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CSSP - NEWSLETTER - CSSP

Congregazione dello Spirito Santo

Clivo di Cinna, 195 - 00136 Roma

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The Superior General's visit to Ghana

On the 23rd November 1974, I flew out from Rome to Accra. The purpose of my visit to Ghana was to attend the second meeting of the group called R.C.A. (Rencontre et Collaboration Africaine) or "Meeting on African Collaboration" which is made up of the Standing Committee of the Panafrican Symposium of Bishops and a delegation from the Union of Superiors General. This group is now a permanent body for contact at the highest level between the African Bishops and the Missionary Congregations.

THE R.C.A. MEETING

We were received in the fine building which houses the Symposium's newly opened secretariat in Accra, by Cardinal ZOUNGRANA, P.B., Archbishop of Ouagadougou, Upper Volta, Cardinal OTUNGA of Nairobi, Archbishop ZOA of Yaoundé and Archbishop AMISSAH of Cape-Coast, Ghana.

Representing the Superiors General were: Father MERTENS, S.J. Assistant General for the Missions, deputizing for his Superior General, Father ARRUBE, who was then at the Jesuit General Chapter; Father HARDY, S.M.A. Superior General; Brother Charles BUTTIMER, Superior General of the Brothers of Christian Schools; Sister Marie José DOR, Superior General of the White Sisters; and myself. The Secretary was Father VAN ASTEN who had shortly before been relieved of his responsibility as Superior General of the White Fathers.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED

The most interesting subjects among the four on the agenda were: "Missionary Collaboration and Coresponsibility" and "Small Communities". The other two were: "Financial Independence for the Local Churches in Africa" and "Islam". Four subjects was a lot to fit into two days, in spite of the Anglosaxon discipline of the debates which was maintained even in the humid heat of Accra.

Small Communities

And now a word about the work done on the second document concerning small communities. I will confine myself here to Archbishop ZOA's very remarkable intervention in which he put forward guidelines for the training of christian communities. He outlined the progress from the old missionary approach, at the time of the establishment of the Church in the Cameroons, to the present tendency towards a community which takes its destiny in its own hands (a goal which has yet to be achieved) through a sharing out of responsibilities among its members. In this way, the community finds new links of solidarity with the larger community outside it, and ultimately with the vast ecclesial community under the direction of the Bishop and his collaborators. The Archbishop brought out clearly how great a discovery this is for the people themselves, who are encouraged by it and spurred on to progress. This missionary approach also helps to make the expatriate missionary feel more at home.

Particularly striking was, on the one hand, the emphasis placed on the missionary character of the community, and on the other hand, the attention given to the idea of transforming society through the involvement of christians at the various levels of village and regional life. This is far from being an "introverted" christianity. Though Archbishop ZOA did say, with his usual humour, that all this has yet to be achieved, it is still good to see a whole diocese - or several dioceses - in agreement on the desirability of such ideas.

ATMOSPHERE OF FRIENDSHIP AND TRUST

The contacts and exchanges between us were, as you may imagine, more important than the documents to be studied. There was an atmosphere of friendship and trust which enabled us to broach freely and openly a certain number of problems involved in missionary collaboration which we sometimes hesitate to bring up in dialogue with those in charge on the spot. We had the very heartening experience of finding out that so many problems can be solved when people get together to discuss them amicably.

UP COUNTRY

I set out from Accra to visit the 14 Irish Spiritans who are working in the two dioceses of Kumasi and Sunyani. Father Pete Nolan travelled the 250 kilometres from Kumasi to collect me after the meeting with the Bishops. The journey was magnificent, even though Pete's rather ancient Peugeot 404 gave us many an anxious moment. For me it meant the joy of travelling once more in the beautiful African sunshine after 4 months of office-work in Chevilly and Rome. It was a journey of rediscovery because in Africa you see so many things you recognize, even if you are in an area that is new to you. Driving along over the tarred roads,

trying to avoid the hens and goats, passing through a multitude of small towns, all with electricity and often with a town water supply, I took my first steps in this English-speaking world which was so new to me and so different in many ways from anything I had known before.

THE ASHANTI PEOPLE AND THEIR CULTURE

It is hard to say what impressed me most in the Ashanti region - a great and ancient kingdom which achieved unity in the 18th century, though its origins go much further back into the past. There were so many things: the remarkable development of the region; the rich, impressive culture of the Ashanti whose kings continue to exercise very great influence in the country, and who proudly guard "the golden chair" which was sent from heaven to the first Ashanti King and constitutes the treasure and symbol of the nation since the 18th century, never having fallen into the European hands so eager to grasp it; the living tradition which deeply marks the everyday life even of the well-to-do; or the well-documented history of this culture which is to be found in the national museums of Kumasi and Accra and in the studies which have been devoted to it.

The Bishop of Kumasi kindly arranged an audience for me with the King. The "Asante-Hinne", guardian of all this culture, received us in his beautiful palace at Kumasi. We also visited the Castle of Elmina, an ancient fortress on the coast. This dates from 1482 and - like other fortified castles of its kind - it soon gained an evil reputation for slave trading which continued up to the 18th century. There are still many sombre reminders of the slave trade for the visitor today.

The Ashanti seem to resemble the people of Eastern Nigeria in many ways. They have in common a striving towards intellectual betterment, a business flair and a sense of development, and also, it would appear, both peoples have retained many of the traditional structures of their societies. The Ashanti are a proud, enterprising people, very ready to offer hospitality in a spirit of overwhelming friendliness but they can be very uncompromising if they think their interests are in jeopardy. In fact, they once burned the episcopal throne of a Bishop who was appointed against their will, and carried off his crozier, the symbol of his pastoral authority.

I am told that Ghana cannot be identified with the Ashanti region. It seems that further to the North, the countryside and its inhabitants are different. Everything changes, the climate, the customs, the agricultural crops, the level of material development. There is also a high proportion of Moslems in the North. This is where the White Fathers are working.

THE ASHANTI CHURCH

Our Fathers were the last of the family of missionaries to arrive. The SMA and the Fathers of the Divine Word have been at work there for a long time. Of the 8 resident Bishops, there is still one European Bishop. He gave in his resignation some time ago and he has a Ghanaian coadjutor. Several of these Bishops are truly remarkable people. There are 170 Ghanaian priests.

FINANCIAL AUTONOMY

I was impressed to see what the people do for their Church. There is comparative financial autonomy and it is the parishioners who ensure the regular upkeep of their priest. Several parishes even provide him with a car. They themselves build their churches and the presbyteries. However, the 7 or 8 junior seminaries, the 2 senior seminaries which between them cater for 140 senior seminarians, and certain diocesan organizations are all dependent on outside help. The parish councils are responsible for finances. The portion of parish revenue to be set aside for the upkeep of the priest is determined by the Bishop - everything else is under the control of the council. In fact, some Fathers hold that these councils have too much power and deplore the fact that they assign so much money to the building of church towers instead of spending it on more useful things...

ECUMENICAL SPIRIT

This take-over of Church affairs by lay-people is very remarkable. It can truly be called "their" Church. The presence of so many different christian denominations (Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists etc.) may have engendered a certain amount of competition here. The odd similarity between all these Churches, each with one or two towers, all alike and one as "British" as the other, lead one to suppose that this may be the case. In fact, these denominations are much closer to us than are the American Baptists or Adventists who work in other places in Africa. All these religious families live side by side in good harmony and with remarkable ecumenical spirit.

THE EXPATRIATE MISSIONARIES

I was struck by the type of missions they have there. One rarely sees any large "missionary complexes" as in some other countries. Nor are there any sizeable groups of foreign missionaries: Fathers, Sisters, lay-missionaries. I saw practically no Sisters at all in the parishes, nor any lay missionary, nor any missionary Brother. Sisters and Brothers are engaged exclusively in teaching and health - with the exception of a small group of Sisters living in a district in Berekum. Practically all the Fathers live alone but their quarters are so close to one another, with a few exceptions like Atebubu, that it is easy for them to meet frequently, which they do. They thus form "regional communities" which I found very much alive. In general, the missions are of very humble appearance and are not in any way cut off from the surrounding environment. Many parishioners are better housed than the parish priest who is however quite content with his lot. I was very favourably impressed by the simplicity of life and the comparative poverty I found there.

INDIGENIZATION OF THE FAITH

I spoke to Bishop SARPONG and also to Bishop OWUSU of Sunyani about what Archbishop ZOA calls the "indigenization" of the faith. The Bishops are certainly very aware of this and Bishop SARPONG of Kumasi is himself an expert on the traditions of his country, having recently written a book on the subject. For the visitor, however, the immediate impression is that of a very "British" style of church life, even down to the choir (an important element in the life of the Church) who are dressed

in black cap and gown like Oxford graduates - and they would not have it any other way!

AN INWARD-LOOKING CHURCH?

The important rôle played by the laity in the Church of the country, and the strong influence they exert is certainly a very positive factor. It is all the more so in that the elite of the country is widely represented: doctors, lawyers, business people, members of the civil administration. There is no pressure on the part of the government to prevent its officials from becoming too involved in "the missions". Nevertheless, the Fathers all agree that this activity is turned inwards too much towards parish life and its organizations which freely proliferate. There is not enough "ferment of life". The next step should be that all the laity, in this same fine ecumenical spirit (60% of the country is christian!) should really open out to become the ferment of society and act as the missionaries of a Church that is widely opened out towards the world around it. The Bishops keep reminding the people of this. Several Bishops are trying to organize better training for the laity through courses to be given by a specialized team which would in this way help the Fathers in the parishes.

THE WORK OF THE IRISH SPIRITANS

As for our Irish Fathers, they are doing remarkable work. We got on to friendly terms straight away on the first evening in Father Milo Smithwick's hospitable presbytery - he himself was an exemplary host. This friendship was sealed by a concelebration mass which is one of the most treasured memories of my journey. At present, this is our only parish in Kumasi which is a large town with 450,000 inhabitants. It is a very new parish, in the outskirts. The Bishop would like us to take on others, as the runaway growth of the city is giving rise to serious pastoral problems. A positive point: the amalgamation of races which characterizes most large African cities does not exist in this city which is truly the "Ashanti capital".

Another town parish is that of Sunyani where Father NOLAN is administrator of the cathedral. Sunyani, the chief town of the region, has 40,000 inhabitants. At Kumasi, as in Sunyani, the Bishops offered me a cordial and generous welcome. At their hospitable table, I met many Ghanaian priests and lay-people in a brotherly atmosphere. I also met Archbishop AMISSAH who is looking for missionary personnel too...

Father Vincent MURPHY, who is in charge of the group, brought me to several other missions. After that, others took over from him in showing me around. I managed to spend a day in each of the parishes where they are working. For the most part, these parishes are in small rural towns like Tepah (Father MURPHY), Mampong (Father Savino AGNOLI, for those who know him...) or Mampong-Ten, where Father Ned SCOTT is carrying out an interesting experiment on "integrated development". However, there is also "the bush" like Atebubu where Father Martin BUCKLEY has set up a parish. In his "skylab" (the noisy remains of what was once a Volkswagen) he covers a wide area where he has established quite a large number of schools. Everywhere I admired the group of former "Nigerians" (several of whom are still young) for their spirit of adaptation, the care with which they try to avoid anything that might offend those who were there before them, and the humility with which they filled the places assigned to them.

Relations with the African confreres are good on the whole, as too with the SMA and the Divine Word. I went to see their regional superiors at Accra and Winneba with Father MURPHY and we had a discussion together on how to coordinate our work.

Of course, like all missionary teams, they too have their internal problems, but they are trying to coordinate their efforts and are giving a lot of thought to missionary priorities. All important decisions involving apostolic commitments are taken together. One of their greatest difficulties is pastoral work concerning Vocations to the Priesthood. There is even a project for the promotion of Spiritan vocations - a project which is encouraged by the Bishop of Kumasi. Father WHITE is the director of the junior seminary at Kumasi, with the understanding that the post will be handed over to an African as soon as possible.

The Bishops have asked the Spiritans to undertake once again what was their "speciality" in Nigeria: Secondary Schools. Father MORROW has established a college at secondary level - greatly helped moreover by the local people. The matter of secondary teaching is being studied without undue haste, taking into consideration the pastoral context of the Diocese. As Father John J. COLEMAN, the Bishop's secretary (recovering from a fractured arm) explained to me, it is true that the situation concerning involvement in secondary education is completely different from the one I was familiar with in Central Africa.

Two days before my departure, I was among those who welcomed Father Christy O'BRIEN, former Provincial of Ireland, who was setting foot in Africa after 13 years absence. Some of the rest of us are looking forward to the day!! He and Father Declan DORR who came with him, will not be the last. Two or three more are expected, but after that, I am told, they will stop: they are not going to build up another "block". And then, we must take care to see that we devote ourselves truly to missionary priorities..

F. TIMMERMANS, C.S.Sp.

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DECISIONS OF THE HOLY SEE

On December 19th, 1974, His Holiness Pope Paul VI appointed as Bishop of Saint-Louis du Sénégal the Rev. Father Pierre SAGNA, C.S.Sp. Bishop SAGNA was born on July 11th, 1932, in Ziguinchor, Senegal. He was ordained a priest on October 4th, 1959. He did pastoral work in his native diocese and then became a teacher and director of the diocesan junior seminary there. When the European missionaries were expelled from Guinea, he volunteered for service there and was appointed director of the junior seminary at Kindia (Conakry). In 1970 he went to France and worked for two years as promoter of priestly and missionary vocations. For the past two years he has been director of the junior seminary in Banjul, Gambia, which he founded in 1972.

GENERAL COUNCIL RECEIVED IN AUDIENCE BY THE HOLY FATHER

On Wednesday, January 29th, the General Council was received in a private audience by the Holy Father. This audience, planned since the beginning of our mandate, had to be postponed on several occasions, first because of the temporary absence of the Assistants, then later, when all were present, because of

the Pope's health.

The audience lasted twenty minutes. Somewhat formal at the beginning, it soon took on a simple, almost homely atmosphere. After the members of the General Council and the Procurator to the Holy See had been presented to him, Pope Paul gathered us around him in a circle and without making any prepared speech, he spoke to us as a father, in warm, friendly words. At a few points, it looked as if the audience was about to come to an end, but the Pope simply turned to another topic, so great was his interest.

He thanked us for our visit, a friendly gesture which he said gave him great pleasure. He mentioned the Spiritans' missionary work - which he had been able to see for himself during his visits to Africa - and said how pleased and grateful he was for the fine work achieved. This work should be carried on faithfully and courageously in spite of difficulties. The Holy Father dwelt for a moment on this call for fidelity: fidelity to the missionary spirit, and all that is best in our tradition, fidelity to the Church in an effort to preserve its harmony and unity, a fidelity which does not mean stagnation but must include research if it is to provide an answer to the present situation. It is understood of course that such research must be carried out within the Church and in the light of the Church's teaching. "I shall pray especially for you and for the Spiritan missionaries. Tell them this, and tell them also that the Pope sends them a special greeting.."

Hearing that Father TORRES NEIVA and I were to leave shortly for Angola, the Pope had a special word for the missionaries in that country. He also paid tribute to Father LECUYER, whom he described as "a great scholar and a wonderful man.."

At the end of our interview, the Holy Father spoke of our consecration to the Holy Spirit and said to us: "Let us pray together to the Holy Spirit". And so, standing around the Holy Father, we prayed, and we included in this prayer all our confreres.

I thanked the Holy Father for granting us the privilege of a private audience. I assured him of the Spiritans' attachment and of our fidelity to our missionary vocation, feeling that I could make this promise for you all. I also told him that we would pray for him, for his health and for his intentions.. His reply was: "Pray for the Church".

After the blessing, a prayer for divine grace for all Spiritans, we took our leave. The Holy Father greeted us all once more, shaking hands with each one individually, in the same simple and cordial spirit which had characterized the whole audience.

F. TIMMERMANS, Superior General.

A GUIDE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Father Tony BYRNE, C.S.Sp., an expert in Development activity, which he helped to organize in many African dioceses, has recently published a "Guide to Social Development for Church Workers in Africa", in which he draws largely from his own experience. This booklet will be very useful for the planning, coordination and practical realisation of development projects which are under way in many missions but are meeting with difficulties because of ignorance about methods of ensuring their success. The booklet may be had from the General Secretariat which has a limited number of copies available.

SPAIN

The Spiritans and their future

"Cuadernos Humanismo Espiritano" No. 16, entitled "Espiritanos y su futuro" is written by Fathers Heliodoro MACHADO, Provincial, and Fernando HERPAIZ, and dedicated to the Congregation, its history, its spirituality and its missionary activities. Special attention is given to post-conciliar renewal and to the future of Spiritan spirituality.. A small bibliography completes the pamphlet which will do much towards making the Congregation known in Spain where it is of comparatively recent establishment.

Twelve scholastics made their religious profession at Aranda, last December.

SENEGAL

The French Provincial's visit

During the last fortnight in November 1974, Father THIBAUT, Provincial of France, visited Senegal where he formerly worked. From his impressions of the visit we have picked out his comments on Pikine, which is a large urban centre built 12 kilometres outside Dakar to relieve the shanty-towns of the capital. Pikine has a very large number of inhabitants representing all the tribes in the country. The mission is at the edge of the new town and has a fine church. The missionary personnel includes three Spiritan Fathers, two Brothers from a local congregation and two communities of Sisters, one French and the other Senegalese. It is not known how many christians there are. The missionaries are overloaded with work and this satellite town is growing all the time. There is scope for first evangelization work. Pikine is a symbol of the Africa of today, with the rapidly increasing depopulation of the country districts in favour of the towns where it is extremely difficult to control growth.

EAST AFRICA

The Spiritan Foundation at Usa River

The District Admissions' Committee for the Spiritan Eastern Africa Foundation met at Usa on November 11th, 1974, to process twenty-five applications from secondary school graduates. Those approved will enter a year's pre-Philosophy Orientation Programme at Usa in February.

Five novices made their first Consecration to the Apostolate in the Congregation at a profession ceremony which took place at Usa River on December 31st. Bishop WINKELMOLEN, C.S.Sp., apostolic prefect of Same, presided over the concelebration, in which the Bishop of Arusha and about twenty priests took part. Father Paul CUNNINGHAM, Principal Superior of Kenya, received the vows of the newly professed, and Father Joop DE BOER, Principal Superior of Morogoro, gave the homily. Also present were Father Tony HEEREY, Principal Superior of Zambia and Father Des BYRNE, Assistant Provincial of Ireland.

ANGOLA

Towards a Spiritan Province

The Conference of Men's Religious Institutes of Angola (CIRMA) held a meeting on November 22nd, 1974, in the College of the Holy Spirit. Included on the agenda were the drawing up and approval, on a temporary basis, of the statutes of the Conference.

After three years of effort, it was only in 1974 that work on the building of the inter-district Spiritan novitiate of Angola was able to get started. The task of fitting up premises and providing a water supply was lengthy and costly. All concerned will try to ensure that this work, which is as

important to the Church in Angola as it is to the Congregation, may soon become a reality.

The Spiritan group in the senior seminary (which is temporarily occupying our College in Nova Lisboa) consists of 5 pupils in theology and 4 in philosophy, including one professed member and two priests. The junior scholasticate is in the centre of the town of Nova Lisboa, in the old college buildings, which are already falling to pieces and are not very practical. There are 86 pupils divided up into five years. Pupils in the three final years attend lectures in the college and take their midday meal there.

At the request of the Bishop of Silva Porto, Father Manuel Domingos VAZ has agreed to take on the direction of the diocesan junior seminary. This agreement is on a purely personal basis and does not involve the Congregation in any way.

HAITI

District News

Father G. THIBAUT, Provincial of France, visited our confreres in the District of Haiti during the end of October and the beginning of November 1974. There are 7 confreres altogether: 4 Haitians and 3 French who are divided up as follows: 2 in Brooklyn (New York), 3 in the Bahamas and 2 temporarily in Canada. They are carrying out their apostolate among Haitian refugees.

In fact, a large number has had to flee from Haiti and the exodus is continuing all the time. They are unable to obtain the status of political refugees in the U.S.A. and risk imprisonment, yet political asylum is granted to Cuban refugees. The situation is similar in the Bahamas, while in Canada they are subject to the law concerning foreign workers.

In the Bahamas, out of a population of 160,000, there are 30,000 Haitians, most of whom are in irregular situations.

Consequently, they have to do work which no-one else wants, and this is part of the reason why the expulsion law of July 31st, 1974 has never been enforced. Nevertheless, this law creates an atmosphere of insecurity for them and in addition, there is the demoralizing effect of the scandalous unbalance between the super luxury laid on for the American tourists and the destitution of the masses. Relations with the Bishop of Nassau are good.

In Brooklyn, the confreres have been received into a parish where they are very favourably regarded by the parish priest. The Bishop is agreeable that other Spiritans should come to join the team. The dispersal of the Haitians is one of the main problems as the Fathers are only managing to reach a section of them. Another problem is that of finance, because the diocesan budget, which provides for other missions, has not made any allowance for the Haitian mission.

Notwithstanding all this, our Fathers are doing good work both in Brooklyn and the Bahamas. They are trying to create small active christian communities and to help the people to cope with concrete problems of a social nature, and in this way, their work can well be said to come under the aim of the Congregation.

UNITED STATES

At Duquesne University

In September 1974, when the Faculty Senate of the University of Duquesne conducted its workshop on "University Governance - A Dialogue of Views", Father H.J. McANULTY, C.S.Sp., President of the University, gave a talk from which we have taken a few extracts:

"...I'd like to suggest that we approach the question of governance of universities on a note of hope. For instance, I am encouraged by the fact that we are now making our third review of the Bylaws and Statutes in my recollection; by the change in the composition of the Board of Directors from clerical members of 5 or 6 priests to a body of 46, most of whom are lay persons; by the establishment of a Faculty Senate whose voice becomes increasingly articulate; by the increasing activity of the faculties in the departments, the Institutes and the Schools; by the growing interest of students to take responsibility for their own governance and for providing valuable inputs into the general administration of the University by their participation in campus-wide committee work...

"I have found as president of Duquesne that a university is actually a unique environment that encompasses a complex set of relationships, powers and influences. The way we move amidst all this complexity, the way we treat each other, the way we handle our problems, are what makes up the "culture" of Duquesne and the "spirit" of Duquesne...

"The university is many things to many people.. I believe the university is the last institution left in the world that is able to resist the tyrannies that have beset mankind since the dawn of history. Its freedom to search out and speak the truth are more important than service, rules, votes or passing consumer preference. It is the guardian of the true, the good, the beautiful, the cultural, the civilized..." (UN.REC.Oct.1974)

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V A R I A

Silver Jubilee of the Sisters of St. Paul in Yaoundé. - In December 1974, the Institute of St. Paul celebrated the 25th anniversary of its establishment in the Cameroons. It was in 1949 that the Sisters of St. Paul opened their first missionary establishment in Mvolyé, near Yaoundé, thus realising the ambition of their founder, Canon SCHORDERET, from Fribourg, who was very anxious that the Work should spread overseas and serve the young Churches. Other foundations were undertaken, notably in Brazzaville and Madagascar. Today, in Yaoundé, a lay technician, with the collaboration of the Sisters and local personnel, supervises the operation of the workshops which produce "L'Effort Camerounais", a French weekly, and "Nleb Bekristen", a bi-monthly in Ewondo, as well as other publications for the service of the Church and the population of the country. In Yaoundé itself, a bookshop caters for those who are anxious to educate themselves. While their main service to the apostolate is through the press, the Sisters are familiar with the other means of social communication and are prepared to adopt audiovisual techniques. They will be able to do this if young girls who are called to the religious life become interested in this dynamic form of apostolate.

(EF.CAM.20, 27-XII-74)

A N A P P E A L

The General Secretariat needs some copies of the most recent issue of the General Bulletin i.e. July - December 1974, No. 773/774..... in English.

If any of the Provincial or Principal Superiors has surplus copies, the General Secretary will be very pleased to receive them and to refund any expense involved.
Thank you.

Churches and Government in the Congo. The Congolese Labour Party (PCT) held its 2nd Ordinary Congress at Brazzaville from the 27th to the 31st December 1974. On this occasion, the various Churches were asked to express their opinion on the event and on its socio-political context. This they did, through their spokesman Father Louis BADILA. In his speech, Father BADILA made the point that the members of the Churches are full-citizens with the same rights and duties as everyone else. He thanked President NGOUABI for respecting the freedom of conscience and religion written into the Constitution. The Congolese Churches feel that the PCT is doing valuable work in the social and economic field. They pray God to bless the President and all the members of the congress, "so that all the Congolese without exception may live as brothers and sisters within our Congo, in accordance with our motto: Work-Democracy-Peace."
(SEMAINE 18-I-1975)

Research on Marriage in East Africa. The ecumenical research programme on marriage in Africa today, which was launched 4 years ago, is now nearing its conclusion. The aim of this programme is to give a picture of the present marriage situation in Africa so that the authorities of the various Churches may take appropriate action. A number of reports and documents has been gathered together and it will be the task of a team specially set up for the purpose to study the material and prepare a résumé for publication. Obviously one cannot prejudge what will be the conclusions of sociological studies as yet unfinished, but it is possible to have a general idea of the reasons behind the fall in the number of christian marriages. The basic problem here has to do with catechesis, since in Africa - as no doubt elsewhere also - christians have acquired a too legalistic and too superficial conception of christian marriage. It is hoped that this programme will not only lead to a more confident attitude towards problems relating to marriage and the family, but that it will also be instrumental in cultivating greater understanding and cooperation between the Churches themselves. It is a fine example of ecumenism. (AMECEA DOC. 10-1-1975)

Letter from Pope Paul to Cardinal ZOUNGRANA. On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the missionaries in Upper Volta, the Holy Father wrote a letter to Cardinal Paul ZOUNGRANA, Archbishop of Ouagadougou. Here are a few extracts which are relevant also to other missionary countries:

"We thank the Lord as we think of the ground covered with Him and for Him. And we would like you to take to each of the faithful in Upper Volta the words that we affectionately address to them through you, on this remarkable occasion. It is in the framework of the Holy Year, an appeal for inner renewal, purification and holiness. Without the spirit of abnegation that animated them and the zeal that fired them, the first messengers of Christ to your country would never have been able to do lasting work. While trying to increase the very limited means at your disposal, we hope, therefore, that you will all keep your apostolic ardour precious, that you will make it grow even more, and that the whole Church will benefit from it. We thus encourage you to pursue perseveringly the expression of the Gospel message in African culture and mentality.... It was and will be in the future, the task of Christians to find, thanks to a better study of the genius of their own civilization, the forms, the symbols and even the rites that correspond best to the religious need and the soul of their fellow countrymen..." (O.R. 6-II-75)

+ + + + + OUR DEAD + + + + +

- Brother SALMANUS SCHMITZ, of the Province of Germany, died at Knechtsteden, 24-12-74, aged 87, after 55 years of profession.(65)
- Brother THEODORE NICOL, of the Province of France, died at Langonnet, 28-12-74, aged 75, after 50 years of profession.(66)
- Father Hermann-Joseph HORKENBACH, of the Province of Germany, died at Eschweiler, 11-1-75, aged 80, after 54 years of profession. (1)
- Father Henricus ARENDS, of the Province of Holland, died aged 62, after 39 years of profession. (2)

+ + + + + R. I. P. + + + + +

THE HOLY YEAR IN ROME

In addition to pilgrimages, the Holy Year in Rome will be the occasion of many missionary and international events, a few of which we are mentioning here:

- MARCH 29: Holy Saturday. During the paschal vigil, the Pope will baptize 12 adult catechumens from mission countries.
- APRIL 8-11: Assembly of the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences for the missions.
 - 13: Mass at St. Peters for priestly, religious and missionary vocations. Holy Year ceremony for seminarians, scholastics, religious in training, novices.
 - 13-19: Assembly of the Rectors of seminaries for the missions and in mission countries.
 - 18: XXth General Assembly of Pax Romana.
 - 20: Mass at St. Peter's during which the Pope will solemnize the marriage of several couples, some of them from mission countries.
- MAY 8: General Assembly of the Conferences of International Catholic Organizations. Exhibition illustrating the activity of these organizations.
 - 9-17: Meeting of the National Directors of the Pontifical Missionary Works.
 - 11-18: World Symposium on Social Communications.
 - 12: General Assembly of Caritas Internationalis.
 - 12-21: International Congress of Mariology.
- JUNE 29: At St. Peter's, the Pope will ordain new priests, some of them from mission countries.
- SEPT. 21-28: International Congress of christian Archeology.
- OCT. Symposium of Episcopal Conferences. - World Meeting of Catholic Lay Associations.
 - 5-10: International Missiology Congress at the Urbanian University.
 - 8-18: General Assembly of the Catholic Association of Services for Youth (Girls' section).
 - 13-18: International Congress on the Theology of the Cross.
 - 13-19: Congress for Catechists.
 - 19: Mission Sunday.
 - 22-25: Plenary Assembly of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.