

ECHOES of the GENERAL COUNCIL

Issue 78

March 2013

From February 25 to March 8, 2013, the General Council held its session at the Generalate in Rome.

The meeting with all the Major Superiors of the Congregation was then held for the first time at the Casa Generalizia from 13 to 20 March 2013. This session was held at a special moment in the life of the Church as it corresponded to the time of the Conclave that elected Pope Francis. As part of the Year of Faith, a pilgrimage to St. Peter's Basilica was organised. The Major Superiors gathered around the tomb of Blessed John Paul II and celebrated the Eucharist in union with the whole Congregation. Thereafter they had the chance to go to the tomb of the apostle Peter.

*Tuesday, March 19, in the morning, a number of Major Superiors joined the crowd to participate in **the inaugural Mass of the pontificate of the new Pope Francis.***

This issue of Echoes brings to the attention of the entire Congregation some information and the following decisions taken by the General Council.

1. The animation of the Congregation :

1.1 Visit of the Provinces and Vice-provinces :

In recent months the Superior General and his Council members visited several Provinces (Spain, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Argentina, Uruguay, USA), the Vice-provinces of (Rwanda, Philippines), plus the Missions of Mexico and Indonesia.

These visits were an opportunity to meet the Brothers and communities; to participate in meetings of Brothers and lay people, as well as Provincial Councils; to animate a retreat and to preside over religious professions. The Superior General also presided over a perpetual profession in Benin and visited the Scholasticate in Abidjan.

1.2 The Provincial Chapters and Assemblies of Vice-provinces.

Following the last General Chapter of March 2012, several Provinces or Vice-provinces have already held their own Chapter:

- The Province of St. John the Baptist (England, France, Italy) in 2 sessions (November 2012 and January 2013).
- The Notre Dame Province (USA) in November 2012.
- The Vice-Province of St. Peter Chanel (French Polynesia) in December 2012.

The decisions of these assemblies were submitted for the approval of the Superior General and his Council as required by the Rule of Life.

In the coming months, other Provinces and Vice-Provinces will also hold their Chapter: St.Teresa of the Child Jesus Province (Uganda) from 7 to 11 May 2013, the Province of St. Michael the Archangel (Kenya-Tanzania) from 25 to 28 June 2013, the Province of Our Lady del Pilar (Spain, Bolivia, Chile) at the end of June, the Vice-Province of West Africa from 28 July to 1 August 2013, the Vice-Province of Japan Philippines, in late December 2013. The Province of Jean de la Mennais (Canada) is currently in preparing for a Chapter whose date is still to be determined.

1.3 The working group « Evangelising in the field of education ».

This working group, responsible for reflecting on the theme of the Mennaisian educational project, held its first meeting in Rome on 21 and 22 February. Present were Mrs. Sonia Acero and Bro. Porfirio Blanco (Spain), Mr.Richard Myre and Bro.Mario Couture(Canada), Mr.Jean-Jacques Erceau and Bro. Thierry Beauplet (France), as well as the Brothers Assistants Gerard Byaruhanga and Guillermo Dávila.

After a short presentation, participants shared the reality of Mennaisian education as lived in different parts of the Congregation. The reflection continued on the course of action to be put in place according to the goals set by the General Council, to produce a document that can be used by all. The working group then set up an action plan and a timetable.

1.4 The theme for the year 2013-2014 : "Being a Brother, good news !"

The Council launched the reflection on the animation of the next year and in accordance with the major Superiors decided to make the year 2013-2014 a "Year of the Brother's vocation."

The theme of this year will focus on the topic: "Being a Brother, good news." The tools for the animation will be sent to the Provinces and Vice-Provinces in June 2013. This theme should also encourage the vocation ministry throughout the Congregation

1.5 The "Logo" of the Congregation and the Mennaisian Family.

The General Council launched the first consultation with the Brothers and Laity competent in this area. We thank the Brothers and Lay people who have responded to our call and sent us some ideas or even proposals of the Logo.

At the meeting of the major Superiors, the essential elements of a future logo were retained.

The next step is to seek professionals, and indicating these criteria to them in order to arrive at concrete proposals in the coming months. They will be submitted to the major Superiors in view of making a choice. We hope to reach a final project during the last quarter of 2013.

2. The decisions of the Superior General and his Council.

2.1 Appointment of Superiors :

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, has appointed:

- For the Province St John the Baptist (England, France, Italy) :
Brother **Louis SÉITÉ**, **Provincial** for a term of six years,
Brother **Thierry BEAUPLÉ**, **Assistant Provincial** for a term of 3 years,
Brother **Rémy HAREL**, **Assistant Provincial** for a term of 3 years.
- For the Vice-Province of French Polynesia (Tahiti):
Brother **Henri ALANOU**, **Vice-Provincial** for a second term of 3 years.
- For the Province St Aloysius Gonzaga (Haïti) :
Brother **Simon ALPHONSE**, **Assistant Provincial** for a second term of 3 years.

2.2 Vice-province of Japon-Philippines : opening a Novitiate.

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, has decided :

- **to open a Novitiate** at the residence St. Francis Xavier of Yokohama (Japan) for one year.
- and to appoint **Brother Jean-Pierre Houle**, Novice Master for one year. This Novitiate should accommodate the two Postulants currently undergoing formation at San Jose in the Philippines.

2.3 Appointment of General Postulator :

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, has appointed:

- Brother **Gil ROZAS (S)**, **Postulator General** for a term of 3 years, from April 1st 2013.

Brother Gil Rozas has been at Casa Generalizia since a few years. He worked, among others, in the service of translations of the texts of the General Administration and the La Mennais Magazine. He will reduce this work to give himself totally to his new mission.

Brother Delfín López, who ends his term of Postulator will continue for a few months, in line with Brother Gil, to pursue the dossier of the healing of the young Enzo Carollo with the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. We thank him with all our heart for the years of service to the Cause of Jean-Marie de la Mennais. He sought to convey to all the Brothers and the Mennaisian Family, his great love for our Founder. He followed with passion especially the study of the healing of the young Argentine. The beatification of our Father would be the best gift to Brother Delfín. But it depends on God. That is why we pray that the Lord bless Brother Delfín and makes fruitful his work, and that of his successor.

3. The economic and financial issues.

3.1 The financial report of Brother Treasurer General.

Brother Treasurer General submitted to the General Council his annual report on the accounts of the General Administration.

The financial status of Provinces (and Vice-provinces) will be discussed at the next Council meeting because all the entities have not yet been able to submit their accounts. Indeed, it seems difficult, here or there, to meet the deadlines for the presentation of the annual financial statement.

3.2 The annual budget.

Brother Treasurer General submitted to the Council the provisional budget for 2014. The resources of the General Administration come, almost entirely from royalties paid by Provinces. The contributing Provinces of the North see their resources diminishing while some Provinces and Vice-Provinces of the South have a missionary dynamism which calls for an increasingly important aid. This prompts both reflection and changes in how to respond to the different needs of animation and government of the Congregation.

3.3 A Council of Experts

A council of three financial experts was appointed to assist the Treasurer General and the General Council in the analysis of the financial situation. This Council has no decision-making power. Thanks to its expertise it should enable the General Council to make the right choices at the economic level, for the mission.

4. The Committee of Solidarity

The new **Solidarity Committee** met on February 15 and 16 at Casa Generalizia in Rome. Those present were: Bro. Gerard Byaruhanga, AG and Chairman of the Committee, Bro. Louis Balanant, Treasurer General, Bro. Robert Gonville for T.S.F, Bro. Albert Pardo and Mrs. Maria Del Río for SAL, Bro. Joseph Kanaabi Zziwa, project manager for the Province of Uganda, and Bro. Hervé Asse replacing Bro. André Richard for ASSIFIC.

Brother Treasurer General reported on the **Solidarity Fund** of the Congregation and its progressive constitution. Despite the generosity and constant effort of several Provinces, a few years will be needed to achieve the desired total before its implementation.

The Committee is especially concerned about **the project in South Sudan**. Bro. Joseph Kanaabi Zziwa presented the whole project (estimates and plan of the architect): a community residence, an administrative block and 2 buildings of 8 classes. Achieving this ensemble should be made in several phases involving key NGOs. The construction of the community residence, however, will be borne by the Congregation.

The Committee discussed the strategy to be put in place to deal with all projects in Africa, Asia and Haiti. The structure of the internal solidarity in the Congregation is improving, especially with the establishment of the Solidarity Fund. However, it will remain inadequate considering the many planned projects. There is, therefore, an urgent need to organise a better research for funds from external donor agencies and major NGOs. The General Council reflects with the solidarity Committee on ways to implement in order to achieve concrete results.

5. Information and communication

The International Council for information met from 25 to 27 January 2013 in the Community of Berrio-Otxoa College of Bilbao where they were warmly welcomed. Brothers Kiggundu Francis, James Hayes, Marcel Lafrance and Misters. Alfonso Michel Blázquez and Tanguy were present. During this session the Council met different Communities of Bilbao and Portugalete, the youth leaders of the group of catechists as well as the facilitator of the Mennaisian Youth blog of Bilbao.

As has already been written, the aim of the Council of information is to be a source of proposals and prospective, to help achieve the communication tools of the Congregation and Mennaisian Family (La Mennais Magazine, website of the Congregation and Provinces, various publications, videos etc..) and thus contribute to media literacy of the entire Mennaisian Family.

The Council wishes to organise information and provide different tools for communication in line with the themes offered for the Congregation and Mennaisian Family. It continues to be attentive, in particular, to the complementarity of information and tools to support a wider dissemination of all these instruments.

At the end of the meeting, the Information Council made proposals to the General Council for the development and adaptation of information resources for the mission of the Congregation and the Mennaisian Family.

6. Meeting of Major Superiors at the Casa Generalizia

The meeting of major Superiors of the Congregation, which has just ended, has been the first to be held after the General Chapter of March 2012. It included 22 Brothers: 8 Provincials, 5 Assistant Provincials and 4 Vice-provincials as well as members of the General Council and the Brother Secretary General. Mr Michel Tanguy, director of information and Mr Corentin Ogier (young layman employed in the service of the website in the French Civic Service) also intervened at the end of the session, to speak about communication and current projects.

This meeting allowed the General Council to present lines of action for the next 5 years and share with the major Superiors the main topics addressed by the General Chapter for the implementation of the said orientations :

Evangelisation in the field of education,
Initial formation and ongoing formation,
Missionary animation and solidarity for the service of the poorest.
Mennaisian Family,
Economic management of the Provinces and Vice-Provinces,
Realisation of a new edition of the **Rule of Life** after the adoption of certain amendments by the General Chapter and the observations made by the Holy See for final approval.

The major Superiors have also raised the issue of the Logo for the Mennaisian Family and thought about writing a text on child protection, as requested by the General Chapter.

They agreed, finally, on the theme of the next year as mentioned above: "**Being a Brother, good news.**"

This meeting of major Superiors allowed checking once again the importance to promote the communion at the level of the whole Congregation, and to find support in the exercise of the fraternal mission for which, too often, each stands alone. The major Superiors want to hold these meetings annually. They would be relatively shorter but more frequent to strengthen the links that should unite the General Council to all the major Superiors.

Calendar of the members of the General Council

Brother Yannick HOUSSAY

March	Rome
End-March - early April	France
May	Rome
15 May-15 June	Rome (GC meeting)

Brother Gildas Prigent

22 Mar- 21 April	Haiti
25 April	Rome
15 May -15 June	Rome (GC meeting)

Brother Gerard BYARUHANGA

27 March	Uganda + Kenya
12 May	Rome
15 May-15 June	Rome (GC meeting)

Brother Guillermo DÁVILA

23 March	South America
12 May	Rome
15 May-15 June	Rome (GC meeting)

The next Council will be held in Rome 15 May to 15 June 2013.