



Spring 2020

Dear Confrères,

At this time of the pandemic, we propose for your reflection this text of Bernard Litzler (21 April 2020).

« **Every age has its sign.** The Church, faced with this actual pandemic, cannot shirk its duty *'to scrutinise the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel, so that it can respond (...) to the eternal questions on the meaning of human life now and in the future and how present and future are inextricably bound together'*. This is the position of *Gaudium et Spes*, the 1965 pastoral encyclical of Vatican II.

'Scrutinise and interpret': it is a huge task, especially when an unknown virus is condemning us to a life of confinement. However, the crisis invites us to read lessons from it. Experts of all kinds abound in the media, responding to widespread pleading to offer guidance. This they do, coming from so many different standpoints. The health crisis involved certainly demands that it be read according to the benchmark of the Gospel. First and foremost to remind us that humanity is one. Pope Francis never ceases to remind us of that. The world is one unbroken whole and we human beings are embarked on the same wild and uncertain adventure which is life itself. This murderous coronavirus does us also a service, that of revealing to us our humanity anew, with its multifaceted beauty, its flaws and our human destiny.

« **The crisis reveals the importance of the bonds that bind us together.**

« This mysterious corona reminds us also of the importance of caring for one another (gratitude to the carers wells up in our hearts) and the importance of health in general (for a Christian religion which respects the body this is not a trivial matter). It strongly reaffirms also the notion of public service: in a world permeated in the extreme by the model of commerce and moneymaking we are



forced to look beyond the limitations of this outlook. Whether we are talking about

health matters, news reporting, food supplies, maintaining public order, all these are calls to serve where the profit motif alone cannot be allowed to hold sway.

« At the end of the day – and that is without doubt the most Gospel inspired lesson from this crisis – it shows the importance of connections, bonds between people. During this time of restrictions, the absence of family and friendship contacts creates really dramatic situations, when people at risk end up preferring to choose Covid and death rather than live an empty shell of a life, cut off from relationships which are the spice of life. Without saying a word thousands of people are dedicating themselves in a caring way to keeping a spark of life and hope in people who are suffering intolerably from being affected by the situation. If we could stop seeing our establishments as waiting rooms for the grave we would be able to portray the harrowing experience of victims more as following a new path in life than as walking a dark road towards death ».

Provincial Council Meeting

Given the Covid-19 pandemic, the Provincial Council could not meet in Paris as foreseen. So it was held by video conference on the 28th and 29th of April 2020. Gérard Malherbe was the only one unable to part in the video conference as he had not the necessary equipment.



Following a reflection shared by the Provincial and some technical explanations, some points were added to the agenda and the Delegates were given the floor for a short cameo account of their Sector, resuming for the most part what had been published in the special « Coronavirus » editions of our Eur-Echo.

We then spent a fair bit of time revising the **appointment** list for 2020.

Under the heading of Initial Formation, we had the pleasant task of voting unanimously to present Rafal Chlastawa (Poland) to the Spiritual Year in Arusha. The stagiaire Simon Apuri (Roquetas) is finishing his stage at Roquetas. A short presentation by the Delegate of the Sector of Spain shed light on his development. A new stagiaire has been nominated by the General Council to the PEP. Hence the Provincial Council approved the appointment to the Sector of Spain (for Roquetas) of Yangbonga Etsekio Jean-Luc, native of the DRC and right now in the Spiritual Year at Samagan. The meeting of the four stagiaires who are in Europe, which should have taken place in Varsenare in March, had to be cancelled on account of the pandemic.

Under the heading of Permanent Formation we have only been informed of the suppression of or the report sine die of several meetings : that of confrères in the second period of their mission in Kigali, that of the Brothers, that of the construction committee due to meet in Bamako and the Jerusalem Retreat session in English in March-June.

Under the heading of Finances, Didier Lemaire, provincial Treasurer, presented the financial report for the year 2019. In a preliminary statement, he made three remarks. Expenses are in general well controlled. Income is good. One must stress the generosity and work of confrères. Many Sectors still benefit by significant legacies. The portfolios benefitted by a raise in market value in 2019.

The different results (expenses and income) of the Sectors and the consolidated report of the Province were then presented one by one and, after some technical explanations, approved just as the financial Council had done.

The portfolios right now are in trouble. Given the fall in market value (on account of the drop in price of petrol and because of the pandemic) the advice is to lie low, weather the storm and not sell.

The Sector Council of Great Britain having proposed that Denis Starkey should be appointed for a third mandate as Sector Treasurer, until the 30th of June 2022, the Provincial Council the Provincial Council duly ratified this appointment.

Didier Lemaire's mandate as provincial Treasurer coming to an end on the 30th of June 2020, the Provincial Council asks that his mandate be prolonged until the arrival of his successor in June 2022.

The next meeting of the provincial Council, with some changes in its composition, will take place in Paris from the 30th of September to the 2nd of October... Covid-19 permitting.

At the conclusion of this video conference, the six confrères ending their mandate were invited to share their spiritual « testament » as Delegates of Assistant Delegates.



Luc Putzeys (Belgium): I was delighted to be able to be at the service of my confrères and communities. I carry a happy memory of that time. Having spent most of my missionary life in formation work and work for the future, in all my animation work my commitment has always been directed towards the future of the Society. Taking part in the Chapter of 2016 was for me a time of grace. I was at it with Patrick, Raphael and Pawel. We live in a special situation in Belgium: the Provincialate and Sector house are in the same place. That has its advantages and drawbacks, but the advantages outweigh the drawbacks. Since 2017 we have very often changed the venue of Provincial councils. I was delighted with that! Meeting up with the other Provincial Councillors in person seems important to me. There was the grace and joy of the beatification in Algeria where I was able to be present, as well as the 150 years Julilee celebration in Tunisia and in the Sector.

Patrick Bataille (France): When I was appointed in 2014 I had never since my Ordination worked in France. I was happy to get to know the confrères and communities. For me the most enjoyable part of the job was helping the confrères, trying to understand them and making them content and happy. I really tried my best to be at their service. I love making direct contact when the opportunity arises. I have been most at ease when paying visits and being in dialogue with confrères. Community life and teamwork are very important for me and I am happy to have been part of both. Bernard and myself have always favoured dialogue. We had a soft spot too for discernment and many confrères shared that with us. I also appreciated travelling with Provincials. They have always given solid advice, especially at difficult moments.



I see the opening of the Toulouse commitment as truly initiated by the Holy Spirit. This project has allowed the same idea to take shape for Liverpool and Karlsruhe. It is a pity that Belgium has not been able to agree on something similar but I am happy to see that the ARCRE-El Kalima project is going to have a new lease of life. I was also delighted to have been chosen to go to the Chapter. It is an excellent experience in sensing in a special way that one is playing an active part in the Society. It was my first time at a Chapter; I learned a lot and felt very much at home with everybody.

Another thing that was very successful was the celebration of 150 years of the Society. I carry a warm memory of the beatification in Tunis and meeting up with people there. In France we had a lot of events to celebrate the 150 years Jubilee, thanks to Bernard

Lefebvre who was mainly involved in it and he followed it up wholeheartedly and enthusiastically. I was happy to commit to making missionary animation a priority over the last four years, but unfortunately lack of personnel obliged us to assign Norbert Mwishabongo to Toulouse. I believe that with our rediscovery of our special charisms we have something to offer as a Society especially to idealistic young people. But it is young confrères who can make this vision attractive to the young of today.

Among the things I regret it is maybe not having given more stimulus to communities, putting more emphasis on community projects. Still I must say that all the communities were already well structured and at our time of life there was plenty of experience to be called on.

In fact time flew by. I have always highlighted a prayer to let ourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit and I believe she has done so and we have not blundered very badly!



Bernard Lefebvre (France): I am very pleased indeed that I went from Algeria to France. With my background of openness to the Muslim world I was able to bring something that was lacking to the Sector team. The first year was a time of recognising the legacy of the past. The second year was the difficult transition of our retirement houses to EHPAD. The third year was that of the General Chapter... and that meant plenty of meetings beforehand and afterwards. The fourth year: the celebration of the 150 years of the

Society. I regret that there was no celebration at European level. We collaborated very well with White Sisters. The fifth year: we began to recognise difficulties in our commitments to projects like Marseilles and Toulouse. Getting started is good, but how do you keep it up? The sixth year: Coronavirus and managing confinement. To conclude, a big thank you to everybody.

Terry Madden (Great Britain): I am grateful for the six years I have served on the council. They have been interesting and exciting times. I think we have seen a clear way forward for the province and secured its establishment as a vital part of the Society's mission.

It is good to see that we have confirmed the places of mission, though these will necessarily need to remain fluid, as our mission is to respond to local needs and these needs change. We have insisted that any missionary community has to remain within our charism: for the good of Africa and the African world, with a service of JPIC and Inter-religious Dialogue. I think we have also not neglected a major concern of the Province: the care of the elderly and the need of a robust safeguarding policy to ensure the respect of all vulnerable and young people within our reach.

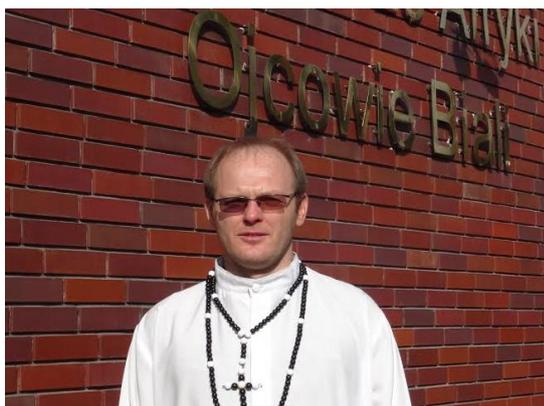


I have been happy with the rhythm of our council meetings and that we have circulated more around the sectors in recent years. This has allowed us to get to know better some of our sectors.

I do believe that we can continue in the present direction of consolidating the missionary foundations. We have enough of them at this time and it would be difficult to add to their number, given the present number of active confreres in the society. I think that, where necessary, the Society should appoint confreres who are not of the province to care for the elderly confreres and not leave it to the sectors to find a superior for each community. This would confirm that the care of the elderly is a real commitment of the Society.

I think it is time to think and feel beyond the confines of our national borders. I know this is not easy. Tradition and structures resist this wider view, especially in the matters of finance and language. However, I would like to see the provincial team take a more important role in the management of the clusters of communities. Some sectors are ripe now to look toward the Provincial Team for direction and leadership. It is time to help them stop thinking within the confines of Sector and begin to think at the level of PEP. This means ending the position of Sector Delegate. The provincial council would take over the appointments and the overview of all the communities. A cluster of communities would elect a member to represent them at this council. This cluster could include more than one nation. I do not think that this is just an ideal to achieve but is a practical development within the present situation.

Thank you to one and all for this past six years. I wish you all well and will certainly keep you in my prayers.



Pawel Mazurek (Poland): For me it was an interesting experience. I was the youngest on the provincial Council and in the community. Poland is a small Sector but were not let like an appendix but with meetings taken place in our community and visits of the confreres we had the feeling of being part of the Province. As part of the Intercontinental Delegation we were like an addition to something. I hope we will always be considered as being part of the

Province, even if it is a small part.

A big challenge for us is to look for vocation, new ways to look for young men. It was difficult to hear during our meeting discussion about closing houses, about who died. Our reality is different. We are not dying, but we look to the future. And I will ask all of you to look to the future with hope.

Another challenge is that there is a small number of confreres available for Poland because of the type of work. We have to choose proper people for the job.

Thanks to all of you. I was happy to visit many communities in the Province. The mission continues.



Gérard Malherbe (Belgium) could not take part in the video-conference, but he also sent us his "spiritual testament", since he too is completing his second term as Provincial Councillor.

I have not yet understood why I had to participate in the Provincial Council. In fact, apart from a question of the number of confreres in Belgium (3 years ago, still over 100), I do not really see any valid reason for my presence. During the councils I felt very useless, not even being very familiar with Belgian-Belgian affairs. That being said, I nevertheless appreciated my presence at the councils. If only to see confreres who have been lost for so long that we don't even remember how long, or to meet other confreres who are still unknown. The councils certainly help to develop an awareness of belonging to PEP. It was also a good opportunity to see Rome and Madrid and the communities again. I have good memories of the fraternal atmosphere of our councils, and also of the evenings that were pleasantly watered. The council in Madrid and the excursions masterfully prepared by Jesus will remain in my memory to rejoice in my old age. The nasty corona virus made us miss what was planned for Paris, it's a shame!

For the future, I hope that there will be no more councillors who don't speak English, which will not fail to disrupt the smooth running of the meetings.

More seriously, I hope that one day a new Provincial Council will put in place a new organization of the Province, more or less as Gerard (the other) had proposed. Perhaps we have suffered from an excess of prudence in deciding not to decide anything and to postpone it.

From now on I will no longer take part in the councils, but I remain ready to welcome at La Plante (Namur) each one of you who would be passing through Belgium. It would be a real pleasure.

The floor was then given to Gérard and Georges who were reappointed for a second mandate.

Georges Jacques: I have often asked myself what my role was when you realise that you visit the confrères, the Sector Delegates do so too, as does a member of the General Council also. Yet I have always been convinced that visiting our missionary commitments was one of our essential tasks. The internal life of the community is the field of concern for the provincial Delegate, but it is up to the provincial team to assess and encourage the confrères so that the commitment remains in line with provincial planning.

A big thank you for all your advice and encouragement.





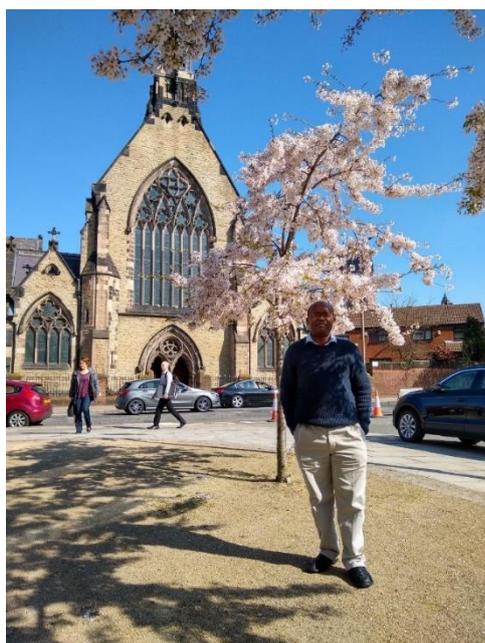
Gerard Chabanon: Something that should be discussed with the future provincial Council is the question of visits. We cannot multiply visits to communities ad infinitum. These communities are autonomous with a person in charge and a council. They should be able to manage on their own. We are not nurses, social workers or psychologists who have to mollycoddle them from one moment to the next.

I would like a successful outcome to the question of the restructuring of the Province. Other ideas will be put forward. The General Council is asking that the reflection on this should continue. From the last elections one can see clearly that what the confrères are looking for is a Provincial for their Sector and not a Delegate. For them we are not yet a real Province. There is a path that should be followed in this direction. We will be speaking of this again when we begin preparing for the next Chapter.

We have made good progress in our reflection on missionary Commitments. Questions about personnel are coming up. It is not easy to hold fast to a project which has been started and keep personnel in place who will maintain a commitment in line with the vision which gave rise to such projects. In all the Commitments we have at least one non-European African confrère. That is real progress.

I admire the tenacity and courage some of us show. We will continue to work together with the new Delegates. I want to say thank you to those who are standing down.

JPIC - RD



Charles Obanya shares his experience with migrants and asylum seekers of African descent in Liverpool

St. Vincent's Parish, with about sixty active Catholics, allows our Missionary of Africa Community of four time to engage in ministries beyond the pastoral care of the Parish, as was the original plan when we came to the Archdiocese of Liverpool at the end of 2018. Our mission is threefold; pastoral care of the Parish, promotion of positive interfaith relations and JPIC under which migrants and asylum seekers, fall.

Although we work as a team, I am the JPIC person in our Liverpool community and also at the Great

Britain Sector level. I understand my work as that of promoting prayer, reflection and action on issues such as the plight of migrants, asylum seekers, victims of human trafficking, blacks and ethnic minority groups. We collaborate well with those who are in the same ministry in the Archdiocese. We are involved in a Food Bank service and on average we get about fifty people coming to collect food parcels and other items



on Tuesdays. A team of parishioners offers tea, snacks and soup. As the main person for Justice and Peace, I work at Asylum Link Merseyside (ALM). ALM is one of the organizations that support asylum seekers through a long and challenging process of getting a refugee status. I am also on the Diocesan Commission of Justice and Peace. Through these involvements we come into contact with many asylum seekers – and some originate from Africa. A majority of these would stay in Liverpool for a few weeks only as they wait for screening and asylum interviews.

As Missionaries of Africa our support is for all asylum seekers irrespective of their places of origin, but we give special attention to migrants and asylum seekers of

African origin. Ministry to migrants and asylum seekers of African origin is one of the specific objectives that brought us to Liverpool.

With the onset of coronavirus crisis, our ministry to migrants and asylum seekers of African origin has changed. External activities have diminished and space for online spiritual and emotional support has increased. Of the Parish based



activities, only the St. Bakhita Day of 17th February with a focus on Human Trafficking was celebrated. We cancelled the events planned this year for April and June. We are experiencing a different quality of contact in our outreach. We make phone calls to

African Migrants and Asylum seekers especially those who are vulnerable. Among them would be those whose claim for asylum failed and therefore have no accommodation or financial support for food (and yet it's illegal for them to work), those who are avoiding to seek asylum support for fear of putting themselves under scrutiny, those who live alone and are undergoing serious medical treatment, those whose treatment of serious illnesses has been put on hold because of coronavirus. The good news is that there are many charities and individuals that donate food and also run errands, like shopping, for those who need it. As a response towards the Coronavirus crisis, the Government introduced favourable temporary changes to the Asylum and Immigration process; for example; the suspension of evictions from asylum accommodation, suspension of detentions and interviews, and the increased support for the accommodation of "rough sleepers" – like those who sleep on the streets. These are good changes in "a hostile environment".

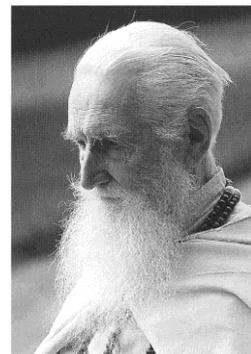
Apart from Asylum seekers and refugees, we have African migrants with work permits and whose work now puts them at greater risk. Some sources show that even in healthcare services, Blacks, Asians and Minority Ethnic groups are dying in disproportionately high numbers and this raises anxiety among some of the Africans we know – especially when they exhibit symptoms of the virus.

As crises are known to spark development if well managed, we hope that the current Coronavirus crisis will lead the government towards establishing better conditions for migrants and asylum seekers from Africa and other places. On a very small scale in our community, it has led us to greater listening and praying with and for migrants and asylum seekers. It has led us into going out of our way, now and then, for their welfare.

Charles Obanya

[Over to our elders : Varsenare](#)

The Chapter of 1936 decided that the Belgian Province should henceforth have its own novitiate. Fr Antoon Grauls was commissioned to see how this could be done. Thanks to the generosity of Fr Alexandre Gillès de Pélichy and his sister, the problem was quickly solved. They made available the necessary funds to buy the De Blauwe Torre property.



In August 1936 a first White Father community was installed in the chateau of Varsenare to prepare for the opening of the novitiate. For 30 years Varsenare was to be the centre for the spiritual year in Belgium. The first novices entered on the 16th of September 1937; the last left in August 1967. Only the war years broke the rhythm. German soldiers, sometimes up to 120 of them, were lodged in the novitiate from the start of January 1941. The property was transformed into a fortress, heavily protected with barbed wire, machine guns and anti-aircraft



guns. The Germans left the property on the 5th of September 1944 at 3.30 am and already at 6.30 am some brothers and priests retook possession of the premises. The house did not suffer from the occupation. It even gained from it: new cupboards, washbasins in the rooms and a coat of paint in the rooms and corridors. The chapel was respected and sealed off.

846 novices in all received the habit at Versenare. Brother novices also came to Varsenare from 1950 to 1962.

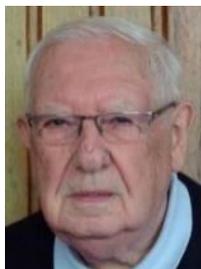
In 1945 the big cemetery in the property was finished off and began to be used. Up to this there are graves of 426 confrères.

In 1969 the house was revamped in order to serve a new purpose, a house of welcome for old confrères, but being also at the service of missionary animation. In 1971 a community of three White Sisters, one of them a nurse, made themselves available for service of the White Fathers community. They left at the end of the 90s. A welcoming centre for missionary animation was built and operative from 1982 to 2000.



Part of the land, i.e the vegetable garden and greenhouses, was given to the Ardoie Sisters to allow them to build a rest house for the elderly and handicapped, as well as a house for the Sisters' community. The gift included an agreement: the Sisters and White Fathers would help one another in various ways. The official opening of the *Avondrust* Institute took place on the 11th of October 1986. The Society has a priority claim on 8 rooms for confrères who need them. Two confrères take turns in serving as chaplains to the centre.

Today the 20 Varsenare confrères are the biggest WF community in Belgium. Four confrères live in *Avondrust* where they get all the care they need and moreover get a regular visit from confrères in the 'château'. Most of the confrères take animation of community life seriously. They have a system in place for answering the phone and the door. Each one leads the liturgy in turn and outsiders are welcome.



← **Paul Geers:** His heart is in Tunisia where he spent half a century and that love constantly overflows from him. He was Vicar General of the diocese of Tunis. He never stops making us part of all that is Islam and the Arab world.



Roland De Cat →: As bursar he gives us lots of choice in adding ingredients to our slices of bread. He looks after us to the last detail. His analyses of football matches and what he knows about the players are amazing.



← **Marc Deneckere:** He still has two assignments in the community: hospitality and making drinks available. He loves reading historical novels and intends to live a long life still!



Marc De Vos →: He is our Benjamin, the one who keeps an eye on the older members of the community and looks after their needs. He is chaplain to the rest and care home in *Avondrust*



← **André De Vinck:** Sees to the wellbeing of all the confreres and pays a visit every day to those who live in *Avondrust*. He keeps an eye open for anything that needs taking care of.



Ghislain De Jaeger →: He is a great friend of nature and lover of the arts, painting and literature. In terms of age he is the patriarch of the community.



← **Philippe De Vestele:** He is always in 'overdrive' in word and action. And he uses these gifts effectively both within the community and outside.



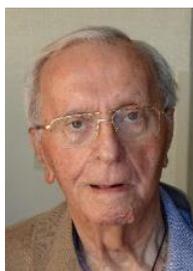
Marcel Neels →: He is fascinated by puzzles and with infinite patience reshapes the clouds in the sky and the waves in the sea. A pastime so different from his life's work.



← **Marc De Wulf**: Deeply concerned with the health of ailing confreres and available for those who are well despite his own shaky health. He is the community leader.



Godfried Trypsteen →: He is an incorrigible corrector of texts submitted to him. A lover of scrabble, crosswords and also cryptograms.



← **Fons Heymans**: In retirement in *Avondrust* and taken up with his computer and TV. He is extremely handicapped and rarely leaves his armchair.



services.

Frans Devillé →: He is perfectly bilingual and uses this talent constantly as translator and secretary. He goes about quietly offering a variety of community



← **Lucien Van Wielendaele**: Is in retirement in *Avondrust*, after living a very full and active life. Richly endowed with a wonderful special sense of humour and with this attitude preparing for eternal life.



Jef Pauwels →: He is in *Avondrust*, where he appreciates visits from confreres. Despite being in poor health, he is still interested in the news, in reading books of spirituality and psychology – and listening to all kinds of music.



← **Piet Arts**: He is in *Avondrust*, « in the waiting room for heaven », as he says himself. He keeps an eye on the construction work going on, while awaiting the call of the Lord.



Jan Anthonissen →: Puts his knowledge of the Bible into practice: from the Psalms he holds to the phrase « the Lord loves his beloved who is sleeping » and in the Gospel finds his motto: « the last shall be the first ».



← **Remi Vande Walle**: A man of great simplicity who is a treasured member of the community. He is that also for very many people outside. It was he who initiated the twinning of Varsenare and Arusha.



Willy Trypsteen →: He was seriously preoccupied with articles for Band and the photos had to be high quality. He is enamoured of modern technology and follows it up very closely.



← **Gaby Vernack**: He has always been a first class animator of young people and the elderly; he never stops making us laugh with his typical expressions. He speaks Polish as well and very much enjoys drawing our attention to worldwide catastrophes.

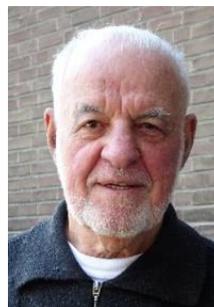


Luc Lefief →: Speaks five European languages and one African language fluently! He aims at being a perfectionist in everything he does and precise in everything he says. At present he is chaplain to *Avondrust*, sharing this service with Marc De Vos.



← **Karel Mertens**: In our eyes he works « miracles », for the computer has no more secrets for the hard disc of our confrere!

Mandus Van Hout →: The grounds are extensive enough to satisfy his capacity for maintaining them, while in our big house he is expert in keeping things tidy, getting rid of papers and other rubbish. He also looks after our vases of flowers.



← **Paul De Vinck**: He is an excellent raconteur, recalling all details. He distinguishes himself also in decorating the chapel with flowers. He also likes to explore the world. He does the sacristy work conscientiously and takes care of the liturgy.

René De Keyzer →: His devotedness in taking care of the grotto is a sign of his devotion to the Virgin Mary. When it is time to repaint her statue, like an artist, he knows how to bring her face to life. He has a workshop where he is able to repair everything. René is there to welcome the Christians who come to our Mass on Sunday.



Most of the confreres devote themselves seriously to the animation of community life. A reception service is organized to answer the telephone and open the front door. The liturgy is animated in turn and is open to the neighbourhood.

Some news from the Province and the Sectors.

Celebration of a confrere's 100th birthday in France: The future **Fr. Georges Bergantz** was born on the 7th of February 1920 at Nivange in the diocese of Metz in France. He now lives in Bry-Sur-Marne and is, with Franz Früh (Trier), who was born on the 9th of May 1919, the second centenarian in the Society. There have been others, now deceased. Here is the testimony of Father Bergantz.



« **Origin of a vocation:** My first testimony recalls the origin of my vocation, the second what I am living in my retirement. I was five when I started primary school. One day, Sister Émilienne – an angel – who was in charge of our class, asked each pupil what they wanted to be when they grew up. When it was my turn, I answered: « Missionary! ». When we were leaving to go home, my mother was there to collect me. And the Sister could not wait to tell her what I had said. I just remember that my mother burst out crying.

Still there was no big surprise in my answer; every evening my mama had me pray « for the little Africans who had never heard of little Jesus » and every month when a missionary magazine arrived (probably that of the Spiritans), she explained to me what the pictures were about... So my missionary vocation was already « African ».

At eleven I entered the minor seminary of Metz. In sixth class we had a book called the History of France edited by the Brothers of Christian Schools. Each chapter was followed by a reading linked to the historical events treated. After the pages devoted to the conquest of Algeria came an account of Cardinal Lavigerie and his antislavery campaign. The illustration which accompanied it showed an oasis where a column of black slaves in chains, guarded by an Arab, were arriving. That is when something snapped: I would be a White Father in Algeria.

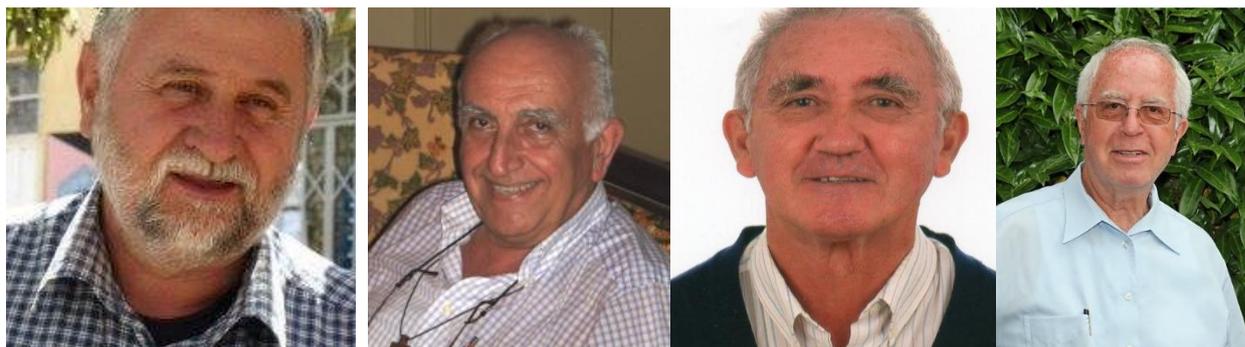
Retirement and Association : I thank God for allowing me to live long enough to be able to see former students of mine from Ain-Sefra (South West Algeria) who had come to France and settled here. They tracked me down through the internet and we met up in Bry-sur-Marne. They had come from Narbonne, Blois, Rouen, Grenoble, and Dijon. First we regaled old memories and they said how grateful they were to me; then they said they wanted to create an Association of Past Pupils of Ain-Sefra, Muslims as well as Christians, corresponding to what was formerly « the Lavigerie Institution ». Better still, having noticed, during their holidays in Algeria, how many social and cultural projects were in a sorry state, they proposed to establish « Programs of help and solidarity with every Sefra association, with the aim of promoting the wellbeing of young people and safeguarding them ».

Could you imagine any more wonderful reward for an educator?

Arrivals and departures

First and foremost, we welcome the election of some **provincial Delegates** for either a first or second term of three years. They are therefore members of the PEP provincial Council.

Elected on the first count and for a second term: **Gaetano Cazzola** (Italy) **Jo de Bekker** (Netherlands), **Jesus Zubiria** (Spain), **Rudi Pint** (Germany).



And for a first term: **Ywo Wellens** (Belgium)



and **Emmanuel Lengaigne** (France).

And thank you for taking this new mission.

Thank You

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A time of discernment or a second count is needed **for the others** (Great Britain, Ireland, Poland and Switzerland), as likewise for the first Councillor of France, which, having more than 100 confreres assigned to the Sector, is entitled to have a second provincial Councillor.

In **Spain** the very much wanted **Alick Mwamba** arrived safely and is busy discovering the richness of the Spanish language. He will eventually join the Roquetas community.

Some confreres have also been assigned **for studies** in the Province: **Serge Boroto** (DRC) will do specialised studies in communication in the Institute for Higher Studies in Social Communication (IHECS) in Brussels. **Patrice Sawadogo** (Burkina) will go to Leuven for a Licentiate in Fundamental Theology. **Juvéna Sibomana** (RDC) will do a doctorate in Philosophy at the Institut Catholique of Paris. A warm welcome to all three!

The General Council having asked that stagiaires who are in the second year of stage should continue their stage until it is safe to return home, **Simon Apuri** is waiting calmly in Roquetas until the door is open for him to return to his family in Ghana. Thank you, Simon, for your missionary witness in Roquetas.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND OF ONE ANOTHER!

