



June 2016  
The Superior General

## LETTER TO THE MENNAISIAN FAMILY



« HAVE BUT ONLY ONE HEART »

Dear Laity, Brothers and Young Mennaisians,

Last year (August 2015), we lived a significant Mennaisian Assembly at Ploërmel. It followed several other events (Assemblies, Chapters ...) that manifested the international character of the Mennaisian family and which showed a rich diversity. We have become more aware that it is good to be united and have only one heart.

Our founding father, Jean-Marie de la Mennais, who often reminded his Brothers of the need of this fraternal union, can only rejoice to see us walk in a common desire to bring together our important mission of evangelisation and of the education of young people. There is no true evangelisation except in fraternity. It is our unity that surprises the world and helps it to open up to the merciful presence of our Heavenly Father.

During the General Chapter of 2012, the Laity and the Brothers had already wanted to take initiatives: "Let us

*have opportunities to get together, Brothers and Laity, and to deeply know one another. Let us find ways to make our communities and our fraternal communion more visible. Let us live together the adventure of evangelisation on new paths that lead us to where the young people and the poor are."*

*"May a structure be set up, in every sector for the Lay Mennaisians themselves, then for Brothers and Lay Mennaisians. Let us pray together; attend sessions of formation together; walk together with joy and hope listening more to one another, observing and discerning the signs of the times".*

It is in the light of these calls that the Brothers of the General Council wished to make one more step. They



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wanted to take initiatives that help to live a greater communion among all branches of the Mennaisian Family worldwide.

This is why I decided, with the Brothers Assistant, to bring to Rome a Provisional International Committee of the Mennaisian family. Five Lay people from Canada, Argentina, Haiti, Spain and France, gathered in Rome on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> May 2016 to consider the question of the organisation, animation and formation on the level of the great international Mennaisian family. We talked about all situations, including the continents of Africa and of Asia, and Polynesia, which had no representatives in this provisional Commission of the Laity.

We felt the need of working more together, and to always go to young people and invite them to feel themselves full members of the Mennaisian family. The Mennaisian charism enriches our identity as Christians and religious through our different cultures; sharing helps us to produce more good fruits. We feel the need to better define what "being" Mennaisian means for our family and for our mission. We talked about the pooling of our resources, especially regarding our formation programs. We dreamt of an organisation that allows the launching of missionary steps for which so many talents could be mobilised. We wish to propose steps for who wish to be "Mennaisian volunteers". We know that some areas are like a huge field that is not yet fully exploited: people are thirsty to drink from the same source. We must answer this call. To receive, we have to accept to give and to lose. Formation, finally, is a fundamental element that must give our family a solid foundation. Time is coming when the Laity themselves will take charge of this formation in connection with the Brothers.

By listening to each other during this meeting of the provisional international commission, we discovered riches, felt fragilities and heard calls. Therefore, we think it important to pursue this path of mutual awareness to better be united for the mission worldwide. We realised that it is urgent to develop animation structures at the international level as well as at the level of each Province and District. We need to think of an organisation that helps to have a "vision" for the Mennaisian family as a whole and that lays the foundation for building a common house

which will allow the spiritual treasure that we have received to produce the expected fruits.

« You are sent as apostles to fulfill this word of the Saviour: " I came to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish it was already ablaze? »

(S VII 2305 )

That is why we decided to establish an International Commission of the Mennaisian family. Provincials and Visitors were informed of these decisions. We think it is important that all are aware. For it is our family. We all love it and we all want to see it grow, be more missionary and always stay young and open to the future, trusting in Providence "so kind and wise".



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You will, therefore, find in these pages the decisions taken by the Superior General and his Council, after meeting with the Interim Committee of the Mennaisian family. I invite you to read them attentively and confidently enter the process that is proposed to all of us.

Let us have at heart the same confidence that our founders lived almost 200 years ago, they put together their energies, will and love, to answer the call of the Holy Spirit. The treaty of union they signed, was "of the utmost foolishness" according to the proper judgment of Father de la Mennais himself. But he was the bearer of a future that far exceeded his expectations. May we all welcome the provisions presented here with the hope born of brotherhood and mutual trust.

Brother, Yannick Houssay, s. g.

« Charity, zeal for the salvation of souls is your element and your life, your principle and your purpose; everything else, and science itself is only an extra deal for you. » (S VII 2305)



*Bellow we present to you the orientations taken by the General Council after the meeting of the provisional International Commission.*

## ORGANIZATION OF THE MENNAISIAN FAMILY

### 1. Animation Commission of the Mennaisian Family in every Province or District.

In several Provinces of the Congregation, there is an organisation of the Mennaisian Family as an Animation Commission of the Mennaisian Family or a structure equivalent to it. We hope that the Provinces and Districts that do not yet have such a structure, set up an Animation Commission of the Mennaisian Family.

#### Composition

The Brother Provincial or the Brother Visitor, with the consent of his Council, in liaison with the Laity of the Mennaisian Family, and in consultation with the General Council through the relevant Assistant, decides to set up an animation Commission of the Mennaisian Family.

For information, this Commission can be composed of

1-3 Brothers nominated by the major Superior and his Council.

1 or 2 lay members representing each group, or each reality, of the Mennaisian family of the Province or District (Lay members, Educators, Catechists, Mission team, Associations, Mennaisian Youth, NGOs, etc.)

The Brother Provincial or the Brother Visitor is an ex-officio member.

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### Operation

The mandate of the participants will be 3 years, renewable more than once.

The Commission elects a male or female Coordinator and two other members to constitute the committee. This committee organises the meetings of the Commission and shall ensure the implementation of its mission.

The Coordinator is the reference of the Animation Commission of the Mennaisian family with the relevant collaborative bodies (Congregation, Diocese, etc.).

The Commission may establish working groups within it.

### Mission

In the Church-Communion, the animation Commission of the Mennaisian Family has for mission

- ◆ To promote the Mennaisian charism, notably through joint formation programmes, Brothers and Laity, and proposals of resourcefulness.
- ◆ Ensure the communion of various groups of the Mennaisian Family engaged in educational and evangelising mission of the youth.
- ◆ To promote the fraternal links between the Laity and Brothers.
- ◆ To allow the implementation of a vocational pastoral animation that promotes vocations, Brothers and Laity, of those involved.
- ◆ Ensure that all groups of the Mennaisian Family of the Province and the District develop a common culture, communication and articulation of all animation proposals.
- ◆ Respond to requests of the General Council when it comes to choosing Mennaisian family delegates for formation or animation initiatives on an international level.
- ◆ To support the links with other Mennaisian family Commissions of Provinces and Districts of the Congregation, especially those who are on the same continent.

## 2. International Commission of the Mennaisian Family.

As requested by the General Chapter of 2012, we decided **to establish an International Commission of the Mennaisian Family.**

### **This Commission will have for mission**

- ◆ to encourage communication at the Mennaisian Family level,
- ◆ to ensure joint formation initiatives and the pooling of resources for the various modalities of engagement in the Mennaisian Family, and promoting Mennaisian Youth,
- ◆ proposing initiatives for the development of the Mennaisian charism for education and evangelisation of young people.

**The Commission will be composed of the General Council and the Lay members representing the Mennaisian Family of the Provinces and the Districts of the Congregation.**

The Superior General and the Brothers Assistants.

A layperson, member of the Animation Commission of the Mennaisian family of each Province and each District, and chosen by them. His or her mandate will be 3 years, renewable once.

Brother Secretary General of the Congregation will act as secretary to the Commission.

**The Commission will take office in March 2017**, one year before the next General Chapter of March 2018.

Provinces and Districts that have no Mennaisian Family Animation Commission, therefore, cannot have a representative in the International Commission, as they have not yet organised their own Commission. We want to encourage them to do so as soon as possible.

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### FORMATION

#### **Formation Project.**

We recall, in particular those responsible for formation, a text "Formation Project" of the Mennaisian Family was adopted by the General Council on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2010. This text is still valid six years later. It provides important axes for formation in the three modalities of engagement in Mennaisian Family. We strongly encourage you to read it and organise formation courses by following it. You can find it attached.

#### **Data bank.**

In order to pool resources, we asked the Brother Secretary General to set up a data bank on the Congregation's website. First, we wish to share the courses that are organised within each modality. These courses will be available to the people in charge of formation and will be protected by a specific code to be used wisely.

#### **Online formation.**

We hope, to favour the establishment of new formation experiences with the Internet medium. This could take the form of Online formation programmes.

### YOUNG MENNAISIANS

We reaffirmed the need to go to young people and call them to join us. This means the need to clarify the identity of Mennaisian youth, to organise formation courses appropriate to their age and at their request, to develop Mennaisian volunteering, to foster a pastoral which includes the vocational dimension which promotes Brothers' vocations.

#### **Launch an investigation.**

To give new impetus to thinking about young Mennaisians in the Mennaisian Family, we decided to organise an investigation to be launched in October 2016 towards all those affected by this reality.

### INITIATIVES AT CONTINENTAL LEVEL.

On every continent, initiatives would be taken to decide on joint actions and/or to pool resources, for formation within the Mennaisian Family, Mennaisian young people and for youth mission.