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SPIRITAN NEWS

March/April 1998

N° 121

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

LIBERMANN CENTRE : SAVERNE

"Fr Libermann has revealed and made known a doctrine of peace which is predestined to be proclaimed to worried souls and to a world in anguish. He is the providential healer for our century which is losing hope". (Fr Pierre Blanchard: Specialist on Fr Libermann).

"The thought and the spiritual doctrine of Fr Libermann have been a great help to me" (L. Senghor, Former President of Senegal).

The Spiritan House of Saint-Florent in Saverne will celebrate its centenary in the year 2000. It has recently changed its orientation from an apostolic school to a Centre for Libermann Studies. Fr Robert Metzger, the Director, gives the following account.

"The Provincial Chapter of France in 1994 decided to make Saint-Florent in Saverne, the birthplace of Fr Libermann, a *significant and meaningful centre* for Libermann Studies. A whole building has been restructured. It has a conference hall, an exhibition hall, accommodation for visitors and a full time Director has been appointed.

A Centre for Libermann Studies

One of the aims of the Centre is to keep alive and to cultivate the memory of Francis Libermann, to keep it vibrant and make it known to a wider public. The objective of the permanent exhibition which is established there is to make Libermann, the man and his work, known to our friends and visitors. There is, in addition, a museum of African art which is an introduction to Africa, and the Congregation. There are also items of a general interest on view.

The exhibition will be a basis for the Libermann exhibition, in the Saverne museum, planned for Spring 2000.

A Documentation Centre

The Documentation Centre aims to have, in one place, as many works as possible, both on Father Libermann and on the Congregation.

A Sentient Base for Spiritans

It is a *significant place* for the members of the Congregation because it is a locus where Spiritans are welcomed for

retreats and meetings. Spiritans on First Appointments met there in May 1997, a German Spiritan Fraternity met in August and the European Spiritan Formators held their annual meeting there in November.

A Place of Reflection for Christians

The Centre is a *significant place* for the Christians of Saverne and even for some further afield. In fact, the Centre welcomes many different interest groups for daily sessions and periods of recollections. This is not altogether a new departure. Saint-Florent has been doing this since the junior seminary closed in 1973. Dozens of groups, — religious, youth, pastoral councils, priests and fraternities, Aid to the Church in Need, Catechists, Legion of Mary and Scouts, etc — have been welcomed over the years.

What is new are the types of retreats and reflections which are available here.

Since 1996, reflection periods of one day each month are organised on topics such as the Holy Spirit, Easter, Mary, Saint Thérèse, Hope. In March 1997, there was a six day retreat on the topic *"True life in God according to Libermann"*. This retreat was repeated in March 1998.

The Centre has begun an outreach programme. Team members have been invited to preach retreats and recollections in places not related to the Centre. These retreats are not limited to communities of Religious. One member of the team gives a talk on the Holy Spirit every Wednesday during Lent in the parish of Saverne".



The Libermann Centre, Saverne

The General Chapter : 1998

The following have been elected delegates to the Chapter:

Fr Oscar NGOY Congo Kinshasa
Fr René TABARD Congo Brazzaville
Fr John McFADDEN Makurdi
Fr Donald NESTI USA/West
Fr Gabriel LUSENI WAF

All delegates to the General Chapter have now been elected.

The following Lay Associates have been invited to the General Chapter and have accepted:

Mrs Maureen SOARES England
D. M. Lúcia MAGALHÃES, Brazil (P/to Rico)

The following Delegates have been invited to present themes at the General Chapter.

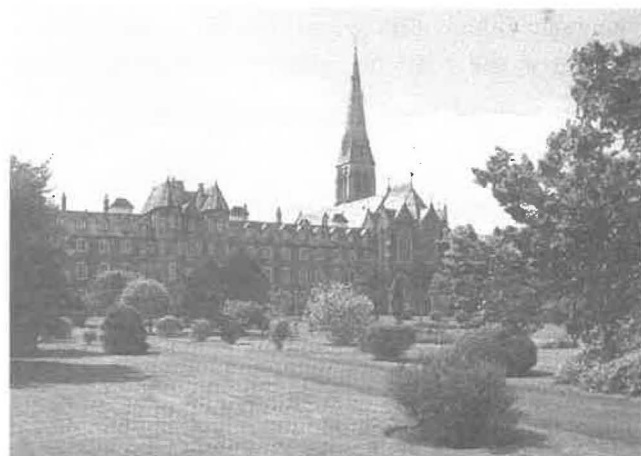
Fr Philip MASSAWE EAP
Fr Anthony AMADI Zimbabwe
Fr Chris PROMIS USA/E
Fr Peter OSUJI Ethiopia
Fr Gérard MEYER Senegal
Fr Emmanuel MEAUDRE Bangui
Fr Gérard SIREAU Cameroon
Fr Jean-Paul HOCH France
Fr John KILCRANN Brazil
Fr Benoît DIEMÉ FAC
Br Javier BLANCO Paraguay
Fr Antonio JANSEN Brazil
Fr Peter WARD England
Fr Konrad BREIDENBACH Germany
Fr Brendan HALLY Ireland
Fr Gabriel LUSENI WAF

Where the Chapter will take place

St Patrick's College is 24 Kms outside Dublin. The present College dates from 1795 and was founded to educate Catholic Seminarians with a view to withdrawing them from seminaries on the Continent. The government of the time feared that Irish seminarians studying in Europe might imbibe the revolutionary principles expounded by the French Revolution.

The first professors were mainly from France. The language of the dining room was French. To assert their identity, Irish members of staff spoke Irish.

From its inception, the college accepted lay students but this was suppressed by the Government in 1817. Maynooth again opened its doors to lay students in 1966.



Maynooth College

NEWS FROM THE CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS

Gambia : First Spiritan Ordination

Fr Gabriel Mendy, CSSp., was ordained to the priesthood at Lamin, his home town, by Bishop Michael Cleary CSSp. on the morning of 15 November 1997. Three deacons of the Diocese of Banjul were ordained to the priesthood with him. An outside altar had been constructed together with covered areas for the big number of people attending. All seven diocesan priests concelebrated as well as visiting priests from Senegal. Fr Robert Ellison, Superior of the District, and all the Holy Ghost Fathers in The Gambia concelebrated, together with Frs John Kwofie, WAF and John Fogarty, Ireland, who came for the occasion. Virtually every religious Sister and Brother in the country attended. The Government of The Gambia was also represented.

During the ceremony, each deacon was brought forward and presented for ordination by his family. During the Litany of the Saints, the respective families covered each prostrate deacon with a full-length cloth. The importance of the day can be assessed by recalling that the Holy Ghost

Congregation is in The Gambia just over 150 years. Fr Libermann mentions the mission by name and was anxious to recruit English-speaking missionaries for it. Fr Jean Ba Lacombe, born in Banjul in 1829 and ordained in 1852, was professed into the Congregation in 1856. Banjul, at the time



Mgr Michael Cleary CSSp., ordaining Fr Gabriel Mendy CSSp.

was part of Senegambia and it seems that Fr Ba Lacombe was more Senegalese than Gambian. It follows that Fr Mendy is really the first Gambian of the soil to become a priest in the Congregation. Four of his fellow-countrymen are in formation.

There are now ten diocesan priests in The Gambia. There are also nine Irish Holy Ghost Fathers, including the bishop, three Fathers and one Brother from WAF, three Nigerian diocesan priests from St. Paul Missionary Society, and this year, there is one student from EAP and one from WAF.

Libreville Assembly

The Superiors of Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Central Africa, Gabon and Senegal, met with the Council of FAC (Foundation of Central Africa) in Libreville from 06 to 08 January 1998. Fr Jean-Michel Jolibois represented the General Council. This meeting was scheduled for Brazzaville but because of the war, it was transferred to Libreville. The main topic on the agenda was to continue the reflection on the future of the Districts involved with FAC. Fr Gabriel Myotte-Duquet, gives the following account:

"The three Districts have already opted to become a Province when the time is opportune. Without prejudice to the prerogatives of the General Council, all welcome this development as the normal evolution of what began twenty years ago. They are very aware that its success depends on how they prepare for it.

Commissions have already been set up to initiate reflection on the topics on which the First Chapter of the province must take decisions, e.g.

- * *the system of government and the animation of the future province,*
- * *sources of finance and solidarity: formation absorbs more than three quarters of the budget,*
- * *discernment and formation — its content, objectives, duration and place,*
- * *welcoming young confreres on pastoral training and on first appointment,*
- * *works in which the new province will be involved,*
- * *religious life and community projects.*

Francophone West Africa (Senegal, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau and Mauritania) will not be part of the Province but will form a separate foundation".

N/American/Caribbean Superiors' Meeting

The meeting of North American and Caribbean Major Superiors took place in Bethel Park, Feb. 01 - 05, 1998. Libermann Day, Feb. 02, was a day of recollection. Fr Vince Donovan gave three stimulating lectures on the Holy Spirit with the accent on the unpredictable.

Fr Pierre Schouwer was principal celebrant at the late afternoon Eucharist at Duquesne University Chapel. After the Mass, the President, Dr. Murray, conferred an honorary doctorate on Fr Schouwer. It was an acknowledgement of

his intellectual standing, a recognition of the influence of his words and writing, as well as an occasion to celebrate the Spiritan commitment to education at university level.



Fr Schouwer with Dr Murray, President, Duquesne, after the conferring ceremony

The next day the Superiors' meeting resumed at Bethel Park.

The following points were raised in the discussion:

Community Life

- * Is a strong witness in a world of individualism,
- * Saves us from a life of idiosyncrasy and personal foible,
- * Without community, Spiritans cannot be missionaries,
- * International community is an impressive sign,
- * No new Rules are required to live our Community Life. All that is needed is implementation of SRL, especially Chapter 3.

Our Spiritan presence in US today

The discussion took as its point of departure a recent exchange of letters on the subject between Chris Promis and the Generalate. Progress is being made but problems still occur which are not confined to the arrival of members of any single circumscription.

Forthcoming General Chapter

A proposal will be presented to the Chapter that in future, the Councils of circumscriptions put forward, in advance, names of possible General Councillors.

The pros and cons of lengthening the mandate of the Superior General were well aired.

Regional Projects

- * The second renewal programme will take place in Trinidad during two weeks within the period mid-July to mid-August 1999.
- * The Superiors of Puerto Rico, Haiti, Mexico and Trinidad met separately to discuss the new initiative in the Dominican Republic which will hopefully begin in 2000.
- * A decision was taken to appoint a co-ordinator of the regional meetings.

The next meeting of the Superiors will take place in New York in April 1999.

News Items

Decisions of General Council

On 05 Feb. 1998 confirmed the election of Fr James DEVINE as Principal Superior of the District of Southern Africa for a 2nd mandate of 3 years with effect from 05 Feb. 1998.

On 12 Feb. 1998 confirmed the election of Fr John Kwofie as Superior of the West African Foundation (WAF) for a 2nd mandate of 3 years from 01 May 1998.

Our Oldest Confrere

Since the death of Br Leufroi in his ninety eighth year, the honour of being our oldest confrere falls to Br Pierre Le TIEC who was born on 22 December 1901 in St Pierre, one of the islands of St Pierre and Miquelon. Having completed his primary education, he qualified as a mason and was then considered the best on the island. He did his Novitiate in Chevilly and was professed in September 1934. From 1936 began what can be described as a "tour de France" of the houses in the Province. He spent some time in almost every house of the Province.



Br Pierre

"Sometimes I just don't know to where I've been appointed" he said "because I've been on the move always from one house to another to do some building and repairs".

In 1974 aged 72, he began his retirement in Langonnet but he did not stop climbing on to roofs until he reached 90. Should you ever have the chance to visit L'Abbaye de Langonnet between 13:00 hrs and 17:00 hrs, you will not find him in his room because he is either in his workshop or chopping wood. With his handbarrow, he provides wood for the workshops of his confreres.

Change of Address : Brussels

Congrégation du Saint-Esprit,

(Missionnaires Spiritains)

Communauté Daniel Brottier

Secrétariat Permanent des Provinciaux Spiritains d'Europe

Centre Spiritain Européen pour la Coopération
et le Développement

Rue des Drapiers 22, B - 1050 BRUXELLES

Tel: Community.. (32) (0) 2/289.14.64

..... Secretariate .. (32) (0) 2/289.14.60

..... C.S.E.C.D (32) (0) 2/289.14.61

FAX..... (32) (0) 2/289.14.69

E-Mail csecd@infonie.be

Change of date of European Meetings:

BursarsApril 26 - 30 Netherlands

Reviews.....June 15 - 19 England

Beatification

Fr Cyprian Michael Iwene Tansi O.C.S.C was beatified by His Holiness, Pope John Paul 11, in Onitsha, Nigeria on Sunday 22nd of March 1998.

He was born at Aguleri, Anambra, Nigeria in 1903. He entered St Joseph's school, Aguleri where he was baptised in January 1912 and was ordained by Archbishop Heerey in December 1937. He joined the Cistercian Abbey of Mount St Bernard, Leicestershire, England in 1950 where he died on 20 January 1964. He was the first Nigerian and the first Nigerian Cistercian to be beatified.



Blessed Fr Tansi

Members of our Congregation have been closely connected with Father Tansi and we rejoice with the people of Nigeria. He was confirmed by Bishop Shanahan who approved his entry to the Seminary. He did his probation year in Eke with Fr Brosnahan who later became Archbishop of Freetown, Sierra Leone. Archbishop Heerey ordained him and later gave him his approval to join the Cistercians.

Publications by Spiritans

A Priest in Changing Times: Fr Michael O'Carroll: 200pp, Columba Press, Dublin 1998.

My Prayer rises with the Sun: Lectio Divina with the psalms: Michel de Verteuil: 64 pp, Dublin 1998.

No hands but yours: Work with Refugees: Fr Kevin Doherty, Veritas, 1997.

Life Duet: Intermittent Poems: Fr Gerard Gogan.

Le Mystère Libermann: Lucien Laverdière: Centre de Documentation, Montréal.

Our Dead

Jan. 26 Fr Myles KENNY Ireland, 74 yrs

Jan. 30 Fr Eugène GAUTHIER France, 78 yrs

Feb. 08 Fr Frans LEFEVRE..... Belgium, 85 yrs

Feb. 16 Br Paulo COELHO Portugal, 75 yrs

Feb. 18 Fr Cristóvão Freire ARNAUD Brazil, 80 yrs

Feb. 21 Fr Cornelius de VOSNetherlands, 75 yrs

Feb. 24 Fr Joseph BRACQUEMOND France, 58 yrs

Feb. 25 Fr Francois RAEMYSwitzerland, 83 yrs

Mar. 02 Fr Joseph F. RENGERS USA/E, 84 yrs

Mar. 03 Fr Antoine VERHEIJENNetherlands, 84 yrs

Mar. 08 Fr Marcel BATARD France, 73 yrs

Mar. 17 Fr Alois ABELGermany, 88 yrs

Mar. 20 Br Ludger HEIDBUCHER.....Germany, 69 yrs

Mar. 22 Fr Benjamin IKEGWUONUNigeria, 62 yrs

Mar. 23 Fr François Le BOURHIS.....France, 86 yrs