

„A Year with Fr. Brisson“



Celebrating the centenary of the death of the Servant of God

THE REVEREND LOUIS BRISSON

(1817-1908)

*Priest and founder of the institutes of the
Oblates and Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales*

First Friday Reflection (#9)

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by

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V + J

To take breath a second time



During the first celebration of the «consecrated life» in Rome on the 2nd of February, 1997, Pope John Paul II said: *“Truly there is great urgency that the consecrated life show itself ever more full of joy and of the Holy Spirit, that it forge ahead dynamically in the paths of mission, that it be backed up by the strength of lived witness.”*

This was as it were an invitation to all women and men of the consecrated life to take a second breath when required, not to fail in their identity as well as in their mission amidst a more and more secularized world.

At the eve of the 21st of November this could be our personal or common situation. On this day many communities, among them also us Oblate sisters and Oblates will renew our vows to be faithful to our commitment to follow the chaste, poor and obedient Christ.

Where else could we catch that „second air“ if not in allowing the Holy Spirit to re-enter our lives as baptized and consecrated people. It is a little like the apostles and disciples in the “upper room” where Jesus in a symbolic gesture “breathed on them” in order to entrust them with their new mission: re-suscitate, re-create, re-concile, forgive, heal the souls and the hearts that were wounded by sin.

In his Gospel, John (20, 19-23) speaks about that scene. Everything happens as if Jesus wanted to tell his disciples once more:

You cannot do anything without me.

You can neither be my disciples without me, nor my witnesses,
nor my missionaries, ...

You cannot be Christians without me, you cannot love each other in a
Christian marriage, you cannot educate your children in a Christian
way, you cannot live as enthusiastic lay people, and you cannot be
people of consecrated life.

I give you everything that belongs to me.

What makes me one with the Father,

What makes me breathe in him and for him,

I give you our common breath: I give you the Holy Spirit.

Let us stop at this gesture of Christ.

If you need to resuscitate somebody, the rescuer blows his own breath into the victim.
Rescuing sign.

How much more is this true, if this person is Christ, the Son of God!

Jesus performs the first grafting. This hasn't yet been mentioned historically.

Or put it in a better way, he renews the original graft of creation: this important
blow of air enables re-creation.

Not by using mechanical ventilation; that is only temporary.

But by the gift of his own breath in us

Which makes out of us a son within the only son.

Who transmits his divine DNA so that we can live as true sons within
the son of God and also behave as such ...

Christ tells us with this gesture, that we need the breath of God in order to be able to live
as true Christians - and as true people of consecrated life.

Quite often in our lives as Christians - in our religious life - we tend to be
short-winded ... short-winded is our faith . short-winded is our hope ... short-
winded is our love...

We are people with spiritual „asthma“ ... sometimes we are
suffocating spiritually ...

We breathe polluted and polluting air ...

We need purer air, a more refreshing air ...

Otherwise our own fear, our anger, our egoistic perception of
serving our neighbor will take hostage of us within ourselves.

Jesus tells us: Here my breath, my Holy Spirit.

The Spirit that allows you to breathe in Trinitarian air, where the one is giving
himself as a perfect offering to the other without looking at himself,

The one, who wants to increase your Christian respiratory volume, your
LOVE.

The one who will breathe within you more than yourself.

The one, who will lead you of your fears, who will complete your imperfections,
who will heal your wounds, who will change your pastoral plans, who will teach you
different things ... Stop desiring to do it on your own ... accept that it happens to
you.

This is my gift:

Accept it - Do not attempt to want to achieve it on your own. Love cannot be
bought, Love is welcomed -

Make yourself the river bed, let him be the torrent.

Yes, may our life as baptized people, as consecrated people, fall in line with the life of the Spirit, in order to be able to receive that „second breath“ we all need at one or the other moment, so that our life doesn't belong to us anymore, but to the One, who died and rose for us.“ And we, Oblate Sisters and Oblates, available for the Holy Spirit, will be able to better understand, how to lead a consecrated life, like Fr. Brisson commented upon:

„Our vocation has its own seal:
It is a call to love God,
in an intimate love,
that unites us so much with him, that we should never be separated from him.
He is always here,
We are always together,
We work together; we speak with each other,
We do everything together;
what our rule commands, our relationships with the others, our service,
Everything is done for him.
That is our life!

And so we will be enabled to continue to faithfully live that *“great history in Christ still to be accomplished”* that our Holy Founders started.

+ May God Be Blessed +