

The General Chapter and the Mennaisian Family



During the General Chapter of the Brothers held at the Mother-House of the Congregation in Ploërmel (France), the Brothers welcomed 14 Laity from 8 countries of Africa, South and North America, Asia and Europe. The Laity who participated in this event described the experience they were able to live with the Brothers:

"Our words are poor to express the marvellous experience lived by the Chapter Delegates and the Lay Mennaisians. Together, with enthusiasm and joy, we had time of prayer, reflection and sharing; we learnt to know one another better."

This educational mis-

sion, to which the Chapter invites the Brothers and Laity to reflect together, is that of the entire Mennaisian Family (Brothers and Laity) and not only of the Congregation. That is why the text of the Laity adds: *« In the aftermath of this Chapter, this will be the new way to live and animate the Mennaisian Family that is taking shape. We are the living witnesses to Jesus, He is at the heart of our lives, He is our rock, He is the treasure of our Mission. To be transformed and make our lives radiate, here is what we, Brothers and Lay Mennaisians want: to be sent to evangelize and to be formed in order to witness. »*

You can read more in

the official document of the Chapter or on the Website of the Congregation.

Now we no longer speak of the Chapter as a past event, but as a path that lies beneath our feet, a mission entrusted to us, sending us to the children and youth of the world;

« We want to be sent to evangelize, to be formed to witness » adds the text of the Chapter that ends by inviting us all to a process of fraternal discernment *« Let us walk together with joy and hope, listening more to one another, observing and discerning together the signs of the times »*.



The young people with whom we walk.

The Chapter invites us to examine how we live WITH the youth. It asks us not only to serve them. It invites us above all to walk with them, to welcome them like little brothers or sisters in the great human family.

We are not going to them first because they need us, but as a big brother or big sister

welcomes children who arrive in the family and who are already taking their place. We must approach them in the manner of Jesus, looking at the rich young man, "he began to love him" (Mk 10 21)

We are on the same path of life as these young people. And at the same time, we have

vis-à-vis them a unique and important mission. With them, we are children; for them we are guides on the road of life, and teachers who are also witnesses.

We want to live up to their expectations and not disappoint their thirst to be in turn builders of the future.

Evangelize ! What to say ?

"It is the love of Christ that fills our hearts and compels us to evangelize" Benedict says in the Letter he sends to the world to proclaim the year of Faith. *"In fact, preaching the Gospel gives me nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion and I should be in trouble if I failed to do it"* St. Paul tells us on his side. (1 Co 9: 16)

Certainly it is not given to everybody to imitate Paul. We are not all called to be like him. Should we, for all that, remain shy or fearful regarding the proclamation of the Gospel? Those men and women who put their faith in Jesus can not be silent.

"Faith grows when it is experienced as a love received and when it is communicated as an experience of grace and joy," says Benedict XVI;

Those who have been touched internally by the Love of God feel the urgent call to make its beauty known to others.

Young Brothers in the Congregation !

Of the four years of formation that represent the Novitiate and Scholasticate, **63 young people** are preparing to give their lives to God and to young people in the **VOCA-TION OF MENNAISIAN BROTHERS**. Others ask to join them in the various postulates of the Congregation. Voici comment se répartissent ces jeunes novices ou scolastiques : Here's how these young Novices or Scholastics distributed:

12 of Haïti,

16 of Central Africa
(Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda).

14 of West Africa
(Benin, Ivory Coast, Togo, Senegal)

19 of East Africa
(Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya)

2 of Indonesia.

Thank you for praying for them and for those who will join them. Thank you also for forwarding this call.

Stay connected

On www.lamennais.org, you will find the event of the General Chapter (photos, interviews, texts).

Spread it around you and use it as your resource. You will thus have access to various Websites of the Congregation.

Education, the most fascinating adventure in life !



Any relationship is real and positive if it is lived in freedom, truth and responsibility. Any educator, teacher, head of educational institution has experienced it. The Pope, in his message for peace, on January 1, laid special emphasis again on the important mission of education. Here is an excerpt from his letter:

« Education is the most interesting and difficult adventure in life. Educating –

from the Latin *educere* – means leading young people to move beyond themselves and introducing them to reality, towards a fullness that leads to growth. This process is fostered by the encounter of two freedoms, that of adults and that of the young. It calls for responsibility on the part of the learners, who must be open to being led to the knowledge of reality, and on the part of educators, who must be ready to give

of themselves. For this reason, today more than ever we need authentic witnesses, and not simply people who parcel out rules and facts; we need witnesses capable of seeing farther than others because their life is so much broader. A witness is someone who first lives the life that he proposes to others”.

(Message of Benedict XVI, 1st January 2012, §2)

To know Jean-Marie de la Mennais better



To follow the way proposed by the Chapter, it is good to go in search of Jean-Marie de la Mennais. Do you know him well?

Three biographies have been published to mark the 150th anniversary of the death of our founder. Ask for them from Brother Provincial, he may obtain them for you.

In Spanish, English and French: **Jean-Marie de la Mennais, future Path Finder** by Bro. Olabarrieta Josu Fernández (Spain), published by Don Bosco.

In Italian: **Gian Maria de la Mennais**, by Bro. Dino de Carolis (Italy), Pauline Publications.

In English: **The Courage of Hope**, by Bro. Edmond Drouin (USA), printed in Uganda

Justice and Peace for all.



The men and women Superiors Generals in Rome formed a Committee for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in 1982, in conjunction with the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

Brother Gerard Byaruhanga, Assistant Gen-

eral, acts as the link between our Institute and the commission.

The General Chapter invites us to "engage effectively as a Mennaisian Family... in initiatives that bring us closer to the poor, more solidarity and justice ..." (p. 30).

Wouldn't one of the

courses of action be for us to approach the diocesan justice and Peace Commissions to associate us more closely to the actions of the defence of the basic human rights of children as we have already been called upon by the last Synod of Bishops for Africa?