



The General Council held its ordinary session from 13 September to 4 October 2021 at the Casa Generalizia in Rome, during which the meeting of the Major Superiors of the Congregation took place. This meeting was held online, given the health situation and the difficulty of travelling for most of the major superiors. It took place in a very fraternal atmosphere, and allowed the Superior General and his Council to be better informed of the evolution of the situation of the Brothers and the communities in the Provinces and Districts.

An online meeting with the International Commission of the Mennaisian Family also took place on September 15, to continue the work begun last June.

This issue of the echoes brings to the attention of the whole Congregation the topics that were discussed during these online meetings, as well as the information and decisions of this Council.

1. Animation of the Congregation

a. Echoes and signs of life in the Provinces and Districts:

The Echoes will include what was shared by each of the Major Superiors at the online meeting as well as reports of some of the visits made by members of the General Council.

- **Haiti:** The Province was spared the pandemic, and all the Brothers are vaccinated. However, the recent earthquake, which hit the south of the country in particular, is once again putting the country to the test. The presence of the Superior General was a great comfort to the Brothers. He was able to mobilize a solidarity drive necessary for the rehabilitation of the Brother Odile-Joseph School in Les Cayes. Despite all these events and the political instability, the school year was able to start. But many young people whose families had fled the country are missing from the schools and this has a direct impact on the finances of the establishments. The Province was happy to welcome 3 new novices, the first profession of 2 novices, the definitive commitment of 2 young Brothers and the presence of 6 postulants and 8 pre-postulants.
- **Tanzania -Kenya :** Brother Vincent Ssekate, Assistant General, was able to visit this Province last July and August, of which he is the Major Superior. He was able to meet each community and each Brother of the two countries. He was grateful for the reception. The signs of vitality are not lacking: 4 novices, 2 scholastics, 6 postulants in the first year; opening of the new school in Kenya (Timau-Nanyuki). However, the number of Brothers on the ground (34) remains insufficient, and they are therefore strained to ensure the mission in the 6 schools in Tanzania and the 2 in Kenya. Fortunately, the covid-19 pandemic has not affected the communities too much and the health of the Brothers is good.
- **Uganda-South Sudan:** The impact of Covid is still very strongly felt in the Province and Schools still remain closed. The consequences are serious for the Brothers who often find themselves without sufficient resources, and without work. The houses of formation have been able to continue their mission, and it is an opportunity for the

Province to welcome many young people in formation. The new communities of Nebbi and Zombo are functioning well, and the Bishop is asking for other Brothers, as it is the case for other bishops in the country.

- **D.R. Congo-Rwanda** : Covid interrupted the smooth running of the District due to the closed border between D. R. Congo and Rwanda. Brother Visitor was not able to travel to where his presence was requested. Today, in general, with more or less delay, the school years have come to an end and the new school year will start at the beginning of October in both countries. The District regretted and mourned the death of the Bishop of Dungu, Mgr Richard Domba, who was close to the Brothers. In Bunia region, instability and violence are draining all goodwill and disturb the smooth running of both civil and religious institutions.
- **West Africa** : Covid spared the District of Saint Paul, few Brothers were affected; and today the 4 countries have gradually returned to "normality". Many meetings were organised online: formation for community superiors; formation for young Brothers; meeting of those involved in vocation ministry in the District, formation for the Headteachers. Three retreats were held this year, one in each sector of the District; two groups of young Mennaisians in Togo were also launched. The latest religious professions, the entry of 5 new novices, including 2 from Togo-Benin, the opening of a congregation owned school in Thian in Benin... are signs of hope for the District.
- **Spain** : The new Provincial, Hno. Carlos Capellán, underlined the gradual return to "normality", which was so long awaited by the Brothers, the communities and the schools; especially after the difficult period of deaths in the Province and the many months of confinement. Last summer was a time of intense fraternal meetings and family holidays. Several online meetings at different levels and with various groups of the Mennaisian Family were organised: these new experiences were blessed times, and are to be continued...
- **Cono Sur (South America)**: The health of the Brothers is good, other than the impact of Covid in the 4 countries of the District. The postponed opening of a novitiate planned for 2022 was felt as a small disappointment when the young Bolivian postulant asked for more time for discernment. But other young people are knocking at the door: a postulant and two young aspirants. The different groups of the Mennaisian Family in the District have continued their formation, online or in contact with the local communities. The return to normality will allow for travel and the possibility of meetings between the four countries.
- **Canada-USA-Mexico**: The Province is continuing its restructuring and daring to make changes that will allow the Brothers to take steps towards life, while facing up to the reality of the fragility of the health and age of the Brothers. Important decisions have yet to be taken, and reflection is underway. The Brothers feel well supported thanks to the many Lay Mennaisians who surround them. The mission of Mexico continues, despite its fragility. Its international dimension - connection with Haiti and Cono Sur - is an asset for its future.
- **Asie** : Brother Gildas Prigent, Brother Visitor is still stuck in France and has to accompany the District from a distance. This is not a new exercise for him, for even before the pandemic, given the distances, many meetings were held online. He underlined some encouraging signs of the vitality of the young District: the opening of a new community in Kupang (Western Timor - Indonesia); the entry into the novitiate in Yogyakarta of 3 young Indonesians and 5 postulants; the election of an Indonesian Brother to the District Council and the nomination of a Filipino Brother to head Pandan Bay Institute.
- **France-England**: Some more painful events have marked the Province: the death of 3 Brothers by Covid; the closure of the community in Liverpool, which was widely

reported on the Congregation's website. However, the presence of many young lay people, competent and committed as Lay Mennaisians in various services of the Province and the Tutelage of the institutions, is a joy and a priceless support for the Brothers and the leaders of the Province. The accompaniment of these lay people remains, however, a challenge, as does that of the 20 Mennaisian fraternities in the Province which include a significant number of lay Mennaisians.

- **Polynesia:** The strong points for the District of Saint Pierre Chanel: the beautiful changes taking place in the new agricultural high school in the Marquesas Islands; the reception of more than 50 young Polynesians at the Foyer des Iles, and the commitment of the Brothers in various social works in Polynesia. The Brother Visitor is involved in catechetical, philosophical and biblical formation. The age of the Brothers is a fact, but they continue the apostolate of prayer.

b. Theme of the Year

In most Provinces and Districts, at least the Provinces of the northern hemisphere, the theme of the year "**Serving Life**" was presented in view of launching the new year and writing the community project. The same will be done in the other sectors in the coming months.

This year's theme, aimed at the animation of the Congregation, takes into account the work of **revising the Rule of Life** which has just been initiated. "The Rule of Life is a rule for life, a rule to live and to live by, a rule at the service of life," the Superior General reminds us. The commission working on its revision has therefore planned to involve the Brothers in this process of updating our Rule of Life.

A second file dossier for the animation of the Provinces or Districts will soon reach the Major Superiors.

c. Formation sessions or meetings done online

- **26 July to 1 August 2021: Formation of Brothers preparing their perpetual vows or those who have recently pronounced them:** 22 young Brothers from Asia, Africa and Haiti participated. It was really a good moment of fraternity. The involvement and the effort of everyone to better master the new means of communication, the richness of the sharing, personal time devoted to prayer and reflection between each online session, all these enabled each participant to experience at the session a real spiritual peak moment.
- **13 September 2021: 13 September 2021: first session of formation of formators.** It was led and animated by Brother Yannick Houssay around "Mennaisian spirituality". 22 Brothers: formators or future formators, participated. It is the first of a whole series of online meetings planned until June 2022. In addition, two 10-day sessions in Abidjan are planned for the summer of 2022 and 2023.
- **15 September 15: Meeting of the International Commission of the Mennaisian Family:** this was a follow-up to the June meeting. It allowed us to go further and to draw up a roadmap for the next three years. The Superior General will soon make it known to the whole Mennaisian Family.
- **27-30 September: Online Meeting of the Major Superiors.** Ongoing Formation - the Mennaisian Family - the Rule of Life - the financing of the General Administration, were the main topics discussed during these four days. This also gave each Major Superior the opportunity to give news of his sector, especially after many months marked by the Covid pandemic.

d. Revision of the Rule of Life

For several months, the Commission for the Revision of the Rule has been set up by the General Council has been at work. Three sub-committees have also been constituted from the Commission to review and update our Rule of Life. Inspired by similar work on the revisions of the Rule of Life in other congregations, recent Church documents on religious life, and new insights into Mennaisian spirituality over the past 20 years, each working group is making progress, chapter by chapter, to ensure that the Rule of Life is a rule for today's life.

The recent meeting of Major Superiors was an opportunity for an overview of the work being done. The calendar of work up to the 2024 General Chapter was presented; then a reflection on the participation of the Brothers in this work of revision of the Rule of Life.

2. Décisions du Frère Supérieur général et de son Conseil

a. Admissions to perpetual profession

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

Brothers **Augustin BOUDAN** and **Léopold DIOUF**, of the District of Saint Paul, from Togo and Senegal respectively.

Brother **Olivier IGINAREZA**, Rwandan Brother, from the District of Saint John Paul II (Congo DRC - Rwanda)

3. Communication

The last Echoes had already presented the evolution of the publications:

- The recent publication of the **Gabriel Deshayes Album**. It was sent to all the French-speaking sectors this summer. An English language version is being prepared by the Brothers of Saint Gabriel in India.
- **La Mennais ClicK Infos. Digital Bulletin of information**. The first issue, in three languages, should arrive in our electronic mailboxes before 10 October.
It will be distributed 4 times a year by e-mail. It is therefore important that the General Secretariat (secretariat@lamennais.org) receives mailing lists that are as complete as possible and well updated (Brothers, Lay Mennaisians, schools and educational centres, associations, Brothers' families, friends, etc.)
- **The La Mennais Magazine Album will be published each year**. It will recount the great events of the year and present 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 released in December 2021.

Calendar of the members of the General Council

Brother Hervé ZAMOR

15 October – 19 November 2021	:	Canada
24 – 26 November 2021	:	Union of Superior Generals (USG)
27 December – 31 January 2022	:	Kenya - Tanzania or Uganda (?)
14 February – 4 March	:	General Council in Rome

Brother Jean-Paul PEUZÉ

October	:	Uganda
November	:	Italia
December – January	:	Western Africa (Ivory Coast-Togo-Benin-Senegal)
14 February – 4 March	:	General Council in Rome

Brother Vincent SSEKATE

14 October – 7 November 2021	:	France
14 November 2021	:	Uganda
26 November – 07 February 2022	:	Kenya – Tanzania
10 February 2022	:	Rome
14 February – 4 March	:	General Council in Rome

Brother Miguel ARISTONDO

4 October – 20 November	:	Rome
20 November – 26 December	:	Bilbao
26 December – 20 January	:	Uganda
20 January – 14 February	:	Roma
14 February – 4 March	:	General Council in Rome

**The next session of the General Council will take place from
February 14 – March 4 2022 in Rome**