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SPIRITAN

NEWS

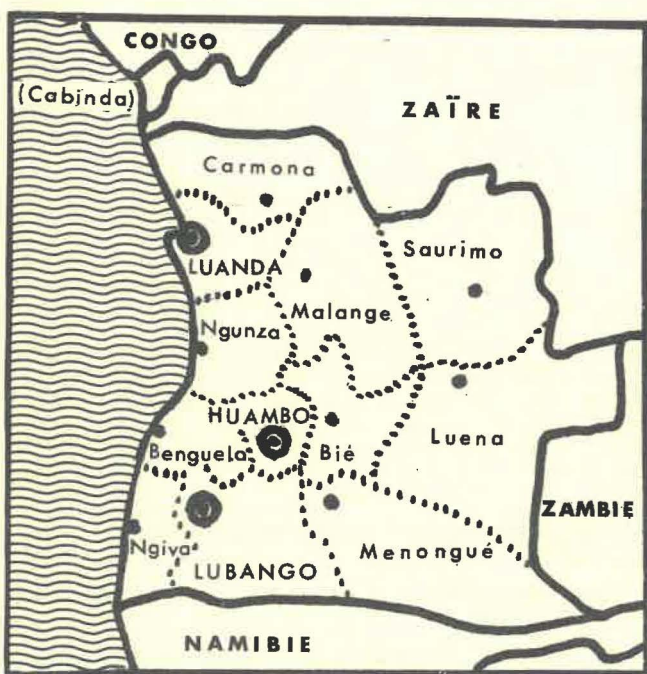
DECEMBER 1977

Number 10

CONGREGAZIONE DELLO SPIRITO SANTO - CLIVO DI CINNA, 195 - 00136 ROMA

SUMMARY

AN EVENT : Christian Angola comes to Rome
DOCUMENTATION : The Synod: Catechesis in the Third World
NEWS : The Generalate Team - Congo - - Spiritan Formation - Madagascar - Poland - Ethiopia - Guinea - USA/Trans-Canada - Jubilees - Our Dead.



THE CHURCH IN ANGOLA: 3 Archdioceses: LUANDA (plus Cabinda); HUAMBO (formerly Nova Lisboa); LUBANGO (formerly Sã da Bandeira); and 9 Dioceses: BENGUELA; BIE (formerly Silva Porto); CARMONA-SAN SALVADOR; LUENA (formerly Luso); MALANJE; MENONGUE (formerly Serpa Pinto); NGIVA; NGUNZA (formerly Novo Redondo); SAURIMO (formerly Henrique de Carvalho).



THE SPIRITAN PROVINCE OF ANGOLA: erected June 29, 1977, it is made up of 7 zones, some of them including several dioceses: HUAMBO-BIE; LUANDA-NGUNZA-CARMONA; LUBANGO-MENONGUE-NGIVA; BENGUELA; MALANJE; SAURIMO-LUENA; CABINDA.

In the Spiritan Seminary at HUAMBO there are 2 theologians, 12 philosophers and 49 junior seminarians. There are 6 Angolan professed members: 3 priests and three brothers. Two of the brothers are studying for the priesthood and the other one for the permanent diaconate.

An Event:

CHRISTIAN ANGOLA COMES TO ROME Holy Year Pilgrimage delayed two years

Because of the political situation in Angola two years ago, it was impossible to send an Angolan national pilgrimage for the Holy Year. This was made up for recently by a pilgrimage which arrived for the Pope's 80th birthday on September 26 and stayed in Rome until October 2.

For us Spiritans, still closely connected with the Angolan Church, this pilgrimage was very touching. All the more so because, in the midst of their busy week in Rome, the pilgrims wanted to come to the Generalate. A delegation of them celebrated the Eucharist with the General Council and the community. During the meal which followed, they expressed their gratitude to Father General for the apostolic work done among them by Spiritans from the very beginning.

The group, numbering 49 in all, was led by the Archbishops of Luanda and Huambo and the Bishops of Saurimo, Malanje and Lusa, and included priests, Sisters, catechists and lay men and women involved in the Legion of Mary or other forms of apostolate.

To insure that this was a real pilgrimage and not just a tourist trip, all the group made a week's retreat together at the Capuchin seminary in Luanda immediately before leaving for Rome. They were received by the Pope in private audience on the morning of their arrival.

In his address to His Holiness in the name of the group, Archbishop Muaca said: "We have come to the tomb of St. Peter to renew our baptismal promises and our promise of loyalty to the Chair of Peter. And we will go to the Catacombs to seek examples of courage that will enable us to remain faithful to the end." He presented the Pope with a bouquet of fresh flowers from Angola and a photocopy of the Catechism used by the first missionaries in Angola.

(from "FIDES", October 12, 1977)

Father Timmermans was one of the 10 elected by the Union of Superiors General as members of the Synod along with the 200 other participants, mostly bishops. His special assignment was to present the relationship between catechesis and religious life. At the end of the Synod he gave the following interview for SPIRITAN NEWS.

Documentation: THE SYNOD: CATECHESIS IN THE THIRD WORLD (an interview by Father Timmermans)

the Third World, particularly Africa and Latin America where our Spiritan confreres work.

Yes, one of the characteristics of the Synod was the presence of a large number of Bishops from the Third World. You have only to look at the figures: apart from the Roman Curia (18, of whom 3 were from the Third World) and the Patriarchs (13, of whom 4 were from the Third World), the Synodal Fathers from Africa numbered 33, from Central America and West Indies 12, from South America 26 and from Asia 21. That makes 92 Bishops from Third World countries and only 47 from Europe and North America. One Bishop said very truly at the opening of the Synod: "Henceforth the West is a minority in the Church." The Church "with a hundred faces" was present here.

I saw in this Synod another sign of the Kingdom: those who set the tone were the representatives of the poor and disinherited. In my discussion group there were 10 Africans and 2 Asiatics, - 12 out of 17. You can see how easy it was for me to be attentive to the voice of the Third World.

I suppose those Bishops insisted upon the Mission and the missionary aspect of all catechesis.

I would say that, by their very presence, they manifested an essential aspect of the Mission: what we might call the "second meaning" or "second direction" of the Mission. For a long time we considered Mission as a sending to the young Churches. But, in the "second meaning", Mission also goes towards what we call the Churches of origin. When they gave joyful and confident witness in the Synod of the wonders the Lord works among them, the young Churches rendered a real missionary service to the Churches of the older Christian traditions. Among those wonders I would especially like to note the existence and vitality of small Christian communities of "human dimension". These are places where the faith is lived and shared, privileged places for the catechesis of adults and young people. In my discussion group this was the key topic: every question about faith and Christian commitment, profession and celebration of the faith, pedagogical rules and catechesis, - all were treated from this angle of the Christian community. Still, the thinking about these communities remained clear. First of all, because there is still a long distance between the ideal and the real in this matter, even if it has high pastoral priority. Then, as Cardinal THIANDOUOM remarked: there is danger of an exaggeration which could harm the personal and individual dimensions of the Faith and risk falling into a sort of religious collectivism. In their interventions, Africans, Asians and Latin Americans stressed the original character of these new community structures. It must be remembered too that terms like "small communities" and "basic communities" stand for quite different realities and the fact of using the same names may sometimes lead to confusion.

I also found another missionary element in the Synod: the Church has "a hundred faces". It is clear that She is trying to become incarnate and to express herself in the various continents. She wants to keep in mind the genius and the cultures of different peoples and at the same time She wishes them all to be in unity around the mystery of the one Faith. All during the Synod one could see this dialectic and balance between unity and diversity, between the unity of the mystery and its deployment in diverse ways. Cultures cannot be the norm; the norm is the Gospel. But the local Churches are becoming more and more aware of their own soul, of their outlook

on the world, of their own hierarchy of values. They strongly feel the weight of the culture which was imposed upon them in the past. True enough, they are still feeling their way, but in Africa, in Asia, in Latin America, there is a fresh theological approach, as well as searchings in the areas of religious art, liturgy, . . .

That is a new kind of work. New also are urban problems in Africa. Was there any talk about an urban catechesis?

The large centers present a great problem. It is not rare to find cities of from 500,000 to 1,000,000 inhabitants. However, there were not many comments on this. Africa and the African Church are still essentially rural. They are only now waking up to the problem of the cities. Perhaps the Bishops find that urban problems are common to all the Churches; or perhaps they have not yet approached these problems in an African way. On the other hand, they are remarkably at ease and informative when they speak of the Africa still marked by its own culture and still rooted in its own traditions.

Surely the voice of the Third World had something to say about catechetical problems presented by injustice in the world.

Yes. Justice and liberation were dealt with frequently. Here too, every continent had its own point of view. The African delegations insisted upon their culture and identity, - no doubt as a legitimate rear-guard reaction against colonialism. The cry for social justice and liberation came most strongly from Latin America, supported by Europe and North America. It was clearly affirmed that the struggle for justice, respect for human rights and the fight against misery form part of the authentic living of the Gospel. Regret was expressed that the great encyclicals have not filtered down into catechetical instruction. Asia, being much more contemplative, insisted upon Gospel values and especially the Beatitudes. It is precisely this inspiration which gives the Christian effort its special character. It is worth noting that one does not find in the Asian Churches' catechetical approach the same sort of aggressiveness as in Latin America.

How about Mission? the dynamism, the spreading of the Faith?

It must be admitted that this seems lacking in the Synod. Of course, the missionary dimension is found in most of the topics treated; but the Synod did not take it up as a central theme. One looks in vain for an adequate sign of the need to extend the Faith beyond the frontiers. Father HARDY, Superior General of the S.M.A., was one of the few who insisted upon baptism as entailing the duty of giving witness and going to bring the Faith to others, and drew attention to the fact that all catechesis must be missionary. He took Mission out of the purely geographical context, out of the setting of "Old-World/New-World" problems, and placed it at the heart of the Christian mystery. I am sorry that there are few echoes of this in the texts. One gets rather the impression of a Synod and a catechesis taken up mainly with "home" problems. Still, I was very pleased by one of the sentences in the final document in which the young are asked to make their faith felt as an influence around them. I quote from memory: ". . . being well prepared, they can respect those who do not think as they do and those who do not believe, but especially they will be able to be true witnesses of faith in Christ."

To speak of catechesis is to speak of catechists; what about them?

The Synod spoke about catechists a great deal. It is too bad, however, that in a meeting which discussed their work there were practically no lay people, young people, women - those who are "the catechists". I knew and admired the catechists in Africa. Now, since the Synod, I am more than ever convinced of their irreplaceable

role in the Church. Without them, Christian communities, even the most alive of them, would be doomed to die. Education in the Faith, on-going formation of Christians, — all depend upon the catechists. They are the main-spring of the Church.

The relationship between catechesis and religious life means a lot to you, doesn't it?

It certainly does. Just as no one is baptized only for his own sake, but also for others, so also, when one makes Profession, it is not only for his own sake, but also for others. I do not believe that the religious life has as its *raison d'être* availability for the apostolate. It is first of all a consecration to God. But what we give to God we give to our brethren at the same time. Because of this, religious have to be both at the heart of God and at the heart of the world. I believe that religious profession gives us in a special way the duty of being the men and women in the Church who radiate the Good News, who are educators in the Faith, who attract people to the Faith.

Because of the Gospel, but also because of our fellow men, we have to re-examine our way of life and the impact of the witness we give. Religious have the freedom to do so much: they don't have the care of a family, they don't have to chase after money to make a living, they are much freer than others to listen for the calls of the

Spirit today and to respond to them. Similarly, their communities must be able to serve as points of reference for Christian communities and perhaps become a focal point for larger communities to grow around them. The African Bishops remarked that they would like to see the religious more integrated into the Christian communities. They believe that we live too much apart, either constituting our own little universe for ourselves or else imposing our own ideas without caring whether they are suitable for the Church in which we work.

The call to us from the Christian communities is a call to holiness, a call to live the thirst for God before the world. The young Churches tell us: "Be communities of prayer; be people whose life is based in God; teach us how to pray. May we be able to find around you a space where God is tangible and not just a community busy with many things." If we truly live in the heart of God, we will not shut ourselves up in our houses and lock the doors. Look at Mother Theresa of Calcutta. She was often referred to at the Synod because of her loving presence among the poor. She does not handle millions of dollars, but she is *there*. I think that all this brings us back to Libermann's intuition that it is the holiness of the missionaries which does the converting.

Did the Synod re-affirm that?

Not as explicitly as this. But I am happy to be able to say it again to all my confreres.

NEWS

The Generalate Team

Father Thielemeier, after he returns from Canada in December, will go to Germany. Father General will join him there at the end of December.

Father Van Sonsbeek will go to Senegal and Mauritania in mid- December. Father Gross will join him there after his visit to Sierra Leone with Father Daly.

After his visit to Sierra Leone, Father Daly will return to Rome for the December meeting on Spiritan Formation. Then he will go to Kenya in mid-January.

Congo

The new address of the Principal Superior and of the Procure in Brazzaville is: Maison LIBERMANN, B.P. 1524, BRAZZAVILLE, Popular Republic of Congo.

The LIBERMANN International Senior Seminary keeps its old address (B.P. 210), but its name has been changed to Emile BIAYENDA Regional Senior Seminary.

Spiritan Formation

From December 18 to 24, there will be a meeting in Rome of Directors of Formation. This will be the first such meeting on the Generalate level in 15 years. Subjects on the agenda are: problems in Spiritan Formation today, ways to make our formation more international, spiritual renewal programs, practical arrangements for the type of international summer sessions for those in formation called for by the 1976 Enlarged Council.

Madagascar

Some Chapters are clearly programmed and fitted into a definite time structure. The District Council

of Madagascar has opted for a different formula: a "CAPITULAR YEAR". After 80 years in the country, the Spiritans are "taking their bearings". Actually it will take more than a year. The 14 meetings held in the past 11 months are only the first stage: that of creating awareness of problems and getting started. The plan calls for discussions of "our presence among the Malgache people", "our presence in the Malgache Church", "how to prepare for tomorrow's Mission", "pastoral priorities", "relationships among priests", "our Spiritan religious life".

Father Thibault, Provincial of France, was in Madagascar from October 28 to November 28 to share this study with the confreres of the District. (from the *Bulletin* of the District of Madagascar, no. 11 and 12)

Poland

Our Polish confreres draw our attention to the fact that the weekly "GOSC NIEDZIELNY", in the series "Orders and Congregations in Poland", has published two articles: one by Father Forys, "The Congregation of the Holy Ghost", the other by Father Mientke, "The Holy Ghost Missionaries". Father Thielemeier visited the Province in September and testifies to its vitality: there were 4 professions on September 8 and the new year began with 3 novices and 10 scholastics.

The French newspaper "LE FIGARO" published in late August an article by René Laurentin which sheds some light upon the situation of the Church in Poland and therefore upon the environment our Polish confreres live in. We give the following extract:

Some Polish sociologists participated in the Congress of Religious Sociology in Strassburg (August 28 - September 2). Their report gave a comparative picture of the religious situation in various Eastern countries. There is great diversity between countries and even between

urban and rural areas, as can be seen from the following statistics of religious practice:

Country	Rural	Urban
USSR	15.9%	7.9%
Bulgaria	25.8%	9.8%
Jugo-Slavia	50 %	29 %
Poland	92.2%	80.9%

Clearly Poland is in a class by itself, both as to the totals and for the similarity between city and rural areas. This is bound up with the history of each of the Eastern countries and also with the degree of liberty enjoyed by believers.

Catechism in the schools is forbidden in the USSR, in Roumania, in Bulgaria, while it is permitted – under State control – in Czecho-Slovakia, in Jugo-Slavia, in Hungary and in East Germany. In the two latter countries, about 10% to 20% of children between the ages of 6 and 12 attend catechism. In Poland the situation is similar, except that attendance is 80% for children 6 to 12, 30% in secondary school, and 5% to 10% in higher education. In Poland there is a less favorable attitude towards religion among students in Letters than among those in Science. There are many religious publications but they are subject to State censorship. There is one priest for about every 1,500 faithful. Permission can sometimes be obtained to build churches. Priests devote half of their pastoral work to liturgical and sacramental ministry, one-quarter to catechesis, one-quarter to pastoral visits and work with special groups.

The state of pragmatic equilibrium and respective autonomy between Church and State is brought out by these two statements "... It is essential that there be recognition of the presence of the Church in Polish society ... freedom for the Catholic cultural milieu ..." (Cardinal WYSZYNSKI, January 1974). "... Millions of Poles are believers. That is a historical and contemporary fact ... There is a vast field for fruitful collaboration between Church and State ..." (President GIEREK, September 1976).

Ethiopia

The Spiritan International Team, made up of 2 Americans and 1 Dutchman, have their base of operations (a house and a school) at Dadim, near Yavello in the Prefecture Apostolic of Awassa in Southern Ethiopia. Their principal objective is the first evangelization of the nomadic Boranas. Because of the local situation, however, the Boranas left the area some months ago. This left our confreres all alone. The local authorities recommended against their remaining isolated there. Father Iede De Lange, the Superior of the Mission, came to Rome along with Mgr. Gasparini, the Prefect Apostolic. It was decided that they should seek temporary work in a less isolated area while waiting for better times in the Yavello region.

The 3 confreres went to Nairobi for the meeting on the Apostolate to Nomadic Peoples. This meeting, organized by AMECEA, took place from October 31 to November 5, with 34 participants from 8 dioceses which have nomads within their territory. There was a day of sharing experiences and discussion of methods and the rest of the time was devoted to an in-depth study of the apostolate to nomads from the theological, scriptural and liturgical angles.

Guinea

On October 1, the 19th Guinean priest was ordained at Kissidougou. The Kissi country was

evangelized in turn by White Fathers and Spiritans and now has flourishing Christian communities. However, the region has produced only one priest, and that 8 years ago, and not a single sister. We can well appreciate the joy occasioned by this new ordination when Joseph Banyou Mara, a Kissi from Fedou, received the priesthood from Bishop Cisse of Sikasso. They had to call this Bishop in from Mali because Mgr. Tchidimbo, the only Guinean bishop, has been in prison for almost 7 years.

In spite of it being a difficult season, and in spite of fatigue and the work needing to be done in the fields, delegations came from every parish in Guinea to take their places with the two Apostolic Administrators: Mgr. Barry of Conakry and Mgr. Téa of N'Zérékén. The first row was occupied by political and administrative authorities, the Secretary General, the Governor and his assistants. The united choirs of the Diocese, 60 boys and girls from Kissidougou and Gueckedou, spent 8 days together at their own expense to prepare for the celebration.

This religious manifestation was another proof of the degree of commitment of the lay people, the vitality of the diocesan communities and of the whole country. It was celebrated in Christian African style, very musical and artistic, very colorful, – deeply rooted in faith, a manifestation of the vigorous faith of Guinean Christians and especially of the Kissi region. The rejoicing was so great that, when the new priest was presented to the crowd, the platform gave way under the ever more enthusiastic steps of the dancers. Joy was externalized by songs and hand-clapping: "Praise to God, thanks to Bishop Cisse, and congratulations to our 3 young men!" (the same day, one seminarian was ordained deacon and another acolyte). There are 12 senior seminarians in the region and about the same number of young women preparing to consecrate themselves forever to the service of the Lord and of their brethren.

(from "AFRIQUE NOUVELLE", Dakar, October 19/25, 1977)

USA-Trans-Canada

The international novitiate opened on August 1 at Ferndale USA - West). There are 5 novices: 2 from USA - West, 1 from USA - East, and 2 from Trans-Canada.

(Trans-Canada "NEWS BRIEFS", October 3, 1977)

Our Jubilarians

- Jan. 12: Fr. Vincent G. KMIECINSKI (USA-E),
65 years professed
- Jan. 29: Fr. Joseph BEYS (Martinique),
50 yrs. ordained

Our Dead

- Aug. 6 : Fr. Jeronimo FERREIRA (Portugal), 87 yrs.
- Oct. 24 : Fr. Patrick COUGHLAN (Ireland), 59 yrs.
- Oct. 27 : Fr. William DWANE (Ireland), 57 years old.