

ECHOES of the General Council



Number 87 - September 2015

The General Council held its regular session from 14 to 26 September 2015 at Casa Generalizia, Rome.

This session revisited quite particularly what was lived and shared during the International Assembly of the Mennaisian Family at Ploërmel, last Summer. The next "Letter to the Mennaisian Family", will develop the orientations taken by the General Council following this important event.

This issue of the Echoes brings to the whole Congregation the following information and decisions:

1. Animation of the Congregation

a. Visiting of Provinces and Districts :

In preceding months, the Brothers of the General Council visited various areas of the Congregation. Below are some highlights of these visits:

- **Canada** : Following the resignation of Bro Gabriel Gélinas for health reasons, Bro. Yannick Houssay visited all the communities of the Province last July. Thereafter, the General Council, proceeded with the appointment of the new Provincial and his Assistant.
- **Rwanda** : Brother Gildas Prigent participated in the Council of the John-Paul II District, which took place in Rwanda. The District knows a real dynamism of growth. Numerous candidates present themselves to the Postulate, but in order to discern better their vocation, one year of pre-Postulate was added.
- **Togo** : Brother Gildas participated in the ceremony of the perpetual vows of Brothes Frédéric Kontiwa and Brother Jules Tone at Dapaong, and of the first vows of seven young Brothers. This ceremony was attended by many faithful. The Brothers are aware of paying particular attention to the Vocations ministry. Besides, one year of pre-postulate was also established at Ogaro. It will be followed by one year of Postulate at Thian (Benin)
- **Uganda** : The Province is undergoing a period of administrative transition with the appointment of a new Provincial Superior. Brother Gerard also participated in a meeting of the three Major Superiors involved in the houses of formation in Uganda, with the aim of the implementation of the new statutes of the Scholasticate. Another meeting will take place in October with the three Councils of the sectors concerned by the initial formation (Uganda, Tanzania-Kenya, and Rwanda) during Brother Yannick's next visit to Uganda.
- **Tanzania** : Bro Gerard Byaruhanga attended the meeting of the new Provincial Council at Moshi.
- **Haiti** : During his visit, Brother Guillermo Dávila met the 13 young Brothers gathered for a week of formation. After attending the session of the Provincial Council, and the meeting of the Mennaisian Family Commission, he visited together with the Brother Provincial and some members of the Council, the place of the new educative mission, called "Cité Soleil". Then he

intervened in the Brothers' annual retreat of the Province, and participated in the ceremony of the first vows of 5 young Brothers. Next year, there will be no Novices, for an additional year of formation in community was organised for the Postulants.

- **Mexico** : Three meetings took place during Brother Guillermo's stay: a day with all the religious men and women of the area within the framework of the year of the Consecrated Life; a meeting with young people and laymen to present the Brother's and the Mennaisian Layman 's vocations; and a meeting with the Mennaisian Family to present the Theme of the year.

b. Events of last July-August 2015

- The **session for Brothers aged from 35 to 55 gathered** 14 Brothers this year: 6 from Uganda, 4 from Tanzania-Kenya, 2 from Haiti and 2 from Western Africa. The testimonies of the participants and of the Formators echoed an undeniable benefit that the participants acquired from this time of formation.
- The **2nd International Assembly of the Mennaisian Family** took place in Ploërmel from 16 till 21 August of this year with 90 participants of 25 different nationalities. All the reflection was organised around four main themes: Mission Team - Formation - Organization of the Mennaisian Family and the Mennaisien Educative Project. The next "Letter to the Mennaisian Family" will share the important orientations decided by the General Council and which will be implemented. Everyone underlined the quality of the experience of Family, which was lived during these days. Certainly, there exists an important diversity of the reality of the Mennaisian Family according to the various sectors, but far from being an obstacle to the building of the Mennaisian Family, it was really seen and lived as a richness.
- **Session for the young religious in Rome** in Rome from 15 to 19 September 2015: two young student Brothers of the Casa lived with a lot of spirit this event of the Church which gathered 5000 consecrated young people from the whole world. "*Wake up the world by the Gospel, Prophecy and Hope* ": more than a song, it was the leitmotiv (main theme) of the whole week. Pope Francis recommended the young religious men and women to live the proximity, the prophecy of the witness, the apostolic zeal, and the memory (always to remember!) Calls which involve every Brother, every Community.

c. Theme of the Year

- All the communities received documents for the implementation of the Theme of year "**Merciful as the Father** ". Other documents are being prepared and will be sent. We are all invited to enter into the grace of the Jubilee wanted by Pope Francis and which will begin on the 8th December of this year.
- **As for The year of the Consecrated Life**, it continues until February 2nd, 2016. On this occasion, all the Brothers who are in Rome will be invited to live one day " As religious Brothers " on October 24th, 2015. All the sectors of the Congregation are encouraged to live where it is possible, such an experience with Brothers of other Congregations.

d. Text on the Brother's vocation

- It will be published by the CIVCSVA and will be translated into six languages. It should be available soon. As soon as it is published, Provinces and Districts will be informed on how to get it.

e. Commission for « Justice and Peace»

The Commission for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) was formalised as a joint working group with USG / UISG in 1982. Institutionalised in 1982 as a joint work-group of the Union of the Superiors General (USG) and the International Union of Superiors General (UISG).

Pope Francis, in his last Encyclical reminds us of the challenge of all forms of ecology. The dramas of the immigrants and the refugees in Europe echo so painfully the injustice and the violations of the Human rights.

Brother Gil Rozas, continues to represent the Congregation. He will make known the proposals of this commission.

1. Decisions of Brother Superior General and his Council

2.1 Nominations

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council took the following decisions:

Brother **Mario HOULE**, is appointed Provincial of the John de la Mennais Province (Canada-Mexico) for a term of 6 years.

Brother **Claude GELINAS**, is appointed as Assistant Provincial of the John de la Mennais Province (Canada-Mexico) for a term of 3 years.

2.1 Other nominations

Brother **Joseph TINKASIMIRE**, is appointed as Master of Novices at the Novitiate of Kasasa (Uganda) for a new term of 3 years.

Brother **Charles MUSISI**, is appointed as Director of the Scholasticate of Kisubi (Uganda) for a term of 3 years, from January 2016.

Brother **Stéphane LE PAPE**, is appointed Delegate for the Mission of Indonesia for a new term of 3 years.

2.2 Admissions to perpetual profession

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, admitted to perpetual profession:

Brother **Eric OLANG'** from Saint Michael the Archangel Province (Tanzania-Kenya).

2.3 New Educative Centers

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, authorised the opening of:

Three new schools: a 'School Complex John-Mary de la Mennais' at **Bunia** and a 'School Complex Raymond-Hamelin' at **Dungu** in **Congo RDC** and a school at **Gisenyi** in **Rwanda** (it will begin as a vocational school).

2.3 Decisions of the General Council for the Mennaisian Family

Following the International Assembly of the Mennaisian Family, the Brother Superior General, with the consent of his Council, has taken the following 6 orientations:

1) The General Council will propose to the Major Superiors to draft a basic text which will provide benchmarks for the establishment of the Mission teams.

2) To support the establishment of formation structures for the Mennaisian Family, the General Council has decided to provide special assistance to the Provinces and Districts of the African Continent, by the implementation of a formation for Laity and Brothers.

3) The General Council will organise the creation of a database. All documents developed in the Provinces and Districts or by the General Council will thus be available to all.

4) To reflect about the creation of a "Worldwide Association of Young Mennaisians" (asked by The General Chapter of 2012), the General Council will propose to the Laity, Brothers and young people, who, throughout the Congregation carry out many initiatives of animation, taking a path together that leads to concrete decisions.

5) The General Chapter of 2012 had requested that an international commission be set up (see CG p. 47). Considering the benefits that this initiative would bring, the General Council decided to establish a temporary commission. The mission of this commission will be to reflect with the General Council in respect of the animation, formation and organisation of the Mennaisian Family.

6) Through a reflection carried out throughout the Mennaisian Family, the General Council wishes to write up a Mennaisian Educational project as requested by the General Chapter 2012. This text will be an instrument that will offer to all our educational centres around the world to take "the Gospel as inspiration" (see CG 8) of their educational project, in line with the Mennaisian charism.



2.4 African Assembly

The last Echoes announced this African Assembly, organised for the Major Superiors of the two Provinces and the two Districts and their Councils.

It will take place at **Kisubi (Uganda) from the 29th February to the 5th March 2016**

This Assembly will be first of all a time of mutual knowledge in order to better understand the African reality, for it is a first meeting of this kind. Another African Assembly had taken place in 1998 on the Initial Formation, but Councilors were not involved. Then the participants will share the perspectives of Religious Life in Africa and its dynamism, but also our mission within the framework of the Mennaisian Family, the challenges and the stakes of today and of tomorrow.

It will also be a time of formation and reflection about the role of the Provincial Council and its running.

2.5 New sessions of Brothers

Brother Superior General, with the consent of his Council, has decided to run other two sessions of Brothers :

A Session for Brothers aged from 35 to 55 at Ploërmel in July and August 2016.

A Session for Brothers preparing for perpetual profession, at Castelgandolfo from 12 of July to 12 of August 2016.

Calendar of the members of the General Council

Brother Yannick HOUSSAY

10 Oct – 10 November:	Uganda
11 Nov. – 1er December:	Rome
December:	Abidjan
	Rome
January:	Togo – Benin
15 February:	Rome

Brother Gildas PRIGENT

6 – 28 October:	France
28 Oct – 1 ^{rst} December:	Japan-Philippines-Indonesia
1 ^{rst} December – half January:	France
Mid- January – beginning February:	Senegal
15 February:	Rome

Brother Gerard BYARUHANGA

30 Sept. – 10 February:	Uganda – Tanzania – Kenya
15 February:	Rome

Brother Guillermo DÁVILA

2 – 23 October:	Mexico and USA
24 October:	Rome, and Spain.
17 November:	Rome
4 – 22 December:	Uganda – Tanzania-Kenya (Sessions of the Mennaisian Family)
23 Dec. – 10 February:	Uruguay – Chili – Haiti.
15 February:	Rome

The next session of the General Council will be held from 14 to 26 February in Rome