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# SPIRITAN NEWS

May/June 2000

N° 132

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

## NEWS FROM CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS

### New Province of Nigeria

The first two pages of the *Spiritan news* No. 122, May/June 1998 were consecrated to this subject: the beginning of the Spiritan presence in Nigeria, the subsequent develop-

ments, the present reality and the process followed in seeking to determine the form of Spiritan presence in Nigeria best suited to our life and mission. The General

Council has finalized this process; it was lengthy and painstaking but one which they believe was accompanied throughout by the presence and action of the Holy Spirit.

At its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2000, the General Council examined carefully the proposals put forward by the WAF confreres from Makurdi and by the Provincial Council of Nigeria regarding the proposed new Province of Nigeria. It also took into consideration the propositions already elaborated by the Joint Commission made up of representatives of the Province of Nigeria and the West African Foundation. Here is a summary of the decisions of the General Council, made in the light of the above process:

The new Province of Nigeria will come into existence on **2<sup>nd</sup> October 2001**, the date on which we commemorate the death of our founder Claude-François Poullart des Places. It will be made up of **4 Regions**, divided on the basis of the existing dioceses in the country.



*Two General Councillors and some WAF-Makurdi confreres present at Ejisu meeting 27-28 Dec. 1999*

This division will ensure a significant Spiritan presence in each of the Regions from the outset. Each may be truly considered an area of mission in line with our Spiritan charism and an area of potential vocations to the Congregation; each Region will therefore have its own missionary challenge to be faced in collaboration with the entire Province.

Each Region will have a **Regional Superior** with a Council, appointed by him after consultation of the mem-

bers, and a **Secretariat**. The **Regional Superior** will have a relative autonomy which can be outlined as follows:

- He will have a ministry of contact and animation to the confreres of the Region;
- In understanding with the Provincial Superior, he will be the Congregation's representative in contacts with the local Bishops;
- He may make movements of confreres within his Region, with confirmation by the Provincial Superior and Council;
- He will be responsible for the promotion of vocations and the accompaniment of candidates up to and including the Postulancy;
- He will be a member of the Provincial Council.

Each Region will have a Director of Vocations and a Postulancy. A Region may collaborate with another one. It shall participate in the welcoming of confreres on leave or returning home. Although the financial resources and properties of the Regions belong to the Province, nevertheless each Region will strive to be financially self-reliant as far as the normal annual budget is concerned.

The **administrative headquarters** of the new Province will be in the capital, Abuja. The **Provincial Council** will be made up of the Provincial Superior, the first and second Assistants, the four Regional Superiors and the Bursar. The **provincial administration** will be responsible for the management and animation of the Province

- regarding missionary commitments inside and outside the Province

- regarding Spiritan apostolic life, except for matters within the competence of the Regional Superiors.

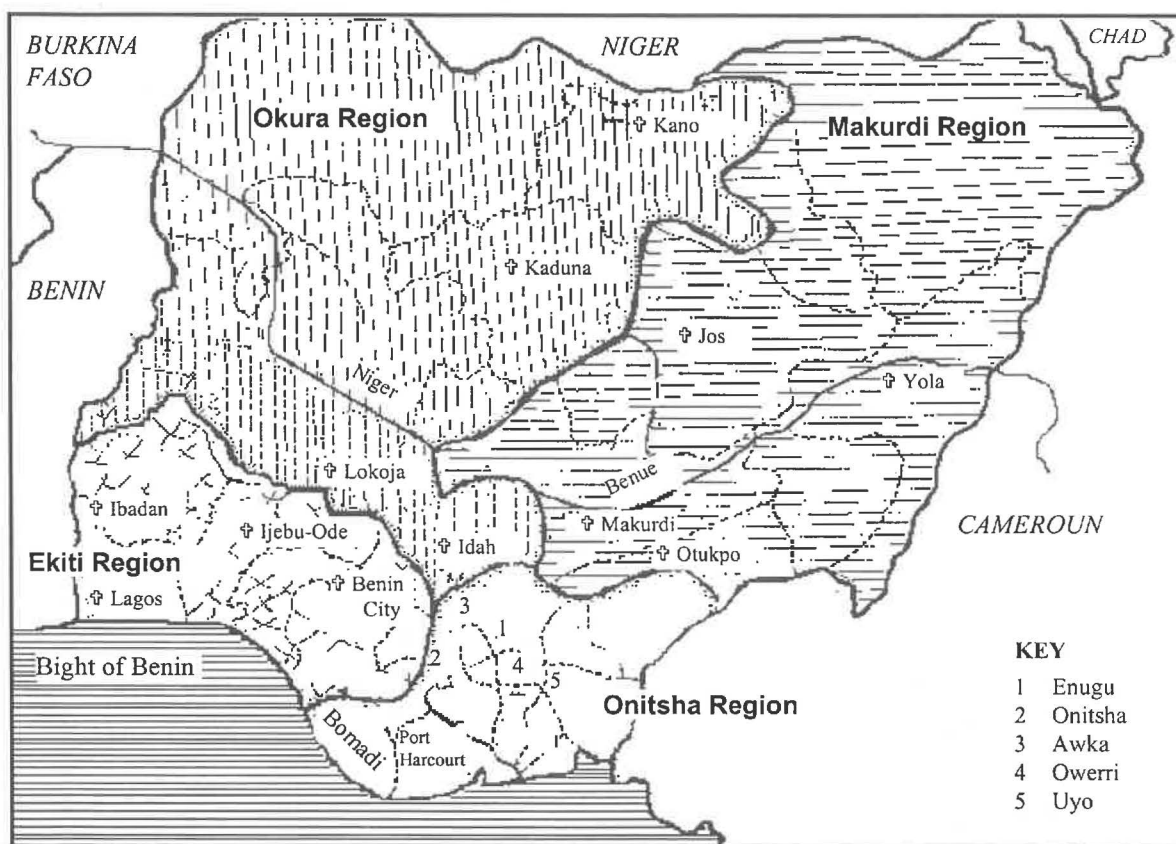
The **provincial administration** will also be responsible for the admission and formation of candidates, starting from the novitiate. A second novitiate for the new Province will be set up in another Region in the near future. Each novitiate will have novices from different Regions. The first and second cycles of formation will remain where they are at the moment.

In accordance with SRL 167.4, the first **Provincial Superior** of the new Province will be appointed by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, after a consultation of the members of the Province. The first

**Provincial Chapter** of the new Province will then decide the procedure for the future designation of the Provincial Superior, either consultation or election, in accordance with SRL 167, 167.1 and 167.2.

The **Regional Superior** in each Region will be elected by the members of the Region, subject to confirmation by the Provincial Superior. Membership of the Regions is determined by appointment, i.e. all confreres appointed to a Region are members of that Region.

All current members of the **West African Foundation who originate from the District of Makurdi** will be free to chose their Province of origin - Province of Nigeria or WAF.



<p><b>Statistics : Nigeria</b></p> <p>Independence..... 01 October 1960 (from UK)</p> <p>Area..... 923,768 km<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Population..... 110,532,242 (1998)</p> <p>Life expectancy ..... Male/female: 53/56</p> <p>GDP per capita ..... US\$ 295 (1995)</p>	<p><b>Statistics : Province</b></p> <p>Members ..... 378</p> <p>Bishops..... 1</p> <p>Brothers..... 7</p> <p>Priests..... 206</p> <p>Junior Professed ..... 164</p>
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### Haiti: a lively Spiritan History

From the start, the history of the Spiritans in Haiti has been nothing if not lively. Every Spiritan novice learns that one of the two companions of Libermann at the seminary of Issy was Eugène Tisserant, the son of a Haitian woman, the grandson of General Beauvais, one of the leaders of the revolution in Haiti which resulted in its being the first black republic the world had ever seen (1804).

It was Eugène Tisserant and Frédéric Le Vavas seur who persuaded Libermann to go to Rome to present his plan for a new Congregation. The rest we know. What is less well known is that Tisserant subsequently became the first native Haitian to be appointed Prefect Apostolic of the island in 1844. Unfortunately, the intrigues of a corrupt local clergy made it impossible for him to carry out his ministry. He had

to leave Haiti and died in a shipwreck, on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1845, on his way to take up a new appointment as Prefect Apostolic of Guinea.

Much work was done to encourage local vocations: many Haitians became Spiritans, thanks mainly to the Junior Seminary/College of St. Martial. In 1969 there was another "lively" event: the dictator Duvalier expelled the Haitian Spiritans from the college. This represented an unsuccessful attempt to divide the local and expatriate Spiritans; the Spiritans from overseas withdrew as a sign of solidarity with their Haitian confreres. Duvalier

"offered" our College to the cousin of his future daughter-in-law, who was the Archbishop of Port-au-Prince at the time. In 1995 the confiscation was reversed, thanks to the efforts of Fr. Adrien and the intervention of an ex-Spiritans who was by then the Minister of Culture.

On the fall of Duvalier in 1986, we returned to the country. In 1991, we were considerably affected by the military coup d'Etat. Fr. Antoine Adrien played a prominent

role amongst those who were working for a return to democracy in 1995. As a result of his sufferings he is now confined to a wheelchair, just at a time when his country needs to hear his voice again as it confronts serious new political crises. He is seen as a man of great integrity and sound judgement, without any trace of political ambition – something rare in a country which has more than 50 registered political parties.

He is now living with the young Spiritans, our hope for the future. There are around 20 of them, preparing to take over the baton – in the College, in the country parish of Arbonite and in the parish that has just been set up at the request of the new

Archbishop of Port-au-Prince. Two have just been ordained, two more will follow in September 2000. One of them has left for Guadeloupe, showing that although Haiti is an island, it is still open to the rest of the world – following the example of Eugène Tisserant of many years ago.

*Jean-Yves Urfié*

#### **Some statistics**

- ◆ **10 priests; 14 junior professed.**
- ◆ **6 young men for novitiate in September 2000.**
- ◆ **Saint Martial (1700 pupils) founded in 1864.**
- ◆ **The new parish in the suburb South of Port-au-Prince has more than 200,000 inhabitants.**

## **NEWS ITEMS**

### **Meeting of the European Spiritan Bursars and Procurators : 12 - 16 May**

The Spiritan Provincial bursars and Procurators of Europe met in Rome at the Generalate. They have been here before, in 1989 when their annual meetings began and since then they have met in each of the European Provinces. No doubt the participants were happy to meet in Rome during this Jubilee year. The procedure and agenda of their meeting was along the same lines as usual, but this year they were also able to share their common problems with the Superior General. He spoke to them about solidarity. It is already widely practiced through Cor Unum and the traditional links between European Provinces and their former Districts. But he also stressed the need for new partnerships between these Provinces and some of the apostolic groups which have no such ties but are in great need of support for their very survival. He invited them to share not just from what is superfluous to their needs but even from what they need for themselves, like the poor woman in the Gospel who was so admired by Jesus.

The bursars and Procurators took a day off to visit Subiaco, the place where St Benedict lived, the Patron of



*Spiritans Bursars and procurators of Europe*

Europe. They ended the day by visiting the church of St. Lorenzo and the Basilica of St John Lateran, Rome. As they were tackling weighty financial problems, this day must have been a real break and relief for them.

Their next meeting will take place in London in April, 2001.

## Decisions of the General Council

### The General Council

- confirms the election of Fr. Daniel **OSEI-YEBOAH** as District Superior of Sierra Leone, for a second mandate of three years, with effect from 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2000.
- confirms the election of Fr. Sean **McGOVERN** as District Superior of Kenya, for a mandate of three years, with effect from 26<sup>th</sup> April 2000.
- confirms the election of Fr. Walter **McNAMARA** as Major Superior of the Group of Australia, for a second mandate of three years, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2000.
- nominates Fr. John **KILCRANN** as Justice and Peace Co-ordinator for the General Administration for a mandate of three years, with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2000.
- nominates Fr. Cyril **ANENE** as Assistant General Bursar for a second mandate of three years, with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2000.
- nominates Fr. Jean-Claude **JAQUARD** as Superior of the District of Madagascar, for a second mandate of three years, with effect from 29<sup>th</sup> June 2000.
- nominates Fr. Michael **WALSH** as Major Superior of the Group of Zambia, for a mandate of three years, with effect from 24<sup>th</sup> June 2000.
- nominates Fr. Heinrich **KUCKERTZ** as Major Superior of the South Central African Foundation, for a mandate of three years, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2000.

## Nomination: A Spiritan Bishop

On April 12 2000 Pope John Paul II nominated , Fr. Lucien Fischer Apostolic Vicar of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon. Fr. Lucien Fischer was born in Strasbourg in 1933. He did his secondary studies at the spiritan apostolic school of Blotzheim, and then at that of Saverne. In 1953, he entered the novitiate and made first profession in 1954. He began the study of philosophy at Mortain in 1954, ending it in 1957. After his military service in Germany and Algeria, from 1957 to 1960, he did his studies in theology at Chevilly-Larue. In 1962 he was admitted to perpetual vows and was ordained priest on the 30 September of the same year. He was appointed to Gabon in 1962, to the Cathedral of Mouila, then to the mission of Dibwangui where he was responsible for a pastoral training course from 1963 to 1964. Appointed assistant pastor in 1964, then pastor from 1965 to 1980 to the mission of Koula-Moutou, he was also the spiritan regional leader for Ogooué Lolo and Haut-Ogooué. Appointed parish priest in the mining town of



Moanda in 1980, he became at the same time Vicar General of the diocese of Franceville.

In 1982, he was called to Libreville as Superior of the District of Gabon and in 1989, after a semester of theological renewal in Strasbourg, Fr. Lucien Fischer returned to Moanda where he resumed the same responsibilities. In 1993, he returned to France at the service of the Province, in Strasbourg, as Regional Superior of the spiritans in the East of France, a task which he held until the time of his episcopal nomination.

## Spiritane Publications

**Albert de Jong**, *Mission and Politics in Eastern Africa, Dutch Missionaries and African Nationalism in Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi 1945-1965*, Pauline Publications, Nairobi, 2000.

**Tony Gittins**, *Reading The Clouds: Missionary Spirituality for New Times*, Liguori, 1999.

**Tony Gittins**, *Life and Death Matters: The practice of Inculturation in Africa*, Steyler, 2000.

## Past Publications

The General Administration would always welcome a complimentary copy of any Spiritane publication, or at least the appropriate information on the availability of such publications. It is possible that over the last year or two, we may not always have received such information.

If superiors of circumscriptions are aware of any such publications over this period, we would be grateful to receive some reply. Thank you.

(Information Service, Generalate)

## OUR DEAD

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