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SPIRITAN NEWS

March-April 1984

No. 51

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

Spiritans in Pakistan

Apart from an Irish Spiritan (Fr. Jack Finucane) working with 'Concern' in Bangladesh, the eight Spiritans in Pakistan represent the Congregation's only commitment in Asia — a continent of 2,700 million people, of whom only 3.7% are Christian.

Pakistan itself has a population of 85 million, of whom 96% are Muslims. Christians number about one million, of whom some 400,000 are Catholics. Apart from the Christians, there are also a few Hindus and nearly a million 'Tribals' — 'outcastes' who did not flee to India when most Hindus did so in 1947, or who came from India at that time. It was for work among these Tribals that Propaganda Fide asked the Congregation for personnel in 1976.

The Congregation accepted, as the work could certainly be described as "first evangelization among the most abandoned", and the first team arrived in Pakistan on 20 Dec. 1977: Fr. John Kitchen, from England, and Frs. John O'Brien and Eddie Flynn from Ireland. (Two French Spiritans were

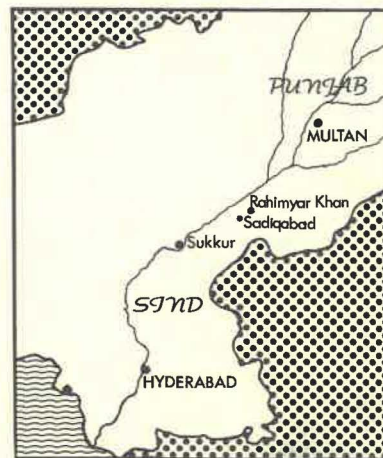


Fr. O'Connell, two Marwaris and Fr. General (who obviously agrees with the camel).

also to have been in the group, but visa difficulties prevented this and in fact all subsequent appointments have been Irish.) They were assigned to the Diocese of Multan (in the Punjab), headed by Bishop Bertrand Boland, an American Dominican, and were to work especially among the Marwaris, a tribal group of some 100,000, who live mostly in Sind Province to the south, but with more than 10,000 in the Punjab, in the area of Rahimyar Khan, a town of 60,000 inhabitants.

After a short stay at Rahimyar Khan, they attended a language school at Murree, in the north of the country. One of the problems is that there are three languages to be learned: Urdu, the national language, Punjabi, the local language, and Marwari, the tribal language. The first group concentrated on Punjabi, but the more recent arrivals have found it better to begin with Urdu. By June 1978 Fr. O'Brien had fallen ill with hepatitis, and in Sept. he had to leave for Ireland and was unable to return. Hepatitis has been a constant hazard for the group and has caused several prolonged home leaves for recuperation.

In Nov. 1978, Frs. Kitchen and Flynn took up work at Sadiqabad (pop. 30,000), 30 kms. from Rahimyar Khan, and began by ministering to the 30 Punjabi Catholic families there and a further 100 in the surrounding area. They adopted the local way of life, eating local food and wearing Pakistani dress: the 'shalvar' (baggy trousers) and 'kamise' (a loose shirt worn over the trousers). It may be noted that the Punjabi Christians are themselves not much higher on the social scale than the Tribals, coming mainly from the menial castes.



The apostolate to the Tribals was not forgotten, and the two Spiritans visited the Marwaris in their villages, attending their weddings and other feasts, and holding prayer meetings, with a Marwari catechist as interpreter. At Easter 1979 they baptized two Marwari leaders and their dependants (a total of 45 people). Some progress was being made until in Jan. 1981 there was a public scandal over some Marwari Christians selling a woman as a slave, and this set back work among them for about a year.

In 1979, Fr. Jim O'Connell joined the team, and he was followed in 1981 by Fr. Paddy Fitzpatrick and Dick Dunne, in 1982 by Fr. John Jackson, in 1983 by Fr. Paddy Nolan and in 1984 by Frank Naughton.

In Sept. 1980, when Fr. Kitchen returned from the General Chapter, the parish of Rahimyar Khan (with about 2,000



Catholic youth rally at Rahimyar Khan.

Catholics), along with its outstation Sadiqabad, was handed over to the team by the Dominicans. In Nov. 1983, the group felt strong enough to take over another parish in the town of Sukkur (pop. 200,000, with 2,000 Catholics), 130 kms. to the south-west, in the Diocese of Hyderabad, headed by Bishop Bonaventure Paul, O.F.M. This is in Sind province, where most of the Marwaris live, and it is hoped that a third parish will be taken on when the aim of three groups of four is realized. Fr. Kitchen is parish priest at Rahimyar Khan, and with him are Fr. O'Connell (who has taken over from him as Group Superior), Dick Dunne and Fr. Nolan — the last two concentrating on work among the Marwaris. Sukkur is staffed by Fr. Flynn (parish priest) and Fr. Jackson.

The team was visited by Fr. Gross in 1981, and recently (27 Dec.-19 Jan.) by Fr. General, who shared their life for more than three weeks and had discussions with the Bishops, local clergy and missionaries of other Congregations. The Church in Pakistan has now committed itself to a renewed effort among the Tribals, and Spiritans are part of that effort. Paying tribute to the team, Fr. General said: "Christmas 1983 marked the 6th anniversary of our Spiritan presence. Six years is a short time in terms of coming to

grips with a reality so completely new for the Congregation, and where we couldn't offer any experience or expertise to the first group setting out. But six years can be a long time when one looks at the hardships and frustrations they had to cope with. It was indeed with admiration and gratitude that I left my confreres in Pakistan, after listening to the story of those six years."



Community Mass. From left: Frs. Kitchen, O'Connell, Flynn, Jackson and Nolan. Back to camera: Fr. General.

Centenary of a Failure: Liberia 1884

There are four Spiritans in Liberia at present: Frs. James Peters and Michael Cahill at the international seminary, and Frs. Joseph Glynn and Terence Smith in parish work.

Fr. Cahill writes:

"We must not let Orwell monopolize 1984! Those interested in Africa will note that it is the centenary year of the infamous Berlin Conference of European powers that arranged the colonial carve-up of Africa and the establishment of the boundaries of most of the present African states. 1984 also marks the centenary of a C.S.Sp. initiative in West Africa, an effort which failed.

The presence today of four Spiritans in Liberia forms the third chapter of the history of the involvement of the Congregation in the Republic of Liberia. The present involvement — two confreres in a suburban parish in Monrovia and two confreres in the international seminary at Gbargna — is a minor one. The two previous ones were nothing less than attempts to establish the Catholic Church in Liberia. Both attempts were utter failures. In 1842-44 Mgr. Barron together with Libermann's Missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary had tried and failed at Cape Palmas, the southernmost point of Liberia. Forty years later the Congregation was asked by Propaganda Fide to open a mission in Monrovia. This move was at the request of the Government of Liberia, which was anxious to improve the educational system and had been impressed by the reports of the educational work of Catholic missionaries along the West Coast.

Fr. Blanchet, the Prefect Apostolic in Sierra Leone, was entrusted with the task. He appointed Fr. Lorber as Superior and they both arrived in Monrovia in February 1884. Fr. Blanchet returned to Freetown, and Fr. Lorber was joined by Fr. Bourzeix, Bro. Coleman and Bro. Laengst. Fr. Lorber was replaced in 1885 by Fr. Stoll. Fr. Bourzeix was replaced by Fr. Féger and died very soon after. Bro. Coleman died in 1885. The names of this international team of Irish and French missionaries deserve to be remembered. Their work never achieved any momentum. They suffered greatly from the climate and from the anti-Catholic feeling in Monrovia at that time. They did not help the situation by attacking the errors of Protestantism and Freemasonry. The latter was very influential in Liberia. Eventually Fr. Blanchet returned in 1887, reassessed the situation and the decision was taken to withdraw. They pulled back to Sierra Leone in 1888. (The best account of this period is to be found in E. M. Hogan, *Catholic Missionaries and Liberia*, Cork University Press, 1981, pp. 22-30).

1984 is the centenary of a failure. We celebrate our successes. Why not at least commemorate our failures? It is

conventional to quote John 12:24: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but, if it dies, it bears much fruit." In previous ages the death and suffering of missionaries was interpreted as a necessary sacrifice. God, it was suggested, noted this and later gave the necessary graces leading to conversions and ultimate missionary success. I question this understanding and application of the text. From this perspective there is no such thing as failure. I contend that there can be such a thing as failure and that it is healthy to acknowledge this. Some rational attempt must be made to account for failure. It is easy to be wise after the event, yet there are lessons to be learned. What strikes me about the Monrovia experience of 1884-88 is the terrible waste resulting from the inability to continue, adjusting and learning as time went on. The early retreat was due to inadequate resources because the attempt was only a spin-off of the Sierra Leone mission and there they were themselves over-extended. We must speak of a half-hearted commitment on the part of the authorities of the time. Thus the efforts of the confreres in Monrovia were of no avail.

A distinction must be made between cases where there was lack of immediate success and cases where there was immediate failure. In the former there was an element of continuity and a building upon the foundations laid by others. In such cases John 12:24 can be invoked with justification. The efforts of some even unto death are frequently part of the linear connection between initiative and eventual success. The C.S.Sp. effort of 1884-88 is an example of immediate failure. The initiative collapsed and the surviving missionaries were withdrawn. In terms of the objective of establishing the Church there was no linear connection between the efforts of 1842-44 and 1884-88, and neither was there such between 1884-88 and the efforts of the De Montfort Fathers, 1902-04, and the S.M.A. initiative of 1906, which was to be the one that finally succeeded.

Fr. Hogan suggests that competition between missionary societies led to a missionary scramble comparable to that of the colonial powers for territory. This may well be the root cause for over-extension and lack of adequate commitment which I noted above. Missionaries live with failure in their lifetime. Generations of our confreres have done so. There is no waste here because of the continuity and perseverance in subsequent generations. The sadness of the failure of 1884-88 lies precisely in the waste. Not indeed that the confreres involved failed in the most vital matter of all, in the truth of their own lives. Here they were loyal to themselves and to their missionary commitment. They were zealous. They suffered — even unto death. There is great edification in their story. Let us salvage something from the wreckage."

News Items

Decisions of the General Council

The General Council

- on 25 Jan., confirmed the reelection of Fr. Albert CLAUS as Provincial of Germany for a fourth three-year term, beginning on 7 Feb.;
- on 25 Jan., appointed Fr. Georges-Henri REY (Switzerland) to Yaoundé, as his first appointment;
- on 6 March, appointed Fr. Maurice BARBOTIN as Principal Superior of Guadeloupe for a third three-year term, beginning on 1 June 1984;
- on 6 March, confirmed the reelection of Fr. Bernard A. KELLY as Provincial of Trans-Canada for a second three-year term, beginning on 1 July 1984;
- on 6 March, appointed Fr. Joseph BURGRAFF, of the Province of Belgium, as Bursar of the Generalate community for a three-year term, beginning on 15 March;
- on 9 March, decided that the 1986 General Chapter will be held at Chevilly for the full month of July, with the option of continuing for a further week if that should be necessary.

Congregation now at 3,600 members

On 1 Jan. 1984, the number of professed members of the Congregation stood at exactly 3,600 — a considerable drop from its high of 5,120 in 1964. The three largest Provinces — France, Ireland and Holland — were still just above, respectively, 1,000, 700 and 400.

The figures for the different Provinces and Foundations were as follows (the figures for the Districts being included in the Province of origin):

| | | | |
|-------------|-------|--------------|----|
| France | 1,003 | Trans-Canada | 53 |
| Ireland | 705 | Poland | 48 |
| Holland | 406 | EAF | 41 |
| Portugal | 250 | Trinidad | 35 |
| Germany | 198 | Spain | 25 |
| USA/E | 176 | Brazil | 22 |
| Nigeria | 145 | Angola | 21 |
| Switzerland | 104 | WAF | 14 |
| Belgium | 95 | CAF | 13 |
| England | 91 | Puerto Rico | 7 |
| Canada | 75 | Indian Ocean | 5 |
| USA/W | 68 | | |

The members were distributed throughout the world as follows:

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Europe | 1,601 | Africa | 1,202 |
| North America | 424 | Asia | 8 |
| Central America | 141 | Oceania | 16 |
| South America | 208 | | |

There were, therefore, 2,025 in Europe and North America, and 1,575 in the 'Southern Hemisphere'.

Generalate

Visitors to the Generalate during the past eight years will certainly remember Brother Nuno, whose cheerful welcome and efficient service brought joy to the hearts of so many. Unfortunately, at the request of the Portuguese Province, which needs him for animation work, the Generalate is losing his services — which were numerous, as he looked after both the kitchen and the cars. The Generalate community expresses its gratitude to Nuno for all he has done and been in it, and wishes him well in his future work.

To fill the gap left by Nuno, the General Council has called on Fr. Joseph Burgraff (Belgium), who on 20 March took over from Fr. Santos Neves as community bursar and will look after the services of the house. For the past ten years Fr. Burgraff has been at Gentinnes, first as bursar and then

as superior, and his multiple skills are well known there. We hope to come back on them in a note on Gentinnes in our next issue. In the meantime — welcome, Joseph.

Germany

The Provincial Chapter was held at Knechtsteden from 2-7 Jan., with 31 voting members, and with Fr. Bruno Trächtler representing the Generalate. Fr. Albert Claus was reelected Provincial for a fourth term. In order to reorganize the work of the Province more realistically, it was decided to close the houses of Heimbach and Buchen in the autumn of this year. (The house at Menden was closed in 1979, and it may be noted with gratitude that the proceeds from the sale of the school were donated to the Generalate to set up a fund for formation.) The closing of Menden and Heimbach in the north and Buchen in the south means that there are now two houses (Speyer and Donaueschingen) for missionary animation in the south, and four houses in the north: the Provincialate in Cologne, a secondary school at Broich, the new students' house at St. Augustin (Bonn), where courses are followed at the SVD Faculty of Theology, and Knechtsteden, where the Libermannhaus is very active in missionary animation and where there is still a secondary school but no longer run by the Congregation. At present the Province has five students in formation, and two more are expected in the autumn. There will be a meeting of the Enlarged Provincial Council later this year, and it was asked by the Chapter to look particularly into the questions of Spiritan Associates and work among immigrants. Ninety young people have already taken part at Knechtsteden in courses in the Associate program ('Missionar auf Zeit' or 'temporary missionary'), and four have gone to work in Brazil and two in Africa.

Ireland

A fire of unknown origin at Blackrock College on the afternoon of Monday 20 Feb. caused considerable damage to the chapel, including the destruction of the organ. The chapel had been beautifully restored for the centenary in 1960, and no doubt can be restored again, but an irreparable loss is that of the archives, which were in an adjoining building that was also damaged by the fire. Much valuable historical material was lost, including more than 10,000 photographs and the archives of Dr. Alfred O'Rahilly.

Puerto Rico

Fr. Michael Barrington made use of his 'experience of vocations hikes in Scotland to organize, with Fr. Neil McQuillan, a similar vocations hike in Puerto Rico from 30 Dec. to 5 Jan. Nearly 100 young men took part in the 100-mile walk from Salinas to Arecibo. Local residents along the way provided dinner and breakfast as well as shelter each night, and accompanied the young men to daily Mass. Cardinal Aponte was principal celebrant and homilist at a Mass in the cathedral of San Juan when the group reached there on 2 Jan., and Bishop Miguel Rodrigues presided at the final Mass in the cathedral of Arecibo, at which two Spiritans were instituted as Lectors. All the Spiritan students and novices took part in the hike, which was given considerable coverage by the local press and radio.

Guinea-Bissau

The mission to the Manjaks in Guinea-Bissau, which was opened at Bajob in April 1980, is developing well, and the first wave of catechumens received baptism, first communion and confirmation in 1983. About 20 couples also had their marriages blessed. But it was a difficult year for the two Spiritans (Frs. René des Déserts and Pierre Buis), as for several months they were without a car after the old one had broken down. A small Renault van, provided by friends in France, has now remedied the situation. Even better, the mission has been strengthened by the arrival, just before

Christmas, of three helpers: a French 'coopérant', a Senegalese Brother, and the first Manjak priest born in Guinea-Bissau, Fr. Clément Gomis. Fr. Gomis left Guinea-Bissau at the age of 15 and was baptized in Senegal at the age of 18. Three years later he joined the Brothers of St. Joseph, and on 20 Nov. last, at the age of 36, he was ordained to the priesthood in Dakar by Bishop Pierre Sagna, C.S.Sp. He has applied to join the Spiritans and hopes to do his novitiate in Cameroon next year.

Kenya

Nairobi will be the venue for the 43rd International Eucharistic Congress, which will be held from 11-18 Aug. 1985. The theme of the Congress will be 'The Eucharist and the Christian Family'. The General Secretary, charged with preparing the Congress, is Fr. Paul Cunningham, a Spiritan with more than 35 years' experience in Kenya, of which six as District Superior. He has seven committees working under him, each with several subcommittees. The present population of Nairobi is about one million, and about 100,000 pilgrims from other parts of Kenya are expected for the Congress, as well as some 30,000 from abroad. Fr. Cunningham accompanied Cardinal Otunga of Nairobi to Rome in January in connection with preparations for the Congress. The first Eucharistic Congress was held in Lille, France, in 1881.

Kilimanjaro

Fr. Pat Patten has succeeded in getting a Flying Medical Service plane for providing medical help to isolated areas in the Diocese of Arusha. The final event of the visit to Kilimanjaro by Fr. Bill Headley, Provincial of USA East, was a concelebrated Mass at Usa River on 4 Nov. to mark the 50 years of relationship between U.S. Spiritans and the District of Kilimanjaro. The District was entrusted to them in 1933 and, in the 50 years since then, 87 American-born Spiritans have devoted themselves to its service. At the beginning the District was coextensive with the Vicariate of Kilimanjaro, which has since been divided into the Dioceses of Moshi, Arusha, Same, Tanga and part of Mbulu. At present there are 31 American Spiritan Fathers, Brothers and Associates serving in the District.

Southern Africa

On 2 Feb., Mr. Michael Sibeko of Vrede made his profession as a Spiritan at Glen Ash, and Mr. Joseph Mokoening began his pre-novitiate training. This was the first local Spiritan profession in 60 years of presence in Southern Africa. Bishop Hubert Bucher of Bethlehem was principal celebrant at the Mass, which was attended by about 300 people.

Angola

Communication from Father General:

"Confreres and communities used to send parcels of food etc. to Angola, and they had been very much appreciated. In a circular to the Provincials of Europe, I had indicated that gifts of money could take the place of the parcels, but several confreres in Angola have asked that the aid be rather in the form of parcels. For those outside of Luanda it is the only means of supplementing the little that is available locally. They say that the parcels usually arrive intact. Please continue, therefore, to send parcels, and thank you for this gesture of solidarity towards our confreres in Angola."

In a letter from Angola in February, one of our confreres writes:

"We're desperately short of everything imaginable and the country's practically paralysed. There's no solution in sight and the war has worsened as Migs and helicopters

become a normal sight. All travelling is either difficult or dangerous. Priests and sisters continue to be kidnapped now and again — those not living in the principal towns and cities. Other missionaries newly arrived are having difficulties proceeding to their respective dioceses. All in all, it's a grave situation. As for the people I serve, there's nothing new to say. Schools and hospitals are functioning, just about. There's nothing in the shops. A lot of stealing goes on among the people, involving clothes, crockery, food stuffs, in short anything of value and easily-carried. Arranging food is a daily headache and the diet is terribly reduced. Many don't bother eating some days, having nothing to go with the basic mash of maize. The Red Cross has folded up for the moment since they can't circulate nor bring in stuff while roads and airspace continue dangerous. We missionaries depend heavily on food stuffs sent from abroad and which have got through to us. Bread, eggs, fresh meat and fish, even vegetables are all rare luxuries. Parcels get through still and we won't go really hungry like the vast majority."

The same missionary described his Christmas Masses. The Mass at night began in complete darkness until the Gloria, when a light shone out as a girl dressed in white sang the good news of Christ's birth. There was a live crib, with a four-month-old baby and its father and mother, and after the gospel the shepherds came up as the offertory was sung. "The 500 who packed the chapel sang their hearts out and even danced. No written word captures the joy of that night. The Mass on Christmas morning was another moving experience. It lasted three hours and was a real celebration. There were no presents to look forward to after it. From the material point of view Christmas was a disaster, but the spirit of the people was marvellous."

Jubilarians

75 Years of Profession:

21 June : Br. Ubald WEISS (France), aged 94 — the oldest member of the Congregation.

60 Years of Profession:

26 Aug. : Abp. Thomas BROSNAN and Fr. Paul CLOONAN (Ireland).

50 Years of Profession:

9 June : Brs. Gordianus ROOSEN and Remaclus WOUTERS (Holland).
21 June : Br. Eulogius BRAUN (Alto Juruá).

50 Years of Priesthood:

17 June : Bishop Agostinho LOPES DE MOURA (Portugal), Bishop Auguste DELISLE (Canada) and Fr. Claude CAROFF (France).
24 June : Frs. Thomas CLERKIN, Bernard KEANE, John O'NEILL (Ireland), Frederick FULLEN and Brendan TIMON (Long Island).
29 June : Bishop Raymond de LAMOUREYRE (Congo) and Fr. Michel KANDEL (France).
8 July : Fr. Gabriel BERTHAUD (France).
22 July : Frs. Gilles MARCHAL and Jean SELS (Belgium).
25 July : Frs. Antonius van LIEROP, Martinus SAELMANS and Petrus SCHOONAKKER (Holland).

30 Years a Bishop:

1 July : Bishop Jean DAVID (Madagascar).

Our Dead

1 Feb. : Fr. Jérôme KAPPS (France), 79.
12 Feb. : Fr. Henri GRIMAUUX (France), 81.
15 Feb. : Fr. Hubertus VERDIJK (Holland), 66.
15 Feb. : Fr. Cosmas BOHEMEN (Holland), 83.
25 Feb. : Br. Andrew KENNY (Ireland), 70.
1 Mar. : Br. Lázaro DIAS (Portugal), 90.
11 Mar. : Br. Séraphin KEHRWILLER (France), 75.
13 Mar. : Fr. Josaphat DIJOUX (Reunion), 85.