

Father Raymond Halter: healing inner wounds

25 years ago, on the night of December 25-26, 1998, Father Raymond Halter set off to meet the Lord and the Virgin Mary, whom he had served all his life. At a time when we had just celebrated the birth of God made man, Raymond, whose stature and face expressed a strong fatherly image, was leaving this world, as if he were stepping aside to make way for Jesus.



A man of great intellectual ability, Father Halter contributed to the development of Marianist spirituality through his study of the *writings on prayer* of Blessed G.-J. Chaminade. He also wrote the book: *The Virgin Mary in the life and work of Paul Claudel*. Appointed general chaplain to the students of Bordeaux, he continued his personal training to better respond to the university world around him.

During a weekend with a group of young people in 1973, they experienced life in the Holy Spirit. Shortly afterwards, following a car accident, he lost his sight. For a man who read *Le Monde* every day and kept abreast of the latest publications, he overcame this tragedy through prayer and the grace of the Holy Spirit. He regained some of his sight following an operation in Nancy, where the surgeon told him that a miracle could also be God guiding his hand. At this time, his superiors sent him to the city of Moselles. From the intellectual milieu of Bordeaux, he had to adapt to the simple people of this working-class city.

Many injured people asked him for help. He accompanied and preached inner-healing retreats. He examined the root causes of wounds, the ravages of spiritualism, satanic links, etc., and warned against the New Age currents that were on the rise. The work was demanding and the requests were numerous. When he was assigned to Abidjan, he

suggested to the Provincial that he set up a retreat center in France, where he could spend the whole year. However, God had other plans for him.

He trained people to provide this support. At the start of the retreats he preached, small listening teams were set up to welcome those whose wounds are too heavy. He knew how to surround himself with people who were discerning and not left alone with all the human misery.

We ourselves carry inner wounds or accompany wounded people. Let's take a moment to let Jesus descend into our inner hell, to let him visit us. Through Father Halter's intercession, let us ask to be visited by the Lord, through the grace of his Holy Spirit. We can make our own the prayer he formulated at Lourdes on July 1, 1979:

You know all our needs, Lord. All those of our body, our emotions, our intelligence, our spirit. You know our hearts. You, Lord, who made us to love and be loved, know everything that life, everything that men, everything that events have wounded in us, or sometimes perhaps killed within us. Lord, you who know us in the depths of our being, you who know our whole existence, come and give each of us what we need most to blossom in the love you put in our hearts and for which you created us. Come and heal in each of us what prevents us from loving those around us. Those things that prevent us from serving those around us.

Lord, we are here in confidence, in peace. We want to tell you now as we look at you, as we look at your face of love and compassion. Lord, heal us, to teach us more how to love, how to be loved. Amen