

Soeurs Notre Dame des Apôtres - Conseil Général - Via G. Ghislieri, 15 - 00152 ROMA

The Joy of the Gospel



Punto de Encuentro
نقطة التقاء
Punto di Incontro

JANUARY 2014 N° 75

Point de Rencontre Meeting Point

THE GENERAL TEAM – What have we been up to?



It is good to be back in touch with all of you again after a long “absence” since the General Chapter in July last year. We may have been absent as far as the “Meeting Point” is concerned but very active and working very hard in other very important aspect of our life – namely Provincial Chapters, and area assemblies and sections. Sr. Denise and I returned to Rome on the 20th of December just in time to celebrate Christmas with the community. We had been in the Ivory Coast for the Provincial Chapter of the Francophone African Province. Prior to that I had attended the Provincial Chapter of Lebanon in August, the one month inter-cultural preparation for newly professed Sisters and those going on mission ad extra for the first time, in September and the Provincial Chapter of Nigeria in October. Mary T was in Ireland in August to pack her things and do all the necessary preparation for life in Rome. She attended the Irish Provincial Chapter not only as a member of the old Irish Provincial Team but as a member of the General Team as well. She also attended the annual assembly of the Sisters in Tanzania and visited the communities there.

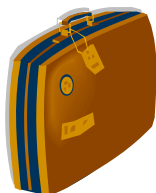
In August, Sr. Daniela Bellini had the opportunity to attend the Provincial Chapter of her home Province – Italy – given the fact that their Chapter is always in Italian and the ability of the rest of us to speak and understand the Italian language in order follow the proceedings of the Provincial Chapter, is rather limited. She again attended the Provincial Chapter of France in October. She returned to Rome early November to wait for the rest of us who were still out. Sr. Denise was supposed to have gone to Egypt for the Provincial Chapter there but could not because of the political situation there at that time. The Egyptian Provincial Chapter had to be postponed to end of January 2014. She still has to attend the Chapter and is actually getting her papers ready to go. With the Egyptian Chapter postponed, we suddenly had one of us free go visit our Sisters in Holland and give them the General Chapter feedback. Well, were we not glad for that opportunity!!! We always try to be as close to the Sisters in Holland as possible because they are only five and advanced in years.

The month of November saw all four of us in Rome to work seriously together as Council. We put all our effort into putting the Acts of the General Chapter together and having them published before the end of November so as to be able to bring them to Ghana, Nigeria and Francophone Africa where Denise and I were going for their Provincial Chapter. Thank God we were able to do that within the period we had given ourselves and now the Acts are within the reach of every Sister in the whole Congregation. We hope they will be used continually as a source of reference for all our activities and for our life in general. Sisters do not keep them in our drawers under a pile of books and papers.

After the short Christmas break work resumed in earnest. Sr. Mary T has begun Italian classes which will go on till March. Sr. Denise is now in Egypt for the Provincial Chapter there. Sr. Daniela is preparing to go to Nigeria for a meeting of the Commission for Initial Formation and I am now on a month’s break at home, after which I go to Lebanon for a brief assignment. God willing we will all be in Rome in March to work together until after Easter when some of us will move out again. We continue to rely on your prayer, support and your collaboration.

We wish to congratulate all New Provincial Teams. May Our Lord, the Servant Leader be a shining example to you during your mandate and always remember that our mission is service. God bless us all.

Sr. Felicia Harry,
Superior General



GENERAL COUNCIL: PLANNING AND RESPONSABILITES SHARED

The General Council returned to Rome prior to Christmas, after attending various Provincial Chapters. We thank you for the welcome and hospitality we experienced when we were with you which enabled us to share in the life of your Provinces.

During the first two weeks of January, we worked together and shared the different activities among the Council members.

Sr Felicia has ‘complete and entire responsibility for the Institute’, working in close collaboration with the Council for the following activities:

Sr. Mary T. BARRON is responsible for

- ✚ Finance: Links with the General Bursar and represents the General Council on the Finance/Solidarity Committee
- ✚ Mission and Vocation Animation: animation of the MVA network in the Institute
- ✚ Child Safeguarding.

Sr. Denise BANG’NA is responsible for

- ✚ Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation: Animation of the JPIC network in the Institute.
- ✚ Mission and Ongoing Formation with the help of this Commission

Sr. Daniela BELLINI is responsible for

- ✚ the General Secretariat
- ✚ Initial Formation in the Institute with the help of this Commission.

We have also set up a **Technical Secretariat**. For the Statistics, Directories and Death Notices, please contact Sr. Nicole Rivard on englsec@ndaolagen.org .

Sr. Maryann Dedewo from Nigeria will join us here in the near future to work in the Technical Secretariat. Thank you to Sr. Nicole and to Sr. Maryann for accepting this service and thanks to the District of Québec and to the Province of Nigeria for their generosity in giving us this help!

In view of the need to begin work immediately, we have already set up the Commissions:

- **Finance and Solidarity Committee**
Sr. Mary T. BARRON
Sr. Theresa QUANSAH
Sr. Christine CHAAYA
Sr. Marta PETTENAZZO

- **Commission for Mission/Ongoing Formation**
Sr. Denise BANG'NA
Sr. Annarosa CRIPPA
Sr. Mervat GOUBRIEL
Sr Beatrice HAMMOND
Sr. Monique SOUBEIGA

- **Commission for Initial Formation**
Sr. Daniela BELLINI
Sr. Antoinette ABIWU
Sr. Hortense DOSSOUMON
Sr. Anne Marie KOUASSI
Sr. Briget OKONYE

We thank all the Sisters for their availability and wish everyone well as the Commissions begin their work.

Since the middle of January, the Council have dispersed again. Sr. Felicia will be in Ghana from the middle of January to middle of February and from there she will go to Lebanon from 15th to 23th February.

Sr. Mary T. will take an Italian course in Rome and will also meet with the Finance Committee in mid-February, also in Rome. She will attend the Provincial Chapter of Ghana from 23th April to 7th May.

Sr. Denise will be in Egypt from 22th January to 6th February for the Provincial Chapter; and then will accompany Sr. Felicia to Lebanon. She will then travel to Ghana for a meeting of the Mission/Ongoing Formation Commission during the last week of February.

Sr. Daniela will be in Nigeria at the end of February for a meeting of the Initial Formation Commission. She will go to Algeria at the end of April to participate in the District Assembly. Let us pray that Algeria will grant her a visa!

We expect to be together again for work in Rome during the months of March and May. Thank you for accompanying us with your prayers!

Let us remain united in our desire to be "*Seeds of communion and of hope*"!

Sr. Mary T. Barron, OLA
Ass. Gen.

THE NEW COMMUNITY AT THE GENERALATE

As this is our first Meeting Point since the General Chapter of 2013, it is appropriate that we present the new Generalate Community. Meeting Point N° 71, Jan. 2009 contained short biographies of five of the current members of the generalate community: Sr. Felicia Harry, Sup. Gen., Sr. Denise Bang'na and Sr. Daniela Bellini, Gen. Councillors, Sr. Theresa Quansah, Gen. Bursar and Sr. Nicole Rivard who is working as Secretary.



General Council : from the left: Mary T. Barron,
Denise Bang'na, Felicia Harry and Daniela Bellini

We now present the two new members of the community:

Mary T. Barron

Born in Donegal, in the North West of Ireland in 1968, I am the 3rd child in a family of 9 children. After qualifying as a Speech and Language Therapist, I worked for some time in Kent, in the South of England before joining OLA in 1992.

I spent most of my time as a postulant in Nigeria, in Maryhill, Ibadan before returning to Ireland to complete my Novitiate in Cork where I had my first profession in March 1995. Following this I spent two months in the OLA Community in Lourdes – to improve my French. I then took up my first missionary appointment in Mwamapalala, Tanzania where I stayed until 2001. My first flavour of 'mission' in Tanzania as a professed Sister was a very fulfilling experience, working mainly in the Parish but also in the local Diocesan Secondary School. I

worked with youth in the parish on a HIV and AIDS awareness and behavioural change programme while also helping to revive the Catholic Women's Organisation (WAWATA) in the Parish. One of my lasting memories of this time in Mwamapalala was the beautiful, simple and meaningful prayer services we had each week with the youth – praying Taizé style.

I returned to Ireland in 2001 to prepare for final profession and to continue studies that might prove more useful to my life on mission than my qualification as a Speech and Language Therapist. From 2001 – 2002 I completed a one year Diploma in Theology and the following year completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Development Studies. In September 2003 I returned to Tanzania, (Bugisi) for one year, to work briefly in what was then known as Bugisi Homecraft Centre. During my time in Bugisi I also coordinated a HIV and AIDS programme which, among many activities, included opening a Voluntary Counselling and Testing Unit in Bugisi Dispensary in April 2004. I also conducted research in the area of HIV and AIDS while in Bugisi, and completed the MA in Development Studies in early 2005.

Although my desire was to return to life in Tanzania after completing my studies, I remained in Ireland to coordinate a National Mission Awareness Programme with Fr. Angelo Lafferty, SMA. The programme, called 'Mission Alive', is an outreach of the Irish Missionary Union – a union of more than 85 Missionary Congregations, Societies and Organisations. While this work was challenging in many ways, it was also very rewarding, providing many opportunities for working with a variety of Congregations, Parishes and Schools throughout Ireland.

Around this time I was also asked to be the link person for OLA Irish Province with the organisation now known as 'Misean Cara' – an organisation that acts as a conduit of funding from the Irish Government to help support the development work of missionary organisations. Over the past seven years as the OLA Liaison Officer with Misean Cara, I have come in contact with many parts of the Congregation, either through working with Sisters concerned to develop project applications and reports or in some cases actually visiting the projects. Although developing applications can be very tedious and demanding work, it also has its positives and personally my involvement in this work has helped open up the OLA world to me and deepen my own understanding of '**OLA One Body**'.

From 2008 to 2013 I was a Provincial Councillor in Ireland – and while it was not always easy being in Ireland during very difficult times as Church there, the experience of serving on the leadership team for the Province was a very humbling and rewarding one. As I move on from this role, I have a deep gratitude for all the love and support I received from the Sisters and the great sense of collaboration that I experienced during the past five years. Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.

During the past two years in Ireland, I followed an MA Programme in Healthcare Management by distance learning. During my travels throughout the OLA world, I have often been struck by the lack of healthcare personnel we have and by the fact that many Sisters who prefer clinical work are burdened with administration in institutions. And so my logic in following this programme was that I might be more useful back in Africa with such a qualification and this might be my ticket back to working full-time there!!! But the Lord had other plans and that dream of mine is put on hold yet again.....

Marie Redenta Crimella

I was born in Valmadrera, in the diocese of Milan, on January 8th 1936. I entered OLA in 1957, in Bardello, and was professed in 1959.

1961 saw my first departure on mission to the Republic of Bénin. I was appointed to Savé where I looked after the Boarding House and also the 'Catholic Action Movement' until 1966. Then from 1966 to 1971, I was at Boukoumbé for the formation of young women who were engaged to be married.

In 1971, I was recalled to Italy to study preschool education and catechesis. From 1974 to 1979, I worked on Mission and Vocation Animation in Italy.

1979 saw my return to Africa, this time to Ivory Coast, where I stayed until 2011. First I went to Gagnoa where I did pastoral work with the youth and also had responsibility for the students accommodation (Foyer) until 1991. From there, I was sent to Agboville to look after the library and for pastoral work with the youth. Next I went to Tengrela, where again I was involved in pastoral work with youth and children and also in the library there for 3 years. I then had a sabbatical year in Monte Sacro, Rome.

I returned to Ivory Coast in 2001, this time to Adjamé for six years where I was engaged in pastoral work with children. Finally, from 2007 to 2011, I worked in the Leprosarium in Adzopé, teaching the sick children, visiting the sick and decorating and looking after the Church in the Hospital.

Since 2011, my service is in the Generalate House.



*From the left: Maria Redenta Crimella,
Theresa Quansah and Nicole Rivard*

OFFICIAL SYNOPSIS OF THE EXHORTATION 'EVANGELII GAUDIUM'

The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Thus begins the Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, by which Pope Francis develops the theme of the proclamation of the Gospel in the contemporary world, drawn from, among other sources, the contribution of the work of the Synod held in the Vatican, from 7 to 28 October 2012, on the theme 'The new evangelization for the transmission of the faith'. After "Lumen Fidel", encyclical written in collaboration with Benedict XVI, "Evangelii Gaudium" is the first text entirely written by the Pope.

I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church journey in years to come. It is a heartfelt appeal to all baptized persons to bring Christ love to others, permanently in a state of mission, conquering the great danger in today's world, that of an individualist desolation and anguish.

The Pope invites the reader to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, finding new avenues and new paths of creativity, without enclosing Jesus in dull categories. There is a need for a pastoral and missionary conversion, which cannot leave things as they presently are and a renewal of ecclesiastical structures to enable them to become more mission-oriented. The Pontiff also considers a conversion of the papacy to help make this ministry more faithful to the meaning which Jesus Christ wished to give it and to the present needs of evangelization. The hope that the Episcopal Conferences might contribute to the concrete realization of the collegial spirit, he states, has not been fully realized. A sound decentralization is necessary. In this renewal, the Church should not be afraid to re-examine certain customs not directly connected to the heart of the Gospel, even some of which have deep historical roots.

A sign of God's openness is that our church doors should always be open so that those who seek God will not find a closed door; nor should the doors of the sacraments be closed for simply any reason. The Eucharist is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak. These convictions have pastoral consequences that we are called to consider with prudence and boldness. He repeats that he prefers a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church concerned with being at the center and then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us it is the fact that many of our brothers and sisters are living without the friendship of Jesus Christ.

The Pope indicates the temptations which affect pastoral workers: individualism, a crisis of identity and a cooling of fervour. The greatest threat of all is the grey pragmatism of the daily life of the Church, in which all appears to proceed normally, which in reality faith is wearing down. He warns against defeatism, urging Christians to be signs of hope, bringing about a revolution of tenderness. It is necessary to seek refuge from the spirituality of well-being detached from responsibility for our brothers and sisters and to vanquish the spiritual worldliness that consists of seeking not the Lord's glory but human glory and well-being. The Pope speaks of the many who feel superior to others because they remain intransigently faithful

to a particular Catholic style from the past whereby instead of evangelizing, one analyses and classifies others. And those who have an ostentatious preoccupation for the liturgy, for doctrine and for the Church's prestige, but without any concern that the Gospel has a real impact on the needs of the people. This is a tremendous corruption disguised as a good God save us from a worldly Church with superficial spiritual and pastoral trappings!

He appeals to ecclesial communities not to fall prey to envy and jealousy: How many wars take place within the people of God and in our different communities! Whom are we going to evangelize if this is the way we act? He highlights the need to promote the growth of the responsibility of the laity, often kept away from decision-making by an excessive clericalism. He adds that there is a need for still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church, in particular in the various settings where important decisions are made. Demands that the legitimate rights of women be respected cannot be lightly evaded. The young should exercise greater leadership. With regard to the scarcity of vocations in many places, he emphasizes that seminaries cannot accept candidates on the basis of any motivation whatsoever.

With regard to the theme of inculturation, he remarks that Christianity does not have simply one cultural expression and that the face of the Church is varied. We cannot demand that peoples of every continent, in expressing their Christian faith, imitate modes of expression which European nations developed at a particular moment of their history. The Pope reiterates that underlying popular piety is an active evangelizing power and encourages the research of theologians, reminding them however that the Church and theology exist to evangelize and urges them not to be content with a desk-bound theology.

He focuses somewhat meticulously, on the homily, since many concerns have been expressed about this important ministry and we cannot simply ignore them. The homily should be brief and avoid taking on the semblance of a speech or a lecture; it should be a heart-to-heart communication and avoid purely moralistic or doctrinaire preaching. He highlights the importance of preparation: a preacher who does not prepare is not spiritual; he is dishonest and irresponsible. Preaching should always be positive in order always to offer hope and does not leave us trapped in negativity. The approach to the proclamation of the Gospel should have positive characteristics: approachability, readiness for dialogue, patience, a warmth and welcome, which is non-judgmental.

In relation to the challenges of the contemporary world, the Pope denounces the current economic system as unjust at its root. Such an economy kills because the law of the survival of the fittest prevails. The current culture of the disposable has created something new: the excluded are not the exploited but the outcast, the leftovers. A new tyranny is thus born, invisible and often virtual, of an autonomy of the market in which financial speculation and widespread corruption and self-serving tax-evasion reign. He also denounces attacks on religious freedom and the new persecutions directed against Christians. In many places the problem is more that of widespread indifference and relativism.

The family, the Pope continues, is experiencing a profound cultural crisis. Reiterating the indispensable contribution of marriage to society, he underlines that the individualism of our postmodern and globalized era favours a lifestyle which distorts family bonds.

He re-emphasizes the profound connection between evangelization and human advancement and the right of pastors to offer opinions on all that affects people's lives. No one can demand that religion should be relegated to the inner sanctum of personal life, without a right to offer an opinion on events affecting society. He quotes John Paul II, who said that the Church cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. For the Church, the option for the poor is primarily a theological category rather than a sociological one. This is why I want a Church that is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. As long as the problems of the poor are not radically resolved no solution will be found for these world's problems. Politics, although often denigrated, he affirms, remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity. I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the lives of the poor! He adds an admonition: Any Church community, if it believes it can forget about the poor, runs the risk of breaking down.

The Pope urges care for the weakest members of society: the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned and migrants, for whom the Pope exhorts a generous openness. He speaks about the victims of trafficking and new forms of slavery: This infamous network of crime is now well established in our cities, and many people have blood on their hands as a result of their comfortable and silent complicity. Doubly poor are those women who endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment and violence. Among the vulnerable for whom the Church wishes to care with particular love and concern are unborn children, the most defenseless and innocent among us. Nowadays efforts are made to deny them their human dignity. The Church cannot be expected to change her position on this question it is not progressive to try to resolve problems by eliminating a human life. The Pope makes an appeal for respect for all creation: we are called to watch over and protect the fragile world in which we live.

With regard to the theme of peace, the Pope affirms that a prophetic voice must be raised against attempts at false reconciliation to silence or appease the poor, while others refuse to renounce their privileges. For the construction of a society in peace, justice and fraternity he indicates four principles: Time is greater than space means working slowly but surely, without being obsessed with immediate results. Unity prevails over conflict means a diversified and life-giving unity. Realities are more important than ideas means avoiding reducing politics or faith to rhetoric. The whole is greater than the part means bringing together globalization and localization.

Evangelization also involves the path of dialogue, the Pope continues, which opens the Church to collaboration with all political, social, religious and cultural spheres. Ecumenism is an indispensable path to evangelization. Mutual enrichment is important: we can learn so much from one another! For example in the dialogue with our Orthodox brothers and sisters, we Catholics have the opportunity to learn more about the meaning of Episcopal collegiality and their experience of synodality; dialogue and friendship with the children of Israel are part of

the life of Jesus disciples; interreligious dialogue, which must be conducted clear and joyful in ones own identity, is a necessary condition for peace in the world and does not obscure evangelization; in our times, our relationship with the followers of Islam has taken on great importance. The Pope humbly entreats those countries of Islamic tradition to guarantee religious freedom to Christians, also in light of the freedom which followers of Islam enjoy in Western countries! Faced with disconcerting episodes of violent fundamentalism he urges us to avoid hateful generalisations, for authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Koran are opposed to every form of violence. And against the attempt to private religions in some contexts, he affirms that the respect due to the agnostic or non-believing minority should not be arbitrarily imposed in a way that silences the convictions of the believing majority or ignores the wealth of religious traditions. He then repeats the importance of dialogue and alliance between believers and non-believers.

The final chapter is dedicated to spirit-filled evangelizers, who are those who are fearlessly open to the working of the Holy Spirit and who have the courage to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness (*parrhesía*) in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition. These are evangelizers who pray and work, in the knowledge that mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people: Jesus wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others. He explains: In our dealings with the world, we are told to give reasons for our hope, but not as an enemy who critiques and condemns. Only the person who feels happiness in seeking the good of others, in desiring their happiness, can be a missionary; if I can help at least one person to have a better life, that already justifies the offering of my life. The Pope urges us not to be discouraged before failure or scarce results, since fruitfulness is often invisible, elusive and unquantifiable; we must know only that our commitment is necessary.

The exhortation concludes with a prayer to Mary, “Mother of Evangelization”. There is a Marian style to the Church’s work of evangelization. Whenever we look to Mary, we come to believe once again in the revolutionary nature of love and tenderness.

(November 26, 2013) © Innovative Media Inc.





EXCEPTIONAL RELIGIOUS EVENT IN ORAN

No ordination of Bishops here for a century! That was done in France or Algiers.

And then on 25th January 2013 (Conversion of St. Paul), Fr Jean Paul VESCO, Dominican Provincial of France, our former Vicar General and part-time Parish Priest of Tlemcen, was ordained Bishop of the Diocese of Oran.

What an event! What organization in this little bishopric to receive the family and friends of Jean Paul and also Cardinal Philippe BARBARIN, the (Asian) Apostolic Nuncio, the present or emeritus Archbishops of Morocco and Algiers, the Bishops of 4 Algerian Dioceses, religious priests and sisters from Algeria or Metz or elsewhere... The « Bel Air » Hotel was booked (40 rooms); all communities were packed. We were eight OLA Sisters in six small rooms. The 2 sofas in the dining-sitting room were also used. In short, everyone was put up! The African and Malagash University academics filled the Cathedral with their rhythms and offered themselves for numerous services...

A colourful, joyful, melodious ceremony in African style! A pluralistic Assembly, of every colour and denomination, including very fraternal Orthodox coptic families with their Monk, (they often seemed very distant from Catholics)! every age and every rank / from Consuls from France and Spain...to employees, many Muslim friends ... But ONE FAMILY !!! Smiles, handshakes, hug. People squeezed together to make space... A very beautiful ceremony in its simplicity: all the same, 10, 12 bishops, about 40 priests, is awesome! Also impressive - the silence, listening, everyone's attention - at the moment of the Episcopal ordination itself: the anointing, giving the ring, the mitre, the cross (a simple Shepherd's crook which belonged to



Bishop Pierre Claverie, Dominican murdered in '96 at the Bishopric).

Jean Paul stretched on the ground, all that touched the Muslims profoundly...

A prayerful and « Good child » environment: Jean Paul



lifting his hand to show the ring offered by Mgr. Georger, his predecessor and everyone applauding. Its motto? borrowed from a religious who had said during the black decade: « I want to live and inspire a desire to live! » His word, spontaneous! not a speech, but a fraternal, affectionate, grateful word for all. In short, a very beautiful ceremony! an « unforgettable day » as everyone said.

As a matter of fact, following the ordination, there was a silent prayer in the oratory where Pierre Claverie reposes in the Cathedral. His sister Anne-Marie was there, coming from

America where she lives with her husband, an American, often there himself. And the parents of Jean Paul, his two brothers, who were very touched and happy. His mother told me the evening before: « Jean Paul has not finished surprizing us! » From lawyer to Dominican, from Vicar General to Provincial and Bishop... » « Perhaps it is not finished », I replied, « He is young »!

Then everyone found themselves in different rooms for a buffet meal and in the court-yard chatting and making new acquaintances. There was a very friendly moment when Cardinal Barbarin began to sing with the Malagasy: he had been four years in Madagascar and hadn't forgotten the language, or the Malagasy songs! I went up to him, accompanied by an Algerian lawyer: handshakes, smiles, presentations: « One wouldn't say that you are a Cardinal » he told him, « you are so simple! And he replied: « Ah, I am so happy here, it does me good to be with you all !!! » And that was evident!

This continued until quite late. Then at 8 p.m., we found ourselves at the Bel Air Hotel for a buffet with the neighbours who were many and the Sisters of Doctrine, those in charge of the Diocesan House, who had so much work : it was necessary to think about snacks for all those who were travelling in the evening, the buses for Algiers, Tiaret, Mosta, Tlemcen, Annaba...

The OLAs had received the guests from France the previous evening: a good thirty in our small lounge: cakes, refreshing drinks, hot or cold ; (they made the most of this invitation, without doubt) ... the people sat together with friends or randomly and moved around ... our two guests from Algiers, Fella and Myriam, came with us.

Myriam, trained in sewing and embroidery by our two sisters, Bibiane and Angèle Marie, assassinated on 3 septembre '95 in Algiers, had been the last person to see them.

A native of Tibhirine, she had known all the monks! and always called herself « our Muslim sister ». You would need to see her discuss, reply to the young Dominicans who were at our table: prof.at the Catholic University in Paris, Fr. Master of the



Ordination épiscopale
M^r Jean-Paul VESCO, o.p.
 Évêque d'Oran (Algérie)
 le 25 janvier 2013
 en la fête de la conversion de Saint Paul
 Cathédrale Sainte-Marie à Oran

Je veux vivre
 et donner envie
 de vivre !

students. I was happy to see her honoured and so happy... she accompanied me then to greet the Consul of France and Madame Sorano, so simple that we will miss them ... Unexpected encounters with people we had not yet greeted. « There you are! » It was Gerard de Belair, the great specialist professor in biology, a connoiseur of the flora and endemic species of Algeria, who had helped us discover the Edough-Annaba Peninsula during the past year.

I could continue ... for all, a great moment of human warmth. A grace not only for the Diocese but for the whole Church in Algeria! How can I not add a surprize? A Dominican brother had his visa very quickly and his appointment. Hope and Joy shared with you.

Fraternally,
 Marie Claude SOHIER (February 2013)
(To see some photos, consult the Dominican site)



JULIANA’S WITNESS – TLEMCCEN – ALGERIA

My name is Juliana Musabayana and I am a dental student from Zimbabwe, studying at Tlemcen in Algeria.

I am living in Algeria for the past 5 years and have learned many things. The most beautiful and most important lesson is that of integration into the Christian community and into the unity of Christians, a unity which goes beyond the boundaries and names of the different Churches.

Before coming to Algeria I was an active member of one of the largest Pentecostal (Protestant) Churches in Zimbabwe. I never really had the chance to pray with members of other Churches. In fact for one reason or another, the Catholic Church was one of the Churches that I never had the chance to encounter. This was due to a number of reasons but especially because of prejudices and misunderstandings that existed between the Catholic and Protestant Churches.

For this reason I had a lot of difficulty being integrated into the local Christian community of Tlemcen, which is Catholic; but by chance it was the only one present there leaving me with no choice. At that time I needed to pray and so I began to frequent this Church.

When I began to frequent it I realised that it was more a question of faith than Religion. This Revelation changed my whole perspective. Since then I have come to understand prejudices and lack of knowledge among us.

I discovered the beauty of unity among faithful Christians coming from different countries, denominations and cultures; the beauty of being ONE in harmony. This comes about by the integration which I call “The Church of Algeria”. This Church is a Church which tries to give each person their place and brings many faithful of different confessions, under one roof, to pray and praise God. This is our duty.

I thank God for this great opportunity which He has given me. The experience has taught me that it is not important where we come from or who we are or what our religious affiliation is. Rather, as long as we live, the important thing is our personal Faith rather than any external expression; thus we are able to build the Body and Blood of Christ through fraternal relationships which, perhaps, do not correspond exactly to what we are.

Unity, integration and harmony as One Body of Christ is a marvellous experience. This I have lived in the Church of Algeria, better known as the Roman Catholic Church of Algeria. However, because of the fact that it is consecrated to unite us and nourish our Spirit and our souls, I believe it is more correct to call it “the Church of Algeria”.

Juliana Musabayana, dental student



Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network

THE ECHOES FROM AEFJN

N° 6 November / December 2013

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JUST THINKING

Escaping from Economic Injustice

Numerous Africans leave their families and home as they search for a better life for themselves and their close ones. They decide to risk a journey that could cost them their life rather than stay and suffer economic injustice in their country of origin. Unfortunately, it is hard for them to free themselves from economic injustice.

FROM THE AEFJN DESK

The World is over-armed and Peace is underfunded

Small arms and light weapons cause significant suffering and loss of lives around the world and their existence remains a great concern for all those interested in peace and troubled by the enormous suffering caused by these weapons. Recently, the United Nations adopted a resolution that draws more attention to the importance of strong international monitoring and action to reduce the threats that illicit trafficking, proliferation and misuse of small arms pose to international peace.

Trade & Agribusiness are destroying Family Farming

The EU trade preferences in Africa are increasingly being captured by foreign agribusinesses and this gives another motive for foreign enterprises to acquire land in Africa. These trade structures restrict Africa to being a supplier of resources and raw material for consumer markets elsewhere.

ALSO IN THE NEWS

Merck's appetite for African microbes

Merck, the giant pharmaceutical company (5th largest in the world) has applied for a patent for two antibiotics gleaned from soil of two African countries. This seemingly good news is bio-piracy as Merck has illegitimately appropriated biodiversity resources and traditional knowledge of the peoples of Africa without returning any of the profits from these drugs to the people who have preserved them for centuries.

African peasants reject the Assault on Peasant Seeds

During a meeting to discuss the African seeds system, African farmers organisations have expressed alarm at the increasing corporate capture of African agriculture and they reject corporate seed laws. They call for the farmer's autonomy on exchanging and saving seeds to be maintained and they reject the model of industrial agriculture.

Swiss NGO TRIAL accuses the Multinational Argor

The facts of this case are linked to the responsibility of the Swiss company Argor-Heraeus which processed 3 tons of gold ore between 2004 and 2005. It seems that the Company had bought gold ore in Uganda and that the mineral originated from pillaging, by armed groups, in West Democratic Republic of Congo.

VOICES FROM THE NETWORK

General Assembly and Closing of AEFJN's Jubilee year

The end of AEFJN's Jubilee year, November 15th, coincided with the annual General Assembly in Rome. Fr. Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, the Jesuit Provincial of Eastern Africa, was the keynote speaker for AEFJN's closing Jubilee celebration. The title of his talk was "Living Faith Through Justice: Old and New Frontiers" (Click here for his Speech). The General Assembly took place in the afternoon.

ADVOCACY

Letter on the Economic Agreements between Africa and the EU (EPAs)

The Secretariat, Antennae and member congregations have written letters to the EU Ministers of Development Cooperation in view of their meeting in Brussels December 12th. AEFJN asked them to facilitate a political solution to the difficult situation EU measures have created in African countries by imposing them stringent conditions for the EPAs. AEFJN also asked them to support the withdrawal from the negotiations of offensive EU demands such as the high level of tariff elimination and the prohibition or limitation of export taxes.

Networking at the EU Family Farming Conference

On the occasion of the International Year of Family Farming 2014, the European Commission organized a conference on family farming. This event proved to be a great networking opportunity for AEFJN. The AEFJN Secretariat exchanged views on the importance of family farming and on AEFJN's upcoming campaign for a moratorium on large scale land acquisitions with farmers' organisations and civil society from around the world.

ACTION

Act to Stop Herakles Farms' Unjust Lawsuit Against a Cameroon Activist

Nasako Besingi is the managing director of Struggle to Economize Future Environment, an organisation actively campaigning against land grabbing by big corporations. Nasako was brutalized by Herakles employees when he was on his way to an awareness-raising meeting on land grabbing. He suffered physical injuries and of top of that Herakles filed a lawsuit against him. Take Action to stop this unjust behaviour and sign the letter composed by our colleagues from AFJN.

VIDEOS

Monsanto - Kolibri: Music video of the group Kolibri on the activities of Monsanto. (Only in French) (4min)

Speculation and Manipulation of Food and Commodities: Video on Food Speculation : illustrative video on food speculation. (10 min.)

Seventh Provincial Chapter of Lebanon

by Sr. Micheline Najjar



« *Women Apostles, rooted in the Word of God, dare to be instruments of peace and justice, to sow hope and joy in the worried hearts of this world in turmoil*»

With its wonderful and quiet location, the community of our senior sisters in Montana hosted the Provincial Chapter of Lebanon from 19th to 29th of August 2013. The Provincial Council, eight elected delegates and one invited sister, representative of the sisters on mission *ad-extra*, gathered in joy to celebrate this special moment and to listen to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in order to find together orientations for the five next years. By her precious and appreciated presence, the Superior General, Sister Felicia HARRY, faithfully accompanied the participants in the work.



The Chapter was animated by Fr. Basil SOYOYE, SMA, with dynamism and competence. The work methodology consisted of four main stages: re-examine the **reality**, identify the **challenges**, set the **priorities**, and finally come up with the **orientations**. Respecting the themes proposed by the General Chapter 2013, which correspond very well with our Lebanese reality and our aspirations, the Chapter discussed the following themes:

1. Charism and Mission
2. Spirituality and community life
3. Formation
4. Finance

To re-examine objectively and thoroughly the reality of the Province, a preparatory phase was launched by the Provincial Council a long time before the Chapter. They first asked each community to review its reality and identify its challenges. Secondly, they charged Sr

Marlene YOUSSEF (Daughters of Charity), an expert in Finance, to study the situation in Salima in order to help the process of evaluating this insertion. In addition, three interventions during the Chapter helped to accomplish this first phase:

- Sr Marlene Youssef presented a theoretical framework for "*the restructuring of a mission*" and the results of her study on Salima.
- The two presidents of the OLA Lay Missionaries in Rawda and Kab-Elias presented a report on their situation during the past five years.
- The chartered accountant for the Province presented the five-year financial report from 2008 until June 2013.



Inspired by the orientations of the General Chapter 2013, we set our priorities and the orientations needed for the next five years. We can mention the following essential points:

1. Mission and Charism

- Continue to send sisters on mission *ad-extra*.
- Continue and develop the spiritual and social animation in our schools.
- Continue to be fully committed to JPIC and include it in our community life.
- Review the existing status of the OLA Lay missionaries by taking into account the different aspects: spiritual, cultural, apostolic, administrative and social.

2. Spirituality and community life :

Improve our community and spiritual life by placing the Word of God and prayer at the center of our yearly community life project (YCLP) and by finding community moments for sharing joy and sorrow.

3. Education:

- Mission and Vocation Animation remains a priority. The Chapter recommends essentially strengthening the team, broadening its apostolate and being ready in our communities to welcome young girls who want to experience OLA life.
- For initial and on-going formation, the Chapter recommends especially establishing the postulate and novitiate and forming an international and intercultural team.

4. Finance:

Aware of the distressing economic and politic situation in our country, the Chapter recommends orientations which aim basically to respect a simple lifestyle and to balance the preferential option for the poor and marginalized and the continuity of our institutions.



*New Provincial Leadership
From the left:
Sr. Nawal Badrane, Assist.,
Sr Marie Charbel Yammine,
Provincial Superior
Sr Paoula Mourad, Councillor*

We entrust the implementation of our decisions to Our Lady of Apostles so that she support all the sisters of the Province in their responsibilities, in particular the new Provincial team: Sr. Marie- Charbel YAMMINE, Provincial Superior, Sr Nawal BADRANE and Sr Paoula MOURAD, members of the Council, in order to proclaim the Gospel by our unity as the Apostle John says: *"Live in unity ... and they will believe"* (Jn 17:21).



PROVINCIAL CHAPTER, ITALY

by Sr. Daniela Bellini

Situated on the hills around Como, the house of the Xaverian Fathers of Tavernio welcomed the Provincial Chapter of Italy from 19 to 31 August, 2013. The task of evaluating the last five years and looking at the future together was made easier for the capitulants by the peaceful environment.

The motto “*With the fire of the Spirit, together, for a new fraternity*” guided the Assembly in reflection and application of the General Chapter decisions to the reality of the Province.

The Chapter was marked by important moments of listening. Listening to the lived experience of the Province, evidently, but also:

- Listening to the experience of mission lived by our sisters in Togo, Chad, Cote d’Ivoire, Algeria...
- Listening to the difficulties and hopes in mission to the young people in Italy;
- Listening to the laity who are members of the Focolari movement, who in Tlemcen (Algeria) are living an extraordinary experience of fraternity among Christian and Muslim families;
- Listening to Mgr. Jean Paul Vesco (Bishop of Oran - Algeria), who shared his experience and convictions with regard to community life;
- Listening to the new possibilities which exist for the use of our houses, in effective and creative collaboration with the laity;
- Listening to the SMA Provincial of Italy, who shared the decisions arising from their Assembly and their suggestions concerning collaboration.

One fruit of this listening was the capacity to look at the future together with hope.

Together as sisters in community, conscious that the witness of fraternal community is mission and invites to mission, because the Lord still calls young people to missionary religious life.

Together with the sisters of different Provinces/Districts, but also with the SMA Fathers, the committed laity and other Institutes of the local Church, because only together is it possible to create small insertions which permit us to live mission here, for and with the marginalized.

Together with the laity, who can give us a new look at our houses which must be adapted in accord with the decreasing number of sisters without losing “the vocation” of places at the service of the Gospel.

The message of the Chapter delegates to the sisters of the Province speaks well of this atmosphere of hope.

“At the end of these Chapter days, lived in fraternity and sharing, we welcome the new orientations open to the future with a renewed joy and trust in the Lord.

Even in our fragility and at an historic moment marked by the economic and spiritual

crisis, we are animated by the certainty that the Lord is accompanying us so as to respond to the calls of the Church and the world.

We feel ourselves called to live intensely a yet more fraternal, open, welcoming intercultural community life.



We feel ourselves challenged to pay special attention to young people, to immigrants, to women in difficulty. We want to respond to this call through a renewed commitment to Mission and Vocation Animation; we want to dare new ‘alliances’ so as to share our Charism and Spirituality, but we are aware that the proclamation of the Gospel begins with our personal and community life witness.

We carry Mission in our heart, still ready to set out.

The Spiritual life and witness of the senior and sick sisters is a richness and strength for the missionary commitment of the whole Province.”

We thank Sr. Attilia Bario, Sr. Maria Teresa Angeloni and Sr. Martina Bernardi who served the Province for the last five years.

We entrust Sr. Marta Pettenazzo, Sr. Margherita Alberti and Sr. Annamaria Schiavon, who have accepted to serve in the new Provincial Council, to Mary, Queen of Apostles, so that, with the whole Province, they may live the mission which the Lord confides to us.

From the left: the new team Margherita Alberti, Annamaria Schiavon and Marta Pettenazzo, Provincial Superior
the former team: Maria Teresa Angeloni, Attilia Bario and Martina Bernardi





PROVINCIAL CHAPTER OF IRELAND

par Sr. Mary T. Barron

The beautiful location of the SMA Retreat and Conference Centre in Dromantine was once again the setting for the Provincial Chapter of Ireland which took place from September 24th to October 7th 2013. Like the 2008 Provincial Chapter, this was an ‘open’ Chapter where each Sister in the Province made a choice concerning her particular way of participating in the Chapter, based on her own capacity and situation. While all Sisters made a commitment to participate through prayer, some who were not in a position to attend the Chapter also opted to participate in all of the pre-Chapter meetings/Assemblies. And then those who attended as delegates made their commitment to participate in all three ways – through prayer, through attending preparatory meetings and through participating in the Chapter. In total 27 Sisters attended the Chapter coming from Italy, Nigeria, Tanzania and Ireland.



The Chapter facilitators, Srs Mary Harrington LSU and Gabrielle Stuart, RSM, journeyed with the Sisters for 18 months prior to the Chapter – facilitating a process of personal and communal discernment, a process that was beautifully linked to the liturgical seasons. In October 2012, the month of Mission, the Sisters reflected in their communities on how our OLA Charism is lived out in their particular setting. Then during Advent, Sisters were invited to listen and reflect at a personal level on what the new calls are for the Province at this time. The fruits of these reflections were then shared in Community throughout Lent 2013 for mutual influencing. Pre-Chapter Assemblies were facilitated both in Ardfoy and in Tanzania Easter time, in April

2013 to reach consensus on the key issues to which the Province is called to respond during the next five years. Following the General Chapter in July, the key orientations from General Chapter were shared in Communities and the Provincial Chapter delegates invited to reflect on how the Province can embody these orientations.

With all of this preparatory work done prior to gathering in Dromantine, the time spent in Chapter seemed to pass very smoothly, in an atmosphere and ambience of prayer and deep listening and a genuine desire among the Sisters to communally discern the way forward. Some of the Sisters even remarked it was like Retreat time together.

And so the new calls for the Province were discerned and realistic responses to these calls were agreed by the delegates, all of which make up the Acts of the Provincial Chapter 2013.

These include:

- New Evangelization in Ireland/Europe, with a desire to work collaboratively with SMA and other Congregations to respond to the needs in this area;
- South/North Mission: form international OLA communities in Ireland to reinforce existing ministries or to develop new ministries according to local needs;
- Ministry to those people who are vulnerable or on the periphery: Strengthen the commitment in this area with various suggestions being made;
- Care of the Earth: the desire for a deeper reflection on the unfolding mystery of the Creation Story and our place in it; and following this reflection allowing it to enrich our spirituality and ministries;
- Mission & Vocation Animation: continue to strengthen the commitment and progress made in this area with a specific emphasis on collaborating with OLA and SMA throughout Europe to work towards the next World Youth Day in Poland 2016.
- Community Life: continue to improve community life so as to witness ever more clearly to gospel values;
- On-going formation: emphasizing formation in non-violent communication and conflict resolution.

The Chapter also made statements in relation to other issues such as Care of the Elderly; the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults; Justice and Peace; Provincial Structures and ‘Maintaining Hope – “Wings of Hope”’.

Of course the delegates celebrated the decision from General Chapter that Tanzania is to become a Region within the Province of Ireland and reaffirmed the importance of ongoing collaboration among Provinces for the continued growth of mission there.

At the appropriate moment during the Chapter, following a beautiful prayer ritual for freedom, the Chapter delegates entered a period of discernment for leadership, at the end of which the new Provincial Superior and Council were elected: Sr. Kathleen McGarvey as Provincial Superior, Sr. Maria Lee as Assistant and Sr. Philomena Mulligan as Councillor.



Following the official closing of the Chapter, a Final Thanksgiving Eucharist was celebrated during which there was a ritual passing of the light of leadership from the outgoing Provincial and Council to the incoming Provincial and Council. That evening a final festive meal in beautiful Dromantine was enjoyed by all the delegates before setting off to re-join their respective communities.



*The new provincial team:
from the left:
Philomena Mulligan, Kathleen McGarvey and Maria Lee*

PROVINCIAL CHAPTER, FRANCE

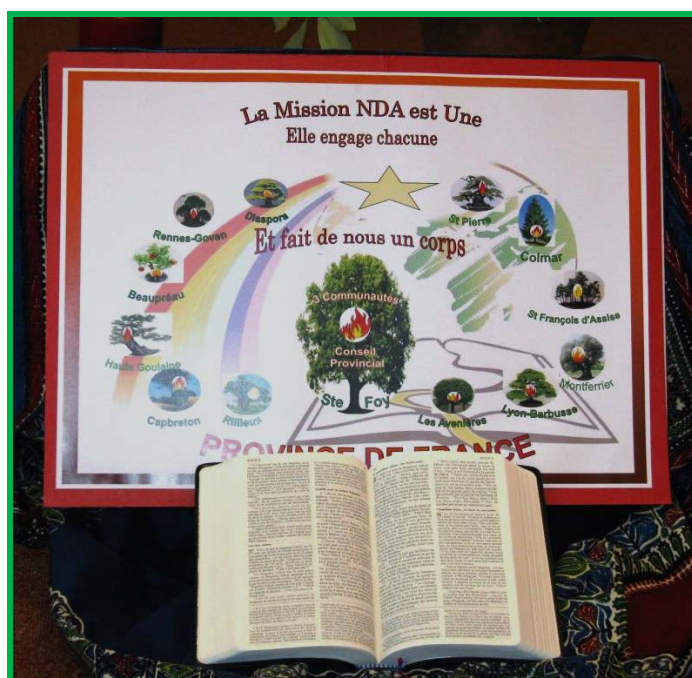
by Sr. Daniela Bellini



The large house at Ste Foy lès Lyon was very full during the ten days of the Provincial Chapter of France. From October 25 to November 3, 2013, the Sisters of the house accompanied us by their unobtrusive presence, their service and prayer.

The work of the Chapter was preceded by a spiritual day animated by Fr. Michel Dujarier SMA associate, who helped us to deepen the “synodal spirit” from the earliest texts of the Church: a spiritual richness on which we do not draw enough in everyday life.

A motto, *“The OLA Mission is One; it involves each one and makes us one body”*, was very prominent in the middle of the room where the Chapter delegates met. This conviction sustained the Assembly reflection, which sought ways to circulate the same Life in the different realities of the Province, with emphasis on sharing within the community and intercommunity meetings, on sponsorship between the Sisters in small communities and the Sisters of communities in retirement homes, and on on-going formation.



The Chapter also questioned itself on the future of the Province as regards structure. The intervention of a Sister from CORREF (Conference of Religious of France) helped towards understanding the need to be protagonists of change when strengths decrease and weaken, so as not to allow events to make decisions for us.

Much attention was paid to the projects which can give greater growth to the momentum of missionary life which is brought by the South-North mission. The experience of Rillieux-la-Pape was dynamic. The desire now is to open a second intercultural community with the

participation of other Provinces and Districts of the Institute, in reflection with the SMA Fathers and in dialogue with the local Church.

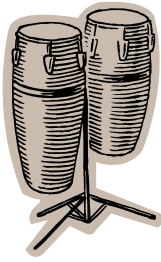
Towards the end of the Chapter, Cardinal Barbarin of Lyons visited and shared with us his expectations of us missionaries, called to help the local Church to welcome and integrate not only the immigrants, but also the foreign priests who are to be found more and more in the parishes in France.



A very big thank you to Sr. Marie Therese Tardy who has given five years as Councillor and who has accepted another service! Our thanks to Sr. Marie Helene Gourdon, Provincial, to Sr. Danielle Billottet, Sr. Claudette Ardouin and Sr. Odile Hermann for having agreed to serve the Province for the next five years. May the Lord and Mary, Our Lady of Apostles, give them the necessary graces to be, with the whole Province, ***“rooted in the Word of God and seeds of communion and of hope”!***

*The New provincial Team: from the left
Claudette Ardouin, Marie-Hélène Gourdon,
Odile Hermann and Daniella Billotet*





THE 6TH NIGERIA PROVINCIAL CHAPTER
14TH OCTOBER 2013 – 30TH OCTOBER 2013
by Sr. Assumpta Mordi

“Women Apostles, Rooted in the Word of God. Dare to be seeds of Communion and Hope” ‘... live in Unity ... and they will believe’.

On the 14th of October 2013, 24 capitulars, 1 observer Sr. Catherine Esiekpe representing all the Nigerian Sisters on mission *ad Extra*, 2 facilitators Fr. Charles Ukwe, OP and Sr. Bernadette Okure, SHCJ, and the Superior General Sr. Felicia Harry, gathered at the OLA Conference Centre Maryland, Lagos for the Opening ceremony of the 6th Nigeria Provincial Chapter. The Opening Prayer with the theme “*we are companions on the journey*” was prepared by the out-going provincial team. Within the prayer, each sister presented a symbol that depicted what she had brought to the chapter and her expectations from the chapter. Back in the conference room, the Provincial Superior Sr. Assumpta Mordi gave her opening address and welcomed all present. The Superior General Sr. Felicia Harry also gave an address.

The following day, the Opening Mass was presided by the Archbishop of Lagos Most Rev. Dr. Alfred Adewale Martins. Also present at the Mass were our sisters from Lagos/Abeokuta/Badagry Unit and some Friends of OLA Sisters (FOLAS) from St. Agnes Parish, Maryland . Throughout the chapter, we were blessed by the presence of different priests from around Lagos who celebrated Mass. And each of them had something unique to say about the theme of the chapter. Our daily liturgy which was led by the delegates from the six units that make up the province was also life giving and enriching as we began and ended each day with soul lifting liturgy.

During the presentation of reports from the six units, the sisters depicted through their greetings, dressing etc the culture of the people with whom they live and work and the reality of their mission. It was evident that the sisters bore great witness with their lives by living out the OLA Charism. There was also report on Finance and Formation. The 25 Nigerian Sisters on Mission *ad Extra* were not left out as a comprehensive and breath-taking report about their mission was presented.

As we all know, the Chapter time in every congregation is a very important time and stage in the life of the congregation. It is a time when we go back and reflect on our founding charism and see the relevance for our mission today, a time when we explore new ways of answering the many calls and challenges in our present society. It is a time when we sit back and listen to the complete story of our province. And base our judgments and decisions on the complete stories as was projected in the presentation titled *The Danger of a Single Story* by Chimamanda Adichie. A time when decisions guiding the province are taken and a time when we deepen our commitment to make Christ known and loved in the periphery. During the course of the chapter, we had some inspiring talks and reflections that helped us to achieve this.

Fr. Basil Soyoye, SMA gave a very challenging input on the theme “*Prophetic Religious Life in Fidelity to OLA founding Charism and Mission in Contemporary Nigeria*”. He began with the following questions; Why do we have to be prophetic today? How do we achieve this and what resources do we have to achieve this? In his talk, he said the Religious life is always motivated and rooted in the written Word of God.

According to *vita Consecrata*, the core of the religious is to witness to the evangelical counsels in the church in the call to follow Christ. In doing this, we need to be prophetic because prophetic witnessing is responding to the signs of time. The charism of Fr. Planque is **pioneer missionary** to the west coast of Africa. Planque answered a call to the unknown, he totally accepted the will of God and he was very open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit that animated him. This is what we are called to be; a voice for the voiceless, people of justice and peace.

Since we were also given the task of electing leaders who will animate the Province for the next five years, the days preceding the election as well as the election days were days of prayer, reflection, discernment and invoking the Holy Spirit to lead us in choosing our leaders. Indeed, all those at the Chapter will bear me witness that the movement and the power of the Holy Spirit was felt during those days. This led to the re-election of Sr. Assumpta Mordi as the Provincial Superior, Sr. Gladys Osagie as the Vice-Provincial and the election of Sr. Anthoinette Adene and Sr. Catherine Esiekpe as Provincial Councillors. The new Provincial team was officially presented to the sisters of the province at the Open day which was attended by our sisters from Lagos, Ibadan, Abeokuta and Badagry.



The chapter days were days of work, reflection and reconciliation of ideas and the General Chapter recommendations as all the delegates worked hard to make sure that we come out with the act of the chapter or the chapter document that will guide the province for the next five years.

Well, after the work there was also time for celebration as we all celebrated our new provincial team and the rebirthing of our province into new life. For like the eagle in the reflection titled *The Story of an Eagle*, we also need to go through some process of change and renewal in order to survive and live.



On the 30th of October, Sr. Assumpta Mordi gave her closing remarks and declared the Chapter close. During the Eucharistic celebration, the Superior General Sr. Felicia Harry missioned the new leadership team. And presented to each member of the provincial team a candle symbolizing the “light of Christ” to light their path and to guide them in their individual and team work. The provincial and Council then presented the Chapter Logo to representatives of each community as a reminder of our commitment to Prophetic witnessing.

There was opportunity to show appreciation to all those who worked hard behind the scene and in the chapter room to make the 6th Provincial Chapter of Nigeria Province a success. After the presentation of gifts and words of thanks, the Chapter came to an end amidst jubilation and with hearts full of gratitude to God.



*The New Team with the Superior General:
from the left:
Sr. Catherine ESIEKPE, Sr. Assumpta MORDI,
Sr. Felicia HARRY, Superior General,
Sr. Gladys OSAGIE, Sr. Antoinette ADENE*



REPORT ON THE FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN CHAPTER

1 – 15 December 2013

by Sr. Denise Bang'na

The 7th Provincial Chapter was held at Abengourou in Ivory Coast from 1st to 15th December 2013. With great joy and happiness, the 24 delegates from 6 countries in the Province arrived at the Novitiate, the cradle of initiation to OLA francophone missionary life. Here they were to celebrate the Chapter.

The Bishop of the Diocese of Abengourou, Monsignor Boniface Zirri, with co-celebrants Daniel Mellier, SMA and Fr. Yvon, diocesan priest, celebrated the solemn opening Mass. The Eucharistic Liturgy was enriched by the presentation of symbols showing the diversity in the Province and signifying the path and direction open to the assembly. At the end of the Mass, the Bishop shared his wonderment at the strong international and intercultural character of our Institute. According to him, “the strength of a social group lies in its capacity to live together and manage the conflicts which arise.” This declaration signifies the source of questioning within the Province and which led to the process of change of structures for the Province.

The Chapter, prepared under the supervision of the Provincial Council, Olga DAGBA, Lucille FORGET and Emilienne TOUGOUMA, set up balanced teams which shared the themes for the Chapter with great interest.

After receiving the Reports from the Regional Councils and from the Provincial Council, the Sisters emphasised the following: life flows through the Province; there is a lived dynamism coming from the Charism; the international, intercultural communities generate openness and at the same time a challenge. The desire of the delegates and of all the Sisters of the Province is to keep this diversity, acquired by the Province, especially in the New Entities that will be created.



In addition to the themes of community life, charism and mission, formation, finances and others, the structures posed a very sensitive point of discussion. Three orientations emerged as challenges: **continue to nurture the very roots of our Faith in the different missions; be open to new needs in the milieu; strengthen our commitments to women, and invest in catechesis.**

In order to look more closely at our reality, Fr. Jean Sinsin, Professor at UCAO, with great passion, focussed the delegates on the theme of “shock” *“Nurture your Faith in order to remain women of hope in spite of chaos.”*

Putting the emphasis on the contribution made by the OLA Sisters in the evangelisation of Africa despite the chaos, he underlined this: “The chaos of Africa is mostly anthropological. Therefore, if the future is to be consolidated, it is through human effort that this will come about. People are at the heart and soul of their continent. They must be evangelised. They must be educated.

Thus the OLA Sisters are called to be bearers of Hope, the beginning of a new Africa; Africa is lost because she has no longer got her identity nor any transcendent points of human reference.

“Set up a new type of family reference, where the emphasis will be on truth, on the depth of our vocation and on the radicality of our spiritual yes.”



For the preparation of the Process of change, in each country there should be a team of two Sisters to maintain communication between the Provincial team and the communities.

The Chapter demands that the New Entities have their Elective Assemblies before the end of 2016.

The General Council accompanies the process to be put in place.

The Chapter proposes that for the first years of existence of the New Entities, those in leadership will meet once a year with a representative from the General Council.

Regarding the houses of formation, the Chapter recommends that they should be under the responsibility of the Entities in which they are found, and that the other Entities should share in supporting these two houses.

The new Provincial Team, **OLGA DAGBA, EMILIEENNE TOUGOUMA AND MONIQUE POIRIER**, received this responsibility of guiding the process during the coming three years in collaboration with the leaders in each country soon to be nominated. The new team will be accompanied by the General Council.

In her final address, the Provincial Olga DAGBA stressed: *“This Chapter is the final one in our large Province. It is marked by a deep desire of each one and of all our Sisters, to retain the values of internationality, of togetherness and of solidarity in our New Entities. This work of collaborative implementation depends on us and especially on all of us.”*

May Our Lady of Apostles support the new Team at this time of setting up the new structures!



The new provincial Team (from the left):
Emilieenne Tougouma, Monique Poirier and Olga Dagba



From the left:
Sr Felicia Harry, Superior General and Sr Olga Dagba

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***“Women Apostles,
Rooted in the Word of God,
Dare to be Seeds of Communion and Hope.”***



***« Live in Unity... and They will Believe... »
(Jn. 17:21)***