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SPIRITAN NEWS

September-October, 1979

No. 24

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

SUMMARY

EVENT: Mgr TCHIDIMBO freed.
DOCUMENTATION: Visit to the Province of IRELAND.
NEWS: Appointments: by the Holy Father; of Major Superiors - Changes of Address - At the Generalate - Questionnaire - Angola - Our Jubilarians - Our Dead.

Event

THE RELEASE OF ARCHBISHOP TCHIDIMBO FROM CAPTIVITY.


The news so long awaited in prayer and hope by Spiritans and other friends broke upon the world on the morning of August 8: the previous evening, Archbishop TCHIDIMBO had been set free. He had spent 8 years and 8 months in prison under harsh conditions. Press and Radio carried the news, with special emphasis on his departure from Conakry to Liberia and Rome on his way to Paris and Lourdes where he hoped to spend a quiet month of thanksgiving.

On August 11, Archbishop Raymond-Marie TCHIDIMBO arrived in Rome: he dined next day with the Holy Father at Castelgandolfo. On August 13, he resigned as Metropolitan of Guinea, while retaining the title of "former Archbishop of Conakry."

On August 24, the Osservatore Romano announced officially the appointment of a successor to the Metropolitan See of Conakry: the Rev. Robert SARAH, a local secular priest, lately Parish Priest of Boké, Katakó, Koundara, and Ourous. Bishop MAILLAT, a White Father, having resigned at the same time, another local priest was appointed Bishop of Nzérékoré: Rev. Philippe KOUROUMA, formerly Parish Priest of Macenta. It is hoped that President SEKO TOURE's gesture in freeing the Archbishop, and these two new appointments by Rome, may ease the tension between the Church and State in Guinea, in the best interests of the people of that country.

On August 16, the Archbishop presided a Celebrated Mass of Thanksgiving at the Generalate and lunched with the Community. In his address he said: "... I wish to put on record that the miracle which has taken place is the result of your prayers. A man in chains has little merit of his own. It is the moral support of the whole of Christendom united with him in prayer, that day after day encourages him to persevere in that hope which is the fundamental virtue of every Christian living in this world. Without wishing to appear partisan, I should also like it to be known that it was the spiritual teaching of Father LIBERMANN that enabled me to endure the humiliations, the annoyances, that were our daily lot in prison.

Archbishop Tchidimbo's Career

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- 1920 (August 15) : Born at Conakry and baptised Raymond-Marie, son of a Gabonese father and a Guinean mother; then entered Junior Seminary.
 - 1942 : Called to the colours. Served in Upper Volta, Senegal, Morocco, France.
 - 1946 : Senior Seminarian.
 - 1948 : Spiritan Novice.
 - 1949 : Religious Profession.
 - 1951 : Ordained to the Priesthood (Chevilly).
 - 1952 : Missionary (Kankan, Guinea).
 - 1961 : Vicar-General of Conakry.
 - 1962 : Archbishop of Conakry.
 - 1970 : Imprisoned by civil authorities. (Dec. 24)
 - 1979 : Released. (August. 7)
Resigned as Metropolitan of Guinea (August 13)
Granted 12 months rest by the Holy Father.

A careful reading of the letters of Father LIBERMANN brings us to realise that, to be a man of God as he understood the term, we must die to self, not evidently in a literal sense but by fully acknowledging our creaturehood, our inability to do anything in God's service. All that we do, all that we will to do, our efficaciousness, our achievement, is in proportion to our submission to the light God gives to sustain, support and urge us on. Other things also helped me to live through this time: but, if I share my joy with you to-day, it is most especially because I am son of LIBERMANN and called upon him in prison, even though he has not yet been canonised! I shall not labour this point, too deep for words. I ask you only, in conclusion, to listen to this song composed for my fellow-prisoners, to encourage them in their darkest hours to look out in hope of the dawn that would come on the morrow."

Then, in his fine baritone voice, and in a minor key befitting the prisoner he was at the time he composed this song for his fellow-prisoners, the Archbishop sang:

Refrain: *How good it is for men to live together!
My friends, let's stay united
The length of days and years
Unto eternity.*

1. *Memories that made us one cannot shade off in dim forgetfulness
Of mornings grey, of cruel insults borne and bitter bread we shared:*
2. *God, whose love drew us all together, willed that our friendship span the years of life:
Friendship is given us that we may build anew in joy, in faith, in love!*

3. *To-morrow, light will dawn again for all who truly cherish liberty,
Liberty, God's gift to men, promise and prospect of horizons new.*
4. *Let us then love each other as true lovers do, for God is Love
And Planet Earth can rise to its intended heights only on wings of love, of joy!*
5. *Good-bye, my brothers, my sisters, well-beloved,
All our to-morrows will be rich in fruits of our experience,
All our to-morrows speak to men of sunshine, perfumed flower and happy song!*
6. *To-morrow, a new Spring will dawn
And children everywhere will sing and dance again!*
7. *May this farewell my friends, sound ever in your hearts
Tolling in tones of deep emotion so many crimes and tears and sorrows borne:*
8. *Remember, to-morrow day will dawn anew and earth be filled with light
For all who in this world cherish peace, and brotherhood and love.*

On August 21, Archbishop Tchidimbo gave a Press Conference at the Generalate. In the course of it, asked to comment upon the first statement made after his release, in Monrovia: "What is past is over and done with.", he explained:

"It means: Christ is always coming. That was what was hidden deep in what I said. Moreover, if it is true that Christ is always coming, we should never look back but go forward confidently to the future. St Paul tells us this in so many words in one of his Epistles: the runner in the race, he says, even should he fall, should not give up. He should arise and continue to run his course to the end. That sums it up, so far as I am concerned. All that has happened is a logical consequence of my missionary

vocation. God has taken note: it is no longer my concern. What does concern me is what lies ahead."

"How then, Your Grace, would you interpret the years you spent in prison?"

"To answer that I believe we must go back to the origins of the Church itself. That is the heart of the problem: the mystery of the Church continues. The fact that I have been badly treated is, rightly or wrongly, in the logic of the Apostolate in which every apostle is engaged, either as priest or religious. I think that often, in human terms, we are shocked by the imprisonment of Bishop or priest. Considered however as a prolongation of the mystery of Redemption in the world, it is a normal happening: we should not be surprised. It is indeed, in my opinion, the contrary that is abnormal: the assumption that the Church can be implanted without pain or cost. It is not for an apostle to ask whether or not his treatment was just. Quite simply, he should be content to see God present in all that happens to him. That, after all, is what it means to read events in the light of the Gospel."

"And what, may we ask, are Your Grace's plans for the future?"

"As you can well appreciate, my immediate desire is to rest, pray and try to update myself on what has been happening in my absence. You must remember, I have spent a longer time in prison than in the Senior Seminary: so much has happened in the last eight years of which I am ignorant! Only when I have assimilated all that can I begin to think about the future. I would only add: the future has never worried me: that is why I found it possible to submit to prison-life."

"Finally, Your Grace, is it your intention to return to missionary work?"

"I am a missionary, and a missionary is a soldier subject to authority. Should the Pope wish me to return, I shall obey. Should he wish me to go elsewhere, I shall likewise obey. I have no personal projects, no particular preferences to express."

Documentation: VISIT TO THE PROVINCE OF IRELAND (February, 10 - April 8, 1979)

History

Spiritans came to Ireland for the first time in 1859 and made their first permanent foundation in Williamstown, a village near Dublin, the following year (1860). It was called 'the French College', a name which many years later was changed to Blackrock College. In 1861 there were 14 junior scholastics and 34 lay pupils in the school, and new buildings were necessary. In 1864 they opened a new college, in Rockwell, near the town of Tipperary. The first junior scholastic were sent to France for their novitiate and senior scholasticate. Those were the days of international formation and international missionary teams and throughout the nineteenth century, and indeed for many years afterwards, Irish Spiritans worked side by side with French and Alsatian Spiritans in the various missions of the Congregation. It was not until early in the present century that the Province had its own novitiate and senior scholasticate.

In spite of the efforts of the Spiritans, there was little interest in Ireland during the late 19th century for the missions of Africa. If an Irish boy wanted to go 'on the missions', could he not go to look after the hundreds of thousands of Irish who had emigrated to North America or to Australia? The modern missionary movement did not begin in Ireland until after the first world war. One of the most charismatic figures of this period was Bishop Joseph Shanahan, CSSp. Young Irish secular priests and lay helpers answered his appeal to work in Nigeria. Some of his first lay helpers he formed into the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary. Another lay helper, Mary Martin, was later to found the Medical Missionaries of Mary. Some of the secular priests who had worked with Shanahan founded the St. Patrick's Missionary Society (the Kiltegan Fathers). Bishop Shanahan

also gave missionary fire and enthusiasm to his own Congregation. In the 1920's recruitment began to soar in the missionary congregations and especially in the Spiritans who, by the 1950's, were the largest religious congregation in Ireland, with over 300 young Spiritans in formation. Irish Spiritans went in large numbers to Nigeria, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Gambia, South-West Brazil and Canada. When civil war broke out in Nigeria in 1967 there were over 300 Irish Spiritans working in Eastern Nigeria. Only six Irish Spiritans remain there to-day but there is a Nigerian Spiritan Province of over a hundred members. In the same area there are hundreds of secular priests, hundreds of religious and major seminarians and a Catholic population of over two million.

To-day 366 Irish confrères are working in missionary situations abroad, the largest groups of which are in Kenya (126), Sierra Leone (71) and South-West Brazil (43). When it became clear that the Irish Spiritans who had been working in Eastern Nigeria would not be allowed to return there they were assigned to other work. Many of them went to work in the 'Irish' Districts and others were assigned to new missionary situations, in Alaska, Botswana, Papua/New Guinea, Malawi, Zambia and Bangladesh. Ghana has recently been erected as a District; the other groups remain under the jurisdiction of the Provincial.

The crisis of vocations in Europe and North America has affected Ireland also, and perhaps missionary congregations more than others. However, the Province has 66 young Spiritans in formation, as well as nine novices (September 1978). The Philosophers attend lectures at a local major seminary (All Hallows) while Kimmage Manor remains the centre of a faculty of Theology which is shared by other religious congregations. The faculty is affiliated to the Irish National and Pontifical Seminary at Maynooth

and the students can sit for the B.D. examination. Kimmage Manor is also the centre of the Department of Development Studies, which conducts a one-year diploma course in development studies and attracts students from many parts of the world. In Kimmage also there is a one-year course of Spiritual Formation which is attended by novices of various religious congregations in the Dublin area.

The Colleges

Blackrock College and Rockwell College made a reputation for the Spiritans as educationalists and they were asked by the Bishops to take on various educational establishments. The Archdiocese of Dublin profited especially and the Spiritans opened three more schools there: St. Mary's College, Rathmines (1890); St. Michael's College, Ailesbury Road (1944) and Templeogue College (1966). Due to the greatly increased population of Dublin city there is considerable competition for places in the Spiritan schools, and consequent pressure to provide more places. In the four Dublin schools there are about 4,000 students. Rockwell College is in the heart of the country but it is a small town in itself: it has over 500 students in the secondary school, 115 in the hotel school and 120 in the School of Agriculture. It has a large farm run on very scientific lines which helps to support the school. Although there are still about 75 Spiritans engaged in these works, falling numbers in Spiritan personnel make it necessary to plan for a different form of commitment to these schools for the future.

As a consequence perhaps of its educational involvement in the Province, Irish Spiritan missionary work has always had a strong educational bias. In the districts staffed by Irish Spiritans much of the evangelization was done through schools: primary, secondary and teacher-training. There were thousands of teachers in schools manned by Irish Spiritans, and hundreds of thousands of school children. Irish Spiritans took responsibility not only for schools in 'Irish' districts but also in Trinidad, Mauritius and Tanzania, where the pastoral work was the responsibility of other missionaries.

The Visit of the Generalate Team

Fathers Gross and Daly arrived in Ireland on February 10th and visited the Communities of the Province. Father General and Father Walsh arrived on March 18th. Father Walsh interviewed the confrères in parochial work in Irish dioceses. The second stage of the visit began on March 22nd. In each Community Father General talked of the Life and Work of the Congregation and its hopes for the future. This was followed by talks by the Assistants which were more directly concerned with the local community and the Province itself.

The last stage of the visit was a General Assembly of the Province which took place in Blackrock College on Friday and Saturday 7th and 8th April. The visit had revealed a certain divergence on the practicalities of how we live our Spiritan vocation. It seemed that the differences arose partly from different theological viewpoints, partly from different concepts of the end and work of the Congregation arising from different work situations. Some people stressed religious life, sometimes in a rather narrow interpretation and perhaps without paying sufficient attention to the specific Spiritan vocation within the Mission of the Church. Others stressed strongly the work, taking very seriously 'poor and most abandoned' but in a narrow sense and without sufficient stress on the quality of life of the person who does the work.

It was for this reason that Father General, in his first talk, stressed the unity of our Spiritan vocation: "*We are a fraternal community of religious missionaries, a community recognisable in its spirituality and its particular role in the Church's universal Mission. We cannot separate the three elements: as religious we are missionaries; as missionaries we are religious, and we are called together to work for the service of those individuals and peoples whose needs are greatest and who are the most neglected . . .*"

Father General's talk was followed by discussion in small groups, which were chosen to be as representative as possible of the age-groups and works within the Province. This was followed by a sharing of opinion in general assembly. Next morning (Saturday) two talks were given jointly by Fathers Gross, Walsh and Daly. The two talks attempted an evaluation of the life and work of the Province and suggested guidelines for the future. These were again followed by discussion in small groups and by a general assembly. The Assembly concluded with a concelebrated Mass at which Father General was the chief celebrant.

The General Assembly brought together 250 Irish Spiritans out of 300 'living or working' in Ireland. Young and old, 'conservatives' and 'progressives', 'missionaries' and 'religious' met together in small groups, met one another - often for the first time, listened to one another and learnt from one another. There was a spirit of reconciliation in the air, perhaps a bit of euphoria. The Assembly, for those who took part in it, was a celebration which contained some of the elements which Cardinal Pironio requires of a religious chapter: that it be a celebration of repentance, of reconciliation and of unity. Reconciliation requires repentance for sin: *Christ breaks down the dividing wall of hostility and reconciles us to God in one body through his cross (ch. Eph. 2, 14, 16)*. It is only the 'righteous' who fail to recognise the need for repentance. When a religious community continues to live in repentance and reconciliation its members become more fully fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God; *Christ becomes its corner-stone and in him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord (ch. Eph. 2, 20, 21)*. The Provincial Assembly was an invitation to the Spiritan community in Ireland to embark on a renewal of its missionary and religious life.

NEWS

Appointments made by The Holy Father.

● The Pope has named Fr Luiz HERBST to be Coadjutor, with right of succession, to the Prelature of Jurua (Brazil). Fr HERBST is at present Vicar-General to the present incumbent, Mgr Heinrich RUTH. Both are Spiritans. (Oss. Romano: 15/8/1979.)

● He has also appointed our Superior-General, Fr TIMMERMANS, as Consultant, for a period of 5 years, of the S.C. for the Evangelisation of the Peoples (3/5/1979). Fr TIMMERMANS replaces two other Spiritans, Frs LECUYER and MARE, who have completed their five-year mandate.

Appointments of Major Superiors.

The General Council

- on May 28, approved the election by the Enlarged Provincial Council of HOLLAND of a new Provincial Team, with effect from June 25. The members are: Frs Cornelius NEVEN (Provincial), Josephus VERWIELEN, Godfridus de KINDEREN, Siebren de LANGE.
- on May 29, named Fr Vincent O'TOOLE to be Principal Superior of the District of MAKURDI, with effect from November 1.
- on June 14, appointed Fr John HOGAN to be Principal Superior of the District of GAMBIA, with effect from July 15.
- on June 26, approved the election by the District Chapter of CABO VERDE of Fr Gil LOSA as Principal Superior of that District.
- on June 30 accepted the resignation of Fr Pierre HAAS, Principal Superior of the District of SENEGAL, and confirmed his election by the Provincial Council of FRANCE as Provincial of that territory, with effect from the same day. The same Enlarged Provincial Council had re-elected Fr Jean FERRON as First Provincial Vicar and elected Fr François NICOLAS as Second Provincial Vicar.
- on July 10 approved the election of Fr William HEADLEY by the Provincial Chapter of the Eastern Province of the U.S.A. as Provincial of that territory, with effect from August 17.
- on July 10 approved the re-election, by the Provincial Chapter, of Fr Edward HOLMES as Provincial of ENGLAND, retroactive to July 7 (Second mandate).
- on August 17, with effect from August 3, the re-election of Fr Rémi PEETERS by his Belgian confreres as Provincial of BELGIUM for a second term.

Changes of Addresses of Major Superiors.

GERMANY: Herrn P. Provinzial, C.S.Sp, Victoria str. 12, D 5000 KÖLN I.
HOLLAND: Provincial Superior, C.S.Sp, Ridderplein 17, Postbus 17, 5420 AA GEMERT dorp.
TRANSCANADA: Provincial Superior; C.S.Sp, 30 Sunrise Ave, Apt 401, TORONTO, Ont M4A 2R3.
MADAGASCAR: Supérieur Principal, C.S.Sp, 7 Rue du Rova, BP 126, MAHAJANGA.
BRAZIL SOUTH: Principal Superior, C.S.Sp, 040004, Rua Alcino Braga 91, CP. 5332, 01000 SÃO PAULO.
BRAZIL SOUTH-WEST: Principal Superior, C.S.Sp, CP 155, 09500 SÃO CAETANO DO SOL, Est de São Paulo.
BRAZIL SOUTH-EAST: Principal Superior, C.S.Sp, CP 8, NOVA IGUAÇU, 26000 RJ.
CENTRAL BRAZIL: Principal Superior, C.S.Sp, Av. Ivai 1283, Bairro Don Bosco, CP 597, 30.000 BELO HORIZONTE; MG.
SOUTHERN AFRICA: Principal Superior, C.S.Sp, 31 Piet Retief Str, PO Box 219, 9745, LADYBRAND, Rep. of South Africa.

Changes in the Generalate.

- Fr Manuel SANTOS NEVES (Portugal), former Principal Superior of Cabo Verde, has been appointed for 3 years as successor of Fr Matthew FARRELLY in the office of Procurator of the Congregation to the Holy See, with effect from September 1.
- Fr Josephus de BOER (Holland), former Principal Superior of Bagamoyo, is appointed to the General Bursar's Office to look after the financial affairs of the new Foundations.
- Fr James F. McDONNELL has been appointed to replace Fr Joseph BOUCHAUD (France) in the Documentation Service.
- Fr Brendan W. McMAHON (Ireland) has been appointed Assistant Secretary-General.
- Fr Charles GALIEGUE (France), formerly attached to the General Bursar's Office, has been appointed Bursar of the French Seminary, Rome.

Replies to the Questionnaire sent out concerning the General Chapter.

Replies of confreres and circumscriptions to questions proposed by the General Council in the Pre-Capitular document, **OUR SPIRITAN LIFE**, should be sent to Rome before December 1. This is necessary so that they may be classified and studied in good time.

Given the usual postal delays here in Italy and the uncertainty of letters arriving at their destination, you are requested to address these replies to the address below:

Spiritan General Council
30 Rue Lhomond
75 005 PARIS (France).

Angola.

The Angolan Spiritans who intended to assist at the Beatification of Fr Laval arrived in Rome a month late, on May 29, because of visa difficulties. Fr BONGO, Provincial of Angola, was accompanied by two young Angolan Spiritan priests: all three spent one week in Rome. Fr BONGO wishes us to greet all his Spiritan brothers and to thank the Provinces and Districts of the Congregation for all the spiritual support and material aid of which Angola has been the recipient. After only two years of existence, this young Province draws strength and comfort from the solidarity of the whole Congregation in their hope of future improvement and in their sufferings, which are inseparable from the present socio-political changes the country is experiencing.

In answer to the needs expressed by the Province of Angola, the Province of Holland regularly sends parcels to the confreres there. One or other Province has accepted to participate in the scheme and Fr GENERAL asks other Provinces and Districts in a position to do so to help our confreres in this way. Please write to THE INFORMATION SERVICE of the Generalate marking your letter "Aid for Angola" and we shall pass it on to the proper authority.

Our Jubilarians.

50 years Professed

Dec. 8: Br Sebaldus TRAUTH (Germany)
10: Br Antonin GOELLER (France)
12: Veronus MOLLEMANS (Holland)

60 years of Priesthood

Dec. 24: Fr. William McMENEMY (U.S.A./West).

Our Dead.

May 11: Br Dionysius HEYDEN (Germany), Aged 83
27: Br Merchman CUNHA MARTINS (Portugal), Aged 76
Jun. 2: Fr Louis KITTEL (Switzerland), Aged 73
2: Fr Gottfried THELEN (Germany), Aged 78
8: Fr Antonius van der ZANDEN (Doumé), Aged 70
12: Br Gomaar LEENAERS (Belgium), Aged 84
Jul. 2: Fr Joseph A. GRIFFIN (U.S.A./East), Aged 77
3: Br Nicolas GELEBART (Gabon), Aged 56
7: Fr Bartholomew J. BUCKLEY (U.S.A./East), Aged 81
12: Br Jean'marie FLOUR (France), Aged 74
19: Fr John B. BRADY (Ireland), Aged 62
27: Fr John ROCHE (Ireland), Aged 69
30: Fr Joaquim Resende BARATA (Cabo Verde), Aged 78
Aug. 2: Fr Terence MULREADY (England), Aged 58
5: Fr Johannes-Chrysostomos STOPP (Germany), Aged 76
12: Fr Antonio BRAS (Portugal), Aged 61
14: Br Wilhelmus EICKOLT (Holland), Aged 89
15: Fr Patrick BURKE (Ireland), Aged 68
15: Fr Hector CHARTRAND (Canada), Aged 79.