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THE FRENCH SEMINARY IN ROME

An anniversary

This year, the French Seminary in Rome celebrates the 150th anniversary of its foundation. It is an important occasion for the whole Congregation since this seminary was founded by the Spiritans and confided to them "for ever" by Blessed Pius IX in the bull "In Sublimis" of 14th July 1859: "The government, administration and direction of this French Seminary is confided in perpetuity to our dear sons, the priests of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and the Immaculate Heart of Mary".

Plans for a house in Rome

Père Louis-Marie Lannurien arrived in Rome on the evening of Sunday 27th February 1853. He had been sent by Père Schwindenhammer, the successor of Libermann, to found a spiritan house and, if possible, a seminary for French students.

In his diary, Lannurien listed the reasons for his coming to Rome: "There are four projects that will receive my full attention: 1) To obtain confirmation of the election of the Superior (Schwindenhammer) as a replacement for our beloved father; 2) To seek to establish a house of our Congregation in Rome; 3) To prepare a doctorate; 4) To record memories that people may have of Père Libermann in Rome, for the edification of the members of the Congregation and those who will read his life and as a possible step towards the introduction of his cause of beatification". In just over a year, Père Lannurien was able to fulfill all four of these aims, especially the foundation of a seminary for French men in Rome.

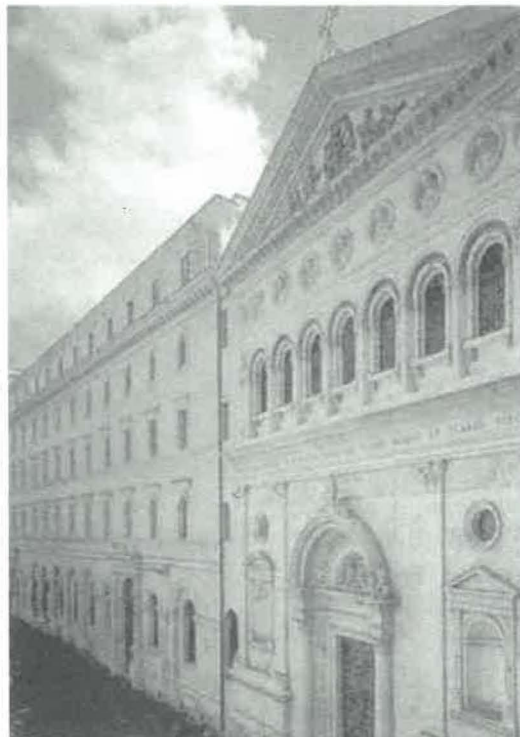
According to Schwindenhammer and Lannurien, Libermann had al-

ways cherished the idea of setting up a house in Rome. On 14th July 1853, Lannurien wrote to Père Leberre that "our beloved Father always wanted to establish a house of our Congregation in Rome". While he was still alive, Libermann was in constant contact with the Propaganda, particularly with Cardinal Fornari, the Prefect, regarding the business of the Congregation and various missionary projects, so it was understandable that he was already thinking of some kind of base in Rome.

Père Schwindenhammer finally carried out this project; on 21st January 1853, he wrote to Bishop Kobès: "For a long time, we have wanted to have somebody in Rome to look after our business there and we have been looking for an opportunity to do this; it seems that such a moment has now arrived".

An opportunity arises

What was this "opportunity" to which Schwindenhammer refers? After the fusion with the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, Libermann had lived in Paris at the *Seminaire du Saint-Esprit*. This seminary was a centre for those who were supporters of Roman teachings, in liturgy, moral and theology. One priest in particular, Père Gaultier, a professor of moral theology, gathered together those in France who were strong supporters of Rome-christened by their Gallican opponents as the "Ultramontanes". This group was always talking of establishing a French seminary in Rome where future priests could be trained according to "pure Roman doctrine". Libermann himself had a group of priests who used to come to the seminary each Tuesday for a spiritual conference; most were former students of the *Seminaire Saint-Sulpice* and were generally of an 'ultramontane' tendency. Sometimes, Libermann had to use all his wisdom and balance



French Seminary

to calm the critics amongst them of the "Gallican" bishops of the French hierarchy. According to Bishop Freppel of Angers, *"the Seminaire du Saint-Esprit, as transformed by Père Libermann, was one of the main centres in France for the restoration of Roman doctrines"*. Père Lannurien, who was one of the directors of the Seminary, took part in all these activities, so it was not surprising that Schwindenhammer thought of him when he decided to set up a house in Rome. Lannurien was one of those who knew Libermann very well, both at the Abbaye du Gard and the Seminaire du Saint-Esprit in Paris. He also had experience of running a seminary and had the reputation of being a strong supporter of Rome; so he was well qualified to look after the Congregation's business in Rome and, at the same time, to found a seminary for French students.

Père Lannurien – the founder

So it was only one year after his death that the dream of Libermann of founding a house and seminary in Rome began to take shape. The plan was still not precise when Lannurien arrived. At that point, as well as a seminary, there was talk of starting a work of evangelisation "for the most poor and neglected souls" and a refuge for abandoned children. But before long, the plan for a seminary took centre stage.

Lannurien kept Schwindenhammer constantly informed of all the developments regarding the foundation of the seminary and his work as intermediary between the Congregation and the Holy See. But it was not easy for him. Despite the keen support of Pope Pius IX and a number of friends in Rome, it took a long time to find a suitable place for the seminary. Finally, he decided to rent the former building of the Irish College near the Forum Romanum. In a letter (already quoted) to Père Leberre, a missionary in Gabon, Lannurien describes the problems he had in renting this property; *"The transaction is now completed and I am surrounded by masons and carpenters who are doing the necessary repairs. As soon as Mgr. Kobès arrives (which should be soon) we will move in. Please pray to the Immaculate Heart of Mary that it will be a success. It should have far-reaching effects: 1) It will bring us closer to the Holy Father and the Propaganda, i.e. to the centre of Christian and missionary life; 2) It will do immense good for France by training future Bishops and Vicars General, imbued with the doctrine and the spirit of the Church; 3) It will produce an Italian novitiate, whose products will be able to go to the help of poor Guinea; perhaps they will be better able to support the bad climate there because their own, in Rome, produces a similar heat and consequent fevers"*

When the seminary finally opened on 10th October 1853, there were only 12 students.

A tragic death

For a whole year, Père Lannurien gave himself totally to getting the seminary off the ground and pursuing the business of the Congregation with the Holy See. He was a man completely dedicated to his work both as a formator and a member of a missionary Congregation. At the end of August, 1854, he went to do a retreat with the Jesuits, but after five days he began to experience the first symptoms of cholera which subsequently advanced at alarming speed. The Pope was informed of his sickness and sent one of his assistants to visit him. After great suffering he died during the night of 5/6 September, 1854, at the age of 31. There were so many parallels between his life and that of our first founder, Claude Poullart des Places; while Lannurien was at the Seminaire du Saint-Esprit, he produced a short biography of Poullart. To this day, his body rests in the chapel of the French Seminary in via Santa Chiara.

A time for remembering

The French Seminary is still very much alive and retains a fond memory of its founder. Many events have been

planned to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the foundation, following in the footsteps of Père Lannurien. On October 10th last year, the date on which the first students arrived, we celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving in the chapel of the former Irish seminary. On 12th October we made a pilgrimage to the four great Roman basilicas, as did Lannurien and Kobès in thanksgiving for the blessings they had received. On 1st December we had the joy of being received in private audience by Pope John Paul



Le Père LANNURIEN

II, the very date on which Pius IX received the students and staff in 1853. An anniversary CD was produced of sacred music sung by the college. This year, 2004, we will celebrate our patronal feasts – 8th December and Pentecost – with great solemnity. Finally, from the 18th – 22nd of November, there will be a gathering of former students of the Seminary.



Audience with the Pope on 1st December 2003

Libermann and the French Seminary

Libermann stayed in Rome from January 1840 until January 1841 while he was waiting for approval from the Propaganda for the “Oeuvres des Noirs”. He lived in great poverty

in the attic of the house of Sig. Patriarca, close to the Piazza Navona. In 1936, the house was due for demolition so the students of the French Seminary dismantled the attic piece by piece and reassembled it on the roof of the French Seminary where it remains to this day, a place of pilgrimage for all Spiritans who visit Rome. It was in this attic that he wrote the Provisional Rule and his Commentary on the Gospel of St. John.

Billy Roger c.s.sp.



The Attic

NEWS ITEMS

GENERAL CHAPTER 2004: LIST OF ALL PARTICIPANTS

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION DELEGATES: EX OFFICIO

Pierre SCHOUVER	Superior General
John FOGARTY	1 st Assistant
Mike ONWUEMELIE	2 nd Assistant
Jean-Michel JOLIBOIS	Assistant
Rogath KIMARYO	Assistant
Antonio FARIAS	Assistant
Jeronimo CAHINGA	Assistant
André LOOS	General Bursar
Robert ELLISON	General Secretary

ELECTED DELEGATES

<i>Circumscription</i>	<i>Name</i>
Amazonia	Teodoro Mendes TAVARES
Angola	Barnabe SAKULENGA João FRANCISCO
Australia + PNG	Paul Walsh
Belgium	Remi PEETERS
Brasil Province + Brasil Central Brasil South-West Alto Jurua	Gijsbertus van TOL George BORAN José Altevira da SILVA

Cabo Verde	Manuel Martins Novais FERREIRA
Canada	Serge HOGUE
CKF	Oscar NGOY
Deutschland + Croatia	Peter MARZINKOWSKI
EAP	Philip MASSAWE Vedastus E. M. BABU Festo ADRABO
England	John McFADDEN
España	Victor Cabezas YAÑEZ
Ethiopia	Philippe SIDOT
F.O.I.	Wenceslas Pierot RABE
FANO + Algeria	Serge BALLANGER
France	Gabriel MYOTTE-DUQUET Christian BERTON Paul RONSSIN Gilles PAGÈS
Haïti	Pierre CHERFILY
Ireland + US Irish	Brendan HALLY Michael BEGLEY Patrick PALMER
Kenya	Martin KEANE
Madagascar	Jean-Claude JAQUARD

Martinique + Guyane Guadeloupe	Charles AUBREE
Mauritius+ Reunion	Raymond ZIMMERMANN
Mexico + P.to Rico	Peter CONATY
Netherlands	Frans WIJNEN Anton GRUIJTERS
Nigeria	Peter EHINMIRO Gabriel EZEWUDO Vitalis IORYHUE Chika ONYEJIUWA Augustine ONYENEKE Remy ONYEWUENYI
P.A.C.	Patrick MBEA Lambert NDJANA Yves NZOUSSI Daniel TABA
Pakistan	John O'BRIEN
Paraguay	Albino Vitor Martins de OLIVEIRA
Philippines-Taiwan	Daniel SORMANI
Polska	Grzegorz KOSIELSKI
Portugal	José Manuel Matias SABENÇA Eduardo F. Miranda FERREIRA
SCAF + Zambia & Malawi	Heinz KUCKERTZ
South Africa	Jude NNOROM
Switzerland	Werner ARNOLD
TransCanada	Pat FITZPATRICK
Trinidad	Herbert Gregory CHARLES
US East	Jim McCLOSKEY
US West	Michael T. GREY
WAP + Gambia	John Bonaventure KWOFIE Peter Kofi LAAST Gabriel LUSENI
Zimbabwe + Mozambique	Leonard Chukwuma EKEANYANWU

FUNCTIONARIES

Name	Function
Michael KILKENNY	General Secretary
José Martins da COSTA	Assistant General Secretary
José de SOUSA	General Manager
Manuel GONÇALVES	Moderator
Jean-Paul HOCH	Moderator
Eugene UZUKWU	Moderator
Eamon MULCAHY	Translator
Bede UKWUIJE	Translator
Vincent O'TOOLE	Translator
Michel ROBERT	Translator
Damien MEKI	Translator
Marc TYRANT	Translator
Manuel Carmo GOMES	Translator

Antonio NDJAMBA	Translator
Jose MENDES	Translator
Jean-Michel GELMETTI	Translator
Nicolas NOAH	Translator
John KILCRANN	Translator
James FLYNN	Translator
Victor Martins da SILVA	Translator
Haroldo ALVES	Translator
Paul McAULEY	Secretary (English)
Elvis ELENGBEKA	Secretary (French)
Verissimo TELES	Secretary (Portuguese)
Edward O'FARRELL	Computer Secretary (English)
Albert LE FLOC'H	Computer Secretary (French)
José de Castro OLIVEIRA	Computer Secretary (Portuguese)
Firmino CACHADA	Liturg
Adelio Torres NEIVA	Retreat
Philip NG'OJA	Information / Communications
Gaudence MUSHI	Information / Communications
Carlos R. SALGADO	Chapter Bursar

SPECIAL INVITEES LAY ASSOCIATES

Name	Region
Chooi Young LAM WING CHEUNG	FOI
	Europe
	America

Decisions of the General Council

The Superior General with the consent of his Council confirms the election of Fr. Jude NNOROM as Superior of the District of Southern Africa, for a mandate of three years, with effect from 1st March 2004.

OUR DEAD

26 November	Fr. Louis LACOSTE France 88
28 November	Fr. Manuel A. FERREIRA Portugal 82
30 November	Br. OCTAVIEN SALBER France 84
06 December	Fr. Michel LUNARDINI France 69
31 December	Fr. Richard O'DWYER..... Ireland 74
03 January	Fr. Eugene WEBER France 83
05 January	Fr. Norman BEVAN..... US/E 66
12 January	Fr. Michael J. O'CARROLL..... Ireland 92
12 January	Fr. Max RABOUD Switzerland 87
24 January	Fr. Franz LAMBERT Belgium 78
24 January	Fr. Anton MORGENROTH US/W 91
28 January	Fr. Francis KANDA US/E 75
02 February	Fr. Gilles SILLARD France 91
04 February	Fr. Robert GRAVES..... USA/E 81
13 February	Fr. Nicolaus F. VEEN N/Lands 89
14 February	Fr. Patrick HOLLAND Ireland 78
15 February	Fr. Timothy MCDONOUGH..... USA/E 74