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SPIRITAN NEWS

March 1995

N° 106

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

The Archbishop of Antananarivo, Mgr Armand Gaétan Razafindratandra was created Cardinal at the Consistory of Nov. 26, 1994. He has long been a close friend of the Spiritans with whom he has worked in Madagascar for many years. Whenever he visits Rome he stays at our Generalate. Our confrere, Fr Albert Perrier, former Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference of Madagascar took the opportunity of talking to the Cardinal during his recent visit.

Fr Albert: Having been a member of the Synod for Africa, you are a member now of the commission for the final document and for the follow-up to the Synod. What do you think are the overall orientations for Africa and for Madagascar that come from the Synod?

The Cardinal: The title of the Synod *The Church in Africa and its evangelising mission as we move towards the year 2000. "You shall be my witnesses"*. Here already there is an indication of the orientations. For me it is a question of keeping in mind the whole story of the Church in Africa from early Christian times. The Church was first experienced in the lives and the activities of the Christian communities in Egypt and then later throughout North Africa. Egypt has the unique honour of being the only country in Africa where Christ himself lived. It is also the first African country that accepted the Gospel. It was there too that a way of living in monasteries evolved that was destined to have very influential effects on Christianity in both the East and the West. Sadly, this early Church was terribly hampered by internal strife and was swept aside by the muslim invasions.

In the 19th century missionaries arrived to evangelise Africa. They encountered African traditional religions. They deserve our recognition and praise for that first announcing of the Gospel. But let me return to our history. For someone from Madagascar, a story is of little value unless one can draw some lessons from it. Our past we believe should contain in itself a message that revitalises us today. Evangelisation has to pervade absolutely everything in the life of the Church in Africa and calls for dialogue, first between all Christians and then between them and both traditional religions and Islam. In today's Africa, which is plagued by civil and international wars, by injustice of every type and by lack of morals, I have to stress the role of Justice and Peace. Then the media: nobody escapes the effects of the media. They are all-pervading. However it is possible to make them serve evangelisation - by being in touch with those who run them, who are quite often themselves Christians.

In its final message the Synod insisted on the spiritual value of witness - through everything inculturation touches - theology, liturgy, catechetics, pastoral work, politics, anthropology, communications. Every part of life has to be inculturated and become impregnated with Gospel values. At the time of independence many Christians held key posts and if there are so many problems today, perhaps it is because their Christian witness was not strong enough in their public life. Witness of life and the directions that have been set should guide us as we approach the year 2000. It is the quality of our Christian living that will make us ready for the Great Jubilee.

Fr Albert: You come from the Church of Madagascar, a local Church which has its own characteristics and outlook on the world. What was the particular contribution of the Bishops of Madagascar to the Synod?

Cardinal: The thing that the bishops emphasised was inculturation. Our catechesis is inculturated through "Fihavanana" a vital unity best exemplified by the parent-child relationship. This exists in every Malagasy family and defines precisely what is precious in all human relationships. In Madagascar the sacrifice of Christ can be best understood with the help of the Malagasy understanding of sacrifice. We have started a special programme for late vocations and priestly vocations in rural areas, for which we have on-site training, as we say, "*with our feet in the rice paddy*". Ecumenism finds its expression in the Council of Christian churches which has played a large part in developing the country. To look at the present situation we find that justice and peace can guide anyone's reactions in the face of the understanding of poverty, misery and insecurity. Those who move from one part of the country to another are setting up links that bind the country together. The Apostleship of the Sea answers the needs of the Island with its merchant sailors and fisher folk.

Fr Albert: You have come back from the Synod with a lot of convictions and obviously happy. What lines does the episcopal conference hope to follow-up in its reflections in the light of the Synod?

Cardinal: We sometimes can see and even live a divide between what we believe and how we live. Our faith is searching for a deeper understanding and to grow stronger in order to get over the split between the way of the world



Cardinal and Fr Albert

and the Christian way. In Madagascar there are many non-Christians still. Places where the Gospel was preached long since are on the high plateau; up to 80% there are now Christian. The regions for first evangelisation are along the seacoast where there is 80% of non-Christians. Evangelisation here is through dialogue and Christian witness.

Fr Albert: Do priests who come from the high plateau - and also lay catechists - accept to go down to work on the coast? Is this happening already? Could it be pushed forward by personnel exchanges done between the bishops?

Cardinal: This missionary facet of evangelisation got great emphasis in the Synod. What we have seen *Fidei donum* priests do in countries where there are insufficient priests, is the ideal answer according to the wish of Paul VI for the Churches of Africa. It's the way that they can be missionary one to the other, to be *missionaries to ourselves*. Today in Madagascar the question is a bit different. The seminaries show that there are more seminarians coming from the places where first evangelisation is happening. And so that is reason to be hopeful. Missionary congregations too have many vocations and they can go to work in these first evangelisation regions of the country.

Fr Albert: How do those actively engaged for the Church in Madagascar look at what the Synod has asked of them?

Cardinal: They ask day in and day out to be shown how to be trained! As for training the catechists, it is getting lots of attention. In rural areas if the Church exists at all, and it does, it is due to them. Catechists are getting more training today than ever before. Everywhere we are trying to set up pastoral councils both in parishes and sectors of rural areas. By means of these pastoral councils, we hope to bring new committed believers to give life to the Church. There are also different commissions taking care of different Christian activities. I can think of justice and peace, commissions for the liturgy, marriage preparation groups. And in these cases the laity are the leaders. The Catholic action movements, those with a wider mandate and those drawn from special groups, are working away. Coordination between all who are active in the field of apostolate is done through the diocesan pastoral councils. As for social services, Caritas is no longer doing relief work and is turning more and more to development. In health services, there are dispensaries run by Sisters and others run by some parishes. Intensive rice production progressed out of a church initiative in development.

Fr Albert: You've been working for a long time together with Spiritans. Could you point out one or another facet of what you have done together?

Cardinal: For sixteen years I worked in the diocese of Mahajanga. I succeeded a Spiritan bishop. The majority of the missionaries with whom I worked were Spiritans working in rural areas. Alongside them I went on trek to the various districts which I found were already well organised and developing nicely. In the city of Mahajanga, it was again with Spiritans that I went to the suburbs. There we discovered the basic Christian community idea and when these different sections of the town develop well, you can go forward and build up to a parish. The Spiritans realised that the Church is made up of persons who become church before ever it's a question of putting up walls. Again Spiritans are working at training in the junior seminaries and they look after different Catholic action movements, the ACI (middle and upper class manpower level), the Young Christian Workers, the Apostleship of the Sea and Ibalita (Movement for Children).

In the footsteps of Libermann

Fr Francois Nicolas writes: "From Sept. 08 - 18, a small group of young men together with three Spiritan priests, went on pilgrimage to Rome, Loreto and Assisi.

We visited the attic where Libermann wrote the 'Provisional Rule' and the Holy House of Loreto where he decided to begin his missionary project. The long walk over the mountains as we approached Assisi recalled to us the long distances covered on foot by our Founder. The ecumenical prayer meetings for peace inspired by St. Francis, the 'discovery' of the Rome of the early Christians and its history and the contemporary Church (Papal Audience: Meeting with the Generalate and the Community of St Egidio) were places and opportunities of getting in touch with both the history of the Church and of our Congregation.

The original idea behind the pilgrimage was to bring together young people from our European Provinces who had already some contact with the Congregation. In fact, there were nine French and one Dutch in the group which finally formed. This first experience touched the participants very deeply. It is certain to encourage others to plan a similar experience.



Photo: L-R Back : Fr F. Nicolas, T. Tiphaigne, T. Taillasson, Ype de Jong (Holland), Fr R. Prevot, M. H. Jeoffre and Fr Serge Ballanoger. Front: J. Thellier, M. Goujaud, E. M. Bavogui (Guinea).

E.G.C: DAKAR, 1995

Delegates

Eighteen delegates have already been selected. Nine are still to be selected.

Fr Jean-Paul HOCH, France
 Fr Eduardo MIRANDA, Portugal
 Fr Peter WARD, England
 Fr Martin KEANE, Ireland
 Fr Lucien POCHON, Switzerland
 Fr Zdzislaw BOBROWSKI, Poland
 Fr Otto v.d.BRINK, Netherlands
 Fr Pedro IWASHITA, Brazil
 Br Janvier BLANCO, Paraguay
 Fr David DONELLAN, Pakistan
 Fr Gabriel VUITTENEZ, Madagascar
 Fr Benôt DIEME, FAC
 Fr René TABARD, Congo
 Fr Michael WHITE, USA/W
 Fr Max DOMINIQUE, Haiti
 Fr Oswaldo Pérez GONZALEZ, Puerto Rico
 Fr Jeronimo CAHINGA, Angola
 Fr Gérard VIEIRA, Senegal

Response to Questionnaire

Total number of replies registered 71
These comprise 32 group and 39 individual replies.

Number of replies in English: 17 group replies
Ireland(3) Nigeria, Zambia, Zimbabwe, England, Ghana,
Ethiopia (Sidamo), USA/E, USA/W, Transcanada,
Trinidad, Kenya, Germany, The Gambia, Brazil S.W.,)
Individual replies in English 18
Total replies in English 35

Number of replies in French: 14 group replies
France, Holland Belgium, Switzerland ,Canada,
Guyane, Guadeloupe, Mauritius, Réunion, Cameroon,
Senegal(2), Algeria and FAC)
Individual replies in French 14
Total replies in French 28

Number of replies in Portuguese: 3 group replies
Portugal, Cabo Verde, Brazil.
Individual replies in Portuguese 5
Total replies in Portuguese 8

Some group replies contained individual replies to be processed at the Generalate, as was the case of Transcanada, French Guyana and Kenya. These individual replies have not been registered as individual replies but have been registered with the group.

There are 3 sets of replies from Formation communities: the WAF group, comprising 23; the Irish Theologate, comprising 15 and the FAC group comprising 20.

There are two replies from Formators - Ireland and JEM, Chevilly.

The Group reply from Nigeria is mainly from the formation houses and from "zone communities".

Pastors without Frontiers

There are millions of refugees and displaced in the world at present. The Pontifical Council for Migrants and Immigrants in collaboration with the Promoters for Justice and Peace in Rome have set up an Organisation "Pastors without Frontiers" to answer to the urgent need for Pastoral Agents to work in refugee camps. It looks at ways in which dioceses which have requested pastoral agents to work with refugees can collaborate with Religious Congregations who may be able to respond promptly to these needs. It proposes to help religious or laity who wish to work with refugees for a period of 3 months to 2 years. For more information on this program - contact Fr J. Skinnader who is one of the coordinators for the programme.

News from Circumscriptions

Tanzania

Fr A Shao, Provincial, East African Province has circularised the Generalate, Provincials and Principal Superiors of the Congregation, asking for two or three experienced confreres to work with the refugees in Tanzania. The appeal for missionaries, priests, sisters and laity, came from Bishop C Mwoleka, Rulenge Diocese.

There are about 700,000 refugees in 17 camps. The Bishop envisions a team of 1 priest, 3 sisters and some social workers for every 20,000 refugees. It is planned to have two recently ordained priests from the East African Province join

the Spiritan team(s) later in the year. The 'volunteers' would need a command of some languages - English, French and Swahili: a knowledge of Burundese would be an advantage.

Nigeria

Three Nigerian confreres have been appointed to Papua NG this year. This is the first appointment from Nigeria to Asia. On the way they visited the Generalate. We wish them well in this international mission.



L-R: Frs E. Okeke, L. Ahamotu and D. Atuanya in St. Peter's Square.

USA/E

African Bishops' Peacemaker Colloquium at Duquesne

Church Leaders from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Angola, Liberia, Nigeria, Eritrea and South Africa participated in the Conference. According to Fr. Headley *the goals of the Conference were to enable participants in the development of practical, Gospel-based conflict resolution skills regarding Africa.* The Most Reverend John Onaiyekan, Archbishop of Abuja, Nigeria added, *we want to make sure that religion becomes not part of the problem, but part of the solution in Africa. Still, we have not yet done all that the Church can do.*

Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies Program

In its desire to further the work of the Colloquium, Duquesne University

- has established a new Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies Program leading to an MA Degree;

- has granted a full tuition scholarship to each nation represented at the Colloquium, plus Rwanda which was unable to be present. These scholarships are for graduate level studies with preference for the Master of Arts Degree, concentrating in Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies.

The Colloquium was the first major effort of Duquesne University's new Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies. It is hoped that Spiritans, particularly from the New Foundations, will come to study in this international setting. According to Father Headley, Coordinator of the Programme, *a (small) cadre of (young) Spiritans trained in Policy Studies with concentration in Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies could be a powerful force for institutionalising (in the good sense) justice and peace in the Congregation.*

Sierra Leone

The war in Sierra Leone has been getting worse over the past month. Travel on the main roads is in convoy with an army escort. Ambushes along the main roads are frequent and attacks on villages are commonplace. The Apostolic Delegate and the Catholic Bishops have made an urgent appeal for peace. They write:

We are greatly saddened and distressed by the tragic trend which this war is taking... We cannot remain silent when traditional, civil and religious life is being completely disrupted.

The Bishops called for an immediate ceasefire so that discussions can start and for the speedy and unconditional release of all those who have been taken hostages.

We also appeal to all people of good will, particularly to all Sierra Leonean women so that they may persuade their husbands, children, relatives and friends that war is against the dignity of everybody... to destroy and loot properties and homes of unarmed, defenseless and peaceful citizens is an outrage in the sight of God

There are nineteen confreres working in Sierra Leone. These include the Bishop of Kenema, Mgr J. O'Riordan. It is difficult

to predict what effect the Bishops' appeal will have. It is not clear who is fighting whom nor who has the authority to negotiate. Contact has been made with the seven Xaverian sisters (six Italians and one Brazilian) who were taken hostage in January 1995. They are still held by the "rebels". It would appear that they are being well treated and are in good spirits. Nothing definite has been heard about the two English Volunteer teachers who were taken hostage in November 1994 nor about the Employees of Rutile mining company taken hostage last January.

European Spiritan Month 1995

The European Spiritan Month 1995 (le Mois Spiritain Européen) is scheduled for July 15 - Aug. 5. at Gentinnes, Belgium. The proposed duration is three weeks. Participants can follow either the full three weeks course, the first two or the last two weeks. The first week is mainly focussed for confreres working in missions 'ad extra'. The theme is *Mission, hope for the future*. The third week is tailored to the needs of confreres working in Europe but again this is not exclusive. The theme is *Mission at home: modernity and post modernity*. The second week, the heart of the programme is a Spiritan retreat directed by Fr Christian de Mare. Frs Gross, Coulon, Mulcahy, Kitchen and hopefully Frs Uzukwu and Kerkhofs S.J. will also be animators.

News items

Decisions of the General Council

General Council

- Jan. 04 named Fr Adélio da CUNHA FONTE as Superior of the District of Cape Verde for three years with effect from Jan. 01, 1995

- Jan. 23 confirmed the election of Fr Hugh DAVOREN as Superior of the District of Makurdi for a second mandate of three years, with effect from Jan. 10, 1995

Change of address and telephone/Fax number

District of Puerto Rico: P Oswaldo Pérez González CSSp, Superior Principal, Congregación del Espíritu Santo, Calle Rossy apt 1, Suite 327, Bo Hato Tejas, Bayamón Pr 00959, Puerto Rico. Tel/Fax (809) 786-8231.

Bagamoyo: Fr Walter DAMEN, Superior.
Tel (255)-56-4655 (Precious Blood Sisters)
Tel/Fax (255)-56-4716 (R. C. Medical Board)

Multimedia International Award

"Multimedia International" is pleased to invite nominations for the 1995 International Award for outstanding contribution to Religious Communications. There is no restriction on the type of media presentation which may be submitted for the Award: radio tapes, books, videos, scripts, posters - anything which represents a creative use of the media. The reward is open to any religious in any part of the world who belongs to a Congregation which is a member of Multimedia International.

In 1994, the best single in the video section was won by Sr Ana Elidia Cafer Neves SSpS working in Brazil in the ministry of evangelisation through the media. The award in the printing section was won by Fr Séan O'Mahony SMA, Nigeria for his publication, *Bible Stories for African Homes*. Our confrere, J. Lambrecht, Senegal won the award in the Audio Visual Section in 1993. The deadline for receiving nominations for the 1995 Award is May 31, 1995 and for submitting materials is Oct. 15, 1995.

For further information please contact Mi-Award, C/O Multimedia International, Via Aurelia 290, 00165 Roma: Tel/Fax (06) 6371 364.

Our Jubilarians

70 years of Profession

24 Aug. : Fr James F. GILTINAN Ireland
08 Sept. : Fr Alexis RIAUD France
14 Sept. : Fr John A. STRMISKA USA/West
08 Dec. : Br Herman J STICKELMANN Germany

Our Dead

27 Jan. : Fr Robert STANLEY Ireland, 82 yrs
30 Jan. : Fr Jean POUGET France, 69 yrs
03 Feb. : Fr James GRIFFIN Ireland, 77 yrs
04 Feb. : Fr Karl KUNZ Germany, 84 yrs
04 Feb. : Fr James BROWNE Ireland, 69 yrs
07 Feb. : Br Raymond MARTIN France, 80 yrs
09 Feb. : Fr Stephen SMOLAREK Poland, 71 yrs
10 Feb. : Br Louis MORVAN France, 66 yrs