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5-1-1979

### Spiritan News, No. 22

Congregazione dello Spirito Santo

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# SPIRITAN NEWS

May-June, 1979

Number 22

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

## S U M M A R Y

EVENT/DOCUMENTATION : Spiritan Portugal.

NEWS : Telegraphic address - Decisions of the General Council - Holland - Brazil - Canada - The Far East - Our Jubilarians - Our dead.

### Event/Documentation

#### SPIRITAN PORTUGAL

The Visit of February-March, 1979.

The visit of the Province of Portugal was carried out by Frs TORRES NEIVA (Portuguese) and Van SONSBEEK (Dutch) from February 5 to March 15. From March 5 to March 15, they were joined by Father GENERAL and Father SOUCY.

A venerable old lady of 112 cannot be expected to have the dash and vigour of her little grand-child of 10! Thus, the Province of Portugal with all the experience and dignity of the former has not quite got the same audacity as the young Province of Spain, to which she has given life.

Materially, the structures of the Province of Portugal are those large and splendid houses of 40-60 years ago. None of these has been sold off, as has happened elsewhere: many continue to house Apostolic Schools, as in the past. Only the most recently-built, the impressive Senior Scholasticate at Carcavelos, which at one time welcomed 100 senior students, has changed its use. The 15 or so young professed of to-day live in the north of the country, near Braga. The building at Carcavelos has become a Retreat-centre and a rest-home with infirmary wing for sick and aged missionaries from Angola.

All the other houses, each with its own farm, continue as before. But, the apostolic schools at Fraiao (120 pupils), Godim (50), and Viano do Castelo (50), and the Novitiate and pre-Novitiate houses (20), are only half-full.

Inevitably, this imposes a heavy burden on the Province. Given the current instability in the country and the precarious economic circumstances of the Province it is not easy to envisage any other alternatives.

Alongside the older Communities that remain, there have sprung up some newer and smaller ones, more directly devoted to missionary animation. Significantly almost all the 183 Spiritans in the Province live in one or other of 12 communities. By comparison with other Provinces, this strong Community emphasis is a distinctive characteristic of Spiritan Portugal, an enrichment though not without its own problems.

### Central Concern of the Province : the Training of Aspirants.

Up to the present time, the training of aspirants and missionary animation, considered as a single priority, has absorbed all the resources and energy of the Province. Increasing vocations led to new foundations: Fraiao, 1919; Godim, 1921; Viano do Castelo, 1932; Silva, 1936; Carcavelos, 1952.

Indeed, the history of the Province and its difficulties may be said to centre around the houses of formation, which have always absorbed its most qualified talent and which yielded in return new life and spirit. Even during the vocation-crisis that hit the rest of Europe so badly in the 60's, the Province did not hesitate to give of its best to the works of formation, seen as the only life-line of its work. That explains, especially, how the Province has







Father GENERAL with the Portuguese Novices at Silva Barcelos.

maintained its apostolic schools to the present day and their evolution to meet the changing pattern of the times. Nonetheless, there is an awareness that the system is not wholly satisfactory and that the results are not always proportionate to the cost in terms of personnel and finance. There is, in consequence, a search being made for other ways, new approaches. In the meantime, however, there is no question of closing the apostolic schools.

### Looking out - Overseas!

The beginnings of the Province should be sought in the overseas possessions of Portugal, more especially in Angola. Three French Spiritans set out for that territory in 1866, not without lively protests from the Liberal opposition in the Portuguese Parliament, who were only too happy to embarrass the Government with warnings of the growing danger of foreign influences in Portuguese possessions. In fact, Fr DUPARQUET had to return to Lison soon after and the following year the Province of Portugal was founded (1867), to provide Portuguese Spiritans for the service of the Mission in Angola, and later in Cabo Verde.

For many years, this vast territory of Angola was to swallow up all available personnel of the Province. Missions were established; Communities set up; a flourishing Christianity was implanted. The present Bishops, all African, are the first to acknowledge with gratitude that the evangelisation of Angola was principally the work of Spiritans. Indeed, as late as 1974, 250 of our members, of whom 180 were Portuguese, were engaged in the missionary apostolate of that country.

The Province of Portugal could be said to have carried the hall-mark of Angola over a long period. For years, every young Spiritan dreamed a dream: that he would be appointed to Angola at the end of his studies. The contrast with our Dutch brethren is striking in this respect. They had to wait a long time indeed to have their "own" Districts, whereas the Portuguese were concentrated almost entirely from the beginning in the overseas territories of their country, considered by the Government of the time as "Provinces".

The Revolution of 1910, which suppressed the Colleges and tolerated only the continuance of Apostolic Schools, was a further element in directing Spiritans to recruit almost exclusively for the Missions.

More recently, the granting of independence to Angola and the political developments in Portugal itself have had their repercussions on the Congregation.

Many problems, hitherto ignored, or at least put upon the long finger, have come to the surface and the Province is trying as best it can to resolve them.

### LIAM: A Movement Vital To Missionary Animation.

The movement known as LIAM (Liga Intensificadora da Acção Missionária) was launched at Fatima in 1917 by a group of dynamic young Spiritans and quickly came to be of national importance. Indeed, since the 1940 period, it has been a major factor in making the Portuguese people aware of their missionary responsibilities.

Helped by the Press and the other means of communication, LIAM has really taken root among the people and counts many thousands of active workers and supporters. It has active cells at work throughout the country: in parishes, schools, hospitals and so on. These in turn have proved important sources of religious and missionary vocations. That the Spiritans are still the principal Missionary Institute in the country and that they are still the most capable of mobilising the mass of the population in favour of The Mission, is attributable in great part to LIAM.

Over the years since it was founded, other Missionary Institutes have been welcomed and other missionary initiatives have sprung up in Portugal but none of these has superseded LIAM as the principal instrument of missionary animation in the country. Some 15 Spiritans are seconded to this work and serve, either directly as mission animators or indirectly in posts of administrative importance, in the movement.

The Administrative Headquarters of LIAM are in Lisbon. There they have an impressive complex of buildings to house Press and other offices, meeting-rooms, larger Assembly Halls, even a Cinema. Those in charge of the movement do not see this as the heart of their endeavour. They are very sensitive of the fact that the living inspiration of their work and the success of their organisation depend principally upon two essentials: missionary animation and serious study of missionary interest.

**Acção Missionária**

**A PERSPECTIVA MISSIONÁRIA UNIVERSAL**  
faz parte essencial da formação cristã Paulo VI

1.—A PERSPECTIVA MISSIONÁRIA UNIVERSAL é uma obra de Paulo VI, Papa, que trata da missão universal da Igreja. É uma obra de grande importância para a formação cristã dos missionários. É uma obra que deve ser lida por todos os missionários e por todos os cristãos que desejam conhecer a missão da Igreja no mundo atual.

The Spiritan Missionary Animation Office in Portugal publishes: each month, 31,000 copies of ACCÃO MISSIONÁRIA every 2 months, 8,000 copies of ENCONTRO every year, 100,000 copies of CALENDARIO DAS MISSÕES 80,000 copies of ALMANAQUE DAS MISSÕES 78,000 LIAM Diaries.



## Concern for those in the "Third Age".

With the return of large numbers of Spiritans from Angola after independence, the problem of the "Third Age" became acute, as many of these were no longer young. In fact, at the present time 200 of the 280 members in the Province are over 40 years of age.

Formerly, older confreres were happy to retire in the mission territory where they had lived and worked. This solved a problem for the Province. The recent repatriation of older members, some in bad health, at a time when the entry of young people was declining, has resulted in a dramatic rise in the age-average of the Province. Here, those responsible are looking for satisfactory answers. They realise

very well that the opening of an infirmary wing at Carcavelos is only a part answer. What they want to set up is a suitable programme of welcome and animation that will enable the possibilities and the riches of those in the "Third Age" to be turned to advantage. Unfortunately, their task is not made easier by the precarious state of the national economy at present, which makes it unwise to place investments desirable for this purpose.



*The Chapel at CARCAVELOS where most Spiritans were ordained priests in the past.*

## A Province in course of Renewal.

The 1968 crisis in Europe, and even more the 1974 Revolution in Portugal itself, deeply disturbed that country and left many wounds which have not yet healed. Some of the anguish and the hope of those days found echo in the Chapter of 1978. The Province is acutely aware of the demands and the challenges of the new times and is striving hard to answer them. Amongst these tentative replies we would single out especially:

### Diversification of Commitment.

The situation in Angola at present and the demands of Mission To-Day both direct attention to the need for new fields of apostolate. In Angola there remain 60 confreres, in Cabo Verde 15, in Spain 5. The other available active members of the Province look to Brazil, where a new District (South-East Brazil) was created in 1978 and which so far has had 23 Spiritans assigned to it. Some have opted for chaplaincies to Portuguese immigrants in Germany, France, U.S.A. and Canada. Others have joined international teams in Paraguay and in Guinea-Bissau. More recently, a number have offered themselves for service in the most dechristianised areas of the home-country.

## Renewal in the Province.

The large numbers of Portuguese Spiritans in the 12 Communities of the Province focussed the attention of the 1978 Chapter on the renewal of Community life and the apostolic commitment of the individual Spiritan... To this end a Provincial Team consisting of the Provincial and two full-time Provincial Assistants has been set up. One of the Assistants will be responsible for Formation, the other for Missionary Animation. This new structure should help in the desired renewal of the Province.

### New Approaches to Vocation-Work.

Those responsible are much concerned for the future of the Province and sensitive to the call of God in this respect. Criticism of the Apostolic School system has moved them to seek new ways of encouraging and deepening vocations to our missionary-religious life. What is being attempted so far is cautious and exploratory but promises well. Thus a former Centre of Missionary Animation at Coimbra has been adapted as a Centre where young people may pray and reflect upon vocation.

## Difficult Post-Revolution Adjustments.

Five years after the Revolution of April 25, 1974, Portugal has not yet achieved political or economic stability. Revolutions take time to bring about change.

Some people are disillusioned and confused: so much sterile discussion in Parliament; the growing cost of an unstable situation; the deterioration of the economy with each successive Government; an increasingly bleaker prospect for the future.

Others, on the contrary, feel challenged by the real poverty that the Revolution uncovered, by the state and strength of the popular masses, by the need to reconcile political and religious values in a way that is responsible and committed, by the requirements of justice and peace.

Deprived of the financial aid received from the State in the past, and stripped of its assets from investments in societies now nationalised, the Province lives austere and finds it difficult to balance its budget. Nonetheless, hope predominates and recent and present developments are accepted as a grace, as a challenge and opportunity to launch into the deep, to discover new ways. They see this as an Exodus, with God always present in what happens and the future safe in His hands.



*Father GENERAL receiving from the Portuguese Novices his "diploma" of proficiency in their language.*



# NEWS

## Telegraphic Address.

We are requested by the Italian Postal Service to inform you that the number of the postal code should be added to the telegraphic address thus: SPIRITUS 00136 ROMA.

## Decisions of the General Council.

The General Council on

- January 30, confirmed the election of Fr Adrianus SLEUTJES as Principal Superior of the District of Bagamoyo, with effect from March 17.
- January 30, appointed Fr Marius PHILIPONA to be Principal Superior of the District of Reunion, with effect from March 1.
- January 31, appointed Fr Francisco FERNANDES CORREIA to be Principal Superior of the new District of South-East Brazil (Cf. Sp News, No 20), with effect from February 1.
- February 9, decided that the District of Auteuil should cease to exist and should be integrated into the Province of France, with effect from September 1.
- February 21, confirmed the re-election of Fr George C. REARDON for a new mandate as Provincial of U.S.A./West, with effect from March 15.
- March 27, confirmed the re-election of Fr Peter NEWMAN for a new mandate as Principal Superior of the District of Sierra Leone, with effect from March 16.

## Holland.

For Vocations Sunday in Holland (May 6), it was decided to make a nation-wide presentation of the Religious Life. Already on April 6, the Television began a series of programmes on the subject. The Radio and Press carried reports of these. The local newspaper of GEMERT, amongst others, published four full pages, with illustrations, written by the members of our Community there, on the 13 religious houses, male and female, in the area. It is also their intention on the day itself to bear witness to their religious life by stopping people in the street to discuss their life with them.

## Brazil.

The new house of Vila Mangalot (Cf. Sp News, Nos 17 & 21) is to be called Fr Laval Community and will receive the Spiritan students of theology in Brazil. It was inaugurated on April 29, the day of Fr Laval's Beatification, by the Archbishop of Sao Paolo, Cardinal ARNS.

## Canada.

Spiritan News, No. 16, briefly referred to the interesting missionary experiment carried out over two months in Mexico by 9 students of St Alexandre's College, accompanied by the Father-in-Charge of Spiritan Formation in Canada, Fr Gaetan RENAUD. The account of this venture, which was published by UNIVERS, the review of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Canada has now appeared as an illustrated pamphlet of 16 pages, entitled MEXICO '79. It should interest many Spiritans, more particularly the young and those in charge of formation. Copies may be obtained from: Fr Renaud, Collège St-Alexandre, 850, Principale, TOURNAI, P. Q. J8V 187, Canada.

As a consequence of this summer in Mexico, 4 young men expressed a wish to try life in Spiritan Community after making an official request to join the Congregation. This period, during which they will be attached to the Province of Canada, will be considered a probationary time of preparation for the Novitiate. Already four Spiritan

priests have joined the new James Laval Community and live with the four postulants. The Community resides on the third floor of the Sisters' House at St-Alexandre. This initiative was undertaken with the approval of the Enlarged Provincial Council, the Community of the College and the interested parties themselves.

## Far East.

Fr Desmond Byrne (Provincial Assistant, Ireland) has recently visited the confreres in Australia (7), Papua/New Guinea (7) and Pakistan (2). He was representing the General Council and his own Province.

● AUSTRALIA. Two Spiritan attempts to get established in Australia (1845-48 & 1888-91) failed. In recent years we tried again. We have been doing parish-work in Brisbane since 1971 and prospects seem good. Two years ago we started a new parish at Pines River. This parish adopted as its own missionary a Father who spent 6 months there before going to Papua/New Guinea. In December 1976, we took charge of a parish and secondary school in Melbourne. After exploring the possibilities we withdrew from the school. Two Fathers continue in the parish at the Bishop's request.

● PAPUA/NEW GUINEA. We have charge of six parishes in Papua/New Guinea. The work is chiefly pastoral but given the spiritual abandonment may be considered as missionary work. The country became independent of Australia in 1975 and has a population of 2 million. There are 16 ecclesiastical jurisdictions two with local-born Bishops. Half of the 100 Senior Seminarians in the country are preparing for religious life and those Congregations there for some time find many vocations.

● PAKISTAN. One of the original three members had to withdraw temporarily for health reasons: the other two finished their preparatory year with the Dominicans. They are living at Saddiqubad, about 12 miles away from the Dominican house at Rahimyar Khan. There they share the food and life-style of the local people and to make their witness more effective travel by local transport or bicycle. Their ministry is only now beginning and is directed principally to the Marwari who number some 30,000 and to the Punjabi. They lead a life of intense prayer, convinced that without that there is no future for them in Pakistan.

## Our Jubilarians.

### Silver Jubilee of Episcopal Ordination:

July 1, The Most Reverend Jean DAVID (Madagascar).

### Golden Jubilee of Priesthood

July 7, Frs Eduardus LOFFELD, Antonius van ROOIJ, Gerardus SCHEERDER and Henricus de VRIEZ (Holland).

July 25, Fr François LE BRAS (France).

July 28, The Most Reverend Daniel LISTON (Ireland); Frs Marc DUVAL and Emile VIDÉLO (France).

August 31, Frs Joseph D. BOYD (Porto Rico), Regis GUTHRIE (U.S.A./East) John A. STRIMSKA (U.S.A./West).

### 70 Years of Religious Profession

August 15, Fr John LUNDERGAN (U.S.A./East).

## Our Dead.

Feb. 12 : Fr Patrick J. HEWITT (Ireland), aged 81.

Mar. 24 : P. Johannes de WIT (Bangui), aged 61.

Apr. 4 : Fr François DOUCE (France), aged 74.

Apr. 7 : Fr Aurèle MICHAUD (Martinique), aged 55.

Apr. 13 : Fr Noel DELANEY (Kenya), aged 46.

Apr. 13 : Br Stephanus OOMEN (Holland), aged 72.