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INFORMATION - DOCUMENTATION

NEW SERIES n° 7

JUNE-JULY 1977

NEWS OF THE CONGREGATION

FROM THE GENERALATE

ACTS OF THE HOLY SEE: Erection of the Diocese of Same

By a decree of the 3rd February 1977, published on the 10th May, the Holy Father raised the Prefecture Apostolic of Same (Tanzania) to the rank of Diocese. At the same time, Mgr H. WINKELMOLEN, C.S.Sp., heretofore Prefect Apostolic of Same, was nominated Apostolic Administrator "sede vacante et ad nutum Sanctae Sedis" of the new Diocese.

ACTS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL: Erection of the Province of Angola

On the 18 June 1977, the General Council decided on the erection of the new Province of Angola, to date from the 29th June 1977. The new Province takes over the three Districts of Luanda, Wambo (Nova Lisboa) and Lubango (Sa da Bandeira). The Provincial house will be at Wambo. At the same time, Father Bernard BONGO, Angolan Spiritan, was nominated Provincial.

NEWS FROM THE GENERALATE

Plenary sessions of the General Council were held during the month of May. In June the Superior General made a short visit to the Province of Switzerland and then went on to direct the preparatory retreat for the General chapter of the Holy Ghost Sisters at Boulogne-Billancourt. He will join Fathers GROSS and SOUCY at the International Meeting of Young Spiritans in Spain (1st to 15th August) and will then return to Rome. Fathers GROSS and Walsh assisted at the Provincial Chapter of U.S.A. East, which began on the 15th June. Fr THIELEMEIER will keep things going at the Generalate during Summer and will visit Poland at the beginning of September. The full Council will be present in Rome, for a series of plenary sessions, as from 15th September. This series begins a little earlier than the usual date, as the Superior General has to attend the Synod of Bishops.

We have had many visitors, with more to come: bishops, Major Superiors, confreres going on home leave and availing of the opportunity for a visit to Rome. During July four scholastics from Ireland, with their Director, are attending a course at the Pontifical Institute of Arabic Studies - an intensive course that leaves little time for tourism...

Fr Christopher BURKE, after three years' study at the Alphonsianum defended his doctorate thesis: "The Development of Doctrine and Method of Evangelisation in the

Life and Work of Francis Libermann", obtaining the verdict: "magna cum laude". He has since returned to the District of Kenya.

Another thesis (of 601 pages), also in English, was defended by Father Alexander EKECHUKWU of the Province of Nigeria, at the Gregorian, entitled: "The Problem of Suffering in Igbo Religion in the Light of Catholic Theology". Father EKECHUKWU was a student at the French Seminary.

Brother Stephane BUAUD, of the French Province, has been at the Generalate since February. His work, especially painting, has been very much appreciated. His Province has agreed to "lend" him to us for another year.

N° 3 of "Spiritans Papers" will appear shortly. We hope to send you I/D 11 on "New Paths?" together with this present number of I/D News. - I/D 12 on "Internationality" will appear at the beginning of September.

INFORMATION SERVICE

As announced in the November issue, 1976, Father Jean GODARD will take over the function of Director of Information on 1st September, 1977. He has spent a year in preparation and is hoping for the collaboration of all confreres. Even the best of Directors in this field can only operate with the news that is supplied to him. Hence, I should like to ask all the Major Superiors to send a copy of their Provincial or District Bulletin to the Director of Information, as well as reports of important meetings, etc. As well, all other confreres are asked to send in important new items of general interest. Perhaps not everything may be of immediate use as it stands, but none of it will go to waste.

At the end of this year as interim Director, I should like to thank all the confreres who helped me in the work - particularly Father Gerald WALSH who looked after the translation and presentation of the English edition, Father Amadeu MARTINS who did the name for the Portuguese edition, Father Charles GALIEGUE who did such a competent and effective job of printing, in spite of his many occupations in the General Bursar's office. I do not forget the confreres in the General Secretariat who attended to the arranging and despatching of the finished product. Without all this willing help I should have found the task impossible. (H. LITTNER).

STATISTICS: How do we stand in 1977?

On the 1st June 1977 there were 3.972 Spiritans (Fathers, Brothers and Scholastics) in 55 different countries, of which 29 are African, 12 American, 11 European, with Bangladesh in Asia and Papua New Guinea and Australia in Oceania.

Taking into account the lessening of our numbers and the rising age-level of our confreres, we see a greater number of confreres in the older Christian countries (Europe and North America). Leaving out of account the confreres still in formation, we find in Europe and North America:

On 1st January 1968: 1.962 Fathers and Brothers out of 4.359, or 45,0%
 On 1st June 1974: 1.934 Fathers and Brothers out of 3.958, or 48,9%
 On 1st June 1977: 2.033 Fathers and Brothers out of 3.739, or 54,4%

One must also bear in mind that between 1968 and 1977 large numbers of missionaries returned to Europe from Eastern Nigeria (300) and from Angola (about 160). Besides, since 1968 the idea of "missionary situations" to be encountered anywhere in the world, has developed, so that merely geographical criteria have lost some of their importance. In fact, the number of confreres involved in missionary situations in Europe and North America has considerably increased in ten years. Unfortunately, from the statistical point of view, it is difficult to discern missionary situations concretely. Hence, one has to fall back on geographical criteria in spite of the limits and dangers in interpretation arising from this method.

OUR JUBILARIANS

October 6:	70 years of profession	Fr Pierre RICHARD	France
October 12:	30 years of Bishop	Mgr Daniel LISTON	Ireland
October 20:	65 years of profession	Fr Manuel J. RAPOSO	Portugal
October 28:	50 years of priesthood		
	Fr Pierre BUVIER	Fr Georges LE FAUCHEUR	France
	Fr Louis COSTE	Fr Jean MACHER	France
	Fr Alphonse GOSSE	Fr Antoine STIEGLER	France
	Fr Louis BECHELEN	Fr Jean KIRCHNER	Angola
	Fr Jean BOLATRE	Fr Louis LE CHEVALIER	La Réunion
	Fr Louis LE FOULER		Auteuil
	Fr Guillaume ROBIN		Guadeloupe
	Fr Christianus SPAANS		Holland
October 29:	50 years of profession		
	Bro. Didacus BOTERMANS	Bro. Rufus TOURNE	Holland
	Bro. Gerlacus REINTJES		France
	Bro. Nereus MEYER		Guadeloupe
December 8:	50 years of profession	Bro. Remigius KNEY	U.S.A. East

OUR DEAD

May 19:	Fr Michael KENNEDY	Ireland	80 years
June 13:	Fr James DUGGAN	Sierra Leone	59 years
June 16:	Bro. Berthold SEEBACHER	Germany	89 years
June 20:	Fr Patrick REA	Martinique	76 years
June 27:	Bro. Placide AZOU	France	64 years
June 27:	Fr Daniel HAGENAARS	Belgium	71 years
June 28:	Fr Stanislas BARAT	Auteuil	64 years
June 30:	Fr Paul FOURMONT	France	77 years
July 3:	Fr Timothy KELLY	Trans-Canada	48 years
July 5:	Fr Pierre NOIRTIN	France	67 years

FATHER LAVAL

On the 7th July, 1977, the Holy Father promulgated several decrees concerning Causes of Beatification. One of these recognised the authenticity of a cure attributed to the intercession of Father Jacques-Désiré Laval. This is a step forward for his Cause, but does not mean that the Beatification is to take place at once. Usually, unless a special dispensation has been obtained, a second miracle is required. Also, the ceremony of beatification does not take place until several months after the canonical procedures have been completed.

SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH

Mgr J. KEMPENEERS, Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith, is well known to many confreres who have availed of his kindness. Serious deterioration in health has obliged him to resign. His successor has just been nominated: Fr Fernand FRANCK, 43, Director of the Oeuvres Pontificales Missionnaires in Luxembourg. He takes over on September 1st.

FROM THE PROVINCES...

GERMANY

The Province is at present setting up a house of Missionary Formation at Knechtsteden, where there has already existed for the past few years a Centre of Missionary Animation in the form of a Missionary Exhibition, visited by 3.000 people each year. Recent adaptation of the buildings and the cooperation of a group of twenty confreres interested in the project have now led to a more permanent set-up in the form of a "Liebermann House" which, it is hoped, will be inaugurated in March 1978. Its objectives will be missionary and spiritual formation, having in view four classes of persons:

- Spiritans: Superiors, confreres involved in pastoral or educational work, renewal courses, etc...
- Young people, ranging from altar boys and schoolboys to high school students and including young workers;
- Those involved in pastoral work: priests, deacons, parish helpers, sacristans, catechists, etc...
- Families: engaged couples, young married people, parents, social workers, etc...

For all of these it is hoped to provide biblical courses, retreats, recollection days, liturgical celebrations (Holy Week for example), family recreations, etc...

"Liebermann House" will be directed by Father BREIDENBACH.

The Province suffered a great loss, on 7th April 1977, in the death of Father Richard GRAF. He had given great service to the Province where he had held several important functions: Director of scholastics from 1938 to 1946, and Provincial from 1948 to 1954. His chief reputation however, both in the Province and in Germany and in the rest of the world, is based on spiritual writings: 13 titles, with 75 translations. He had begun to write and to publish from the first years of his priesthood. His masterpiece is

surely "Ja, Vater" (published in English under the title "Yes, Father") which was translated into 23 languages, and must certainly be a Spiritan best-seller. As well as writing, Fr GRÄF communicated his thought through the length and breadth of Germany by innumerable retreats preached especially after 1954. From 1972 to 1975 he was hospital chaplain in Cologne, and during his last years his illness gave him the opportunity to practise by willing acceptance of suffering, the spirit of his own "Yes, Father".

"One skylark makes others sing": this Basuto proverb is the title of a 30 minute film directed and produced in South Africa by Fr Johannes HENSCHERL of Knechtsteden. It was made in an African area near Bethlehem and present a typical basic Christian community animated by Fr Horst SCHIER, C.S.Sp. It presents to German parishes the living example of an African basic community.

UNITED STATES

The Provincial house of the Western Province has been transferred to San Antonio (Texas). At the time of the division of the United States Province in 1964, the Western Province set up the provincial headquarters at Glenwood Springs (Colorado). In 1971 it was transferred to Denver (Colorado). It was found that the State of Colorado, although geographically at the centre, was too far from the areas in which the Province is chiefly engaged, and so the change was made. Glenwood Springs, formerly a novitiate, was closed last year. The theology house of the Province has also been located at San Antonio for some years.

Address: Holy Ghost Fathers Provincialate
919 Briarcliff
SAN ANTONIO, Texas 78213 Phone: (512) 349-6349

The inter-provincial novitiate will open at Ferndale at the end of this month. For the present, six candidates are expected: one from U.S. East, two from Trans-Canada and three from U.S. West.

SWITZERLAND: a Spiritan Parish in Bâle

Since the time of our first arrival in Switzerland (at Fribourg) in 1904, the longed-for possibility of an establishment in German-speaking Switzerland has always been kept in view. That part of the Confederation is traditionally considered to be very rich in vocations, just like the cantons of Fribourg and the Valais. Visits, recruiting efforts were made, and about ten German-speaking confreres joined up, but the main drive remained concentrated on French-speaking Switzerland. It must be remembered that the International Scholasticate at Fribourg and the sanatorium in Montana were directly dependent on the Mother House, while the Junior Scholasticate (at Bouveret from 1936) was dependent on the French Province until 1948, when Switzerland became a Province. The houses of Fribourg and Montana were handed over to the Province after the General Chapter of 1962.

The present opening into German-speaking Switzerland is due to the initiative of the Diocese of Bâle which has offered us the French Parish in Bâle, hitherto looked after by the Jesuits. With very few French-speaking members in their German Swiss Province, the Jesuits were unable to keep the parish going by replacing the Parish Priest who is 68 years old. The Swiss confreres showed they were interested, when consulted by the Provincial Council. After studying the situation and looking into local conditions in the parish, the Provincial Council, with the agreement of the General Administration, took on the Sacred Heart Parish. A native of the diocese of Bâle, Father Albert MEIER, who had been a missionary in the Cameroons since 1952, was nominated Parish Priest and canonically installed on the 31st October 1976.

The special apostolate of this parish is concerned with French-speaking people living in Bâle and its neighbourhood and coming from Switzerland, France, Belgium, Canada and also French-speaking Africa. Care is given to the religious formation of children who speak only French. Religious services are provided for all those visitors who do not speak German. There is no question of forming a French-speaking ghetto but rather of establishing contact with and helping those who do not fit into the local churches for linguistic reasons.

There are all the characteristic difficulties of parishes concerned with special groups. The parishioners are spread out over a very large area, in this case the city of Bâle and its suburbs (230.000 inhabitants). Some live fairly continuously in Bâle, others are there only for a few months at a time. For many, the Sacred Heart Church, if they have even heard of it, is very distant, and they run the risk of dropping out of church life, at least during their time in Bâle. On the other hand, as in all such parishes, there is a core of convinced Christians who can be dependent upon, and who could become the apostles of their French-speaking fellow-citizens.

From the beginning, Fr MEIER has been in contact with the twelve Catholic parishes of Bâle and has assisted regularly at priestly and pastoral meetings. He has also established good relations with the pastors of the French-speaking Reformed Church, especially during Unity Week and on the occasion of a fortnight devoted to ecumenical activities, featuring biblical encounters and in particular two remarkable conferences on the Old and the New Testaments given by Fr P. FERET O.P. and Prof. ACHARD of Geneva.

His principal preoccupation remains the catechesis of youth: at the French School, where he is helped by a group of women (for whom he provides preparatory meetings); in the parish itself for children attending other schools; at meetings with parents who look after the catechesis of the smaller children; by preparation for First Communion and for Confirmation. An effort is also being made to get youth movements going. For the adults, there is the H. Ghéon Circle, a Women's Circle, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the mixed choir, etc.

This Autumn, the Parish Priest expects to have a permanent curate to help him. During this year he was helped by Fr RIGOLET who has returned to La Réunion. The Spiritans are very happy about the good reception they have been given by the parishioners.

FROM THE DISTRICTS AND SMALL GROUPS...

ALASKA: Life in the "Bush"...

Fr Gerard T. RYAN, 47, of the Irish Province, describes his life as a Parish Priest in Alaska. He has been there since 1971, having been previously a missionary in Nigeria from 1957 to 1969.

My parish is in the Archdiocese of Anchorage, Alaska, and is named after St Bernard of Menthon, the patron saint of mountain-climbers and rescuers. The reason for this is that my rectory is situated only sixty air-miles from Mount McKinley the highest mountain in North America (20,320 ft.) and one of the highest mountains in the world. My home is a double-wide mobile unit sitting on cement blocks in a little clearing over the railway tracks close to a very small town called Talkeetna. In the same clearing is my church - one of three in the parish - made of cedar wood.

Alaska, the 49th and largest State in the U.S. is vast. In fact, it is eighteen times the size of Ireland, so it is not surprising that St Bernard's parish is eleven thousand square miles, or about one third the area of my native land. So I have a large territory to cover and I visit all three churches and an additional town in another parish, every week. The circuit is 175 miles and it takes 24 hours to visit all the towns and say the four masses every week-end.

The church in Talkeetna doubles as a town-hall for the local residents and is never locked. It is used as a movie theatre, a clinic for the doctor, parish parties, catechism classes and various meetings of different societies. Another church named after St Philip is actually a cement basement with a fully equipped kitchen and used in the same way as St Bernard's. The third church is a mobile unit called St Christopher's in the town of Willow. I say my fourth mass in a public school beside a summer resort called Big Lake. St Philip's church is in place known as Trapper's Creek or Cache Creek.

St Bernard's is the northernmost parish in the archdiocese and borders on the diocese of Fairbanks. Talkeetna is just over a hundred miles from the city of Anchorage on a spur road off the main Anchorage-Fairbanks highway. It is sparsely populated as there are not many opportunities of employment in the vicinity. So my congregation is small. There are only about 30 Catholic families in the entire parish. That is why we have movies, bingo and other fund raising projects to supplement the Sunday collections. The pastor's salary is paid by the Catholic Extension Society.

As I live alone, time does not weigh heavily on my hands. I do my own cooking, house-cleaning, wash my own clothes and haul my own garbage to the dump two miles outside the town. I also do a certain amount of snow clearing in the Winter when the snow reaches a height of four or five feet and the temperature drops to 40° below zero, which is 72° below freezing point. As hobbies I enjoy listening to music, reading, writing poetry and cross-country skiing.

During the week I say Home-Masses, promoting devotion to the Sacred Heart and to the recitation of the Rosary. I also hold weekly classes in either scripture or convert

instruction. Visiting families and individuals is also part of my schedule. Two or three times a month I travel to Anchorage to be with my fellow priests. Also once a month we have a clergy meeting when all the priests of the archdiocese, about 30, gather together with the Archbishop for a day of consultation and prayer and good cheer.

Such in brief is my life as pastor of a "Bush" parish in the Frontier and as yet undeveloped State of the great land of Alaska.

Gerard T. RYAN, C.S.Sp.

SENEGAL: Life of a "Bush" team in Muslim country

Our information comes from a circular letter sent to their relatives and friends by the missionary team in Goudiry (Prefecture Apostolic of Tambacounda): Father Gérard MEYER, Brother Albert MATHIS and two Sisters of St Joseph of Annecy. The mission is in the extreme east of Senegal, near the frontier of Mauritania and Mali. There are about 50 Catholics in a population of 54.500. The mission also serves Bakel, about 650 km from Saint-Louis, where from 1850 to 1854 an attempt was made at evangelization (3 Fathers and 2 Brothers) but the effort had to be abandoned because of conditions of insecurity and a flood which destroyed all the buildings.

First of all, the team members describe their life in this Muslim environment: be present, create contacts and bonds with the people... "For us who bear the marks of a civilization where efficiency and utility and success are esteemed and where we take a secret joy in being very busy, a conversion, a change of outlook, is needed. It is often said that a European is a person "who is always rushing about, who never sits down". Here "to sit down" means to take the time to greet others, to exchange the talk that makes a real meeting of persons possible. It means to accept the slow pace of learning a language which little reveals itself as more than a collection of words, as a way of life, a part of humanity".

As they visit the villages, the missionaries try to improve the health of the children, to suggest a more balanced diet, to encourage the planting of gardens where local crops can be bettered and other crops introduced, e.g. fruit trees. The big problem is irrigation. the wells are so deep that it requires a great deal of work.

"The Muslim religion has been here for a long time. Tribes like the Toucouleurs and the Sarakollés were islamized in the XIXth century. Islam is very strong: nearly every village has its Koran school which hold sessions at night around the fire. The children learn to read and recite the Koran in Arabic. The religious chiefs still have considerable influence. Some of them are real men of prayer, often passing part of the night in prayer and study. Some have deep religious and Arabic learning. In the small villages, such men are found who have passed their whole life studying and searching the scriptures. The kind of religion works for unity and solidarity among the different tribes".

But Western influence has penetrated everywhere too, for better or for worse. "There is not a village without transistors giving news from all over the world. New ideas and customs also filter in from the many who migrate to France. Money comes in also.

A person who used to farm at subsistence level can go and sweep streets in Paris for 3.000 francs (600 dollars) a month. With money coming in, new needs make themselves felt: increase the herd, improve the house. They can also take more wives. It seems though that sometimes it is the latest Japanese motorbike or some other gadget that comes before cleaning out a well or improving working or living conditions. So we see some newly rich, but also many poor. It is not always easy for migrants to come back home: some have ruined their health, others can no longer settle down here. Perhaps these, more than any, are sensitive to a certain type of acceptance".

"Acceptance -- hospitality -- is still one of our principal tasks. It seems to us that opening our house to everybody, paying attention to every person, crossing all social lines, -- that these constitute in the long run a Gospel attitude... To welcome is to prepare the way of the Lord and to discover patiently the marks of God's presence in the Muslim community where we live. In any case, welcome and hospitality are not empty words here: not long ago we went to visit somebody without prior notice; he welcomed us most cordially, rolled out his finest mat, and turned his household upside down to prepare meals for us and to make our visit pleasant. For several hours the only thing that mattered was his passing guests".

"Would that we could disturb our comfortable houses in the same way. Isn't Jesus Christ often the guest who comes knocking at the door...unannounced?"

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

AFRICAN SPIRITANS

On the 5th November 1852, almost 125 years ago, Mgr KOBES ordained Jean LACOMBE (1829-1900) to the priesthood at Gorée. He later entered the Congregation (professed on the 20th December 1857) thus becoming the first African Spiritan. He was born in Bathurst (now Banjul) on the 28 of October 1829 of a French father and a Senegalese mother of the Peul tribe, and grew up in Gorée where his father lived. After secondary studies at Saint-Louis, he entered the Holy Ghost Seminary in 1848 and returned to Senegal for his ordination in 1852. Thus, his time in the Seminary was spent under Fr Libermann as Superior. His priestly ministry was extremely fruitful, because of his devotedness and his perfect understanding of the language. He worked with great zeal at Gorée, Dakar, Joal, Ngazobil, Bathurst (1864-1875), Casamance, etc. He died exhausted by his work, at Dakar on the 21st November 1900. (*See account in General Bulletin, XXI, 1901-1902, pp. 64-70*).

SOUTH-WEST BRAZIL

The Episcopal Conference of Brazil (over 300 members) has nominated Fr David REGAN, C.S.Sp., as coordinator for the urban apostolate and has also put him in charge of cultural and pastoral relations between Brazil and Africa.

CAMEROONS

The Bishops of the Cameroons, eighteen in number, of whom seven are religious (including three Spiritans), devoted their Annual Assembly, from 19th to 23rd April 1977, to the theme: "Religious Vocations". In the thirteen diocese there are 85 Congregations of women and 24 of men.

KENYA

In 1976 alone, the sale of Bibles in Kenya came to 1.529.243. This is a high figure for a population of 13 million, of whom 9 million are christians (2,5 million catholics). Apart from the major Churches, sects have swarmed - more than 200 christian denominations are recorded in the "Kenya Churches Handbook" of 1973.