

A new page



ECHOES OF THE General Council

Number 101 - May - June 2020

The General Council held its ordinary session from 18th May to 6th June, 2020 at the Casa Generalizia in Rome.

Since February-March 2020, the members of the General Council have remained confined to the Casa because of the health crisis which affected the whole world and which suspended all intercontinental travel. Faced with this new situation, new means of social communication have been much sought after to reach the Brothers and Laity of the Mennaisian Family present on the 5 continents. On this occasion, the General Council published, for this period, a new weekly link "Presence and Hope".

Even if the Internet links have not always been easy in all sectors of the Congregation, we must underline all the efforts of the Major Superiors, of the various Brothers and Lay leaders, of the Formators, to strengthen the links and stay close to each other. others, especially children and young people.

During this period, almost all countries have been affected by Covid-19, and some countries are still in the midst of an epidemic, we are particularly thinking of Latin America. The Province of Spain has so far been the most affected sector: 7 Brothers have died in the community of Bilbao. During these painful events, the whole Congregation lived a moving time of communion with our Spanish confreres. We will be again when a farewell ceremony is held in Nanclares during next Summer.

Now the coronavirus is part of our life and will continue to affect our daily life for several months, even years. There is no lack of concerns: vocations ministry, future events, financial resources (families, schools, congregation, etc.) more difficult the support of the General Council in the sectors. The planning of the animation of the Congregation has been disrupted. This report will echo this.

1. Animation of the Congregation

1.1 Theme of the year

The Echoes of the General Council last February made known the themes chosen for the next three years: 2020-2021, **«Sowing joy»**.; 2021-2022, **«Serving Life»**.; 2022-2023, **«Witnessing to Hope»**..

The first elements of animation have already reached the Provinces and Districts. Since the Pope wished to launch a year **«Laudato Si» (24th May, 2020 – 24th May, 2021)**, 5 years after the decisive encyclical letter which drew the world's attention to the increasingly precarious state of our common house. A document from the Dicastery «For the Promotion of Integral Human Development» was recently published, inviting the whole Church to «collaborate as instruments of God for the safeguard of creation, each according to his culture, his experience, his initiatives and his capabilities. » (Pope Francis).

The Major Superiors will shortly receive some guidelines for entering into this ecclesial dynamic.

1.2 Ad gentes Commission – Missionary experiences

The health situation has not made it possible to establish new contacts in Asia, or to continue those already initiated in Africa. But the General Council continues its effort of discernment to open new missionary pages.

Likewise, the search and dispatch of new young Brothers with missionary experience has been greatly disrupted, but remains a priority for the General Council.

1.3 International Commission of the Mennaisian Family

The mandate of the 6 lay people who belonged to the International Commission of the Mennaisian Family ended in February 2020. The General Council thanked those who have committed themselves during the last 3 years. Since then the sectors concerned have made their representatives known for the years 2020 to 2023:

Ana Victoria DRAPER for the Divina Providencia District
Françoise Le BRETON for the Province of Saint-Jean-Baptiste
John Bosco DDUNGU for the Province of Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus
Yvette MÉUS for the Province of Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague
Michèle HETU for the Jean de la Mennais Province
Bélén CORUÑA MOZO for the Province Nuestra Señora del Pilar

1.4 International Commission « Young Mennaisian Adults»

The General Chapter had asked to work on the creation of an *International Commission Young Mennaisian Adults* (21.e). This is officially established. As recommended by the General Chapter, the main mission of this commission is to promote fraternity on an international scale.

Bro. Gérard HOUNYETIN (Côte d'Ivoire)	Jean SAITDREI GARLENS JOLICOEUR (Haiti)
Teddy NANFUKA (Uganda)	Hno Justino Santiago (Spain)
Daniela Paola Palacios (Argentina)	Iván Márquez (Spain)
Mónica Rosales Luna (Mexico)	Bro James HAYES (England)
Bro. Lamy DESSALINES (Haiti)	Agathe Morel (France)

We thank the members for their availability. Brother James Hayes will be the leader of this Commission.

1.5 Animation Texts for the Brothers and the Laity

The situation of confinement did not allow to receive from the CIVCSVA, the official recognition of the **Statutes of the Association «Lay Mennaisian Associates»**. However the General Council decided to make known to the Congregation the computer file document of the new Reference Text of the Mennaisian Family, and the Statutes of the Association “Lay Mennaisian Associates”. Upon receipt of the response from the CIVCSVA, a printout of the new document will be made and sent to the Provinces and Districts.

During the February 2020 session, the new **Protocol of the Congregation for the Protection of Children** was approved by the General Council. It was presented to the CIVCSVA, and the latter simply acknowledged receipt of the document. As the opinion of the «Task Force» recently formed by the Pope, whose mission is to accompany the Congregations in the preparation of their Children's Protection Protocol is slow to come, the General Council therefore decided to publish their own. The text will be sent to the Major Superiors very soon to allow for the writing or rewriting of the Protocols of the Provinces and Districts.

The last Echoes of the Council mentioned the **Guide to the application of the charism**. Translations have been completed. All the elements, including the text «Mennaisian Education» (February 2018), will reach the various sectors to allow the formation and the animation of sessions of mission teams, heads of establishments, teaching staff.

1.6 Next international meetings

As already mentioned, the health crisis has profoundly changed the planning schedule for the General Council. Thus, the **European Conference** which was to take place in May 2020, is reprogrammed in May 2021. The **Brothers' Session preparing perpetual profession in the Summer of 2020** has been reprogrammed for the Summer of 2021. The **Session of the formation of Formators** which was to be held in Abidjan in September 2020 is postponed to September 2021.

The Congregation meetings that were to be held in Tanzania and Uganda in September-October 2020 have been cancelled. The next session of the General Council will be held in Rome next September. A meeting of Major Superiors will take place "on line" from September 30 to October 3, 2020.

Three events are scheduled in Kisubi, Uganda in February 2021:

- **The African Conference**, 2nd to -5th February, 2021,
- **The Closing of the Bicentenary** in Kisubi, 7th February, 2021,
- **The General Council**, from February 8 to 28, 2021.

If conditions allow, the closing of the Bicentenary in Kisubi will take place during the African Conference. But each Province or District is invited to do it locally at the most appropriate time.

1.7 Opening of a Postulate in Mexico

The Congregation will have the joy of welcoming the first Mexican postulant, Gabriel. He will do his Postulate in Mexico City. We ask the Lord to bless our mission in Mexico by sending us other young people.

2. Decisions of the Brother Superior General and his Council

2.1 Appointments

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

- **Appointments of Brother Visitors:**

District Saint-Jean-Paul II: Brother Pascal MBOLINGABA, Visitor of the District Saint-Jean-Paul II (Congo DRC-Rwanda), for a new mandate of 3 years.

Saint-Paul District: Brother Jean-Baptiste NDIAYE, Visitor of the Saint-Paul District (Benin-Côte d'Ivoire-Senegal-Togo), for a 3-year term.

District Saint-Pierre-Chanel: Brother Yvon DENIAUD, Visitor of the District Saint-Pierre-Chanel for a mandate of 3 years.

- **Appointments of Brothers Assistant Visitors:**

District Saint-Jean-Paul II: Brother Emmanuel BAZIMAZIKI, Assistant Visitor of Saint-Jean-Paul II District (Congo DRC-Rwanda), for a mandate of 3 years.

Saint-Paul District: Brother Jules TONE, Assistant Visitor of Saint-Paul District (Benin-Côte d'Ivoire-Senegal-Togo), for a 3-year term.

- **Other appointments:**

ROME : Brother Claude GRÉGOIRE, Procurator General of the Congregation to the Holy See, for a 3-year term. He will be also Assistant Archivist, in charge of digital archives.

ROME : Brother Hervé ASSE, Secretary General of the Congregation, and Superior of the Community of Casa Generalizia for a new mandate of 3 years.

The General Council warmly thanks Brother Pierre Berthe, for the 14 years of service, as Prosecutor, Secretary General, Superior of the Casa, vice-postulator. He returns to France where he will no doubt continue to render service to the Congregation. Thanks also to **Brother Leonard Robert Byankya** who has spent 20 years serving as a Receptionist and translator at the Generalate. **Brother Felix Mwesigye** and **Brother Leonard** will rejoin their Province of origin.

2.2 Admissions to perpetual profession

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

- Brothers **Matthew KATONGOLE**, **Delefino MUHINDO**, **Vicent MUBANGIZI**, **Mathias MULUMBA** and **Geoffrey YIGA**, 5 Ugandan Brothers from the Province of St. Teresa of the Child-Jesus (Uganda-South Sudan).
- The Brothers **Ony DESRIVIÈRES**, **Michel-Ange DURÉ** and **Frantz-Caleb MUSEAU**, 3 Brothers of the Province Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague (Haiti).

2 Communication

Mr. Michel Tanguy, following restrictions on European flights, was unable to join the General Council. However, he was able to send a document to take stock of all the subjects related to information in the Congregation, among others:

- **La Mennais Magazine**: forecast of issues 46, 47 and 48.
- **The Pocket Book on Jean-Marie de la Mennais**: the French version should be available next September. Major Superiors will receive an order form for their respective sectors. Translations into English and Spanish have also been completed. The General Council thanks all the actors of this new publication.
- The **various forthcoming events of the Bicentenary** in the Congregation.

New publication of the General Council:



«During confinement», the General Council published a new small booklet entitled «***Praying to Mary with Jean-Marie de la Mennais***». The layout was realised with the precious support of Brother Philippe BLOT. It is a small book in the same format as « Following Jesus in the manner of Jean-Marie de La Mennais» (2010) or «30 days with Jean-Marie de La Mennais... milestones for your life» (2014) very readable and accessible, 13 cm x 13 cm format, all in colour. The Major Superiors have received an order form for their sector. The General Council decided to offer this little book to each Brother and to each Lay Mennaisian Associate.

Calendar of the members of the General Council

Due to many uncertainties in intercontinental travel, it was impossible for the Brothers of the General Council to establish a calendar of visits for July and August.

All the members of the General Council will meet together from:

06 September– 13 September

14 September –29 September

30 September –03 October

Retreat of the General Council

General Council

Meeting of Major Superiors by Video-conference

**The next session of the General Council will take place in Rome
from September 14th to 29th, 2020.**