

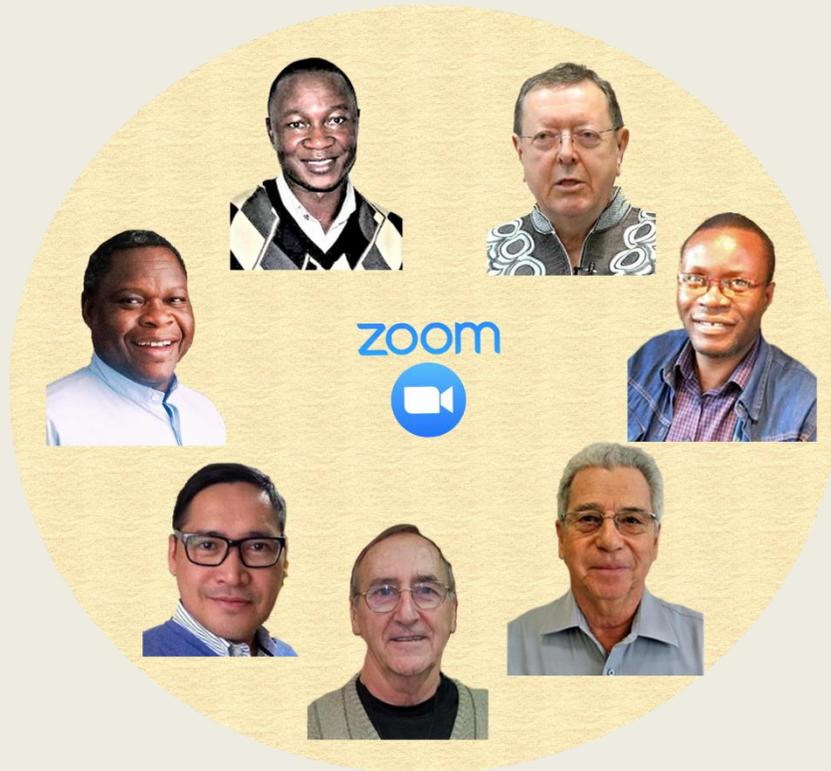
Société des Missionnaires d'Afrique - Society of the Missionaries of Africa
Los Misioneros de África - Os Missionários de Nossa Senhora da África

EL CONTACTO - THE LINK - LE LIEN - O CONTATO



MAFR Américas

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PROVINCIAL CONSEIL DONE THROUGH ZOOM APPS

Barthélémy Bazemo, Provincial Delegate U.S.A., **Serge St-Arneault**, Provincial Secretary, **Cyriaque Mounkoro**, Provincial Delegate Mexico, **Raphaël Muteba**, Provincial Delegate Brazil, **Armand Galay**, Provincial Delegate Canada, **Jean-Guy Labrecque**, Provincial Bursar and **Réal Doucet**, Provincial AMS.

Translation of «Le Lien» into English: by **Michel Gingras**

WORD FROM THE PROVINCIAL

To be a missionary in any of our Sectors in this time of the pandemic of Covid-19, that is the challenge we are called to face in order not to make of this time of self-isolation and restrictions a wasted time. Last October in the Link, I wrote that the traditional ways based only on the sacraments to proclaim the Reign among us were obsolete. We have to be creative in finding new approaches by using modern means. And now this pandemic confirms that it is impossible to do what we always did: no more question of doing ministry outside the house, visiting families, going to the streets to meet people, and so on. We have to remain in our homes.

Besides praying the Lord for his help, many among us began to use social means of communication to reach out to people and encourage them not to lose hope and to tell them that they are important in the eyes of God (Is. 43, 4). We want to be men of faith and hope for those we reach. WhatsApp, Facebook, Emails, phones and other means of communication have become essential tools to live our mission at this time of human history.

It looks like as if we are going to be limited in our movements for quite a long time still. Therefore let us not be afraid to invest a few minutes even a few hours a day to be witnesses of the Good News through those social means.

Actually I am in admiration in front of the initiatives our confreres have taken in the various sectors of the province. No, the pandemic has not taken away from us our capacity of being heralds of the Good News. On the contrary, it came and it comes to purify our vision on life, death, God, the Church, and faith to make us find the right words that can touch the heart of those we contact in order to help them to get closer to the Risen Lord and to stand on their feet.

The pandemic, in a certain way, has become a time of grace for us, because we take more time to reflect, meditate, pray and discern.

In this edition of The Link, you will find the echoes of the last Provincial Council in April, a council done through teleconference on ZOOM. It was a positive experience that we will repeat once in a while in the future. You will see that things happen in our Province, some more painful as our departure from Brazil, others more encouraging, in the USA, Mexico and Canada; thus mournings and births to live...

Réal Doucet, M.Afr
AMS Provincial

ECHOES OF THE PROVINCIAL CONSEIL AMS

Done through the virtual help of the internet application ZOOM coordinated from Washington by Barthélemy Bazemo – April 14 to 16, 2020

1. PRESENTATION OF THE SECTORS

1.1 UNITED-STATES SECTOR

1.1.1 CONFRERES

As in many countries, the USA sector is facing the difficult context of the CoVid-19 pandemic with the drastic lockdown and social distancing measures decreed by the US government. We are grateful that so far, the sector is faring well with no recorded cases. As a whole, the confreres are safe in our various communities: Washington, Brooklyn and St-Petersburg. Confreres continue to live their M.Afr mission and charism within closed doors and praying for peace and healing for all those impacted by the coronavirus across the world. Since our last meeting in Guadalajara in October 2019, the USA Sector has faced mixed fortunes, such as health challenges and even bereavement, especially in Lavigerie House (St-Petersburg).

- a) After suffering a stroke that impaired the mobility of his left side, our confrere **Joe Braun** died and was buried in Tampa on November 19, 2019.
- b) **Roger Labonte** has recovered from his prostate surgery he underwent in September 2019.
- c) **Richard Archambault**: The Parkinson disease is taking a toll on him; his health has deteriorated, needing more attention and care. As a result, he will be transferred from the assisted living home to a nursing home for better care.
- d) **Antonio Koffi** has taken office as our new sector treasurer.
- e) **Roger Bisson** is on a heart monitor but is out of danger.

1.1.2 BROOKLYN DIOCESE PROJECT

As reported in our last meeting, the Brooklyn project is a reality now. The official opening of the joint-parishes St Bonaventure & St Benedict the Moor took place on June 30, 2018. The installation of **Bartholomew Mrosso** as the pastor, the parish was made official by Bishop Sanchez on October 5, 2019.

Barthélemy Bazemo is in touch with the chancellor of the diocese to finalize the contract with the diocese. As soon as both parties agree on the terms, the contract will be signed as planned, hopefully before June 2020. The visa application of **Yago Abeledo** who will be joining the Brooklyn community is under way, but all is stalled now because of the government shutdown.



1.1.3 USA SECTOR RETREAT: OCTOBER 18-23, 2020

The Sector will gather in Tampa for its annual retreat which will be preached by our confrere **Albert Thevenot**. All the confreres of the Province are invited if interested.

1.2 CANADA SECTOR

1.2.1. DURING THIS PERIOD OF THE COVID 19

All the communities have taken the measures of social distancing in order to protect our confreres from the infection of the virus (Covid 19). In Toronto, we have stopped our ministries since the beginning of March 2020 and our two employees have been temporarily licensed. In Sherbrooke, nobody is allowed in the house, except the staff. In Quebec, at the Cardinal Vachon, and in Chicoutimi, at the Antonian Sisters, all the residents are confined in their apartments while the personnel bring their meals. In Montreal, the kitchen staffs have to serve the meals while avoiding manipulating the plates and the utensils.

In St-Hubert, **Guy Vezeau** was confirmed positive with the virus. He is confined to his room. Until now April 14, 2020, he has not developed any particular symptoms. All the other confreres are well.

1.2.2.1 SHERBROOKE

- a) There will probably be a delay before moving to our new residence Lokia. The workers will go back to work on Monday April 20, 2020
- b) We deplore the death of **Maurice Desjardins**, who died at the Hotel-Dieu hospital in Sherbrooke on February 5, 2020. His ashes will be buried during the coming spring, in La Tuque, where he was born.

1.2.2.2 CONFRERES OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY IN SHERBROOKE.

- a) **Raymond Perron** lives at the CHSLD St-Vincent
- b) **Réal Tardif** lives at the Haut Bois in Rock Forest
- c) **Victor Grégoire** lives at the CHSLD St-Joseph
- d) **Georges Benoit** lives at the CHSLD St-Vincent
- e) **Armand Garneau** lives in Thetford Mines in a home for elderly persons, with his sister
- f) **André Neault** lives in Eastman at his cousin's home

1.2.2.3 JUBILEE OF THE OATH IN SHERBROOKE.

The date foreseen as May 16 is still uncertain.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a) 75 years (1945) | Marcel Mercier |
| b) 70 years (1950) | Luc Piette and Jacques Palasse |
| c) 65 years (1955) | Roger Tessier, Léopold Desrochers and Armand Garneau |
| d) 60 years (1960) | Réal Tardif, Jean-Marie Béliveau, Georges Benoit,
Richard Dandeneault, Raymond-Marie Gagnon, Jean-
Claude Pageau and Denis Laliberté |
| e) 50 years (1970) | André Filion |

1.2.2.4 ANNUAL RETREAT IN SHERBROOKE

We will not be able to have the confreres living outside of Sherbrooke for the annual retreat at our new home (Les Terrasses Bowen). We have no idea about the form it will take in the future, while taking into account that more than 120 sisters will also share the same home.

1.2.3.1 MONTREAL

- a) There are 20 confreres in the community
- b) **Romarc Bationo** has finally received his visa after several months of waiting, and he was about to buy his ticket as he had planned to spend his sabbatical year with us. **Michel Meunier** told him that in the context of this pandemic of the Corona Virus, he should delay. Moreover, the borders have been closed to all foreigners.
- c) Visitors are not authorised to enter into our house, following the preventive measures against the propagation of the Corona Virus.
- d) The rules in the refectory have been modified. Our employees fill our plates, to avoid manipulating the utensils and the plates by the confreres. The atmosphere remains peaceful.

- e) **Robert Laberge**, who used to live outside our community, passed away this month of March.
- f) **Gilles Prévost** has changed home. He now lives in a private home for elderly people in Saint-Jérôme, north of Montreal.

1.2.3.2 AFRIKA CENTER

- a) Due to the confinement, the team composed of **Monique Bonnefoy**, **Jocelyne Morin**, **Cristobal Padilla** and **Serge St-Arneault**, director, have spent some time in a new laying-out of the Center. A phone link has been put in place to remain connected with our friends.
- b) **Roger Bélanger** has given his resignation in January 2020. **Cristobal Padilla** took his place as the treasurer, and is doing fine in this responsibility.

1.2.4 TORONTO

- a) **Andrew Lane** has gone for a 10-day personal retreat at the Carmelites in Hamilton and was back to Toronto, on the 18th of March 2020.
- b) **Armand Galay** was supposed to go to Jerusalem for the session-retreat on March 9, 2020. Due to the Covid19 pandemic, the said session was cancelled.
- c) **Salvador Munoz-Ledo** is studying English in Toronto, but the school has closed due to the Coronavirus. He continues learning English on-line and confreres are helping him out.
- d) The cook does not come anymore. So, Armand and Salvador, in the kitchen, put their talents at the service of their confreres.

1.2.5 QUÉBEC

- a) **Jean-Marc Lindsay** lives on the 6th floor at the infirmary since the beginning of December 2019.
- b) The health conditions of **Cyprien Bouchard**, **Yvon Lavoie** and **Yves Gaudreault** is stationary.

1.2.6 CHICOUTIMI

- a) **Bernard Tremblay** has moved with the Antonian Sisters
- b) **Yvan Bouchard** now lives with the priests' home
- c) **Louis-Philippe Girard** is not as fit as he used to be
- d) **Guy Larouche** is doing fine.

1.2.7 WINNIPEG AND SASKATCHEWAN

Our confreres **Paul Sorin**, **Pierre Dumaine** and **Albert Thévenot** are fine.

1.3 SECTOR OF BRAZIL

1.3.1 OVERALL VIEW

- a) Three confreres continue the work: **Luciano Fuchs**, **Francisco J. Ambrosio Vargas** and **Raphael Muteba**.
- a) Luciano continues to collaborate at the treasury with Francisco.
- b) **Francisco J. Ambrosio Vargas** took over the project "Princesse Tamar" of **Serge Moussa Traoré**. He is the bursar of the sector and he does some ministry in various parishes, visits the sick people, and assures the vocational and missionary animation.
- c) Following a request of the Bishop, with a yearlong subcontract, **Raphael Muteba** is the chaplain responsible for the community "Nosse Senhora do Rosario dos Pretos", a community made of Afro-descendants. He gives short conferences on different topics (enculturation, ancestors etc.) and he collaborates with the centre Cardinal Lavigerie, within the frame of interreligious dialogue.
- b) Following his return from the Financial Council in Canada, **Francisco J. Ambrosio Vargas** had to enter into confinement. He had started to feel some respiratory difficulties

toward the end of his confinement. Fortunately, he was tested negative. The test for the Covid-19 was taken on March 27 and the answer came only on Monday April 13!

- c) After the last provincial council, a large consultation was made to allow the confreres to express their opinions about the future of the Brazilian Sector.
- d) The parish Sao Tiago has a new parish priest (a religious priest) since December 10, 2019. A farewell mass and the closure of the 150 years Jubilee of the Society was celebrated on December 8, 2019.

Take note that the Bishop of Salvador da Bahia will retire. We are expecting the arrival of the new Bishop.

1.3.2 STATUTES OF THE SOCIETY

The change of our social head office is still to be completed. The acknowledgement of **Serge Moussa Traoré** as the president of the Association with the solicitor was made for a period of six years following the deposition of our statutes. His mandate started in 2015 and therefore it will end in March 2021. It is only from that date that another team will take office.

1.3.3 THANKS

The Provincial Council thanks **Serge Moussa Traoré** for the seven years he has spent in Brazil and wishes him good luck for a new step in his missionary life.

1.4 MEXICO SECTOR

1.4.1 OVERALL VIEW

- a) The community of Queretaro: **Ismael Mendez, Jean-Pierre Roth, Rafael Santana de Azevedo.**
- b) The community of Guadalajara: **Cyriaque Mounkoro** (until June 2020), **Dieudonné Rizinde, Markos Lopez Torres** and **Emmanuel Barongo** (waiting for the green light for the language course in the city of Mexico)
- c) At the rehabilitation center Rougier:
 - **Rafael Santana de Azevedo**: after having spent three months, he will return to Queretaro to visit the sick and the aged and also the groups of friends of the M.Afr and the families of the confreres.
 - **Maralf Jiménez Mendivil** will spend three months at the Center.

1.4.2 UPDATE

- a) The updating of the Statutes of the M.Afr in Mexico for the time being is put aside on account of the confinement due to the pandemic of the Covid-19. The same applies for the sale a house given to us by a Canadian.
- b) **Dieudonné Rizinde** is officially rector of the Formation Center.
- c) The team spirit between the confreres has improved quite a lot, together with the collaboration with the lay people.
- d) With the encouragement of the Superior General, it will be eventually possible to open a parish with the approval of the new Bishop of Queretaro, who has yet to be appointed. It will be done when we will have the personnel needed.

2. THE SITUATION IN BRAZIL

2.1 PLAN OF ACTION

The decision to put an end to our presence in Brazil has brought up a lot of emotions. After a wide consultation among the confreres of the Province and the General Council, we have decided to withdraw from Brazil. The question is to set the best way to do it. The Provincial Council considers the following appointments to put an end to our presence in Brazil in 2021.

- a) When the time comes, we will allow **Raphael Muteba** to take a good break before going to Guadalajara for some studies and join the formation team.
- b) **Luciano Fuchs** and **Francisco J. Ambrosio Vargas** will remain there to liquidate what we have. They will leave the Province. We have to make sure that other confreres will come and join the province, either in Mexico, or in Canada.
- c) Some negotiations have already started with the Province of SAP concerning **Francisco J. Ambrosio Vargas**.
- d) The future of **Luciano Fuchs** will be discussed with him due time.

2.2 UPDATING OF THE STATUTES.

As already mentioned in 4.3.2, our Statutes must be clarified to allow us to withdraw from the country with serenity.

The Provincial Council wishes that all the confreres living now in Brazil work together to bring to an end the process of our withdrawal from the country, with the help of a lawyer, more specifically with regard to the legal Statutes who will be updated during the month of March 2021.

2.3 FURTHER STEPS

- a) The provincial delegate will contact the local Bishop, actually acting as the diocesan administrator, to draw to his attention our decision and to share with him our calendar concerning our withdrawal. This letter will be written in Portuguese, with a translation in French for our archives and will be signed by the Provincial and by the delegate of the Sector.
- b) The Provincial Council asks the confreres in Brazil to check with a lawyer, the legal way to proceed with the transfer outside the country of the funds after the sale of our houses.

3. FINANCIAL REPORT

The outstanding point of the financial report of the year 2019 is in American dollars.

- a) We have to reduce our expenses in a significant way this year because of the negative foreseeable impact of the Coronavirus which will affect our incomes coming from our donors.
- b) The Provincial Treasurer is happy with the collaboration of all the bursars from the Sectors, and wishes to thank them
- c) Our administrators **Mélanie Pouliot** and **Annik Gauthier** have to work from their homes.
- d) It will be possible to deposit our cheques directly in the bank with a new electronic system.

4. OUR CANDIDATES

4.1 IN MEXICO

4.1.1 Adrian A. Martinez

Adrian has completed his third year in Theology this year and he will start his fourth year next fall. Let us pray that his discernment may be enlightened by the Spirit.

4.1.2 Ulises Morales Sanchez

The Provincial Council noticed that his knowledge of English is too poor to think about the Spiritual Year this year. Moreover, he may not be able to defend his thesis for the licence in Philosophy before September. At the appropriate moment, he could do a stage in English in Toronto and go to Africa a few weeks before joining the spiritual year, and become familiar with the environment.

4.1.3 Marcello Becerra

Marcello is a candidate since October 2019. His academic level is improving and he makes some efforts in learning English.

4.1.4 Two other serious candidates are ready to enter next fall.

4.2 IN BRAZIL

Father Francisco Reginaldo Henriques de Maranda

Francisco is a former candidate of our Society. He made a stage in Mozambique. Aged 48 years old, he is actually parish priest in a large parish in the diocese of Sao Paulo. His pastoral involvement is largely inspired by his missionary formation. He would like to come back with us. After having received the necessary information, we will give a positive or a negative answer to his request.

4.3. IN THE USA

Two serious candidates are in contact with Barthélémy Bazemo.

- a) **Daniel Marceau** who will finish his thesis for a Doctorate in Minnesota.
- b) **Ben Dafany** aged 22. He follows a licence in Theology in Washington. He speaks French fluently.

5. APPOINTMENTS CONCERNING DIFFERENT SECTORS

5.1 MEXICO

- a) **Dieudonné Rizinde** is appointed rector at Guadalajara for three years and superior of the house after the departure of **Cyriaque Mounkoro**, until June 30, 2023.
- b) **Cyriaque Mounkoro** returns to Queretaro on July 1st, 2020 and is again Superior.
- c) **Marcos Lopez Torres** becomes bursar at Guadalajara until June 2020. The Provincial will write him an official letter of thanks for his involvement in the formation team.
- d) **Aleixo Rafael Santana de Azevedo** is appointed at Queretaro until June 30, 2023
- e) **Jean-Pierre Roth** is appointed bursar at Guadalajara for one year, renewable, from July 1st 2020, depending on the date of the arrival of **Raphael Muteba**.
- f) **Emmanuel Barongo** is appointed at Guadalajara for the missionary animation. He is on the formation team until June 30, 2023

5.2 CANADA

- a) After the confinement period and the departure to the Lokia Home in Sherbrooke, have been appointed to our house in Montreal: **André Fillion, Pierre Benson, Alain Gingras** and **Robert Lavertu**.
- b) **John Boos** is appointed to Montreal after the confinement period.
- c) **Cristobal Padilla** is appointed to the Africa Center until the end of January 2023.
- d) **Jacques Poirier** is appointed to the Media until June 30, 2023
- e) **Serge St-Arneault** is appointed Provincial Secretary until June 30, 2023
- f) **Andrew Lane** is appointed to Montreal from July 01, 2020.

5.3 USA

- a) **Julien Cormier** remains at our house in Washington
- b) **Yago Abeledo** is appointed to the community in Brooklyn from July 1st, 2020 until June 30, 2023.

5.4 BRAZIL

- a) **Raphael Muteba** will leave Brazil as soon as possible and he will go to Guadalajara for some studies and join the formation team.

- b) **Luciano Fuchs** and **Francisco J. Ambrosio Vargas**, will remain in Brazil to finalise our departure from Salvador da Bahia.

5.5. RENEWAL OF THE APPOINTMENTS OF THE SUPERIORS OF COMMUNITIES FOR ONE YEAR STARTING ON JULY 1st, 2020

- a) **Marc Angers** in Toronto
- b) **Michel Meunier** in Montréal
- c) **Michel Carbonneau, Jean-Marie Tardif** and **Jean-Claude Pageau** in Sherbrooke.
- d) **André Bilodeau, André Savard** and **Jean-Paul Laflamme** in Québec
- e) Contact persons: **Guy Larouche** and **Bernard Tremblay** in Chicoutimi
- f) Contact person: **Paul Sorin** in St-Boniface
- g) **Jean-Claude Robitaille** at St-Petersburg

6. VARIA

6.1. UPDATE TO THE FILE ABOUT THE PARISH IN TORONTO

Andrew Lane is correcting an official letter written by the Provincial which should be normally delivered in person to the Archbishop of Toronto. The confinement caused by the Covid-19 will oblige us to send the letter through the Post Office. A meeting will take place when circumstances will allow.

6.2 ABOUT CONFRERES

6.2.1. Léonard Hategekimana

He has made a half sabbatical year in Chicago. He is grateful. The University has unfortunately closed its doors on account of the pandemic. Barthélémy Bazemo got a ticket for him on the last flight of Ethiopian Airlines so that he could return to Africa. Taking advantage of his visa he is now in Zambia where he has spent his quarantine. He is fine. He will go to Rwanda in due time.

6.2.2 Jean-Guy Labrecque

He underlines the uncertain situation of the stock markets at present. This situation will oblige us to be more prudent with our finances.

6.2.3 Barthélémy Bazemo

He could not go back to his country after the death of his father. He will go back as soon as possible. He thanks the confreres for their support.

6.3. THE LENTEN COLLECTION

The generosity of the confreres for the two projects in Africa brought more than 38,000 \$. A sum of 4,000 \$ will also be sent to **Innocent Maganga** for the purchase of a vehicle. The surplus will be sent latter on for other projects in Africa.

7. EVALUATION OF THE ZOOM EXPERIENCE AND DATES FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Once the network was established, the meeting went smoothly in spite of the distances. The discussions were frank and attentive even in front of a camera. It allowed us to have some good moments of discernment. The members of the Council are aware of the support of the confreres and are thankful.

The next provincial council will be held from November 2-9, 2020. In October, a decision will be taken to know whether the council will take place through ZOOM, or whether the confreres will be able to travel to Montréal.