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# SPIRITAN NEWS

APRIL 1978

Number 13

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

## SUMMARY

An Event : Provincial Chapter, Germany.  
Documentation: In Trinidad, "SERVOL".  
News : Information Service - Sierra Leone - Nigeria - England - Angola - Christians and Moslems - Sunday Services for Catechists - Our Dead.

## An Event :

### PROVINCIAL CHAPTER, GERMANY

(December 1977 - January 1978)

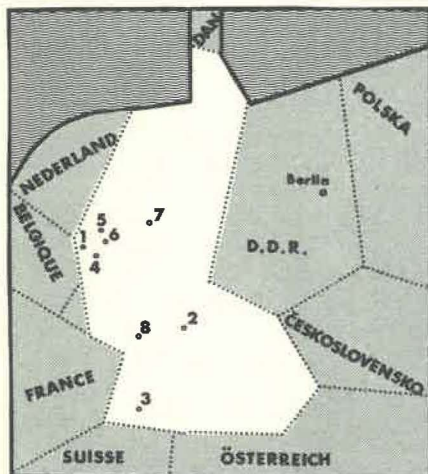
#### A Call to Hope

No Province of the Holy Ghost Congregation has suffered more than that of Germany. Of many possible examples of this none perhaps is more striking than the vacillation in the graph of Scholastics of the Province over the past 75 years, which reflects so well the history of that period.

At the present time, there are 241 German Spiritans dispersed as follows: Working in the Province: 166, of whom 118 are living in one or other of the 8 communities of the Province; the others are in parishes, hospitals, or homes for the aged. Working outside the Province: 75. 48 of these are in Brazil, 22 in South Africa; the others are scattered in different Districts.

#### SCHOLASTICS:

1901 : 1  
1914 : 54  
1920 : 4  
1939 : 120  
1945 : 15  
1958 : 80  
1977 : 5



- 1 : Broich
- 2 : Buchen
- 3 : Donau-eschingen
- 4 : Heimbach
- 5 : Knecht-steden
- 6 : Köln
- 7 : Menden
- 8 : Speyer

Six years since the last Provincial Chapter, no professions in the last five years, an average age of 58 and only 12% of the members of the Province under 40! Who

could have blamed our German brethren if their Provincial Chapter of 1977-78 had been a proclamation of despair. Yet, the contrary has proved true.

Already in 1971, the Provincial Chapter had set itself as principal task the revival of the missionary spirit of the Province. The 1977-78 Chapter renews this determination and realistically indicates the direction it should take. One must first BE, action will follow. The aim must be to exist and give living witness to the Spiritan way of life which is that of a religious, missionary community. One is particularly impressed by the fact that there is no direct reference made to "looking for vocations", as might have been expected in the circumstances. Though not deliberately excluded, the general conviction was "vocations will come when we live up to our ideals. We must be seen to be what we truly are by profession". Vocations today are found in prayer groups, in committed Christian communities, - and that "precisely is what our Spiritan communities should be".

Father General and Father Thielemeier, former Provincial of Germany and now General Assistant, shared in the deliberations of the 31 delegates present. This made it easier for the Chapter to align itself with the whole Congregation in the hope that inspires it today (spiritual renewal, community life, a more definite dedication to the poor). One era of missionary endeavour has definitely ended: another has definitely begun. The invitation clearly is not to sit and weep that the harvest-time is over but to go forth in the hope and joy of a new spring, scattering the seed of a harvest yet to come.

The Chapter documents reflect this new start. Over and above community, they are directed to EACH INDIVIDUAL member of the Province in the first instance. It is a personal responsibility to review one's life, to recognize the necessity of common prayer and of renewal courses, to restore respect for the religious vows, to make our communities places of welcome. Missionary renewal itself cannot be effected merely by some individuals or communities. Every Spiritan, by his life-style and fidelity, has a positive and personal contribution to make to the missionary ideal of his Province. No doubt, that the witness may be more striking, it will be necessary to call upon the services of confreres at present working abroad. No doubt also, that from 1978 onwards, our houses will have to change and develop on different lines, become more specialized communities perhaps like "Libermannhaus" at Knechtsteden or the Diocesan Centre for Missionary Inspiration to be opened shortly at Speyer.

The unanimous-re-election of Father Claus as Provincial at the end of the Chapter is a sign of the hope that inspired all the delegates.

The stirring of new life, hope for the future: what better expression of this than the invitation extended by the Province to the Enlarged Council of 1978 to hold its meetings in Germany?

And what better proof that these aspirations are shared by the Congregation in general than the joyful acceptance of this invitation by the General Council and those who will take part in the Enlarged Council meeting in May this year. TOGETHER we go forward IN HOPE!

## Documentation

### In Trinidad: "SERVOL" at the service of the underprivileged

After 11 years' teaching, a Spiritan has been devoting himself for the past 7 years to the service of the poor.

For the past seven years SERVOL ('Service Volunteered for All') has been working in the slums of Port-of-Spain and in other parts of the islands of Trinidad and Tobago (West Indies), to improve conditions for the underprivileged.

After the Black Power riots in Trinidad in April 1970, Fr. Gerard Pantin, C.S.Sp.\*, brother of Archbishop Anthony Pantin of Port-of-Spain, decided that neither the Government nor the Church was doing enough to solve the problems of unemployment, and he asked for leave from his work as Science Master and Dean of Studies at St. Mary's College, so as to be able to devote himself entirely to work for the underprivileged in the slums on and around Laventille Hill in East Port-of-Spain.

To help him at the start he secured the services of Wesley Hall, a well-known international Negro cricketer, and the two of them began work on Sept. 8, 1970. They approached groups of idlers in the Laventille area and asked what they could do to help. At first they were greeted with scepticism, but the people soon realized that they were serious and began to cooperate.

The first services were in organizing sporting facilities and community centres and in looking for jobs for the unemployed.

\* Fr. G. Pantin, St. Mary's College, Frederick St., PORT-OF-SPAIN, Trinidad (W. Indies).

#### An interesting idea

##### The Poor Man's Christmas Dinner.

The Poor Man's Christmas Dinner was organized by Fr. Pantin for the first time on Dec. 15, 1970, at the Hilton Hotel, Port-of-Spain, to get funds to launch SERVOL. The numerous guests were charged US \$25 each, and for that sum they received, not a lavish meal, but precisely a poor man's Christmas dinner: a thick Trinidadian vegetable soup called 'sancoche', a roll of bread and a glass of water.

The dinner was sponsored by the Inter-Religious Organization, and the 'sancoche', which was supplied free of charge by the Hilton Hotel, was ladled out to the guests by Archbishop Pantin of Port-of-Spain, the Anglican Bishop of Trinidad and other religious leaders. There were two after-dinner speeches, by two shantytown dwellers, who explained briefly the needs of their area and thanked the guests for their interest.

The Poor Man's Christmas Dinner has become an annual event and has continued to receive support. Even classes of schoolchildren have raised among themselves the price of a ticket and have sent a member of their class to represent them at the Dinner.



Trinidad is the southernmost of the West Indian islands and almost touches Venezuela. It is 50 miles from north to south and about 37 miles wide. It belonged to Spain until 1797, and was then a British colony until it attained independence in 1962, along with its smaller sister colony Tobago.

Catholics make up one-third of the population of one million, with one-third Protestant and one-third Hindu and Muslim. About 40% of the population are Africans, with 35% East Indians and the rest mostly of mixed race.

The Spiritans arrived in Trinidad in 1863, and the District became a Vice-Province in 1962 and a Province in 1965. The Province counts 35 members of Trinidadian origin, plus 7 from Ireland. Of these 42, 27 work in Trinidad (13 of them in the two colleges), 2 in Paraguay, and 13 elsewhere.

#### The first Volunteers

After three months, Wesley Hall had to return to his native Barbados, and Fr. Pantin turned to the local Defence Force for help. On Feb. 2, 1971, seven volunteers from the Regiment and five from the Coastguard were assigned for full-time work with SERVOL, and the organization could really get underway.

The whole Laventille area of 25,000 people was divided into 12 sectors, and each Defence Force volunteer took charge of a sector. Their job was to establish a cordial, easy relationship with the people of their sector (especially the suspicious, hostile youth), listen to their problems, their ideas and their projects, and bring these back to the weekly Monday meeting, when possible solutions were discussed. The fact that several of the Defence Force volunteers were popular sportsmen was of great help in breaking down barriers.

Financial aid was secured from funding agencies in Holland, Canada, the United States and England, and from fund-raising ventures in Trinidad such as the annual 'Poor Man's Christmas Dinner'.

By 1974 the SERVOL workers numbered 62, of whom 31 were paid staff, 10 were members of the Defence Force whose salaries were paid by the Government, and 21 were dedicated volunteers (doctors, architects, engineers, businessmen and agriculturists) who gave their services free of charge.

#### Self - Help

The idea, however, was not simply to work for the underprivileged but to get the underprivileged to work for themselves, to get them out of the stagnation they were in and give them goals they could realize.

In its seven years of operation SERVOL has built up the following projects:

- seven nursery schools;
- three medical clinics and one dental clinic;
- one farm in Trinidad and two in Tobago;
- a fishing cooperative in Tobago;
- 12 sporting facilities;
- vocational training in carpentry, welding, plumbing, masonry and electrical work;
- Women's training courses;
- a school for retarded and deaf children;
- an aged people's monthly food supply;
- a vocational centre.



... Whither Laventille ...

(Photo Courtesy Norton Studios)

At present the paid staff of SERVOL numbers 36 (of whom 18 are teachers), plus nine members of the Defence Force, who are paid by the Government. Many volunteers continue to give their services free of charge.

The teachers in the seven nursery schools (for children aged 3-5) are themselves girls of the underprivileged class who were not able to get school diplomas but are learning as well as teaching (and earning their livelihood) in caring for some 250 small children in the nurse schools.

The medical and dental clinics started with time donated free on a rotating basis by volunteer doctors

and dentists, but the demand was so great that there is now also a fulltime paid doctor and nurse, and small fees paid by the patients help to support the project.

The training programmes in carpentry, welding, plumbing, masonry and electrical work have all become self-supporting, though at the start they had to be subsidized. For example, the welding shop was receiving a monthly subsidy of U.S. \$750 in 1972, the monthly subsidy was \$187 in 1973, and in 1974 the shop was self-supporting. In 1974 the plumbing institute won a Government contract for U.S. \$30,000.

### Training in responsibility

An important aspect of these technical institutes is the attention paid to the social development of the young trainees. They share in a major way in decisions involving the running of the institute, payment of financial incentives, disciplining of members, purchasing of equipment etc. They are also given a complete account of the finances of the institute in an effort to make them share in the responsibility of its operation.

In its technical training programmes, SERVOL tries to give an all-round formation. It provides a 12-month course, at the end of which the trainee should have acquired an open attitude to job opportunities and should regard himself more as an all-round worker, with definitive training in one particular sphere, rather than as a plumber or a welder or an electrician etc. The course stresses discipline and punctuality, and gives the trainee a confidence in his ability to put his hand to anything. To achieve this, nine months are spent in the specialization of his choice and the other three months in the other workshops. Thus a welder will spend nine months learning welding, but will also spend three weeks learning the basics of plumbing, three weeks in woodwork, three weeks in electrical installation, and three weeks in masonry.

By its dedicated work, SERVOL has brought hope, pride and self-respect to a large section of the population, where before there had been cynicism and despair.

(Fr. Roland Quesnel, C.S.Sp.)

*Subjects of "Documentation" are chosen not by the Generalate Team, but by the Information Service. Preference is given to recent experiments of confreres which are clearly in line with our Spiritan Apostolate. That does not mean however that more traditional works of education are not fully appreciated. Indeed, their importance will be stressed in forthcoming publications from the Generalate (Editors' Note).*

## NEWS

### Information Service

The staff has been increased 100%: we are now two instead of one! In the beginning of February, Father Gerald Fitzgerald of the English Province came to Rome at the request of the General Council. For the past nine years he has been Provincial Treasurer at Bickley.

He is no stranger to the Generalate and was in fact one of the original members of the community of Monte Mario. He served as General Prefect of Studies in Paris and Rome from 1963-1968. He will have special responsibility for English language news and translations.

### Sierra Leone

The second Chapter of the District of Sierra Leone met at the Teacher Training College, Bo, from 12 to

17 December, 1977. It was preceded by two-day Renewal Sessions at three centres: Kenema, Freetown, and Bo.

Twenty-seven members of the Congregation attended. Four of these were observers (1 from the Province of Ireland, 1 from the District of Gambia, and 2 from the Generalate). All found it "a most rewarding experience in living, praying and planning together as a Spiritan community".

The final document was deliberately short. But, it was significant that the first two chapters were given up to "Spiritual Renewal and Mission". Practically, these focus attention on personal and community life, attitude to work and sharing of available resources. Realistically, those present were convinced that this document would remain a dead letter unless each confrere made its implementation a matter of personal concern and action.

That presumes a three-fold renewal – of prayer, study and fraternal co-operation with those who have to apply the decisions taken.

## Nigeria

The Prefecture Apostolic of Idah has been raised to the dignity of a Diocese.

Since 1968 the Prefecture had been confided to the care of Mgr. Leopold Grimard, a Canadian Spiritan, aged 57. His successor, the first Bishop of the new Diocese, is Mgr. Ephraim Silas Obot, a member of a tribe different to that of the area. He is being transferred from the Diocese of Ikot-Ekpene, where he was Auxiliary Bishop to Cardinal Ekanem.

The District of Kabba will thus in future embrace two Dioceses, both confided to Nigerian Bishops. Twenty-four Canadian Spiritans and one Nigerian Spiritan work in the two Dioceses.

## England

The Provincial Chapter of 1976 decided that there should be a renewal meeting of all available members of the Province each year. The Provincial Team thought it well to prepare for this general meeting by two smaller regional meetings.

These have proved very successful. Last October, for the second year running, one was held in the North of England, another in the South. Father P. Jeffrey, Director of Scholastics, read a well-researched and interesting paper on the first foundation of Claude Poullart des Places on both occasions.

Similarly, in February of this year, Father E. McAteer of the Vocations Team read an interesting paper on "Prayer and Practical Union according to Libermann".

Members of the Province working as parish priests were invited in January to meet the Provincial Team and discuss their problems. It was agreed that everything possible should be done to interest parishioners in the work and spirituality of the Congregation.

The principal meeting of the year will take place in Easter Week. Father Gross (Assistant General) and Father Moloney (General Secretary) have consented to read papers and lead discussion on "Evangelii Nuntiandi: Mission Today".

Two further gatherings are planned for August: a renewal course on "Sacred Scripture and Theology in Relation to our Contemporary Missionary Apostolate" and the annual meeting of Missionaries on Leave with the Provincial Team.

## Angola

• The Government of Angola has chosen to follow the Marxist-Leninist line and the consequences of that are reflected at all levels (of Production, Consumption, Education, Health, Means of Communication, Public Life).

In the circumstances, the scope of the Church in the realisation of her mission is very limited. Naturally enough, She finds it difficult to adapt to the new situation, to discern what God wills in this time and place and to devise new modes of presence and of action. Scarcely out of a critical situation where so much was disorganised, restricted in so many ways and lacking the means necessary, those in charge will need time and thought to adapt and find in the light of the Gospel positive values in the new situation. This undoubtedly means thinking of the Church in terms different to the past. There are definite signs that this has already begun and that new times are near. The Permanent Secretariate of the Bishops' Conference recently established, renewal courses to take place in April for those engaged in pastoral work and especially the striking "Pastoral Letter" issued by the Bishops and read in all the Churches and Missions of Angola on January 8 (Summary and quotations in International Fides Service, January 14, 1978) all point in that direction.

• After Father Torres-Neiva, Assistant General, visited Angola with Father General, he wrote:

"I saw many missionaries and questioned them on the approach of the Church to the Angola of tomorrow. No

one seemed discouraged or apprehensive for the future. In all, I found hope and trust in the Spirit of the Lord, who leads his people in ways known to him alone. This sentiment predominated over all questioning, doubt or depression. Certainly, the way ahead is not yet too clear but, more important than our plans, it is hope that keeps the Church alive and advancing."

• Father Adelio Ribiero Lopes, C.S.Sp., Superior of the Mission of Bela Vista in the Diocese of Huambo, with his confrere, Father Armando Pinto, and Father Camilo, a Diocesan Priest, were arrested by UNITA soldiers in July 1976. Father Pinto was released a month later;

Father Camilo is known to be still alive. Alas, we have serious reason to believe that Father Adelio has been assassinated. We recommend to the prayers of the Congregation this confrere who has sealed in his blood his love of and dedication to the Gospel and to the people of Angola.

• Excerpt of a letter signed by the nine members of the Provincial Council:

"... the Provincial Council of this young Spiritan Province of Angola, gathered at Luanda for their first meeting, send greetings and thanks to Spiritans throughout the world for their spiritual and material help, especially in setting up this Province. We live in the hope of better days for the Church and for the Congregation in Angola, as it continues its long and difficult progress to a new future."

## Christians and Moslems

We set down below a summary of an interesting article which appeared in the Winter issue of the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (Temple University) Philadelphia, Pa. 19122, U.S.A. – Quarterly, U.S. \$11) Vol. 14, Number 11, entitled: "The Doctrinal Basis Common to Christians and Muslims and Different Areas of Convergence in Action".

"The common spiritual heritage of Christians and Muslims includes: the ways of knowing God; belief in the existence of one God, who is Creator of heaven and earth, who loves humankind, who pardons and is merciful, and who is worthy of being praised and glorified; a belief in a God who has sent prophets and who raises the dead and fulfils human desires; belief in a life of faithful adherence to God's will, notably by concern for the neighbor.

"Christians and Muslims, as common believers in the same God and common human family, face a common challenge from an unbelieving modern world. This should prompt cooperative efforts to protect life wherever threatened, and to promote freedom, peace, justice and equality in the spirit outlined in Vatican II's *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*."

## "PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD"

A three-volume collection of simple Sunday Services intended for use in out-stations in the absence of a priest and a source-book of lessons for adult catechumens based on Bible-readings of the Sunday.

Written by Father J. Carroll, C.S.Sp. in collaboration with Sister Bernadette Murdoch, H.R.S., (published by Geoffrey Chapman, London) the Services follow the form of the Mass without the Canon; the lessons for adults are designed to provoke discussion and the application of the Bible lessons to everyday life.

Simple in form, profound in content, this work should have a wide appeal: ideally, one might have hoped for a text lightened by apt illustrations. No doubt, the economic factor excluded that possibility.

We congratulate the authors of this excellent instrument of Christian instruction and we hope it will find a ready market in Nigeria and other English-speaking countries of Africa.

## Our Dead

Feb. 1 : Fr. Martinus van Oorschot, (Holland), 60 yrs.