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1-1-2000

Spiritan News, No. 130

Congregazione dello Spirito Santo

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Congregazione dello Spirito Santo. (2000). Spiritan News, No. 130. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/spiritan-news-en/137>

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SPIRITAN NEWS

January/February 2000

N° 130

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

Meeting of the European Formators Madrid: 11-17 November, 1999

The first meeting of European formators took place at Knechtsteden in 1984 and there has been one each year ever since. The most recent was at Majadahonda, a suburb of Madrid. This year, for the first time, the German representation included a delegate from Croatia. This European "foundation" is a sign of hope for a region where formation houses are not exactly bursting at the seams.

It was decided the previous year that the meeting of 1999 would only concern second cycles (hence the reduced number of participants) and that the session would include an element of on-going formation. This was led by Adrian Lopez, a Jesuit teaching at the University of Salamanca, on the subject of spiritual direction and discernment of vocation for religious students in 2nd Cycle. Despite the quasi-impossibility of treating such a vast subject in a single day, the participants nevertheless found it to be a valuable experience.

Several important themes were discussed. Even though this commission has no authority to make important decisions (that is reserved to the Provincials), it can and does make recommendations to the Provincials of Europe:

Confreres coming to European Provinces (generally from the south) for 2nd cycle studies. For this academic year they number 23 in all. The meeting sought to harmonise policies in the different provinces: delegates discussed integrating the students into the formation communities and the European scene, regulating the relations between their province of origin and the province that receives them – especially as regards admission to orders and to vows. With a few amendments, the provincials accepted the text of the formators, which itself was based on research done by the confreres from Spain and Portugal.

Confreres coming to European Provinces (generally from the south) for 3rd cycle studies. This generally concerns priests, who come to Europe, often after time spent in pastoral work, to pursue studies to become formators. Once again, the details of reception and relations with province of origin were examined, but with special emphasis on university courses and financial considerations. The motivation of the partners concerned was examined - the student, the sending province and the receiving one. The provincials also accepted this text after amendments; it was based on a submission from Christian Berton (France) and Jean-Marc Sierro (Switzerland).

The question of an international European Novitiate was

discussed. It proved to be very complex. At present, only Portugal and Poland have regular novitiates. The international novitiate of Templeogue (Ireland), which catered for all the other provinces, is presently closed, due to a lack of sufficient numbers (only one or two per year). What is to be done? If a novitiate must be done in an official "novitiate community", the few who present themselves would have to learn either Portuguese or Polish, or else travel to



From L to R: Frs C. Berton (France), J-M. Sierro (Switzerland), B. Ducrot (France), A. Owca (Croatia), J-M. Sabença (Portugal), J. Castro (Portugal), P. Delisse (Netherlands), Z. Szadura (Poland), V. Yañez (Spain), R. Kimaryo (General Councillor) and M. Wegner (Germany).

another continent. But is it possible to do a good novitiate in a language that is not well understood or in a cultural context which is radically different to one's own? On the other hand, if it is done in an ordinary Spiritan community, under the direction of a designated novice master (known as "an integrated novitiate", and practised by many other congregations), one loses the advantage of the company of other young people and a specifically designed community. The formators found the question so complex that they felt unable to reach any specific recommendations. The Provincials likewise decided to reflect on the subject during the coming year with a view to taking a possible decision on this important subject.

Other subjects treated were the calendar of common events in 2000, the recollection for those taking perpetual vows and the meeting of 2nd cycle students in Europe at Gentines. Fr Rogath Kimaryo represented the General Council at the meeting. He brought up several important questions that are on the mind of the General Council: the spirit of

Maynooth as applied to Spiritan formation, the current lack of formators in the Congregation, the time for making first appointments, and the Spiritan Year. The Formators' meeting next year will be held in Ireland.

Jean-Pierre Gaillard
European Secretary

Meeting of the Spiritan European Commission for Justice and Peace Bickley: 07-13 October, 1999

When 14 delegates representing 9 spiritan provinces in Europe met at Bickley, England, they were particularly aware of the reality of refugees and asylum seekers in their own countries and within the European Union. Each province, in its own way, has taken some action to address the problem; now it was time to come together once again to reflect on the gap between our Christian faith and the decisions being taken by European leaders regarding refugees and asylum seekers. According to UNHRC statistics of January 1999, of the total number of 12,810,800 refugees and asylum seekers, 3,244,800 are in Europe.

The delegates gave reports on the various activities undertaken in their circumscriptions. New realities were noted and examined, in particular the issues of asylum in the context of the trends in the European Union to implement common policies. Fears were expressed that any such harmonisation of policies would result in further repressive legislation, targeted at this most vulnerable group within the EU.

The delegates visited the impressive humanitarian work being done at the Refugee Arrivals Project at Heathrow

Airport, and the Oaklands Project at Honor Oak Park, for the welfare of asylum seekers in Britain. The participants were addressed by Bishop Patrick O'Donoghue, Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster, who is responsible in the Catholic Bishops Conference for immigrant issues. The bishop reminded the delegates of the centrality of images of exile and refuge in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition. Jesus himself, in the vulnerable days after his birth, was the victim of a tyrannical dictator and dependent on the hospitality of the people of Egypt. The universal Christian commandment of "*Love thy neighbour*" applies as much to the duty of welcoming the stranger as it does to others in the human community.

The delegates emphasised the need for policy-makers to give more attention to the causes behind the increased number of people seeking asylum in the last decade, rather than devoting their undoubted skills to strengthening the walls of "*Fortress Europe*" against the victims of conflicts and unscrupulous dictatorial regimes throughout the world. The most effective treatment of any symptom is to address the disease itself.

A missionary community in Rotterdam

As early as 1991, the Dutch Province had been considering inviting African confreres to join in our missionary commitments in the Netherlands. On 1st September 1999, the Province established a community of 5 members, two Nigerians and three Dutch, in the southern part of Rotterdam. In doing so the Province was responding to an invitation of the Bishop who was looking for a "missionary community" in that part of the city. Traditionally, this was the area of the docks in the world's biggest port. Recently, the docks have been moved closer to the sea and the section where the Spiritans have moved in has now one of the biggest concentrations of migrants in the city. Most of them are Turks and Moroccans, but there are also numerous Africans, mainly from the West coast and from Cape Verde, as well as people from Surinam and from the West Indies.

The pastoral situation in which we find ourselves is unusual for all five of us. The four parishes in the region are being merged into one single "sectorial parish" served by a pastoral team of 8: an SMA priest and two lay pastoral workers who were already there, and the five of us. Three of us are full time: Frs Stan Chukwube, Venantius Umunakwe and Harry Tullemans. The latter arrived straight from Uganda. Two are part time: myself, (because I am continuing with

my work at Missio Netherlands) and Leo van Kessel, who has joined us from Tanzania.

We have made it clear that ours is a missionary commitment. We want to reach out beyond the Christian communities to which we have been appointed (and which represent only a small minority of the people in the area) to the majority of the population which is now of foreign (and Muslim) origin. For this missionary commitment we will collaborate with others - priests, religious and lay people - who are working in the same area in different structures and organisations.

Little Turkey

Big apartment buildings surround the Afrikaner plein, a huge open space where an open air market takes place twice a week. In the middle of all that is to be found the Huize Maasveld, a retirement home that is about to be closed and in which we have had temporary shelter since 1st September 1999. On the wall of each apartment building there is an enormous coloured butterfly which is visible from afar. If the idea behind this was to symbolize the colourful human community living there, then it was a good choice. Once on

the Afrikaanderplein, one has left the Netherlands, or so it seems. The scene is very exotic, especially on market days. The language spoken is Turkish or Moroccan (I cannot tell one from the other!). The place is crowded with children and groups of youngsters hang around near the entrance of our provisional home. They are friendly and easy going. In the supermarket, Turkish music is constantly being played.

From time to time, an occasional Dutchman passes by! It is not without mixed feelings that we have learned that the municipality has given permission for the construction of a 50 metres-high minaret beside the Mosque, a few yards from our house. With a minaret goes a Muezzin, and to our ears that is something quite different from a church bell, especially in the very early hours of the morning. But for other ears it has, no doubt, something familiar that will make them happy. Looking at

this exotic world around us, one wonders how these enormous ghettos will ever be able to integrate into Dutch society. For the time being, we can only try to have a positive outlook and to establish the first timid contacts with what appears to be good and friendly people.

All in all it has not been a very easy start. We should not complain about our housing facilities as they are only provisional, but they are rather narrow and there are a lot of limitations. There is hardly any storage room, no possibility to receive guests, food that is good but more adapted to the needs of elderly people than to ours. From time to time one of the psychiatric patients on the floor above us gets lost and wanders into our rooms with an empty gaze. How long will it last? We still don't know.

But more difficult still is the lack of clarity and the provisional character of our position regarding the parishes. There are four parishes that are supposed to merge into one, but they are still autonomous, each with their own parish

council. Until recently, they all had their own pastor, but this has been replaced by one team of 8 for all 4 parishes. That creates confusion for the parishioners and also for us. Each parish has its own set of expectations regarding our services. And they want to know "which one is in charge of what". Three of us are full time: Harrie, Stan and Venantius. Each is specially attached to one of the parishes without

being the one "who is in charge". Their title is: "referents". Leo and I are available for services in all the four parishes, but without being "referents". The three full timers are still "scouting around", and all three find it difficult to get used to the heavy schedule of meetings (a Dutch disease). After this first period of getting to know the people and the social and ecclesial reality on the spot, we will divide the responsibilities for the various pastoral fields among ourselves, like catechesis, youth, care

for the sick, diakonia, interreligious relations and so on, and coordinators for these various fields will be designated. This has not happened yet so we still feel as though we are hanging in mid-air, and that can be rather frustrating, especially for those who are looking for clarity. On the other hand it is difficult to provide that clarity, because the structures have not yet been worked out.

Thank God, there are also more pleasant things, like the relations with the various pastoral and social services in the region, the "pastoral service for the old city centres" which is not a territorial but a categorial pastoral service, mainly for people on the margins of church and society, and the social services in the region. Then there is the apostolate of the sea, some priest-workers and a little brother of Charles de Foucault, living in the middle of the people. And then there are the contacts with the people around us.

Frans Timmermanns



Spiritan Pastoral Team at Rotterdam with the Superior General

NEWS ITEMS

Spiritan Publications

Guy Pannier, *L'Eglise de Pointe-Noire (Congo-Brazzaville), Evolution des communautés chrétiennes (1947-1975)*, Editions Karthala, Paris, 1999.

Mémoire Spiritaine N° 10, *La part des femmes dans la mission en Afrique XIX^e-XX^e siècles*, deuxième semestre 1999.

Begley Michael, *Asylum in Ireland, A Public Health Perspective*, UCD/CSSp, Dublin, 1999.

Boran George, *The Pastoral Challenges of a New Age*, Veritas, Dublin, 1999.

Lynch Flor, *Footprints On My Journey*, Costello Print, Navan, 1999.

Whelan Thomas, *Making the most of Order of Christian Funerals, contribution to the Funeral Book*, Griffin E. (Editor), Columba, Dublin, 1998.

Zbigniew Warcholic, *Marnotrawny Sen*, Bydgoszcz, 1999.

DECISIONS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The General Council

- ◆ in accordance with the SRL 245.2, elects Fr Jeronimo Cahinga, of the Province of Angola, as General Councillor of the Congregation, to replace Fr Gabriel Mbilingi, who was nominated Coadjutor Bishop of the diocese of Lwena, Angola.
- ◆ nominates Fr Jean-Yves URFIÉ Assistant General Secretary for a mandate of three years, with effect from 1st January, 2000.
- ◆ confirms the election of Fr Oscar NGOY as Superior of the Foundation of Congo-Kinshasa for a mandate of 3 years with effect from 10th January 2000.
- ◆ confirms the election of Fr Geraldo HOGERVORST as Superior of the District of Brazil Central for a second mandate of 3 years, with effect from 21st January 2000.
- ◆ confirms the election of Fr Joseph HARRIS as Provincial Superior of the Province of Trinidad for a second mandate of three years with effect from 2nd February 2000.

Suppression of the District of Ghana

Following consultation of the members of the circumscriptions of Ghana and WAF, and in keeping with SRL 249.3.1, the General Council canonically suppresses the District of Ghana, as from 1st October 1999, and those who have been members of the District until then are appointed to the West African Foundation.

Fusion : District and Foundation of Congo-Kinshasa

The General Council confirms the decision taken by the Chapter of the District and Foundation of Congo-Kinshasa to fuse the two circumscriptions together and become the one circumscription of the Foundation of Congo-Kinshasa, as from 10th January 2000.

New General Councillor



Fr Jeronimo Cahinga, of the Province of Angola replaces Fr Gabriel Mbilingi, who was nominated Coadjutor Bishop of the diocese of Lwena, Angola.

Fr Jeronimo was born on 5th September 1950 and was professed in 1976. In 1978 he was ordained priest after which he worked in his province until 1982 when he came to Rome to do a licentiate in Holy Scripture (PIB-Rome). In 1986 he went back to Angola and became Assistant director of formation until 1989. In 1989 he was elected Provincial Superior of Angola. In 1996 he came to Rome to do a doctorate in Biblical Theology at the Gregorian University.

Services at the Generalate



Fr Jean-Yves Urfié has replaced Fr. Jean-Jacques Boeglin as Assistant Secretary General. Born at Rennes in 1937, Jean-Yves was ordained priest at Chevilly in 1963, studied chemistry at the Catholic University of Washington and mathematics at Fairfield University (USA). He subsequently taught chemistry, physics and English in the College of Saint Martial in Haiti until the Spiritans were expelled from that country in 1969. For two years, he was director of the seminary of St. Kisito at Mouila, Gabon, after which he rejoined the spiritan team working with Haitian exiles in New York (1971-1985). In 1985 he went to Guyane where he worked again with immigrants and in the parish of St. Paul. After three years as Superior of the District of Guyane, he returned again to Haiti in 1989 where he founded the first weekly newspaper in Creole, entitled "Libète". In 1997, he was appointed Director of the secondary school at Saint Martial until he was called to the Generalate in Rome.

OUR DEAD

12 Nov. :	Fr Patrick HOLLY	(Ireland), 85
18 Nov. :	Fr Patrick NOLAN	(Ireland), 89
18 Nov. :	Fr Georges WACKER	(France), 83
23 Nov. :	Fr Joseph FULLEN	(Ireland), 82
24 Nov. :	Fr Nicolau RUFINO	(Angola), 43
26 Nov. :	Fr John ENRIGHT	(Ireland), 82
30 Nov. :	Fr Jacques LAMERAND	(France), 70
01 Dec. :	Fr Eugène CLIVAZ	(Switzerland), 87
06 Dec. :	Fr Michael FRAWLEY	(Ireland), 74
14 Dec. :	Fr Henricus HOFFMANS	(N/Lands), 74
16 Dec. :	Fr Henry SCHOMING	(USA/E), 81
25 Dec. :	Fr Christopher MEAGHER	(Ireland), 87
27 Dec. :	Fr Fernand MONERIE	(France), 89
31 Dec. :	Fr Manuel M. L. COUTO	(Portugal), 61
02 Jan. :	Fr Brendan TIMON	(Ireland), 92
03 Jan. :	Fr William ROCHE	(Ireland), 88
05 Jan. :	Fr Manuel Domingues VAZ	(Portugal), 79
08 Jan. :	Fr Edouard NEFF	(France), 82
09 Jan. :	Fr Michael GILMORE	(Ireland), 89
10 Jan. :	Fr Edward DARCY	(Ireland), 83
14 Jan. :	Br Ange PHILIPPE	(France), 69
17 Jan. :	Br Aurelius WERKER	(N/Lands), 81
19 Jan. :	Br Pierre LE TIEC	(France), 98
24 Jan. :	Fr Dominique JEANSON	(France), 68
25 Jan. :	Fr George CROCENZI	(USA/E), 77
28 Jan. :	Fr Vincent NIEDERBERGER	(USA/E), 75
28 Jan. :	Fr Nicholas KILLIAN	(Ireland), 84
29 Jan. :	Fr Petrus POULS	(N/Lands), 72
02 Feb. :	Fr Anthony Kliche	(Poland), 81
04 Feb. :	Fr Augustine MURPHY	(Ireland), 73
11 Feb. :	Mgr Anthony NWEDO	(Nigeria), 87