



Letter to the Mennaisian Family

October 2015



AS A BIG TREE ...



Orientations proposed by the General Council of the Congregation to the Mennaisian Family,

following the Assembly of Ploërmel in August 2015

In August 2015, we had a wonderful experience in Ploërmel (France), that of a united and enthusiastic Mennaisian family. I think we have experienced "the family style" that Pope Francis wants for the whole Church.

Laity and Brothers together from five continents, we sought to give strength to the tree of the Mennaisian presence in the world. We wanted to symbolise it by planting a tree, a *Liquidambar*, in the garden of the Mother House. This beautiful tree, when it is grown, will adorn the park with the colour of its greenery and its flowers, and provide shade to visitors. It will symbolise the Mennaisian family tree in its diversity and in its fertility worldwide. Each Province and each District is a branch which deploys its own vivacity to welcome, protect and give strength to the "birds" - the children and youth of our schools – who come to perch there. The next time you visit Ploërmel, ask to see it. You will then think of presenting to God all those whom you serve.

Today, all of us are called upon to support and develop the energy and life that gives beauty to the tree that the Mennaisian Family is. As noted by one author, "we do not sculpt an edible apple, as we do not grow grass by uprooting it." We are rather playing the role of a farmer who welcomes a dynamism that he has not produced. "The farmer recognises that the fruit is not only that of his efforts, but above all that of nature, of an initial gift, of a form and of a formulation of which he did not have any idea "(Fabrice Hadjadj). This is indeed our Mennaisian family, since this is the Mennaisian charism.



Letter to the Mennaisian Family

Let us remember what Jean-Marie de la Mennais wrote: "*I started my work at Saint-Brieuc with two young men...who did not know more than me what we were going to do ... gradually, the grain of mustard seed became a great tree ... it is the Lord who did this!*" We must understand the meaning of this statement: "It is the Lord who did this!" We know this passage from Saint Paul: "*I have planted, Apollos watered; but it's God who gives the growth. So neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but he who gives the growth, God. We are God's fellow workers*" (1 Cor 3: 6-9). We are then co-operators of a work that is beyond us. We're not involved in starting it, but we are invited into its dynamism. Together, we must take this way that leads to joy because it is a source of donation and not of withdrawal. It opens to the One who is the source of all life. It makes us bearers of life to those who crave a Love that precedes and attracts us, and that, in the Church, we recognise to be Jesus Christ himself

We are at the service of a work that is already there by the grace of the Spirit of God. In this sense, we can say: it is not our work; it is God's. We are servants, everyone, whatever our state of life or our own mission: brothers, lay people, school principals, teachers, parents, service personnel, students, etc., in the service of this magnificent work that is to welcome and assist the growth of a tree whose branches extend throughout the planet. We are brothers and sisters in the service of this work that demands our enthusiasm and generosity. We are like the farmer who looks proudly at the growing seed to which he lovingly provides all the care they need.

The General Council, meanwhile, has tried to make its own contribution to the growth of this tree. It is for this purpose that it organised the Mennaisian family Assembly. Now it is the G.C., with you, to support its development. In these pages you will therefore find the decisions taken at its Session in September 2015 in Rome. I invite you to read them carefully in order to welcome and accompany with your generous commitment the growth of our Mennaisian family.

Let us ask our founders to help us listen to the Spirit as they did, and to follow His inspirations with joy and courage.

Brother Yannick Houssay, s. g.



DECISIONS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

September 2015

1. An International Commission of the Mennaisian family.

The General Chapter of 2012 requested that under the responsibility of the General Council an international commission be set up (see CG p. 47). Considering the benefits that this initiative would bring, the General Council decided, taking into account the diversity of situations, 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 organization of the Mennaisian Family. It must, among other things, define what form the **International Commission of the Mennaisian Family** desired by the General Chapter will take.

2. Mission Teams.

The Mission Team is a group of Brothers and Laity instructed by the Provincial or the Visitor, to accompany, coordinate and facilitate the educational mission in the Province or District. Already such teams exist in parts of the congregation but not in all. The General Council will propose to the Major Superiors to draft a **basic text** which will provide benchmarks for the establishment of these teams.

3. A database.

The General Council will organise the creation of a **database**.

All documents concerning the initial and ongoing formation of Brothers and Laity, as well as pastoral care for youth and developed in the Provinces and Districts or by the General Council, will thus be available to all.



Letter to the Mennaisian Family

4. A Formation Session across the African continent.

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. They will reflect with major Superiors on the implementation of the **formation for Laity and Brothers** that will generate among participants greater engagement locally in the areas of animation, formation and organisation of the Mennaisian Family.



5. A Mennaisian Education Project

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: *"The General Council will initiate in conjunction with the Provinces and Districts, a reflection which clarifies and defines the mission and the Mennaisian style of evangelization."*(CG 7)



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.

6. A Mennaisian Youth Association.

The General Chapter of 2012 emphasised the "need for developing communion between young people across the Mennaisian Family". For that they proposed a reflect on the creation of "**A Worldwide Association of Young Mennaisians** " (GC No. 15). To answer this call, 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.