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SPIRITAN NEWS

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

The Province of Portugal

The Province of Portugal prepares itself to host the 19th General Chapter of the Congregation, taking place in a few months' time. In this publication we have decided to give an account of this dynamic province whose beginning goes back to the wish of our founder, Fr Libermann. Today, of the ten provinces of Europe, it still remains one of the most dynamic and active province.

The country

Portugal, which is situated at the extreme south-west of Europe, is one of the countries of the European Union. It also includes the archipelagoes of Madeira and the Azores in the Atlantic Ocean.

On the continent of Europe, Portugal has an area of 88,889 km². It is 218 km wide and 516 km long; the Atlantic coastline is 832 km. long and the frontier with Spain is 1,215 km.

The Azores, which are between the continents of Europe and North America, have a surface area of 2,355 km². They consist of nine islands: Saint Michel and Sainte Marie in the east, Terceira, Gracioso, St. Georges, Pico and Faial in the centre, and Flores and Corvo in the west.

The archipelago of Madeira is 741 km². It is in the Atlantic Ocean, around 500 km from the African coast and 1,000 km from Europe. It is made up of Madeira and Porto Santo, as well as the uninhabited islands of Desertas and Selvagens which are nature reserves.

The population of Portugal is 10,048,232 (July 2000), of whom 94% are Catholics.

History of the Province

The idea of founding a house in Portugal as a springboard for a renewed evangelisation of Portuguese Africa was a dream that Libermann had already had in 1851. We have two references to this plan in the letters of Mgr. Bessieux (Prefect Apostolic of the two Guineas) and Père Lannurien. Libermann thought about sending Lannurien and Bessieux to Portugal to look into the possibilities. The idea was taken

up again a few years later by Père Charles Duparquet but had to be abandoned, because the political atmosphere in Portugal at the time was not favourable.

In 1866, the Congregation of the Holy Spirit accepted responsibility for the Apostolic Prefecture of the Congo at the request of the Holy See. The mission had been confided to the Capuchins but they were no longer able to carry out this assignment. Even before the Congregation was established in Portugal, French Spiritans had been sent to the Prefecture, but it was not long before they realised the difficulty of evangelizing a Portuguese colony without having first reached an understanding with the authorities. It was obvious that a spiritan house would have to be established at Lisbon; it would look after the business of the Prefecture of the Congo and, at the same time, try to find Portuguese missionaries for the work of evangelising their colonies.

The project was put in the hands of Père Charles Duparquet who had set up contacts with the Apostolic Nuncio and the Patriarch of Lisbon,

as well as members of the government who were ready to support the initiative. Santarém seemed to be the ideal place: it was close to the capital and was the site of the patriarchal seminary which had expressed its willingness to receive future spiritan seminarians.



• = Spiritan presence in Portugal

Thus, by a decree of 31st August 1867, the Superior General, with the unanimous consent of his Council, decided to found a new house at Santarém with the title "The Congo Seminary", consecrated from the start to the Holy Spirit.

The new community was in a modest house in the street of S. Lázaro, close to the seminary. It opened on 3rd November 1867 with four French Spiritans: two priests, Charles Duparquet and Antoine Carrie, and two students – Alexandre Rulhe (the future Provincial) and Dissard Léon. Both would soon become the foundation stones of the future Portuguese Province.

It was not long before candidates started coming. On 29th October 1868, the Swiss Spiritan, Père Joseph Gabbard Eigenmann, came to replace Père Duparquet who had asked to return to the Congo.

It soon became clear that Santarém could not fulfil the needs of the work as foreseen, so in 1870, they moved to St. Bernard's College in Gibraltar. But this also proved to be unsatisfactory and they left again in 1871. After further wanderings, Père Eigenmann finally fixed on the College of San Geraldo at Braga in 1872. Here he found a place where he could establish "*a house where they could receive students from the secondary school and the diocesan seminary to live according to a rule and religious discipline*". It was very similar to the foundation of Poullart des Places in 1703. This was the start of the house at Braga which came to be called the "Colégio do Espírito Santo", the cradle of the future Portuguese Province.

Soon, two other colleges were founded: Santa Maria at Porto and the Institut Fisher in the Azores. In 1887, the Colonial Agricultural School started at Sintra for the training of future brothers for work on the missions. This was followed by the setting up of a seminary for philosophy and theology in the same place in 1890. In 1884, the Colégio do Espírito Santo was split up with the creation of the "Seminário da Formiga" for teaching the humanities. In 1896, the clerical novitiate was established at Sintra and in 1908, the major seminary was transferred from Sintra to Carnide on the outskirts of Lisbon.

When Père Eigenmann became a General Councillor in 1896, he was replaced as Provincial by Père Rulhe, a post he retained until 1901 when ill-health forced him to retire. Père Eigenmann replaced him "ad interim". Père José Maria Antunes, the superior of the mission of Hulla in Angola, became Provincial of Portugal in 1904 and he fixed his residence at the Procure that had been bought in Lisbon.

When Père Rulhe had taken over as Provincial, the Province was already well established: 7 communities with all the necessary houses of formation, 35 priests and 47 brothers.

With the coming of the republican government in Portugal in 1910, a religious persecution broke out and all the houses

of the Congregation in Portugal were confiscated. Nearly all the Spiritans had to take refuge in France or Belgium. A small group was finally set up at Zamora in Spain where it was possible to continue with the training of the seminarians.

In 1919, when the political climate had improved somewhat, P. Moisés Alves de Pinho, at that time a refugee in France, was appointed Provincial of Portugal and mandated to restore the Province. It was canonically erected on 2nd February 1921, by the Superior General, Mgr. Alexandre Le Roy. Meanwhile, P. Pinho had opened a house in the former property of the Congregation, "Quinta do Charqueiro" in Bento Miguel road. In 1922, a seminary was started at Godim, a village close to Régua, and in the same year, a house of philosophy and theology was opened at Viana do Castelo. In 1927, the work at Braga was transferred to "Quinta do Fralão" on the outskirts of Braga. In 1942, the clerical novitiate that had been founded in Braga in 1934 was moved to Silva Barcelos. Finally, the theological scholasticate transferred from Viana do Castelo to Quinta da Torre d'Aguilha, at São Domingos de Rana, near Lisbon.



Torre d'Aguilha

The present situation of the Province

The Missionary work of the Province

The Province currently has 199 members, of whom 60 are working ad extra (16 in Angola, 16 in Cabo Verde, 12 in Brazil and Amazonia, 2 in Guinea-Bissau, 1 in Paraguay, 2 in São Tomé e Príncipe, 3 in Spain, 3 in Canada, 1 in the USA). Recently, without abandoning its historical commitments, the Province has tried to reply to the calls of the Congregation and to spread its missionary involvement to other areas, such as Mexico (1), Mozambique (2), Guinea Conakry (1) and Taiwan (1).

Mission seen as a commitment to Justice and Peace is an essential part of the life and work of the Province. In this context, there has been considerable investment of finance and personnel in several projects: a Centre for the welcoming and support of immigrants; CEPAC (the Padre Alves Correia Centre; three hospital chaplaincies; a new parish near

Torre d'Aguilha where there are many immigrants; a greater involvement in the problems of Justice and Peace at the national level. The publications of the Province also pay much attention to these aspects.

Spiritual and community dynamism

The Province has launched several initiatives to attain a new spiritual and communitarian dynamism. Amongst these are:

- The *Pro Anima* programme which provides texts for personal and community reflection;
- Annual consultative Provincial Councils with all the superiors and bursars;
- Reflections on a special theme for Christmas and the Easter provincial assemblies;
- Greater attention to the nature of the roles of superiors and bursars;
- Various activities during the Spiritan Year which increased the enthusiasm of confreres in the Province and their joy in their vocation.

Missionary awareness and shared mission

It has been a traditional task for us to make Christian communities aware of the universal mission of the Church. In recent years, there has been a significant advance in this direction as lay people are taking on a more important role in reflection, decision-making and a deeper appreciation and understanding of mission and spiritan spirituality. The Episcopal Conference of Portugal has given approval to the statutes of LIAM (300 parish groups), MOPIP (150 teachers) and "*Young people without Frontiers*" (35 groups) – all three of these movements having been founded by Spiritans. Spiritan Fraternities have been set up and a volunteer missionary movement for young people is also developing. A centre of Spiritan Spirituality (CESM) has been established to help in the formation of lay spiritan associates. The spiritan missionary press ("*Acção Missionária*", and "*Encontro*" amongst others) has followed and supported this effort. The new review "*Missão Espiritana*" offers a deeper reflection on mission.

Vocations and formation

Vocations have always been a prime concern of the Province but, as elsewhere in Europe, there is a lessening of missionary commitment for life. Despite these problems, much effort has been put into this pastoral work through the Spiritan Vocational Centre for adolescents and young people. Missionary life is presented in its different aspects and there is a small group of young people at different stages of formation; accompaniment in the family, secondary studies, philosophy (Postulancy) and theology.

Recently, the 2nd cycle formation house (theology) has become international. A small group of Portuguese and Africans are being trained together in preparation for the international and inter-cultural life of the Congregation.

Solidarity and material goods

The solidarity of the Province towards the mission of the Congregation has increased over the last six years. At the same time, several of our houses have undergone restoration. Under the pressure of urbanisation, the Province has had to dispose of some of its rural inheritance and invest in other buildings for the support of our mission. Some houses have been put at the disposal of social projects to help deprived people in certain areas (Godim and Espadanido). The community of Braga, following an arrangement with the association of San Tiago which is occupying the house at Espadanido, has established an annex for old and sick members of the Province.

Looking to the future with hope

Despite the difficulties that it shares in common with the other Provinces of Europe (ageing of confreres, lessening of vocations), Portugal is looking with confidence to the future. The theme of the last Provincial Council (2003) was: "*There is a hope for your future*". This hope is based on the young people who are coming to join us in the spiritan life and the many lay people who help in promoting missionary awareness, some of whom are keen to share the spirituality and mission of the Congregation in fraternities and voluntary missionary work.

Meeting of European Provincials: Dublin, 21-29 January, 2004

The Provincials meet each year to study the dossiers prepared by the various commissions and their Secretariat in Brussels. There were several subjects on the programme for this year:

- The missionary projects of the European Region. It is evident that Europe is a continent in need of evangelisation. How can we Spiritans make our missionary charism grow in this area in international and inter-cultural communities?
- Preparation for the General Chapter. How can we strengthen the unity of our Congregation and play our role in the future despite our fragility? We will rely on



Participants at the Meeting

the rest of the Congregation in the difficult years ahead. How can we retain our hope, despite everything?

- Assessment of the work of the Region. What work have the Commissions been doing? How do we see the future of the Region, even at the juridical level? Arrangements for the European Novitiate which will open in September, 2004. Assessment of the activities of our Brussels office.

We are all aware that the Congregation will face difficult times in Europe, even the question of survival in some areas. We must not lose hope; Spiritan Europe is convinced that the confreres from around the world will give their

support. So now is the time to set up missionary projects and pursue the great adventure of evangelisation.

Much work lies ahead for the superiors of the Region. They have great hopes that the General Chapter will confirm them in their vocation and their works.

Fr. J. Gordjin, a member of the Dutch provincial team, will co-ordinate the work of the European Region this year.

The Province of Ireland hosted the meeting with its usual fraternal kindness.

Based on the report of J-P Gaillard, Brussels.

NEWS ITEMS

The 2004 General Chapter: An Interactive Chapter

A few weeks ago, the Superior General sent a letter to all the members of the Congregation informing them that the coming General Chapter will be interactive: He writes "It is our intention to avail of these new communication techniques at the forthcoming Chapter in Torre d'Aguilha and to have, for the first time in our history, an interactive Chapter with the aid of the Internet".

His letter contains information about ways in which those who will not be present at the General Chapter (as delegates) may be able to participate in some way in the Chapter process, either by e-mail or by the Spiritan intranet website and it further indicates that information with regard to the content and orientations of the Chapter as it progresses will be sent out on a regular basis to the wider Congregation in two ways:

- * via the current e-mail addresses of circumscriptions, communities and individual members (some 900 at the moment);
- * via the Spiritan intranet website (mission-cssp.pcn.net). On occasion, specific questions will be asked with a view to a response.

The Superior General also underlines the fact that "a General Chapter is an event that involves and challenges every single member, young and old, of our Spiritan family. While only a restricted number of elected delegates can take part in the proceedings, it is essential that the Chapter discussions reflect the joys, the concerns and the hopes of the entire Congregation. The final orientations and decisions of the Chapter should speak to each individual member in the reality of his Spiritan life and mission".

With this in mind, we request all those confreres who have an e-mail address and are not in our mailing list and therefore are not receiving our regular Spiritan Newsflash, to send their e-mail address through csspinfo@tin.it to the office of information service. This list which currently has some 900 e-mail addresses will be used at the coming General Chapter.

All the delegates to the General Chapter will also need to have an e-mail address that they can access during the Chapter. If any delegate does not have one and is not able to obtain one let us know so that arrangements could be made.

GENERAL CHAPTER 2004: Corrections/ additions to the list of participants

ELECTED DELEGATES

France: Raymond JUNG replaces Paul RONSSIN

FUNCTIONARIES

Name	Function
José Lopes de SOUSA	General Manager
Pedro Miguel Valinho GOMES	Translator
Carlo S. RIBEIRO	Chapter Bursar

SPECIAL INVITEES : LAY ASSOCIATES

Name	Region
Mary Ann LAM	FOI
Jean-Pierre ROESCH	Europe

Decisions of the General Council

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, nominates Fr John HELU as Major Superior of the International Group of Malawi for a mandate of three years, with effect from the 31st May 2004.

Following consultation of the members of the Bagamoyo Group, the Province of Nederland and the EAP, and in keeping with SRL 249.3.1, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council canonically suppresses the Group of Bagamoyo, as from the 8th March 2004, and those who at this date have been members of the Group are appointed to the East African Province.

OUR DEAD

26 Feb.	Fr. Johannes van der BURG	N/Lands 88
28 Feb.	Fr. Aaron GYAMFI-APPIAH	WAP 47
28 Feb.	Fr. David REGAN	Ireland 77
02 Mar.	Br. Rudolphus SCHOONDERBEEK	N/Lands 73
03 Mar.	Fr. Bryan O'CONNOR	Ireland 84
16 Mar.	Fr. John KANDA	US/E 88
19 Mar.	Fr. John SHEEHY	Ireland 86
26 Mar.	Fr. Charles PETIT	France 84
26 Mar.	Br. Jean CRANSVELD	Belgium 95
08 Apr.	Fr. John RONDEAU	US/E 92