

ECHOES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

No. 56

June 2006

The members of the General Council have been meeting in Rome for the first session of their mandate these the first days of the month of May 2006.

A certain number of decisions have been made and communicated to the whole Congregation in the last issue of The Echoes.

This issue of the Echoes, No. 56, gives some information on the work of the Council during the current session.

1. The animation of the Congregation:

The Council has spent the considerable time sharing ... the study of the texts of the General Chapter 2006 and considering ways and means of putting them into practice. The proposals for animation will be made known throughout the Congregation after proper consultation with the Major Superiors.

The General Council has also devoted some time to the reading of the Rule of Life and the General Chapter concerning their specific mission in the service of the Congregation.

The Council has chosen as their priority of action during their mandate what the Chapter tells us: "The Superior General and his Council constitute a force of animation and of dynamism in the service of the communion, the mission and the formation. They form a community in Rome and, together, they search for the unity of purpose and of spirit, for the good of the Congregation."

1.1 1.1 The role of the Brother-Assistants:

To fulfil better their mission as "counsellors to the Superior General" and to be, "with him, the animators of the religious and apostolic life of the Congregation", the Assistants receive, individually, the responsibility of accompanying the Provinces, Vice-Provinces, or the communities as a whole.

Their mission in relation to these structures, in addition to what is already in the Rule of Life, is as follows:

- They strive to know the communities and the Brothers, and accompany the Major Superiors who have these communities and these Brothers under their responsibility. They assist them and share times of evaluation of their mission of animation and governance.
- They give their consent to the nomination of the superiors of communities.
- They give an account of such accompaniment to the Superior General in Council.

On the other hand, to be faithful to the dynamic envisaged by the Chapter, the General Council as a whole assumes the responsibility of whatever action taken concerning matters of formation and animation.

It is, therefore, in the light of this spirit that each Brother-Assistant has been entrusted with the accompaniment of the administrative structures or whole communities as follows:

Brother Miguel-Angel Merino: the Province of Spain-Chile-Bolivia; the Province of Argentina-Uruguay; the Communities of Italy of the Province of St. John the Baptist; and the Community of the General House.

Brother Gerard Byaruhanga: the Province of Uganda, the Vice-Province of Kenya-Tanzania; the Communities of Canada of the Province of Jean de La Mennais, the Vice-Province of Japan-Philippines; and the Province of the United States of America.

Brother Gildas Prigent: the Communities of England and France of the Province of St. John the Baptist; the Vice-Province of West Africa, the Vice-Province of Polynesia, the Vice-Province of Central Africa, the Province of Haiti, and the mission of Indonesia.

1.2 1.2 Planned Projects:

➤ ➤ As part of the programme of animation envisaged by the Chapter, several **meetings and international sessions** in the fields of:

- ▪ formation,
- ▪ shared mission
- ▪ preparation for perpetual profession
- ▪ vocation ministry

have been planned for the next three years.

➤ ➤ A committee to edit the **Ratio Institutionis** will soon be put in place, in collaboration with the Major Superiors.

➤ ➤ The Superior General has written a letter to all the Major Superiors about all of these issues. Their first **meeting is scheduled for October 2007 at Ploërmel**.

During this session, the General Council put aside some time to meet the members of the General Administration and to reflect with them on their respective responsibilities. The Council also discussed ... other projects, especially regarding the Etudes Mennaisiennes and the cause for the Beatification of John Mary de la Mennais.

1.3 1.3 Publications:

In the coming weeks, the whole Congregation will receive:

- ▪ A brochure of the documents of the General Chapter
- ▪ A Circular giving an account of the General Chapter

This Circular, together with the documents of the General Chapter, will consist of the synthesis of Brother Obeso's report, a presentation of the Chapter proceedings and some suggestions on how to use these orientations.

2. The decisions of the Superior General and his Council

2.1 Closing of Communities:

After the consultations provided for by the Rule of Life, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council has authorised the closing of the communities of La Guerche and Saulnières in France (Province of St. John the Baptist).

2.2 Status of the Vice-Province of Central Africa:

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, on the advice of Brother Provincial of the Province of St. Jean de la Mennais and his council, has decided that Brother Provincial will be directly responsible for the Communities of the Vice-Province. He will be assisted on the spot by two Superiors of the missions of Congo and Rwanda, each one helped by an Animation Committee.

3. News of the Congregation

➤ ➤ Indonesia:

At the request of the Superior General, Brother Josu Olabarrieta went to Indonesia in May to visit our mission. On his return he informed the members of the General Council about the current situation and the ongoing projects.

Some decisions have been taken for the construction of a youth centre and the accommodation of some aspirants. Other decisions will be made in the coming months, especially in view of sending one or two more Brothers to reinforce the mission and facilitate its growth and development.

➤ ➤ Provincial Chapters:

Several Provinces will hold Provincial Chapters in the coming weeks, preceded or followed by assemblies with the laity:

- • The Province of the Immaculate Conception (Argentina-Uruguay) from the 13th to the 15th July 2006.
- • The Province of Our Lady of Pilar (Spain-Bolivia-Chile) from the 6th to the 8th August 2006.
- • The Province of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus (Uganda-Kenya-Tanzania) from the 30th August to the 2nd September 2006.

➤ ➤ Anniversary:

This year, on the 12th August, St. Mary's College, Kisubi in Uganda will have a grand celebration of its Centenary Jubilee and 80 years since the arrival of the Brothers at the College.

4. Feast at the Generalate

On Saturday 17th June 2006, the Community of the Generalate together with the Brothers of the Communities of St. Ivo and Castalgandolfo celebrated the Eucharist followed by a luncheon in

honour Brothers Yvon Deniaud and François Raguénès. It was, in fact, the occasion of bidding them farewell and thanking them for the good work they accomplished for the Congregation and the House during their stay here.

Brother Superior General gave a warm vote of thanks to Brother Yvon Deniaud for the nine years spent in the service of the Congregation, with competence and devotedness as Secretary General and Procurator, and the five years as Assistant Director of the Chronicle. He wished him a pleasant journey to his new mission in French Polynesia.

Brother Louis Balanant gave an account of Brother François Raguénès' span of 70 years in Religious life, and particularly the twelve years spent at the Generalate, seven of which he spent as Treasurer General. Brother François is going back to his Province of origin. A big thanks to both of them!

The Schedule of the Members of the General Council

Brother Yannick HOUSSAY

End of June--3 rd July	France
4 th July -- 2 nd August	England
August --	Uganda
23 rd August --	Rome

Brother Miguel Angel MERINO

22 nd June-- 5 th July	Spain
5 th July -- 19 th July	Argentina
19 th July -- 27 th July	Chile
27 th July -- 17 th August	Spain
18 th August	Rome

Brother Gerard BYARUHANGA

26 th June -- 21 st July	Uganda
22 nd July -- 8 th August	Kenya-Tanzania
9 th August -- 8 th September	Uganda
8 th September	Rome

Brother Gildas PRIGENT

20 th June -- 1 st July	Senegal
2 nd July -- 26 th July	France
27 th July -- 10 th August	Spain
28 th August -- 2 nd September	Rome
2 nd September -- 13 th September	Togo
13 th September	Rome

The next session of the Council will take place in Rome from the 15th to the 30th September 2006.