



Number 104 - May -June 2021

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*The General Council held its ordinary session from 17 May to 4 June 2021 at the Casa Generalizia in Rome. A first moment marked this session. It was the online meeting of each major Superior of the Congregation. Each one took stock of the situation in his Province or District with regard to COVID-19. Then he shared the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of his sector, and reviewed the General, Provincial or District Chapters, focusing on what has been achieved, what remains to be done, and the strategies for moving forward. These Echoes will share with you some signs of life in each Province or District.*

*The members of the General Council also took time to review the first three years of their mandate and to discern together the objectives and means to be implemented for the next three years.*

*Another key moment: a time of discernment for the nomination of 5 major superiors. Finally, the online meeting of the International Commission of the Mennaisian Family was held from May 31 to June 2. This Commission was renewed in February 2020, with three new members out of the six laypeople on it.*

*The Echoes will bring you the highlights of this meeting, as well as the information and decisions of this Council.*

## 1. Animation of the Congregation

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### a. Echoes and signs of life from the Provinces and Districts:

The Echoes cannot take up all that was shared by each of the major superiors, but they do take up for each Province or District, the signs of life that are bearers of hope.

- **Tanzania-Kenya:** Brother Vincent Ssekate, Assistant General, the new Major Superior of the Province, is gradually becoming aware, from a distance for the moment, of the issues and challenges of the sector. The youthfulness of the Brothers, their concern for unity, the commitment of many Brothers in the schools are the strengths of the Province. The opening next July of the new work at Nanyuki in Kenya and the community that will be attached to it, is a fine example of the dynamism that is lived there.
- **Uganda-South Sudan:** 180 Brothers, 27 works in 10 dioceses, opening of communities in the periphery (Zombo and Nebbi), 62 young people in formation, influential presence of the University of Kisubi (UniK), a school in full growth in South Sudan... these few indications are enough to show the assets of the Province. The new provincial team, which will begin its mission on 1 July, will have to continue to strengthen and consolidate everything that promises a good harvest.
- **Congo-Rwanda :** The youth of the District (the youngest average age in the Congregation, less than 36 years), abundant and diversified works, the will on the part of the Brothers to invest themselves in the development of these works and to acquire a solid formation for their management, a favourable vocational recruitment .... These are some of the strengths of the John Paul II District which recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the presence

of the Brothers in the Congo and Rwanda (currently being tested by the volcanic eruption of the **Nyiragongo** volcano).

- **West Africa:** Brother Jean-Baptiste Ndiaye, Visitor, underlined some of the strong points of the District: the youthfulness of the Brothers, the stability of the schools, the good collaboration with the laity, a strong sense of belonging to the Congregation, the good appropriation of the year's theme in the communities, and the setting up of the IGAs (Income Generating Activities) which are essential for achieving greater financial autonomy. To strengthen this autonomy, there are many projects underway, such as opening congregational works.
- **Spain:** The new Provincial, Bro. Carlos Capellán, first of all wanted to recall that the Brothers of the Province are doing well and that they are gradually recovering from the trauma caused by the number of Brothers who died because of the COVID-19. This ordeal has shown the support of many people who "love the Mennaisians". The resolute option for the poor and the weakest (the new project in Zamora, Valladolid, welcoming a new group of refugees in Nanclares, social projects in Mennaisian works, etc.) remains a strong point for the Province. A group of LAM, in the process of discernment, is also a strength for the Brothers and the communities.
- **South America:** Brother Benito Zampedri emphasized the esprit de corps that exists at the level of Brothers and teachers in the new Divina Providencia District. The Mennaisian formation that is given there, reinforces the Mennaisian identity of the District. The Mennaisian Family is truly a strength for the communities and the educational centres. A group of young Mennaisians has started a formation program (Metanoia). Postulants and lookers are also signs of hope.
- **Canada-USA-Mexico:** Two strong moments, the Provincial Chapter and the Assembly with the Laity "Cap Espérance", have profoundly marked the life of the Mennaisian Family of the Province and have helped to commit ourselves to live the different challenges of the Province: animation, management, health, future of the communities. The pandemic has in some way disrupted this pathway, but it has also been an opportunity to move more quickly towards a restructuring of the Province, to dare to make changes that allow us to take steps towards life, openness, the presence of young people and the poor in the communities, life in the Mennaisian Family mode, and to accompany the elderly and sick Brothers...
- **Asia:** Brother Visitor, still stuck in Paris, continues to animate his District. He did not hide the difficulty of the exercise! The great diversity of cultures, distances, countries, languages, missionary history, remains a great challenge for this young District. But the entry of 3 postulants to the novitiate, a first profession on 5 June, new aspirants and postulants in Larantuka, San José and Yogyakarta are great joys for the District. The opening of a new community in Kupang (Indonesian Timor) is also a new sign of the vitality of the District.
- **France-England :** The concern for unity within the communities, the animation of spiritual and community life, the commitment of the Brothers according to their strengths and ages to parishes, establishments and solidarity associations, remain strong supports within the Province. Many Brothers are also very sensitive to the action of the laity in the service of the Mennaisian work. They seek to contribute, to the extent of their strength, to the actions undertaken by the Mennaisian Family. We should also underline the vitality, over and above the obstacles due to Covid, of the Estival and Vayakom associations, in the service of young people, especially those in difficulty, etc.
- **Polynesia :** 9 Brothers make up the District and although 7 of the 9 are retired, all are active with young people, teachers, schools and associations (FSCF-Fédération Sportive et Culturelle de France and MEJ-*Mouvement Eucharistique des Jeunes*). There is also a small community of lay Mennaisians, established in Paea, around educational and leisure activities for children (FSCF). The primary concern of the Brothers is vocations, and in spite

of all the efforts, from a human point of view, nothing has been achieved. Some great young people from the Foyer des Îles, from the FSCF of Paea, from the Taiohae Agricultural College School... these are the breeding grounds that the District can reasonably envisage for the formation of Lay Mennaisians and eventually of Brothers.

- **Haiti:** The three years (2018-2021) have been very trying for the population and the Brothers: violent demonstrations, blockades of activities, insecurity, sometimes spectacular kidnappings... However, these painful trials have not prevented them from continuing to fulfil their mission of evangelisation and education among children and young people. The presence of the older Brothers is a strength for the Province. The youth of the Province constitutes both an asset and a challenge: dynamism, commitment, animation of communities and of vocational pastoral work which is bearing fruit.

#### **b. Africa Conference**

- The last Echoes spoke about it. The Follow-up Committee composed of the major superiors concerned with Br. Jean-Paul, Assistant, has published a booklet containing the orientations of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Africa Conference. All the Brothers in Africa will receive a copy. But the General Council wanted to make known to all the fruits of this Africa 2021 Conference. All the Major Superiors were therefore invited to send to their communities the proceedings of the Africa Conference in their French or English version

#### **c. New Circular of the Superior General**

- **"In a Mennaisian Family Mode":** This is the title of the new circular that Brother Hervé Zamor is addressing to the whole Mennaisian Family. This circular will help us to better "understand and discern the paths that will allow us to produce good fruit, together, Brothers and lay people of the Mennaisian Family" (cf. GC 2018, N°16). This circular will be sent during the month of June.

#### **d. Two online formation sessions foreseen**

- Because of the uncertainty of travel due to Covid, these two courses will take place online:
  - **Formation for the Brothers preparing for their final vows or those who have recently made their final vows**, will participate in an online meeting from 26 July to 1 August, from 12:00 to 14:30 (Rome time). 22 young Brothers from Asia, Africa and Haiti will participate.
  - **Formation of Formators**, originally scheduled to take place in Abidjan from 3 to 18 September 2021, has been re-organised and will take place in several online sessions, the first of which is scheduled for 9 to 11 September (12 noon to 2 pm Rome time).

#### **e. Meeting of the International Commission of the Mennaisian Family**

- All the lay members of the International Commission of the Mennaisian Family met online for a time of exchange and reflection with the members of the General Council.
- The first part of the sharing was to evaluate the reception of the *new Mennaisian Family Reference Text and its implementation in the different sectors*.
- *Then the members of the Commission questioned themselves on the role it had to play - according to the new text - to encourage the emergence of Mennaisian groups and to accompany lay people who would like to commit themselves to the Association of Lay Mennaisian Associates (LAM).*
- *Finally, to reflect on the call of the General Chapter to develop the place of young Mennaisians in the Mennaisian Family.*

*A message, including all the reflections of these three days, will soon be sent to the whole Mennaisian Family.*

*A new online meeting of the International Commission of the Mennaisian Family has been scheduled for September 15, to continue the journey and to come up with concrete implementations in terms of formation and accompaniment, sharing and communication.*

#### **f. Online Meeting of the Major Superiors**

- The next meeting of the Major Superiors will again be held online from September 27 to 30, 2021.
- Three main themes will be discussed: the Mennaisian Family - the Rule of Life - prospects for the financing of the General Administration. It will also be a time of formation among the major superiors - five of whom are "new" major superiors.

## **2. Decisions of Brother Superior General and his Council**

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### **a. Nominations**

Brother Superior General, with the consent of his Council, has taken the following decisions:

- **Sainte-Thérèse of the Child Jesus Province (Uganda-South Sudan):**  
**Brother Casio AIZIRE**, is appointed Provincial for a mandate of 3 years.  
**Brother Rogers KAZIBWE**, is appointed Provincial Assistant, for a mandate of 3 years  
**Brother Gerard BYARUHANGA**, is appointed Provincial Assistant, for a mandate of 3 years
- **Jean de la Mennais Province (Canada-Mexico-USA):**  
**Brother Mario HOULE**, is appointed Provincial, for a new mandate of 3 years.  
**Brother Claude GELINAS**, is appointed Provincial Assistant for a new mandate of 3 years.
- **Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague Province (Haiti) :**  
**Brother Géniaud LAUTURE**, is appointed Provincial, for a new mandate of 3 years  
**Brother Joslyn GONTRAND** is appointed Provincial Assistant for a mandate of 3 years.
- **Saint-François-Xavier District (Indonesia-Japan-Philippines):**  
**Brother Gildas PRIGENT**, is appointed Visitor, for a new mandate of 3 years.  
**Brother Stéphane LE PAPE**, is appointed Assistant Visitor for a mandate of 3 years.
- **Delegation of Italy**  
**Brother Jean-Paul PEUZE**, is appointed Major Superior for the delegation of Italy for a new mandate of 3 years.

## b. Other appointments

Brother Superior General, with the consent of his Council, has appointed:

**Brother Casio AIZIRE**, Chairman of the Council for the Scholasticate at Kisubi for a mandate of 3 years.

**Brother Peter KAZEKULYA**, Director of the Scholasticate at Kisubi, for a mandate of 3 years.

## c. Admissions to perpetual profession

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

Brothers **Rémy MONDÉLUS et Wenscky JN-LOUIS**, from Province Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague Province (Haïti)

## 3. Communication

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As part of its reflection on information, the Council wished to strengthen the dissemination of information in digital form while maintaining *La Mennais Magazine* but on an annual basis.

- **La Mennais Magazine.** Due to significant changes in the cost of producing and sending the Magazine, the Board decided to stop publishing *La Mennais Magazine* every quarter.
- Instead, **an annual La Mennais Magazine Album will be published each year**, recounting the major events and presenting the life of the Brothers, schools, works and Mennaisian groups in the 26 countries where the Mennaisian Family is at work. This new album will be published in December 2021 - January 2022.
- **La Mennais Clic Infos.** A new feature for the whole Mennaisian Family is **the creation of a digital newsletter: *La Mennais Clic Infos***  
It will be sent 4 times a year by e-mail, directly to each person. It will be readable on mobile phones, tablets and computers and will have 16 pages. The first issue of this newsletter will be published in September 2021. It is important that the major superiors send to the General Secretariat ( [secretariat@lamennais.org](mailto:secretariat@lamennais.org) ) the most complete and up-to-date mailing lists possible (Brothers, lay Mennaisians, schools and educational centres, associations, family members of Brothers, friends, etc.)
- **The internet website [www.lamennais.org](http://www.lamennais.org)** continues its information mission. Improvements are underway to provide even easier access to news, countries, resources (videos, publications, etc.)

## Calendar of the member of the General Council

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There are still uncertainties about intercontinental travel. It is therefore still impossible for the Brothers of the General Council to establish a calendar of visits for the coming months.

Tentative programme for the members of the General Council:

<b><u>F Hervé Zamor :</u></b>	15 Julu – end August	Haiti***
<b><u>F Jean-Paul Peuzé :</u></b>	8 June – 23 July	France
	August	Uganda***
<b><u>F Vincent Ssekate :</u></b>	28 June – 28 August	Uganda – Tanzania-Kenya***
<b><u>F Miguel Aristondo :</u></b>	5 June – end August	Spain

\*\*\* if the health (covid-19) situation permits.