

The General Council held its ordinary session from 11 February to 3 March 2023 at the Casa Generalizia in Rome.

On his return from Congo (RDC), since 19 January, Brother Jean-Paul Peuzé, first Assistant, has been hospitalised in Nantes, following an acute attack of malaria. After weeks in which his state of health remained alarming, he seems to be recovering progressively from his long period of coma, thanks to the dedication of the medical team of the CHR of Nantes and to the unceasing intercession of the whole Mennaisian Family. The General Council thanks all the Brothers and Lay Mennaisians who have prayed for his recovery through the intercession of Jean-Marie de la Mennais. Let us continue to accompany him with our prayers as the recovery will be long.

Obviously, the absence of Brother Jean-Paul was felt by the General Council, for the follow-up of the sectors for which he was responsible and for the animation of the Congregation, on the path to the General Chapter. The death of Mr. Zamor, father of the Superior General, at the beginning of the Council also disrupted the calendar, since Brother Hervé went to Haiti to join in the mourning with his family.

However, the General Council continued with its work. This issue of Echoes brings to the attention of the whole Congregation the subjects that have been worked on, as well as the information and decisions that have been taken.

1. Animation of the Congregation

a. Echoes from the Provinces and Districts:

Here are some echoes of the trips made:

- **Brother Hervé Zamor:** The Superior General visited the Province of **Nuestra Señora del Pilar** from 26 October to 21 November. This visit allowed him to share the spiritual, community and apostolic life of each community. He visited the apostolic works. Here and there, he met with teachers, members of the educational team of the schools, lay members of the Mennaisian Family and sometimes with students. He also exchanged with each Brother. From all these meetings, there emerged: the desire of all to continue to serve the children and youth according to the Mennaisian charism and to strengthen the links at different levels between the Brothers, between Brothers and Lay people, between the members of the educational community and between the members of the great Mennaisian network that the Congregation. Brother Hervé also underlined the attention given to the poorest in the Province: refugees and migrants are welcomed, professional training is offered to disadvantaged youth, which allows them to learn to fish instead of giving them a fish every day.

Then from 4 January to 1 February 2023, the Brother Superior General visited all the **communities in Tanzania and that of Nairobi**. Unfortunately, due to the illness of Brother Jean-Paul Peuzé, he had to shorten his visit by a week and return to Rome. The communities

of Meru and Timau will be visited next time, if possible before the next General Chapter. During his visit, the Brother Superior General had a personal meeting with each Brother, followed by a community meeting. He spoke to the students and teachers. He met the bishops of Tanzania where we are based, with the exception of the one of Arusha.

- **Brother Vincent Ssekate:** Provincial Superior, accompanied Brother Superior General on all his visits. Together, Brothers Hervé and Vincent, rejoiced over the entry into the novitiate (Kasasa – Uganda) of 7 young men from the Province. However, the Province is facing many challenges. They have been invited to organise a Provincial Assembly as soon as possible to discuss the challenges facing the Province and to identify the priorities for the next 25 years. This should lead to concrete lines of action that can help the Province to make a new start.
- **Brother Jean-Paul Peuzé :** For two and a half months, Brother Jean-Paul visited Uganda, Rwanda and the Congo DRC. Among other things, he took part in the perpetual professions of three young brothers from Congo, on 8 January 2023 in Dungu. Unfortunately, his state of health did not allow the General Council to receive the fruits of these visits.
- **Frère Miguel Aristondo :** In the month of January, Brother Miguel continued his discovery of the District of St. Francis Xavier by visiting the communities in Japan and Indonesia. He thanked the Brothers in this sector for their warm welcome. In Japan, the Brothers are moving towards the end of their presence in this county. In the Philippines, outside Manila, the two communities remain fragile because of the small number of Brothers. In Indonesia, the growing number of young Indonesians in formation is a source of hope. The District will have to discern on a new organisation of the work and formation communities.

b. Theme of the Year and the General Chapter 2024

At present, all the sectors of the Congregation are journeying with the rhythm of the theme of the year which is "**Witnessing to Hope**". This theme will be further clarified with the publication of the most recent circular of the Superior General. This circular, entitled "**Servants of Hope**", which marks out the path towards the next General Chapter (March-April 2024). All the Brothers and Lay people of the Mennaisian Family, Provinces and Districts are invited to take an active part in the preparation of our next General Chapter.

"**Servants of Hope**". This theme and the biblical icon of **the first sign of Jesus at Cana (Jn 2, 1-11)**, will help the Institute to journey towards the next General Chapter, planned to take place at **Ariccia**, in the heights of Castel Gandolfo, from **26 March to 24 April 2024**.

c. Rule of Life

Since last December, the Communities have been working on the revised texts of the first 8 chapters of the Rule of Life. A return of the reflections is expected by 30 April 2023. In a few weeks, the Major Superiors will receive **chapters 9 to 15**. Each Major Superior will organise the rereading of these chapters in his sector. As an indication, the Formators could work on Chapter 9 and the Province and District Councils on the others.

d. Formation of Formators of the Mennaisian Family

The first session of 5 days took place at **Kisubi last February**. 25 Brothers and Lay people participated in it. This formation will continue online, until July 2025, when another face-to-face formation will be held to take place in Ploërmel.

e. Formation of Superiors of Community

After a moment of hesitation, following the absence of Brother Jean-Paul who was the principal animator, the animation team decided to maintain this formation. Brother Géniaud Lauture, Provincial of Haiti, was asked to take on the coordination. Brother Hervé Asse, Secretary General, joined the team and took charge of logistics and animation.

Each sector is invited to send Brothers, present or future superiors of communities. This session will take place at the Lycée La Touche in Ploërmel, from 15 July to 14 August 2023. We exhort the Provinces and Districts who have not yet done so to send the names of the designated Brothers as soon as possible.

f. Formation of Formators of Brothers at Abidjan

After some online meetings since 2021, a formation session for Brothers' formators was organised in Abidjan in the summer of 2022. 15 current or future formators were present. Another session which will complete this cycle of formation specific to the Congregation will be held from 21 to 31 August 2023 in Abidjan. Two main themes that are on the agenda: ***Study of the presentation of the Rule of Life*** and ***Individual accompaniment and spiritual growth***.

g. Tutti Fratelli Session: formation of those responsible for accompanying young Brothers

The Tutti Fratelli organisation, which has already organised several formation sessions for the Brothers' Congregations, has set up a session for those responsible for accompanying young Brothers. The General Council has asked **Brothers Gildas Prigent and Gerard Byaruhanga** to participate in the next session which will take place in **Rome** from 9 September to 6 October 2023.

h. Missionary Experiences

The last General Chapter had asked the General Council to promote missionary experiences of young Brothers. COVID had prevented this from happening. Now the General Council is happy to be able to propose such experiences to some young Brothers.

At present, **Brother Andreas Pito** (Indonesian) is inserted in the mission of Thian (Benin). **Brother Frantz-Caleb Museau** (Haiti) is a missionary in Huatusco (Mexico). **Brother Louis Natukunda** (Uganda) has arrived in Luján de Cuyo (Argentina). Two other Brothers from Uganda, **Noah Tusasirwe** and **Matthias Mulumba**, are preparing to join the Communities of Abidan (Ivory Coast) to learn French and to live an experience in a house of formation.

i. Accounts of the Congregation

As already announced, FIC Expertise, under the supervision of Mr. Yves Delarra, is doing an audit of the Congregation. This requires the participation of all sectors. Thank you to the Brother Treasurers for providing the necessary information to the Brother Treasurer General.

The audit will allow us to receive informed advice for choices to be made at the next General Chapter.

j. Postulation – the Case of Josette Poulain

The last Echoes of the General Council had announced the abandonment of the case of **Josette Poulain**. After the meeting with the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, and the various encouragements received, the General Council has decided to carry on with this case, go as far as it can go; and ask that the intercessory prayer to Jean-Marie de la Mennais be continued untiringly.

With one or two exceptions, Brother Dino received the names of the **relay animators** of the devotion to our Venerable Founder. These are responsible, among other things, for animating and localising the animation of the novena in their sector. A WhatsApp group will be created. A zoom meeting will be scheduled to promote and develop a better animation of the devotion to our Venerable Father and to allow a greater collaboration and sharing between the relay animators and the General Postulator.

k. Mennaisian Family

In order to better define the vocation and mission of the International Commission of the Mennaisian Family, a work of discernment initiated at the General Conference will continue with the six Lay members of the Commission. The latter, as well as the Province and District Commissions, are encouraged to reflect on the mission of the International Commission, the animation and structuring of the Mennaisian Family. This will allow us to seek together what the Lord expects of the Mennaisian Family.

l. Communication

Mr Michel Tanguy recalled the publication of the **first annual album of La Mennais Magazine, No 48**: "My school to grow". It was well received. The feedback is rather positive.

An English version of the Gabriel Deshayes album will be available next summer in Ploërmel. The Brothers present at the session of Community Superiors will be able to take with them some copies for the sectors concerned.

During the General Conference, the Major Superiors approved the project of a **new statuette of Jean Marie de la Mennais**, 25 cm high and 8 cm wide, made of earth-coloured stone line. Mr. Michel Tanguy has found an artist who is willing to make it. The estimated cost is 30 € per statuette, plus postage. The Capitulants will be able to take with them the orders from their Province or District.

2. Decisions of the Superior General and his Council

a. Nominations

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

- **Saint-Paul District (Benin, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Togo)**

Brother Jean-Baptiste NDIAYE, Visitor of the District of Saint-Paul (Benin, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Togo), for a new mandate of 3 years.

Brother Wilfried FARA, Assistant Visitor of the District of Saint-Paul (Benin, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Togo), for the first mandate of 3 years.

- **Saint-Jean-Paul II District (Congo DRC, Rwanda)**

Brother Eric MUGISA, Visitor of the District of Saint-Jean-Paul II (Congo DRC, Rwanda), for the first mandate of 3 years.

Brother Damien HABIMANA, Delegate of the Visitor for Rwanda, ex-official member of the District Council for the first mandate of 3 years.

- **Saint-Peter Chanel District (French Polynesia)**

Brother Yvon Deniaud, Visitor of the District of Saint-Peter Chanel, for one year.

b. Other Nominations and decisions

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

- **Brother Claude GRÉGOIRE**, Procurator General for a second mandate.
- **Brother Hervé ASSE**, Secretary General for the fourth mandate.
- **Frère Miguel ARISTONDO**, responsible for Child Protection for the Congregation.
- **Opening, in August 2023, of a French-speaking Novitiate** ad experimentum for 3 years, at Pétion-Ville, Haïti. It will receive the novices from the District of St-Paul, Congo and Haiti.

At the end of January, the Casa Generalizia welcomed Brother **Luis-Manuel Cuesta**. He comes to strengthened the Casa community and is available to provide many services, including translation. The General Council thanks him for his availability and wishes him a good mission in Rome.

Calendar of the members of the General Council

Brother Hervé ZAMOR

15 March - 30 April:

South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Uruguay)

15 May:

General Council

Brother Jean-Paul PEUZÉ

Brother Vincent SSEKATE

25 March - 7 May:

Tanzania-Kenya

15 May:

General Council

Frère Miguel ARISTONDO

15 March - 30 April:

South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Uruguay)

1 May– 7 May :

Mexico

15 May:

General Council

**The next session of the General Council will take place
15 May - 9 June 2023 in Rome.**