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5-2-1995

### Supplement to Spiritan News, No.108

Congregazione dello Spirito Santo

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#### Repository Citation

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# Enlarged General Council 1995

Supplement to Spiritan News No. 108

## Senegal celebrates the 150 Anniversary of the arrival of Fr Libermann's Missionaries

***You must never give up the Ministry of the Holy Gospel. The people must never see us as political agents of the French government. Let them see you as priests of the Most High and preachers of truth.***

***You know that Mgr Barron has resigned from the Mission to Guinea and the Holy See has given the responsibility to us. We are going to appoint one of our own men as Prefect around October, I hope. I shall never abandon Guinea unless it cannot be avoided.*** Letter of Fr Libermann to Fr Bessieux of May 4, 1845.

As the year 1845 dawned the Mission to Liberia for Fr Libermann had been a complete failure. When he turned his attention to finding a more healthy climate for his missionaries, he was unaware that Fr Bessieux and Br Gregoire were still alive in Gabon. He did not get this news until April.

The missionaries of the Immaculate Heart were not Senegal's first contact with Christianity. As far back as 1570, the first Wolof priest, Fr Joao Pinto was ordained. The Jesuit, Father Balthasar Barreira who had worked in Angola, Congo and Sierra Leone, spent five years exploring along the Senegal river. The first Holy Ghost Father to arrive in Africa, Fr Deglicourt, was Prefect Apostolic of St Louis from 1779-1781. The Sisters of St Joseph came in 1819 to take charge of the hospital in St Louis and Mother Javouhey visited in 1822. In 1840, three priests, Frs Boilat, Moussa and Fridoil, natives of St Louis who had been sent to France for their studies by Mother Javouhey, returned home. They were important helpers of Mgr Kobès in moving into the interior. It is fitting that I should mention other Senegalese priests who were the indefatigable co-workers of the early Spiritans, Frs Santa Maria, Lacombe, Jouga. Frs Sene and Stock were ordained in 1869 to be joined later by Fr Diof.



150 years on...missionaries looking towards Gorée



Encouraged by the Nuncio in Paris and Mother Javouhey, Fr Libermann intended to concentrate his forces on Gorée Island. Problems immediately arose due to misunderstandings. Gorée was already under the prefecture of St Louis and the relationship between the Holy Ghost Fathers and the diocesan clergy was not clarified.

In order to avoid further embarrassment and on the advice of the Prefect of Senegal, Fr Libermann's missionaries decided to move to Dakar Peninsula. A tract of three hectares of land was bought on the site where the present town hall stands and so the Church in Dakar was born. It had the advantage that they would not be under the French Government and not subject to the Vicar Apostolic of Senegal. Fr Eugene Tisserant was appointed Prefect Apostolic of the two Guineas in October 1845. He never took up the post as he died in a shipwreck off the coast of Morocco on Dec. 7, 1845. His successor Mgr Truffet, arrived in March 1847. He died in November of the same year. In 1920, Senegal suffered another tragedy. Mgr Jalabert was drowned together with fifteen priests in the shipwreck of the *Afriqué*.

From those difficult beginnings the Church in Senegal has grown to what it is today. There are six dioceses, all governed by native bishops, among whom is our confrere, Mgr Sagna, in the historic See of St Louis. Although the country is predominantly muslim, the catholics number 600,000. There are approximately 180 local clergy, 200 Sisters and 40 brothers.

Among the confreres born in Senegal, there is one bishop, 4 priests, 2 students in Theology, 4 in Philosophy, 5 in the Novitiate and 2 in the Postulancy.

Sainte-Marie de Gambie was opened from Dakar in January 1849; Bula in Guinea Bissau in 1933 and Atar in Mauritania in 1950.

<b>Senegal</b>	
Area . . . . .	196,722 Km Sq.
Population . . . . .	8.5 Millions
Population under 15yrs . . . . .	45%
Average annual increase . . . . .	3%
Life expectancy . . . . .	49 yrs
Literacy . . . . .	40%
Religion: Muslim . . . . .	90%
Catholic . . . . .	6%
Traditional . . . . .	3%
Foreign debt . . . . .	\$3.5 Milliards
GNP . . . . .	\$6 Milliards

### A word of thanks to Senegal

The holding of the EGC in Senegal was a "significant experience" for all of us. Our confreres in Senegal did everything to facilitate the success of the meeting. Everything was done to make our stay fruitful and happy. Organised visits to places of special interest to Spiritans - Gorée, Popoungue and Fadiouth, not forgetting our visits to the different parishes in Dakar itself - served to broaden our interest. In sharing meals with the Sagna family and the Christian Community, we experienced the warmth of the Senegalese people.



*Postulants Dakar: Clement Malou, Blaise Mounguengui Mouanga and Thomas Diouf. The postulancy building is in the background.*

### The first Senegambian Spiritan

Fr Jean Ba Lacombe, son of a Senegalese mother and French father was born in Banjul, Gambia on Oct. 28, 1829. He was reared in Gorée where his father lived. Having completed his secondary studies in St Louis, he went to France on a government scholarship to continue his studies. He entered the Holy Ghost Seminary on October 1, 1848 just after Fr Libermann had taken charge. A strong relationship developed between the two men and Fr Lacombe retained pleasant memories of this for the rest of his life. He returned to Senegal in 1852 and was ordained priest by Mgr Kobès on Nov. 5, 1852. In 1856 he returned to France for his Novitiate and was professed on Dec. 20, 1857.

On his return, he worked in Gorée. In 1865, he was appointed to Banjul. He is remembered there for his work during the yellow fever epidemic in 1866 and the cholera epidemic in 1869 during which 2000 people died.

From 1876 to his death in 1900 he continued pastoral work in Casamance, Sedhiou, Carabane, Ziguinchor and Brombrone.

Apart from the example of his life and commitment to the apostolate, that which contributed most to the success of his apostolate among the people was his perfect knowledge of the Wolof language.

### Special events

#### Visit of Cardinal Thiandoum

His Eminence, Cardinal Thiandoum honoured the EGC by speaking to the Assembly on the evening of May 11. His Eminence has a long and happy relationship with the Spiritans. He parents gave him the name Hyacinthe, at his baptism, to commemorate Mgr Hyacinthe Jalabert who had perished at sea. He is proud to say that he is a spiritual son of Libermann. He spoke appreciatively of the work done by Spiritans in developing the local language - translations, grammars and dictionaries.



*Fr Veira, Cardinal Thiandoum and Fr Schouver*

Fortunately relations with Muslims are very good and the Cardinal himself is a keen ecumenist. Nevertheless, according to him, the most serious problems facing the country are the growth of Islamic fundamentalism and unemployment among the youth.

**Visits to Gorée and the Anniversary Mass** have been described in the Newsletter of May 13.



*The slave house, Gorée. L-R: Frs Miranda, Devine, Skinnader, White, Schouver, the Mayor of the Town, Frs Vieira and Hurley.*

### Trip to Poponguine, Fadiouth and Ngasobil Sunday, May 21



*The Basilica, Poponguine with Fr Fogarty in foreground*

Early in the morning we set out on a trip of about 300 Km. Our first stop was at the Shrine to our Lady *Notre Dame de la Délivrante*, **Poponguine**. When Mgr Duboin was transferred from Martinique in 1876, he wished to consecrate the evangelisation of Senegal to the Virgin Mary by building a Church in her honour. The Church became a National Shrine.

When Pope John II visited the Church in 1992 he honoured it by elevating it to the status of a Minor Basilica.

Our second stop was **Fadiouth** which was opened by Fr Diop, a young Senegalese priest who was ordained in 1879. The island which is entered by a wooden foot-bridge is still today 85% catholic and the cradle of many vocations to both the priesthood and religious life. It is also the birthplace of two bishops, Mgr Jacques Sarr of Thiès and Theodore-Adrien Sarr of Kaolack.

Our third stop, **Ngasobil**, was the residence of Mgr Kobès. On a large farm of 3000 hectares, he established workshops and a printing press. The first printed edition of Fr Libermann's commentary on the Gospel of St John was made here in 1872. We visited and prayed in the graveyard where many of our deceased missionaries, sisters and priests await the resurrection. Another encouraging and emotional experience.



*Remembering in prayer our predecessors in cemetery, Ngasobil: L-R:Frs Fradet, Odigbo, Mr Osei-Yaw, Frs Onwuemelie, Doran, Miranda, O'Grady.*

**Invitation to a meal organised by friends of Spiritans** on Saturday evening May 13. It was a most pleasant evening in a friendly atmosphere. It was another example of Senegalese hospitality where nothing was left to chance in making us feel at home.

### Visit to the small Christian Community, Friday evening, May 19, 1945.

This was a meeting with a small group of christians in a rural village about 25 kilometres outside Dakar. It was an evening with the ordinary citizens of the catholic community. The highlight of the evening was a meal shared in a true family spirit.

## News Items

### General Council Decisions

#### General Council

- April 3, named Fr Jean-Claude PARIAT as **Coordinator of the International History Research Group**, at the service of the Generalate, for three years with effect from Sept. 15, 1995.

- April 3, named Fr John SKINNADER as **Coordinator of Justice and Peace Services** at the Generalate, for a second mandate of three years as from Sept. 1, 1995.

- April 4, made the following first Appointments

Joseph SHIO (EA)	East Africa
Josaphat KILAWILA (EA)	East Africa
Gervase TARATARA (EA)	East Africa
Joseph MASHAKA TRIPHON (EA)	France
Angelino TCHIVANJA (AN)	Angola
Jeremias Alberto PRAIA (AN)	Angola
Richard EZENWANNE (NG)	Guiana
Joachim NJOKU (NG)	Guiana
Joseph NNADI (NG)	South Africa
Ugene OGUAMANAM (NG)	South Africa
Joseph OGI (NG)	Zimbabwe
Reginald ASAM (NG)	Zimbabwe
Charles EBELEBE (NG)	Ethiopia/Sidamo
Reginald ANYAEZE (NG)	Ethiopia/Sidamo
Bernard ASHIPU (NG)	Kogi
Peter NWANOWANYE (NG)	Nigeria
Paul NWANERI (NG)	Nigeria
Jude NWACHUKWU (NG)	Nigeria
Marc TYRANT (FR)	Pakistan

- April 5, transferred Fr Bernard DUCHENE from the French Seminary to the Province of Angola with effect from July 1, 1995.

- April 11, decided to invite 15 members to an international financial committee meeting in March 1996. The agenda will follow the lines given in Itaici 35.8. There will be eight representatives from Africa, two from the 5 Provinces of North America, three from the European Provinces, one representing the circumscriptions of Brazil and Paraguay and one representing Mexico, Puerto Rico and Haiti.

## Congratulations

### Fr Patrick Wallis: Doyen of all Spiritans

Fr Pat celebrates his hundredth birthday on August 19, 1995. He will be the first Spiritan to reach the century. The previous record was held by Br Cantius Szurszewski of USA/E who died in Jan. 1990 just six months short of the hundred.

Fr Pat was born on Aug. 19, 1895 in County Cork, Ireland. He was professed in 1914 and ordained in 1923. Archbishop Mannix, former President of Maynooth College and former Archbishop of Melbourne was his uncle.

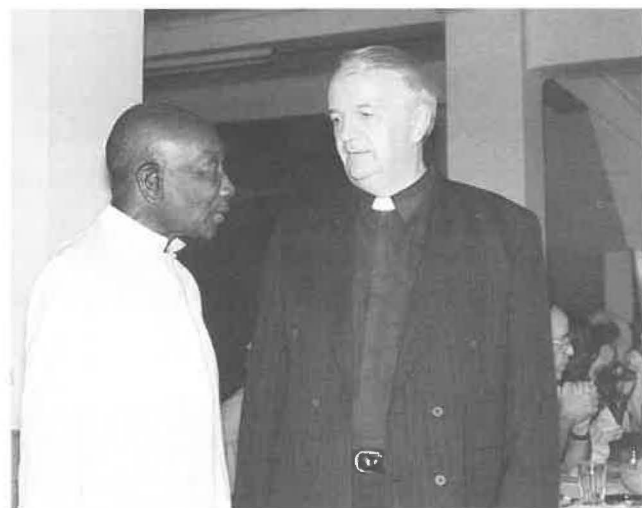
After ordination in 1924 Fr Pat spent fifty five years in East Africa. His first appointment was to Morogoro where he started the Teachers' Training College. He moved to Kenya where he was Vicar General of Zanzibar and at a later date of Nairobi Diocese. For a time, he was Superior of St Mary's Community. He retired to Ireland in 1979. We wish him a happy birthday on Aug. 19.

### Fr Alexandre Ndiaye: Doyen of African Spiritans

Fr Alexandre Ndiaye is now in his 90th year. He was born in St Louis on Jan. 1, 1906, the younger of two brothers. Sadly

his elder brother died at the age of 33. His father was captain of a boat on the Dakar-Kaolack line. It was on one of those trips that his father died in Kaolack.

Alexandre did primary and secondary schooling in St Louis. He remembers the cinema shows organised by Fr Brottier in his home town. After two years in secondary school, he joined a printing company as an artist. This was followed by military service for 18 months. He went to Paris for his Novitiate in 1929 and was professed the following year. Fr Ndiaye returned to Dakar and was the first priest to be ordained in the Cathedral on Feb. 9, 1936.



Fr Ndiaye and Fr Schouwer after the anniversary Mass

When asked what were his views on his life's journey he simply replied: "When one reaches this age, it is satisfaction and fulfillment. We have much to thank God for: the number of priests is increasing, the faithful are more numerous. Christ is better known".

We congratulate Fr Ndiaye: we hope that Spiritan News will have the honour of congratulating him again in 2006.

## Our Dead

29 Mar.	:Fr Mathias M. KEUNEN. . . . .	Neth/lands, 66 yrs
29 Mar.	:Fr Albert KIM . . . . .	France, 79 yrs
29 Mar.	:Fr Jean-Bapt. SCHOEFFEL . . . . .	France, 83 yrs
03 Apr.	:Fr E. VAN CROONENBURG . . . . .	Neth/lands, 86 yrs
13 Apr.	:Fr Horst SCHIER . . . . .	Germany, 57 yrs
16 Apr.	:Fr Norman LORD . . . . .	USA/W, 76 yrs
17 Apr.	:Fr José ALVES . . . . .	Portugal, 72 yrs
29 Apr.	:Fr John R. MARX . . . . .	USA/E, 95 yrs
03 May	:Fr Gerard P. LEECH . . . . .	USA/Irish, 58 yrs
05 May	:Fr Henry NICOLAY . . . . .	France, 75 yrs
05 May	:Fr Piet VAN DER HEIJDEN . . . . .	Neth/lands, 70 yrs
06 May	:Br Privat M. MOLINIER . . . . .	France, 78 yrs
10 May	:Fr Yves SALAUN . . . . .	France, 77 yrs
15 May	:Fr André EUZEN . . . . .	France, 67 yrs
19 May	:Fr Paul CUNNINGHAM . . . . .	Ireland, 77 yrs
23 May	:Br Firmin HENRY . . . . .	France, 77 yrs
30 May	:Fr Martinus AARTS . . . . .	Neth/lands, 84 yrs