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21st January 1970

No. 4.

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EDITORIAL

By now all the confreres know of the efforts being made at the Generalate to establish an Information Service, so obviously necessarily and hence prescribed by the General Chapter. It must however be admitted with regret that the initiatives taken in this matter have not yet produced the desired result. As is the case with all new projects - even Rome was not built in a day! - there seems to be an inescapable time-lag for gestation, before a fully-formed, though weak, structure can be formed.

Since the General Chapter the staff at the Generalate has been occupied in settling in, in beginning to apply somewhat tentatively the Chapter decisions, in arranging for the publication of the Chapter Texts etc.... It must also be remembered that the Generalate has not yet put down deep roots in Rome. Part of the Secretariate is still in Paris, - indeed, the most important part for our present purpose, since it includes the whole documentation service. This section will, within a week or two, be on its way over the Alps; and we must ask our readers to be patient for a little while more, because we are conscious that our Information Service cannot be what it should be until we have this mine of books, reviews, publications, communications, at our disposal. In particular, the present number of our Newsletter will confine itself to giving some items of news about our confreres, and for this issue at least, is unable to attempt any serious documentation.

On the other hand, we have the example of the success of Newsletters from various sectors within the Congregation to encourage us - and also those of you who have not yet got your own publication - and to show us how valuable these newsletters can be. The French province and missions are particularly well organised, and the various publications which are sent to the Generalate are eagerly read. For years, the bulletin of the French province has been a model of its kind. In the mission districts, a similar service is provided in Yaoundé, Gabon, Madagascar, and Congo-Brazzaville - to mention only those which are under my

eyes at the moment. In the English-speaking regions, the Western province of the United States has a well-produced and interesting newsletter. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, so it is hoped that the editors of publications which have not been mentioned will not take offence. The idea is simply to give a few concrete examples to show what can be done.

These simple newsletters can often have a useful influence outside the group for which they were originally intended. Thus a recent issue of the letter from the Principal Superior of Yaoundé contained an interesting article on the new French Breviary, which was used again by the Principal Superior of Gabon in his presentation of this breviary to the members of his circumscription. For the information of the non-French confreres, the present issue will also borrow from the same article with the "presumed permission" of the author, Father Joseph Balthasar. The October letter of the Principal Superior of Congo-Brazzaville, and a special circular letter from the French provincial, gave a well chosen selection of some Chapter decisions, in order to keep the confreres in touch while awaiting the official text of all the Chapter Directives.

The editor of C.S.Sp. Newsletter thanks the various correspondents who have sent in items of news from their districts and invites those who have not yet done so to break the silence barrier, and let us know how the mission work is progressing in their area.

Wishing God's blessing on all the confreres throughout the '70's !

EDITOR

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CHANGES IN THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Father Matthew Farrelly (Ireland), at the end of his second three-year period as General Secretary, has, at his own request, been relieved of this function. He has been re-appointed for another three-year period as General Procurator to the Holy See.

Father Samuel Moore (Ireland) has been appointed to the post of General Secretary.

LETTER FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

My dear Confreres,

As I write these lines, our great concern is for our confreres in East Central Nigeria. We have not much news of them up to the present, but in this newsletter, we pass on what we have. Nothing is certain concerning the future of our works in these dioceses, where our Fathers have accomplished such important and such fruitful work; and where almost 70 of them have remained up to the end of the war. I recommend to your prayers these sorely-tried Churches, and their people who have suffered so much from hunger, sickness, and the death of those dear to them. You all know that we have in this area a flourishing District, which was already showing a continual increase in the number of aspirants, novices and scholastics. Obviously, all this is not lost, but we must courageously undertake the necessary adaptations, so that the Church may be able to continue its work of salvation. May the severe trial endured by our Nigerian and Irish confreres stir up our confidence and generosity, knowing that "sufferings bring patience, and patience brings perseverance, and perseverance brings hope, and this hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us" (Romans, 5, 3-5).

It is therefore to a new vision of faith that I invite you. And as February 2nd approaches, we cannot but think of the example of faith given us by Fr.Libermann - faith in the word of God, more powerful than "all the persuasive words of human wisdom" (1 Cor. 2,4). Once more, I should like to avail myself of this occasion to invite you to read and study the writings of our Founders, especially of Fr.Libermann, who has left us a treasure still so little known. I am happy to announce that a special group is being set up on a permanent basis in France to undertake research in this domain. I have also heard that Fr.Forys is continuing his translation of the principal texts into Polish.

May these efforts encourage others. What we need more than any other reform is a deepening of our life of faith, and Fr.Libermann invites us to this continual conversion.

J.Lécuyer

Rome, January 20th, 1970.

SUPERIOR GENERAL C.S.Sp.

Chapter Directives and Decisions

The printing of the official texts of the Chapter is well under way. The manuscripts have been with the printers since mid-November, but there have been unforeseen delays, flu at the printing works etc. The French edition is being printed in France and will be distributed from there. The English edition is being printed in England, and in this case also, the printers are responsible for despatch. In spite of delays it is hoped that the manuals will be on their way by the end of January. Since there is a certain urgency, because these texts will be needed for Provincial and District Chapters, the books will be sent by air as a general rule. Where Air Freight is noticeably cheaper than ordinary Air Mail, it will be used; even though it may be somewhat inconvenient for some Superiors to arrange to have their parcels collected at the nearest airport.

New Decree concerning the Brothers

In its document on the Brothers, the General Chapter decided that Brothers as well as Fathers were, in principle, eligible for all posts of responsibility in the Congregation, except when the sacrament of Orders was involved. The capitulants were aware that the approval of the Holy See would be required before this decision could be implemented, because our Congregation is classed as a "clerical" institute. Accordingly, this was one of the cases submitted to the Sacred Congregation of Religious after the Chapter. So far, there has been no reply to the questions proposed, but in the meantime a decree has been published, on the participation of lay-members in the administration of religious institutes. Because the same question was being proposed by a number of General Chapters, the Sacred Congregation of Religious decided to issue a statement which would settle the matter for all in general. In our case, the terms of the decree are completely relevant, and it is to be expected that when the official answer comes to our particular request, it will simply confirm the application of this new decree.

The full text of the decree will be published in the next issue of the General Bulletin, but the following summary gives the substance of what has been decided:-

1. General Chapters of clerical institutes may rule that

lay-members be allowed to hold purely administrative posts, e.g. that of Bursar, or Director of a printing works or other such works which have not a direct relation with strictly priestly ministry.

2. The General Chapter can also allow lay-members to have active and passive vote for Chapters at all levels; and for elections and the transaction of business by these same Chapters, to the extent and under the conditions determined either by the nature of the case or by the decision of the General Chapter.

3. The General Chapter may also rule that, within the same limits, members who are not clerics may hold the post of Councillor at any level.

4. Members who are not clerics cannot hold the office of Superior or Vice-Superior, either at general, provincial or local level.

The terms of this decree have been incorporated into the official text of the Chapter decisions, which must be interpreted in conformity with these norms.

History of the Second Session of the General Chapter

The work of compiling for the confreres an account of what happened at Chevilly during the second session of the Chapter was confided to Fr. Michael O'Carroll of the Irish province. In spite of his duties as professor in Blackrock College, he has finished the manuscript. During the Christmas holidays, he spent some time at the Generalate, while studying documents and texts of the various meetings.

Provincial Chapters

The newsletters from the French-speaking territories show great interest in the provincial chapter of the French province which will be held next July, and for which elections are now taking place. A circular from the French provincial gives the following details concerning the arrangements for this Chapter. The Chapter will be composed of:

7 members ex officio of the provincial council

24 delegates from the French province

12 Fathers

7 Brothers

4 Scholastics

1 Father or Brother from the community of
Misserghin in Algeria.

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12 principal superiors, belonging by origin to the province - ex officio

8 delegates for regions outside France (including one delegate to represent members working in Italy and Switzerland).

Germany held the first session of its provincial chapter over the Christmas holidays. It was composed of 36 members:

2 members ex officio from the province (Provincial Superior and Provincial Bursar)

13 delegates from 11 circumscriptions (In the case of two large communities, the members were divided into "over 50 years of age" & "under 50 years of age".)

For the choice of these 13 delegates, no places were reserved to Fathers, Brothers or Scholastics.

9 delegates chosen from a "Provincial list" thus:

4 Fathers

4 Brothers

1 Scholastic

3 principal superiors ex officio

9 delegates of the mission districts.

In the province itself, 15 Fathers, 5 Brothers, and 2 Scholastics were selected as delegates; the average age was 42.9 years. The provincial Chapter invited as guests Father Stöcker of the General Council, and a confrere from the Dutch province. All confreres, and the aspirant students, were welcomed as observers and could take part in the discussions during the plenary sessions, as well as join in the meetings of the commissions.

Four commissions were set up. The first had as its theme the task of the German province within the framework of the specific aim of the Congregation. The second discussed new Forms of membership, and also the rights and duties of members. The third commission dealt with organisation, but in fact confined itself to devising a scheme for selecting the Provincial Council. Elections are held but the Provincial retains a certain liberty about the final choice. The fourth commission was to deal with the Brothers; but decided not to issue any definite decisions until the whole subject of Formation had been discussed.

The date for the second session has been fixed for the

end of August or the beginning of September, and a commission of three members has been appointed to prepare for it.

Ireland and England are also arranging for provincial chapters next Summer, but exact details are not yet available. Portugal, Poland and Switzerland have also begun to make their arrangements. Belgium and Holland already have experience of provincial chapters since the Inter-Session period, and are continuing along the same lines. In general, their method of organisation allows for the actual presence of all who can attend.

In most cases, the Districts consider it better to wait till after the provincial chapters before holding their own. An intermediate solution has been found in the District of Ontario, where a week-long session of study and reflexion was held, to bring the confreres up-to-date on the work of the Chapter. In addition to the members from the District, the session was attended by Fr.Donal O'Sullivan of the Generalate, First Assistant, and by Fr.Michel de Verteuil, who was present at the General Chapter as delegate of Trinidad. The reports which we have received indicate that the experience was a fruitful one, and has opened up great prospects for the eventual holding of a District Chapter.

As this is a subject which interests all the confreres, we should be grateful if those responsible for the organisation of provincial and district chapters would let us know some details about how the work is progressing.

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NEWS FROM THE GENERALATE

Early in December, Father O'Sullivan left for the study session in Ontario. On his way he called to a number of houses in the English Province and in Ireland.

Father Eberhardt, along with Fr.Thomas Clynes, Director of Propaganda for the Eastern province of the United States, opted to spend the Christmas in Biafra. Fr.Clynes is responsible for a very successful Biafra Appeal Fund, and already spent some time in Biafra earlier in the year. Fr.Eberhardt succeeded in meeting all except two of the Fathers working in Biafra. He was tremendously impressed with the work being done by our confreres, and at the same time, appalled at the sufferings being endured by the people of Biafra. During his stay, the military operation was stepped up by the Nigerian forces, and he

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had some unpleasant moments. He arrived back at Clivo di Cinna on Friday, January 9th. Father Stöcker attended the first session of the German provincial Chapter. Father Houdijk went to Holland, where he was able to attend some of the sessions of the Dutch provincial chapter.

Among our more distinguished visitors to the Generalate were Mgr. Guibert of Reunion, and Mgr. Marie Sainte, Co-Adjutor Bishop of Martinique. More recently, we welcomed Fr. Tony Byrne and Fr. Michael Reynolds, both on their way to seek aid for Biafra from various agencies in Europe. According as the Federal troops advanced, the problems of hunger and accommodation were becoming worse in the areas under Biafran control.

We were very pleased to receive the Superior General of the S.M.A. and his council to lunch. They remained on for some time chatting informally with the members of the community. We came to realise once again how much we have in common with such missionary institutes as this, and how much we can help each other by an exchange of experiences, views, and suggestions.

Fr. C. Woulfe also from Biafra, stayed with us for a few days in early December.

Brother Longinus has returned to his functions at Clivo di Cinna. He had been in Via Macchiavelli to replace Brother Paulus, who was in hospital, but has now happily recovered.

Finally, we might mention that the 'flu which ravaged Europe also took its toll at the Generalate. Over the Christmas, a number of the confreres were laid up, but now all are practically back to normal.

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N I G E R I A

All the confreres will have followed, with personal interest, the sudden and dramatic ending to the Nigerian civil war. After two and a half years of struggle, the Biafran collapse came more suddenly than anyone expected.

On Monday, 12th January, when the last plane left Biafra, there were still left 67 of our Fathers, working at their posts. All were there of their own free will. Each Father had made up his own mind whether he would go home, or stay behind with the people. The two Holy Ghost Brothers, Ignatius and Augustine, who wished to remain, were ordered home by their Superior. They had both done wonderful work. Brother Ignatius supervised the distribution of food supplies from Ihioma to stores all over the country, while Brother Augustine helped Fr. O'Connor in a very extensive agricultural programme. As both these

operations would end in their present form at the end of the war, it was felt that the Brothers should be sent home.

Besides the Holy Ghost Fathers, there were 3 Irish Vincentian Fathers, 2 Kiltegan Fathers, one secular priest and 4 Marist Brothers. The secular priest - Fr. John Kearns - had spent over 15 years working in that part of Africa, and had come from his parish in Kilkenny to be with Bishop Whelan for Christmas. When informed that the last plane was leaving, he replied that he would stay with his friend Bishop Whelan.

Besides the priests and brothers, there were 17 Holy Rosary Sisters staying in five different houses, and with them, 3 St. John of God Sisters, 2 Presentation Sisters, 2 Medical Missionaries of Mary, 1 Holy Child and 1 Maryknoll Sister.

Those staying behind were naturally apprehensive at the sudden collapse and at the speed with which the end came. They were fully conscious that the future would not be easy, but realised that their presence would be a stabilising influence in what otherwise might be a chaotic situation.

The Theology students from Awo-omama were home on holidays, and the students from the Amakohia House of Philosophy had been sent home shortly after Christmas. The Novices from Emekuku had been evacuated the day before it was captured.

Within the last day or so, contact has been established with about forty of our Fathers. All these are safe and well and are able to report of the others that they too are all safe, Thank God. During all this troubled period, the Irish Embassy in Lagos and its counterpart in Rome, as well as the Department of External Affairs in Dublin, have been unsparing in their efforts to help our missionaries. We owe to the Minister, Ambassadors and staff responsible, a deep debt of gratitude.

In the areas recently taken over by the Federal authorities, a small number of our Fathers have been asked to stay on to help with relief work. About forty others have been brought to Port Harcourt for clearance by the military. They will next have to go to Lagos, and it is only then that they will know whether or not they will be allowed to go back to their missions. Meantime, we have reliable information that all these Fathers are being well-treated. We were particularly pleased to hear that Bishop Whelan is allowed full freedom of movement in his territory.

Let us hope and pray that before long, this troubled land

may experience a true and lasting peace, where the missionaries of Christ may continue to work for the spread of His kingdom.

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O U R D E A D

(since the last entry in the General Bulletin for Nov-Dec.1969)

- 23rd December 1969, Fr.Victorin LAFFONT, of the province of France, who died at Langonnet at the age of 77 years, after 57 years in religion.
- 25th December 1969, Fr.Joseph PIVETEAU, of the province of France, who died at Chevilly at the age of 73 years, after 50 years in religion.
- 29th December 1969, Fr.Petrus RIJKERS, of the province of Holland, who died at Gennep, at the age of 62 years, after 38 years in religion.
- 2nd January 1970, Fr.Petrus WILLEMS, of the district of Bagamoyo, who died at Ifakara at the age of 50 years, after 30 years in religion.
- 15th January 1970, Fr.Leonard GRAF, of the province of Trinidad, who died at Port-of-Spain, at the age of 86 years, after 63 years in religion.
- 15th January 1970, Fr.Petrus BUKKEMS, of the province of Holland, who died at Geldrop at the age of 69 years, after 48 years in religion.
- 16th January 1970, Fr.Ludwig NAARMANN, of the province of Germany, who died at Knechtsteden at the age of 58 years, after 35 years in religion.
- 16th January 1970, Fr.Patrick MCGILL, of the district of Kenya, who died at the age of 67 years, after 45 years in religion.

R. I. P.

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THE NEW BREVIARY IN FRENCH

In the first place, the term "breviary" is no longer used, but rather the title "Prière du Temps Présent", for which we might suggest the translation "Prayer for our Times".

It will be convenient to begin first with the obligation, not because this is the most important aspect, but because it will help to understand the lay-out of the new book. The official text states the obligation thus:

"In virtue of the decision of the Apostolic See,..... the rule concerning the obligation of the Office is as follows:-
Priests shall recite the Divine Office each day, respecting the proper time for each Hour.

They shall not, without a serious reason (empêchement grave) omit the two principal Hours, which are the two "poles" of the Office:

- Lauds as morning prayer (which is not said after midday)
- Vespers as evening prayer (which is not said after midnight).

Moreover, Vatican Council II (Constit.Dei Verbum, 25) recommends assiduous reading of Holy Scripture for priests; but in the special form of an office of readings - the liturgical celebration of the Word of God, of which a prolonged omission would constitute a grave negligence."

Some practical details

1. The day normally begins with the morning office (Lauds). There is also an office for the middle of the day. The evening office (Vespers) is the official evening prayer; Compline is said before retiring for the night. In addition, there is an office of Readings, corresponding to what was formerly called Matins.
2. Psalm 94 with its Invitatory is said before the first hour of the day, that is, normally, Lauds; but if, for example one recited first the office of Readings, this would be preceded by Psalm 94.
3. For the present the Scripture readings for "Matins" are suggested on separate sheets corresponding to the season, but the reader must find them for himself in the Bible. In addition to the Scripture readings, there is to be a "christian reading" of which a selection is being prepared from the Fathers and the spiritual writers throughout the ages right down to our own times. For the moment, this lectionary is not available, so one could take another chapter of the Bible, or a text of the Council, or some spiritual reading book.
4. Each Hour has only three psalms (or portions of psalms), and the hymn is always said before the psalms. Periods of silent meditation also form part of the office.
5. Instead of being distributed over one week, the psalms are spread out over four. For each year there is a system to indicate exactly which of the four sets is to be taken in a particular week.
6. At Lauds and Vespers, the final section is entitled "Intercession", and makes provision for incorporating the needs of the Church and the world into our daily prayer. There is a generous selection of texts, which take somewhat different forms, - some of them rather resembling the "Preces FERIALES", others more like the "Prayer of the Faithful" which is recited at Mass. They are found in each of the four sets of ferial offices, and there are also special formulae adapted to the liturgical seasons.

The whole Office is contained in a small slim volume, in spite of its 592 pages. There is a choice of binding - paperback or blue leatherette. To complete the office for each season, small fascicules are provided to be used in conjunction with the main text.

It has been known for some time that a new "breviary" is in preparation, and that the various episcopal conferences and others involved were being consulted. After the last consultation, the French-speaking Bishops declared themselves satisfied, and asked permission from Rome to proceed with this Office, at least experimentally. The permission was granted, and meanwhile the official texts were sent out for final revision. It is not known when the definitive Latin text and ultimately the various translations will be available. The new French Office has been in use since July 4th 1969. When the official version for the universal Church is published, it is likely to resemble the "Prière du Temps présent".

A final point is worth mentioning. A number of the hymns (both words and music) were composed by Fr. Lucien Deiss C.S.Sp. of the French province.