

# ECHOES OF THE General Council



Number 88 - February 2016

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*The General Council held its regular session from 15 to 24 February 2016 at Casa Generalizia in Rome. The community of Casa took advantage of the presence of the General Council to respond to an invitation to live a fraternal time with St Gabriel Brothers in their Generalate: it was a beautiful moment to live the "Tutti siamo fratelli". Before the departure of the General Council to Kisubi, where the Conference of Africa will be held, the Casa celebrated, as it should, the birthdays of Brothers Gerard Byaruhanga and Yannick Houssay.*

This issue of the Echoes informs the whole Congregation of the following information and decisions:

## 1. The animation of the Congregation

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### a. Visits to Provinces and Districts :

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

- **Asia** : Brother Gildas Prigent has toured the three Asian countries. For the Philippines-Japan district, the arrival, close now, of two Filipinos still Scholastics in Manila, will provide a valuable service and a new youth communities to Pandan and San Jose. Brother Gildas, during his visit to Scholasticate of Manila, appreciated the fraternal atmosphere of a very international community. In Indonesia, we must recognise the proper insertion of the Novitiate in Yogyakarta and the dynamism in the works of Larantuka, especially the recently opened school.
- **Uganda - South Sudan - Kenya**: Brother Gerard Byaruhanga accompanied the introduction of the new Provincial team. A major challenge is that of formation. This year there are 8 Novices and at the Scholasticate, 32 scholastics. The establishment of formation teams remains a priority for the Province. Brother Yannick Houssay, also passing in Uganda, emphasised the good atmosphere among the young Brothers who are happy to continue their formation in connection with the Brothers University in Kisubi. The Province of Uganda has a large number of Brothers. It is a source of thanksgiving. This also represents a call to engage in new educational places.

The difficult and unstable political situation in South Sudan has not allowed us to open the school this year. Even if the new mission of the Brothers was spared, the other neighbouring Community of Solidarity, on its part, was completely robbed. The situation is not secure enough to open our new school. Two other Brothers are preparing to join the two pioneers.

Brother Gerard also travelled to Kenya, where the challenge ahead, given the number of Kenyan Brothers will be to open a new mission. Concrete steps have been made in some dioceses.

- **Haiti**: this year the Province has no Novitiate. A community internship year was requested of the applicants before their entry into the Novitiate. Currently two young Haitians live this time of formation in Cap Haitien community. 12 more young Haitians are at the Postulate of Pétionville. Brother Guillermo stressed the importance of the work

done for the accompaniment of these young men in formation and the young Brothers of the Province. The new work CENA (Educative Centre “Noël des Anges”) inserted in the neighbourhood of Cité Soleil at Port-au-Prince, has inscribed its first students.

- **Mexico:** Brother Guillermo visited the community and the work Agapê-Fic Huatusco in the company of Brother Mario Houle, Provincial of Canada and Brother Marcelin of the same Province. It was an opportunity to take stock of this cooperation with the Agape Association and draw lines for the future in this place where the Mennaisian family is growing and the Brothers recognized for their integration into the local church.
- **South America:** Brother Guillermo and Brother Miguel Aristondo, Provincial of Spain-Bolivia-Chile, lived with the Brothers of the Cono Sur, the annual retreat and a time of Assembly. This sector is experiencing the joy of opening a Novitiate in Chile, at Quinta Normal with 3 Novices: a Bolivian and two Argentines. The Novitiate began on 31st January 2016.
- **France:** Brother Gildas Prigent continued to visit the communities of the Province of St. John the Baptist, including those of Morbihan. These communities, though aging, are very active with various associations and in the parishes. The Province of St. John the Baptist will organise a process that will involve all the Brothers. It will take place in several stages, starting from 27 February, and will experience a time of discernment about the future of the Province.
- **West Africa:** Brother Gildas Prigent visited the 3 communities in Senegal. These communities are invested in educational works growing rapidly. The Youth Centre in Thies and boarding schools of Diourbel and Vélingara require a lot of investment, but also allow a closeness with young people especially those in vocational research. Brother Yannick Houssay, meanwhile, visited communities of Togo and Benin. He found that the Brothers are very involved in educational centres. However, they are few and the task is immense. This year there is no Postulate at Thian, but a pre-postulate year opened in Ogaro where 4 pre-postulants live their integration into the primary school Jean de la Mennais at Battebangbang. Finally, the Superior General was given a tour of the two Abidjan Scholasticate communities where 33 young Brothers from West Africa, Central Africa and Haiti are continuing their initial formation in connection with the CELAF. Brother Yannick emphasised the excellent fraternal atmosphere and good personal commitment of young Brothers in formation. He commended the Brothers of the formation teams.
- **Italy:** the Superior General met with each of the two communities in Italy, and held a joint meeting. It was an opportunity for an exchange on the animation of the Mennaisian family that is to continue and develop, but also about the present and the future of both communities.

#### **b. Following the Assembly of the Mennaisian Family(Aug 2015)**

- **International Commission of the Mennaisian Family**

The previous Echoes from the General Council developed guidelines adopted following the Assembly of the Mennaisian family. Among them, it was decided to establish immediately an interim International Commission of the Mennaisian family. The commission will hold its first meeting at the next General Council meeting in May.

The General Council also took stock of the various initiatives taken after the August meeting and welcomed their advance. A new assessment of these actions will be made at the next Conference of Major Superiors in October.

- **Mennaisian Educational Project**

The reflection conducted throughout the entire Mennaisian family, for writing a Mennaisian Educational Project, as requested by the last General Chapter has raised a lot of items around 7 modules. It is time to write the document expected.

The General Council has decided to work at it during the next session in May-June. On this occasion they will study, besides the content, the method and timing of the approach to be adopted.

**c. Other documents of the Congregation**

- **The Ratio Studiorum** : A final version is already completed in French it will be translated soon into English and Spanish and presented to Formators. It will be submitted to the General Conference next October.
  
- **The local Superior's Guide**: The writing of this guide is completed. Members of the General Council are currently drafting some practical sheets for its use by major Superiors and local community Superiors. It will be presented in preview at the next Conference of Africa in March.

**d. Theme of the year**

We just received the document from the CIVCSVA on "**the identity and mission of the Religious Brother-in the Church.**" The General Council has decided to use this work for the animation of the 2016-2017 year. It is the entire Mennaisian family who will be invited to take over the theme of "brotherhood", the thread of this document. The title of this year will then be the following: "**You are all brothers**" (Mt 23: 8)

**e. Conference of Africa**

As announced, it will be held from 1 to 5 March, at Nabinoonya (Kisubi). With the General Council, it will bring together 26 Brothers from all parts of Africa. The Superior General, will announce the findings of the Assembly to the whole Congregation in the coming months.

**f. Devotion to Father de la Mennais**

The entire Mennaisian family recently received a letter from the Superior General taking stock of the Cause of Beatification of Father de la Mennais. Following the negative response of the medical committee that examined the case of healing of the young Enzo, we hear the call to renew our devotion to the Founder. The General Council, in the next session of May-June will think it over again. It is open to proposals from all those who would like to give it their suggestions.

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

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### 2.1 Appointments

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

Brother **Hervé Zamor**, Provincial of Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague Province (Haiti) for a term of 3 years.

Brother **Lamy Dessalines**, Vice Provincial of the same Province for a term of 3 years.

### 2.2 Other appointments

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

Brother Simon **Alphonse**, Director of the Scholasticate of Abidjan, for a term of 3 years, from the next academic year.

Brother Joseph **Bellanger**, Novice Master at the Novitiate of Pétionville, for a term of 3 years.

## 3. Other issues addressed

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### Approval of the Accounts of the General Council.

The General Council has taken the time to study the fiscal year of the General Administration for the past year. It adopted the draft budget, and decided on the contribution fees for the year 2016. The financial results of the Provinces and Districts will be discussed at the next Council.

### Statutes for the future North American Province .

Following what we had already announced in the Echoes of the General Council of May-June 2015, the General Council has decided that the current 2 Provinces of Canada and the United States will make but a single Province.

Furthermore it adopted the Statutes made by the two existing Councils.

The new Province will take the name of Jean de la Mennais with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016.

It remains to elect the new Provincial Council. The Major Superiors are, in turn, those of the current Province of Jean de la Mennais.

### Information Communication

The presence of Mr. Michel Tanguy, in -charge of communication in the Congregation has allowed the General Council to address projects of future publications of La Mennais Magazine, and to agree to the general structure of the new website of the Congregation, which should be online during the coming Summer.

## Calendar of the members of the General Council

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### Brother Yannick HOUSSAY

1 <sup>st</sup> March to 15 <sup>th</sup> March		Uganda
15 <sup>th</sup> March to 11 <sup>th</sup> April		Rome
11 <sup>th</sup> April to 24 <sup>th</sup> April		Tahiti
15 <sup>th</sup> May	:	Rome

### Brother Gildas PRIGENT

27 <sup>th</sup> February to 5 <sup>th</sup> March		Uganda
5 <sup>th</sup> March to 23 <sup>rd</sup> March		Congo RDC
23 <sup>rd</sup> March to 7 <sup>th</sup> April		Rome
7 <sup>th</sup> April to 4 <sup>th</sup> May	:	Indonesia
4 May	:	Rome

### Brother Gerard BYARUHANGA

26 <sup>th</sup> February to 5 <sup>th</sup> April		Uganda, Tanzania
8 <sup>th</sup> April to 10 <sup>th</sup> May	:	United States, Canada.
10 <sup>th</sup> Mai	:	Rome

### Brother Guillermo DÁVILA

26 <sup>th</sup> February to 5 <sup>th</sup> March		Uganda
5 <sup>th</sup> March to 12 <sup>th</sup> March		Ivory Coast
13 <sup>th</sup> March to 22 <sup>nd</sup> March		Rome
23 <sup>rd</sup> March to 5 <sup>th</sup> April		Chile
5 <sup>th</sup> April to 16 <sup>th</sup> May	:	Argentina -Uruguay :

The next session of the General Council will be held from 18<sup>th</sup> May to 17<sup>th</sup> June in Rome.