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SPIRITAN NEWS

N° 143

September/October 2002

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

SPIRITAN YEAR: February 2002 - Pentecost 2003 300 Years of Spiritan Mission

SPIRITANS WORKING AMONG MUSLIMS

A meeting took place from the 23-29 June 2002, in The Gambia, for Spiritans who work in countries where the presence of Islam constitutes a challenge to their ministry. There were 22 participants in all, representing 17 different countries where we work, and 11 different nationalities of origin. The presence of Bishop Augustine Shao C.S.Sp., Bishop of Zanzibar, added a special dimension to the meeting.

The meeting was co-ordinated and facilitated by two confreres from the Generalate: Frs. Jean Michel Jolibois and Robert Ellison. A special observer from the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue was also invited to attend – Mgr. Denis Chidi Isizoh. Fr. Myles Fay (The Gambia) accepted the role of secretary for the meeting.

English and French were the two official languages of the meeting.

Thirteen years ago in July 1989, a similar meeting took place in Dakar. On that occasion, there were 15 participants representing 7 countries where we work. Just four of those 15 confreres were present again at the Banjul meeting.

Of the 22 confreres at the Banjul meeting, 11 of these were African, one was from Mauritius and one from the USA. The remaining 9 confreres came from Europe. Two of the participants were students from the West African Province who had just completed their two year pastoral experience programme in Algeria – a real baptism of fire. This new venture has opened a window of hope for the older confreres who have borne the heat of the day for many years in this country. It also symbolises at a wider level the way in which the younger African confreres have become involved in this kind of mission, as the older confreres in the 'north' decrease in numbers.

Theme and Agenda for the Meeting:

The theme for the meeting was finally agreed upon as follows: 'Christians and Muslims: building bridges of Understanding and Respect'.

The overall aim of the meeting was to provide a forum which would enable our confreres to rediscover for themselves a sense of purpose in this demanding area of mission. The emphasis was more on the pastoral and spiritual aspects of this ministry. What motivates, what inspires us from one day to the next? Do we really believe in the importance of mission as reconciliation, of mission in terms of the vision of Isaiah where the lion and the lamb can lie down together eventually – even if our efforts seem at times to bear little or no fruit? Can we continue to hope for a better world?

Although the planning and preparations for this meeting began before the events of the 11 September 2001, these gave an added note of urgency and importance to it.

The agenda for the meeting focussed on the 'see, judge and act' method. It was felt that this process would best help in achieving the overall aim, by starting the meeting with the lived experiences of the confreres. Long before the meeting began, each confrere

prepared a short report describing what is actually happening in his country of mission with regard to relations/dialogue between Christians and Muslims. A copy of each report was given (in English or French) to each participant at the start of the meeting in Banjul.

The first two days of the meeting (first stage) were given to sharing and listening to these reports. The variety of situations in which our confreres involved in this kind of mission find themselves was most striking.

Some special interventions:

The overall plan or internal dynamic of the meeting was punctuated with a few inputs from specially invited speakers as follows:

On Monday: An Imam from the main Serekunda mosque addressed the assembly. His input triggered a lively discussion.

List of Participants		
Circumscription	Names	N°
PAC (Cameroun)	Antonio Ayanz; Basil Agba	2
Nigeria	John Atoba; Patrick Okeahialam; Alex Osei	3
WAP (Ghana)	John Osei-Yaw	1
WAP (Sierra Leone)	Francis Folleh	1
The Gambia	Peter Adu	1
FANO (Mauritania; G. Bissau; Senegal)	Marc Botzung; Aquiline Mrema; Patrick Hollande	3
Algeria	René You; Michael Gomez	2
EAP (Tanzania)	Daniel Bouju	1
Zanzibar	Bishop Augustine Shao; Gallus Marandu	2
Kenya	Peter Suttle	1
FOI (Pakistan)	Henri Arthé	1
Mauritius	Jean Luc Rencker	1
Philippines	Daniel Sormani	1
France	Jean Pierre Buecher	1
Nederland	Harrie Tullemans	1
	Total	22

On Tuesday: Bishop Michael Cleary C.S.Sp. (Bishop of Banjul) spoke of some of his experiences of relations with Muslims during his 49 years of mission in The Gambia.

On Wednesday: Mgr. Denis Isizoh gave an account of the various areas in which the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue operates.

On Friday: A Gambian Catholic woman shared her experiences of some 25 years of marriage to a Muslim. Only in the last few years, this marriage was finally blessed in Church.

During the week, the morning and evening liturgies formed an integral part of the daily sharing.

Second and Third Stages:

The second stage of the meeting began with a brainstorming session in full assembly during which the participants were invited to identify a few key issues arising from the reports. These formed the basis for some reflection and discussion in small groups. With the assistance of a 'steering committee', the following three questions were approved:

- In the light of our experiences as Spiritans, why do we believe in and commit ourselves to inter-religious dialogue?
- Can we find a way of living and proclaiming our faith that does not threaten others?
- How can we integrate a faith dimension to the dialogue of life and social collaboration?

It would not be possible to include here an account of the discussions and feedback in general which emerged from these three questions. The material gathered from the second stage became the basis for moving into the third stage of the meeting i.e. finding ways in which we as Spiritans could move forward in this ministry of building bridges between Christians and Muslims. This was done under two headings:

- A statement about our Spiritan commitment to the mission of reconciliation and dialogue.

- Ways in which we can collaborate more with the local Churches in which we work, in the light of the various obstacles we meet as well as the opportunities which present themselves.



Participants at the Meeting in Banjul

One point, among many, became evident from the reflections. Given the complexity of so many situations, and the deep feelings of injustice among both partners in the dialogue, the way forward will call for a lot of self-emptying on the part of those who commit themselves to this kind of mission; for a Church ready to identify itself more with the early Christians in poverty, in weakness and in persecution. It will call for a Church that is ready to involve itself in the mystery of the redemptive suffering of Jesus by taking upon itself the sin of the world. St. Paul became aware of this when he referred to the cross as a scandal for the Jews and sheer madness for the Gentiles; but for those who believe – it is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

(A fuller and more detailed account of the content of this meeting will be given in the next edition of 'Spiritans Life', which should appear before the end of this year).

Two Spiritan Associates in Madagascar



Rakotonindrina Gilbert and Razafindrakoto Pierre Marie Pascale

On 8th September Rakotonindrina Gilbert (42) and his wife Razafindrakoto Pierre Marie Pascale (38) entered our spiritan family in Madagascar by committing themselves for three years as lay associates. The ceremony took place in the cathedral of Mahajanga during the Sunday Eucharist in the presence of all the Spiritans who were gathered together for a few days for a Chapter.

The contact of Gilbert and Marie Pascale with the Congregation is nothing new: for many years we have known of their interest in our missionary work and in our dedication to the poor. Married in 1996 and parents of a little girl aged 5, their professional work inevitably drew them closer to us. Gilbert has been working full-time for many years in the chaplaincy of the prison of Antanimora; he is there all week, listening to the prisoners and encouraging them according to their needs. His wife is a social assistant at a re-education centre in Tananarive; her work means that she is dealing each day with the most abandoned children of the capital.

But it is not just their professional work which has drawn them close to our religious family; it is above all their life of faith and their relationship with Christ. They have discovered in the spirituality of our founders the support and strength which they were seeking in order to continue their journey as vibrant members of the Church of Christ. A trust in the Holy Spirit at work in our lives, the evangelical

simplicity of spiritan life, the joy to be had in serving the poor - these are the sort of spiritual values which link their married life to Christ. So they asked for a period of formation to go deeper into these things and to organise their lives around the Rule of Life of Spiritan Associates. This lasted for three years and the spiritan community of Centre Energie of Tananarive traveled the road with them to prepare them for the engagement that they have just undertaken.

After their commitment, they were given a "mission letter", inviting them to live their professional life in conjunction with the work of the Spiritans in Madagascar. There was no need to ask them to change their work: their dedication to

the chaplaincy of the prison of Antanimora and the re-education centre of Anjahamasina fitted in perfectly with the missionary priorities of the Congregation. The only difference is that henceforth they would carry out this work as a missionary mandate from the Congregation.

It is a great joy for all the Spiritans of Madagascar to welcome these lay associates into our family; they will enrich us by their fraternal presence, their missionary work and their apostolic prayer.

Jean-Claude Jaquard

jc.jaquard@vitelcom.mg

Spiritans Photographic Archives

The photographic archive at rue Lhomond is run by the French Province and is complimentary to the archive of written material for the whole Congregation which is located at Chevilly in the outskirts of Paris. The age, quality and number of the photos and negatives that are preserved make it a database that is without parallel in our religious family.

Photos are a unique means of knowing more about the lives and work of those who went before us at any given point in our history. As we celebrate the Spiritan Year, confreres are showing a greatly increased interest in the way things were done in the past. Who were these men? What was the world like in which they lived? What did they do, and who were the people they met? The photos in this archive are an anthology of our involvement in mission, giving added interest and colour to what we can glean from written sources.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, photography was a much more complicated business than it is today, so you can imagine the amount of material that we need here in order to photograph, develop and preserve these photos. The early procedures were very involved and the materials used were fragile. The conservation of the glass negatives of that period can cause many headaches. The photographers were not professionals but, for the most part, enthusiastic and self-taught Spiritans, who wanted to share their life and work with friends and supporters back home. We are still discovering old photos, which are often the only remaining record of the early days.

The archive has several thousand black and white photos. Unfortunately, in many cases there is no precise date and it is not always possible to identify the persons depicted. We have glass photos (negative and positive), flexible negatives and prints, as well as slides. So far, we have material from the following countries: Gabon, Cameroon, Guinea, Senegal, Angola, Congo-Brazzaville, Madagascar, Nigeria, Central African Republic, East Africa, Haiti, Reunion, Mauritius, Guadeloupe, Martinique, St. Pierre et Miquelon, Amazonia and France.

With such a precious collection, our main concern is to preserve this material by using modern technology. Those who use our services are various types of researchers, the media and many confreres who are writing articles or simply researching for their own interest.

I am at your disposition to help in any way I can. Perhaps you are worried about not having the right environment for preserving your photos. Or maybe you would like to put them at the disposal of the wider Congregation for purposes of research. If you do send us material, I would ask you to

include as much information as possible regarding the date, place, names of people appearing etc. This will greatly increase their value for research purposes. Naturally, any such photos sent to us will remain the



Geneviève Karg

property of the donors and all copyright will be observed.

We can also do photographic research, in our collection or elsewhere, at the request of confreres. We can make reproductions in formats according to your specifications. If you prefer, payment for the work can be made through the bursars of circumscriptions to the procure here in rue Lhomond.

Thank you very much in advance for contributing to the enrichment of the photographic patrimony of our Congregation.

*Geneviève Karg,
30, rue Lhomond,
75005 Paris, France
Tel: (0033) 1 47079447.
Email archphotocssp@free.fr*

Another Spiritan Martyr



At last our worst fears have been confirmed with the discovery of the body of our confrere, Jean Guth at Lugolo in Congo Brazzaville. Jean disappeared on the 31st of March in the region of Pool. He was celebrating the feast of Easter in this region during a time of great tension between the Ninjas rebels and the Congolese army. He had already gone there to celebrate Christmas 2001 and all passed peacefully. Like his confreres and his bishop, he thought he could safely return to Kindamba, but at that very moment war broke out again. While returning in his car from Kindamba to Mayama, he was intercepted and taken by the "Ninjas".

Since his abduction, there was no official news of his whereabouts. Some said that he was wounded and that a tendon in his foot was cut, that he was walking with great difficulty and often had to be carried. Evidently, he died on or around 10th August, but the actual cause of death is still unknown.

Jean was to be reburied next to the cathedral of Brazzaville on 1st October. Many messages of sympathy have arrived at the Generalate, including communications from Cardinal Sepe of the Propaganda and Cardinal Sardano, the Secretary of State, writing on behalf of Pope John Paul II.

DECISIONS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council,

- confirms the election of Fr. Patrick **FITZPATRICK** as Superior of the Province of TransCanada, for a second mandate of three years, with effect from 1st July 2002.
- confirms the election of Fr Lambert **NDJANA** as Superior of the Province of Central Africa for a mandate of three years, with effect from 4th July 2002.
- confirms the election of Fr. Grzegorz **KOSIELSKI** as Superior of the Province of Poland, for a third mandate of three years, with effect from 11th July 2002.
- confirms the election of Fr. Charles **AUBRÉE** as Superior of the District of Martinique for a mandate of three years, with effect from 1st August 2002.
- confirms the election of Fr. Serge **HOGUE** as superior of the province of Canada, for a second mandate of three years, with effect from 20th August 2002.
- confirms the election of Fr. Manual Martin Novais **FERREIRA** as Superior of the District of Cape Verde, for a second mandate of three years, with effect from 1st September 2002.
- confirms the election of Fr. Jean-Claude **PARIAT** as Superior of the Province of Switzerland for a second mandate of three years, with effect from 1st September 2002.
- nominates Fr. Jean-Jacques **BÖGLIN**, of the Province of France, as Superior of the Spiritan Community of Palmarola, in Rome, for a second mandate of three years, with effect from 1st September 2002.
- nominates Fr. Jean-Yves **URFIE**, of the Province of France, to join the Information Service of the Generalate,

in view of establishing a Spiritan Web Site, for a mandate of 1 year with effect from 25th September 2002.

- confirms the election of Fr. Albino Victor Martins de **OLIVEIRA**, as Superior of the Group of Paraguay, for a mandate of three years, with effect from 15th December 2002.
- confirms the election of Fr. Gijsbertus van **TOL**, as Superior of the Province of Brazil, for a second mandate of three years, with effect from 2nd February 2003.

The General Council prolongs the mandate of Fr. Rhéaume **SAINT-LOUIS** of the Canadian Province as superior of the Generalate Community until 30th September, 2003.

OUR DEAD

30 May	Fr Nicolas FAKKELDIJ	N/Lands 81
02 June	Fr Emmanuel MERCIER	France 92
08 June	Fr Bernard CHRISTOPHE	France 79
23 June	Fr Roger FELDMANN	France 72
25 June	Fr Francisco LOPES	Portugal 85
28 June	Fr Desmond McGLADE	Ireland 85
05 July	Fr Eugène HUGEL.....	France 80
05 August	Fr Johannes C. DIELISSSEN.....	N/Lands 82
10 August	Fr Jean GUTH.....	France 63
11 August	Fr Charles WILLEM	France 81
18 August	Fr John E. NADER	US/E 78
26 August	Fr Michel CHAVEROT	France 88
02 September	Fr John A. O'HANRAHAN.....	Ireland 89
06 September	Fr Jacobus BLOMMESTEIN....	N/Lands 76
14 September	Fr Timothy J. CROWLEY	Ireland 80
15 September	Fr Moses ORAKWUDO	Nigeria 84
19 September	Fr Josef BAUER	Germany 96