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SPIRITAN NEWS

May-June 1980

Number 29

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

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Event: OFFICIAL CONVOCATION OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER



THE SUPERIOR GENERAL
OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY GHOST AND THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY
TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION.

My dear Confreres,

In conformity with Constitution 11, No. 78, and with the Directives and Decisions of the General Chapter 1968-69, Nos. 157a and 172, I hereby convoke the ordinary General Chapter of 1980. It will be held at Chevilly, France, from 1st to 31st July 1980.

I therefore call upon all the capitulants, and those appointed as functionaries, to be present at Chevilly on the evening of 30th June.

Yours very devotedly in Christ,

Rome, 31 March 1980

Frans TIMMERMANS
Superior General C.S.Sp.

CG/80/12

Documentation: PREPARATION FOR THE GENERAL CHAPTER

Among the possible topics for this issue, the most useful seemed an outline of the precapitular work that has been taking place, especially on the responses from communities and confreres to the document *Our Spiritan Life*.

I have been warned that I am treading on dangerous ground, that I shall leave some dissatisfied, that I shall be accused of trying to manipulate the Chapter.

Dangerous ground? Perhaps. Difficult, rather. It would be even more dangerous to try to hide divergencies that exist.

I would regret leaving some dissatisfied, but I cannot believe that any confrere would be upset because his particular point of view has not found a place in a two-page summary.

As for manipulating the Chapter, I prefer not to take such a charge seriously. Information implies a certain amount of power, but it also entails self-discipline for those who wish to be impartial. If there are any who do not trust *Spiritan News* to be fair in its presentation of differing opinions, I shall not be able to convert them. But I believe that the vast majority will accept our effort to be impartial, and that an attempt at a summary is worthwhile.

Jean GODARD, C.S.Sp.

DOCUMENTS ON SPECIAL SUBJECTS

The General Council has asked certain confreres to draw up preparatory documents on special subjects, as background material for the capitulants and for the next General Administration.

The subjects are:

- Formation (by a commission of confreres in charge of formation in different Provinces);
- Justice and Peace (by Frs. M. DOYLE, of Trans-Canada, and J. G. GAGNON, of Canada);
- Spiritan Religious and Apostolic Life (by Fr. R. YOU, France);
- Mission (by Fr. B. HEARNE, Kenya);
- Mission Possibilities in Latin America (by Fr. D. REGAN, Brazil S.W.).

QUESTIONNAIRE TO MAJOR SUPERIORS

A questionnaire, containing 34 questions based on the 1974 Chapter's *Guidelines for Animation*, was sent out to all Major Superiors for their comments on the implementation of them.

COMMISSION ON FORMATION

A Commission of five confreres in charge of formation (in France, Ireland, Portugal, U.S.A. and Nigeria) met at the Generalate in Sept. 1979 and April 1980, and have drawn up a document on Formation, based on consultations with other Provinces as well. The document will be available for study at the Chapter.

'CARA' RESEARCH

In preparation for the Chapter, the General Council commissioned a research project by 'CARA' on our present administrative structures. Other Congregations, like the Passionists and the OMs, had expressed satisfaction with their own experience of CARA research.

CARA (Centre for Applied Research in the Apostolate) is an American institute, based in Washington, which tries "to apply modern techniques and scientific informational resources . . . to the Church's social and religious mission in the modern world".

At the end of 1979, CARA submitted a long questionnaire to each of the functionaries in the General Administration (including a detailed account of one's use of time, hour by hour, over a fortnight) and to each of the Major Superiors.

CARA's evaluation, based on the replies, will be submitted to the Chapter and discussed by it.

PRAYERS FOR THE CHAPTER

All circumscriptions were asked to begin prayers for the General Chapter, starting from the feast of Blessed Jacques Laval, 9 Sept. 1979. At the Generalate, an hour every Monday evening is devoted to this intention, and other communities have reported their own forms of participation.

REPLIES TO THE PRECAPITULAR DOCUMENT

By February, more than 600 pages of replies to the precapitular document *Our Spiritan Life* (OSL) had been received - from 43 of the 61 circumscriptions (89 group replies and 37 from individuals).

They have been read through by the General Council, and by the seven members of the Precapitular Commission, who have made a 60-page synthesis of them, in French and English, to be sent out to the capitulants and Major Superiors.

In this issue of *Spiritan News* we can give no more than a two-page summary of this synthesis, which means that we can only scratch the surface of the replies, but it may give at least some idea of the main lines of discussion.

We have not indicated the source of the replies, but we have tried to indicate whether opinions were held by a majority, or several, or a few. We have not been able to include strictly individual viewpoints, although these have found a place in the synthesis.

The PRECAPITULAR COMMISSION worked in Rome for the whole month of February. It was composed of Fathers Donald S. NESTI (USA/E, Chairman), J. Gerald WALSH (Gen. Asst.), Johannes HOGEMA (Holland), Etienne LESPINASSE (France), Manuel GONÇALVES (Angola), Brendan McMAHON (Gen. Adm.) and Roland QUESNEL (Gen. Adm.). In the synthesis they drew up, they tried to remain strictly faithful to the thought of the confreres, keeping their own comments for a separate document submitted to the General Council.

Renewal

The vast majority see renewal as acceptance of Vatican II and interior conversion. Many groups mention difficulties in bringing about this renewal, and several ask for direction, though there are differing understandings of 'direction'. A few would prefer to go back to pre-Vatican II, and dislike the description of the Congregation as a fraternal community, preferring to see it as a religious community with simple vows. These would also like clear Constitutions, after a period of pluralism reaching anarchy at times. The majority stress authentic community life, not merely a living together under the same roof, and some ask for smaller communities, structures that help renewal, and community animators that are carefully selected and trained.

Charism

This was one of the most controversial points. While many groups see a clear understanding of our charism as vital for renewal and ask that

it be one of the priorities of the Chapter, others do not want to see it defined. Some point out that the word 'charism' should be applied only to individuals, not to groups; others that the multi-cultural nature of the Congregation makes such a definition difficult; others that we should allow ourselves to be determined by the future rather than seek our identity in the past. For quite a different reason one group feels that the charism of the Founder is of secondary importance, the essential thing being to follow the directives of the Holy See.

Other words than charism are proposed: spirit, faith-vision of the Founders, commitment. But the question remains: Do we define ourselves by what we are or by what we do?

A number of replies stress the vision of the Founders, better understood and adapted to our times, and the special place of the Holy Spirit. While some emphasize service to the poor and abandoned, others say that this does not distinguish us from many other Congregations that have a similar aim. While a few wonder if celibacy and our understanding of poverty are really seen as signs in some missionary contexts, the majority see a life of poverty, chastity and obedience as an integral part of our charism.

Our Life in Community

This part of OSL was well received. Almost without exception, Spiritans wish to live in community and want to improve their community life. There is also general agreement that community is for the person. One group would like this section entitled 'The Person in Community'.

In spite of divergencies on how community life is seen (some preferring it strict and regulated, others relaxed and spontaneous), all feel that it should help members develop as persons and be a place of real personal friendship, where sharing should extend to faith experiences, prayer, recreation, work and each other's interests.

Opinions on different types of community are varied, some wanting it reserved exclusively to Spiritans, others willing to open it up to others, including 'lay Spiritans'.

How far we should open our communities is seen as a problem by many, along with tensions between pastoral demands and the demands of community life.

A few voices call for a clear directive that all confreres should live in community; some feel that recent Chapters have spoken enough about community life; most think that the Chapter should strongly encourage community life, but without rigidity and exaggeration.

Prayer

All groups recognize the necessity and importance of prayer, both personal and community, and put it at the heart of renewal. The majority would like to achieve more satisfactory common prayer. Several express a desire for some standardized prayers with which we can feel at home as Spiritans. Several also stress the link between prayer and work, and mention Fr. Libermann's approach of 'practical union with God', but descriptions of this vary.

Many difficulties are mentioned, for both personal and community prayer, but there are different points of view on solutions. For some, there should not be fixed formulas of prayers, but rather a guide to prayer life, with each community free to choose its own rhythm and style of prayer. Others would like both fixed formulas and precise directives, e.g. a half-hour's meditation every morning. Some say that the 1968 Chapter gave excellent directives on prayer (CDD 126-143) and that there is no need for further directives.

Our Missionary Ministry

This section stimulated a good deal of discussion, but there is fundamental agreement on several questions, such as that our ministry is one of service, and that there is a new spirit of universality.

Some groups are opposed to the 'new concept of mission', and interpret Pope Paul's call as one for a new missionary impulse, not a new type of missionary ministry. They accuse OSL of trying to "sell an idea" (that a missionary era has passed). While some complain that Africa is not mentioned enough, others say that the document is oriented too much towards Africa.

As to what directions the Congregation should now take, there are varying replies. Many want first evangelization to remain a priority. Some mention that we should avoid too much dispersion.

Faithfulness to our Founders' intentions is recognized by all as a criterion for present and future commitments, but some object to the expression 'poor and abandoned' as paternalistic. It is agreed that our present commitments should be reassessed, with a view to disengagement in certain cases, but on the whole our present commitments are seen as satisfactory.

The dispersion of personnel in a multiplicity of new areas does not get much approval, and various criteria are mentioned for taking on such new work.



Those linked by a common spirituality...

I KNOW SOMEONE

who, if he was invited to the Chapter, would need a dictionary as a start - because a lot of new words have come in since the days when he debated with the doctors in the temple - words that were not in his vocabulary at all.

I know someone who, if he was invited, would sit at the back of the hall, and might draw pictures on a bit of paper perhaps, until, at a certain moment, he got up quietly, opened the windows, all of them, and let the wind blow away all the words and papers and theories, and left the tables bare, ready for the feast.

E. LESPINASSE, C.S.Sp.



... and sharing a common task.

Among today's appeals those considered most important are first evangelization and ministry to youth, including educational work, especially in the Third World.

Work for Justice and Peace gets full approval, and is seen by some as an essential part of evangelization. One group would like to see a Justice and Peace commission at Congregation level in each country, with the Generalate coordinating their efforts. Requests are made for special attention to be paid to the needs of migrants and the urban poor.

Engagement in works in the home Provinces is admitted, especially in the field of missionary animation, where some say that we should not be afraid to invest personnel. The large number of confreres in parishes at home is criticized, though it is recognized that many of them, through age, ill health or changed conditions, no longer feel able to work in the missions, and should not on this account be discouraged or feel removed from the Congregation.

For today's appeals, the Congregation is asked to train specialists in various fields.

Spiritans Foundations

The new Foundations are welcomed by all who commented on them. Some mention that they do not dispense the local Churches from their own missionary responsibilities, and that they must not interfere with the establishment of a local diocesan clergy. Others point out that the Foundations should be given enough living room to develop their own form of religious life, that internationality should not be forced on them, and that they should try to send their members to missionary situations in other countries. All circumscriptions are willing to help the new Foundations.

Personnel and Planning

Planning is seen as a need by all. One group asks that all circumscriptions participate in the planning, and another warns that the Holy Spirit need not take our plans into account.

The visits by members of the Generalate Team have been appreciated by all, but there are different opinions on the role the General Council should play. Some want to see its authority strengthened, especially in the distribution of personnel. Others would not like to lose the subsidiarity and coresponsibility acquired since 1968, but want it strengthened and developed.

There is a suggestion that the General Council should be replaced by the Superior General and Provincials, meeting for two or three weeks twice a year or when necessary, and another suggestion that the General Assistants should live for part of the year in the areas they represent, forming a sort of regional council with the Provincials.

The majority accept the Enlarged General Council, and some would give it an even greater role. Others remark that it is not representative of all the circumscriptions, or would like it restructured, or see it only as an advisory body.

As for the Provinces, some feel that the Provincials, especially of large Provinces, have too much power at present, and that regionalization would help to even out the inequalities in influence between large Provinces and small ones.

Formation as Spiritans

The replies to this section were not very full, as several circumscriptions said that they preferred to deal with it in their reply to the special questionnaire sent out by the Commission on Formation.

Among those who did reply, some want a return to strict discipline and an end to the experiments of the past few years, which they see as disastrous. They would also like a single, unified type of Spiritan formation. Others feel that the clock cannot be turned back and that formation must be adapted to the needs of our time, even at the risk of mistakes. Formation must be open to the new concept of mission and the new spirit of universality.

Most would prefer to see the novitiate done early in the period of formation – at any rate before the period of missionary experience. As for this period of 'prefecting' in the missions, some suggest that it could be done in missions run by a Province of a different language and culture, but others point out that this would entail a double cultural adaptation that would be too difficult for most.

After studying the replies, the General Council decided to propose three Focuses for the Chapter's reflection: APOSTOLIC LIFE, FORMATION and GOVERNMENT (Apostolic Life being understood as including both Community Life and Missionary Ministry).

NEWS

General Chapter

● Fr. Vincent EZEONYIA, the newly elected Provincial of Nigeria East, has also been elected as the Province's delegate to the Chapter. Aged 39, he has studied in Ireland and the U.S.A., and has done pastoral work in Nigeria.

● Apart from those mentioned in our last issue, the following functionaries have been named for the Chapter:

Simultaneous Translation: Frs. A. BURGHARD (France), E. MULCAHY (England), M. DANNER (France), E. NEALON (Brazil S.W.).

Written Translation: Frs. L. NICOLAS and M. ROBERT (France), Frs. J. FLAVIN and J. McNULTY (Ireland).

Typists: Fr. J. McCORMACK and Br. Paul KEHOE (Ireland).

Liturgy: Fr. J. C. PARIAT (Switzerland).

Bursar: Fr. J. DE BOER (Gen. Adm.).

Observer for Scholastics: Mr. C. REIDY (Ireland).

Decisions of the General Council

● On 7 March, the General Council decided that the Congregation's General Archives would be transferred from Rue Lhomond to Chevilly, the cost being borne by the Generalate.

● On 26 March, the General Council confirmed the election of Fr. Yves GAUTIER as Principal Superior of the District of Bangui, to take effect from 15 May.

Changes of Address

● Principal Superior of Sierra Leone: P.O. Box 95, BO, Sierra Leone.

● Provincial of Portugal: 49, R. de Sto Amaro à Estrela, 1200 LISBOA 2, Portugal.

Tanzania

His Holiness the Pope has made Zanzibar a Diocese and appointed as its first Bishop the present Apostolic Administrator, Mgr. Bernard NGAVILIAU, C.S.Sp., a Tanzanian member of the Province of U.S.A. East (Oss. Rom., 11 April 1980). Mgr. NGAVILIAU, 63, was born in the Diocese of Moshi and was ordained a priest in 1956.

Angola

● The Province of Angola held its first Provincial Chapter from 12 to 22 March at Huambo, with 45 of its 82 members taking

Internationality

In general the replies indicate a desire to move towards greater internationality, but there are some reservations on how far it should go and how it should be brought about. It is pointed out that all are not able for it, and the value of international teams is occasionally questioned.

There are many calls for greater internationalization of formation, with various suggestions as to how this might be achieved – from language study and student exchanges to international scholasticates attended by all.

part. Themes reflected on included Spiritan identity in Angola, Provincial administration, temporal goods, and apostolic ministry.

The opening retreat was preached by Archbishop FRANKLIN of Huambo, who also attended the closing ceremony along with Bishop VITI of Menongue. Another session of the Chapter will be held in February 1981, after the General Chapter.

● Three of the four novices were professed on 10 April. Two new international teams have been set up, after a long wait for visas: the Saurimo team (with a Portuguese Father, a Spanish Father and three Spanish scholastics) and the Huila team (with two Portuguese Fathers and an Irish Father). At the request of the Bishops, three Portuguese Spiritans have taken over the running of the national senior seminary, at Huambo.

Jubilarians

60 Years of Profession:

19 Oct.: Mgr. Jean-Baptiste FAURET (France) and Fr. Francis HOARAU (Reunion).

27 Oct.: Mgr. Henri de la BRUNELIERE (Martinique) and Mgr. François de LANGAVANT (France).

50 Years of Profession:

7 Oct.: Br. Arsenius VAN ZANTEN (Holland).

50 Years of Priesthood:

5 Oct.: Frs. Emile DEHON (France), Emile LAURENT (Gabon), Francisco Alves REGO (Portugal), Adriano ROCHA (Angola).

12 Oct.: Frs. Louis BERCLAZ (Switzerland), Louis DIDAILLER, Joseph GUILBAUD, François NASS, Henri NEYRAND, Maurice RAMAUX, Jean-Baptiste SIMON (France), Achille ROBIN, Michel TRICLOT (Martinique), Bernard SLEVIN (England).

Our Dead

30 Dec. : Fr. Joseph AUSSEMS (Belgium), 70.

22 Feb. : Fr. Patrick McCAMBRIDGE (Ireland), 70.

25 Feb. : Br. Ambrosius TERPSTRA (Holland), 56.

28 Feb. : Fr. Pierre RICHARD (France), 93.

3 Mar. : Fr. Henri LECOQ (France), 72.

10 Mar. : Fr. Michael WALLACE (Papua New Guinea), 47.

15 Mar. : Fr. Charles HURSTEL (France), 76.

18 Mar. : Fr. Simon DOODEMAN (Holland), 74.

4 Apr. : Fr. Cornelius VAN DER BURG (Yaoundé), 56.

5 Apr. : Br. Marie-Pierre RIMLINGER (France), 78.

7 Apr. : Fr. Robert HEYDEL (France), 82.