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Points for Further Reflection

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POINTS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

If we are to get our Constitutions written in keeping with what the Church, the world and the Congregation needs, both in our day and in the future, then there are several areas in which we are going to have to develop our thinking. The following are some examples.

1 - SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Reading the signs of the times demands that we be better informed on the major movements that are reshaping the world at present. Our search for missionary situations, for places of first evangelization, would be better directed if we knew more about the massive population shifts that are steadily redrawing maps all over the globe. London has Muslims, so has Paris. The working-class areas of Montreal are being taken over by people from Haiti. Unbaptized people from the ends of the earth pack the underground trains of New York and Toronto — not to mention the vast migrations within Africa itself. Are our Spiritan "media" able to keep us up-to-date on these facts? Can they initiate serious analysis of the drift of Eastern peoples into the West? Are we ready to take on the giant that is Asia? What do we know about it?

2 - POVERTY

This is the preferred object of our Spiritan zeal. What do we know about it? Even the word has different meanings for different Spiritans. It will have to be clarified. Does poverty — a famine that rages throughout the world — move us? Have we looked into it closely, near home or at the ends of the earth? Have we lifted up our eyes to the multitudes, seen the pitiful condition of the abandoned, the world of the child, of the exploited, which regimes of both Left and Right bludgeon

or gun into submission? Are we stirred to the depths of our Christianity by the racism of South Africa and other countries? Does our "Christian charity" measure up to our vocation as missionaries? Do we stand up for the human value of work?

3 - INTERNATIONALITY

Is the internationality we want to experience genuinely more than the wish to learn another language, to extend our intellectual curiosity to another culture? Is it gospel-based: Go teach all nations? Is Spiritan fellowship respect for the other in love?

4 - THE HOLY SPIRIT

Since we are called Spiritans we should be experts on the Holy Spirit. What Spiritans have actually done about it looks meagre. A deepening of our knowledge of the Holy Spirit would become us. *Evangelica Testificatio* says that the Holy Spirit is "the principal agent of evangelization as well as its end".

5 - SPIRITAN HERITAGE

Surprisingly this is another field where little is known. Requests not to forget Poullart des Places come from all sides. This is fine! But in answers about our charism, the Spiritan heritage, Libermann's understanding of mission, there are clear indications of ignorance of both our history and tradition. There is a desire to practise the spirituality of Libermann, but the appropriate vocabulary seems lacking. Those who have attempted to come to grips with it might pass on the secret to their confreres in articles, retreats or other ways.

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