

# ECHOES

## OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Number 65

March 2009

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*The General Council has held the first part of its ordinary session from the 16th to the 27th February, at the Generalate in Rome. The second part of the session will be held at Kisubi, Uganda, from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 19th March, the beginning of the General Conference.*

This issue of the Echoes brings to the whole Congregation the following pieces of information and decisions:

### **1. The animation of the Congregation :**

#### **1.1 Visits to Provinces and Vice-Provinces :**

During the last months, the members of the General Council made many visits to the Provinces and Vice-provinces of the Congregation : England, Bolivia and Chile, Spain, France, Indonesia, Kenya, Uganda, Polynesia, USA. Once again, this survey permits the Council to know the diversity of situations in the Congregation :

- In many sectors we find an increasing difficulty of meeting all the apostolic engagements and the necessity of achieving a real discernment in the way of carrying on our mission.
- The « Shared Mission » raises some expectations especially on the part of the Laity. The reflection about the concept of the « Mennaisian Family » arouses a real interest and seems to open up new horizons for both the Brothers and the Laity.
- The question of the ongoing formation of the Brothers, most especially of the Community Superiors, remains a major preoccupation in all the Provinces and Vice-provinces.
- The vocations ministry calls for initiatives but this is still difficult in many sectors.
- And there where there are initial formation structures, the choice and the formation of Formators remain a priority.

#### **1.2 The ongoing formation :**

Brothers Guillermo Dávila and Jean Pétilon, recently made in-charge of the ongoing formation, have been invited by the General Council to come to Rome. This week has been put to good use by reflecting, together with the members of the General Council on the best way of assuring this formation for the Congregation.

A programme has been elaborated for the following months and it will be submitted to the Superiors during the General Conference. The detailed programme will be given to the participants of the General Assembly in the forthcoming weeks.

With effect from September 2009, the ongoing formation team will pursue the work on the theme of the year but according to different modalities. An international session for the Brothers of 35 to 50 years of age has already been envisaged at Ploërmel in July-August 2010.

### **1.3 Preparation for the General Conference:**

As already announced, the General Conference will take place from 19 March to 1 April 2009, at Kisubi, Uganda. It will be followed by the meeting of the Brother Provincial/Vice-Provincial Bursars from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> April. The General Council has completed the detailed preparation of the meeting during this session.

At the end of this present issue of the Echoes, a letter from the Superior General re-emphasises the meaning and the importance of this meeting for the Congregation.

### **1.4 The session for the initial-formation Formators:**

The session for the Formators will take place at Gabriel Deshayes Scholasticate, Abidjan, from 25th June to 4th August 2009. The session will be animated by the Brother Assistants.

This session concerns the Brothers currently responsible for a group of formation. It will provide an occasion of sharing experiences in the field (programmes, counseling, apostolic life, etc.) and to harmonise better the formation practices, with the help of the RATIO Institutionis.

## **2. The decisions of Brother Superior General and his Council**

### **2.1 The creation of a new Province :**

In the spirit of the last General Chapter concerning an eventual adaptation of the administrative structures for better governance and animation, the Brothers of the Vice-Province of Kenya-Tanzania have taken some considerable time reflecting on their current administrative status. Following this reflection, the Vice-provincial and his Council have made an official request to change their status. The Brother Superior General himself has visited the Vice-province. Several meetings have taken place between the Councils of the Province of Uganda and the Vice-province of Kenya-Tanzania, as well as with the General Council.

It is after these consultations and these different stages, and in liaison with the authorities concerned that the Brother Superior General with the consent of his Council elevates :

**the Vice-province of Kenya-Tanzania to the status of a Province under the name of  
Saint Michel the Archangel Province.**

### **2.2 Admission to perpetual profession:**

The Brother Superior General, with the consent of his Council, has admitted to perpetual profession for the Vice-Province of West Africa :

**Brother Thomas MANGA and Brother François Sido FARI**

## **3. The Treasurer General's Financial Report**

The Brother Treasurer General has presented a detailed financial report of the accounts of the whole Congregation and of the administrative entities. Some entities still find it difficult to submit their accounts on

time. We must commend, in a special way, the effort made in certain areas to rectify a difficult financial situation.

The Council has also approved the Provincial/Vice-provincials' contributions for the year 2009 as well as the budget estimates.

It is the wish of the Council that the Treasurer General visits the Provinces/Vice-provinces oftener in order to contribute better to the economic formation and to the accountancy work of the Superiors and the Bursars.

#### **4. Information and communication in the Congregation**

Mr. Michel Tanguy, Director of Information, has made the first assessment of issue Number 1 of *La Mennais Magazine* and most especially on the distribution problems in certain countries. Some measures have been taken in order to avoid a repetition of the same problems. Number 2 is practically ready, it should come out in a few weeks.

Mr. Tanguy presents to the Council the changes envisaged for the **website of the Congregation**. It is all about making it accessible in the English and the Spanish languages, by making some changes and introducing new headings on the opening page. All these changes are already underway.

A special time was also consecrated to the discussion of the different possible initiatives to mark **the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of the death of Father de la Mennais. The ensemble of these propositions will be presented to the major Superiors during the General Conference and then to the whole Congregation.

### **Calendar of the members of the General Council**

#### **Brother Yannick HOUSSAY**

9 March to 5 April	Uganda : Council and General Conference
14 to 22 April	Dapaong (Togo) : Perpetual professions
April	Rome
18 May to 18 June	Rome : Council session

#### **Brother Miguel Angel MERINO**

9 March to 5 April	Uganda : Council and General Conference
April	Rome and Spain
18 May to 18 June	Rome : Council session

#### **Brother Gerard BYARUHANGA**

2 March to 5 April	Uganda : Council and General Conference
7 to 25 April	Tanzania
28 April to 7 May	Senegal : Perpetual profession
18 May to 18 June	Rome : Council session

#### **Brother Gildas PRIGENT**

9 March to 7 April	Uganda : Council and General Conference
14 April to 1 <sup>st</sup> May	Indonesia
2 to 12 May	France
18 May to 18 June	Rome : Council session

**N.B. : the next Council meeting will be in Rome  
18 May to 18 June 2009**

# GENERAL CONFERENCE

18 March – 1st April 2009

***Redouble your zeal in a spirit of faith.***

(Jean-Marie de la Mennais)

Brothers,

The Major Superiors will soon gather at KISUBI (Uganda) for the GENERAL CONFERENCE from 18th March to 1st April. This Conference will be followed by the Provincial/Vice-provincial Bursars' meeting, from the 1st to 4th April

As the Rule of Life indicates (C 170-171 et D 171) the General Conference is a consultative Assembly for the purpose of maintaining a close liaison between the different parts of the Institute and to strengthen its unity

Since the General Chapter of 2006, it is the second time that the Major Superiors meet together. These meetings appear important, in fact, in a world undergoing perpetual change, if we want to work together to "***intensify the communion around the Brother's charism and his identity, in the diversity and internationality of the Congregation***" to use the same words used in the last Chapter.

Together, the Major Superiors gathered with one heart, will search for the means to "***redouble their zeal in a spirit of faith***", according to the words of Jean-Marie de la Mennais. Throughout the session this advice of our Founder will invite us to discern the callings of the Spirit and the means of answering them. But these words are not addressed to the Superiors alone. All the Brothers ought to feel challenged. With the Laity belonging to the Mennaisian Family, in a spirit of faith which does not look back with nostalgia, or dwell on what goes wrong, we must redouble our ardour and zeal in our apostolic mission.

I invite you then to pray together, each day of the Conference, in union with those who will be gathered at Kisubi. This will be the sign of our fraternal Communion to which the Chapter strongly invited us.

Father, our hope is in you.  
Without you, we cannot overcome any danger in this world.  
Without you, we can be overwhelmed with activism or blocked in routine, rigid with presumption or exhausted with fatigue.  
You who are our hope and our salvation, come to our aid and save us.  
Father, tell us how we can, today, make you known to the young and to the adults.  
Help us to interpret the present time with rectitude.  
Teach us to be Mennaisian Brothers and Laity full of hope and radiating with joy.  
Holy Mary, by your prayer and assistance, help us to receive the interior light of the Holy Spirit. Be thou our support and teach us to "***redouble our zeal in a spirit of faith***".  
Amen.

Brother Yannick Houssay, s.g.

*This prayer can be photocopied so that it can be used every day.*