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Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers

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April 20th, 1971

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### SPIRITAN APPOINTMENTS

#### Doumé: Appointment of the District Council

Frs.Wilhelmus de Jong(Principal Superior and Bursar),Johannes Verberne(1st.Assistant),Arnoldus Gubbels,Henricus Slegers, Brother Emmanuel van Beers.  
 (Letter of March 25th,1971)

### THE GENERAL HOUSE

Visit to Poland: Father Louis Ledit,Assistant General left Rome for Poland on March 2nd,1971. His visit will last for approximately two weeks,and is intended as a "follow-up" to the Superior General's visit of last year. One young Polish priest has already been appointed to the missions,and it is hoped that this will mark a new beginning for the Polish Province.

SEDOS: Father Benjamin Tonna,Executive Secretary of SEDOS,paid his first visit to the Generalate in March. He met the members of the General Administration and discussed the form of our collaboration with other institute-members of SEDOS. Father Tonna is a religious sociologist,and his observations concerning the planning and organisation of missionary work were stimulating and encouraging. Area meetings have been organised to group a number of member-institutes living in the same suburb of Rome. In this way it is possible for small groups to meet members of the Executive of SEDOS and discuss their special needs and priorities.

The Spiritans took part in the first of these area meetings on March 26th.

Vocations' Day: The Union of Superiors General was officially notified last month that the Holy Father wishes Vocations' Day-1971 to be celebrated on May 2nd. According to the new Missal,the liturgical texts of "Good Shepherd Sunday" have been transferred to the 4th Sunday of Paschaltide. Accordingly, the link with the Vocations' Day has been maintained. Superiors

of religious institutes were asked to prepare this celebration in a special way in all the houses of their jurisdiction. They were reminded to present a "youthful image" of the diverse forms of religious commitment to the young people of today.

### SPECIAL REPORT

Rome: The Plenary Assembly of Propaganda Fide

The annual Plenary Assembly of the S.C. for the Evangelization of Peoples was held here from March 30th to April 2nd. Presided over by Cardinal Rossi, it was attended by 45 members (23 Cardinals, 15 Archbishops, and Bishops, 4 Superiors General of mission institutes, and 3 National Directors of Pontifical Missionary Works.

As previously reported in this Newsletter (N<sup>o</sup> 3, 1971), two main papers were read: one dealt with the Universal Church and particular Churches, the other on relations between Propaganda Fide and Episcopal Conferences. Here we give a brief summary of the contents of these papers.

Universal Church and Particular Churches: The first theme studied by the Assembly was introduced by a paper presented by Cardinal Wright. This document was the most important theoretical paper presented during these sessions. However, it should be noted here that considerable opposition exists in missionary circles to the debating of theological papers at a Plenary Assembly of Propaganda Fide; this view would like to have greater emphasis laid on Propaganda's character as a coordinating and policy-making service at the disposal of the Universal Church.

Dealing first with particular Churches, Cardinal Wright singled out four main characteristics: (1) a sociological-cultural milieu determined by history; (2) liturgy and ecclesiastical discipline; (3) theological orientation and catechesis; and (4) means and methods of the apostolate. In each of these four fields, particular Churches should expect to have their own special circumstances and problems. Each Church should try to develop its full potential, and use it in a missionary spirit to help other Churches. On the other hand, the missionary apostolate should always respect the diversity of the particular Church it serves.

According to the documents of Vatican II, the responsibility to proclaim the Gospel is seen primarily as the task of the college of bishops, and the task of coordinating this activity is confided to Propaganda Fide (Lumen Gentium, 22).

As to the relationship between Universal Church and the particular Churches, the paper pointed out the organic unity between the two, and stressed the balance which should always be maintained between the centralization necessary to maintain unity and, on the other hand, the right to a certain amount of regional diversity.

Centralization - Decentralization: The balance between these two elements of Church government was referred to in the section dealing with practical problems. The organizations of the Universal Church have sometimes, in the past, hindered the originality of the local Churches. But at the present time, the paper claimed, the risk of error is perhaps greater on the part of the particular Churches. There is today a reaction between these two tendencies closely connected with fear of the standardized and the anonymous. On one side this can lead to aloofness and self-sufficiency, which is likely to affect the more important dioceses in particular, whether their importance is

political or merely historical, the result of their resources perhaps, or of their personnel. No Church should take a position in the face of certain problems without taking into account the interests of the Universal Church or the other particular Churches whether neighbouring or overseas.

On the other hand, local Churches that are less well-endowed may be tempted to a sort of mimicry slavishly imitating the actions of others and neglecting their own charisms. In this way they leave themselves open to the risk of subjection. They are accustomed to receiving help and may not be sufficiently provident to acquire independence in matters of personnel and resources. They may even be content to remain in perpetual dependence rather than reach the stage of being able to help more needy Churches in terms of personnel and other resources.

The more powerful and wealthy Churches, on the other hand, may be tempted to engage in a sort of economic and cultural colonialism. They are in a position to give help and are naturally tempted to exercise a certain prestige; but this can have damaging results and can evoke protests from the receiving Churches.

### Principles governing relations between the Universal Church and the Particular Churches

These principles can be summarized as follows: 1) Cooperation and co-responsibility; 2) subsidiarity and non-interference; 3) exchange and dialogue.

All the Churches should be aware that they are in duty bound to share in the evangelization of the world, and each individual Christian should assume his own responsibilities in the matter. This applies to all the People of God, lay as well as clerical, local diocese as well as episcopal conference. The principle of subsidiarity, clearly enunciated by Vatican II, gives the local Churches their freedom of action, a freedom which should be tempered with a spirit of exchange and dialogue both among themselves and with the unifying centre of the Holy See.

Propaganda Fide and the Episcopal Conferences: Cardinal Garrone presented the main study-paper on the second theme. Basing himself on Church documents, the speaker described the constitution, purpose and competence of Propaganda Fide. The whole of missionary activity falls within its scope, and it is responsible for promoting missionary activity throughout the world. The paper goes on to analyse the different kinds of episcopal conferences and their relations with Propaganda Fide. All areas of key importance in this field should be the subject of regular exchanges of information and consultation between the Sacred Congregation and the various episcopal conferences.

Suitable means for fostering these relationships were proposed by the paper:

- a) Persons- The most important people for maintaining a close liaison between Propaganda and the Episcopal Conferences are the bishops who are both members of the Plenary Assembly and of the Episcopal Conferences, along with Nuncios and Apostolic Delegates, Presidents of Conferences, and Presidents of Episcopal Commissions for the Missions.
- b) Means of Communication: The Conferences should keep the S.C. informed by sending it the proceedings and records of its meetings, and by replying to questionnaires sent by Propaganda. Information should be exchanged by both sides.

Conclusions of the Plenary Assembly: At the moment of going to press, the official statement containing the conclusions of the Assembly had not yet been issued. What follows is a short summary of conclusions issued by "Fides" on April 7th, 1971:

On the relationship of Universal Church to Particular Churches-

a) Theologians were urged to bring out the true concept of Mission, as expressed in the Council Documents, showing that its specific aim is "evangelization and the planting of the Church among those peoples and groups where she has not taken root" (AD Gentes, 6), and not allowing this aim to become clouded by excessive insistence on social development, laudable as this may be.

b) In accordance with Ad Gentes, 16; 21; 22 & 26, it recommended a healthy diversity in unity, adapting the Christian life to the genius and character of each culture, while not forgetting the primary duty of transmitting the faith in all its integrity. Missionaries should be trained in the language and culture of the peoples they evangelize, and the local clergy and Christians should work for the development and Christian expression of all that is best in their culture.

On the relationship between Propaganda Fide and Episcopal Conferences -

a) The Assembly recommended that Propaganda Fide should stimulate and support the life and activity of Episcopal Conferences in mission countries, and should establish a specific bureau for liaison with Episcopal Commission for Missions within Conferences all over the world.

b) It asked that the S. Congregation's already existing Commission of experts in missionary pastoral work should be enlarged and should pay special attention to local situations and mentalities, and keep Episcopal Conferences supplied with information.

c) It also suggested periodical meetings between Propaganda Fide and the Superior Generals of Missionary Institutes (of men and women) for studying how to bring about a better distribution of personnel.

Note: Concerning the recommendations of the Union of Superiors General adopted during a meeting of the Sixth Commission (For Missions) on March 29th, 1971. Four members of this body are also members of the Plenary Assembly of Propaganda Fide, but are not elected representatives. Their proposals are worth quoting in summary form:

- 1) That the role of the Plenary is not to determine the value of theological statements on the Mission and related subjects, but to lay down policy which will be executed by the S.C. for the Evangelization of Peoples.
- 2) That in the missions it is desirable that new types of particular Churches should develop their own proper liturgy, discipline, theology and spirituality, and manner of exercising the ministerial priesthood, as in the Patriarchates and the Eastern Churches many centuries ago.
- 3) That particular Churches be encouraged to continue the missionary work begun in them, and increase their share in it.

- 4) That in establishing policy for particular Churches, proper attention be paid to the role of missionary institutes, something which has not been done in the two documents presented to the Assembly for 1971.
- 5) That it is Propaganda's role to encourage growth in diversity, as well as to maintain unity in coordinating diverse activities. Thus the S. Congregation is seen as an organ of the College of Bishops, and not merely a department of the Holy See. Consequently it should promote exchange and discussion between particular Churches and Episcopal Conferences, and between them and the Missionary societies. Sound information would necessarily play a key role in this form service.

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## TWO ROMAN DOCUMENTS

### 1) "The Liturgy of the Hours" - Introduction to New Breviary

On February 2nd, 1971, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship issued a document which contains the basic prescriptions of the reform of the Breviary. Entitled "Institutio Generalis de Liturgia Horarum", this detailed introduction corresponds to the introduction placed at the beginning of the new Missal which is similarly entitled. It is, in short, a theological, biblical, pastoral introduction to the celebration of the Divine Office.

If it comes down to details of rubrics and even of ceremonial, it is because these details are the recognized framework which is necessary in organizing public prayer. But those responsible for the reform do not intend publishing another series of "General Rubrics" of the kind to which we were long accustomed. Such new rubrics as are found in the present document are simply an outline or frame on which to hang the basic components of the Church's prayer - psalms, collects and readings.

To those unfamiliar with the terminology of liturgists, the title is indeed an unfamiliar one. But on reflection this expression "Liturgy of the Hours" will be found to be quite normal. By this is meant the official prayer of the Church, a prayer which should help us to sanctify the various parts of the day.

Let us turn to the document itself. It consists of five chapters and 284 numbered paragraphs. The chapters deal with the importance of the Office in the life of the Church, with the sanctification of the periods of the day, with the constitutive elements of the Office, with the various kinds of celebration during the yearly cycle, with the rubrics for the solemn or the common celebration of the Office.

Chapter I recalls the principles upon which the liturgical prayer of the Office is based. Of all those who pray, the first and foremost is Christ himself, the Splendour of the Father, who unites unto himself all humanity and associates it with himself in sending up the divine song of praise. There are many other indications in the early history of the Church of prayer offered not only by individuals, but also in common under the presidency of the Apostles. And it was not a question of some legal observance, but rather the faithful were simply fulfilling a duty and a need which they recognized as part and parcel of their common faith.

The careful reader will find that this introduction to the New Breviary is solid and rich in insights into the nature and practice of Christian prayer.

2) A Decree from the S.C. for Religious

A recent decree, dated December 8th, 1970, modifies certain prescriptions of Canon Law concerning religious, thus anticipating the revision of the Code which is still only in the draft stage. A summary of the decree follows:

I. Reception of the Sacrament of Penance

- 1) Religious are recommended to go to confession frequently, i.e. at least twice a month.
- 2) Special jurisdiction for hearing Sisters' confessions is no longer needed; any priest with faculties for hearing confessions in a given place can validly and licitly absolve all women religious in that place.
- 3) Concerning ordinary and extraordinary confessors: convents of contemplatives, houses of formation and also large communities will have an ordinary confessor, and except for the last named category, an extraordinary confessor. These regulations are intended to guarantee the possibility of confession, but no religious woman is obliged present herself to these confessors.

Communities which do not fit into the above mentioned types, can have an official confessor, if they so wish and if the Ordinary judges it necessary. As to the number of confessors, their age, duration of appointment, nomination and termination of appointment, the Ordinary will consult the community in question.

II. Ill-health and admission to, or renewal of vows

Canon 637 forbids an Institute to refuse admission to perpetual vows or renewal of temporary vows for health reasons, unless the illness had been fraudulently concealed before profession.

From now on a religious in temporary vows can be refused permission to renew vows or make final profession, by the competent superior with the consent of his or her council, and after previous consultation with doctors or other specialists. However, the following conditions must be observed:

The illness whether physical or mental, even when contracted after profession must be judged as rendering the subject unfit for the religious life, in the sense of harmful to the religious in question or to the Institute. In assessing the situation, superiors should act charitably and equitably.

(Note: The General Bulletin for May-June, 1971 will print the full text of this decree; its prescriptions should be applied without delay.)

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NEWS OF THE PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS

United States - West: Novitiate to open this year

A canonical novitiate has been erected in the Western Province of the United States. Accomodation is being prepared at Glenwood Springs where the novitiate will begin in August of this year.

Ireland: Spanish Provincial visiting Ireland

The Provincial Superior of Spain visited Ireland recently where he had talks with the administration. He also visited two

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novices from Spain who are doing their novitiate at Kilshane.

Malawi: Mission-team arrives in the Archdiocese of Blantyre.

On March 29th, 1971 the first members of the new mission-team left Ireland for Malawi where they will work in the Archdiocese of Blantyre. The three man team is composed of confreres from the District of East Nigeria: Frs. M. Frawley (former Principal Superior), D. O'Connor and Denis Gavin.

The Archdiocese of Blantyre dates from 1959, and has its own local ordinary, Mgr James Ciona. It covers 9,161 sq.kms. and has a population of 980,000 of which 275,000 are Catholics. The presbyterium consists of 23 local priests assisted by 49 missionaries. There are 7,000 catechumens and 31,000 pupils in the mission schools.

Bangui: Pastoral Priorities of the District

A report on the situation in the District of Bangui contains the following conclusions concerning pastoral priorities:

- The personnel crisis should not necessarily lead us to give the large, established missions priority in our planning for the future. This will only lead to "short-term solutions" and does not open a way to future organic growth.

- The principal priorities would seem to be the following:

a) Catechist schools for the formation of those who will take charge of local communities, and aim at self-sufficiency on the part of these communities;

b) Training of missionary personnel more specialized in the training of lay leaders. These should be able to guide the other missionaries in carrying out this policy of community organization.

- In order to avoid overwork and discouragement on the part of our limited missionary personnel, we must be ready to make a choice and drop certain activities which do not offer hope of lasting results. This will also mean re-structuring our missions and calling on the help of teams capable of doing vital work which the individual missionary is unable or not trained for.

- The Bishops must be urged to plan the apostolate, especially in the sphere of the best possible use of dwindling missionaries. They must decide where residential missions are to be retained, and where religious could possibly take over, or in certain cases, where laymen could be entrusted with the care of the Christian community.

- At the same time we must re-organize our financial resources, and foresee where our means do not allow us to maintain certain buildings, institutions or services.

- The statement of the Bishops of Central Africa concerning the need for new forms of the priestly ministry demands attention and reflection.

- Missionaries are more and more aware of the orientations of Vatican II, and are discouraged by the slowness with which these directives are being applied to the situation in Africa. In order to reduce the danger of mistakes in planning, diocesan and inter-diocesan commission must get to work immediately, collecting information, evaluating solutions and offering assistance.

- Greater liberty should be given to those who are called to work among the non-Christians, and are ready to leave ordinary work in



more settled areas for "first evangelization".

Brazil: Amazonia and Central Brazil.

Father Q. Houdijk, Assistant General visited the two Dutch districts in Brazil from November 20th, 1970 to January 26th of this year. He took part in two general meetings of the confreres, one at Tefé (December 15th-19th), the other at Belo Horizonte (Jan. 5th-9th). Here are some of his observations:

Amazonia: This is an immense area, a country of virgin forest and endless waterways. The villages are scattered throughout the region, while everywhere silence reigns - relaxing for the visitor but nerve-racking for those who live here permanently! Means of communication are still primitive and progress comes very slowly to Amazonia, though there are some signs of it: telephone and electric lighting in the townships, while there is a hospital and a radio station at Tefé.

Twenty confreres turned out for the meeting in Tefé. This represents a considerable effort, and is a gauge of their interest. Pastoral problems were their principal preoccupation: formation of catechists and human development are the means considered most promising at the moment. Furthermore they are looking for a pastoral plan which is closer to the everyday life of the people, and responds to their real needs. The Fathers and Brothers at Solimoes have begun a catechetical movement which they consider essential to the growth of a truly Brazilian Church, and the elaboration of forms of pastoral activity adapted to the life of the people.

Despite the time and expense involved in such meetings, the Bishop and the confreres are convinced of the need for a concrete plan of pastoral action elaborated and discussed by all the members of the District. They are willing to collaborate with the Pastoral Secretariate at Manaus and with the government which is sympathetic to their efforts.

Belo Horizonte: Here the meeting was also well-attended; 48 of the confreres were present despite distances which ranged from 80 to 1,000 kms! The four Brazilian confreres also took an active part in the discussions. The proceedings began with some conferences on the religious mentality of the people, the formation of leaders and the movement to combat illiteracy.

Emphasis was placed on the integration of the laity in the life of the Church through the "Cursilhos" movement, and on the training of community leaders in the interior of the country. The young people were not neglected in discussion concerning their evangelization and integration into Church life and activities.

Conclusion: Both meetings showed that the confreres are well aware of the need for more realistic pastoral plans for the future. They are aiming at the evangelization of the people through the penetration of their community structures. The formation of basic communities is recognized as the principal aim of pastoral activity: sometimes the emphasis is cultural, sometimes the stress is laid on human development.

With regard to the formation of leaders for these communities, both Districts have petitioned the authorities to study the ordination of married men as constituting the only practical solution to the problem of providing priests for the vast areas of the interior. Relations with the government, happily, are good; this is especially so in Amazonia.

Cameroons: Young Germans visit Spiritan Mission

The German Federation of Catholic Youth (BDKJ) recently organized a visit to the Cameroons for 40 young teachers, social workers, etc. from the dioceses of Mainz, Limbourg, Cologne, Spire and Trêves. After a week at Yaoundé, they went to the mission at Nyamfende where they were received by Frs. Eugene Stegel and Jerome Fritsch, both Spiritans. There they were able to examine the various social works attached to the mission: dispensaries, schools, etc.

A visit to bush villages was organized by the JAC (whose President comes from Nyamfende), and there they were able to get some idea of life "up-country". Back at Yaoundé the young people met Archbishop Zoa and Cardinal Leger. In this way they were able to form a clear picture of the overall work of the Church in the townships and in the bush, and of the social development work as well as the purely religious aspects of the Mission.

NEWS OF THE MISSIONARY WORLD

Brazil: Over-all pastoral plan of the Church in Brazil

In our last Newsletter we promised to publish some extracts from the final document issued by the Brazilian Episcopal Conference in February this year. The six orientations for pastoral work, previously laid-down by the Conference, were considered still valid and form the basis of the new document. We begin our brief summary with the six basic orientations:

1. To promote the visible unity of the Church
2. To promote missionary action
3. to promote instruction in the Faith
4. To promote the Liturgical life
5. To promote ecumenism
6. The Church's presence in the world.

1. "Once again circumstances call on us to strengthen the bonds which unite us much more strongly than the divisions which separate us. It would be truly tragic if the Church allowed herself to be destroyed simply because there are differences of opinion, on matters still open to question, among her members, bishops, priests, laity and religious."

2. "There is a specially subtle aspect of missionary action: the deep connection between our action in converting men to faith in the living God, and urging them on to human development. In this sense, therefore, our pastoral action will strive to clarify and apply the notion of development with greater exactitude, aware that true development is impossible unless it promotes the whole man and all of society, so that all can benefit."

3. "The Conciliar documents remind us that evangelization is not only a matter of preaching the Word. It also means giving witness of our Faith by word and example in the concrete situation in which we find ourselves. Catechesis will be meaningful insofar as it forms an organic part of our over-all evangelization plan, both in theory and in practice."

"To reduce evangelization to the level of a simple proclamation of dogmatic truths and spiritual and moral directives is just as inadmissible as turning evangelization into a policy of social or political action. We are determined to evangelize men as they really are, and as they really live."

4. "Only through encounter with God through Christ and in the communion of the Holy Spirit, can we find the way to genuine encounter with our neighbour. In this sense the Liturgy is a means to human and fraternal communion."

1 "By means of the liturgical life man can come to a realization of what integral human development really means, i.e. through sharing in the divine life. God became man so that he could share the fulness of life with us."

5. "Our principal preoccupation and commitment in the field of ecumenism is not the enticement of the separated brethren to return to our ranks, but an invitation to join us in reflecting on Christ's plan for us, He who is the way, the truth and the life, the light of the nations..."

6. "The Church, guardian and interpreter of Divine Revelation, exists and works in the world, but it is not an organization separate from, or a rival to other societies. Rather it is an evangelical ferment placed inside humanity itself..."

"Yes men should be helped to get to heaven; but this also means making man more human, and the world he lives in more liveable. The Church must never come to terms with situations which are opposed to the Gospel. In such situations the Church should speak out and act with all the means proper to her, so that social structures may be purified and changed."

Kampala: Southern Sudan is still far from pacified

During a recent press conference in Kampala, President Idi Amin Dada stated that there was "another South Africa in the southern Sudan where Christians are persecuted". According to the General, congregations at Mass have been machine-gunned.

A Sudanese priest recently returned to his homeland. He came secretly so that as many as possible of his people could celebrate the feast of Christmas. In his report we read of small groups of people scattered throughout the forest, constantly on the move to avoid Arab soldiers patrolling the area. Many of these settlements are quite new, some dating from only a few months back. The greatest need of the people after proper medical care, is for some catechists. Unfortunately it is difficult to organise a system of catechists for small groups constantly on the move. Small spotter planes are used to harass the rebels, and not long ago one of the most important guerilla camps was attacked from the air and by land.

Since the last ordinations there are now 64 priests in the entire Sudan, inclusive of one bishop and three apostolic administrators. As to the indigenous clergy, 27 are working in their homeland, while 29 are refugees in Congo Kinshasa, Uganda and the CAR. There are 6 studying in Europe. Seminarians number 78, of whom 60 are at the seminary of Lacor (Gulu diocese, Uganda). There would seem to be very few seminarians, whether junior or senior, actually in the Sudan at present, though the seminaries are still functioning in theory. =====

NECROLOGY

Father Joseph Burggraf of the German Province died on Jan. 18th, at Knechtsteden, aged 79 yrs, after 42 years of profession.  
Father Emile Poulard of the District of Guadeloupe died on March 21st at Chevilly, aged 52 years after 27 years of profession.  
Father Henry Davits of the Dutch Province died at the age of 46 years after 26 years of profession. R.I.P.