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# CSSP - INFORMATIONS - CSSP

Congregazione dello Spirito Santo

Clivo di Cinna, 195 - 00136 Roma

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20 October 1969

No 3

My dear confrères,

We are recommencing the publication of our Bulletin of Information (C.S.Sp.) which we began last year. We beg your pardon for the delay in publishing this number : the staff of the General Secretariat were in need of a few weeks rest after all the work of the Chapter.

I shall not speak to you of the Chapter; you will shortly receive the results of its labours. I would like today to invite you urgently to a renewed effort - an effort requiring constant renewal - of prayer in all its forms: personal prayer, community prayer, liturgical and private prayer. During the past few days, and on the occasion of the Synod, I have had to take part in numerous meetings with all kinds of personalities: lay-folk, religious, theologians, priests, bishops and cardinals and everywhere I found expressed the same need, I heard the same call for prayer. The lay-folk ask us to teach them to pray: the priests and religious in the midst of all their discussions about the meaning of their vocation feel the need of rediscovering that contact with God which only prayer can give: the theologians in the face of conflicting trends, why bother to mention them in detail? realise that serious reflection on the word of God is not possible unless it be heard in silence, in meditation and with prayerful response. And, how must it be then for us missionaries?

Let it not be said in order to put prayer aside: it is in the service of my fellow men, my neighbour, that I shall encounter God. It is true that God is in my neighbour but we will not see him, we will not know how to discover him unless our hearts are purified by his word and his grace. Christ himself spent whole nights in prayer while the crowd sought him. Since it is no rare thing - against all truth - to base oneself on the theologian Bonhoeffer in order to cast doubt on the value of seeking God in prayer, may I be permitted to quote him here:

"Meditation on the Bible, prayer and intercession are a cult which we owe to God and, in the course of which he communicates his grace to us.... we have the right to demand from others that they leave us the time and the peace and quiet for this purpose in spite of their pressing needs. Prayer is especially indispensable for the pastor: on this all his ministry depends." (De la Vie Communautaire, trad. française, Neuchatel, 1968, p. 87).

We look for the solutions of our problems in a host of techniques and sciences: psychology, sociology, planning etc.. This is a good thing since nothing must be overlooked in the service of God and our neighbour. However, let us not too easily forget that the essential does not lie there and that God alone can give fecundity and growth.

J. Lécuyer

THE GENERAL CHAPTER ENDS  
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On September 10th 1969, the second session of the Chapter came to an end, and with it the Extraordinary General Chapter of Renewal called for by the Motu Proprio, "Ecclesiae Sanctae" II, 3.

There is every reason to be satisfied with the work done at this Chapter - not that everything is perfect, far from it! The most tangible results of the Chapter are to be found in the documents. With most of these, the confrères are already familiar since the Inter-Session period, when they were published at the particular stage each had reached - green (a few), yellow or white. In addition to these, two documents of a special kind were produced at the second session - the voluminous "Guidelines for Reflexion on the Apostolate" and the almost equally lengthy document on "Training" (formerly called 'Formation'). Arrangements have been made for the final editing of these documents, and it is hoped that every confrère will have a copy in book form shortly after Christmas.

The second session saw too the appearance of another kind of "document" - primarily oral, but also available in typescript - which contributed greatly to the education of the capitulants. These documents were the reports by the Provincial and Principal Superiors on their various circumscriptions. In this way all the capitulants were brought completely up-to-date on the situation in the whole Congregation, and on the particular problems - often the same ones! - encountered by the confrères in their work in different parts of the world. Plans are also being made for the publication of these reports and the various Superiors are being asked to touch up their reports in view of publication.

Another consequence of the Chapter which must be counted a great gain is that so many confrères - capitulants and others - from the different provinces and districts got to know each other and become friends. This is certain to lead to greater understanding, cooperation and union throughout the Congregation. It is to be hoped that those who benefitted by such contacts will do all they can to ensure that the maximum advantage is taken of this openness and that each does not simply return to his own provincial outlook.

One of the last juridical acts of the Chapter was to empower the General Council to settle urgent questions that may arise and to take whatever decisions may be necessary to ensure consistency in the Chapter documents. Finally, there was the moving address by Father General which will be published in full in the next issue of the General Bulletin.

And so, the planting has been done. It remains for the work of the Chapter to bear fruit in the "appropriate renewal" of our way of life, - both in the case of the institute as a whole and of each member in particular.

"Et renovabis faciem terrae....."

## EXPULSION OF THE HOLY GHOST FATHERS FROM HAITI

Haiti is an independent republic since 1804. As the majority of its population is Catholic, a Concordat with the Holy See was considered as early as 1842, and was signed in 1860.

Article VII of this Concordat reads: "In the major and minor seminaries which may in future be established according to need, the direction, administration and teaching will be regulated in accordance with Canon Law by the Archbishops and Bishops, who will also be free to name the superiors, directors and teachers in these institutes."

On May 19, 1872, the local hierarchy, after a trial period, signed a contract with the Congregation, entrusting to it the minor seminary of St. Martial.

On several occasions, especially in 1875 and 1919, serious crises caused the Congregation to threaten to hand over St. Martial to the Archdiocese, because the State wished, in violation of Article VII of the Concordat, to meddle in the affairs of the Seminary-College. On both occasions an agreement was arrived at by mutual concessions.

In 1969, however, a third grave crisis arose, and this time it was not possible to compromise. The Holy Ghost Fathers had to leave, some expelled by force, the others recalled by the Congregation.

If the "essence of the philosophy of the Duvalier Revolution is summed up in the words 'One Leader, one Party, one Parliament'", as the Minister for Religion, M. Chalmers, said in the House on Sept. 3, 1969, it is not surprising that the Government should wish to control and direct the formation given to young Haitians (such as the 1,100 pupils at St. Martial), especially as one of the major concerns of the State is the struggle against opposition parties (necessarily underground), which, with an eye on Cuba, it accuses of communism.

It is on the alleged ground of such 'subversive activity' that on August 15, 1969, the Government expelled 7 Haitian priests (of whom 3 were Holy Ghost Fathers teaching at St. Martial) and said that 2 other Haitian Holy Ghost Fathers, who were out of the country at the time, would not be allowed to return.

Father General went to Haiti on August 25 to assess the situation personally. On his return he reported to the General Council on his interviews with the civil and religious authorities and with the Fathers. As a result the General Council took the following decision on Sept. 2:

"Whereas, after investigations on the spot by the Very Rev. Fr. Lécuyer, Superior General of the Holy Ghost Congregation, it has not been possible to obtain even the semblance of proof for the accusations on which the Government of Haiti bases its expulsion of five Haitian Holy Ghost Fathers on August 15, 1969, whether in the matter of the Fathers' taking part in communist activities, or in their 'alliance with secret political parties promoting ideologies that are harmful to Christian faith and morals, with a view to overthrowing the established order';

"And whereas the Very Rev. Fr. General, in his conversations with the Haitian hierarchy, received no confirmation from the Bishops of the accusations against the Fathers;

"And whereas Niclerc Casseus, one of the alleged witnesses, was announced as dead in a Haitian Government communiqué on June 3, 1969, a week before the 10th June, on which date the Government claims that

Casseus confronted Fr. Dominique - thus making it difficult to admit the role he is supposed to have played;

"And whereas the Seminary-College of St. Martial has clear statutes granted by the Concordat of 1860, which was signed by the Holy See and the Haitian Government - statutes in which it is stated that the Archbishop of Port-au-Prince alone is authorized to name the directors of the Seminary-College of St. Martial;

"And whereas the measures taken by the Haitian Government and the campaign in the Government press make it impossible for the Holy Ghost Fathers in Haiti to exercise their ministry in a normal way;

"And whereas the Holy Ghost Fathers own property in Haiti that they have acquired during more than 100 years of work in the country;

"The Superior General and his Council have taken the following decisions:

"(1) They reject the accusations made against Fathers Antoine Adrien, Paul-Jean Claude, Max Dominique, Paddy Poux and Ernst Verdieu.

"(2) They protest against the injustice done to these Haitian priests, and against the Government's decision to forbid the other Holy Ghost Fathers to teach at the Seminary-College of St. Martial.

"(3) They ask the Holy Ghost Fathers still at St. Martial to leave their posts as soon as their successors in the direction of the institute have been officially named by the competent ecclesiastical authorities.

"(4) They also recall the Holy Ghost Fathers working in parishes, and hand over the parishes to the diocesan authorities.

"(5) They uphold the rights of the Congregation over all its property, movable and immovable, in Haiti.

Given at Paris,  
September 2, 1969."

For its part, the Government of Haiti passed a law on September 3, 1969, taking away the direction of the Seminary-College of St. Martial from the Congregation and handing it over to the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince, for it to continue the work.

The remaining Fathers then left the country - three for nearby Guadeloupe, and the others for their Province of origin. The total number of Spiritans working in Haiti had been 28: i.e. 2 French Brothers, and 26 Fathers, of whom 20 (including 6 Haitians) belonged to the Province of France, 2 to the Province of Holland, 3 to Switzerland and 1 to Canada. Of these, 16 Fathers and 1 Brother had been working at St. Martial, and 10 Fathers and 1 Brother had been working in three parishes (with several outstations), where there was a population of 115,000, of whom 108,000 were Catholics.

After more than a century in Haiti, the Congregation now finds itself 'disengaged' from the work, which has been taken over by the local clergy.

While regretting that the Haitian Government has so well fulfilled the 'duty of ingratitude' spoken of by Dr. Aujoulat (a former lay medical missionary in Africa), we must bow before this 'sign of the times' and turn towards other fields of apostolate. The Fathers concerned have generously accepted this fact and, after a short rest, will set off

(some have already done so) for their new missions: Fr. Adrien and Fr. Dominique in Bangui (Central African Republic), Fr. Urfie in Mouila (Gabon), Fr. Eschrich in Pointe-Noire (Congo-Brazzaville), Fr. Berthaud and Fr. Schmitt at Auteuil. The other destinations have not yet been made known by the Provincials. Some of the Fathers have asked for a year's refresher course: Fr. Verdieu and Fr. Claude in Canada, Fr. Poux in the United States.

The Congregation pays tribute to these confrères, who have given an example of strength amid trials and of willingness to take up new assignments.

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#### PROVINCE OF BELGIUM

Gentines- Centre for Religious and Missionary Activity.

On June 30th. 1969, the enlarged provincial council of Belgium decided to close down the college of Gentines and to convert it into a "Centre for Religious and Missionary Activity." Because of the "Kongola Memorial" the community's connection with the missions was already well known.

The Provincial Chapter then arranged the details concerning personnel and the adaptation of the buildings. Work on the material alterations was begun immediately. As for personnel, the General Council, which showed great interest in the project, appointed two French Fathers, F. Henri de Langavant and F. Alphonse Gilbert and one Trinidadian Father F. Albert Clarke to the staff. Furthermore, thanks to the good will of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit, Sisters Lucie and Monique were assigned to the centre to look after reception and to help in stimulating a missionary outlook especially among girls.

The Centre was opened in August, 1969 and first of all the whole team-Fathers and Sisters-met together to decide what should be done. A provisional plan was drawn up (ad experimentum): in the Centre itself, retreats and courses in missionary subjects would be organised; visitors to the Kongola Memorial would be catered for by a better organisation of the missionary exhibition and documentation centre; as outside activities, the etam would collaborate in the missionary effort of the neighbouring dioceses.

The first results are encouraging. The programme of group retreats is booked out up to January 1970 and a number of development workers spent some days at the centre discussing their problems. The Fathers and Sisters are very pleased with this beginning, which has helped them realise that this work is important and constructive. They are anxious to cooperate in similar activities being carried out by the White Fathers and the Scheutists and to establish contacts with specialists in missionary propaganda from Louvain and Brussels.

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#### ENGLISH PROVINCE----- DISTRICT OF MAKURDI.

A short time ago, a young priest of the English Province, Father Michael Cammack, aged 34, died in a hospital. He had returned from Makurdi, three months previously, suffering from cancer, unable to complete his second tour out there. While he was in the hospital, I visited him on several occasions and always the conversation turned towards the Missions and especially Nigeria. One of his last conscious acts was to surrender his return ticket to Nigeria-hoping against hope, he had guarded it till the very end. His death, humanly speaking, must be regarded as a great loss to the Makurdi Mission.

About the same time as Father Cammack was returning to England, another man was asking to be posted to the Mission of Makurdi. He had made a similar request thirty nine years ago on the completion of his senior studies. At the time he was officially appointed to Nigeria-his appointment appeared in the General Bulletin of the Congregation-but the urgent demands of a small, understaffed Province delayed therealisation of his dreams.

This man, Father Finn is now 64 years old. He has worked all his priestly life in the Home Province, performing a variety of tasks-Superior, Junior Director, Professor, in addition to regular week-end ministry of supplies, appeals etc. He is leaving soon for Makurdi. No doubt, his work there will go a long way to fill the gap left by his former pupil.

We hear frequent mention today of the phrase 'First Evangelisation'. The term suggests a variety of meanings. It could mean nurturing the seed of a Missionary vocation in the heart of a young aspirant who has responded generously to the call of Christ. Few are better equipped for such a task than one who over the years has kept alive within himself the missionary ideal and who, when occasion presents, is ready to put it into practice.

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NOTICE : The list of deceased confreres will no longer be sent separately each month but will be published in the Monthly "Newsletter" and also, as previously, in the General Bulletin.

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++ OUR DEAD ++

Father Joseph J. Callahan, of the United States Western Province, died on October 11th., 1969, at the age of 91 years, after 69 years spent in religious life.

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P.S.- We are grateful to the confreres who have pointed out to us that the title "Informations" is not suitable for the English Edition. Accordingly the English title will be changed to: C.S. Sp. NEWSLETTER". For the present issue, however, we have continued to use existing stocks of paper.

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