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other in a fraternal spirit of discernment – a discernment in the Holy Spirit that will lead to definite decisions. In this way no one's gifts will be lost to the community.

Yes, time is short, and decisions must be made in the name of Mission. The signs of true renewal are still not clear enough, still too few. Let us wake up. Let us decide, once and for all, to get up and go. We cannot allow ourselves the luxury of not facing up to the demands of our vocation.

And who will help us to see our way, who will "lead us to the full truth" about our life, our commitments and the spirit that should animate us, if not He to whom the blind man cried, "Lord, that I may see"?

So may the new year, the year of our Chapter, be a year of light and discernment: discernment in the study of the questions facing us, in the renewal of our spiritual life and prayer, and especially in our attitude to God, who must always come first. Speaking one day of God's works, Fr. Libermann said: "God does not want them to be attributed to man's power; He wants them to be recognized as His own" (N.D. II, 160).

Happy Christmas and Happy New Year.



Documentation :

NUMERICAL DECLINE OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES SINCE 1964

The December 1979 issue of I/D gives some reflections of the Generalate Team on the Congregation as it is today.

The Information Service would like here to extend these reflections by placing the numerical evolution of the Congregation in the context of the other religious congregations of men.

We base ourselves on an article in the French missionary magazine *Missi* (No. 412, April-May 1978), entitled '**Some Striking Statistics**', which highlights 1964 as the turning point for virtually all the religious institutes of men. It was in 1964, in fact, that our own Congregation reached its numerical peak (5,141 members). In 1964, the 62 religious institutes of men that had more than 1,000 members each, totalled nearly 300,000 religious. Since then, all except one have decreased in membership, and the total in 1977 was about 230,000 (a decrease of 24%).

With permission from *Missi*, we reproduce their list of statistics, along with a translation of the article that accompanied it (p. 3).

We would point out, however, that the statistics in *Missi* are taken from the *Annuario Pontificio*, which is published in January each year by the Holy See, but in which the statistics for Congregations are sometimes up to three years behind time. Thus, for our own Congregation – Spiritans, in Line 17 – the real figures were 5,008, 5,141, 5,060, 4,081, for a difference of –1,060 (instead of 5,200, 5,200, 5,060, 4,081, for a difference of –1,119).

The slight discrepancies, however, do not detract from the validity of the overall picture or of the reflections based on it by the author of the accompanying article.

We should note, too, that in the French list in *Missi* the names of the Congregations are in alphabetical order within each subdivision: over 9,000 members, over 4,000, over 2,000, over 1,000. In the English translation of the names of the institutes the alphabetical order is lost.

If, on the basis of the list, the 62 institutes are classed according to their percentage of decrease in the 13 years 1964-77, the Spiritans are found to be in the middle, with a decrease of 20-21%.

- One institute had a decrease of more than 40%: the Third Order Regular of St. Francis.
- 11 decreased by 30-40% (including the Marist Brothers, De La Salle Brothers, Premonstratensians, Marianists, Assumptionists, Calced Carmelites...).
- 9 decreased by 25-30% (including Maryknoll, the Vincentians, Redemptorists, Paris Foreign Mission Society, Brothers of St. John of God, Ploërmel Brothers...).
- 18 decreased by 20-25% (including the Montfortans, Priests of the Blessed Sacrament, Brothers of St. Gabriel, Trappists, Claretians, S.M.A., Jesuits, Spiritans, White Fathers, Capuchins, Franciscans, Salesians, Scheut Fathers...).
- 16 decreased by 10-20% (including the Benedictines, O.M.I., Mill Hill, Cistercians, Marist Fathers, Dominicans...).
- 6 decreased by less than 10% (including the Society of the Divine Word, the Consolata Missionaries...).

The author of the article in *Missi* (p. 3) focuses on the "refusal of life" as the major cause, as he sees it, of the decrease in religious personnel. Each one is free to form his own analysis of the causes of the decline. We live in a complex world, and the factors in such a situation are also complex.

One would have to be bold indeed to claim to have the full explanation. Many sociologists have studied the phenomenon, and have admitted that they cannot explain it fully. One factor in it seems to be a collective subconscious feeling of uneasiness and insecurity in the face of a future in which too many elements that were formerly stable and reassuring have become uncertain.

Those who see the basic factor as a "refusal of life" understand it in a broad sense. The refusal of life is not merely the contraceptive mentality (though this is one of its manifestations). It means also a loss of confidence in values hitherto recognized, a hesitation to commit oneself, a distrust of structures, whether family structures or those of institutions, including religious institutions; it means uncertainty in the face of a future that one cannot predict and that will in any case be difficult.

However, the phrase "refusal of life", even if it is the explanation, does not take account of the new values that people are looking for. Many do not "refuse life", they just want it to be different. All cultural change – and we are living through a period of cultural change – entails rejection and rupture but also the need for new values or the rediscovery of old values, perhaps in a new guise.

Many 'traditional' values are far from being rejected. Recent opinion polls have come up with sometimes surprising conclusions. What has taken place, in our modern climate of protest and permissiveness, is that certain values have been reappraised, while others, just as essential and maybe more important, have been emphasized.

In any case, what has taken place is a cultural crisis that began well before the 1960's when it crystallized. Its consequences in the 'religious' world are only one aspect of a wider crisis that affects all sectors of life – in the West and in fact throughout the world. A different kind of world is in the process of being born, and it is futile to sigh for the "good old days". It is better to try to understand the new world and help it to grow, by committing ourselves to it with the hope and strength of the Gospel.

J. GODARD, C.S.Sp.

SOME STRIKING STATISTICS

The table alongside gives statistics for the 62 religious congregations of men with more than 1,000 members in 1962.

The uniform decline in membership is striking.

For practically all the Congregations, 1964 was the peak year, and since then all except one have declined in membership, the one exception being an Indian Congregation - the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate.

What, one may ask, is this tidal wave that has engulfed all the Congregations, broken their ascent and condemned them to statistical decline? What has affected them all, in all the countries of Europe and America - active Congregations as well as contemplative, teaching Congregations as well as hospitaliers?

Each Congregation has analysed its own situation and examined its own conscience. But, when one sees the scale of the decline, one is forced to go further than the usual explanations and seek a deeper cause.

Some have spoken of a loss of faith, of growing secularization, of a climate of selfishness, and have expressed hopes for a return to strict religious discipline and to holiness. This analysis does not, however, go deep enough. It is a question of a general crisis which took place around the year 1964. According to historian Pierre Chaunu, the year of the divide was in fact 1962. For him the crisis is one that affects the very heart of Western civilization. All the main areas of social life have been affected, but the most striking and the most disturbing symptom has been the refusal of life, which is being shown up more and more in population statistics in the West. For the first time in Western man's long history, his very existence is threatened. There is, here, a sign of spiritual disintegration. By refusing to build on its past, the West has, in the space of a decade, damaged its present and compromised its future.

(Missi, April-May 1978.)

Religious Orders and Congregations	1962	1964	1966/67	1977	Difference 1964/1977
Benedictines	12 131	12 500	12 070	10 037	- 2 463
Capuchins	15 849	15 751	15 575	12 475	- 3 276
Dominicans	9 991	10 091	9 946	8 773	- 1 318
Franciscans	26 961	27 140	26 666	21 504	- 5 636
De La Salle Brothers	17 710	17 981	17 584	11 484	- 6 497
Jesuits	35 438	35 968	35 573	28 038	- 7 930
Marist Brothers	10 068	10 230	10 125	6 291	- 3 939
Redemptorists	9 308	9 450	9 080	6 888	- 2 562
Salesians	21 355	22 042	21 900	17 535	- 4 507
Augustinians	4 273	4 353	4 447	3 650	- 703
Discalced Carmelites	4 050	4 050	4 016	3 425	- 625
Conventuals	4 650	4 650	4 590	4 000	- 650
Vincentians	5 966	5 992	5 900	4 333	- 1 659
O.M.I.	7 592	7 623	7 526	6 271	- 1 352
Passionists	3 935	4 065	4 204	3 194	- 871
White Fathers	4 083	4 120	3 749	3 235	- 885
Spiritans	5 200	5 200	5 060	4 081	- 1 119
Trappists	4 339	4 211	3 819	3 179	- 1 032
S.V.D.	5 588	5 746	5 693	5 243	- 503
Calced Carmelites	2 943	3 075	3 007	2 134	- 941
Claretians	3 720	3 770	3 468	2 884	- 886
Clerics of Pious Schools	2 498	2 540	2 429	1 049	- 292
Christian Brothers	3 500	3 814	3 779	3 078	- 736
Ploërmel Brothers	2 220	2 220	2 012	1 640	- 580
Sacred Heart Brothers	3 052	3 124	3 116	2 131	- 993
Marists	2 777	2 320	2 364	2 013	- 307
Mis. of Sacred Heart	3 215	3 418	3 315	2 599	- 819
Pallottines	2 250	2 250	2 259	2 099	- 151
Picpus	2 000	2 031	2 060	1 661	- 370
Priests of Sacred Heart	3 250	3 375	3 424	2 705	- 670
Holy Cross	3 263	3 275	3 087	2 197	- 1 078
St. John of God	2 527	2 527	2 299	1 856	- 671
Assumptionists	1 960	1 971	1 967	1 365	- 606
Carms. of Mary Immac.	912	992	1 028	1 189	+ 197
Camillians	1 314	1 341	1 309	1 049	- 292
Cistercians	1 665	1 665	1 665	1 428	- 237
Verona Fathers	1 610	1 670	1 740	1 643	- 27
Bros of Charity (Ghent)	1 559	1 559	1 484	1 010	- 549
Bros. of St. Gabriel	1 830	1 903	1 900	1 434	- 469
Marianists	3 350	3 470	3 434	2 256	- 1 214
Maryknoll	1 264	1 360	1 381	967	- 393
Mercedarians	1 163	1 230	1 070	808	- 422
S.M.A.	1 820	1 855	1 751	1 440	- 415
Consolata	1 017	1 092	1 200	1 072	- 20
Mill Hill	1 165	1 192	1 197	995	- 197
Paris For. Mission	904	912	855	872	- 240
Montfortans	1 750	2 000	1 985	1 502	- 498
Oblates St. Fran. Sales	1 210	1 250	1 239	974	- 276
Paulists	1 350	1 500	1 401	1 202	- 298
Premonstratensians	1 750	1 991	1 917	1 294	- 697
Providence	1 055	1 070	1 097	1 032	- 38
Recollect Fathers	1 550	1 605	1 580	1 300	- 305
St. Augustine	1 102	1 190	1 190	859	- 331
St. Columban	1 015	1 042	1 103	1 024	- 18
Holy Family	1 280	1 310	1 260	1 044	- 266
Blessed Sacrament	1 596	1 624	1 616	1 219	- 405
Viatorians	1 910	1 910	1 746	1 287	- 623
Salvatorians	1 350	1 492	1 430	1 227	- 265
La Salette	1 130	1 179	1 153	919	- 260
Servites	1 700	1 750	1 749	1 303	- 447
Scheut Fathers	1 943	2 008	1 995	1 604	- 404
Third Order St. Francis	1 496	1 592	1 550	887	- 725

NEWS

Appointment of Major Superior

On Oct. 12, the General Council ratified the election of Fr. Charles P. CONNORS as Principal Superior of the District of Puerto Rico, to take effect from 1 Jan. 1980.

Changes of Addresses of Major Superiors

U.S.A. EAST: Provincial Superior, 6230 Brush Run Rd., BETHEL PARK, Pa. 15102, U.S.A.

KONGOLO (Zaire): Supérieur Principal, B.P. 274, KONGOLO (Shaba), Rép. Dém. Zaire.

(N.B.: The telephone number of the DOUALA 'Procure', Cameroon, is: 42-27-97.)

Canada

● The Major Superiors of Canada, Trans-Canada, U.S.A. East and West, Puerto Rico and Haiti met in Canada at St. Alexandre, Limbour, near Hull, on Oct. 6. Their next meeting will be held at the beginning of March 1980, probably in Trinidad.

● Following the St. Alexandre meeting, the Canadian Province organized, from Oct. 6 to 8, a celebration, for all the North American Provinces and Districts, of the tercentenary of the birth of Claude Poullart des Places. About 60 persons took part. Fr. Henry Koren, historian of the Congregation, gave a talk in which he discussed the Congregation's future, and a French translation of his book *Knaves or Knights*, on the early Spiritans in Canada, was presented to him and its publication announced.

On Sunday morning, Oct. 8, the commemorative Mass, in the parish church of St. Alexandre, was presided over by Bishop Proulx of Hull. In his homily at the Mass, the Canadian Provincial, Fr. Jean-Guy Gagnon, reminded the North Americans present that they belonged to "a rich world which throws crumbs to the poor". He spoke of their duty as religious to work for a new type of society, and of the need for Spiritan communities to be true witnesses to the good news of salvation.

That afternoon, the participants visited Ottawa and Hull by coach, as well as the Gatineau property (now 450 hectares - about 1,100 acres), which was the cradle of the Spiritans in Canada. In the evening there was a slide show on the early days of the Congregation in Canada.

Angola

After the death of President Agostinho NETO, the situation of the Church remains more or less the same in Angola. A visa to work in the country - the first for a year and a half - has just been granted to Fr. Victor CABEZAS, a Spanish Spiritan. It is to be hoped that others will also be granted - four Spaniards, two Portuguese and an Irish Spiritan are still waiting for visas. The first Chapter of the Angolan Province will be held at Huambo in the first half of March.

Gambia

The District Chapter will be held from Dec. 18 to 21.



From left: Frs. NEVEN, HAAS, HEADLEY.

Meeting of three new Provincials in Rome

From Nov. 1 to 5, three new Provincials (Fr. Pierre HAAS, 41, of France, Fr. William HEADLEY, 41, of U.S.A. East, and Fr. Cornelius NEVEN, 58, of Holland) met in Rome, at the invitation of the General Council, as recommended in G.A. 163. The three Provinces concerned make up 47% of the Congregation.

The Provincials reported to the Council on the situation in their Provinces, and on their main concerns and priorities as they begin their term of office. They were unanimous in stressing three points, in the context of preparation for the General Chapter:

● The desire that, through better communication, the confreres should realize - as some have not - that the Generalate Team is not separating its insistence on spiritual renewal from the pastoral action of the missionaries.

● The desire that different types of internationality should be better distinguished. Co-responsibility should be developed in the Congregation - a good example of it, for instance, being seen in North America, where the Spiritan Major Superiors intend to meet even more frequently and to have joint formation programmes. They are also jointly preparing for the General Chapter.

● The desire to find a solution to the present 'dispersion' of confreres in the Provinces. However, all recognized that this is a complex problem, involving human rather than juridical factors.

Finally, the three Provincials stressed the importance of dialogue, between themselves and with the Generalate Team, and the need to go more deeply into certain questions. Apart from merely exchanging opinions or coming up with spiritual or juridical solutions, there is need for deeper research in common, taking fuller account than in the past of psychological and sociological aspects.

Our Dead

- 2 Oct.: Fr. Joseph COLOMBÉ (France), 84.
- 3 Oct.: Br. Revocatus VAN DER ELST (Holland), 71.
- 5 Oct.: Fr. Léon HEBRARD (Amazonas), 72.
- 10 Oct.: Fr. Peter GROSS (U.S.A. East), 76.
- 14 Oct.: Fr. Paulin DURY (Belgium), 51.
- 16 Oct.: Fr. Joseph BREITENSTEIN (France), 81
- 19 Oct.: Br. Gregor NEESEN (Germany), 75.