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SPIRITAN NEWS

September/October 1999

N° 128

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

NEWS FROM CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS

THE SPIRITANS IN THE USA

This 1999 summer there were several ordinations to the priesthood of some of our young Spiritan confreres in a number of circumscriptions. In the USA-E there were two ordinations; Paul Flamm on 26th June in Chicago and Timothy Hickey on 14th August at Duquesne. Fr Henry Koren gives a brief account of the beginnings, challenges and current situation of the Spiritan presence in the USA.

The first Spiritan on record to arrive in North America was Fr Pierre Maillard, who was jailed when he arrived in Boston in 1745. After him, other Spiritans worked in hiding. But when the USA declared its independence, religious persecution ceased. Around 1793 several Spiritan refugees from the French Revolution went to the USA. The last of them died in 1839. In 1847 the Holy See allowed the Spiritans to send priests to the USA and a few did go, but it took till 1872 before the Congregation established itself corporately in the USA. It found a warm welcome in Pittsburgh. The mandate of the Generalate was threefold: 1) pastoral care among immigrants, 2) missions among Blacks, and 3) formation houses for American candidates.

Fr Joseph Strub, who was charged with the mandate's execution, opened a junior seminary and college at Pittsburgh in 1878. It grew and prospered to become Duquesne University in 1911. Other formation houses were built at Cornwells Heights, PA, two in Connecticut, and much later two in Michigan and three in the West. Spiritans also staffed several high schools, where they expected to also find vocations. Ethnic parishes for immigrants began to be opened from 1874 on, and by 1950, fifty such parishes were staffed by the Fathers. Many of these parishes gave birth to religious vocations.

Starting missions among Blacks proved difficult. Racial prejudice was still strong, and in the 1870s there were no Catholic missions for them. It took until 1888 before a beginning was made in Pittsburgh, followed in 1889 by great success in Philadelphia. Meanwhile Spiritans had also accepted in 1893 to serve as chaplains to the schools the Drexel-Morrells had opened in Virginia for Black boys and girls. The Fathers worked there until 1929, but returned in 1947 to staff also the boys' school. Numerous lasting conversions occurred at both schools, averaging about 45 a year.

By 1911 the Fathers opened the first Black parish in Michigan at Detroit, followed by one in Harlem NY in 1912. Meanwhile their attention had also been turned to the Deep South, where racial prejudices were profound. Blacks in Louisiana were baptized Catholics but many were leaving the Church because they were barely tolerated in its parishes. The bishops in Louisiana did nothing until the Holy See appointed two who favoured parishes for Blacks. And so our Provincial Eugene Phelan opened 11 parishes for them in Louisiana from 1911-1915. Fr Joseph Schmody became the great pioneer of these Southern missions. Others followed in 8 of the states: 26 between 1939 and 1954. In all, some fifty parishes were opened, most of them with a string of missions attached to them. Several parishes had highly-rated teachers training schools, for the Fathers took great care to see to it that the children

received a good education. They also fostered the people's material welfare by getting electricity, paved roads, sewers and decent housing wherever possible.

In addition, the province then had 81 members working overseas in East Africa and Puerto Rico, where their labour would result in the creation of several dioceses. Its overseas involvement had started as early as 1896 when Fr John Walsh went to Sierra Leone, and died there soon after. Several others followed. They too either died young or were forced to leave by illness; and Bishop Le Roy, then Superior General, advised the Provincial to concentrate on that "other Africa" within the USA. So it took until 1930 before the Province took up missionary work in Puerto Rico. From 1919 on, the Province had asked the Generalate to assign to it a territory in Africa under an American bishop. In 1923 it sent out five men. It was the first time in history that such a large contingent of Catholic missionaries went to Africa and the event got great publicity. But they had been assigned to different territories; It took until 1932 before Kilimanjaro was entrusted to the Province. It became one of the best missions of the Congregation.

States in the USA with Spiritan presence

Massachusetts	Alaska	West Virginia	Louisiana
Rhode Island	Washington	Ohio	Iowa
New York	California	Kentucky	Kansas
Connecticut	Arizona	North Carolina	
Pennsylvania	Colorado	South Carolina	
New Jersey	Texas	Wisconsin	
District of Columbia		Illinois	
Oklahoma		Alabama	
Virginia	Arkansas	Florida	
		Puerto Rico	

In the 1960s it began to be evident that the old world order of the West was due for a rapid change. In the USA the descendants of ethnic immigrants were rapidly becoming fully Americanized. As the inner cores of cities where they lived became slum-like, their people moved to the suburbs and kept only sentimental attachments to their old churches. So the Spiritans gradually gave up most of these parishes. As to the African-American parishes, bishops began to realize that taking care of them really was part of their ordinary pastoral task. Consequently, they requested or even demanded that they be returned to the diocese. Others ceased to exist through slum clearing and through integration with formerly White parishes. The shortage of vocations in the western world was also a contributing factor in handing over parishes to the dioceses.

At present there are about 230 professed members of the Congregation in the USA of whom some 40 belong to Irish groups, and 20 have come to Duquesne University for studies. Recently two men were ordained, Fathers Paul Flamm in Chicago and Timothy Hickey at Duquesne. Their



The two newly ordained priests. From L to R: Rev. Paul Flamm, Most Rev. Dennis Durning and Rev. Timothy Hickey

appointments sent them back to the places where they had their first missionary experience: Paul to work among refugees in East Africa and Tim to Puerto Rico.

Assembly of Irish Confreres Ordained/Professed 25 years and under

A Long-standing dream of the Provincial Team finally came to fruition in Dublin City University (DCU) from 5th to 16th July, 1999. Nearly 70 Spiritans of this group gathered with the Provincial Team to begin a two week reflection on where we are today. Expectations were expressed with the overall views merging into a few important themes which guided us through the Assembly: where each one is at in his personal journey; what are the issues, personal and Spiritan, which need to be looked at; what does Spiritan living mean today in a Congregation which is becoming more and more international; how do we relate more to, and more fully "own", the Irish Province. In brief, how can we be at peace with our reality.

The Assembly was characterised by a great openness to, and acceptance of each other throughout. The level of trust inspired confidence for the future and provided a very good forum for each one to express himself in a setting that was understanding and sympathetic.

The weeks could be described as therapeutic in the best sense of the term. Each one came away refreshed and renewed even if very tired. The various dynamics available through the weeks enabled discussion and sharing at a deep level; in the small discussion groups; in the interest groups; within the social gatherings in the evenings; during the full Assembly and, of course, in the very fine liturgies at different points in the two weeks.

The fact that the Assembly was not a Chapter, and hence no pressure to make decisions and come to conclusions, helped enormously. Some five suggestions were eventually presented to the Provincial Team to be carried forward either by them or filtered to the Provincial Chapter 2000. There were personal suggestions for each one and proposals for the consideration of the General Council.

One of the prayers used in the opening ritual sums up the journey of the two weeks:

*"Father of Pilgrims, we gather to praise and bless you,
Your name is faithful one and your love is everlasting.
We have come to experience your love in many ways - as
life's pilgrims".*

Another part of the prayer sums up some of the outcomes of the Assembly:

*"We struggle to know our weaknesses and our strengths,
and to live our Spiritan journey in faithfulness to the gospel
and to the intuitions of Claude and Francis and all those
Spiritans who have journeyed before us and with us.
Our hope is the promise of life you give us,
As we make our Spirit-filled pilgrimage of faith,
Towards the fullness of love that is ours
On the day of Christ Jesus the Lord..."*

(From Spiritan Provincial Newsletter - Irish Province, no. 3 July 1999).

NEWS ITEMS

Second Meeting of European Spiritan Associates

The meeting took place in **Knechtsteden, Germany from 17th-20th June.**

Participants. 23 Spiritan Associates from Germany, England, Spain, France, Ireland, The Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland and 9 Professed Spiritans, along with Antonio

Farias from the Generalate and Jean-Pierre Galliard from Brussels attended the meeting.

Chapter Report. During this gathering, each Province gave a report on the status of Spiritan Associates in their country. Maureen Soares, as European Coordinator of

Spiritan Associates, gave a report on the Maynooth General Chapter, from the perspective of a lay woman.

Network of Spiritan Associates. Throughout the meeting it was clear that many Provinces have already developed a network of Spiritan Associates and there was much room for discussion and exchange of views on the profile of a Spiritan Associate.

This meeting was an opportunity for the participants to know each other better, to learn from each other, to try to discover the essence of being Spiritan and to try to identify with the Congregation through practical mission and Spiritan projects and Spiritan spirituality.

Some Highlights. The gathering coincided with the G8 Meeting in Cologne. The group joined the Jubilee 2000 Break-the-Debt Human Chain around the G8 meeting place. Just before the Human Chain formed, the world-wide Petitions for Debt Forgiveness were handed over to Gerhard Schroder, host of the G8 meeting, and it was announced that there were 17 million signatures.

... It is a journey worth making. By walking together with our associate brothers and sisters, I believe that we bring enrichment to each other. It is not our Institute that matters but the Kingdom of God. To establish it, it is worth replying positively to each sign of the times, to each initiative of the Holy Spirit. And could not the strongest sign of our times be precisely this journey undertaken with the associates?

Frans Wijnen CSSp.

Another highlight was when the group visited Notel in Cologne. A well-organised Spiritan project, run by a lay and professed Spiritan team, providing a night shelter for people with severe drug addiction.

Elections and Proposals.

A new European lay Spiritan Coordinator was elected for the next three years, Mariëlle Beusmans from The Netherlands.

Future Meetings. Participants agreed that there should be a large meeting every three years, with a small meeting in each in-

tervening year, the latter having one lay delegate from each European Province and two professed Spiritans only, namely, the representative of the European Provincials and the professed Spiritan guide for the lay people in the host Province.

The next small meeting will take place in Salford, England, from 15th – 18th June 2000. The meeting will focus on: the identity of Spiritan Associates and what unites this group; examining organizational structures; providing a forum for reflection on Spiritan spirituality.

St Austin's Mission Centenary 1899 – 1999

On Pentecost Sunday, 23rd May, St Austin's mission celebrated its centenary of the presence of the catholic church in central Kenya. 100 years ago, Fr Alain Hemery and Br Alois Blanchard, Spiritan missionaries from Alsace; started the mission work in Nairobi with their first Mass in Nairobi on 13th August 1899.

St Austin's is the mother church of all the missions in Central Kenya, an area geographically and historically separate from the coast of this Eastern African country.

Br Solanus Zipper (Alsace), who had joined the founders of St Austin's in November 1899, built the mission with the help of the "children of the mission" (a name given to the men and women and families who joined Spiritans from Bagamoyo ('Mother of all churches in East Africa', see Spiritans News no 97 of May-June 1993). These faithful christians and dedicated builders provided lively liturgies on Sundays and became an inspiration to the local people who would later be baptized and become members of the church.

From the very beginning of St Austin's and indeed of all Spiritan missions there was a drive for schools which developed into full education centres. One cannot fail to be impressed by the buildings of St Mary's school now celebrating

60 years or to notice amongst the lists of former students names like Cardinal Otunga, former Archbishop of Nairobi and Archbishop Ndingi Mwana 'a Nzeki, Archbishop of Nairobi.

It is worth mentioning that in the cemetery of St Austin's one finds the original tombs of Bishop Joseph Shanahan, 'the Apostle of Nigeria' and that of the Venerable Edel Quinn, Envoy of the Legion of Mary to Africa.

The centenary Mass, celebrated in St Mary's playing fields adjacent to St Austin's church, was presided over by the Archbishop of Nairobi, Msgr. Raphael Ndingi Mwana 'a Nzeki. Among the guests of honour at the celebrations were the Spiritan Superior General, Fr Pierre Schouwer, and the Provincial Superiors of East Africa and Ireland.

It was truly a moment of thanksgiving, for the humble beginnings had borne fruit: Thanksgiving to God for the faith which had been brought to Nairobi by Spiritan priests and brothers and which has now become a vine well planted and producing abundant fruit. The local Church has now become a missionary Church, sending men and women as missionaries to many parts of the world.

After the Mass informal celebrations of songs and dance continued for the afternoon.

A Gentle Reminder

Confreres who are the authors of books are requested to send a copy of their works to the Librarian at the Generalate. The books will be carefully catalogued and

will be available to the members of the General Council, to confreres in the General Administration and to passing visitors.

Decisions of the General Council

The General Council

- confirms the re-election of Fr Grzegorz **KOSIELSKI** as Provincial Superior of the Province of Poland, for a second mandate of three years, with effect from 11th July 1999;
- confirms the election of Fr Richard **REMOND**, as District Superior of the District of Martinique, for a mandate of three years, with effect from 1st August 1999;
- confirms the election of Fr Serge **HOGUE** as Provincial Superior of the Province of Canada, for a mandate of three years, with effect from 21st August, 1999;
- confirms the election of Fr Luke **MBEFO** as Provincial Superior of the Province of Nigeria, for a mandate of three years, with effect from 22nd August, 1999;
- confirms the election of Fr Jean-Claude **PARIAT** as Provincial Superior of the Province of Switzerland, for a mandate of three years, with effect from 1st September 1999;
- confirms the election of Fr Pierre **JUBINVILLE** as Superior of the Apostolic Group of Paraguay, for a period of three years, with effect from 15th December 1999;
- confirms the election of Fr Gijsbertus van **TOL** as Provincial Superior of the Province of Brazil, for a mandate of three years, with effect from 2nd February 2000;
- extends the mandate of Fr John **MARANDU** as Superior of the Zambia International Group for a further year to June 2000.

NOMINATION: Services at the Generalate

The General Council nominates

Fr Robert **ELLISON**, of the District of Gambia, as the General Secretary of the Congregation for a mandate of three years, with effect from 1st September 1999;

Fr José **MENDES** of the Province of Portugal, as Procurator of the Congregation to the Holy See for 3 years from 1st September 1999;

Fr Christian **de MARE**, of the Province of France as Co-ordinator at the Generalate of Spiritan History and Anniversaries for a mandate of three years, with effect from 1st September 1999;

Fr Rhéaume **SAINT-LOUIS** as Superior of the Generalate Community, for a period of three years, with effect from 1st October 1999.



Fr Robert Ellison took up duty on 1st September as Secretary General of the Congregation, succeeding Fr James Hurley. Born in Ireland in 1942 and priest in 1969, he holds B. Sc. of National University of Ireland (1965), STL of Gregorian University, Rome (1970) and Islamic Studies of PISAI (1973). He was in charge of seminarians at Kimmage before

he went to Gambia as missionary for 23 years where he was involved in parish work, formation of seminarians and the Pastoral Institute.



Fr. José Ribeiro Mendes, who has replaced Domingos Neiva as Procurator to the Holy See, was born at Sobreposta-Braga (Portugal) in 1941, professed in 1964 and ordained priest in 1969. In 1971 he was appointed to work in Angola, and from 1976-1979, he joined the missionary animation team in Portugal. After a brief period as formator, he was put in charge of the Spiritan parish S. Domingos de Rana and has remained there for the last 18 years.



Fr Christian de Mare, who has just taken over the "History and Anniversaries" portfolio from Jean-Claude Pariat, was born in Paris in 1929, professed in 1949 and ordained priests in 1954. He spent much of his life as a formator: 22 years in Senegal and Congo, 5 years in the French Seminary in Rome, 2 years at Lyons and 14 years in noviciates in France and Ireland. Having worked last year in Paris in charge of the review "*Esprit-Saint*", he has now been called to Rome to devote himself to the sources of inspiration of our Congregation.

OUR DEAD

29 Apr. :	Fr Vitorino J. Silva AMORIM	(Portugal), 72
06 May :	Mr Conrad VOISARD	(LA/Canada), 78
09 May :	Fr Gérard BOUCHER	(Canada), 91
21 May :	Fr John Seán HERRIGAN	(Ireland), 77
30 May :	Fr Armindo F. BARBOSA	(Portugal), 71
06 June :	Fr Gaston GAUTHIER	(France), 82
11 June :	Fr Antoine SCHMITT	(France), 77
15 June :	Fr Petrus van DOORN	(N/Lands), 87
15 June :	Fr Quirinus HOUDIJK	(N/Lands), 82
22 June :	Br John CURTIN	(Ireland), 83
26 June :	Fr James LEWIS	(Ireland), 73
11 July :	Fr Josephus SCHUCH	(N/Lands), 72
13 July :	Fr Theodorus ROOIJAKKERS	(N/Lands), 84
17 July :	Fr Kenneth MILFORD	(USA/W), 89
24 July :	Fr Egbert J. FIGARO	(USA/E), 73
30 July :	Fr William O'NEILL	(Ireland), 84
02 Aug. :	Fr Harold HEARD	(England), 86
08 Aug. :	Fr António RODRIGUES	(Portugal), 75
02 Aug. :	Msgr Donal MURRAY	(England), 81
18 Aug. :	Fr Jean BERNARD	(France), 74
20 Aug. :	Fr Jean DERAINE	(France), 72
04 Sept. :	Fr René HOUSSET	(France), 80
10 Sept. :	Fr Joseph O'NEILL	(England), 80
13 Sept. :	Fr Richard LEHANE	(Ireland), 80