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# SPIRITAN NEWS

November 1979

Number 25

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

## SUMMARY

**EVENT:** Young Spiritans at Gentinnes.  
**DOCUMENTATION:** First Feast of Blessed Jacques Laval.  
Meeting in Rome of Missionaries in Muslim Countries.  
**NEWS:** Generalate Team - Appointment - Preparation for General Chapter - Poland - Gabon - Spiritan Novitiates - Information Service - Our Dead.

## Event: YOUNG SPIRITANS' SUMMER EXPERIENCE AT GENTINNES

From 30 June to 30 July, 32 young Spiritans of 12 nationalities (10 Provinces, 3 Foundations) shared the "SUMMER EXPERIENCE 1979" at Gentinnes, Belgium. Four Provinces and one District were not able to send representatives: Angola and Poland, because of visa difficulties, and Germany, Trinidad and Puerto Rico, because of a lack of young professed members.

Frs. Tony GEOGHEGAN (Ireland) and Albert LE FLOC'H (France) took part in the meeting, as well as Fr. Albert THIELEMEIER, General Assistant. Father GENERAL joined it for the last few days.

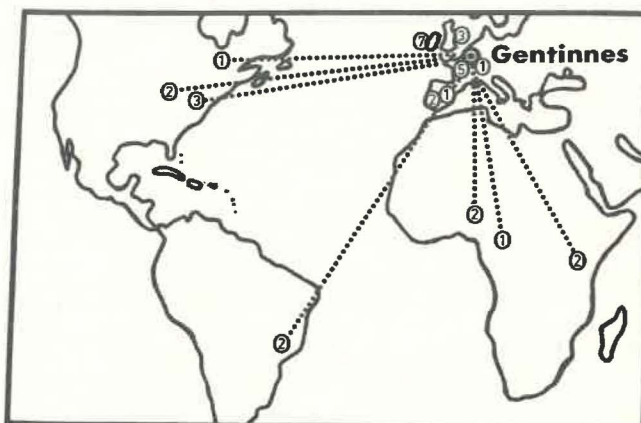
### Preparation

The Enlarged General Council of 1976 had decided to encourage international Spiritan formation. A first 'experience' was held at Aranda (Spain) in August 1977, with 134 young Spiritans taking part.

During the meeting in Rome, in Dec. 1977, of those in charge of Spiritan formation, it was decided that the next meeting of young Spiritans would be



Frs. Albert LE FLOC'H (left, France) and Tony GEOGHEGAN (right, Ireland), who were in charge of the 'Summer Experience' at Gentinnes.



a "summer experience of international Spiritan life" in July 1979.

At the 1978 Enlarged General Council, Gentinnes was chosen as the location for this meeting, and the organizers worked out the details at two preparatory sessions.

### Purpose of the Meeting

The Gentinnes 'experience' in July was primarily for young Spiritans just ending their theological or professional training. Its aims were: to create bonds of friendship between Spiritans of different countries; to experience what it means to belong to a Congregation rather than just to a Province, District or Foundation; to study a few themes considered important for Spiritan life and activity today; to provide a community prayer life that would be the main bond between the participants and would stimulate their group discussions; to stress not so much speculative study as an experience of Spiritan life at the deepest possible personal level.

### The Meeting

It is always difficult to give an account of what one has experienced. More than one participant will no doubt be disappointed at reading the bare résumé given here. Reservations, even criticisms, were expressed at the end of the meeting, and some of these will be mentioned below, but the overall feeling was that it was indeed a worthwhile experience.

Apart from the times set aside for prayer (morning prayer and the evening Eucharistic celebration) and silence (45 minutes before the day's work), the time-table included lectures and discussions in the morning, and manual labour and pastoral work in the afternoon (the pastoral work consisting in meetings with foreign students, helping in three rural parishes etc.).

Five lecturers presented the themes for discussion: 'Mission and Politics' in the first week; 'Libermann Today' in the second; and 'Basic Communities' and 'Urbanization' in the third. During the fourth

week Fr. General held discussions with the participants on the Congregation today.

Manual labour, in four groups, took the form of repairs to the pavement around the chapel and to the windows and toilets of the guest house; another group did work in the village of Gentinnes, and the money earned was put into the community fund.

### Evaluation

At the end of the month the young Spiritans made their own assessment of it, and the following are some of the points that emerged:

- The need to have at least a second language. Without some knowledge of languages, communication breaks down and linguistic groups tend to close in on themselves.
- Different cultures have different prayer styles, and the richness of this was experienced, as well as a depth of prayer transcending cultural differences. The liturgy could have been better prepared and the lack of a liturgical expert was felt.
- It was easier to establish personal contact at manual labour than in the discussion groups. There was a real spirit of friendship, though in a month one could not establish deep personal contact with everybody.
- There was a sense of sharing, especially in the small discussion groups, but financial sharing could

have been improved, and there was not enough contact with the Gentinnes community.

- Pastoral work was easier for those who spoke French, because it was the language of the area.
- The manual labour was useful, and provided relaxation and personal contact.
- The themes for discussion came in for a certain amount of criticism, e.g. too theoretical, too sketchy.

A month is of course a short time. Perhaps a longer period would have shown up the tensions inherent in all community life. And there are different approaches to formation in the different Provinces and Foundations. But the Gentinnes Experience, in spite of its limits, was definitely worthwhile, as can be seen from the following two comments, taken from among many:

*"It was an excellent way to take stock of the international aspect of our present, and especially future, life. It is up to each of us to promote this international aspect in our Provinces, communities and parishes, and to realize its ultimate aim: the Church's work of evangelization."*

*"Success, joy, friendship. A new feeling of belonging to a great international family. Encouragement for everybody. We discovered so many talents and made a faithful reading of the signs of the times."*

## Documentation: FIRST FEAST OF BLESSED JACQUES LAVAL

*The 9th September this year was a Sunday and so we were not able to celebrate the first feast of Blessed Jacques Laval. A Proper (Mass and Office) for the feast is being prepared for next year and will soon be published by the Superior General for the whole Congregation.*

*We had planned to publish in our last number of 'Spiritans News' a report on the ceremony that took place in Mauritius, on 19 May, at the monument of Mary, Queen of Peace, in the presence of more than 100,000 Mauritians. But the liberation of Archbishop Tchidimbo, and the coverage of that event, caused us to hold over our report on the Mauritian Mass for this issue.*

There are some who dislike 'official' or 'national' Masses, saying that the Eucharist, a mystery of faith, should be a gathering of believers in the presence of Christ, not a public manifestation with political or nationalistic overtones. Nor should the Eucharist be syncretistic, with borrowings from other religions.

Both dangers could have been feared at the ceremony in Mauritius, on 19 May, in honour of the newly beatified Fr. Laval, in that it brought together his devotees from all religions - Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims as well as Christians.

The ceremony, however, was in perfect accord with liturgical norms, while allowing people of other religions to identify with at least some of the prayers. The booklet for the ceremony (a copy of which was sent immediately to us and for which we are grateful) enables us to give a sample of some of the prayers. They may inspire others to similar initiatives elsewhere.

The entrance procession was accompanied by a fanfare of trumpets and a hymn to Fr. Laval in French:

*"All children of the one father, we gather round you, full of love and hope. Fr. Laval, pray for us."*

### Penitential liturgy in Mauritian Creole:

*"Pitié Seignère, pitié nou la misère; Pitié Seignère, pitié pou nou péssé."*

### After the first reading, Psalm 112, in Chinese:

## 上主的僕人 聖詠一一三 江文也曲

亞肋路亞 亞肋路亞

上主的僕人啊請讚美上主請歌頌上主的名

願上主的名受頌揚自今世直至永遠

自日出到日沒願上主的名受頌揚

上主超出萬民之上他的光輝凌駕諸天

誰如上帝我們的天主坐於至高之處

他在上天下地眷顧卑微的人

他從塵埃裡提拔陋人予他從糞土中高舉貧陋人

使他們坐在貴人中在他子民的顯民中

他使不孕的婦女居在家中成為子女們快樂的母親

亞肋路亞 亞肋路亞

*"Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord..."*

### After the second reading, a hymn in Hindi:

तेरा नूर

तेरा नूर (२) जग में समाया हुआ है ॥ (२)  
सकल विश्व तेरा बनाया हुआ है ॥ (२)

बने है तुझी से ये आकाश धरती  
सभी ओर जलवा समाया हुआ है ॥ (२)

चमकते है दुनिया में चन्दा व सूरज  
तेरी ज्योति से जगमगाया हुआ है ॥ (२)

गावें हमेशा तेरे गीत स्वामी  
तू ही मेरे दिल में समाया हुआ है ॥ (२)

"Your majesty fills all the earth; the world You created belongs to You..."

Alleluia, with verse in French. Music by the Police Band during the Offertory procession. At the Kiss of Peace a group of children released a flight of doves to symbolize peace over Mauritius. The 'Agnus Dei' was in Creole:

"Seignère Zézi dans ça monde-là to vinne efface tou nou pessé."

During the Communion, a hymn in Creole, and one in Tamil:

உம் துதி பாடுவோம்

பல்லவி: உம் துதி பாடுவோம், உம் துணை நாடுவோம்,  
எம் தந்தை வளவலை என்றும் உமை போற்றுவோம்.  
உம் புகழ் கூறுவோம், உம் அடிகள் தேடுவோம்,  
எம் தந்தை வளவலை கின்றுமைக் கொண்டாடுவோம்.

எழிய மனத்தவர் ஏகவின அன்பர்  
எனும் அடும் உண்மையை வாழ்த்து காட்டினாயே.  
ஏகாதகர் நண்பரே! திறைவனின் துதரே!  
எம் சிறு தீவுக்கு கலங்குகறாயே.  
உம் அடி போற்றி உம் வழி நடப்போம்.

"We sing your praise, we implore your help,  
Fr. Laval, our father in the faith..."

## MEETING IN ROME OF MISSIONARIES IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES

The meeting is open to priests, religious and lay people living their Christian life in a Muslim environment. Begun more than 20 years ago, these reunions at first were held every three years, but now they are held every two. This year's meeting was held at Grottaferrata, near Rome, from 2 to 8 Sept., and brought together about 100 participants from Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. The majority came from Egypt and North Africa, but there were others from Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Mali, Niger and Mauretania.

Two priests from Mauritania (one of them a Spiritan, Fr. Bernard Pelletier) took part in it, and the following brief account is based on comments from

After the final blessing, Catholic nuns sang the Magnificat in Latin, and Buddhist nuns sang in Chinese:

"The sandalwood is lit, we are gathered in prayer. We pray fervently that God and all the saints will hear us and be with us. We pray that all mankind will live in holiness."

Then the Pandits chanted, in Sanskrit, mantras from the Upanishads and Vedas:

"O Lord, from illusion lead me to reality; from darkness lead me to light; from death lead me to immortality... May there be peace in heaven; may there be peace in the atmosphere; may there be peace on earth; may there be peace in the water... May peace pervade everywhere; may that peace come to me..."

Finally the Imams chanted, in Arabic, the first 'sura' of the Koran:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ  
مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ  
إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ

"In the name of the merciful, the all-merciful God. Praise to God, the Lord of the world, the merciful, the all-merciful, Master of the day of retribution. It is You we adore, You whose help we seek. Guide us on the right path..."

The final procession was accompanied by a hymn, in French, composed by Raymond Fau:

"You call us to love You in loving the world to which You send us..."

This was followed by another fanfare of trumpets and the release of balloons.

Fr. Laval, from his place in heaven, must have smiled at his 'children', united in true brotherhood, thanks to him.

A growing number of Spiritans work in Muslim countries, but not many of them know of the week-long meeting in Rome, every two years, of such missionaries home on leave. This gives them a chance to meet each other and compare notes, to pray together, and to study the implications of life in an Islamic milieu.

them. They found the meeting very interesting and useful, and recommend it to other Spiritans. The number of participants each time is limited, but the organizers would like to see as many countries as possible represented.

Unlike many congresses in Rome, this is not an initiative of the Vatican, and the Bishops present (those of Oran and Laghouat) were there as simple participants. The languages used were French and English, with translations provided.

Among the more noteworthy elements of the 1979 meeting were the following:

● A reflection on the way of expressing the Christian faith in a Muslim environment. The Christian

message should be expressed in Islamic terms, rather than using expressions which are more exact perhaps but meaningless to Muslims.

● An inquiry into the way Christians expressed their faith during the Middle Ages, when in a Muslim environment. Christian Arab authors spoke of Christian realities in Muslim terms, without the fear of ambiguity that we have today. At Baghdad, in the time of the Abbasid Caliphs, there was a Christian university beside the Muslim one, and the Christian university was the more popular of the two.

● A discussion on the Bible in a Muslim environment.

● Personal accounts of Christian prayer in Muslim countries. Without minimizing the importance of Christian social activity, the life of a missionary in a Muslim country should be first of all a witness to

prayer and Eucharistic contemplation. It is possible to be a 'priest for' (for Catholics, for the sacraments, etc.), but one should also be a 'priest with', simply with the people, present among them. The Eucharist then becomes an act of adoration, of incarnation in the country, and of thanksgiving in the name of all the people. Muslims are often surprised at how little visible prayer there is among Christians. "*The Nsara (i.e. strangers, Europeans) do not pray,*" they say. "Or, if they do, they use a book." A missionary should be a man of prayer, of regular, visible prayer. During a meeting of Christians, at which some Muslims were present and which usually ended with a prayer, it was a Muslim who said one night: "*Why no prayer this evening?*" And everyone sat back down on their mats to pray.

## NEWS

### The Generalate Team

● Frs. THIELEMEIER and VAN SONSBECK visited the Province of Germany during the entire month of September. Fr. GENERAL joined them from 20 Sept.

● Fr. TORRES NEIVA was in Angola from 12 Sept. to 8 Oct.

● Fr. DALY went to a meeting in Ireland from 17 to 22 Sept.

● Fr. GENERAL will visit the French Antilles from 10 to 30 Nov.

● From mid-November, several of the General Assistants will visit the French-speaking Districts of Equatorial Africa: Fr. GROSS in Cameroon, Fr. DALY in Gabon, Fr. TORRES NEIVA in the Congo, and Fr. VAN SONSBECK in the Central African Republic. These visits will last until February 1980, and Fr. GENERAL will take part in them in January-February.

### Appointment

On 30 August, the General Council appointed Fr. Jean DAVIET Principal Superior of the District of Senegal, as from 1 Sept. He replaces Fr. Pierre HAAS, who was elected Provincial of France on 30 June.

### Preparation for the General Chapter

Five Fathers in charge of Formation in the Congregation met for a week in Rome in September to draw up a pre-Capitular document on Formation, which will eventually be studied by the delegates to the Chapter. They will have another meeting at Easter to finalize the text.

### Poland

The Province of Poland will hold its Provincial Chapter in November. In 1978-79 there were 24 young Spiritans in formation: 9 theologians, 3 philosophers and 12 novices.

### Gabon

On 15 August, the Diocese of Oyem, in the north of Gabon, celebrated the 50th anniversary of the coming of Christianity. At the request of the local Bishop and faithful, the remains of the first Spiritan to preach the Gospel there were brought from

Chevilly and, after a five-mile procession in which more than 2,000 people took part, were laid to rest in the Oyem cathedral.

### Spiritans Novitiates

In September 1978 the Congregation had 57 novices, distributed as follows: Ireland 9, Nigeria 8, Poland 7, France 6, Portugal 5, Brazil 4, East African Foundation 4, Angola 4, U.S.A. West 3, U.S.A. East 2, Trinidad 2, Spain 2, Germany 2, Switzerland 1, Canada 1, Trans-Canada 1.

The figures do not correspond necessarily to the number of professions at the end. The novitiate year begins in different months in different places.

For the coming scholastic year (1979-80), there will be no novices in certain Provinces: Ireland (for the first time in its history), both U.S. Provinces, both Canadian Provinces, Trinidad. On the other hand, other novitiates will be reopening, such as that of the Central African Foundation, with two novices from Equatorial Guinea.

### Information Service

Beginning with this issue, Fr. Roland QUESNEL, from Trinidad, will do the translation for the English edition of *Spiritans News*. He replaces Fr. Gerald W. FITZGERALD, who has been appointed to the General Bursar's office. Fr. Amadeu MARTINS continues as translator for the Portuguese edition. The overall editor remains Fr. Jean GODARD, and the choice of material, editing, layout etc. is done by him.

On the other hand, the material for *IID (Information-Documentation)*, reflecting as it does the thought of the Generalate Team, is written by one or other of the General Assistants, and Fr. Godard is responsible only for its presentation.

### Our Dead

14 Aug.: Fr. Nicholas McCORMACK (Trans-Canada), 72 years.

27 Aug.: Fr. Edouard CLAES (Belgium) 82 years.

6 Sept.: Fr. Jean KIRCHNER (Angola), 77 years.

11 Sept.: Fr. William J. MULLEN (USA East), 89 years.

13 Sept.: Fr. William O'MAHONY (Ireland), 57 years.

17 Sept.: Fr. Clarence ROTHWELL (England), 69 years.

21 Sept.: Br. Nazarius JACOBS (Holland), 71 years.

28 Sept.: Fr. Johannes KLEFFNER (Germany), 69 years.

30 Sept.: Fr. Louis CLERC (Yaoundé), 54 years.