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SPIRITAN NEWS

March/April 2000

N° 131

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

NEWS FROM CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS

A Spiritan Group in the heart of South America

In the very centre of South America, there is a group of Spiritans trying to live out its missionary vocation. In 1967, the Province of Trinidad came to the diocese of Concepción where the bishop gave them a parish in a village called Lima. It was destined to become the cradle of the Congregation in Paraguay. A little later, in 1970, the group took on the parish of San José Obrero as a base in the capital, Asunción.

In the 70's and 80's, Paraguay underwent important demographical and economic developments. The parish of San José Obrero, which was originally in the rural periphery, was absorbed into the city and became a prosperous suburb. In the country, the area around Lima became the centre of a huge colonisation scheme, with a rapid growth in population.



*Ordination of the first Spiritan from Paraguay.
Fr Pierre Schouver lays his hands on Elvio Nery Cantero Ávalos.*

In the area that use to make up the sole parish of San Francisco de Lima, there are now six parishes with more than 250 basic Christian communities. The population, which is very poor, now numbers 120,000. The colonisation scheme has been bedeviled with corruption and lack of organisation. Rather than concentrating resources on the creation of an infrastructure for farming, education and health care, the State has allowed huge farms to be built up, destroying the delicate ecosystem and the development

projects being financed from abroad. The effects are making themselves cruelly felt at present; the peasants are getting poorer, there is no coherent agricultural policy and chaos and corruption are the only things that are prospering.

While the main effort of the group is in the countryside, we still have a team working in the capital. At present it is reduced to one confrere working with the Pontifical Missionary Works and our Postulancy where a confrere is living with 7 young people.

In 1975, the superior of that time, Joseph Harris, appealed for reinforcements to the Generalate and different circumscriptions. As a result, we were joined by confreres from France, Portugal and Switzerland as well as a dynamic group of lay people from Spain. From that time we became truly international. More recently, 2 confreres from the WAF have come to Paraguay. There are inevitably occasional tensions amongst the group, but in general the spirit of integration and harmony is very good.

Our priorities today are to strengthen our formation works and to continue our commitment in the diocese of San Pedro (carved out of the diocese of Concepción in 1978). Living conditions have continued to deteriorate and the Church tries to answer the increasing needs. There are huge social needs (above all health care and education) and constant political instability. There are also Church communities and structures in need of a new breath of life. There are not enough personnel or financial resources. The Church is really poor and our confreres are trying, with their limited resources, to maintain a presence in nearly a quarter of the diocese.

This is the context in which the last District Chapter decided to strengthen our community life. We would like to have a more unified plan; we want to live out more fully our Spiritan charism in the service of the Church of San Pedro. There is a shared feeling that for a few years now, authentic dialogue has been more of a reality amongst ourselves and that gradually a more specific common project is emerging.

Ordination of the first Spiritan from Paraguay

On January 23 of this year, the Spiritan group celebrated a most happy event. Elvio Nery Cantero Avalos (commonly known as "Babi") was ordained in his own village of Lima, the place where it all started for us. The local bishop, Mgr Fernando Lugo, was present, but it was our own confrere, Dom Mosé Pontelo, who presided at the ceremony. He had come all the way from Cruzeiro do Sul in Brazil.

Around 15 young men are in formation for our Congregation in the country, so the Spiritan formation efforts in the past are at last bearing fruit. It is thanks, above all, to Javier Blanco that things are now improving; he always believed in this work and carried it through with great love and personal sacrifice.

It is hoped that all these efforts will eventually result in a Spiritan circumscription that is genuinely Paraguayan.



*Bishop Mosé Pontelo ordaining Elvio Nery Cantero Ávalos.
At his right, Mgr Fernando Lugo.*

A further important step in this direction will be the foundation of a new mission in South America.

Pierre Jubinville

CHAPTER OF THE PROVINCE OF SPAIN Madrid: 9 – 15 March, 2000

This 6th Chapter was made up of 16 members of the Province (including a lay associate), the Moderator, Eduardo Miranda (Provincial of Portugal) and the representative of the General Council, Antonio Farias. At present, the Province has 21 members and 4 students: 15 are working in the Province itself and 6 elsewhere (Paraguay, Brazil, Tanzania and Cameroon).

The first period was devoted to an examination and an analysis of Spanish society and the local Church in which we are working; the Congregation and the European region; the present reality of our little Province.

From this starting point, we considered how we could renew

our missionary dynamism and find the sources of inspiration for the missionary project in Spain, according to the spirit of our Rule of Life and the recent General Chapters.

Finally, we drew up some decisions which could renew the life of the circumscription in the years to come. We resolved unanimously that these should be the basis on which we live out our Spiritan charism in our pastoral undertakings and our work of missionary awareness in the local Church:

- Start a parish in a poor area in the suburbs (from this year!);
- Maintain our mission "ad Gentes";
- Strengthen our existing work with immigrants;
- Eventually, set up a community in our house at Aranda which will join in the work of rehabilitation with those suffering from drug abuse.

The Chapter appealed to the European Region and the General Council to support and help us in carrying out these resolutions.

The Chapter walked a path between prophecy and reality; while remaining realistic about our small number and our limitations, we still want to respond to the challenge of our mission today and ensure that our Spiritan charism continues to be followed both now and in the future.

Juan Antonio Ayanz



Family photo: Participants at the Chapter.

Criteria used by the General Council for first appointment of our confreres

One of the most important moments in the life of a Spiritan is that of his first appointment. Past experience has shown that these early years often have a decisive impact on his future commitment, and indeed on his whole life.

Our Rule of Life entrusts to the Superior General and his Council the task of making such appointments (SRL 158; 249.2.3). In this way, the General Council gives concrete expression to the Congregation's missionary orientations and priorities and it also enables the General Council to assure solidarity and continuity (Maynooth 2.33-2.38).

It is in pursuance of this objective that the General Council seeks the opinion of the superior and council of circumscriptions of origin of young confreres for first appointment, the choices of the young confreres themselves as well as the needs for first appointment from the different circumscriptions of the Congregation. All these factors are taken into account by the General Council in making first

appointments, as well as the possibility of a supportive community environment, which it regards as of vital importance.

In making the appointments the General Council sometimes posts confreres to their circumscriptions of origin, following the recommendations of Itaici Chapter (Itaici 17; and 37.4). This is on the understanding that the circumscription is engaged in a truly missionary situation at home and that the young confrere is appointed to a cultural environment significantly different to his own.

The General Council was unable to satisfy all those circumscriptions which applied for confreres on first appointment. Please renew your application for the coming year as the Council will continue to make efforts to meet the various needs for personnel as more confreres become available for first appointment.

Mike Obi Onwuemelie (For the General Council).

FIRST APPOINTMENTS - 2000

NAME	FROM	TO
SACRAMENTO E. Jose do	Brasil	Brasil
LAIZER John	EAP	Zimbabwe
MASSONG Nicodemus	EAP	EAP
MUNISHI Honest	EAP	Zimbabwe
NGOWI Pamphilius	EAP	Zambia
WALIMBWA Charles	EAP	EAP
MANIQUE Daniel David	FOI	Papua N. Guinea
RAKOTOMALALA Alfred	FOI	FOI
RAMANANDRAIBE Fredo	FOI	FOI
CORTINOVIS Christian	France	EAP
JEOFFRE Marc-Henri	France	Mexico
SISKO Ante	Germany	Madagascar
EXCELLUS Jeanrilus	Haiti	Haiti
FRANCOIS Ronel	Haiti	Haiti
GREENE Niall	Ireland	Brazil Southwest
ABAH Cyprian	Nigeria	Nigeria
AMAUBOSI Christopher	Nigeria	Nigeria
CHIBUIKE Ojilere	Nigeria	Philipp.-Taiwan

NAME	FROM	TO
EZENWA F. Ekwunife	Nigeria	Zambia
IROADUMBA Innocent	Nigeria	Zambia
NDUBUISI Remigius	Nigeria	Ethiopia/Borana
UZOKWE Modestus	Nigeria	Nigeria
CANTERO ALVES E. N.	Paraguay	USA/West
DUSINSKI Marcin	Poland	Paraguay
KOCUR Rafal	Poland	Amazonia, Tefe
KRYSTKOWIAK Piotr	Poland	Mauritius
KUROWSKI Slavomir	Poland	Mexico
PRZYBYLSKI Rafal	Poland	Paraguay
FIGUEIREDO GOMES	Portugal	FANO
RODRIGUES N. Miguel	Portugal	Cape Verde
ATEL Edward	WAF	The Gambia
AYOOSU Philip Wang	WAF	Philipp.-Taiwan
BRONI Dominic	WAF	The Gambia
CHIA Thaddeus	WAF	WAF
EKUDI James	WAF	WAF
FOLLEH Francis	WAF	Sierra Leone

NEWS ITEMS

Decisions of the General Council

The General Council nominates Fr René YOU as Superior of the Group of Algeria, for a mandate of three years with effect from 7th February 2000.

The next edition of Spiritan Life

Spiritan Life no. 10 will be published by the end of April. It concerns "Collaborative Ministry", identified by the Maynooth Chapter as one of the important characteristics of our mission today. As usual, copies will be sent for each confrere to all superiors of circumscriptions for distribution. Make sure that you get yours!

Our Spiritan Mission as presence among and solidarity with the people ...

In Sierra Leone

"Having gone through the same suffering with the people, we are able to see, feel and deal with their/our crisis more meaningfully.... Sharing painful experiences, talking, listening and empathising and even laughing over it, or crying at times is a source of healing. The "Presence" is more important than handouts though one cannot live without them, for "an empty bag of rice does not make the stomach full".

We are not heroes but mere servants doing what God and the Congregation stand for; we may be in one way or the other traumatised, but we are normal people and happy to have some share in the sufferings of Christ" (*Daniel Osei Yeboah, Sierra Leone*).

In Pakistan

"In this situation of unusual calm, we Spiritans are trying to remain supportive of the people amongst whom we live. The recent events have brought no further restrictions to our work. As foreigners trying to be close to the people, we are going through the same uncertainty and sharing the same hopes. But we are also aware that the absence of any short-term improvements in the country could easily lead to impatience from those who currently have such high expectations; the nature of our solidarity with the people must therefore be adaptable to changing circumstances" (*Marc Tyrant, Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan*).

Spiritan Publications

Paul Gay, *Vous, les jeunes! Reponses à des questions qui vous hantent*, Publications Marie et Notre Temps, 4^e trimestre 1999.

Gérard Duchesne, *Ils nous tuent, tes millions!*, 1999.

Lucien Deiss, *Terre entière acclame Dieu*, choix de chants en 2 volumes de format A4.

Alexis Riaud, *La Foi de l'Eglise Primitive*, Chevilly-Larue, 1998.

A new history of the French Province. Amongst the suggestions made by the General Chapter of Maynooth for the celebration of the Spiritan Year was the following: "...if it has not been done already, to write the diary and history of the circumscription" (8.6). Fr. Jean Ernoul of the French Province has responded to this call in an exemplary way by publishing a "*Histoire de la Province de France*" in the collection "*Mémoire Spiritaine, Etudes et Documents*". It is a book of 450 pages, extensively documented and illustrated. The origins of the Congregation occupy the first three chapters, but the history of the Province as such does not really begin until 1906. A second section is a review of the Spiritan establishments in France throughout its history. This important and patient contribution to the history of our Congregation concludes with a section of statistics and a bibliography.

Brother Pierre Le Tiec: 1901-2000

Brother Pierre, who was the oldest living member of the Congregation, died on January 19 at the age of 98. He was born in the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon and trained as a builder. Encouraged by the Prefect Apostolic, Fr. Charles Heitz, he asked to enter the Congregation. He made his first profession at Chevilly in 1934.

Being already a qualified builder, he was immediately in great demand all over the French Province. As an example of availability, there must have been few like him in the history of our religious family. From 1936 until 1974, he moved from one community to another, building and repairing. Superiors of communities fought for his services, not just because of his skills as a builder but also because of his human qualities and his unfailing good humour. Both physically and spirituality he was built like a rock; his dominant fault was not knowing when to stop work!

He "retired" to Langonnet in 1974 at the age of 72 but you would never have guessed that he was in retirement. When he reached the age of 90, he announced that he was now too old to climb up on the roof! He could be summed up perfectly by the Benedictine motto, "*Ora et Labora*".

Brother Pierre has now been replaced by Fr. Alexis Riaud as the doyen of the Congregation. He is a mere 97 and is another confrere for whom the word "retirement" has little meaning. He is living in the community of Chevilly with the other senior citizens to most of whom he taught philosophy. He also worked for a considerable period in the Province of Canada and is the author of many books. *Ad multos annos!*

OUR DEAD

15 February	Fr. Félix GILS	(Belgium), 78
20 February	Fr. António MOREIRA	(Portugal), 87
24 February	Fr. Desmond CAHILL	(Ireland), 73
12 March	Mgr Anthony PANTIN	(Trinidad), 70
17 March	Fr. Kelvin POWER	(Ireland), 71
25 March	Br Finbar KELLY	(Ireland), 62
25 March	Fr. Jean-Baptiste SCHMITT	(France), 90