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7-1-1978

Spiritan News, No. 15

Congregazione dello Spirito Santo

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SPIRITAN NEWS

JULY - AUGUST 1978

Number 15

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

SUMMARY

AN EVENT : Enlarged General Council.
DOCUMENTATION: Canada: Evolution of our Colleges.
NEWS : General Council - Central African Empire - Madagascar -
Angola - France - Episcopal Conferences in Africa -
Jubilees - Our Dead.



An Event: THE ENLARGED GENERAL COUNCIL. Knechtsteden, 1978.

The Second Enlarged General Council has just ended. It was held in Germany, on the invitation of the German Province, from May 4-14, 1978. Its purpose was "to strengthen the bonds uniting all members to the Generalate". It was also to consider "the problems of the Congregation" and to decide on "its general orientations".

Thirty-eight members were present: 8 from the Generalate Team, 16 out of 17 Provincials, 9 Principal Superiors, representing the totality of Districts, and 5 delegates invited by the General Council.

The choice of Knechtsteden was symbolic. This important Spiritan Centre was for a long-time the centre of training for all our German confreres - in Philosophy, Theology, Arts and Crafts. It is now a centre for Missionary Animation and a cross-roads where all interested in Mission To-day can meet and exchange ideas. The completely renovated Libermann House is a sign of the will to live of the Province and of its desire to express its missionary call. Here it was then that the Enlarged Council dipped into the ever-vital resources of the Congregation to re-affirm the project of Spiritan Life.

During these ten days we did not experience either the "mighty wind" of Pentecost nor any dazzling intuitions. Yet, all the participants were unanimous in acknowledging this meeting as giving strong support to Spiritan solidarity, to a growth in awareness of the personal involvement of all in a common work, to fraternal exchange of the different aspects of our religious and missionary life.

It is not possible in a few lines here to enumerate the topics treated, nor to enter into the details; still less to describe the fraternal spirit of the discussions through the length of each day. It would not be much help either to do so on a special page. Still, until the next issue of "I/D" (end of Sept - beginning of Oct) which will treat of this subject, we are publishing a SUPPLEMENT to this issue. It aims to share with you some of the more characteristic aspects of the lived experience of E.G.C. 1978.





THE COLLEGE OF St ALEXANDRE

The Spiritan College of St Alexandre is situated in the town of Gatineau, in the Province of Quebec. It is a foundation made by French Spiritans in 1912 and has undergone many changes over the years since then. From a "classical" college covering an 8-year Course of Secondary and pre-University Studies, it has since 1965 limited the Course to 5 years of Secondary Studies only. In 1971, the Boarding School was closed and the College became exclusively a day-school. As a result the intake, limited to 250 until 1955, has grown. There are 658 pupils on the roll at the present time. From a College previously staffed wholly by Spiritans it has become one predominantly staffed by the laity. Lay-teachers now number 32 and only 4 Spiritans remain: the Careers Master and 3 of the 7 Deans.

The most striking changes date from 1964. At that time, Quebec underwent a social change which came to be known as "The Quiet Revolution". The world of education did not escape. A Minister of Education was appointed: a Law on Private Schools was passed in 1968. The College managed to survive the political upset but, unfortunately, still suffers from the repercussions inside her own walls. At Church level Vatican II, at Congregational level the 1968 General Chapter, put the stress almost exclusively on MISSION. This led some to question whether such work as this was justified or not. We should also add, that rightly or wrongly there existed a mentality in the Province that we were a privileged class, and that inside the Community itself there were differences and divisions.

In face of an ageing teaching staff, young priests had been sent to complete University studies and to learn new approaches. When they returned a problem of assimilation arose. Their application of principles acquired in training were taken by some as a reflection on what had been done before, with consequent resentment and tension. The division between old and new that resulted was the beginning of a serious haemorrhage of staff. Some opted for the Missions, others for pastoral or social work at home; some were requested to retire,

Documentation : CANADA : EVOLUTION OF OUR COLLEGES.

The Beginnings.

The Congregation of the Holy Ghost has been known in Canada since the middle of the 18th century. Already in 1735, we read of the Bishop of Quebec appealing to the Priests of the Seminary of the Holy Ghost for help.

It was only in 1905 however that the first Spiritan foundation was made at Gatineau, near Ottawa. It was called St Alexandre after Mgr Alexandre LE ROY, Superior-General at the time. He had visited the property of St Alexandre before it was finally purchased. In those days many young Frenchmen were emigrating to Canada in search of work and adventure. Many of these were quickly disillusioned, and having lost their money and their enthusiasm, went on to lose also their Faith and morals. The school was begun to help these young people to better integrate in the New World by offering them an opportunity to train for the work available in agriculture and trade.

Three Fathers, two French-speaking and one English-speaking, and ten Brothers came from Europe to start this Agricultural College, which was later to develop into a classical one. In an age when school-discipline was rigid and military, it is significant that at St Alexandre the emphasis was put on family-spirit and an appeal was made to the "good-will and sense of honour" of the students.

In December 1954, a second Spiritan College would be founded in Canada, at the request of the Archbishop of Toronto. Six Irish Fathers arrived to begin the school in the City of Toronto, which was called "The Neil McNeil High School" after a former Bishop. It has quickly built up a reputation for the excellence of the teaching, good discipline and training in social responsibility.

Both Colleges have experienced the changes of recent years. We thank Fr Gaetan RENAUD of St Alexandre and Fr John Geary of Neil McNeil for supplying the information that makes these reports possible.



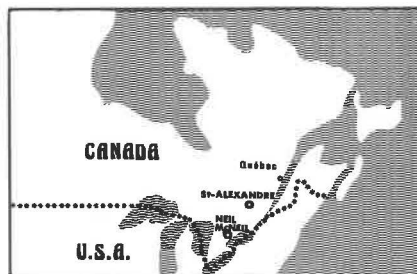
NEIL McNEIL HIGH SCHOOL

The Holy Ghost Fathers came to Woodstock, Ontario, in 1964, with the intention of Founding a Province in English-speaking Canada. Four years later, at the request of the Archbishop of Toronto, they opened the Neil McNeil High School in that city. It was seen as a valuable means of getting in touch with the young and as a possible source of vocations. After a five-year trial period, the Congregation decided that the work should continue. This decision pleased the diocesan authorities, who gave the title-deeds of the school, and of the 7.5 acre site on which it stood, to the Holy Ghost Fathers. In return, the Congregation accepted exclusive responsibility for the financing of the venture.

In Ontario, Catholic High Schools only receive partial support from the State. The first two years of the course are paid for out of Government funds: the three that follow must be met out of private resources. This necessarily means rather high tuition fees and places a heavy burden on parents, who are mostly, though not exclusively, in the lower middle-class income bracket. Yet, rather than send their children to the free but totally secular state schools, the parents of 80% of those finishing second year elect to make this sacrifice.

Since its foundation, the school has grown not merely in number but in public esteem. It is to-day a school of 1000 pupils and is staffed by 52 teachers. It has attained high academic distinction and has had more than its share of success, even in the field of sport. As many successful past students take their place in the professional and business life of the country, so the Congregation becomes more widely known and more highly esteemed. About one-third of all pupils persevere to the end of the 5th Year and then go on to University. The others for the most part remain until the end of 4th Year and then leave to follow courses at what are called "Third Level" Educational Institutes; or to take up a career.

Catholic High Schools continue to exist in Toronto only because of the great generosity, in money and in personnel, of the 23 Religious Institutes working in the city. This is clearly recognised and appreciated by parents



Saint-Alexandre (Cont'd.)

others left the priesthood altogether. In spite of these very real difficulties we have managed to persevere, and can claim that to-day the College is experiencing a new and encouraging renewal of life and action.

- In the first place, there is growing recognition of **the necessity of working as a Team** rather than as clerical individualists. To do "one's own thing", to create one's own sphere of action independent of the group is a contradiction of Community life, however one may convince oneself to the contrary. The realisation of this has resulted in some clarifications on the role of Administration and some more precise delineation of duties.
- The distinction between and the reconciliation of **the relative requirements of Religious and Professional Life** has become clearer. Forced by circumstances to enlist the help of lay-teachers, we soon found that being a religious did not exclude one from the discipline proper to a teaching career as, for example the punctuality required of everyone who teaches.
- **Our confidence in the laity** has grown through closer contact with them. We have come to appreciate them as excellent colleagues to whom we can confidently entrust responsibility.
- **Spiritual and Community Renewal** has been greatly helped by the Charismatic Movement, which has everywhere made a lasting contribution to the Church, the young and those engaged in their education.
- Finally, in the College at the present time, we have **a body of young people, free of religious prejudice**, open, generous and hungry for the Word of God.

Although there is some uncertainty about what the future holds for us – the Law on Private Education is under review – internally we find much hope in both the human and spiritual resources of the College to-day.

We are also greatly encouraged by the interest young people are taking in our Community life, and, after 10 lean years of indifference, by their manifest desire to share it.



Neil McNeil (Cont'd.)

and pupils alike. Perhaps, the vocation-response is an indication of this. Already in the early Nineteen-sixties, there were 8 young men, novices or professed, who had come to us from the School. It is unfortunate that, as elsewhere in the Church, the unrest of those years took its toll. Happily, the seventies show a revival of interest and there are definite signs of vocations among the students. At the moment, three past students, having spent a year in preparatory training, are ready to begin their noviceship.

An awareness of the problems of Social Justice, and an active involvement in them, is possibly the greatest Christian contribution of the School to the life of the educated classes in the city. It is certainly something unique in Toronto. The pupils are instructed in the situation existing in the Third World and in mission needs. They themselves by personal offerings, or by events organised, contribute considerable sums to these projects: they are involved in the lay-missionary movement known as VICS and also furnish personnel for social work at home. This concern for the less fortunate is presented not just as humanitarian interest but as the Christian expression of responsible and practical interest in other members of our one human family.

The future is uncertain, principally on the financial side. It is almost miraculous that so many make such sacrifices to give their children a Christian education. And lest it be thought we are providing a facility merely for the well-to-do, may we stress that the school is in the poorer east side of the city, in a lower middle-class catchment area. Our principal, though not exclusive aim, is to offer a higher education to the poorer and, more likely to be, educationally abandoned. Our work is approached in a missionary spirit and conforms very much with present thinking on mission and mission priorities.

Address :

- Collège Saint-Alexandre, 850, Principale, TOURAINÉ, P.Q. J8V 1E7.
- Neil McNeil High School, 127 Victoria Park Ave, TORONTO (Ontario) M4E 3S2



Lord, to whom shall we go ?

NEWS

Decisions of the General Council.

- On March 25, Fr Eamonn MANSFIELD was appointed Principal Superior of the District of Mauritius. He replaces Fr Jean EON, who has had to return to France for reasons of health.
- On April 13, a decision was made to open a Novitiate at Dorado, Puerto Rico. This was at the request of the

District Council. The decision sets the seal of approval on the birth of a new Spiritan Foundation in the West Indies.

- On the same day, it was also decided to establish a Spiritan Community in Monrovia, Liberia, where 2 Fathers are already teaching in the Inter-Diocesan Senior Seminary. The new Community will be attached to the District of Sierra Leone. But, it is a further development of the Congregation in English-speaking West Africa as a whole.

Central African Empire.

The Holy Father has appointed Father Michel MAITRE, C.S.Sp., to be the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Bambari "sede vacante et ad nutum Sanctae Sedis." The diocese has been vacant since the death of Mgr Cucherousset in 1970. Since then Fr MAITRE has been Vicar-General to the Apostolic Administrator of Bambari, Archbishop N'DAYEN of Bangui. (Oss. Rom. 7-5-78)

Madagascar.

The Holy Father has accepted the resignation of Mgr Jean DAVID, C.S.Sp., who, since 1954, has been successively Vicar-General and Bishop of Majunga. He is 66 years of age. His successor is Father Armand RAZAFINDRATANDRA, a secular priest of Tanarive and Director of the Junior Seminary there. (Oss. Rom. 13-5-78)

Angola.

On April 9, the Generalate was shocked by the news of the brutal assassination of a Portuguese Spiritan, P. Jose da SILVA PEREIRA, aged 72, at Munhino. He had been 43 years in Southern Angola (since 1935).

On the morning of April 6, Br Tomaz ALVES, on going out of the new house where he lived, found a body at the foot of the bell-tower. The face was not recognisable, the body had been stabbed. The Father's room in the old house had been rifled but there were no signs of blood, only the print of military boots which indicated that there were at least three criminals involved. The autopsy, at Lubango, concluded that the crime was probably committed about midnight on April 5.

The Criminal Investigation Department is pursuing enquiries. Meantime, the funeral took place, at Huila, on April 7. The Archbishop of Lubango, Mgr NASCIMENTO, presided and there was a large representation of priests, religious and faithful present.

This tragic event calls upon us to redouble our prayers for Angola. At the same time, it increases our admiration for those courageous witnesses of the Gospel, our brothers, who continue their apostolate under such very trying conditions in that country.

Kenya.

The District Chapter of Kenya took place from April 2-7, at St Mary's College, Nairobi. It corresponded with the end of the 3-month visit of Fr Daly and the month-long visit of Father General. The following three points would seem to best sum up the impression made:

● **The participation of most of the confreres.** In this District which has the biggest number of Spiritans to-day, a total of 141, virtually all were present with the exception of the sick, those studying abroad and those on holiday. This formula, which admits of the presence of all, is beneficial in two ways: it encourages greater reflection before and less need of information afterwards.

● **The insistence on Community and Prayer life.** In this District, where so many live alone, there was a manifest desire for Community. If it were not possible to get together permanently, then there should be regular meetings of regional Communities, for several days even, from time to time.

● **Obedience.** This was considered in practical terms, and stress was put upon the importance of maintaining the link with the Superior General, even to the nomination of the District Superior. Associated with it was **Poverty**, considered in relationship to the acceptance of change of appointment.

The District of Kenya is staffed almost entirely by Irish confreres. They are a closely-knit group in the three dioceses where they work. During the Chapter, an earthquake, 4.5 on the Richter scale, took place. Some confreres rather facetiously read this as a sign of the coming of the Spirit!

France.

Chevilly: A New Look. The former scholasticate section of the building has been completely modernised, thanks largely, though, not exclusively, to the dedicated work of the splendid team of Brothers in the Community. It has taken two years to complete. The third floor of the building is now a fully equipped infirmary for sick members, the second is reserved for older members in retirement, the first houses those engaged in the active service of the Community. Chapel, refectory and recreation-rooms are on the ground floor. A lift gives easy access to all floors. The "chateau" is now the Novitiate: the "new wing", a Conference Centre.

Episcopal Conferences in Africa.

AECEWA: Association of Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa - Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Gambia.

CEREO: Regional Episcopal Conference of Francophone West Africa - Senegal, Mali, Upper Volta, Niger, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin, Mauritania.

ACECCT: Association of the Members of the Episcopal Conferences of the Congo, the Central African Empire and Chad.

AMECEA: Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in East Africa - Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, Ethiopia and Sudan.

SECAM: Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar.

Our Jubilarians.

Anniversary of Profession:

- 65th:** August 15: Fr William McMenemy, U.S.A./WEST.
Sept 8: Br. Agostinho Alves, Angola.
Sept 28: Frs Edward Kinsella and Daniel Murphy, Ireland.
- 60th:** Sept 15: Frs Michael Mackey, Ireland; Fr Henry P. Thiefels, U.S.A./EAST.
- 50th:** Sept 8: Br Antonio Sousa Lopez, Portugal.
Sept 9: Brs Dominic Reardon, U.S.A./EAST; Jude Bernable and Samuel Bienvenu, France.

Anniversary of Priesthood:

- 50th:** August 25: Fr Joseph A. Griffin, U.S.A./EAST.
August 26: Mgr Gustave Bouve, and Fr Marcel Devoldere, Belgium; Fr Antonius Rooijackers, Holland; Fr Johannes van de Zandt, Cen. Brazil.

Our Dead.

- March 17: James Hibbs, nov. (USA/W) aged 24.
April 5: Fr José da Silva Pereira (Angola) aged 71.
April 11: Fr Brian d'Arcy (Ireland) aged 56.
April 16: Br Marcien Le Moing (Gabon) aged 65.
April 28: Fr Charles Devillers (France) aged 79.
April 30: Br Rochus Metzler (Germany) aged 82.
May 7: Br Teofano Venard Messias (Portugal) aged 61.
May 14: Fr Francis Murray (England) aged 75.