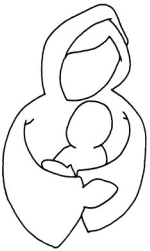


Together, on the way

Letter n° 8
to the Mennaisian Family
Rome December 2012

A Faith on the way...



In this Christmas season when we celebrate the incarnation of the Son of God, we read with great interest the last book of Benedict XVI on the Gospels of Jesus' childhood. Describing the reaction of the parents of Jesus when the latter, aged 12 years, is among the Doctors in the Temple, the Pope notes "Saint Luke describes the reaction of Mary and Joseph at Jesus' words ['Did you not know that I must be in my Father's House?'] (Lk 2,

49)] by two statements: "But they did not understand what he told them, and his mother kept all these things in her heart. 'Jesus' word is too great for the time being. Mary's faith also is a faith "on the way", a faith that, on many occasions, is in darkness and, it is by passing through the darkness, that it must ripen"'

Mary is blessed because she believed. This is what Elizabeth says: "Blessed is she who believed in the fulfillment of the words which were spoken by the Lord." (Lk 1, 45)

Mary is an example for

us to follow. She shows us the path of faith: to hear the words of Jesus, keep them in one's heart, and let them mature gradually. Moreover, as the Pope says: "The words of Jesus again and again are beyond our intelligence. The temptation to reduce, to manipulate them into our measure is understandable." Yet, "to believe means to submit to this greatness and grow step by step towards it."

With Mary, our faith is on the way. With her, let us accept to walk with Jesus who explains the Scriptures to us.



Evangelizing the Family

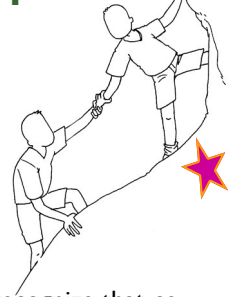
"We are a Mennaisian Family to make Jesus Christ known and loved" by the children and youth of today and their families," wrote the Laity and the Brothers gathered in meeting of the General Chapter in March 2012. The Bishops at the recent Synod on the new evangelization also stressed that urgent appeal to propose the

Gospel of Jesus to families: "We cannot think of a new evangelization without feeling a special responsibility to proclaim the Gospel to families and support them in their educational task"'. In this Christmas season, Joseph and Mary, by welcoming Jesus and presenting him to "men of good will" represent a strong invitation to **explore together** how to

help families to experience how they are "the first place where the Gospel meets with everyday life and shows its ability to transform the fundamental conditions of existence **under the sign of love**"

(Message of the Synod on the new evangelization)

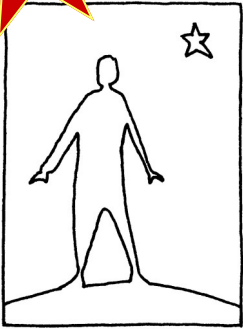
Walking WITH young people



"We recognize that, as Brothers and Lay Mennaisians, we are sent to bring Christ to the youth, and that we must send them to evangelize in their turn," wrote the last Chapter of the Brothers. Young people have in them the enthusiasm of the Holy Spirit that animates them.

We are with them like their elders. We encourage them to go forward, confident in the inspiration that inhabits them. We assist them in the difficult choices they often have to take.

Like the angels of the Lord who, at Christmas, in the sky of Bethlehem, call for rejoicing and dancing, they evangelise us! With them, we want to make the world a song of praise to the glory of God, a kingdom of justice and peace for all, this Kingdom his Son Jesus brought by coming among us. Journeying with the young people supposes our being inhabited by the Gospel of Jesus and that we know how to hear the sweet voice of the Spirit who, like the kids on the square, sing a song of joy that we may dance (cf. Mt 11, 16)



FOLLOWING JESUS in the manner of Jean-Marie de la Mennais.

Here is the testimony of a young Togolese Brother currently in formation at Abidjan. He answers the question that I asked: "What kind of Brother would you like to be tomorrow?"

"My own personal model is Brother Arthur Greffier, because I am convinced that this servant of slaves had Christ as his model. Brother Arthur, a Brother of the time of Father de la Mennais, is remembered for his piety, humility, obedience and sense of service for the black slaves of Martinique. In identifying with this Brother, I will try to be a Brother who has a boundless confidence in prayer because it gives strength to the mission of educating poor children. That will also make me a Brother who lives humility in a genuine and deep manner. Humility is the foundation of all other virtues. Brother Arthur practised obedience, poverty, and chastity with a deep love for the vow of obedience. Like Brother Arthur who was the joy of Father de la Mennais, I shall be dedicated to the cause of the souls of poor children by selfless service."

Brother Albert NAMANI

A journey of prayer

"Inner silence consists in being master of our eyes and our thoughts. A journalist recently gave his own experience in this field. After being shaken internally by a "Silent presence" that imposed itself on him, he rereads his life and explains in a recent book (*Conversion to silence*, Michel Cool, Salvator, 2012), his long and slow discovery of the grace of silence. He talks about this silent presence

as the "sacrament" of the relationship with a living person. He says: "Since then, it never leaves me. I have an irrepressible desire for it, and for it alone, to welcome the birth of each new day. It accompanies my rising, my dressing up, the preparation of breakfast ... For thirty years, I had the morning reflex of any "normal" journalist: turn on the radio ... Since my amazing adventure ...

I do not know any more how to turn my radio on. When I wake up, I now gather my thoughts and meditate by the silence of this secret and discreet Presence: it invites me, first of all, to pray privately with it for the salvation of the world."

(Extract from Circular 308 of Brother Yannick Houssay)

Father de la Mennais speaking to us of the Christmas Crib



"... The Crib is the epitome of the whole Gospel: therefore come there to listen to Jesus Christ, his words will fall on your soul like a gentle dew; they will renew it, they will enliven it and, full of strength and joy, you will return like the shepherds glorifying God and imbued with a sincere desire to take your Saviour as model. Come, come then to the manger of Jesus Christ.... but will you present yourself empty-handed? Do you have nothing to offer him? Ah! it is neither gold nor perfumes that he requests of you, he asks for your heart; however puny this offering might be, ... do not refuse to offer it to him and returning to yourself, drop at his feet ... the spirit of avarice and pride, he will clothe you with his spirit of meekness, humility, simplicity ... "(VI S 1970)

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2013



With the Brothers of the General Council, I am pleased to offer my best wishes for a Happy New Year to all members, young people, and friends of the Mennaisian family. The Holy Family present themselves to us in these days of celebration, as a reminder that love is a free gift and that life is welcomed as the greatest treasure ever. May this year be a song of praise and love that we shall intone together so that nobody is left in sorrow or suffering and that the peace and joy of Jesus spread like a fire that warms and heals.