

Echoes of the General Council

Issue 73

June 2011



The General Council has held its spring session in Rome from May 16 to June 8, 2011.

This session has been slightly shorter than usual since all Council members must travel to Indonesia for the official closing of the 150th. La Mennais Magazine will report on this more extensively in a forthcoming issue.

Moreover, as it is traditional at this period, the Meeting of the Union of Superiors General was held from May 25 to 27 on the theme "Identity and Prophecy: Theology of Consecrated Life Today."

This issue of Echoes brings to the attention of the entire Congregation the information and the following decisions:

1. The animation of the Congregation:

1.1 Overview of the Congregation:

The Council has taken the time to make an overview of the different Provinces and Vice-Provincial of the Congregation. Some points have been highlighted in this exchange:

We receive appeals from all sectors to strengthen the structures of government and animation in various administrative units of the Congregation.

In some Provinces and Vice-Provinces we also recognize the importance of supporting community life and involvement in educational works.

We also hope that we can move forward in the implementation of the framework of the Mennaisian Family both in the Provinces and Vice-provinces already well underway as well as for those just beginning the process.

We welcome the presence of young people in our houses of formation. We also see that where we do not have any, decisions are taken to revive the pastoral care of vocations. We again stressed that the question of vocations is vital to the dynamism of the educational mission.

We see the need to work to support better the Brothers with temporary vows in their early apostolic engagement and community inclusion.

1.2 The Ongoing Formation:

Brother Guillermo Dávila, in liaison with Brother Jean Pétillon, presented the General Council with various topics related to the ongoing formation:

- The training session of the Brothers aged 35-50 years: It will take place at Ploërmel from July 10 to August 14, 2011. Currently 17 Brothers from different sectors of the Congregation are enrolled for the new session. The Brothers who attend this session will join the four-day pilgrimage of the Mennaisian Family at Lourdes, from July 14 to 18.

- The theme of the year 2011-2012: The preparation for the General Chapter of 2012 around the theme "Educating and evangelizing today" - already launched by the first stage in progress - is the main axis of animation for the year 2011-2012. The second stage will be given to communities in October.
However, in order to support and enrich this special preparation and extend it beyond the Chapter, the Ongoing Formation team wants to offer Major Superiors a set of animation materials for ongoing formation entitled "*Educate and evangelise : new ways for the Good News.*" The documents will be available to the Provincials and Vice-Provincial who will be in-charge of adapting them to each situation.
- The Lectio Divina booklets: A new booklet with some liturgical celebrations (Assumption, Holy Cross, Holy Guardian Angels, All Saints, and Holy Innocents) will be offered to the Brothers and the Laity in the coming weeks. Far from adding to what is offered elsewhere, these books will ultimately have for every Sunday (and feast days) of the liturgical year a Lectio Divina inspired by a Mennaisian reading.
- The preparation of the international session of formation open to eight Congregations of teaching Brothers continues. This session should take place in September 2012 in Rome.

2. Decisions of the Superior General and his council

- **For the Casa Generalizia in Rome:**

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, conducted a new division of responsibilities at the Generalate.

Brother **Pierre BERTHE** has been appointed Superior of the House, for a first mandate of 3 years. Brother **Gerard CHATELIER** retains administrative and economic responsibilities of the House as Director. The General Council and the Community of Casa express to him their gratitude for the mission of Superior of the House accomplished with great efficiency and discretion for several years.

Brother **Claude BEAUCHESNE** (Province Jean de la Mennais) will strengthen the Community of Casa. He will assist in various departments of the General Administration, specifically for translations. Already, we welcome Brother Claude and thank him for his availability.

- **Admission to the Perpetual Profession:**

The Superior General with the consent of his Council, admitted to perpetual vows:

Brother **John FROGIER**, of the Vice-Province of Polynesia (Tahiti).

3. General Chapter 2012

3.1 The preparation:

The Council reported on the first preparatory stage of the General Chapter. All Provinces and Vice-Provinces have started the preparation. The synthesis from the Communities is expected in July. In September, a meeting of the Commission will take into account the contributions of all and begin the second stage.

In view of a presentation to the General Chapter, the Council continued its work of updating the Rule of Life.

3.2 The presence of the Laity:

The Council discussed the participation of lay people both in the preparatory stage as well as their presence at the Chapter (number of participants, distribution and duration of stay etc..). A letter is sent to the Major Superiors to clarify these different points and to reach concrete decisions at the General Council meeting in September.

4. Information and communication

The General Council considered various proposals made by the International Council for Information at its meeting in Paris from 11 to 14 March 2011:

- The search for lay people and Brothers who could provide regular collaboration for several headings of both the website of the Congregation as well as of the review *La Mennais Magazine*.
- The importance of media and social networks among young people also calls for reflection and development of these new means of communication at the service of evangelization and the Mennaisian Family.
- The issue of information and communication at the next General Chapter of 2012.
- Completion of various media (logo, brochure, DVD etc..) to better identify and publicize the Congregation and the Mennaisian Family.

5. The economic and financial issues

Brother Treasurer General reported on his visit to East Africa. This mission is under the support and guidance of the Provincial Treasurers through the General Administration. This is particularly assisting in the accounting field through better computer skills and a methodology adapted to a rigorous maintenance of accounts. The reflection is also continued on how to strengthen self-sufficiency and raise the incomes of the Provinces concerned.

Also the visit of Brother Treasurer General gave him the opportunity to see the progress of the ongoing projects and to verify the implementation of the economic decisions affecting the formation houses in the sector.

The Council approved several grant applications made by the Provinces of St. Therese and St. Michael the Archangel. These annual claims relate primarily to the aid given to the students and to the inter-provincial formation houses.

The **Mission of Indonesia** submitted a proposal to build a Postulate-Novitiate at Yogyakarta. The land is already acquired; it remains to find the necessary funding to start this construction, if possible at the beginning of 2012.

6. Seminar on the Theology of Consecrated Life

From 8 to 11 February 2011, an international seminar bringing together a number of Superiors General and theologians was held in Rome. The seminar was entitled "Theology of Consecrated Life: Identity and significance of the apostolic consecrated life."

Following this work, a summary of issues accompanied by questions was sent to all the Superiors General and their Councils. The General Council has taken the time to work on that document and contribute to the ongoing reflection.

The session of the Union of Superiors General, held at the end of May 2011, was also on the same theme. In the coming months steps will be taken to continue and deepen this important reflection for the consecrated life t

CLOSURE OF THE JEAN MARIE MENNAIS YEAR (150th anniversary of his death)

The Jean Marie de La Mennais year - 150th anniversary of his death – will end officially on June 20, 2011 at Larantuka (Indonesia). The closing of the year will be during a Eucharistic celebration, presided by Bishop Fransiskus Kopong Kung of Larantuka, in the presence of the Superior General and his Council, and a delegation from the Vice-Province of Japan-Philippines.

During the stay of the General Council several other events are planned: a scenic play by the children of Larantuka on the theme of "Becoming a sower"; a celebration around the Cross of the missionaries, a day of pilgrimage to the nearby island of Adonara and the graduation of students completing their studies at the Pusat La Mennais.

Calendar of members of the General Council

Brother Yannick HOUSSAY

June 15 to June 26	Indonesia (closure of the 150th)
Mid-July - late July	France (Lourdes, Ploërmel)
Early August	Rome
Mid August to 30 August	Uganda
Early September	Dapaong (Togo / First vows)
Mid-September	Rome

Brother Miguel Angel MERINO

June 15 to June 26	Indonesia (closure of the 150th)
June 28 to July 7	Spain
July 8 to 30	France (Lourdes, Ploërmel)
August	Spain
September	Rome

Brother Gerard BYARUHANGA

June 15 to June 26	Indonesia (closure of the 150th)
July	U.S.A.
August	Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania
September 16	Rome

Brother Gildas PRIGENT

15 to 26 June	Indonesia (closure of the 150th)
July - early August	in West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire, Togo)
August:	France
August 30	Indonesia (First Vows)
September 16	Rome

The next Council will be held in Rome from 19 to 28 September 2011