very well be for them the only Gospel they shall ever read. It's impossible then that it be written in such great hurry in our hearts. The page corners might be a little torn or dirty, but they can still serve to light the fire of hope in the hearts of our sisters and brothers.

Such apostolic zeal can only bring us to giving of ourselves. Our encounter with Christ is so intense, this fire inside us so strong that it's impossible not to commit one's whole life to it. Here we open the door to the third element of our spiritual identity.

“We show our love for people through our zeal, our courage and our boldness for their eternal salvation. ‘It is love that must draw us to action. If we love, we must undertake, attempt, and try everything’ (Father Henri Roy). From the Sacred Heart of Jesus the members draw a burning love for sinners and a no less profound hatred for sin” (Constitution, Article 11).

Some of Father Roy's Thoughts

“Why was the Pius X Secular Institute born? It was because of zeal for souls. We must keep the same fervor as at the beginning.”

(December 6, 1957)

“The Pius X Secular Institute was born of a great desire : to make Christ Jesus better known, better loved and better served.”

(September 8, 1957)

“A characteristic trait of the Institute; its particular trademark; what distinguishes us, is our zeal for souls. Love of God becomes zeal, and zeal is the thermometer of our love for God.”

(August 29, 1958)

“Zeal for souls is the first characteristic trait of the Institute.”

(August 26, 1957)

“What is above all lacking in the Catholic world from the upper echelons to the lower ones is zeal for souls.”

(January, 1965)

“We are totally consecrated, and we have but one ambition that keeps us going 24 hours a day : to hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God in the world by 100,000 means.”

(January, 1965)

Questions to help your reflexion...

1. How does the apostolic zeal that is in me express itself?
2. How do I renew the apostolic zeal that is in me?
3. What new apostolic needs have I perceived these last few months? How can I answer them?

3

**A need for total commitment
that takes up the whole person
in the service of Christ Jesus : *never a half-measure!***

“At daybreak we pronounce these words that can have great consequences : ‘I give my all.’ It’s not a ‘loan’; we know the difference between a LOAN and something GIVEN...and then, He who received the gift of ourselves has the right to do what He pleases with our life!”

Father Henri Roy

This desire for Jesus to be better known, better loved and better served by more people is an invitation to commit one’s whole life. This becomes quite exacting, but it’s the requirement of love making itself known. So, it is in the steps of Christ who gives all, takes all—and demands all—that we decide to answer his call. “If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross, and begin to follow in my footsteps” (Matthew 16, 24). In another circumstance Jesus invites some to abandon all possessions, belongings, parents, family, etc. In other words, Jesus asks for everything.

It’s in the search for the love that fills all desires that a human being can find the deepest self-realization. And, isn’t this challenge still more of a challenge when we become instruments that permit others to find this God of Love?

Total dedication then becomes not just an option but a necessity. All our life is then taken up by a need to make the Good News of love known. It’s a “necessity” that imposes itself on us and that liberates our heart from all that could keep it prisoner, or separated from this Love.

Total dedication is also a **permanent gift of self**. It’s not just a project to which the person consecrates energies for the duration of a contract. The mission and the love of Christ that call us require a permanent, total, invasive giving of self that takes first place in our lives.

Hence, the commitment to God in total dedication expresses itself in a commitment to poverty, chastity and obedience. We don’t commit to poverty merely in order to better identify with the poor. We don’t commit to chastity merely in order to bear witness to the world of a meaning deeper than that which it transmits concerning the expression of sexuality. We don’t commit to obedience merely because it’s easier to be guided by leaders. It’s none of that!

The evangelical counsels are in view of the mission. They are present and accepted in our life to liberate us from all material and affective attachments of our wills **in order to be totally committed to the mission**, to be totally given to God, to be totally committed to others.

This self-giving brings forth an interior freedom that cannot fail. It’s within this sentiment of freedom that Christ Jesus is able to influence all spheres of our life. In self-giving the words of Saint Paul come alive : “It is not I who lives, but Christ who lives in me.” Such self-giving concretely expresses our desire to follow the evangelical counsels and refers us unceasingly to the fundamental experience of Christ Jesus in our lives. Total commitment results from our basic, mystical experience, an experience that has prompted us to give all.

Is total commitment really total? It seems that the gift of self is never completed; it is **never done once and for all**. There is progression in the giving of oneself. Right at the start, when we decide to follow Christ, we are usually full of fire and enthusiasm; our heart seems to be completely given. Years pass—and we discover that certain detachments have still to be made in order to be entirely given. We rededicate ourselves, and it seems perfect, but is it really...?

Our commitment must be made again and again, from day to day, from year to year as we progress in renouncing ourselves. Doesn't total dedication express itself in this way, in daily life, through daily situations? Father Roy used to say :

“Let us recall this truth : to really reach this ideal (of TOTAL COMMITMENT), which is the norm for consecrated members of our Institute, absolute fidelity and generosity, and no measuring are needed in all instants; these two elements can only be obtained through mental prayer and frequent heart-to-heart talks with He who IS our LIFE. At all costs, we must get there by constantly ‘trying’ to live in the presence of Jesus, the Master, who called us to this life of intimacy and contemplation.”

Beyond categories and beyond our concrete commitments (vows or promises), each of us is called to total commitment. It is understood that the way of living the commitment may differ. But the requirement of committing our whole person to Christ and the mission cannot be diluted. No half measures! Members of the Pius X Secular Institute, whether they be consecrated or associates, are “committed,” radically and totally.

It is by remaining in God's presence that we arrive at total dedication. Our whole life becomes “holy ground,” a place where God manifests himself. On certain days, it will be with the splendor of the Transfiguration. More often it will be amidst daily occupations, at work or in other activities. Sometimes it will be at a breakfast served on the beach of our own Sea of Galilee. These encounters with God sustain us in giving ourselves.

These signs of the real presence are what make women and men capable of unceasing self-giving. Seeing that God himself went all the way in self-giving, are we not invited to do the same? His call, “Come, follow me,” thus becomes to us an imperative that lights up our whole commitment.

Right from the beginning, even before the Family took on its definite form : the Pius X Secular Institute, certain basic elements appeared quite clearly : *“First, total sanctity and self-dedication; second, specially trained priests formed in the spirit of ‘the Family’ to exercise their ministry in the world; third, specially prepared laymen to go before the priest and make ready the way, able to penetrate where the priest could not; finally, married couples to carry the Gospel of Christ into households.”* (Introduction to the Constitution of 1959)

Some of Father Roy's Thoughts

“The Institute asks only one thing of us : to live ALL of the Gospel.”
(August 27, 1961)

“Yes, Jesus, I wish to be more and more in the habit of saying : Jesus, you can count on me and on each Pius X member.”
(April 13, 1965)

“When we love someone, we're always under the impression that we haven't done enough...”
(August 29, 1961)

“A proof of love is to always undertake more for Him.”
(August 27, 1958)

“There is no place here for people who are only half-committed.”
(August 29, 1958)

“We committed ourselves totally; we should now be afraid to uncommit ourselves in little things.”
(February 1964)

“The world doesn't need ‘good little boys’ but men who are ready to give themselves totally.”
(August 30, 1961)

“Lord, my load is sometimes so heavy! Especially heavy when I see people who received so much from heaven and who refuse to give to God.”
(April 5, 1963)

“We are not on loan to God and the Church; we are committed to them.”
(December 6, 1953)

“We must be given ‘to the bone’.”
(October 1, 1961)

“Let us often and with enthusiasm renew our TOTAL COMMITMENT in order to ‘hasten the Kingdom of God’!”
(February 1958)

“Nothing kills a true commitment or a truly good action more than saying : ‘I'll give this much but no more; I'm willing to go this far but no further.’ Limiting the commitment beforehand is the same as not committing at all; it's not a commitment. God is good, and God wants X...in his service and completely so.
(February 22, 1965)

“When we are really committed—it changes everything! Then we don't have to repeat, push , or tell others what to do—and things get done with care and precision....”
(September 17, 1963)

“I asked for total commitment from you for God and for souls, and you enthusiastically accepted the following slogan : ‘Committed, and no complaining allowed.’”
(February 1957)

“We need a full, absolute and total commitment : so then, no loans, but an absolute consecration.”
(August 29, 1961)

4

**An apostolic mission to mix with the ordinary working class, especially the poor and underprivileged, in order to make Christ Jesus better known, loved and served :
*it's up to us to answer this call!***

"Lord Jesus, my all! All is for you! I love you, and I want to bring joy to your Heart and have you loved by a great number of people! What's most urgent is to make You known! Give us the means to accomplish this well and quickly : sanctify us."

Father Henri Roy

Lots of texts have been written in an attempt to define the mission that spurs us on, we, the members of the Pius X Secular Institute. But, it takes more than words to express the reality of this mission that is continuing and has been sustained for the past 40 years by people who believe in Christ Jesus and want to share this experience.

From the start, the mission was of the utmost importance. It came to give sense and significance to the basic experience of encounter with Christ. To experience this encounter "doesn't change the world, but..." If this encounter comes to liven up our life with new dynamism and give meaning to it, then our fundamental experience of Christ gets new life. How many times have we heard the following phrase **"it's in doing apostolate that we become apostles"**? This certitude nourishes each of the members and permits us to respond to our responsibility of being apostles.

There is only one way for this mission to be realized : by doing apostolate. And this apostolate is as wide as the world. It can be done at work, by means of direct evangelization, or through apostolic works and whatever other means we find. A member of the Pius X Secular Institute wants Jesus to be better known, better loved and better served. Apostolic action is done mostly in the ordinary working class environment, among the lowly and the poor. We do have preferential love for those who touch the Father's heart in a big way.

As is frequently the case, important apostolic needs linked to the birth of a spiritual family, require direct evangelization. Therefore direct evangelization has been of primary importance over the years, and this is still so. When a society can no longer transmit a message of commitment to faith in everyday life, it's essential that women and men rise up as prophets in order to remind people of eternal values. Members who spend themselves in the apostolate of direct evangelization are still very necessary.

However, leaders and coordinators of the Institute, starting with Father Roy up until today have always had the greatest respect for a presence in the world. And today, this apostolate is more and more needed and highly important. It's "infusing into the modern world's veins the vivifying energies of the Gospel." Some apostolic works do reach people who are already "in the Church," but what happens to all of the others? Presence in the world thus becomes a prophetic place for exercising the apostolate on all highways and byways of the world. Discreet witnessing then becomes light on the road for crowds of women and men and salt to give them the taste to grow with He who can change everything.

A member of the Institute doesn't experience the encounter with Christ Jesus merely intimately, just for himself. His encounter with Jesus comes from daily situations wherein he discovers Jesus as his Savior, and the Master of his life. His actions, words and attitudes; all his existence is marked with the seal of Christ. Everyday experience thus becomes a place of encounter, a place of love shared between Jesus and himself. This exchange of love is confirmed when the member has the firm will to share this experience with as many people as possible.

However, the founder wanted the Pius X Secular Institute to give priority to the lowly and the poor. "The poor are our masters!" This cry of great spiritual leaders was given us as a motto for all members of the Institute. Our apostolic concern is specially meant for the poor. This option of priority and preference for the poor is an inalienable condition for all evangelizing vocations of persons called to the Institute. There are the poor and lowly who are hungry, but often the poor and lowly also lack knowledge and light.

This commitment to the poor and the lowly requires that we be present in the world, to persons, to situations in order that our action be not only "exterior," but that it deeply touch all aspects of life. **It's in the duration of the presence and of the witnessing that the mission gets its full force.** Otherwise, our action, worthy as it may be, risks being misinterpreted as evasion, self-promotion or manipulation of others. The deep concern of each member must be that everyone encounter the Jesus who saves through his love and that each in turn become a "multiplier" for the mission.

The mission can't be done if there is no direct announcement of the Good News. This happens through direct proclamation of the message of the Gospel. This sort of witnessing can't be done discreetly, by the example of Christian life alone. There comes the day when discretion must become expression.

"The Good News proclaimed through life witnessing will eventually have to be proclaimed by the word of life. There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom, the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God are not announced."

(Pope Paul VI, *Evangelization in the Modern World*, No. 5)

"Henceforth, we are to have but one ambition : to walk in Jesus' footsteps, to see as He sees, to judge as He judges, and to act as He acts. Like Him, we search along highways and byways for lost sheep to bring back to the fold, so that 'they will become one flock with one shepherd.'

Thus, 'we are totally consecrated to God and have only one ambition that claims our attention and energy twenty-four hours a day : to hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God in the world by a hundred thousand means.'"

(Constitution, art. 23)

Statement of the objective to be pursued in order to realize the mission of the Pius X Secular Institute

It isn't superfluous here to recall this statement of the mission as approved by our last General Assembly. Because of its approval by the Assembly, this text is now a reference text that we can't ignore. It specifies in a concise way the particular accent which characterizes how we want to walk in Jesus' footsteps.

“Members of the Pius X Secular Institute are concerned with wanting to reach people of the popular ‘milieus,’ particularly the humble and the poor who are especially entrusted to our care. Conscious that our apostolic life has its source in our union to Christ (cf. art. 3), at all times and in all places, members must make themselves available for this apostolate, seeking to affirm the worth of every person who crosses our path each day. It’s through our personal witnessing and through direct proclamation that they help others to discover Christ living in the persons we encounter. Through this apostolate we reveal to people that Christ has a mission He wants to give them, and in so doing we discover Him more and more in our own life. ‘To know, love and serve Christ in order to make Him known, loved and served’; this is the concrete realization of our mission.”

Jesus, throughout his whole life, by his words, attitudes and actions, wanted to make known the Father’s love to the people of his time. In the same way, we members, by our lives, words, attitudes and actions want to make Jesus known, loved and served, He who so loved the world. Furthermore, it is in having Him discovered that we members deepen our own personal experience of Christ the Savior. The mission then becomes a spirituality that nourishes our whole life.

Some of Father Roy's Thoughts

“The specific goal of the Pius X Secular Institute is service to the needy. The poor are our masters; souls are our masters.”

(December 1959)

“Unfortunately, Catholics don't live of the Christ we meet in the Gospel...In the end, what does our Christian life amount to, aside from Sunday Mass that we consecrate to Christ? It isn't the moment to become bourgeois and materialistic; it's time for total commitment. This is the only way to chase away the forces of evil and to give the world an example of dynamic and militant Christianity.”

(November 1, 1962)

“I also asked myself to what point you feel yourselves responsible for all those around you? You too must make use of each occasion to help your brother spiritually...because you'll have to answer for it eventually.

It's my duty to remind you of this truth. We have all received so much, and we received in order to give to others...Let's meditate on this and have a certain fear not to have done all the good the Master wanted us to do.

We must be concerned to use our time wisely; by our 'PROMISE OF APOSTOLATE' we vowed our time to God's and the Church's cause. Let's often remind ourselves of the Master's word : 'Let us work while it is yet day'—and let's do it with JOY!”

(May 1960)

Questions to help your reflexion...

1. The statement of the objective to be pursued for the realization of the mission is central to the life of the Institute. How does this statement affect my way of living the mission?

2. Each of us has a personal mission within the general mission of the Institute. How can I describe my personal mission? Am I living it?

3. Is personal witnessing a tool I often use to realize the mission?

5

An apostolic spirituality that nourishes the whole life in the service of Christ Jesus : *a daily incarnation!*

“We must seek our own sanctification through the sanctification of our neighbor.”

Father Henri Roy

“The Institute was founded for the apostolate. Its spirituality, its categories of members, the bonds that unite them, and the way they live out their commitment are all determined by the apostolate.” This citation from the Constitution comes to remind us of the fundamental spirit of our vocation : to be apostles!

Being an apostle isn't just a possible option when the occasion arises. It's a constant concern that haunts us, an existential anguish that lifts us up to the highest stages of sanctity.

“Concern for the eternal salvation of our sisters and brothers is what moves our hearts,” and our whole life is then borne by this apostolic preoccupation. How to reach them? What to tell them? Is it possible that there is any better way to tell them the love of the Father? What if I were to do it this way...?

There is no “right answer.” There are women and men consecrating their whole life to this. Their attitudes, their daily ways of doing things, all their prayers are done in a constant effort to announce the Good News of Salvation. Members of the Pius X Secular Institute thus become beings of a single preoccupation : that Jesus be known, loved and served.

However, in order to accomplish all this, to respond to the mission and to take up the challenge, there is need to re-immersing ourselves in the Spirit of God, to receive life from his Spirit and to be ever more faithful to the movement of the Spirit. Only persons driven and prompted by the Spirit; only saints can take up such a great challenge.

Without this commitment on our part for a prayer life that is “**energetically disciplined**”, to refill us with this spiritual energy, we cannot light fires for generations to come; we cannot accumulate burning coals for the future; we leave no embers with which to light up new fires in the hearts of those we meet and in those who shall replace us.

What are the essence and nature of this apostolic spirituality that is so essential for the coming times, which will be times of compassion? What are the characteristics and the components of this apostolic spirituality that is ours and that give it its originality and its particular flavor?

Let's summarize the particular colors of this apostolic spirituality that drives each of us and stimulates our apostle's heart.

1. A spirituality based on Christ Jesus.
2. A spirituality based on the Word of God.
3. A spirituality that is attentive to the presence of God in events and persons we meet.

4. An apostolic spirituality completely oriented toward “contempl-action” that makes us contemplatives in action.
5. A spirituality that makes us seek and find God in all things.

In the same manner as the first initiators of the Family, we greatly realize that we can't get there by ourselves. This task requires “heroic” means! And, one of these means is **an energetic and disciplined spiritual life**. This can only happen within a robust, organized prayer life...Within a personal process of intimacy with the Lord we can establish this personal relationship which permits deepening one's commitment to God and the awareness of the commitment God Himself makes to each of us. This communion with God's presence can then take its rightful place within us.

But Divine presence is not limited to prayer life. Christ meets us in daily events as well as in unexpected events and those of the present moment. Christ Jesus's incarnation then isn't just an event we celebrate at the start of the millennium; rather it's an encounter happening in the most ordinary daily events of life. All events then become an occasion of deep prayer with Christ, because he is at the heart of our life.

Thus, “contempl-action” is central for nourishing our spiritual life. **Contemplation and action complete one another**. They are two roads, one to get to God and the other to give to God. They participate one with the other. What's the important thing here? It's simply to get to God using these two roads or means : prayer and action.

Father Roy points out the following : “Thus, there aren't two objectives in our life opposing one another : apostolate for others and sanctification for myself.” There is but one objective : to meet God in prayer and in action, to experience God in my commitment to Him and to others.

What's most important is to unite what men have divided : action and prayer; love of neighbor and love of God. Union with God and the activity of the apostle can't be separated. Contemplative and active life are two inseparable sisters like Martha and Mary.

The more active we are, the more we need contemplation; and the more we are contemplative, the more we overflow into action. Dom Chautard once said : “May our action always be contemplative and our contemplation always active.” Father Roy caught on to this truth in a big way.

So then, this spirituality nourishes our whole life. It's particularly verifiable in the way we live our apostolic mission and in our apostolic zeal. It's this same spirituality which gives us the strength needed for a total commitment consequent to our personal encounter of Christ Jesus that has changed our whole life.

Our presence at home or at work becomes our way of expressing in a 100,000 ways our personal experience of Christ and, in so doing, sows in the hearts of women and men we meet the desire to have a similar experience. Our prayer supports those close to us so they may also have such an experience. The goal of our whole interior life isn't really to firstly deepen our own relationship to God, our Father, to Christ, our Savior, to the Spirit of Consolation...but rather, by knowing the Triune God better, that we may be able to present him better to others through our life.

Some of Father Roy's Thoughts

“Love for souls must bring us to action. If we have love we must undertake everything and try all things...”

(August 29, 1958)

“May heaven permit that we conduct MILLIONS of souls to heaven!”

(April 27, 1965)

“St. Theresa of Avila used to say to her nuns : discipline is worth nothing if it's not for the salvation of souls. Priests exist for others : *Pro aliis.* Your contemplation shall be proportionate to your concern for souls.”

(August 12, 1964)

“We received a whole lot freely! We must also give others a whole lot.”

(April 19, 1965)

“The apostolate must occupy us all the time.”

(May 5, 1957)

“Everything must be centered on Christ, on Christ the Apostle : seek those who are really in need. Christ is concerned about souls. Christ loved with an intense personal love. That's the enthusiastic mystique that sustains the apostle in all conditions.”

(August 26, 1957)

“Apostolic courage must be the characteristic of every one of us. We must ask God for the gift of strength that manifests itself by two attitudes : to undertake and to suffer for the undertaking.”

(April 3, 1964)

“We become intimate with Jesus as we give ourselves totally.”

(December 6, 1953)

“We can't give ourselves totally without contemplation.”

(November 1, 1962)

“Let's remember this truth well : to really come to the ideal of total commitment, which is the norm for all consecrated members of the PXSC, we need absolute fidelity and generosity without measure, and in every instant : these two elements can't be had but through and in MENTAL PRAYER : in a heart-to-heart exchange with He who is our LIFE. We must at all costs reach this level by 'exercising' ourselves to constantly live in the company of Jesus, our Master, who calls us to this life of intimacy and contemplation.

(August 1962)

“We did give ourselves totally, but we still have this terrible power to 'take back' our giving of self. But it won't happen if we stay on our guard to live in the continuous presence of God who assures us of an ardent fervor!”

(September 1960)

Questions to help your reflexion...

1. How does everyday life bring Christ to me?
2. How does contempl-action work in my personal life?
3. What are the great discoveries made in my spiritual and apostolic life these last months? Are these discoveries in some way tied one to the other?

Conclusion

A spiritual identity that picks up strength with life itself...

These five elements are essential to the spiritual identity of our apostolic Family :

- **a personal experience of Christ Jesus,**
- **that begets and is verified in an apostolic zeal that stands up no matter what,**
- **that takes us to total commitment of our whole life,**
- **to intensely live out the mission,**
- **through an apostolic spirituality that takes place in daily life.**

In these few pages these elements were defined summarily. Before this, they had been discussed in other documents over the years. At certain times, one certain aspect more than another was given priority in seeking definitions. Evidently, it may be detrimental to single out one aspect more than another. Today it is as a whole that we wish to present the five poles that sustain all of our spirituality.

These elements of our spiritual identity aren't an exhaustive description of the Institute's vocation. On the contrary, they are there to structure the road to be travelled in order to really live out the particular vocation of the Pius X Secular Institute. Each will have to live his commitment profoundly in order to answer the call received from God : **"Come, follow me."**

.....

May we continue to better discover each word of our prayer to the Holy Spirit composed by Father Henri Roy himself and in which we find every element of our spiritual identity :

O Holy Spirit, hurry and come upon us. Make our hearts come alive with true concern for the eternal salvation of our brothers and sisters.

May our voices, spirits, senses and our whole beings praise the Divine Host of our souls and cause Him to be praised.

May the fire of Divine Charity enflame all those who come in contact with us, making us faithful in all things, faithful to your commandments, and as generous as our Master on all occasions, now and forever.

Amen.