

ECHOES of the General Council



Number 85 - February 2015

The General Council held its regular meeting from 16th to 28th February, 2015 at the Community of Bethany, Ciboure (FRANCE).

This session was preceded on 14th February by a meeting with the Spanish and French Brothers in view of the first draft of what will be the events to mark the bicentenary of the Congregation in 2019.

Then on Saturday 28th February was held another meeting of Brothers and lay people of the two provinces (St. John the Baptist and Nuestra Señora del Pilar) to prepare for the International Assembly of the Mennaisian Family to be held in Ploërmel in August.

Between these two dates, the General Council studied various issues and reflected on how the General Chapter was implemented in the Congregation.

1. Overview of the Congregation

In recent months, the Brothers of the General Council visited various parts of the Congregation. Some highlights of these visits:

- **Togo-Benin:** Brother Gildas Prigent visited the communities of both countries and witnessed the commitment of Brothers and lay people in schools which are growing in workforce. On the other hand, he participated in a District Council during which he discussed the evolution of the two years of Postulate at Thian to a pre-Postulate year at Ogaro for an educational and pastoral experience, and one year of Postulate at Thian.
- **Spain:** Brother Yannick visited 12 Spanish communities. He noted with joy the dynamism of the Brothers and lay people engaged in educational work. The establishment, following the Provincial Chapter, of a Mission Team and an Animation Team at the Provincial level, are good tools for growth and the animation of the Mennaisian family, Brothers and lay people.
- **Haiti:** It was the first canonical visitation of the Province by Brother Guillermo. It was found that communities and institutions run by the Brothers are real places of education and evangelization. The province is investing heavily in the vocation ministry and initial formation. For the latter, the Province seeks, adapting the current formula, to promote better integration and personal growth of new candidates. Recently, the Haitian Conference of Religious men and women (CHR) echoed its national concern about abuses for which religious communities are victims throughout the country.
- **Mexico:** the collaboration between the Province Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague and Mexico progresses. Brother Gaétan Arseneault went to Haiti and presented the mission of Mexico. A Haitian Brother will participate in a meeting of Mexican youth at Easter, and another during the Summer camp where more than 400 young people are expected.

- **USA:** Brother Gerard Byaruhanga has echoes of the "shock" to the Province on the death of Brother Guy Rody in January. The latter was the Assistant Provincial, and the Superior of the Walsh community.
- **Uganda:** Bro. Gerard Byaruhanga shared the important events in the Province of Uganda, especially the first vows of 6 young Brothers, the admission to the Novitiate of 18 young people from Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, and Rwanda; the renewal of vows by 27 Brothers, the perpetual profession of three Brothers of the Province, and the celebration of some Jubilarians. On the 1st December a Formation session of the Mennaisian Family was held in Kisubi, led by Brother Guillermo.
- **Tanzania-Kenya:** The works of the Province enjoy real vitality. In recent years, the Province was pleased to welcome new young Brothers, the majority of whom hail from Kenya. Brother Guillermo, as at Kisubi, led a Formation session of the Mennaisian family in Moshi.
- **South America:** Brother Guillermo participated in several events: the annual retreat of all the Brothers, the meeting of local Superiors of the 4 countries, the Assembly of the Brothers of Chile and Bolivia and the Assembly of all the Brothers of the Cono Sur.
- **Philippines-Japan:** Brother Yannick had the opportunity to meet the 4 Scholastics in Manila: a formation community of four young Brothers (2 Indonesians, and 2 Filipinos) and their Formators. Then he visited other communities in Pandan and San Jose. He was pleased to see the new effort that the Brothers provide for the pastoral care of vocations. He also noted the good work of the laity who are in-charge of our Japanese schools in liaison with the Brothers
- **Indonesia:** The mission in Indonesia is in full swing. Two new buildings are a clear testimony: our new elementary school in Larantuka (opening in July for the new school year) and the construction of the Postulate-Novitiate in Yogyakarta.
- **France-England:** Brothers Yannick and Gildas have visited most of the communities of the Province - including that of Liverpool - except those of Morbihan and the Côtes d'Armor, which will be visited later. They found that, despite the aging communities, the Brothers and lay people carry out important work of animation in the service of the network of schools and the Mennaisian family. The lack of Brothers' vocations is a suffering for all. But hope remains, and is manifested particularly by many proposals made to young people.

2. Decisions of the Superior General and his Council

2.1 Appointments

The Superior General, with the consent of his council, appoints:

Brother **Miguel Aristondo**, Provincial of the Province of Nuestra Señora del Pilar (pain-Chile-Bolivia) for a new term of 3 years.

Brother **Rafa Pérez**, Assistant Provincial of the same Province, for a term of 3 years.

Brother **Michel Gougeon**, Director of the Scholasticate of Manila for a second term of 3 years.

2.2 Admissions to perpetual profession

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, has admitted to perpetual profession Brother **Jules TONE**, of the District of Saint Paul (Benin-Togo, Senegal and Ivory Coast).

3. Future events and their progress.

The Assembly of the Mennaisian Family:

- An important time of the session of the General Council in February was devoted to the preparation of the future international meeting of the Mennaisian family to be held in ***Ploërmel from the evening of 16th to the morning of 22nd August***. The meeting held at the end of the session with Brothers and the French and Spanish lay people helped refine the framework of this meeting which will bring together 77 delegates from all sectors of the Congregation: 45 lay persons and 32 Brothers (including Major Superiors).

Session of formation in Ploërmel:

- Like last year, a ***session for Brothers of 35 to 55 years*** of age will be held in Ploërmel from 15th July to 15th August 2015. This will be followed by the Assembly of the Mennaisian Family.

Celebration of the bicentenary of the Congregation:

- Following the meeting with the Spanish and French Brothers on 14th February, the General Council has studied the dynamics of events that will mark ***the bicentennial celebration*** of the founding of our Institute. It was decided that this celebration will last three years, from June 2017 to September 2020. The preparation work will continue. One of the next steps should lead to the definition of the general theme of the celebrations and the logo which will be its visual support.

Lay Correspondents:

- During the last General Chapter the Laity present had made a number of requests and recommendations. They expressed among other things, the desire *"that under the responsibility of the General Council, an International Commission be set up."*
- The General Council, rather than establish an International Commission, preferred to ask each Province/District to appoint ***a lay-correspondent of the Mennaisian Family***. These correspondents thus form a fraternal bond that allows the General Council to engage directly with the laity without removing the prerogatives of Major Superiors.
- We shall see whether this initiative will be a step towards the establishment of the International Commission.

Writing of the Mennaisian Education Project:

- Work on ***the Mennaisian Educational Project***, in six modules, is launched. The General Council collects the responses from different sectors. After Module 0 (on the Mennaisian school) and Module 1, in progress (on Christ and youth), Module 2 (instruct, educate, evangelize) will be presented to the sectors in the coming weeks. Module 3 (on "going to the peripheries") will be considered at the next International Assembly of the Mennaisian Family in August.

4. Other matters

Approval of the accounts of the General Administration.

- The General Council has taken the time to study the financial Report of the past year. It adopted the draft budget, and reviewed the contributions for the year 2015. The financial results of the Provinces and Districts will be reviewed at the next council.

Kisubi Scholasticate.

- During this session, the General Council adopted the text of the **Statute of Scholasticate at Kisubi**: an important text for the smooth running of this Formation House and to harmonize the responsibilities between the three sectors (Uganda, Tanzania-Kenya, and Rwanda). This text will be implemented at the beginning of the next academic year (1st September 2015).

Mission du South Sudan.

The **South Sudan's** mission continues its development: a second block of classes is currently under construction. Several organizations have assisted (SAL, ASSIFIC, TFS ...) A large donation was granted by the Italian Episcopal Conference. We ask all the Brothers and all the members of the Mennaisian family to pray for this new mission whose challenges are many.

Calendar of the members of the General Council

Brother Yannick HOUSSAY

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| 15 th -30 th March | : Bolivia – Chile |
| 01 st April -15 th April | : Rome |
| 20 th April -5 th May | : USA |
| 18 th May | : Rome, the General Council |

Brother Gildas PRIGENT

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| 6th -22nd March | : Tahiti |
| 22nd March-3rd April | : France |
| 3rd April -5th May | : Indonesia – Philippines |
| 6th May | : Rome, the General Council |

Brother Gerard BYARUHANGA

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| 7 th March - 15 th April | : Uganda |
| 15 th April | : USA, Canada |
| 10 th May | : Rome, the General Council |

Brother Guillermo DÁVILA

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|------------------|-----------------------------|
| 15th -30th March | : Bolivia - Chile |
| April | : Argentina - Uruguay |
| 18th May | : Rome, the General Council |

The next session of the General Council will be held from 18th May to 13th June in Rome.