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Licheń 2020

"Behold, I am doing something new" (Is 43:19)

XXI GENERAL CHAPTER



REPORT OF SUPERIOR GENERAL AND HIS COUNCIL

GCh.20/12/E

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I. THE SPIRITAN CONGREGATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

1.1 INTRODUCTION

We gather together in Lichen, Poland, representing the wonderful diversity of our membership and missionary commitments across the globe, for the Twenty-First General Chapter of our Congregation, a sacred moment in our history. The task before us is clearly stated in our Spiritan Rule of Life:

- To check that the Congregation has remained faithful to the mission that it has within the Church;
- To augment the apostolic and religious viability of the members of the Institute;
- To evaluate the effect in practice of measures taken by previous Chapters;
- To decide objectives in missionary activity for the coming years;
- To examine the financial state of the Congregation.¹

The fundamental responsibility that is entrusted to us over the coming four weeks is to verify and ensure the fidelity of our Congregation to our spiritual patrimony, to the charism of our founders, in the contemporary world.² Founded for the “evangelization of the poor,”³ we are called through prayer, reflection and discussion to courageously discern the signs of the times in which we live and, led by the Spirit of God, to respond with audacity and creativity to the needs of evangelization of our time.⁴ The document, *New Wine in New Wineskins*, published in 2017 by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL), reminds us that “allowing ourselves to be destabilized by the life-giving provocations of the Holy Spirit is never painless.”⁵ New poverties have emerged in our world calling us to new and creative responses in fidelity to our charism but the demands of day-to-day management and administration often tend to limit our vision and to prevent us from taking the risks that are necessary in order to embrace these new challenges.⁶

The words of Francis Libermann to M. Gamon after the Paris Revolution of 1848 are of perennial relevance at the beginning of a General Chapter: “The problem with the clergy in recent years is that they have remained stuck in the ideas of the past. The world has changed...while we cling on to what has gone before... Wanting to cling onto the old days and sticking to the customs and spirit of the past will make our efforts worthless and the enemy will reinforce itself in the new order. So let us welcome the new ways with openness and simplicity, bringing to them the spirit of the Gospel. In this way we shall sanctify the world and the world will join itself to us.”⁷

The Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, following the recent Synod on Youth, echoes a similar challenge: “It does us no good ‘to sit down and long for times past; we must meet our culture with realism and love and fill it with the Gospel. We are sent today to proclaim the Good News of Jesus to a new age. We need to love

¹ SRL 213

² Canon 631

³ SRL 4 and N.D. XIII, 170

⁴ SRL 2

⁵ *New Wine in New Wineskins* (NWNW), 3

⁶ NWNW, 8

⁷ N.D. X, 151

this time with all its opportunities and risks, its joys and sorrows, its riches and its limits, its successes and failures’.”⁸

1.2 THE CONTEXT OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

1.2.1 POPE FRANCIS: A POOR CHURCH FOR THE POOR

The election of Pope Francis in 2013 has brought a new breath of the Spirit and a renewed missionary dynamism to the Church in the contemporary world. Desiring a “Church that is poor and for the poor,”⁹ Francis has insisted from the outset on the intrinsically missionary nature of the Church, on a Church whose energy is invested in “going forth” rather than in self-preservation; on a Church which is “bruised, hurting and dirty” because it has been out on the streets;¹⁰ on an evangelizing community that gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives, where the evangelizers take on “the smell of the sheep”;¹¹ on a Church that is “bold and creative in the task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization.”¹² He reminds us that: “Today’s vast and rapid cultural changes demand that we constantly seek ways of expressing unchanging truths in a language which brings out their abiding newness.”¹³

Pope Francis has provided us with several challenging principles to inspire our reflection and our activity: zeal for evangelization should take precedence over concern with doctrine; time should take precedence over space; realities over ideas, relationships over structures, and the whole over the part. Priority should be given to “actions which generate new processes in society and engage other persons and groups who can develop them to the point where they bear fruit in significant historical events.”¹⁴ He invites us to draw near to new forms of poverty and vulnerability, in which we are called to recognize the suffering Christ, even if this appears to bring us no tangible and immediate benefits.¹⁵ Reminding us that “those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to other,”¹⁶ Francis stresses that “we grow in wisdom and maturity when we take time to touch the suffering of others,” adding that “the poor have a hidden wisdom and, with a few simple words, can help us discover unexpected values.”¹⁷

1.2.2 SYNODALITY

At the heart of the vision of Pope Francis for the Church is the notion of synodality: “Making a synodal Church a reality is an indispensable precondition for a new missionary energy that will involve the entire People of God. It is precisely this path of synodality that God expects of the Church of the Third Millennium.”¹⁸ Essentially synodality “involves a ‘journeying together’ that values the charisms that the Spirit bestows in accordance with the vocation and role of each of the Church’s members,

⁸ *Christus Vivit* (CV), 200

⁹ First audience with journalists on March 16, 2013

¹⁰ *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG), 49

¹¹ EG, 24

¹² EG, 33

¹³ EG, 41

¹⁴ EG, 223

¹⁵ EG, 210

¹⁶ EG, 10

¹⁷ CV, 171

¹⁸ Final Document of Synod on Youth (SY FD), 118

through a process of co-responsibility.”¹⁹ Synodality should characterize both the life and the mission of the Church, which is the People of God formed of young and old, men and women of every culture and horizon, and the Body of Christ, in which we are members one of another, beginning with those who are pushed to the margins and trampled upon.²⁰ It involves a process of respectful and unconditional listening, where no one is excluded and everyone has something to learn, in a mutually enriching effort to discern where the Spirit is leading the Church today.

The experience of “walking together” as the People of God helps us to understand more and more deeply the sense of authority in the Church as service and to avoid the danger of clericalism – including the clericalization of the laity - which essentially fails to recognize the rich diversity of the Church’s membership and excludes many people from the decision-making processes.²¹ The Final Document of the Synod on Youth stresses the need for specific formation of Church leaders for synodality, suggesting joint formation courses for young lay people, young religious and seminarians, especially where matters like the exercise of authority or collaborative ministry are concerned.²²

1.2.3 ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

The Church still struggles to give greater role and recognition to women in its decision-making processes and its ministerial responsibilities. The issue was specifically raised at the recent Synod on Youth with young people clearly voicing their concern in this regard. The Synod itself recommended that “everyone be made more aware of the urgency of an inevitable change, not least on the basis of anthropological and theological reflection on the reciprocity between men and women.”²³ Pope Francis has referred on several occasions to the indispensable role of women in society and in the Church and, acknowledging that the presence of the “feminine genius” must be guaranteed wherever important decisions are made, both in the Church and in society, recognizes that “we need to create still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church.”²⁴ He also admits that “a living Church can look back on history and acknowledge a fair share of male authoritarianism, domination, various forms of enslavement, abuse and sexist violence,” adding that the Church today needs to offer convinced support for “the legitimate claims of those women who seek greater justice and equality.”²⁵ Aware that “the absence of the feminine voice and perspective impoverishes debate and the Church’s journey, depriving discernment of a precious contribution,”²⁶ the Synod on Youth stressed the importance of the female presence in ecclesial bodies at all levels, including positions of responsibility.²⁷ Pope Francis has already moved in this direction by naming four women as consultors to the secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, which under his pontificate has become a crucial vehicle for setting the Church’s pastoral agenda, and seven others to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, which hitherto has been an all-male preserve. A study into the role of deaconesses in the history of the Church with a view

¹⁹ CV, 206

²⁰ cf. SY FD, 121

²¹ cf. SY FD, 123

²² SY FD, 124

²³ SY FD, 55

²⁴ EG, 103

²⁵ CV, 42

²⁶ SY FD, 55

²⁷ SY FD, 148

to their revival today, however, was apparently inconclusive, although Pope Francis has indicated that the matter is still not closed.

1.2.4 A POST-TRUTH SOCIETY

For a variety of reasons – disillusionment with traditional party politics, lack of access to employment, excessive taxation of the working class, unequal distribution of wealth, social injustice, resistance to the influx of migrants – there has been a worrying political shift in a number of countries towards right-wing populist movements. This has given rise in some cases to attitudes bordering on xenophobia, with national issues taking clear precedence over international responsibility, as well as to a tendency to underplay the urgent need to address climate control in a spirit of international collaboration. Contemporary society has been characterized as “post-truth” with the intentional circulation of misinformation and disinformation for the vested interests of particular groups. “The way many platforms work often ends up favouring encounter between persons who think alike, shielding them from debate. These closed circuits facilitate the spread of fake news and false information, fomenting prejudice and hate. The proliferation of fake news is the expression of a culture that has lost its sense of truth and bends the facts to suit particular interests.”²⁸

1.2.5 NEW EVANGELIZATION

In view of the profound social, religious and cultural changes that have taken place of recent decades, affecting a person's perception of self and the world, and consequently, a person's way of believing in God, the need for a “new evangelization” was specifically addressed by the first Synod of Bishops shortly after the Bagamoyo Chapter (October 2012). The very concept of the family, for instance, essential to the fabric of society, continues to evolve today and, for a wide variety of reasons, the traditional Christian model no longer corresponds to the lived reality of many people across the globe.²⁹

Although some difficulty was experienced in articulating the relationship between mission *ad gentes* and the new evangelization, it was noted that essentially the call for a new evangelization is a call to the Church to rediscover its missionary origins.³⁰ While directed primarily towards people who have drifted away from the Christian faith in traditionally Christian countries, where secularism, religious indifference and atheism are pervasive, new evangelization was seen as also applicable to countries that have been more recently evangelized where equally “the coalescing of social and cultural factors — conventionally designated by the term ‘globalization’ — has initiated a process which is weakening traditions and institutions and thereby rapidly eroding both social and cultural ties as well as their ability to communicate values and provide answers to perennial questions regarding life's meaning and the truth.”³¹ In particular “the new evangelization is an urgent task for Christians in Africa because they too need to reawaken their enthusiasm for being members of the Church.”³²

Essentially, while new methods and forms of expression are needed in conveying the Gospel message today, the new evangelization is ultimately about enabling people, including ourselves, to encounter Jesus anew in their lives. It was noted that current

²⁸ SY FD, 24

²⁹ Cf., for example, *Amoris Laetitia* (AL) 40, 44, 46

³⁰ Synod on New Evangelization, *Instrumentum Laboris* (SNE IL), 81

³¹ SNE IL, 47

³² SNE IL, 87

Church structures, as well as the personal witness of some of those in positions of Church leadership, have also contributed to distancing people from the Church: “The excessive bureaucratic character of ecclesiastical structures, perceived as far removed from the average person and his everyday concerns... the excessively formal character of liturgical celebrations, an almost routine celebration of rituals and the lack of a deep spiritual experience,” tend to turn people away instead of attracting them.³³ In addition, “in Christian communities we sometimes risk presenting, even without intending it, an ethical and therapeutic theism, which responds to the human need for security and comfort, rather than a living encounter with God in the light of the Gospel and in the strength of the Spirit.”³⁴ A touchstone of the authenticity of the new evangelization is the ability to reach out to the new poor and the new faces of poverty in our world today: “Placing ourselves side by side with those who are wounded by life is not only a social exercise, but above all a spiritual act because it is Christ’s face that shines in the face of the poor... The presence of the poor in our communities is mysteriously powerful: it changes people more than a discourse does, it teaches fidelity, it makes us to understand the fragility of life, it asks for prayer: in short, it brings us to Christ.”³⁵ We are called to form welcoming communities in which all outcasts find a home, concrete experiences of communion, which attract the disenchanted glance of contemporary humanity with the ardent force of love.³⁶

1.2.6 SECULARIZATION

Essentially secularization is a cultural transition in which traditional religious values in society are gradually replaced with non-religious values, a process during which religious figureheads, such as Church leaders, lose their authority and influence over society. While secularization, particularly in Europe and North America, is certainly not a new phenomenon, it continues to provide a particularly challenging environment for evangelization and to invite creative missionary approaches from Congregations such as ours dedicated to missionary activity. Secularization essentially reduces faith to the realm of the private and personal and the Church is often perceived as promoting a particular prejudice and interfering with personal freedom.³⁷ To a significant extent, superficiality and relativism are fostered in society by the indiscriminate circulation of data, all perceived to be of equal value and importance, in the information-driven society in which we live today.³⁸

However, the *saeculum* is also where believers and non-believers interact and share in a common humanity and effectively secularization is an invitation to the Church to rethink and re-imagine its presence in society.³⁹ The inner struggle of people in search of truth and meaning in life, evident in the increasing number of individualistic forms of spirituality and neo-paganism, “is a real incentive for us in our duty to live and witness to the faith, so that the true face of God can be seen by every person.”⁴⁰ Pope Francis notes that “unless these people find in the Church a spirituality which can offer healing and liberation, and fill them with life and peace, while at the same time summoning them to fraternal communion and missionary fruitfulness, they will end up by being taken in by solutions which neither make life truly human nor give glory to

³³ SNE IL, 69

³⁴ SY FD, 62

³⁵ Synod on New Evangelization, Final Message (SNE FM), 12

³⁶ SNE FM, 3

³⁷ EG, 64

³⁸ cf. EG, 64

³⁹ SNE FM, 6

⁴⁰ SNE IL, 54

God.”⁴¹ The unprecedented advances in the networks and means of human communication offer us “the challenge of finding and sharing a ‘mystique’ of living together, of mingling and encounter, of embracing and supporting one another, of stepping into this flood tide which, while chaotic, can become a genuine experience of fraternity, a caravan of solidarity, a sacred pilgrimage. Greater possibilities for communication thus turn into greater possibilities for encounter and solidarity for everyone.”⁴²

1.2.7 ECUMENISM

The credibility of the Christian message continues to be undermined by the historical divisions among Christians challenging us to an ongoing commitment to ecumenism with a view to the full realization of the prayer of Christ for his followers, that “all may be one.”⁴³ In this regard, Pope Francis encourages us to continually remind ourselves “that we are pilgrims journeying alongside one another. This means that we must have sincere trust in our fellow pilgrims, putting aside all suspicion or mistrust, and turn our gaze to what we are all seeking: the radiant peace of God’s face. Trusting others is an art and peace is an art.”⁴⁴

However, the proliferation of recent years of new fundamentalist “Christian” religious movements, often “exploiting the weaknesses of people living in poverty and on the fringes of society, people who make ends meet amid great human suffering and are looking for immediate solutions to their needs,”⁴⁵ constitutes an ongoing challenge and invites us to creative responses based on a true spirituality of the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

1.2.8 INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

With the escalating violence in the contemporary world between the followers of different religions, often involving the systematic persecution of minority groups, the importance of inter-religious dialogue takes on a new urgency today. In addition, as noted in the Instrumentum Laboris for the Synod on New Evangelization, “the emergence on the world stage of new economic, political and religious actors from the Islamic and Asian worlds has created an entirely new and unknown situation, rich in potential, but fraught with dangers and new temptations for dominion and power.”⁴⁶

Pope Francis states unambiguously that “interreligious dialogue is a necessary condition for peace in the world, and so it is a duty for Christians as well as other religious communities.”⁴⁷ This dialogue, in the first place, is a conversation about human existence, a matter of being open to others, of accepting their difference, of sharing their joys and sorrows. “We can then join one another in taking up the duty of serving justice and peace, which should become a basic principle of all our exchanges. A dialogue which seeks social peace and justice is in itself, beyond all merely practical considerations, an ethical commitment which brings about a new social situation.”⁴⁸ Since the majority of people living on the planet profess to be believers, inter-religious dialogue has a vital contribution to make towards protecting our common home,

⁴¹ EG, 89

⁴² EG, 87

⁴³ Jn 17, 21

⁴⁴ EG, 244

⁴⁵ EG, 63

⁴⁶ SNE IL, 57

⁴⁷ EG, 250

⁴⁸ EG, 250

defending the poor and building networks of mutual respect and fraternity in a divided world.⁴⁹

Our relationship with the followers of Islam has taken on considerable importance today, since they are now significantly present in many traditionally Christian countries, where they can freely worship and become fully a part of society.⁵⁰ Clearly missionary Congregations have a particularly important role in initiating, promoting and fostering such relationships in a world where the other is often regarded with suspicion and fear. Pope Francis stresses the essential need for suitable training for all involved if dialogue with Islam is to be sustained “not only so that they can be solidly and joyfully grounded in their own identity, but so that they can also acknowledge the values of others, appreciate the concerns underlying their demands and shed light on shared beliefs.”⁵¹

1.2.9 YOUTH AND THE CHURCH

The recent Synod on Youth was convened with the conviction that young people are not only recipients of pastoral activity but they are already members of the Church with their own specific and irreplaceable contribution to make to its life and mission. In addition, the young constitute “one of the “theological arenas” in which the Lord tells us some of his expectations and challenges for building tomorrow.”⁵²

Young people, in fact, essentially keep the Church young by challenging it to return constantly to its origins, to be true to the Gospel it preaches and to avoid complicity with worldly values: “They can stop her from becoming corrupt; they can keep her moving forward, prevent her from being proud and sectarian, help her to be poorer and to bear better witness, to take the side of the poor and the outcast, to fight for justice and humbly to let herself be challenged.”⁵³ Understandably many young people have distanced themselves from the Church because of the lifestyle and witness of some of its members, particularly those in leadership, and because of the lack of ability of those entrusted with their pastoral care to engage effectively with their sensitivities and concerns, their failure to give them an active role in the community and their inability to explain Church doctrine and ethical positions to contemporary society.⁵⁴ Young people want to live differently in this world and demand change: “They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded.”⁵⁵ Social commitment is a specific feature of today’s young people; many are ready to commit themselves to volunteer work, active citizenship, including politics, and to social solidarity.⁵⁶ They have a passion for justice and for speaking the truth; they are spontaneously open with regard to diversity and “know how to be pioneers of intercultural and interreligious encounter and dialogue, in the context of peaceful coexistence.”⁵⁷

However, they are also fragile and vulnerable in the contemporary world where an idealized image of youth is exploited for commercial purposes,⁵⁸ where the cultural

⁴⁹ cf. *Laudato Si* (LS), 201

⁵⁰ EG, 252

⁵¹ EG, 253

⁵² Synod on Youth, Final Document (SY FD), 64

⁵³ CV, 37

⁵⁴ cf. CV, 40

⁵⁵ LS, 13

⁵⁶ cf. CV, 170

⁵⁷ SY FD, 45

⁵⁸ CV, 79

colonization effected by globalization severs them from their cultural and religious roots⁵⁹ and exposes them to different ideologies, where lack of access to employment deprives them not only of a reasonable quality of life but also of their capacity to dream and to make a positive contribution to the development of society.⁶⁰ In addition, the education they have received, even in Catholic institutions, often fails to prepare them adequately to live their faith in the contemporary world.⁶¹ They are, therefore, in serious need of accompaniment by pastors and youth leaders who have a genuine capacity for listening, who respect the freedom of young people and are sufficiently flexible to adjust to their ways of organizing themselves, their agenda and schedule, and who are in touch with their own humanity and limitations.⁶² Religious Congregations, in particular, are called upon to offer young people accompaniment and personal discernment involving an experience of fraternal life “that is essential, simple and respectful of the common home; a firm apostolic programme for living together; an offer of spirituality rooted in prayer and sacramental life.”⁶³

1.2.10 A DIGITAL WORLD

We live today in a highly digitalized culture that has had a profound impact on our ideas of time and space, on our self-understanding, our understanding of others and the world in which we live, as well as on our ability to communicate, to learn and to enter into relationship with others.⁶⁴ Modern means of communication, the internet and social media have opened up exciting new ways to communicate and to create relationships and solidarity among people. They offer wonderful opportunities for dialogue, for encounter and exchange, as well as unprecedented access to information, knowledge and education, even in remote parts of the world. They can facilitate the circulation of independent information in regard to injustice and human rights violations and actively engage individuals and groups in the protection of the vulnerable and exploited in society, as well as the safeguarding of the environment.⁶⁵

However, the digital world is also one of exploitation, manipulation, and violence (cyberbullying and sexual abuse, for example); consciences can be manipulated through the spread of “fake news” and closed networks of like-minded individuals can be created, protecting them from alternative viewpoints and fomenting prejudice and hate.⁶⁶ It also creates a virtual world where relationships can be chosen or eliminated at will and people are shielded from “the pain, the fears and the joys of others and the complexity of their personal experiences.”⁶⁷ Individuals, particularly the young who have effectively been born into this digital environment, are at risk of isolation, loneliness, addiction, and gradual loss of contact with concrete reality, blocking their potential to develop authentic interpersonal relationships.⁶⁸ In the context of intercultural mission, modern means of communication and social media can provide the opportunity for a missionary to effectively remain in the world of his family and friends and militate against full insertion into the language and culture of the people to whom he is sent.

⁵⁹ CV, 185

⁶⁰ CV, 270

⁶¹ CV, 221

⁶² CV, 230, 242, 244, 246

⁶³ SY FD, 161

⁶⁴ cf. CV, 86

⁶⁵ cf. CV, 87

⁶⁶ CV, 89

⁶⁷ LS, 47

⁶⁸ cf. CV, 88

As emphasized at the Synod on Youth, “the digital environment presents a challenge to the Church on various levels; it is essential, therefore, to deepen knowledge of its dynamics and its range of possibilities from the anthropological and ethical point of view. This requires not only entering into it and promoting its communicative potential with a view to the Christian proclamation, but also giving a Gospel flavour to its culture and its dynamics.”⁶⁹

1.2.11 CLIMATE CHANGE

Concern over climate change and its impact have been raised for several years but recent studies have pointed to the urgency for immediate action if catastrophe is to be avoided. Research published in 2018 by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicated that the world has effectively less than twelve years to avoid catastrophic levels of global warming. If drastic action is not taken to reduce global net emissions of carbon dioxide, the planet will reach a crucial threshold of 1.5 degrees above preindustrial levels by 2030, precipitating the risk of extreme drought, heatwaves, wildfires, floods and food shortages. Its findings were effectively confirmed by the World Meteorological Organization which reasserted in the same year that the physical and financial impacts of global warming are accelerating, with 2018 being the fourth warmest year on record. A similar study published in 2019 by the UN Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems presented a bleak picture of a planet ravaged by an ever-growing human population with insatiable consumption, and stressed that drastic change is necessary to avoid a dire future, a future that lies solely in the hands of the present generation.

At present, one million of the planet's 8 million species are threatened with extinction and the world's ecosystems are deteriorating more rapidly than ever. Fishing and timber harvesting are at unsustainable levels; marine plastic pollution has increased tenfold since 1980 with 300-400 million tons of waste dumped annually into the world's waters. The Global Forest Report in 2018, while stressing the critical role of trees in sustaining biodiversity, revealed that, in the previous year, 12 million hectares of the world's tropical forests (equivalent to 30 football fields per minute) had been cleared for agricultural or commercial needs. Deforestation in the Amazon basin, which is home to some 20 million people, was the worst in ten years during this period. The Institute for Public Policy Research emphasized in 2019 that the combination of climate change, loss of species, topsoil erosion, forest felling, and acidifying oceans are driving a complex dynamic process of environmental destabilization that has reached critical levels and that the window of opportunity for avoiding catastrophic outcomes is rapidly closing.

In his Encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis reminds us that “we can be silent witnesses to terrible injustices if we think that we can obtain significant benefits by making the rest of humanity, present and future, pay the extremely high costs of environmental deterioration.”⁷⁰ In fact, the deterioration of the environment – pollution in its various forms, rising sea levels, depletion of foresting and fishing reserves, natural disasters - affects most directly the most vulnerable people on the planet, giving rise to many premature deaths among the poor: “Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest.”⁷¹ The warming caused by huge consumption on the part of some rich

⁶⁹ SY FD, 145

⁷⁰ LS, 36

⁷¹ LS, 48

countries has repercussions on the poorest areas of the world, especially Africa, where a rise in temperature, together with drought, has proved devastating for farming.⁷² An “ecological debt” therefore exists between the global North and South related to the commercial imbalances that affect the environment, and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time.⁷³ A consumerist and “throwaway” culture has led to a situation where a third of all food produced today is discarded and “whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor.”⁷⁴ Therefore “peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes, which cannot be separated and treated individually.”⁷⁵

Essentially a global consensus and a comprehensive approach are crucial for confronting the complex problems involved but, to date, World Summits on the environment have failed to live up to expectations “because, due to lack of political will, they were unable to reach truly meaningful and effective global agreements on the environment.”⁷⁶ However, we are all called to conversion, to changes in lifestyle, particularly through small daily actions (such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights), to the cultivation of sound virtues and the development of an appropriate spirituality with a view to contributing to the creation of a more sustainable planet and ensuring its future, not only for ourselves but for the generations that will follow us.⁷⁷

1.2.12 MIGRATION

We live in an era of unprecedented movement of people and migration. The UNHCR Global Trends Report for 2018 revealed that there were 70.8 million people forcibly displaced across the globe due to war, persecution and conflict, the highest number in almost 70 years of its operation. Effectively this amounts to 37,000 new displacements per day consisting of three main groups: refugees (25.9 million), asylum seekers [without refugee status] (3.5 million) and internally displaced people (41.3 million). More than two thirds of the refugees came from Syria (6.7 million), Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and Somalia. During this twelve-month period, only 92,400 refugees were settled. Europe saw the highest number of arrivals in 2015 (over 1 million), but significant numbers continue to be annually trafficked across the Mediterranean Sea in extremely precarious conditions with the crossing becoming deadlier every year: in 2015 there was one death for every 269 arrivals, in 2018 this figure had risen dramatically to one for every 48 arrivals. Hundreds of thousands who did not qualify for asylum have been sent back home; however, hundreds of thousands still remain undocumented in Europe.

In addition to fleeing from war, violence and persecution, others are forced to leave their country due to natural disasters, including those caused by climate change, and extreme poverty, while some are simply attracted by the opportunities offered by Western culture. Many are young and, in general, are in search of a better future for themselves and their families. Today security concerns in receiving countries often

⁷² LS, 51

⁷³ LS, 51

⁷⁴ LS, 50

⁷⁵ LS, 92

⁷⁶ LS, 166

⁷⁷ cf. LS, 23, 211, 216, 218

take precedence over the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, and fear and alarm, frequently exploited for political ends, have given rise to a xenophobic mentality.

In a strident call to the Church to respond to the crisis, Pope Francis has summarized the action we should take as follows: “Welcome, protect, promote and integrate,” and called on parishes, religious communities and families to open their doors to offer accommodation to migrants. The final document of the Synod on Youth, noting that migration, considered globally, is a structural phenomenon, and not a passing emergency,⁷⁸ elaborates further: “Of particular importance is cultural and political engagement, involving appropriate structures, to fight against the spread of xenophobia, racism and rejection of migrants... Nor must we overlook the commitment to guarantee the effective right to remain in the country of origin for those who do not wish to migrate but are forced to do so, and to provide support for Christian communities that are at risk of depopulation through migration.”⁷⁹ A durable solution to forced migration is obviously to ensure the right of all to dignity, security and peace in their own country. Clearly, in a world marked by the diversity of people and the variety of cultures, migrants bring an opportunity of enrichment for the communities and societies to which they come and for the integral development of all.⁸⁰

The dark phenomenon of human trafficking, which represents an “open wound on contemporary society,”⁸¹ involves tens of millions of people across the globe. The purposes which drive this “most dramatic commodification of people,”⁸² are many and complex: sexual exploitation (79%), forced labour (18%), domestic servitude, forced marriage, organ removal, and criminal acts. Domestic and inter-regional trafficking (rather than inter-continental) are the major forms, and almost 20% of trafficking victims today are children. Pope Francis, while acknowledging the risks involved, has emphasized our responsibility, particularly as religious and as missionaries, to engage the appalling tragedy of human trafficking in collaboration with public institutions and civil society organizations.⁸³ The final document of the Synod on Youth re-echoes this challenge: “The resources of the Catholic Church are a vital element in the fight against human trafficking, as is clearly seen in the work of many religious sisters.”⁸⁴

1.2.13 URBANIZATION

The Synod on New Evangelization noted that the changes taking place in the great expanses of the cities of our world and the culture they create are a privileged place for the new evangelization.⁸⁵ In fact we can speak of new cultures constantly being born in urban environments “where Christians are no longer the customary interpreters or generators of meaning. Instead, they themselves take from these cultures new languages, symbols, messages and paradigms which propose new approaches to life, approaches often in contrast with the Gospel of Jesus.”⁸⁶

⁷⁸ SY FD, 25

⁷⁹ SY FD, 147

⁸⁰ cf. CV, 93

⁸¹ *Address of Pope Francis to the International Conference on Human Trafficking*, 10 April 2014

⁸² *Address of Pope Francis to the International Conference on Human Trafficking*, 11 April 2019

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ SY FD, 147

⁸⁵ SNE P, 25

⁸⁶ EG, 73

We are challenged to imagine innovative spaces and possibilities for prayer and communion which are attractive and meaningful for city dwellers.⁸⁷ “What is called for is an evangelization capable of shedding light on these new ways of relating to God, to others and to the world around us, and inspiring essential values. It must reach the places where new narratives and paradigms are being formed, bringing the word of Jesus to the inmost soul of our cities.”⁸⁸ While people leave rural settings in search of new dreams and new possibilities in the mega-cities of our times, urban life often becomes a place of isolation and mistrust with countless thousands living in conditions that deprive them of their humanity and the development of their true potential, where violence, drugs and criminal activity are daily realities. While a uniform and rigid programme of evangelization is not suited to this complex reality,⁸⁹ “the feeling of asphyxiation brought on by densely populated residential areas is countered if close and warm relationships develop, if communities are created, if the limitations of the environment are compensated for in the interior of each person who feels held within a network of solidarity and belonging. In this way, any place can turn from being a hell on earth into the setting for a dignified life.”⁹⁰

The enormity of this challenge is clear when one considers urban reality on the African continent. Currently the African urban population is 414 million. Estimates are that this will grow to 742 million by 2030, and not less than 1.2 billion people will live in African cities by 2050, making it more than half the African population at that point. After delayed urbanization, Africa is now the continent with the fastest rate of urban growth. What adds to the challenge is the informal nature of African urbanity with more than at 62% of the African urban population living in informal settlements. It raises obvious challenges in every respect but particularly in terms of keeping up with demands for urban infrastructure, housing and services, as well as the related challenge of responsive and appropriate urban governance and management, tailored for the unique contexts of African cities. An interesting and promising research project, *Urban Africa 2050: Imagining Theological Education/formation for flourishing African cities*, has been initiated by the Institute for Contextual Ministry at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. *Urban Africa 2050* is focussed on creative religious and theological engagement with African urbanization, with particular reference to those who live on the margins of our cities, and the appropriate formation for ministers of the Gospel in this context.

1.2.14 SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS

There has been a much greater awareness of more recent years of both the extent and impact of child sexual abuse by priests and religious and of the failures of leadership to deal adequately and appropriately with the matter, often with disastrous consequences for the victims. The stark findings of the Royal Commission in Australia (2017) and the Grand Jury Report in Pennsylvania (2016-2018), the laicization of American Cardinal McCarrick, the criminal conviction of Australian Cardinal Pell (sexual abuse) and the penal process against the French Cardinal Barbarin (failure in leadership responsibilities), shocked many and understandably led to angry calls from both within and outside the Church for clear procedures for accountability and sanctions at all levels in the Church.

⁸⁷ EG, 73

⁸⁸ EG, 74

⁸⁹ EG, 75

⁹⁰ LS, 148

The unprecedented Meeting on the Protection of Minors in the Church called by Pope Francis in Rome in February 2019, involving Presidents of Episcopal Conferences and representatives of the Union of Superiors General (USG) and the International Union of Superiors General (UISG), sought specifically to tackle these issues, some of which are addressed in the subsequent *Motu Proprio*, *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*. Pope Francis has consistently denounced the evil of child sexual abuse, has met with and listened personally to the stories of the survivors of clerical sexual abuse, and has proclaimed a “zero tolerance” policy for perpetrators of sexual abuse of minors and for those responsible in any way for its cover up, acknowledging its lifetime effects on survivors. He established a Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors in March 2014, under the leadership of Cardinal O’Malley of Boston, and included both women and survivors in its composition. It is clear that the issue of child sexual abuse and the fallout therefrom will be with the Church for many years to come and much has yet to be done to regain the trust of people and the credibility of the Church. There is a growing awareness in local Churches across the world that clerical sexual abuse is effectively a global issue and not only a matter for certain Western countries but Church leaders are still on different points on the learning curve.

Clearly the recent revelations are an invitation to profound personal and institutional conversion, “a dark moment” that “can truly be an opportunity for a reform of epoch-making significance, opening us to a new Pentecost and inaugurating a new stage of purification and change capable of renewing the Church’s youth.”⁹¹ The Synod on Youth placed the sexual abuse of minors in the wider context of the different forms of abuse – which also include abuse of power, abuse of conscience and financial abuse – emphasizing that “the ways of exercising authority that make all this possible have to be eradicated, and the irresponsibility and lack of transparency with which so many cases have been handled have to be challenged. The desire to dominate, lack of dialogue and transparency, forms of double life, spiritual emptiness, as well as psychological weaknesses, are the terrain on which corruption thrives.”⁹² The Synod highlighted the danger of clericalism where priests see “the ministry they have received as a power to be exercised, rather than a free and generous service to be offered. It makes us think that we belong to a group that has all the answers and no longer needs to listen or has anything to learn. Doubtless, such clericalism can make consecrated persons lose respect for the sacred and inalienable worth of each person and of his or her freedom.”⁹³ “It leads us to believe that we belong to a group that has all the answers and no longer needs to listen or learn anything, or that pretends to listen.”⁹⁴

1.2.15 GLOBALIZATION

While globalization is not a new phenomenon and has undoubtedly many positive aspects, particularly in creating new possibilities for interconnectivity and solidarity among people across the globe with enormous potential benefits for the good of humanity, nevertheless its negative effects continue to have a profound effect in many parts of the world, especially on the poor and the vulnerable. On the continent of Africa, for example, while GDP has increased fivefold since 1990, and child and

⁹¹ CV, 102

⁹² CV, 98

⁹³ CV, 98

⁹⁴ Francis, *Address to the 1st General Congregation of the XV General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops*, 3 October 2018.

maternal mortality has been reduced by half, yet youth unemployment still stands at 50%, another 50 million people are in precarious employment, and producers receive only a small fraction of the price of their products on the world market (cocoa farmers, for instance get a mere 6%). Africa, which has 15% of global oil reserves, 40% of gold reserves and 80% of platinum reserves, has the largest expanse of agricultural land in the world and could feed itself, yet the continent spends 35 billion dollars annually on food imported from abroad. In 2017 it was estimated that 232 million people (almost 1 in 4) in sub-Saharan Africa, where the average of the population is 18 years, were living in hunger.⁹⁵ At the global level, the 2019 Oxfam Report revealed that income inequality continues to increase with the world's richest 1% receiving 82% of the wealth created in 2018 and the wealth of billionaires growing six times faster than that of the ordinary worker. The world's richest 26 people in 2018 held the same wealth as the poorest 50% (it was 43 in 2017); an estimated 3.4 billion people survive on less than \$5.5 per day, 10,000 people die every day due to lack of healthcare, and 262 million children do not attend school. As the wealthy are amassing ever greater fortunes, hundreds of millions are struggling to survive; poor workers are exploited (in assembling our phones, making our clothes, growing our foods etc.) to swell the profits of corporations and billionaire investors. Tax evasion is a major issue and it is estimated that if the wealthiest 1% paid 0.5% extra tax it would generate \$418 billion per year.

Pope Francis has reserved some of the strongest statements of his pontificate to denounce inequality and exclusion and their causes in the contemporary world: "We should be particularly indignant at the enormous inequalities in our midst... We fail to see that some are mired in desperate and degrading poverty, with no way out, while others have not the faintest idea of what to do with their possessions..."⁹⁶ "Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape."⁹⁷ "To sustain a lifestyle which excludes others, or to sustain enthusiasm for that selfish ideal, a globalization of indifference has developed."⁹⁸

The "trickle-down effect," still held by many who defend the absolute autonomy of the financial market and which assumes that economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and greater inclusiveness, has never been confirmed by experience.⁹⁹ The fact is that we live in an individualist, consumerist and "throw-away" culture, which fosters inequality and exclusion, putting individual and group interests above the common good, imposing a cultural homogenization that impoverishes local cultural, ethical and religious values, giving priority to appearances over reality and to "the method and aims of science and technology" in shaping "the lives of individuals and the workings of society."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Source: Marshall Plan 2017 published by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

⁹⁶ LS, 90

⁹⁷ EG, 53

⁹⁸ EG, 54

⁹⁹ cf. EG, 54

¹⁰⁰ LS, 107

On the other hand, there is a growing awareness that scientific and technological progress cannot be equated with the progress of humanity and history;¹⁰¹ different associations for the defence of rights and the pursuit of noble goals are being founded;¹⁰² cooperatives of small producers have emerged adopting less polluting means of production and opting for a non-consumerist model of life and community living.¹⁰³ In the knowledge that we are all unconsciously but profoundly affected and shaped by the culture and philosophy of the times in which we live, the Church must firstly examine its own structures, practices and lifestyle, with honesty and humility, to ensure that it truly gives countercultural witness in the contemporary world; it must “clearly reject an economy of exclusion and inequality”¹⁰⁴ and denounce their structural causes, promote the development of economic institutions and social initiatives that can give the poor regular access to basic resources,¹⁰⁵ ensuring that local people are always involved in the decision-making processes regarding issues and initiatives that impact on their life and wellbeing,¹⁰⁶ put pressure on governments to ensure that private interests never take precedence over the common good and to develop more rigorous regulations, procedures and controls which protect the lives of the local populations.¹⁰⁷ In particular, it needs to live and promote “a spirituality that proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption...It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack.”¹⁰⁸

1.2.16 VIOLENCE

Violence, insecurity and fear have become everyday realities for many people around the globe. As has already been noted, 2018 saw over 70 million people forcibly displaced, due to war persecution and conflict, the highest number in almost 70 years of the existence of the UNHCR and twice the number recorded 20 years previously. According to the statistics of the Marshall Plan, in Africa alone conflict and violence led to the displacement of about 20 million people and 24,000 fatalities in 2015.

In addition to intra-State (49 in 2017), regional and inter-ethnic conflicts, which are often exploited for political purposes, and terrorism driven by fundamentalist groups of different religions, violence spawned by poverty and inequality, criminal activity and drug-related and sexual violence affect the lives of countless millions of people on a daily basis. Missionaries serve in many countries and communities where violence is frequent, their commitment to the people providing at times the only ray of hope in an otherwise bleak situation. The information service of the Pontifical Mission Societies, Agenzia Fides, publishes annually the number of pastoral care workers killed in the previous year. In 2018, 40 pastoral workers were killed across the globe -35 of them priests - with Africa having the most casualties (19), followed by America (12), Asia (3) and Europe (1). In the period 2012-2017, 135 pastoral workers were killed, 88 of them priests and 24 Sisters and Brothers. The contexts in

¹⁰¹ LS, 113

¹⁰² EG, 67

¹⁰³ LS, 112

¹⁰⁴ EG, 53

¹⁰⁵ LS, 109

¹⁰⁶ cf. LS, 183

¹⁰⁷ LS, 179

¹⁰⁸ LS, 222

which the killings took place vary: robberies, hold-ups, abductions, attacks by armed gangs. There is obviously a clear need to address the issue of appropriate trauma care and psychological assistance for missionaries who have had direct experience of violence and whose lives have been deeply affected by it.

1.3 THE CONGREGATION TODAY

1.3.1 STRENGTHS

1.3.1.1 PERENNIAL RELEVANCE OF THE SPIRITAN CHARISM

The Spiritan charism, the “evangelization of the poor”, in the words of Francis Libermann to D. Salier less than a year before his death,¹⁰⁹ has perennial validity in the sense that “the poor are always with us.”¹¹⁰ Libermann saw the Black population of Africa and the Colonies as the special focus of the Congregation during his lifetime since they were “the most miserable and abandoned people” of his day.¹¹¹ However, realizing that there were poor and abandoned people also in France, he also quickly envisaged his missionaries taking on works at home, especially among the working class and poor in the large industrial cities whose needs appeared to him to be the greatest at the time, on the understanding that these undertakings would be extra-parochial in order to reach those who were not touched by existing parish structures.¹¹² In every age we are entrusted with the sacred responsibility of placing our charism, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit, at the service of the Local Church, in discerning and creatively responding to the new forms of poverty of our times. The Synod on New Evangelization outlines the harsh reality of the contemporary world, which continues to challenge us to respond in the light of our charism and the spirituality that characterizes us: “Today there are new poor and new faces of poverty: the hungry, the homeless, the sick and abandoned, drug addicts, migrants and the marginalized, political and environmental refugees, the indigenous peoples... Among the poorest in contemporary society are the victims of grievous loss of respect for the inviolable dignity of innocent human life.”¹¹³

1.3.1.2 NEW HORIZONS OF SPIRITAN MISSION

The fact that the General Council continues to receive requests from the Local Church to open new Spiritan communities, both in countries where we already have commitments (Holland, Belgium, Benin, Guinea Conakry, Senegal, Guinea Bissau, The Philippines, Taiwan) and in countries where we are not currently present (Estonia, Chad, Surinam, Argentina, Uruguay), is a testimony to the reputation of the Congregation in the Church as well as to the ongoing relevance of the Spiritan charism in the contemporary world. In addition, the recent growth of the Congregation in Asia, with increasing numbers of vocations in Vietnam, India and The Philippines, is clear evidence of the attractiveness of the Spiritan charism and way of life to a new generation of young men in cultures where we have not had a traditional presence. Of equal significance is the growing number of lay people across the globe who seek to be associated with our spirituality, our life and mission, through

¹⁰⁹ N.D. XIII, 170

¹¹⁰ Mt. 26, 11

¹¹¹ N.D. XIII, 170

¹¹² N.D. XIII, 171

¹¹³ SNE P, 31, also EG. 210

the various forms of Lay Spiritan Associateship and who open new and exciting horizons for us in living the Spiritan charism in the world today.

1.3.1.3 WITNESS OF SPIRITANS ACROSS THE GLOBE

Many Spiritans across the world continue to give inspiring witness, often in very difficult circumstances, through their commitment, their dedication and their closeness to the people they serve, through their availability and the simplicity of their lifestyle. A recent survey carried out by the new Development Office at the Generalate revealed an extraordinary number of development projects – many of them hitherto unknown – undertaken by our confreres, with both creativity and generosity, to improve the dignity and quality of life of the people among whom they live and work. We continue to be involved with ministries around the globe that correspond to the priorities of our Spiritan Rule of Life and recent General Chapters: first evangelization, work with indigenous people, inter-religious dialogue, migrant and refugee ministry, youth apostolate, and various JPIC initiatives. The growing demand from Bishops in the global North for Spiritan involvement in ministry to migrants and refugees, for instance, is a testimony to the particular effectiveness of Spiritans in this much-needed apostolate today. The many Spiritan initiatives of recent years in Africa, in both formal and informal education, with a view to opening up new possibilities for young people, particularly for those who are marginalized, and empowering them to develop their talents and shape the future of their societies, represent a creative response within the Local Church to the needs of evangelization of our times. Many sick and elderly confreres, who can no longer be active in ministry, continue to make an invaluable contribution to worldwide Spiritan mission through their prayer, their ongoing interest and links with the people they formerly served, the serene acceptance of their sufferings and limitations, and through the faith and joy they radiate to all with whom they come in contact.

1.3.1.4 INTERCULTURALITY AT THE SERVICE OF MISSION

As the demographic composition of our Congregation continues to evolve, the worldwide Spiritan community today comprises members from a vast array of nationalities and cultures. Our Spiritan Rule of Life points out that the diversity of our membership is the work of the Spirit of Pentecost who brings us together into one large family, “from different cultures, continents and nations.”¹¹⁴ Much more than an inevitable consequence of the geographical spread of our missionary endeavours or a testimony to the success of those who have preceded us, the cultural diversity of our membership is truly integral to our charism in the contemporary world. “Conflict, racialism and the cult of the individual are all too prevalent in the world of today. By coming together from so many different places and cultures, we are saying to our brothers and sisters that the unity of the human race is not just an impossible dream. In this way, our community life is an integral part of our mission and a powerful witness of the Gospel.”¹¹⁵ Intercultural community living is a “response to the call of the Holy Spirit to all of us, to witness to a new quality of human solidarity, surpassing individualism, ethnocentrism and nationalism.”¹¹⁶ Virtually all of our circumscriptions now comprise confreres of several different cultures and, indeed, the principal apostolic commitments in many of our older Provinces depend significantly, if not uniquely, on confreres originating from other circumscriptions. Called to

¹¹⁴ SRL 37

¹¹⁵ Maynooth 4.15.

¹¹⁶ Torre d’Aguilha, 2.1

intercultural living, where each one's culture finds expression and affirmation, where the dignity of difference is cherished and enriches our common vision and mission, we can contribute in a significant way to building bridges and promoting reconciliation in a fractured world, divided by ideological conflicts, inter-religious and inter-ethnic tensions, where the stranger is often treated with fear, mistrust and hostility.

1.3.2 CHALLENGES

1.3.2.1 NEW PARADIGM FOR MISSION

Mission in the twenty-first century has significantly changed from the traditional model which we have inherited from previous generations and calls for a new understanding, a new approach and a new methodology. Many of the Local Churches in which we serve today have developed considerably over the years and, thanks to an increasing influx of local vocations, have sufficient diocesan personnel today to take responsibility for the majority of their pastoral and administrative needs. In countries where Spiritans founded the Local Church or have been present for many decades, we sometimes find ourselves limited by our own history, in the sense that we expect or are expected to continue to maintain parish commitments we have held for several years, not infrequently at the expense of genuine community life. The result is an impoverishment of our role in the Local Church where we, as religious, are called to reach out to new peripheries in fidelity to our charism, where necessary freeing ourselves from existing engagements to respond to new and different calls of the Spirit.¹¹⁷

The traditional image of the missionary, which it must be acknowledged was the image familiar to many of our younger members who joined the Spiritan family – a priest living alone, committed to his people, self-reliant and dependent on a network of external friends for financial support – can no longer be upheld in view of our renewed understanding of the essential role of community life today, in line with the spirit of our Founders. To a certain extent this model has been perpetuated in some circumscriptions through an excessive number of parish commitments, with the confreres involved often living alone and more committed to the life of the diocese than to their Spiritan family.¹¹⁸ A further negative consequence of this understanding of mission is the fact that a significant number of young confreres seeking Mission Appointments each year express their preference to remain at home in view of urgent need for personnel, contrary to the spirit of the Congregation and effectively promoting a nationalistic understanding of mission. Parish ministry is certainly not excluded from the role of the Spiritans in the Local Church but it should be undertaken for reasons that are clearly articulated and in line with our Spiritan charism.

A model of mission dependent solely on external financial support, often through the personal contacts of the individual missionary in his home country, has been replaced by a situation in which many, if not all of the members of a circumscription, originate today either from the circumscription itself or from countries where such support is effectively impossible. This calls for skills and creativity in working towards financial self-sustainability at the level of the circumscription, involving internal solidarity among its members, which often places an enormous burden on the Superior and

¹¹⁷ SRL 25

¹¹⁸ cf. NWNW, 23

Bursar of the circumscription to ensure the basic needs for survival. It also significantly shapes the missionary project of the circumscription as, effectively, it is not possible to reach out to new peripheries of poverty in the absence of adequate resources to do so.

The new priorities for contemporary Spiritan mission outlined in recent General Chapter documents also call for new skills on the part of the missionary – in the areas of development, inter-religious dialogue, reconciliation and peace-building, advocacy for human rights, etc. – which are generally not provided in the current initial formation programmes (see below). In addition, access to mission, so to speak, has changed significantly of recent years: missionary Congregations can no longer freely choose where to send their members but are often dependent on strict immigration regulations which exclude or limit the presence of missionaries and require them to have professional qualifications which will enable them to be of service to the country; missionaries must live and work at times where their presence is more tolerated than accepted, which calls for a spirituality of humble service, quite different to the “master-builder” of the past.

1.3.2.2 FORMATION FOR CONTEMPORARY MISSION

The recent document *New Wine in New Wineskins*, published by CICLESAL, is especially relevant in regard to the challenges of religious missionary formation today. Reflecting on the effectiveness of the different religious formation programmes across the globe in the context of the renewal of Religious Life envisaged by the Second Vatican Council, the document notes the following: “Despite every effort and commitment to formation, it seems that these have not reached the point of transforming the hearts of individuals. One gets the impression that the formation process is more informative than performative. The result is that a certain fragility remains within individuals in both their existential convictions and journey of faith. This produces a minimal psychological and spiritual aptitude which consequently prevents them from generously and courageously living their proper mission in the areas of cultural dialogue and insertion at both the social and ecclesial levels.”¹¹⁹

Our experience in the General Council effectively corroborates this view of the Congregation for Consecrated Life and we see indications of the fragility mentioned in our own context: an inability on the part of some young members to embrace wholeheartedly a model of Church and a cultural reality significantly different to those with which they are familiar in their own country; a difficulty to accept willingly an appointment outside the areas they indicate in their personal preferences; an over-dependency on social media that sometimes militates against truly settling into a new culture, a new people and a new language; an identification of one's personal worth with specialized studies and the acquisition of post-graduate university qualifications; a tendency to leave one's circumscription of appointment at the end of the initial six-year period or beforehand, either to return to their circumscription of origin or to pursue further studies. The document *New Wines in New Wineskins* stresses the essential need for an integrated approach to formation – involving, spiritual, intellectual, communitarian, apostolic and human – throughout the different stages of formation. The new Ratio Fundamentalibus Institutionis Sacerdotalis, *The Gift of The Priestly Vocation* (2016), emphasizes in particular the importance of human formation: “For priestly formation, the importance of human formation cannot be

¹¹⁹ NWNW, 12

sufficiently emphasized. Indeed the holiness of a priest is built upon it and depends, in large part, upon the authenticity and maturity of his humanity.”¹²⁰

One of the difficulties throughout our various Spiritan formation programmes across the globe is that the affiliation to universities, both for philosophy and theology, has not only increased significantly the length of the overall time in formation (confreres leaving on Mission Appointment are often now 30 years of age or older) but more importantly has resulted in academic demands relegating the other essential aspects of formation (spiritual, human, communitarian, apostolic) to a very secondary position. In today's world of violence, secularization and diminished institutional Church credibility, there is clearly a need for deep human and spiritual resources on the part of every Spiritan missionary, wherever he is called to minister, which includes the ability to humbly accept one's limitations and mistakes and to learn from them.

In addition, the process of individual discernment, which is an essential service to the individual concerned and to the Congregation, presents specific challenges to us today as Spiritans for a variety of reasons: large formation communities with too few trained formators; the presence in the formation community of formators, academic staff or spiritual directors, who do not necessarily share the vision of Spiritan formation articulated in the Guide for Spiritan Formation; the fact that different stages of formation within a particular Union of Circumscriptions often take place in different countries with the result that files are not necessarily passed on and decisions on the suitability of a particular candidate for Spiritan Life are left to those responsible for a future stage. Experience has clearly shown that the period of PME, prepared, accompanied and evaluated, is crucial to the discernment process. As stated by the Spiritan Rule of Life,¹²¹ this should (normally) be in a culture different to that of the student and last for a period of two years. A recent survey on formation carried out by the General Council, which now assists in the travel and language costs involved in PME, revealed that the majority still do their PME at home, usually for a period of one year, and often in a setting which gives no direct experience of intercultural mission and its challenges.

A matter of particular concern is the diminishing number and aging profile of Brothers in the Congregation. They represent only about 4% of the membership of the Congregation today. Despite the insistence of recent General Chapters on the need to actively promote the vocation of the Spiritan Brother (Bagamoyo 2.12) and to give the Brother's vocation a fresh impetus (Torre d'Aguilha 6.16, Introduction), the efforts of successive General Councils have not been successful in this regard. Although we have a small number of well-qualified younger Brothers in different fields today, new vocations to the Brotherhood are rare and this essential element of the membership of the Spiritan family is non-existent in several circumscriptions. Strategies to promote the vocation to the Brotherhood by the General Council will not be effective unless there is a conviction at the local level, and particularly at the level of the leadership, of the importance of the Spiritan Brother to our life and mission in the contemporary world.

1.3.2.3 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITY LIVING

Although we are called through the richness of our cultural diversity to witness to a “new quality of human solidarity, surpassing individualism, ethnocentrism and nationalism,” the concerns shared at successive meetings of new superiors and at the

¹²⁰ The Gift of Priestly Vocation, 63

¹²¹ SRL 136.1

2016 Enlarged General Council indicate the presence in our midst of mistrust and prejudice, often based on national, racial or ethnic grounds. Such considerations can affect *inter alia* the process of election of superiors, the composition of the circumscription council, the inclusion of confreres in decision-making processes in the circumscription, the sharing of responsibilities in community, equity in access to financial resources, and the transition from one leadership team to another, with serious negative consequences for our internal life and for our community witness. While conflicts are inevitable in any human family, and in a sense need to happen if we are to live sincere and honest relationships, we are called to build truly intercultural communities, places where we are genuinely at home together, where there are no “insiders” and “outsiders,” where no single culture dominates but where each one’s cultural identity finds expression and affirmation, where the dignity of difference is cherished and enriches our common vision.

Intercultural living, beyond mere multicultural living, which has been described as “living together separately,” is a challenge for all international missionary congregations like ours. Experts in this area point out that simple goodwill is not sufficient to achieve this end; it requires commitment and conversion on the part of every member in the community, together with the willingness to acquire the appropriate skills. Many of our misunderstandings and tensions originate in our different cultural perspectives. If a truly intercultural community is to be gradually constructed, we must be committed to a journey of mutual discovery of the each other’s culture, through dialogue and personal study, and to working together to create what is effectively a new culture – in our case, a new Spiritan culture¹²²- where everyone is at home. Those entrusted with leadership have an essential role to play in promoting mutual trust and respect, unveiling unacceptable attitudes and behaviours, and facilitating possibilities for meaningful dialogue and for the acquisition of the appropriate skills for intercultural living. Likewise today experience of genuine intercultural living needs to be fostered in our houses of formation, with the aid of trained personnel where available.

1.3.2.4 MOVEMENT OF PERSONNEL

At the Bagamoyo General Chapter, the General Council (2012-2020) was directed as a matter of urgency to send confreres “to those circumscriptions at risk of disappearing and whose activities are a priority, after having made a careful assessment of the needs of these circumscriptions.”¹²³ This challenge was addressed from the outset by the General Council with new Mission Appointments being made systematically to circumscriptions like Algeria [4], Amazonia [6], Alto Juruá [4], Pakistan, PANO (for Mauritania), Australia (for Papua New Guinea) and Ethiopia, in understanding with the relevant Superiors. The General Council also introduced a requirement for every confrere seeking a Mission Appointment to include among his stated preferences at least one of the priorities of the Congregation, clarified annually by the General Council, which certainly facilitated the above process.

However, an analysis of the Mission Appointments over the period 1998-2018 shows that, although several appointments were made over the course of the years to these and other fragile circumscriptions, the majority of the confreres involved left the circumscriptions of appointment after a relatively short number of years of ministry there. The reasons are many – request for their services in their home circumscription,

¹²² Bagamoyo, 4.1

¹²³ Bagamoyo, 1.16

specialized studies, inability to adjust to the life and mission of the new circumscription, personal problems which necessitated their withdrawal from the circumscription etc., – but overall it reveals an extraordinary level of mobility within the Congregation which effectively undermines the continuity and the consolidation of its priority mission commitments. Some who were sent by the circumscription for specialized studies for its future benefit never actually returned there. A similar level of mobility is sometimes reflected at the level of the local circumscription where confreres are transferred from one ministry to another within a relatively short space of time to the detriment of the continuity of some of its undertakings and of its responsibility to the people we serve. Here too, confreres who received specialized training for particular positions in the circumscription, often sponsored financially by another circumscription, are not infrequently employed in other tasks on their return or soon afterwards.

In a sense, the matter is further complicated by the fact that, following an initial experience in a circumscription of Mission Appointment, confreres are rarely available afterwards for appointment to another circumscription in urgent need of personnel. While the interchange of experienced personnel between circumscriptions to address priority mission needs would contribute significantly to the stability and growth of fragile circumscriptions, contemporary Spiritan culture appears to effectively identify missionary activity outside one's circumscription with the early years of ministry and subsequent appointments afterwards, where they occur, are generally confined to parish ministry in countries in Europe, North America, Australia and South Africa.

Although the recruitment and appointment of experienced confreres to another circumscription is currently a decision left to the major superiors concerned in accordance with SRL 159.3, a possible way forward in view of strengthening our fragile priority commitments, might be for the General Council (2012-2020) to be given more direct responsibility in this area following SRL 159.1 and 159.2. At a general level, there would seem to be a need to stress clearly and unambiguously from the beginning of the formation process that availability for mission, a readiness to go wherever we are sent by the Congregation, is a basic characteristic of the Spiritan calling.¹²⁴

1.3.2.5 LEADERSHIP: SHARING A COMMON VISION

In a decentralized Congregation, such as ours, effective administration and animation throughout the Congregation depend to a very large extent on the degree to which those in leadership at all levels, in particular the General Council and the Major Superiors, share a common vision. There are several factors that weaken our current capacity in that regard:

Firstly, the fact that there is no structural link between local circumscription Chapters and the General Chapter effectively means that local issues tend to take primary, if not exclusive, importance at local Chapters. At present, for instance, a number of circumscription Chapters take place either in the months immediately preceding or succeeding a General Chapter which precludes any direct influence of the General Chapter on their decisions. In addition, it is effectively a matter for a local Chapter itself to decide whether or not to take into account the orientations of the previous General Chapter in its deliberations and decisions. A possible way forward would be to require every circumscription to hold a special Chapter or General Assembly within

¹²⁴ SRL 25

a year or two after a General Chapter, specifically to apply the General Chapter at the local level. Alternatively, as in some other Congregations, all regular circumscription Chapters could take place within the first two years or so after the General Chapter with a view to applying its orientations and decisions within the circumscription. This would require two structural changes, namely the extension of the mandate of the Major Superior to four years renewable, rather than three as at present, and a change in the periodicity of Chapters from six to eight years. Individual extensions of the current mandates of some Superiors would obviously be necessary to ensure the future alignment of the local Chapter with the General Chapter.

Secondly, the process for the nomination of Superior in a number of circumscriptions faces certain challenges - the limited capacity for leadership among the members in the case of some small circumscriptions; the divisive nature of elections in circumscriptions where there are tensions among its members; an inadequate discernment process with Superiors being chosen for ulterior motives rather than in view of their leadership ability. Based on the experience of the present General Council during our time in office, we would recommend consultation (SRL 165.1) rather than election (165.2) for the choice of all circumscription Superiors in the Congregation. In addition, unsatisfactory handovers from the outgoing to the incoming leadership team, not infrequent at present, can seriously affect continuity in dealing with important matters to the detriment of the life and work of the circumscription.

Thirdly, despite the fact that the provision of training for new leadership has been considered essential at successive General Chapters,¹²⁵ no effective way has been found to date to address this necessity. The current practice of a two-week session with the General Council for all new Superiors within a year or so after their appointment, is universally appreciated as particularly valuable but also limited in this regard. While some experience in the ministry of leadership is deemed essential in order to derive maximum benefit from this meeting, the reality is that confreres generally need preliminary training before assuming their function which often commences as soon as they are elected. In addition, the need for a follow-up session with the General Council, perhaps a year after the initial meeting, has often been recommended by Superiors in the light of their experience but would not be easy to organize within the present timeframe and schedule of the General Council.

1.3.2.6 UNIONS OF CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS

Inaugurated by the General Council in November 2006, and introduced into the Spiritan Rule of Life at the Bagamoyo Chapter,¹²⁶ Unions of Circumscriptions, formerly designated by the term Region, are not legislative entities but structures that promote and express “communio,” enabling Superiors of circumscriptions in the same geographical region, or of the same linguistic area, to collaborate together for the better fulfilment of the leadership task entrusted to them and their individual councils, and for the advancement of Spiritan mission in the region or area concerned. Unions have several potential positive contributions to make to the Congregation and its mission: they promote and facilitate collaboration and solidarity between the member circumscriptions, particularly in the areas of formation and mission; they provide a forum for exchanges of opinion and common reflection on questions concerned with Spiritan life and mission with a view to a common position on certain important local or regional issues; they play a valuable role in engaging issues of concern to the

¹²⁵ e.g. Bagamoyo, 2.10.2

¹²⁶ SRL 184

worldwide Spiritan family especially in the preparation of Enlarged General Councils and General Chapters. For the above reasons, it is the conviction of the present General Council that all circumscriptions should belong to a Union.

Within the Congregation, in practice, some Unions function much more effectively than others. To a large extent their ability to do so depends on the capacity and willingness of the Major Superiors to collaborate with each other; tensions between Superiors, sometimes with historical roots relating to a period before the Union was created, or due to the relative size and perceived importance of the different member circumscriptions, undermine the potential of the Union for collaboration and solidarity. Generally speaking, Unions are disconnected from the membership of the individual circumscriptions, who have little sense of belonging to this wider entity and for whom local issues take clear precedence. A number of initiatives could possibly make an important contribution to moving matters forward: the production of statutes for the Union, where these do not already exist; common mission projects, whether internal or external to the Union;¹²⁷ the organization by the Union of the annual period of preparation for final profession and of regular meetings of the young confreres within the member circumscriptions; the identification of essential needs within the Union and the corresponding designation and training of appropriate confreres to meet these needs (Canon Law, JPIC, protection of minors, financial management, formation) on the understanding that these confreres are then at the service of all the member circumscriptions. In all cases it is important to ensure that the agenda for regular Union meetings is not simply confined to formation matters, as is the practice in some instances today.

Given the present situation, where some Unions are struggling to function effectively, and indeed where some circumscriptions still do not belong to any Union despite strong encouragement from the General Council to do so, it would not seem appropriate at this juncture to move towards attributing a juridical status to Unions pending their ongoing evolution. It should be stressed, however, that although decisions taken at the Union level require ratification by the individual member circumscription Councils,¹²⁸ any refusal to do so requires very serious reasons. In this regard, perhaps the General Chapter might consider certain Union decisions, such as those pertaining to the identification and training of key personnel (formators, safeguarding officer etc.), as well as the approval of the annual budget for the formation houses belonging to the Union, as exempt from this requirement. Admittedly, there may be practical difficulties involved for individual circumscriptions in implementing such Union decisions.

1.3.2.7 FINANCIAL LIMITATIONS

While many of the older Provinces are facing serious challenges in providing for the care of retired and ill confreres and, in the absence of sufficient income, are drawing on their reserves to do so, several of the newer circumscriptions are struggling to meet everyday needs and are unable to envisage any new missionary initiative for the circumscription that involves additional financial resources. Despite the fact that the Spiritan Rule of Life,¹²⁹ and indeed Canon Law¹³⁰, require Bishops to enter into a contractual arrangement with the Congregation for works entrusted to its care, agreements which specify *inter alia* the details of the financial support given to the

¹²⁷ cf. SRL 161.4

¹²⁸ SRL 184

¹²⁹ SRL 234

¹³⁰ Canon 681 §2

Spiritans involved, in practice a number of Bishops are still reluctant to sign such contracts with the Congregation. In some cases, particularly where Spiritans were the founders of the local Church, they appeal to history and tradition to justify their stance; in others there is a lingering perception based on an outdated missionary paradigm that missionaries should contribute financially to the local Church rather than draw on its limited resources.

Our fidelity to our charism to reach out to new peripheries of poverty is seriously compromised by the lack of financial resources in many circumscriptions; the need to accept commitments that provide income understandably predominates in order to ensure a minimum for survival. A fund at the level of the Congregation specifically to enable circumscriptions to undertake new initiatives in favour of the poor would seem necessary; the Apostolic Projects Fund was intended for this purpose but the present annual income from its investment is radically inadequate. A recent recommendation from the Financial Committee of the General Council that 80% of the annual contributions to this fund be disbursed in conjunction with the annual interest would effectively make more money available for the needs of evangelization each year but would have the disadvantage of only minimally increasing the fund itself, contrary to the spirit of Bagamoyo.¹³¹

In addition to ordinary costs involved in the administration of the circumscription, formation expenses often place an enormous burden on a young circumscription. It is not unusual in our international houses of formation to find fees for students unpaid by some of the participating circumscriptions, at times for several years, which gives rise to tensions between the superiors involved, embarrassment for the students concerned, and an impossible situation for the bursars of the houses in question. The limited ability of the poorer circumscriptions to accept new vocations effectively means that finance is determining the future diversity of our membership, which is an unacceptable situation. It would seem urgent to have new criteria for the distribution of the Cor Unum Fund that would ensure greater equity in the Congregation; this would mean that, in a spirit of inter-circumscription solidarity, and in line with SRL 21, those who have benefitted from the Cor Unum Fund for a long period would receive less than at present, or eventually leave, with a view to the support and growth of the newer and poorer circumscriptions. The present General Council has struggled to make adjustments to the current system of distribution, which it deemed necessary in the interests of fairness, within the limits imposed by previous General Chapters.

It is important to take note of the fact that the annual contributions to the Generalate Administration (Cor Unum Fund, Personal Contribution, Apostolic Projects Fund etc.), which come principally from the older circumscriptions in the global North, are declining and will continue to do so into the future. *Inter alia*, this underscores the urgent necessity of continuing to work towards self-sufficiency at the local level, where possible at the level of each individual community, of using and managing our resources as efficiently as possible, and of having competent confreres in charge of our finances, aided if possible by professional personnel. Lack of competence and/or failure to supervise constructions, for instance, has often resulted in a poor use of limited resources and ongoing issues of mismanagement - and regrettably at times of misappropriation - continue to erode our inadequate funds.

It is hoped that the new Development Office established at the Generalate, in conjunction with the existing support offices [Kibanda, SOMA (USA), IODO (Ireland), Sol Sem Fronteiras (Portugal)], will be of assistance in enabling

¹³¹ Bagamoyo, 5.8

circumscriptions to access funding in order to improve the quality of life of the people they serve and to avail of the potential income for the administrative costs involved in the projects to support the confreres engaged in these works.

1.3.2.8 ROLE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The role of the General Council in the government and animation of the Congregation may be summarized as follows: it watches over the work of the circumscriptions and their fidelity to the Spiritan charism, while making due allowance for subsidiarity; it works for the growth of the Congregation promoting new initiatives in mission, safeguarding its unity, while respectful of diversity, fostering solidarity between circumscriptions and promoting the Congregation's international character.¹³² In practice, its effectiveness in carrying out the responsibility entrusted to it is largely dependent on the collaboration of the circumscription superiors and their councils. Canonical visitation to the circumscriptions¹³³ and the subsequent report, for instance, have limited value in the absence of an accepted mechanism for follow-up, as it is a matter for the local leadership to decide whether or not to implement the Council's recommendations. Similarly, the animation plan requested by the Bagamoyo Chapter and developed by the General Council¹³⁴ was successful to the extent that it was embraced and promoted locally in each circumscription, which varied considerably across the Congregation.

In a sense, the Congregation functions as a confederation of independent entities where the role of the General Council is perceived at times to be limiting the freedom of individual circumscriptions. While this is not in line with the vision of the Congregation outlined in SRL 21 whereby "as members of one Spiritan family, we take upon ourselves in solidarity, responsibility for the Congregation's projects and priorities," it is difficult to see an effective way forward in the absence of a change of mentality across the Congregation. There has been an increasing call of recent years for greater centralization in the Congregation with a view to safeguarding its unity and inter-circumscription solidarity, but the Bagamoyo Chapter, following the intuition of Francis Libermann, who was opposed to excessive centralization,¹³⁵ opted to stress the exercise to the full of the current authority of the General Council ascribed to it in the Spiritan Rule of Life.¹³⁶ However, the direct intervention of the General Council into the life of the circumscriptions in certain exceptional circumstances (serious difficulties due to personnel, finances and especially leadership), requested by the Chapter,¹³⁷ is in practice limited by Canon Law which recognises the right of the Major Superior to the office he holds. The alternative, namely the removal of the Major Superior by the General Council,¹³⁸ involves a canonical process, which is subject to appeal, and runs the risk of destabilizing the circumscription and creating division among its members.

As already stated, close collaboration between the circumscription superiors and the General Council is vital to the functioning of a decentralized Congregation. Canonically, each of the different instances of authority - the Major Superior and his council, the General Council and the relevant Vatican dicastery - have different and

¹³² SRL 198.1

¹³³ SRL 196.3

¹³⁴ Bagamoyo, 2.10

¹³⁵ N.D. XI, 97-98

¹³⁶ Bagamoyo, 6.3

¹³⁷ Bagamoyo, 6.4

¹³⁸ SRL 248.2.6

complementary roles, none of which can substitute for the other. Hence, for instance, in the case of addressing situations of irregularity in the circumscription, the initial steps towards eventual dismissal of a member must be taken by the Major Superior,¹³⁹ the decree of dismissal is issued by the General Council on the basis of the dossier submitted by the superior and his council, and this decree is subsequently confirmed by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.¹⁴⁰ In practice, for a variety of reasons, circumscription superiors are often reluctant to take the necessary initial steps, preferring that, in this particular case, the General Council effectively micro-manages the situation and, as a result, cases of irregularity continue unresolved for years. It is of particular concern that cases of financial irregularity and misappropriation continue to emerge in the Congregation despite the concerted efforts of the General Council to address and put an end to such malpractice in the spirit of the Bagamoyo Chapter.¹⁴¹ A return to more centralized authority on the part of the General Council would be largely ineffective in a Congregation, where today even the limited decisions reserved to the General Council (e.g. undertaking new commitments requiring added investment in finance and personnel,¹⁴² mortgaging the property of the Congregation to obtain bank loans¹⁴³) are often disregarded, unless sanctions on Superiors for disobedience were introduced, which I believe would be contrary to the spirit of the Congregation founded by Libermann.

It is the conviction of the present General Council that the future of our Spiritan Congregation lies in a sense of collective ownership and responsibility for our common life and mission, beyond the concerns and interests of each confrere, each community and each individual circumscription. In this spirit, animated and enthused by the marvellous spiritual legacy we have inherited from our Founders and the inspirational witness of those who have gone before us, and drawing on the extraordinary resources with which God continues to bless us, we can truly respond creatively to the needs of evangelization of our times in fidelity to the vision of Claude Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann.

¹³⁹ SRL 245.1.6

¹⁴⁰ Canons 695-701

¹⁴¹ Bagamoyo 5.1, 5.4.5 and the revised SRL 267.

¹⁴² SRL 248.3.4

¹⁴³ SRL 248.5.5

II. SPIRITAN MISSION ACROSS THE WORLD: INDIVIDUAL UNIONS AND CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS

2.1 AFRICA AND THE ISLANDS

2.1.1 UNION OF CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS OF ANGLOPHONE WEST AFRICA (UCAWA)

UCAWA could be considered as a Union of Unions. It comprises of the circumscriptions that make up the Union of Circumscriptions of West Africa (UCWA): Gambia, Ghana and Sierra-Leone and the Union of Spiritan Circumscriptions of Nigeria (USCN) – Nigeria North East, Nigeria North West, Nigeria South East and Nigeria South West.

The area of collaboration in the Union is the proprietorship of the Spiritan International School of Theology, Attakwu-Enugu, Nigeria (SIST). UCAWA's role in SIST includes,

- the establishment of the Statutes of SIST and the approval of its amendments;
- the appointment of the members of the SIST Governing Council;
- the choice of the Rector of SIST before his formal appointment by the Governing Council;
- the vetting and proposal of formators to be appointed to SIST;
- the funding and maintenance of SIST.

The superiors of UCAWA meet every year in the respective member circumscriptions. The Rector of SIST is invited to the meeting during which he gives a report on the institute. The host superior becomes the coordinator for the year until the next meeting. One of the Superiors is asked to take the minutes of the meeting.

The Union hosts the bi-annual Program for the Ongoing Formation of Formators and Missionaries that takes place at SIST. The program was initiated by the Spiritan Conference of the Circumscriptions of Africa and the Islands (SCCAI).

UCAWA has yet to draw up its Statutes. A committee has been created for this purpose.

UCAWA has sought to initiate other areas of collaboration that are yet to be followed with concrete actions. They include:

- the harmonisation of formation programs in the Unions, making sure that the curriculum in UCWA philosophy house (Ejisu) and USCN philosophy house (Isienu) prepare the students adequately for theology studies at SIST;
- the organisation of a meeting of brothers in the union in order to give them a sense of belonging and involve them in the promotion of vocation to brotherhood in the Union.

2.1.2 UNION OF CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS OF WEST AFRICA (UCWA)

UCWA is comprised of three circumscriptions: The Gambia Group, the Province of Ghana-Benin and the Province of Sierra Leone-Liberia. The Union was created on Pentecost Sunday 2009 following the suppression of the former West African

Province. The Union has drawn up its governing statutes which are meant to guarantee unity, cooperation among member circumscriptions, particularly, in the common formation and mission projects. The Superiors of UCWA circumscriptions form the Council of the Union which appoints one of them as Co-coordinator on a two-year rotational mandate. His specific role is to convene and chair Union meetings. UCWA meets once a year, usually in the month of May.

Social, Economic, Political and Ecclesial Context of UCWA Countries

The Countries of The Gambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone belong to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS),¹⁴⁴ a regional group of fifteen countries, which was founded on 28 May 1975. ECOWAS member countries “*have both cultural and geopolitical ties with shared common economic interest.*”¹⁴⁵ The aim of ECOWAS is to promote co-operation and integration in all fields such as economic, social-cultural, energy, agriculture, religious, etc. Therefore, ECOWAS mission is to raise the standard of living of its people, foster cordial relationships, and accelerate sustainable development of the region.

The prevailing peaceful atmosphere in UCWA countries is, to a certain extent, an outcome of the regional social-political-economic cooperation. These countries have democratically elected presidential and parliamentary governance in a multi-party system. Particularly noteworthy in Sierra Leone and the Gambia is the peaceful co-existence between the minority Christians and the majority Muslims. The Gambia population is 95% Muslim while that of Sierra Leone is 78% Muslim. Yet there is a very strong religious tolerance and good inter-faith relations. UCWA countries provide a very good context for inter-religious dialogue and fraternal relations between peoples of different religions.

There are, however, high levels of poverty and youth unemployment and a growing gap between the rich and the poor. The unemployment of youth together with the disparity between rich and poor is a major threat to the prevailing peace and security in UCWA countries.

The Catholic Church is very active and dynamic especially in the areas of education and health. Spiritans have been promoting quality education which has benefitted the people of UCWA countries, including many who have held important roles in society. However, illiteracy remains a major challenge, especially in the rural communities and therefore this could be identified as an important area for our Spiritan missionary outreach.

UCWA Today

There are two principal areas of collaboration in the Union: mission and formation.

According to the statutes of UCWA (11.1 and 12.2), the Union has two common missions in Benin and Liberia for which they are supposed to provide both financial and personnel resources. However, in practical terms there is no significant collaboration in regard to those two mission projects. The mission in Benin is placed under the leadership of the Province of Ghana while that of Liberia is under the Province of Sierra Leone.

With regard to formation, the Union is responsible for the 1st cycle formation community (philosophy) at the Spiritan University College (SUC), in Ghana. In 2012

¹⁴⁴ ECOWAS is made up of 15 Countries: : Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.ecowas.int/member-states/>

the GC made a decision to create a common Novitiate in Sierra Leone for UCWA circumscriptions, effective from 2013. However, the project was not realized due to a lawsuit filed in a Sierra Leonean court challenging the ownership of the plot of land where the Novitiate structures have been partially built. Due to no lasting solution in sight and, in understanding with the Superiors of the Union, in September 2019 the GC was compelled to revoke the previous permission given to UCWA circumscriptions to open a common Novitiate in Sierra Leone. The Union intends to look for a more suitable place elsewhere. UCWA circumscriptions are also members of the Union of Circumscriptions of Anglophone West Africa (UCAWA), which is responsible for the Spiritan International School of Theology (SIST). Therefore, theology students from UCWA circumscriptions are normally sent to SIST. In the case of novices, they are currently sent to either Awo-omamma or Aliade Novitiates in Nigeria (belonging to USCN) or sometimes to other novitiates on the Continent.

With the support of the General Council, UCWA has one confrere who has received special training in the area of Safeguarding of Minors and Vulnerable Adults. His role is to animate confreres in matters of safeguarding and to provide technical assistance whenever an issue of a safeguarding nature occurs.

Strengths and Challenges

- The Union is blessed with a youthful membership working in places where our charism finds full expression. However, the animation and accompaniment of this youthful energy is largely dependent on collaboration among the three leaders of the Union which is not functioning well at present. Communication between Superiors does not flow and therefore impedes collaboration and efficiency. A big challenge ahead is working towards a greater sense of mutual trust and solidarity in all areas of the life and the mission objectives as stipulated in their governing statutes.
- The Union is also blessed with a good number of vocations, especially so in Ghana and Sierra Leone. Their challenge is a lack of adequate human and financial resources to train students and to give sufficient support to common formation programmes. For example, all the staff members at SUC are from the Province of Ghana. The circumscriptions of the Gambia and Sierra Leone do not have trained formators. Therefore, at Ejisu, internationality is not lived or experienced by the formators.
- Distances between circumscriptions and corresponding cost of airfares also limit the possibility of regular meetings among the Union Superiors.

2.1.2.1 THE GAMBIA GROUP

REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

AREA: 11,000 KM²

POPULATION: 2,348,000

BIRTH RATE: 39‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 68‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 62 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 4.2%, MUSLIMS 95.3%,

UNAFFILIATED < 0.1%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 0.3%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 42.0%

GDP PER CAPITA: 1,516 USD/HAB

The Gambia is the smallest country on mainland Africa. She gained independence on 18 February 1965. Between 1982-1989, the Gambia and Senegal formed a short-lived federation (Senegambia). In 1991 the two nations signed a friendship and cooperation treaty. A military coup in 1994 overthrew the President but in 1997 the country returned to a civilian rule. The Gambia is a sovereign Republic with a multiparty

system of government headed by a President. The Gambia is a member of several International Organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations Organization, the Commonwealth of Nations, African Unity, and the Organization of Islamic Conference. The economy of the country is heavily dependent on tourism mainly along the coastal region. The interior of the country remains largely underdeveloped and dependent on small-scale agricultural production.

Spiritan Presence in The Gambia

The Gambia Group has its origins with the arrival of the first Spiritans in 1848. Until very recently the Spiritan communities and works in the District of the Gambia were staffed almost entirely by members of the Province of Ireland. It was a District until 2002 when it became a Region of the West African Province. With the reorganization of the West African Province in 2009, The Gambia Region was established as an autonomous circumscription and a member of the Union of the Circumscriptions of West Africa (UCWA) alongside Ghana and Sierra Leone.

Statistics: The Gambia Group has a total number of 16 members: 1 bishop, 12 ordained priests and 4 students in initial formation. Non-Gambians by appointment are 8 (from Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone) and 1 student from Vietnam on Pastoral Missionary experience (PME). The Group has 4 ordained confreres by origin: 3 on mission *ad intra* and 1 on mission *ad extra*.

Mission Priorities: The Group's mission priorities are parish based (seven parishes). They are involved in parish pastoral care, working for integral community development, education, and inter-faith dialogue.

Strengths

- There is a very good rapport with the local diocesan administration, the clergy, the religious communities and especially the Muslim community.
- Spiritans in The Gambia are highly respected for having made a valuable contribution in the establishment of the local Church. It is not surprising that the first indigenous bishop of Banjul is a Spiritan.
- The Group has a commendable commitment to Basse and Bansang (up country) where mission as witness and inter-religious dialogue is essential.
- The Group has a solid structure of animation and hospitality. The leadership team has done well in providing a vision for the Group and has animated the confreres to develop a sense of collective ownership of the circumscription and its missionary project.

Challenges

- Animation for Spiritan vocation continues to be a slow process in The Gambia (only 4 ordained priests and 4 students until now).
- The Group remains financially fragile. There are insufficient local resources to support initial/ongoing formation and the missionary commitments of the Group. The circumscription needs close accompaniment from the General Council, especially in the areas of animation, finance and personnel.

Vision for the Future

The circumscription should redefine the future Spiritan presence and mission in The Gambia taking into account the changing face of the diocese (growing number of

diocesan clergy). Confreres should commit themselves to this important missionary audit and work out a comprehensive strategic plan for the Group.

2.1.2.2 GHANA PROVINCE (INCL. BENIN)

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

AREA: 239,000 KM²

POPULATION: 30,418,000

BIRTH RATE: 30‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 52‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 64 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 73.6%, MUSLIMS 17.5%,
UNAFFILIATED 3.8%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,
FOLK RELIGIONS 4.9%, OTHER 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 71.5%

GDP PER CAPITA: 4,096 USD/HAB

REPUBLIC OF BENIN

AREA: 115,000 KM²

POPULATION: 11,801,000

BIRTH RATE: 36‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 96‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 61 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 52.2%, MUSLIMS 24.6%,
UNAFFILIATED 5.2%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,
FOLK RELIGIONS 17.9%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 32.9%

GDP PER CAPITA: 2,061 USD/HAB

The Circumscription

A group of Irish Spiritans who left Nigeria after the Nigerian civil war started the Spiritan mission in Ghana in 1971. The mission evolved from being a District (1978) to a member of the West African Foundation (1979) which subsequently became the West African Province (2001) and now the Province of Ghana-Benin (2009).

Membership Statistics: The Province has a total number of 145 members: One Archbishop, 110 ordained priests, 7 brothers and 18 students in initial formation. Non-Ghanaian confreres by appointment are 9 (from Kenya, Congo Brazzaville, Sierra Leone, DR Congo and Nigeria). 48 confreres by origin are on *mission ad extra*.

Missionary Engagements: The Province has a number of pastoral commitments such as:

- **Parish Ministry:** currently, Spiritans are ministering in fifteen parishes spread in ten dioceses. Many of the parishes are located in deprived rural areas of primary evangelization. The Province also manages three parishes in the Republic of Benin (1 parish in the Diocese of Porto Novo and 2 parishes in the Diocese of Natitingou).
- **Youth ministry** in the schools parishes.
- **Education:** The Province owns and manages secondary, technical, and tertiary education institutions (Libermann Senior High School, Sowodazim, Secondi-Takoradi Diocese, Western Region; Spiritan Academy, Adan Kwame, Archdiocese of Kumasi, Ashanti Region; Spiritan University College, Ejisu, Diocese of Konongo-Mampong).

Formation

- Philosophy is done at the Spiritan University College (SUC), a common project of UCWA, which offers a BA in philosophy and social sciences, and a diploma in philosophy and religious studies.
- The Province sends novices to the USCN novitiates in Nigeria.
- As UCWA member, theology students are sent to SIST, Nigeria and to other Spiritan international theology communities in Africa and outside.

Major Challenges

- The major challenge facing the Province is the financial constraints in the training of its students in formation and supporting confreres working in poorer and challenging missions.
- Community life, solidarity and sense of collective ownership of the Province also remains a challenge.
- There is a lack of adequately trained personnel as formators, lecturers, teachers, project and human resource managers.

Vision for the Future

- The Province is determined to build human capital: to give specialized training to confreres who will manage the circumscriptions' educational works, formation communities and other projects.
- The Province has a strategic plan, which among other things, aims to consolidate, stabilize and establish a solid Spiritan identity and missionary approach.
- There are plans to set up some income-generating projects for financial self-reliance and sustainability of the Province's life and works.
- With visionary leadership, the Province of Ghana is growing in hope and has a bright future as it prepares to mark the 50th anniversary of the Spiritan presence in Ghana in 2021.

2.1.2.3 SIERRA LEONE-LIBERIA PROVINCE

REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

AREA: 72,000 KM²

POPULATION: 7,813,000

BIRTH RATE: 34‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 110‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 54 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 20.4%, MUSLIMS 78.5%,
UNAFFILIATED 0.1%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,
FOLK RELIGIONS 0.8%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 32.4%

GDP PER CAPITA: 1,240 USD/HAB

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

AREA: 111,000 KM²

POPULATION: 4,937,000

BIRTH RATE: 33‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 74‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 64 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 86.2%, MUSLIMS 11.7%,
UNAFFILIATED 1.4%, HINDUS 0.1%, BUDDHISTS 0.1%,
FOLK RELIGIONS 0.6%, OTHER 0.1%, JEWS 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 42.9%

GDP PER CAPITA: 667 USD/HAB

The Circumscription

Spiritans arrived in Sierra Leone on 12 February 1864 from the then Senegambia. The group was led by a French confrere, Fr Edward Blanchet. Later, Irish and English confreres took over the mission from the French and the German confreres. It was a District of the Irish Province until 1998 when it became a Region of the West African Province. On Pentecost Sunday 31 May 2009, the Regional group became a Foundation and member of UCWA. In October 2014 the circumscription became the Province of Sierra Leone-Liberia. There is only one Spiritan community in Liberia at present.

The two neighboring countries of Sierra Leone and Liberia have experienced years of devastating civil wars, military rules, the Ebola outbreak and landslides. This unfortunate history has left behind a traumatized society. The Province itself has

faced its own share of damaging internal problems, including an apparent difficulty in leaving the past hurts behind and moving forward with a new sense of purpose.

Membership Statistics

The Province of Sierra Leone has a total number of 42 members: 36 ordained priests, 2 deacons, and 4 students in initial formation. Non-Sierra Leonean confreres by appointment are 4 (from Nigeria and Guinea Conakry). There are 13 confreres by origin on *mission ad extra*. 8 members by origin are in an irregular situation.

Mission

Sierra Leone and Liberia are two countries in need of missionaries. They have many opportunities for works that correspond with our Spiritan charism such as accompanying a people traumatized by years of civil wars and natural disasters. Other pastoral opportunities include youth ministry in a very young population, interreligious dialogue and community development initiatives. The local Church is making a big contribution to promote self-reliance. At present many parishes in Sierra Leone, especially those in the rural areas, cannot support themselves.

Confreres are engaged in parish ministry in Gerihun, Jaima-Sewafe, Holy Trinity Kenema, Holy Spirit Shrine Bo, St. Martin's Freetown, and St Paul's mission in the Archdiocese of Monrovia, Liberia, education, catechetical and development ministries.

Overall, the Province benefits from the rich Spiritan tradition and reputation in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The Spiritans are highly regarded by the local Church for their fruitful work of evangelization with over 155 years of Spiritan presence in Sierra Leone.

Strengths and Challenges

- The youthfulness of the Province's membership (with average age of 42) is a blessing and a promise of a brighter future. However, it is a major challenge for the circumscription to manage that energy. The Province lacks the necessary basics, such as leadership experience for effective and efficient animation of the circumscription and its mission priorities.
- Internal divisions, lack of financial transparency and accountability, and apparent inability to manage leadership transitions have weakened the life and mission of the circumscription. This unfortunate situation has damaged the otherwise good Spiritan image in the local Church.
- The Province has not been able to draw up a clear vision for its life and mission for the present and for the future.
- A number of construction projects initiated some years ago, including the building of a common Novitiate for UCWA and of a central house, have stalled. These projects, which involved a lot of money from the Congregation and donor agencies, remain unfinished and of poor workmanship. In each of the two cases mentioned above, the ownership of the land on which the buildings are constructed is disputed.
- The quality of community and prayer life in the Province is weak.

Vision for the Future

- The Leadership Team in collaboration with the GC and all members in the Province must draw up a Provincial strategic mission and financial plan that is based on the analysis of the needs of the Province, mission opportunities, human and financial resources.

- As a matter of urgency, the Province should put in place a policy for financial and material resource management and accountability.
- The accompaniment of students in initial formation, animation of confreres, nurturing of community and prayer life, inculcating the spirit of solidarity and ownership of the Province, need to be prioritized, with the close supervision of the General Council.
- The situation of irregular confreres needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

2.1.3 UNION OF CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS OF NIGERIA (USCN)

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

AREA: 924,000 KM ²	RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 46.9%, MUSLIMS 51.1%,
POPULATION: 200,964,000	UNAFFILIATED 0.4%, HINDUS < 0.1%,
BIRTH RATE: 38‰	BUDDHISTS < 0.1%, FOLK RELIGIONS 1.5%,
INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 102/100	OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.
LIFE EXPECTANCY: 54 YRS	ALPHABETISATION: 51.1%
	GDP PER CAPITA: 5,231 USD/HAB

With a population of 200 million inhabitants, Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa and seventh in the world.

Nigeria is a Federal Republic with 36 states including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The country enjoys democratic government since 1998, after several years of military dictatorship.

The country comprises of 250 ethnic groups and languages. Ethnic diversities play a significant role in Nigerian politics. While they represent a notable strength, they are also manipulated by politicians in order to influence policies.

Economically, Nigeria is the largest growing economy in Africa. Although the economy is highly dependent on oil revenue, the country has made giant strides in the development of agriculture, solid minerals, industries, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), natural gas, and tourism.

While Nigeria develops in the line of capitalism, one notices the growth of poverty of the masses. There is a strong disparity between the rich and the poor. Many workers and civil servants are not paid their salaries. The majority of the States say that they are not able to pay the basic salary of 30,000 Naira (75 Euro) decided by the Federal Government. The phenomenon of urbanization provokes significant movement from the villages to the cities, especially the youth, who go to the cities in quest for employment and education.

Insecurity has been a major source of concern. Over the past years, the country has witnessed a series of killings and kidnappings across the board. Priests and religious are not spared. The constant thread of the Fulani herdsmen has increased the tension between the North and the South and continues to generate mutual suspicion. The present government made the fight against corruption its major project. However, the result is far from convincing.

Disenchantment in the population with regard to injustice and inequality as regards access to power and resources among the different components of the federation has led to incessant calls for the restructuring of the country. Nationalist groups like IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra), Niger Delta Militants and others do not hesitate to call for the independence of their regions.

Nigeria is blessed with different religions, especially, African traditional religion, Christianity and Islam. At the same time, they constitute sources of tension due to the manipulation of religious for political strategies. Islamic fanaticism, particularly that of Boko Haram remains a great threat to peace in the country.

The Catholic Church has played a key role in promoting good governance in Nigeria. Initiatives are taken through different diocesan Justice Development and Peace Commissions/Caritas (JDPC). In every election, the Church was involved in conducting voter education, monitoring elections and even organized debates between candidates for various offices. In partnership with the government and other NGO's, the Church tries to educate people in the area of religious freedom and respect of human life, and recreate confidence in social and political institutions.

Spiritans Presence in Nigeria

Spiritans presence in Nigeria started with the arrival of Alsatian Spiritans in Onitsha on December 5, 1885, namely Fr Joseph Lutz, Fr Jacob Horne, Br Jean Gotto and Br Hermas Huck. The mission in the area grew so fast that the Superior General of the Holy Ghost Fathers, Fr. Emonet, asked Rome to erect the Prefecture of the Lower Niger . This was done in 1888 and entrusted to Fr. Lutz. He was succeeded by Fr. Alexandre Lejeune. In 1902, Fr. Joseph Shanahan, an Irish Spiritan, arrived to help Lejeune. He was later appointed Apostolic Vicar of the Lower Niger in 1920. This area, predominantly peopled by the Igbo, the Efik and Ibibios was later named as District of Nigeria East under Irish Spiritans and became the Province of Nigeria East in 1976.

In 1930, Bishop Shanahan invited German Spiritans who established a District in the area known as Makurdi, among the Tiv and Idoma peoples. With the departure of German missionaries during the Second World war in 1940, they were replaced by Spiritans from the English province who extended the mission to Yola in the early 1980s and to Jalingo in 1995 and Otuorkpo in 1996.

Spiritans from French Speaking Canada arrived later in 1947 and were assigned to the Prefecture of Benue. A separate Prefecture, Kabba was carved out in 1955 and entrusted to them, from where they reached out to the Igala, Yoruba and Igbira speaking peoples of both sides of the Niger and the Niger-Benue confluence of Lokoja in what has become dioceses of Idah and Lokoja. The Canadian Spiritans formed the District of Kabba. With the creation of new States in Nigeria, it became District of Kwara-Benue and in 1992, District of Kogi.

In 1983, the Province of Nigeria East became Province of Nigeria embracing the entire country with the districts of Makurdi and Kogi as autonomous circumscriptions within the boundaries of the province.

Recruitment of indigenous Spiritans in Makurdi District started in the late 1970's and in the District of Kogi in the early 1980's. Those recruited in both Districts professed into West African Foundation (WAF) that was made up of English West Africa: Ghana, Gambia Sierra Leone and the Districts of Makurdi and Kwara-Benue. However, in 1984, the District of Kwara-Benue started sending candidates to the Province of Nigeria.

Following the policy of regionalisation encouraged by the General Council after the General Chapter of Itaici, all the circumscriptions of Nigeria were unified into one Province of Nigeria in 2001 with four regions: Onitsha, Ekiti, Makurdi and Okura. The Province held its first chapter from 16 to 17 July 2002.

With the Province of Nigeria growing steadily to the point that it became the largest in the Congregation worldwide, there was need to change the status of the regions to Provinces and Foundations. The 2007 Provincial Chapter voted the motion for the possibility of restructuring the Nigerian Province. In 2010, the Province gave birth to two Provinces, Nigeria North East and Nigeria South East and two Foundations, Nigeria North West and Nigeria South West. In 2012, after the General Chapter at Bagamoyo, the Foundations of North West and South West were elevated to the status of Provinces. These four Provinces form the present Union of Spiritan Circumscriptions of Nigeria (USCN).

USCN Today

The major area of collaboration between the four Provinces of USCN is formation. They have in common two Novitiates, in Awo-omamma (Nigeria South East) and Aliade (Nigeria North East), and the Spiritan School of Philosophy, Isienu-Nsukka (Nigeria South East).

Each Province has a postulate, They share the Spiritan International School of Theology Attakwu-Enugu with other circumscriptions that make up UCAWA.

It is the responsibility of the Union to train and provide formators for the common formation communities.

USCN superiors meet once a year. The host superior becomes the coordinator for one year.

Challenges

- The Union is yet to have its statutes.
- USCN is yet to develop a common vision as regards formation at the different levels, especially in the common formation communities.
- Large number of students and lack of trained formators, especially at the Philosophy house, Isienu, militate against adequate accompaniment of students in accordance with the *Guide for Spiritan Formation*. USCN superiors are still reflecting on how to control the number of intakes in order to assure a reasonable ratio of the number of students to that of trained formators.
- Staffing the formation communities, especially the house of philosophy has been a great challenge. Presently, the majority of the formators are from one Province.
- More collaboration is needed in the area of students' holiday apostolic works and Period of Missionary Experience (PME).
- There is need for a common program for the Spiritan month for the preparation of final vows.
- Some of the circumscriptions have difficulties in meeting up with their financial obligations at the common formation communities.
- The circumscriptions need to strengthen their financial solidarity within the Union.

2.1.3.1 NIGERIA NORTH EAST PROVINCE

The Province covers the area of 13 dioceses, namely, Lafia, Otukpo, Jos, Pankshin, Shendam, Gboko, Katsina Ala, Makurdi, Bauchi, Jalingo, Kafanchan, Maiduguri, Yola.

The Province has 117 confreres of origin among whom 48 are appointed at home and 44 are on mission in other circumscriptions. 65 confreres are appointed to the province among whom are 5 confreres from outside.

Strengths

The majority of the confreres are involved in parish and school apostolates. Recently, the Province has been involved in working with internally displaced persons (IDPs) in collaboration with diocesan Justice Development and Peace Commissions. There is also an outreach to widows and vulnerable children.

The Province is committed to sending members on mission ad extra and collaborating with the wider missionary objectives and needs of the Congregation.

The Province has a postulate in Yola and houses one of the USCN Novitiates in Aliade. Vocations to the priestly/religious life within the region covered by the Province are abundant and there is widespread support within the local communities for young men and women who choose this way of life. The lay faithful as well as the Bishops are willing to collaborate with the Province.

The new Provincialate built in Makurdi serves as a reference point for the confreres.

Challenges

One of the principal challenges of the circumscription is to continue to create a common vision that unites all the members.

The Province currently lacks trained formators and lecturers who are willing to be part of the teams of USCN houses of formation.

The Province is situated in a zone plagued by the menaces of Boko Haram and Fulani Armed Herdsmen who maim and kill at will. Their main aim is to grab land and Islamize the region. This indeed has weakened and destabilized the region.

The Province has serious financial challenges and finds it difficult to meet up with her financial obligations towards the formation communities.

Confreres preparing for mission appointment are not well accompanied. They seem to be abandoned on their own. A good number of NNE confreres find it difficult to adapt and last in their areas of mission appointment. The growing number of those who have abandoned their missions or were sent home in the recent years is a great source of concern.

2.1.3.2 NIGERIA NORTH WEST PROVINCE

The Province of Nigeria North West covers the dioceses of Abuja, Idah, Ilorin, Kaduna, Kano, Kontagora, Lokoja, Minna, Sokoto and Zaria.

It has 60 confreres of origin among whom 24 are appointed at home and 15 are on mission in other circumscriptions. 47 confreres are appointed to the province, among whom 14 come from outside.

Strengths

The Province enjoys a good rapport with the local Church and a good reputation among the population. This is greatly due to the work done by French Canadian Spiritans and the ingenuity of the younger generation of Spiritans of the then Province of Nigeria and the present Province of Nigeria North West.

The Province is involved in 8 parishes spread in 4 dioceses. The parishes are well managed. Confreres distinguish themselves by their availability, inclusive style of animation, rich spiritual teachings and structural development of the parishes. They also transmit the Spiritan spirituality of devotion to the Holy Spirit and option for the poor. The Province is also involved in youth ministry at the Chaplaincy of the University of Ilorin in the Diocese of Ilorin.

The Humanitarian Centre Okura Saw-Mill is a typically Spiritan mission. It is managed by two confreres and provides shelter and education to orphans and street children. Special attention is given to people who are mentally sick as well as those who need spiritual healing.

The Province is also involved in the education apostolate. The Province established Holy Ghost College Okura, a co-education Secondary School where there are 120 Students. There is also the Spiritan Nursery-Primary School, Okura. Spiritan parishes have also started schools in different parishes. Prominent among them are St Patrick's Nursery/Primary School, Aya and St Theresa's Nursery/Primary School, Odomomoh. Two other schools are under construction in Sabon-Lugbe and Abejukolo.

The Postulate is situated at Okura while other levels of formation are in common with USCN.

Challenges

Tensions and divisions among confreres of different ethnic backgrounds have undermined to some extent the effectiveness of the Province. The new Provincial Leadership Team is faced with the challenge of strengthening the fraternal bonds among confreres of different ethnic origins. They also have to help the confreres to develop the spirit of common ownership of the province.

Conflict and uncertainty surround the provincialate property, which is a setback for the Province and puts on hold every possible development of the property.

The Province does not have sufficient personnel to match the demands of the various apostolates. Moreover, it has no reliable sources of income to meet the needs of the different apostolates.

Although the Province has sent some confreres on specialized studies, it does not have sufficient trained formators to be part of the common formation communities of USCN.

2.1.3.3 NIGERIA SOUTH EAST PROVINCE

Nigeria South East is currently the largest circumscription in the Congregation. It has 431 confreres of origin among whom 169 work in missions outside the Province. There are also 230 confreres appointed to the province among whom are 5 from other circumscriptions.

Strengths

The Province is blessed with confreres who are committed to mission within Nigeria and in the wider Spiritan world. The Province enjoys a great legacy and respect in the local Church. There is a good working relationship with bishops, clergy, religious, and lay people.

The Province has good administrative structure: there is an organized secretariat with functional offices of different organs of our missionary engagements in the Province.

The Province has built up a strong communication press (Spiritans Press).

The Province is involved in 27 parishes spread in several dioceses of Eastern Nigeria. The pastoral insertions cover the urban and rural areas. Some of them are situated in conflict zones, like Ogoni land. Series of efforts are made to ensure that commitment to Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation traverses the different pastoral commitments of the Province.

The education apostolate is another strong commitment of the Province. Apart from the nursery, primary and secondary schools established and managed by confreres in almost all of the parishes, the Province has four secondary schools and a university. The Spiritan University Nneochi (SUN), approved in 2017 and opened in October 2018, is a huge stride in the education apostolate. The official inauguration and first Matriculation ceremonies took place on 23 March 2019.

The Province has a house for the elderly and sick confreres, Holy Ghost Haven Mgbidi. This is also a center for recollections and retreats for individuals and groups. The center has a Clinic/Hospital, which provides health care to confreres and people from the region and is being upgraded to serve in future as the Teaching Hospital of the Faculty of Medicine of SUN.

The Province has a Mission Office for the financial support and accompaniment of confreres going on mission and those coming home on holidays. It is also intended to support confreres in difficult missions *ad extra*.

Generally, the Province has great potential in terms of financial returns. Confreres have to be commended for their contributions and solidarity and some viable self-reliance projects.

Nigeria South East has a postulate in Akabo and houses the major formation communities for USCN (Philosophy- Isienu; Novitiate-Awo-omamma) and UCAWA (SIST Attakwu-Enugu). The Province has trained a good number of qualified personnel for different houses of formation and other educational establishments.

Challenges

Confreres have to develop more skills in community living in the present inter-cultural and inter-generational contexts.

As in all large Provinces, effective administration and animation present considerable challenges and call for creativity in regard to sharing leadership responsibilities.

The Province is facing a significant increase in the number of aging/sick confreres and the difficulty in finding replacement for those with specialized training.

The formation communities consume a good bulk of the Province's finances. Equally, the Province struggles to finance special projects like Spiritan University Nneochi (SUN) and the Farm in Okija.

Some confreres who have completed their studies outside the country refuse or are reluctant to return and take up assignments for which they were sent on studies. Some other confreres abscond and become irregular within or outside the Province.

2.1.3.4 NIGERIA SOUTH WEST PROVINCE

Geographically, the Province of Nigeria South West covers the South-western part of Nigeria with all the Yoruba speaking States, Lagos, Edo, Delta and part of Bayelsa.

It has 37 confreres of origin among whom 4 are on mission outside the Province. There are also 55 confreres appointed to the Province among whom 33 come from other circumscriptions.

Strengths

Structurally, the circumscription has made great progress since its inception. It built and opened its administrative house in Benin, Edo State in 2011. Recently, this administrative house was transformed into staff quarters for a new school and a new Provincialate has been opened in Lagos.

The Province has invested a lot of energy and personnel in parish ministry. New missions have been undertaken within the last few years/ Illoti; Ehor; Osasere, Oyede. Bomadi Missions, and parish at the Provincialate community.

The development of the education ministry is commendable. One Secondary school has taken off in Benin, Edo State whilst another one is being constructed at Imuwen in Ijebu of Ogun State. Some parishes have schools attached to them but are run for the dioceses. Attention is given to youth ministry as well as JPIC. A director coordinates JPIC activities.

The Province is blessed with a growing number of local vocations. Consequently, the Province has built a Postulate in Koko.

There is a good collaboration with the laity. Many of them form part of the Holy Ghost Missionary Movement dedicated to supporting Spiritan vocations.

Challenges

Confreres do not invest sufficiently in the learning of the local languages. Most of the liturgies are done in English.

Though the confreres are in contact with a lot of lay people, the Province lacks avenues and programs for the spiritual formation of the laity on Spiritan spirituality.

Some confreres live with diocesan priests in parishes in response to the need of the local Church. Sometimes it is a way the bishops test the confreres before giving them autonomy.

The Province is struggling to meet the financial needs of initial formation, especially the building of the new Postulate in Koko.

The Province currently lacks trained formators and professors to be part of the teams of USCN houses of formation.

2.1.4 UNION OF CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS OF EAST AFRICA (UCEAF)

UCEAF was created on 2nd October 2008 following the suppression of the Province of East Africa and the District of Kenya and, consequently, the reorganization of the Spiritan presence in the region into pluri-national circumscriptions. The Union is comprised of four circumscriptions: Ethiopia Group, Uganda Group, the Province of Kenya and the Province of Tanzania. These countries, with the exception of Ethiopia, are members of the East African Community (EAC).¹⁴⁶

Social, Economic Political and Ecclesial Context in the East African Region

The EAC member countries have diverse political, economic, ecclesial and social realities. However, apart from having similar colonial backgrounds, they also have common characteristics found in most of the developing countries such as high levels of poverty, youth unemployment, disparity between rich and poor, etc. The East Africa countries are largely peaceful thus attracting foreign business investments.

¹⁴⁶ EAC is made up of six countries: Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan and Tanzania

Presently they are in the process of developing economically and socially from low to middle income societies. With this in mind, the EAC has drawn up a development strategic plan with the aim of accelerating a people-centered and market-driven integration in the region (i.e. free movement of people, goods and services across the entire region) and building a firm foundation for transforming the community into a stable, competitive and sustainable middle-income society by 2025. To achieve this ambitious objective, the regional leaders must show commitment to good governance practices and work towards combatting deep-rooted corruption, provide affordable health care, build infrastructures, ensure provision of education for all and improvement in the social service delivery sector.

Politically, the UCEAF countries have embraced multi-party democracy, but with varying degrees of success, as some of them have restricted political and civil liberties. Despite the differences, multi-party politics is becoming an enduring feature.

UCEAF countries belong to the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA). Since the early 1990s, AMECEA has strongly focused on building vibrant small Christian communities in order to encourage active participation in Church life and in response to the growing number of Pentecostal Churches in the region. The role of the laity in the work of evangelization is underscored. As well as evangelization, AMECEA countries are strong in the provision of social services: education (formal and informal), health care, justice, peace and integrity of creation, conflict resolution, family life, communication, etc. The role of the Church in the East African region is highly respected because of the invaluable contribution she has made towards the integral development of the people in a period that spans nearly 150 years.

Governance of the Union

In 2009, UCEAF drew up its governing statutes which were approved by the General Council. The statutes were revised and updated in 2011. They cover the following specific areas of governance: general and specific objectives of the Union, organizational structure, finances, and formation (both initial and ongoing). The Union has the following sets of meetings:

- The Council of Superiors meets twice a year to discuss matters of common concern. One of the Union Superiors is elected as the Coordinator for a one-year mandate. The role of the Coordinator is to organize and convene Union meetings, to sign relevant documents of the Union and, to liaise with the Generalate on matters concerning the Union.
- The Formation Commission meets twice a year. Often the Formation Commission gathers for business when the Union Superiors have their meeting so that matters that require the attention of both meetings can be addressed.
- The Bursars of the respective circumscriptions also meet once or twice a year, usually around the same time with formators and the Superiors.

Areas of Collaboration

The main areas of collaboration between the UCEAF circumscriptions are:

- **Formation:** UCEAF has in common three formation communities: Njiro Seminary School of Philosophy in Arusha, Tanzania, Novitiate in Lushoto, Tanzania and, Spiritan House of Theology in Langata, Kenya. Each formation community follows a formation programme drawn up by the Union Formation Commission in the light of the Guide for Spiritan Formation (GSF). The Union

has established, at the Generalate, a Formation Reserve Fund for the extraordinary expenses of the common houses of formation.

The Union also organizes the Spiritan month in preparation for the celebration of final vows and diaconate ordinations together.

- **JPIC:** The Union has a joint Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) training programme. In keeping with our mission, the UCEAF JPIC formation programme states that, *“the overriding goal of the UCEAF is to create a deeper awareness and appreciation on the part of our students in formation of matters of JPIC as a constituent part of our mission of evangelisation”*. Each year, UCEAF sends at least two students for JPIC training at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa.
- **Mission in South Sudan:** This is an important common mission project established in 2012. For juridical and practical reasons, the Spiritan community in South Sudan is placed under the leadership of the Province of Kenya.

Strengths and Challenges

- Overall, UCEAF has made commendable steps towards greater unity, fraternity and solidarity. The Union Superiors are faced with the challenge of consolidating the partnerships and achievements gained, and identifying new areas of collaboration, e.g., working towards a common income-generating project (s) with the intent to support and sustain financially the vision and common projects of the Union. To achieve this level of collaboration, the Union leadership and all members will need to overcome any lingering past negative prejudices and mistrust, avoid the temptation to function independently – or unilaterally - and instead work towards a greater sense of mutual trust, solidarity and belonging in the Union.
- With the exception of Ethiopia, vocations to Spiritan life and mission are flourishing within the Union. In addition, there are many opportunities within the Union for students in initial formation, including those on Pastoral Missionary Experience (PME), to have a variety of formative programmes and experiences which correspond to our Spiritan vocation and identity. The challenge, however, is a lack of sufficient funds to fully finance their initial formation and to train a pool of formators.
- The East African region, especially Nairobi, Kenya, has many tertiary institutions such as Tangaza University College, Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) and Chemchem. Ongoing and specialized studies, such as the training of formators, language learning and JPIC/IRD studies, are easily accessible and at a reasonable cost. Spiritans must take advantage of this by establishing a base at Spiritan House, Nairobi, which will serve as a Congregational centre of studies for confreres from other circumscriptions who are appointed to undertake specialized training for the needs of their respective circumscriptions and the whole Congregation.
- South Sudan is a Church in need of creative missionaries and a country where our charism finds full expression. However, it faces serious security and development challenges and will take years to achieve sustainable growth.

2.1.4.1 ETHIOPIA GROUP

FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA

AREA: 1,104,000 KM²

POPULATION: 112,079,000

BIRTH RATE: 33‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 55‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 66 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 61.9%, MUSLIMS 35.9%,

UNAFFILIATED < 0.1%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 2.1%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 39.0%

GDP PER CAPITA: 1,719 USD/HAB

Spiritans Presence in Ethiopia

Four Spiritans from East Africa worked in Ethiopia from 1943 to 1947, and left the mission. It was not until 1972 that a permanent presence was established. The reason behind this renewed venture was the 1968/9 General Chapter orientation, which reaffirmed first evangelization as one of the Congregation's mission priorities. Confreres belonging to the Province of the US East and the Netherlands arrived first and were shortly followed by another group of Spiritans from Ireland.

The American-Dutch group opted to settle in Borana Land and invested mainly in education which they used as their tool of evangelization. Over the years, this group was praised for its commitment in education and adaptation to the Borana culture. The group from Ireland chose to establish themselves in the Highlands of Gamo Gofa where they developed an Integrated Community Development Program, collaborating closely with the Ethiopia Orthodox Church. Their work in development earned them admiration from the community and the local government, but it also caused controversy among the Catholic Church hierarchy over their emphasis on ecumenical cooperation with the Orthodox Church to the disadvantage of Catholic evangelization.

The two groups, which had different missionary approaches, continued to function independently of each other until 2001 when they merged and became the Ethiopia International Group (EIG). With the reorganization of the Spiritan presence in East Africa in October 2nd 2008, the EIG became the Foundation of Ethiopia and a member of UCEAF. Following the Bagamoyo Chapter (6.9.2) it was designated as a Group in October 2, 2014.

Personnel: The total number of confreres in the Group is 14 from 10 nationalities: Cameroon, Ethiopia, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi, Ireland, Seychelles, Tanzania and Uganda. Three mission appointments confreres have not yet arrived in the country because of the slow and cumbersome process of obtaining work permits. The Group has only 2 members by origin.

Missionary Engagements: The Group has a number of missionary commitments such as:

- First evangelization in Borana and Gamo Gofa regions implemented mainly through education;
- Spiritan Community Development Outreach Programs (SCORE), providing safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, livelihood enhancement and food security, support to access basic education, emergency relief distribution, agricultural and auto mechanic training;
- Ecumenical collaboration with the Orthodox Church;
- Chaplaincy to the Catholic community based at the headquarters of the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa.

Formation: At present, the Group has two novices in Magamba Novitiate, Tanzania. They will finish their program in July 2020.

Strengths and Challenges

- The circumscription's strength hinges on the relative youthfulness of its members who are working in a situation (nomadic and semi-nomadic) where the fundamental element of the Spiritan charism find expression. However, diminished personnel due to early withdrawal or departures of young confreres from the Group before or shortly after six years of mission appointment, together with insecurity and sporadic ethnic violence in some parts of the country,

constitute major threats to the continuity and sustainability of the Group's missionary commitments.

- SCORE is a very important and vibrant part of the Spiritan missionary engagements in Ethiopia. Having grown out of what initially was called Integrated Community Development Program (ICDP) operating only in Gamo Gofa, it has become the circumscription's supportive tool for mission and development. However, despite its vital financial contribution to the Group, funds for pastoral and education services have greatly diminished. This is partly due to the departure of confreres from the Provinces of United States and Ireland who were making a significant financial contribution to the Group.
- The Ethiopian Government restrictions on visa and work permits makes it harder for confreres on mission appointment to enter Ethiopia. The Ethiopia Catholic Church is making efforts to dialogue with the Government on this issue. At present, only people with educational or social development expertise can enter and work in Ethiopia; they are accepted as unsalaried social workers and not as missionaries.
- The circumscription's membership in the Union (UCEAF) and close accompaniment by the General Council have greatly helped the Group to revitalize its presence and mission in Ethiopia. Further investment in personnel and greater financial resources are required to sustain the life and the mission of this young and enthusiastic Group.
- **Future Plans:** The circumscription, through its SCORE office, is trying to identify new sources of finances, both internal and external, in view of guaranteeing continuity and sustainability of its mission. The Group is also looking into the possibility of investing in the construction of a property in Addis Ababa for future self-reliance. The collaboration of the wider Congregation will be required to bring this project to realization.

2.1.4.2 KENYA PROVINCE (INCL. SOUTH SUDAN)

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

AREA: 592,000 KM²

POPULATION: 52,574,000

BIRTH RATE: 29‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 47‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 66 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 84.5%, MUSLIMS 10.5%,
UNAFFILIATED 2.3%, HINDUS 0.1%, BUDDHISTS 0.1%,
FOLK RELIGIONS 1.5%, OTHER 1.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 78.7%

GDP PER CAPITA: 2,961 USD/HAB

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH-SUDAN

AREA: 659,000 KM²

POPULATION: 11,062,000

BIRTH RATE: 35‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 99‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 57 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 60.5%, MUSLIMS 6.2%,
UNAFFILIATED 0.5%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,
FOLK RELIGIONS 32.9%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 26.8%

GDP PER CAPITA: 963 USD/HAB

Social-Political Context: Kenya has been peaceful, accessible and progressive due to its overall stable social-political context. This also creates a favorable environment for mission. However, in recent years, the country has experienced violent national elections and sporadic terrorist attacks, which have threatened to derail the nation's peace and security and undermine its economy.

The Spiritans in Kenya: The Spiritans arrived in Kenya in 1889, first in Mombasa and later in the highlands of Nairobi, Kikuyu and Ukambani. The first missionaries were French. They were followed later by the Irish confreres.

On October 2nd, 2008, the Spiritan presence in East Africa was re-organized. The Province of East Africa and the Irish District of Kenya were suppressed and in their place, four pluri-national circumscriptions were created: Ethiopia Group, Uganda Group, Kenya Foundation and Tanzania Province. Following the Bagamoyo Chapter (6.9.2) Kenya Foundation was designated as a Province in October 2, 2014.

Statistics: Total number of professed confreres in the Province is 94 (71 members by origin and 18 by appointment (4 Irish, 3 Ghanaians, 2 Madagascans, 2 Nigerians, 1 Indian, 1 Malawian, 4 Tanzanians, and 1 Ugandan). Confreres by origin on mission *ad intra* is 36 and on mission *ad extra* 17.

Number of students: 5 in the postulancy, 20 in philosophy, 12 in theology and 11 on PME.

Missionary Engagements: The Province of Kenya has pastoral commitments in 7 dioceses. The following are the principal missionary engagements of the province:

- First Evangelization in Rumbek, South Sudan and among the nomadic peoples of East Pokot and Wenje. The Province has five parishes in East Pokot - a deprived area. In the Diocese of Garissa, confreres work among the Orma and Pokomo people and are engaged in small-scale development projects.
- Education: Spiritans in Kenya are well known for their involvement in education and the Province continues to make significant investment in this area: Holy Ghost Schools in Sultan Hamud - Makueni, Holy Ghost Fathers Migombani Polytechnic in Mombasa, Claude Academy in East Pokot, St Luke's Primary School in East Pokot and Barpello High School in East Pokot.
- Special ministry in Mukuru Slum, on the outskirts of the city of Nairobi.
- Inter-religious dialogue in Mombasa, Garissa and Malindi.
- Parish pastoral ministry (3 urban parishes which contribute to the sustenance of the Province's missionary engagements in poor areas and 7 rural parishes).

Formation and Vocation Animation: There are two formation communities in the Province: the postulancy (for the circumscription) and theology (for the Union).

Strengths and Challenges:

- The circumscription benefits from the heritage of the presence of the Spiritans in Kenya who played a key role in founding the Catholic Church and in raising missionary awareness in the local Church. It is for this reason Kenya is blessed with both diocesan and religious missionary vocations in abundance. The challenge for the Province is a lack of adequate financial resources to train its students and to give sufficient support (e.g. trained formators) to the Union formation communities. Another challenge for the Province is to ensure that the divisions along ethnic lines do not undermine the life and mission of the circumscription.
- The membership of the Province is young, hardworking and reflects the international character of the Congregation. In addition, confreres are involved in ministries that are in line with the Spiritan charism and enjoy an ambiance of mutual collaboration and understanding with the local Church, other missionary congregations and the laity. However, the continuity and sustainability of the circumscription's commitments in the margins of the society and among the

marginalized is a challenge in terms of personnel and finance. The problem is further exacerbated by the presence in the Province of a number of confreres with serious personal problems, thus hindering their availability for mission.

Plans for the Future

As a modest way of addressing some of the financial challenges, the Province has established a well-functioning development office. Through this office and in compliance with Bagamoyo 1.9 and 5.4, the circumscription has drawn up a long-term Strategic Mission and Financial Plan for the future life and mission of the circumscription. It has also established some reliable and durable income-generating projects for financial self-reliance. A proposed project on the Langata property to put the circumscription and the Union formation programme on a more sound financial basis has yet to obtain a consensus among the Superiors of the Union.

SOUTH SUDAN

THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

AREA: 659,000 KM²

POPULATION: 11,062,000

BIRTH RATE: 35‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 99‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 57 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 60.5%, MUSLIMS 6.2%,
UNAFFILIATED 0.5%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,
FOLK RELIGIONS 32.9%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 26.8%

GDP PER CAPITA: 963 USD/HAB

South Sudan Context: The Republic of South Sudan is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. It has suffered decades of devastating civil war that has hindered its development. The country continues to face serious economic, social, political and security challenges. More than 50 % of the population lives below the poverty line. Therefore, the Church in South Sudan is in great need of missionaries. However, only a few religious congregations have taken up the challenge. This is compounded by the fact that no lasting peace is in sight to the tribal and politically instigated clashes that continue to rage, especially among the predominant ethnic groups.

The Spiritans in South Sudan: The Spiritans arrived in South Sudan in 2012 and established their base in the Diocese of Rumbek. Their presence has made a positive impact. Presently there are 4 confreres working in South Sudan (2 Kenyans, 1 Irish and 1 Tanzanian). They are primarily engaged in parish ministry but also focus on education as a key development agenda for the Spiritan mission in the country due to the fact that only 1 in 4 adults is able to read and write. They are also involved in market gardening to impart agricultural skills to a population that has largely lost farming skills following decades of devastating civil war and famine.

Way Forward: Personnel, financial and moral support for the Spiritan presence and mission in South Sudan is needed, particularly from within the Union, and outside the Union, in order to sustain it.

2.1.4.3 TANZANIA PROVINCE

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

AREA: 947,000 KM²

POPULATION: 58,005,000

BIRTH RATE: 37‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 57‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 65 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 63.1%, MUSLIMS 34.1%,
UNAFFILIATED 1.6%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,
FOLK RELIGIONS 1.1%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 77.9%

GDP PER CAPITA: 2,655 USD/HAB

Tanzania is best described as a country with 4 post-independence epochs that have shaped its development. First, the 1962 to 1967 period, marked by capitalist mode of production inherited from colonial rule. Second, the 1967 to 1980s period, marked by African Socialism, the drive for self-reliance and the nationalization of the commanding heights of production (private industry, public utilities, heavy industry, transport and control over foreign and domestic trade). Third, the 1980s to 2007 period marked by extensive economic, political, public service and multiparty democracy reforms. Fourth, the 2008 to 2019 period, marked by a national drive towards industrialization and infrastructural development with the ambition to make Tanzania a middle-income country by 2025. These epochs have had their impacts on the current social-political and economic state of the nation, including the context of mission. Overall, Tanzania has been blessed with long-standing peace, national stability and unity.

The Spiritans in Tanzania: In 2018 the Catholic Church in Tanzania, in collaboration with the Spiritans in Tanzania, gathered in Bagamoyo to celebrate 150 years of Catholic evangelization and to pay tribute to the first Spiritan missionaries, the esteemed founders of the Catholic Church in Tanzania. Spiritans arrived in Zanzibar in 1863 and five years later initiated evangelization in Bagamoyo. The founding of the Province of Tanzania goes back to the creation of the East African Foundation in January 10, 1973. In February 2nd, 1989, the East African Foundation became the East African Province (EAP), covering the countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. With the reorganization of the Spiritan presence in East Africa on 2 October 2008, Tanzania became a Province.

Membership Statistics: The province has a total number of 168 members: 144 members by origin and 24 by appointment (from Croatia, Congo-Brazzaville, DR Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Spain, Uganda, United States of America, Vietnam (PME), and Zambia). Number of ordained priests by origin is 114. There are 2 bishops and 28 temporary professed scholastics. 39 members by origin are on mission *ad extra*. The Province has 74 students: Theology 19, PME 7, Novitiate 5, Philosophy 29 and Postulancy 14.

Mission Priorities: The Province has the following missionary commitments:

- Primary evangelisation among the Maasai in the North-Eastern region of the country.
- Refugee ministry in Kigoma, west of the country (for last 25 years).
- Education apostolate (both formal and informal): The Province has a total number of 14 (Spiritans owned and managed) education establishments: 3 primary schools (including one for deaf children), 5 secondary schools (including one for deaf boys and girls), 4 vocational training centers (including one for street children and orphans) and one 1 university. There are 9 other education institutions established and managed by Spiritans but are owned by the local dioceses.
- Inter-religious dialogue on the Island of Zanzibar.
- Parish apostolate in 9 dioceses (19 rural parishes and 5 urban parishes).
- Street children and youth ministries in Dar es Salaam (Dogodogo Street Children and Orphanage Centre, Bunju, Dar es Salaam).
- Health care and HIV/ AIDS services at Usa River, Arusha.

Formation and Vocation Animation: There are 4 formation communities in the Province: 2 for the Province (Usa River Junior Seminary and Postulancy in Bagamoyo) and 2 for the Union (Spiritan Missionary Seminary for philosophy in Arusha and Magamba Novitiate in Lushoto, Tanga).

Strengths: The circumscription has a rich heritage of 152 years of Spiritan presence in Tanzania. It also has a variety of ministries that are clearly in line with the Spiritan charism and has a very good rapport with the local Church, other missionary congregations and the laity. Another strength of the Province is the rich diversity and experience of its personnel and their commitment to mission (both *ad intra* and *ad extra*). In addition, the Province is blessed with a good number of young vocations to Spiritan life and some material assets for future self-reliance.

Challenges: The Province does not have sufficient number of adequately trained confreres in leadership and management skills in different areas of its life and mission. Concerning religious life and Spiritan identity, some confreres lack a strong sense of the ownership of the Province and therefore of the Congregation. In addition, a number of confreres are in irregular situations. Other challenges include inadequate funds for formation and limited capacity to monitor and evaluate the performance of the projects of the circumscription.

Plans for the Future: The Province has drawn up an elaborate Strategic Mission Plan that touches on all areas of its life and mission, which will be reviewed and updated by the forthcoming Provincial Chapter in April 2020. The aim of the long-term strategic planning is to guide the Province in its pursuit of financial self-sufficiency, faithfulness and relevance in the living of the Spiritan charism in the contemporary world and to address the challenges mentioned above.

2.1.4.4 UGANDA GROUP

REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

AREA: 242,000 KM²

POPULATION: 44,270,000

BIRTH RATE: 38‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 63‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 63 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 86.1%, MUSLIMS 12.1%,

UNAFFILIATED 0.5%, HINDUS 0.3%, BUDDHISTS 0.3%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 0.9%, OTHER 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 70.2%

GDP PER CAPITA: 1,658 USD/HAB

Since its independence in 1962, Uganda has endured a military coup and a cruel military dictatorship which ended in 1979. In 1980, the country held presidential and parliamentary elections which were disputed and consequently led to a five-year war which ended in 1986. In addition, Uganda suffered a violent 20-year insurgency in the north of the country, perpetrated by the Lord's Resistance Army. Since 1986, Uganda has made remarkable strides in economic recovery and development, but there is also a growing gap between the rich and the poor, with poverty remaining deep-rooted in rural areas where people are involved in small-scale farming.

Spiritans in Uganda: The first Spiritan presence in Uganda goes back to 1970 when Fr. Bonifasi Remo from the former USA-East Province arrived in the Diocese of Moroto to work as a teacher in the Apostles of Jesus Seminary. However, it was not until 1983 that Spiritans arrived in Uganda with an intent to settle and establish missions. They began at Mulago Parish in the Archdiocese of Kampala. Today, the Spiritan presence and mission has expanded into two more dioceses, namely Kabale (Uganda South East) and Moroto (Uganda North East). On October 02, 2008, Uganda

became a Foundation and member of UCEAF. Following the Bagamoyo Chapter (6.9.2) Uganda Foundation was designated as a Group in October 2, 2014.

Statistics: Total number of confreres by origin is 38 (ordained 26; temporary professed 12). There 5 Confreres by appointment from other circumscriptions (1 from Tanzania and 4 from Nigeria). Confreres on mission ad intra number 15.

Formation: The circumscription has 27 students: 3 in the Postulancy, 7 in philosophy, 5 in Novitiate, 3 on PME and 9 in theology.

Missionary Engagements: The Group has a number pastoral commitments as:

- First Evangelization in two rural parishes in the Diocese of Kabale.
- Parish pastoral ministry (Mulago Parish, Kampala Archdiocese).
- Hospital Chaplaincy in Mulago National Hospital.
- Education: St. Daniel Comboni Naoi Polytechnic in Moroto Diocese and Mulago Special education for deaf children (both managed on behalf of the local dioceses). The Group will soon complete construction of its own Libermann Primary School in Nnamugongo, Kampala.

Strengths:

- The mission priorities of the group are clearly in accordance with the Spiritan charism.
- Confreres have a good rapport with the local church.
- There is a strong and supportive Spiritan Lay Associate group which takes an active role in the life and mission of the circumscription.
- Abundance of vocations to Spiritan life.

Challenges:

- The major challenge facing the group is the financial constraints in the training of its students and supporting confreres who are working in poorer and challenging mission contexts. Recently the Group decided to limit recruitment of students until its financial situation improves. The Group is struggling to establish income-generating projects for financial self-sufficiency.
- Community life, solidarity and sense of collective ownership of the Group and its mission remain a challenge for some confreres. There is an overdependence on the Group's administration to provide financial support to confreres.

Plans for the Future: In accordance with Bagamoyo 1.9 and 5.4, the Uganda Group has initiated a process of drawing up a long-term Strategic Mission Plan which is based on a realistic analysis of its needs and resources in order to arrive at self-reliance.

2.1.5 UNION OF CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS OF CENTRAL AFRICA (UCSAC)

The socio-political and economic situation of the Central African countries, resulting from many causes, remains very fragile as a whole. The volatile security environment and political instability do not augur well for regional economic prospects. This situation is exacerbated by the weak capacity of the States to face their various challenges, particularly the high level of poverty of the populations, widespread corruption, and weak governance, without forgetting the control of certain multinational companies over the natural resources of these countries. The future of the Central Africa region depends on the ability of governments and civil societies to create concrete conditions for sustainable peace and effective socio-economic development.

The Union of Spiritan Circumscriptions of Central Africa (UCSAC) was created after the suppression, on October 2, 2010, of the Central African Province (PAC). It comprises four circumscriptions: The Provinces of Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, Gabon-Equatorial Guinea, and Central Africa. Since 2018, at the request of the General Council, the Province of Congo Kinshasa has been participating in the various meetings as an observer in view of a future definite integration.

UCSAC Today

UCSAC experienced some difficulties in its early years due to the debt left by the former PAC and inherited by each of the new circumscriptions. It became clear that memories of the common past were becoming an increasingly heavy burden to bear, and this did not help the smooth functioning of the Union. But, as developments unfolded, mutual mistrust dissipated and gave way to good working relationships between Superiors and confreres of different circumscriptions. Generational change in leadership in the four circumscriptions also contributed to this evolution. The Directory for Organisation of the Congregation reminds us that *“the strength and the potential weakness of a Union of Circumscriptions lies in the ability of Major Superiors concerned to collaborate effectively and to foster a sense of belonging to the Union among the confreres of their respective circumscriptions... It is important that all Superiors participate in the Union with a spirit of openness and cooperation and with a willingness to put aside local vested interests for the wider good”* (D.O.C 3.4.2).

The Council of UCSAC, composed of the four Major Superiors, meets twice a year. The meetings are hosted, on a rotating basis, by each circumscription. The coordination of the Union is ensured by one of the Major Superiors, for a three-year term. Initial formation remains the principal focus of collaboration and solidarity in the Union. Another area of collaboration is the rental of part of Daniel Brottier Seminary site to a filling-station company for the purpose of financing the future project to transform the Brottier Seminary into a Higher Education Institution.

Strengths and Challenges

- The foundation of the Union is based on the principle of solidarity, communion and collaboration. Insofar as formation remains the main common project of the Union, there is a real involvement in common initial formation: pre-novitiate in Libreville, Gabon; novitiate and post-novitiate in Cameroon, Mbalmayo and Ngoya, respectively. The Superiors have been particularly attentive to the situation of their common houses of formation, the interchange of candidates for Pastoral Missionary Experience (PME), measures to encourage formators, and fraternity as the bedrock of the functioning of the Union.
- The quality of interpersonal relationships between Superiors is also an important aspect. They are aware today of the need to work together in all aspects of Spiritan mission, and especially in formation.
- Initiatives concerning common projects are currently being explored. For example, the project to establish a Spiritan Institute of Human Sciences on the existing site of Daniel Brottier Seminary with a mission to serve as a bridge between African worldviews and the Christian vision of the world. The underlying concept is the recognition that it is important to prepare young Central African women and men for socio-political and ecclesial responsibilities.

The progress made by UCSAC over the past eight years shows the decisive role of the various meetings in the organisation of the Union. These meetings led to a rebound in the Union towards greater solidarity with the firm conviction that the

complementarity between circumscriptions remains essential. Although the results are quite positive, a series of challenges remain to be addressed:

- the drafting of the statutes of the Union, and the establishment of a permanent secretariat;
- the need for greater solidarity within the Union to ensure fair sharing of financial resources between the formation houses in order to reduce the dependence on external solidarity;
- written agreements with circumscriptions outside the Union regarding the presence of their students in UCSAC formation communities;
- the inadequate human and financial resources for common formation communities;
- the regular payment of the contributions imputable to members of the Union for formation needs;
- creating a sense of belonging, and the mobilization of good will on the part of all members;
- the development of a support of network and exchanges of information in similar works such as street children, education and health ministry, etc;
- the decision of the Province of Congo Kinshasa with regard to its membership;
- the burden of the debts of three circumscription members to the Generalate in relation to the financial functioning of the Union.

2.1.5.1 CAMEROON PROVINCE

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

AREA: 476,000 KM²

POPULATION: 25,876,000

BIRTH RATE: 36‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 88‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 59 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 69.6%, MUSLIMS 19.3%,

UNAFFILIATED 5.2%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 3.2%, OTHER 2.7%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 71.3%

GDP PER CAPITA: 3,315 USD/HAB

Cameroon is a Central African country nicknamed “Africa in miniature” because of its climatological, mining, geographical, human and cultural diversity. The two official languages are French and English. The former kingdoms were succeeded in the 19th century by the German colony, which placed Cameroon under protectorate. At the end of the First World War, the country was placed under the supervision of the League of Nations and entrusted to the administration of France for its eastern part and the United Kingdom for its western part. The former mandate of the UN under French administration gained independence as the Republic of Cameroon on 1 January 1960. It was joined by part of the territory under British administration in October 1961 to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon, which on 20 May 1972 was renamed the United Republic of Cameroon and then the Republic of Cameroon in 1984.

Presentation of the Circumscription

The Spiritans arrived in Cameroon in 1915 since the departure of the Pallotin missionaries. The status of the Spiritan presence in the country has changed over the years from Spiritan Districts (in fact there were two in Cameroon) to that of the PAC Region (Central African Province) in 1999. The Province of Cameroon was erected on 2 October 2010, following the abolition of the CAP. In 2015, the Spiritans celebrated the centenary of their presence in the country.

The Province has 78 native members: 68 with perpetual vows and 19 with temporary vows; 47 students in training (28 before vows and 19 with temporary vows); 52 confreres on ad-intra missions, 39 natives and 13 assigned from other constituencies: France, Spain, Switzerland, Congo-Brazzaville, CAR, DRC, North-East Nigeria, Ghana, and Burkina-Faso. Spiritans are present in about 30 parishes and in 13 dioceses: Yaoundé, Douala, Bertoua, Buea, Bamenda, Kumba, Doumé Abang-Mbong, Kribi, Obala, Bafia, Sangmélima, Maroua-Mokolo, Yagoua. They were distributed in 31 communities, 27 parish communities and 4 communities of life. Thirty-five native confreres are on ad-extra missions in all continents. 14 in Africa (Senegal, Gabon, DRC, Congo Brazzaville, Angola, Zimbabwe - pending visa-Madagascar, Ethiopia), 15 in Europe (France, Belgium, Spain, Holland, Italy, England), 2 in Asia (Philippines), 1 in Oceania (Papua New Guinea), 1 in Brazil, 1 in the United States of America and 1 in Haiti.

The missionary priorities of the province, both in urban and rural areas, correspond to the charism of the Congregation: first evangelization, interreligious dialogue, parish pastoral care, educational pastoral care, ministry of street children and the disabled.

Strengths and Challenges

Advantages

- There is a great availability and pastoral generosity on the part of the confreres in their various ministries. They are involved in parish animation, in the first evangelization (among the Baka or Pygmies) and in an area dominated by Islam (northern part of the country). In Douala, they work in the supervision of street children in the “Chaîne des Foyers Saint Nicodème” as well as children with mental and physical disabilities in the “Association Pour les Enfants Préférés” (APEP). We salute the prophetic courage of the confreres who work in the two dioceses of Northern Cameroon: Maroua-Mokolo and Yagoua, despite the insecurity.
- The province has taken the option of reducing the number of its missionary commitments, especially in parishes, in dioceses where it does not receive any support from the bishop, in order to strengthen the apostolic communities in personnel and free up confreres for other ministries.
- There is an awareness of the need for financial solidarity. In the Spiritan communities, there is a desire to create financial resources for self-financing.
- The province has embarked on a restructuring of the financial management system and has put in place rigorous management and regular control procedures.
- Training takes place within the framework of the Union. The province is home to two UCSAC formation communities: the novitiate in Mbalmayo and the theologate in Ngoya. These training communities benefit from the particular assistance and support of the province. The province also exchanges its students with other districts of the Congregation.
- The province has four Lay Spiritan Associates. The others are associated with the Spiritans through the Spiritan Brotherhood.

Challenges

- Insertion into first evangelization settings requires regular visiting and financial support.
- Because of the lack of collaboration and a lack of commitment of some within the Union, the province continues to bear the burden of the difficulties of the Union's formation houses in Cameroon.

- Some bishops and lay people still live in the past where expatriate missionaries brought everything to the local community. There is a great expectation on the part of some of them for a financial contribution from the congregation. As a result, some dioceses have difficulty in financially supporting Spiritan communities, and therefore, the difficulty in getting them to sign contracts.
- The excessive number of missionary commitments has a negative impact on community life.
- The province had to withdraw confreres from the parishes of Wum and Kumba because of the insecurity linked to the English-speaking crisis in the area.
- The life of the province seems to be very painfully marked by shortcomings in financial management that tend to undermine the efforts of the whole. Some communities do not respect the decisions of the chapters on issues of financial participation in the life of the province.
- The repayment of the money taken from the Jubilee Fund to the General Council remains a major challenge for the province.

2.1.5.2 CENTRAL AFRICA PROVINCE

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

AREA: 623,000 KM²

POPULATION: 4,745,000

BIRTH RATE: 35‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 122‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 53 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 89.0%, MUSLIMS 9.0%,

UNAFFILIATED 1.0%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 1.0%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 36.8%

GDP PER CAPITA: 663 USD/HAB

The Central African Republic, also known as the Central Africa, is a Central African country surrounded by Cameroon to the west, Chad to the north, Sudan and South Sudan to the east, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo to the south. After independence, the country was ruled by various authoritarian regimes, including that of Jean-Bedel Bokassa, president and later self-proclaimed emperor. The first free multi-party elections were held in 1993. The Central African Republic also has many natural resources, including uranium, gold, diamonds and oil. This country is still plagued by a conflict that began in December 2012 between the Seleka and anti-Balaka militias. The conflict is characterized by many abuses against civilians, Muslims and Christians. The situation is leading to a major humanitarian crisis, aggravated by the security chaos caused by a real absence of the state, especially in rural areas. The end of the tunnel still seems far away, but there is hope.

Presentation of the Circumscription

The Spiritan presence in Central Africa dates back to 1894 on the initiative of Bishop Augouard. Long a district of the province of France, then a region of the CAP, the Central African Republic became a Foundation in October 2010, then a province in 2014. It has 29 professed members by origin, 17 of whom are in ministry in the province, 9 in mission ad extra and 1 in mission of study abroad, and 2 in an irregular situation. Six confreres from other districts are assigned to the Central African Republic: Province Europe 1, Province of Congo Kinshasa 1 Gabon-Guinea 3, and Angola 1. Eighteen students are in formation: four professed and 14 not professed. The province has a cardinal confrere, Dieudonné Nzapalainga, archbishop of Bangui since 2012, and created cardinal in 2016. He is an important figure in the country's socio-political life. He is close to the suffering people and works on reconciliation issues in collaboration with other religious leaders in the country.

The confreres are involved in four dioceses: the Archdiocese of Bangui, the Diocese of Mbaïki, the Diocese of Bangassou and the Diocese of Alindao. The missionary work is in full coherence with the charism of the congregation: first evangelization mission in urban and rural parishes where the concern for the poorest is expressed (Mobaye, Bangassou, Pissa), and educational and health works.

Strengths and Challenges

Advantages

- The Spiritans had a considerable role and contributed in a unique way to the foundation of the Church of Central Africa.
- The province has invested a lot in the implementation of extra-parochial missionary insertions through educational and health works. (They include) Daniel Brottier School in Niakari, Bangassou, Manicus School, Mobaye, Mgr Aloès Kobes College and Claude François Poullart des Places College, Bangui; “Foyer Sainte Thérèse” - care and support for orphans, “Groupe espoir” - care for people living with HIV, “Voix de l’espoir” - care, schooling and reintegration of street children in Bangui.
- The province receives financial support from local and foreign donors
- The confreres set up IGAs (Income Generating Activities) in the places of insertion to meet the daily needs of the mission.
- Despite the crisis in the country, the province welcomes vocations and students from other Spiritan districts for the missionary internship. She has only one house of formation, the postulancy in Bangui. The other stages of formation are carried out in the formation houses of the Union.
- It has put in place internal financial solidarity and is making an effort to ensure coordinated financial management. Some communities and confreres are very generous towards the province.

Challenges

- The lack of personnel is a major difficulty in building strong communities in significant places of first evangelization.
- The province suffers from a lack of its own sources of income to support itself. The current socio-economic and political situation in the country does not favour initiatives to create production units. The question of ownership of the congregation's property remains a challenge for the province. This is due to the absence of contracts with local churches.
- The province has a number of real estate assets and land for development, but must be maintained.
- The confreres work in the daily reality of violence and face its effects.

2.1.5.3 CONGO BRAZZAVILLE PROVINCE

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

AREA: 342,000 KM²

POPULATION: 5,381,000

BIRTH RATE: 33‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 48‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 64 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 87.1%, MUSLIMS 1.2%,

UNAFFILIATED 8.0%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 2.7%, OTHER 1.0%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 79.3%

GDP PER CAPITA: 5,694 USD/HAB

The Republic of Congo, also known as Congo-Brazzaville, is a country in Central Africa, located on either side of the equator. There are 4 main ethnic groups in the country. The official language is French, while Lingala and Kikongo are the most widely used local languages. Independent from France, on 15 August 1960, Congo opted for democracy in 1990. From 1993 to 1998, it experienced social violence that led to a civil war. The Congolese economy is mainly based on the exploitation of hydrocarbons along the Atlantic coast; this activity represents about 90% of the country's exports. The country experienced strong economic growth between 2002 and 2015. The prosperity enjoyed by the Republic of Congo thanks to the oil windfall has not benefited the entire population. Levels of inequality remain high.

Presentation of the Circumscription

Spiritans arrived in Congo in 1865 in continuity with what had existed in the former kingdom of Congo since the end of the 15th century. The missions themselves on Congolese soil were created by the fathers and brothers of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Congo was, for many years, a District, then a CAP Region (1999), and finally a province on 02 October 2010.

The province of Congo now has 67 native confreres: 21 on ad-intra mission, 42 on ad-extra mission, and 4 temporarily professed. 18 students in formation (14 non-professed and 4 temporarily professed): 33 confreres work in the province, 21 from and 12 assigned to the province: Cameroon 2, France 4 (including two bishops: the Bishop of Impfondo and the Bishop of Ouesso), Nigeria 4, Poland 1, and Switzerland 1.

The priority axes of the Province's mission are: pastoral care for vulnerable persons or groups through education and reception: "Espace Jarrot", Sala Ngolo Centre, ORA Schools; promotion of indigenous populations (Likouala and Sangha); health pastoral care through support for the sick and access to care (Kisito Health Centre, traditional therapy in Likouala); parish pastoral care in urban and rural areas. Spiritans are present in seven localities of the country: Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, Dolisie, Madingou, Lékana, Impfondo, and Bétou.

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

- Founders of the Church of Congo, the Spiritans have a good relationship with the local Church. In the parishes run by the Spiritans, the Bishops accept that a financial contribution be granted to the province on the occasion of the Feast of Pentecost to support the formation of young people in the province of Congo.
- The province has a young workforce, which bodes well for the future. The confreres are committed to their missions, even the most difficult ones, with few resources. They work in educational works for young people and children: Holy Spirit School, "Espace Jarrot", ORA Schools in Impfondo, Sala Ngolo Centre in Dolisie, and finally a Schooling Centre for Refugee Children in Betou.
- The province has organized itself into an Association, recognized by the public authorities, under the acronym ASPC (*Association des Spiritains au Congo*), to apply for the various calls for projects of international organizations (UNDP, UNICEF, etc.).
- Mission *ad-extra* remains a significant component of this.
- The province has a postulate. The other stages of initial training take place at the Union level. It also collaborates with the other provinces of the congregation in initial formation: Congo Kinshasa province, PANO, Ghana, and Angola.

- There is financial solidarity that is organized within the province - individual contributions, community contributions.
- Lay people share the Spiritan spirituality and are organized in a Spiritan Fraternity. They provide significant financial support to the life of the province.

Challenges

- The province lacks staff for priority missions in rural areas.
- In some insertions, there is little distinction between community space and parish public space. Most communities lack a community project, and there is no good financial accounting. The sharing of property is also not respected in some communities.
- Due to a lack of capital, the province does not have investments or reliable sources of income, let alone cash-generating activity. This is a major handicap, although it can be overcome. Most communities of apostolic life lack transportation for the mission (vehicles, motorcycles, etc.) - in some cases, the mission is run. It lacks the financial resources to train young people. Apart from the *Cor Unum* allocation, it has no other sources.
- Existing structures in the province require redevelopment work. We will think of building new ones for a better animation.
- The province owes the General Council a debt for the replenishment of the Jubilee Fund. Repayment efforts remain a burden.
- The province has difficulty establishing written contracts with the dioceses in which its members work.

2.1.5.4 GABON-EQUATORIAL GUINEA PROVINCE

REPUBLIC OF GABON

AREA: 268,000 KM²

POPULATION: 2,173,000

BIRTH RATE: 32‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 48‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 66 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 75.6%, MUSLIMS 12.2%,
UNAFFILIATED 5.7%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,
FOLK RELIGIONS 5.7%, OTHER 0.7%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 82.3%

GDP PER CAPITA: 16,431 USD/HAB

REPUBLIC OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA

AREA: 28,000 KM²

POPULATION: 1,356,000

BIRTH RATE: 33‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 94‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 58 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 88.7%, MUSLIMS 4.0%,
UNAFFILIATED 5.0%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,
FOLK RELIGIONS 1.7%, OTHER 0.5%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 52.5%

GDP PER CAPITA: 19,513 USD/HAB

Gabon, a former French colony, is a Central African country located on the Atlantic coast. A small population, extensive forest resources and abundant oil have made Gabon one of the most prosperous countries in Africa. It is, in fact, the country with the highest human development index in sub-Saharan Africa according to the United Nations, with the second highest per capita income after Equatorial Guinea and ahead of Botswana. However, due to unequal income distribution, a significant proportion of the population remains poor.

Equatorial Guinea is a central African country landlocked between two French-speaking countries, Cameroon and Gabon. It is the only Spanish-speaking country in Africa. Consisting of two parts, one continental and the other insular with the island of Bioko (where the capital Malabo is located) and the island of Annobón, it has a Spanish

colonial architecture. It is characterized by high oil production, which makes it the third largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa and has enabled it to achieve high economic growth and become one of the largest recipients of foreign investments in Africa. However, this economic miracle remains very theoretical for the majority of the population.

Presentation of the Circumscription

The Spiritan province of Gabon-Equatorial Guinea is a young district, born from the dismantling of the former CAP. It includes two countries - the Republic of Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. Spiritans have been in Gabon since 1844; in Equatorial Guinea, a more recent presence since 2004. There is a much greater number of confreres in Gabon than in Equatorial Guinea.

In this circumscription, Spiritans are active in almost all the dioceses, except Oyem, with a fairly strong concentration on Libreville (8 parishes, Provincial House, and the International Spiritan Major Seminary Father Daniel Brottier). In Equatorial Guinea, two insertions, one in the diocese of Evinayong, and the other in the diocese of Ebibeyin.

The province has 23 native professed members: 13 perpetually professed (including 4 brothers) and 10 temporarily professed; 1 bishop emeritus of the diocese of Mouila and 1 other bishop prefect apostolic of Makokou. 8 confreres on *ad-intra* mission, and 5 others on *ad-extra* mission. There are 16 non-professed students. The confreres affected are 30: Angola 1, Cameroon 4, Central Africa 3, Congo Brazzaville 7, Congo Kinshasa 1, France 3, Guinea Bissau 1, Nigeria 7, and Senegal 3. Total number of confreres working in the province of Gabon-Equatorial Guinea is 37.

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

- The internationality of the members of the province is a joy and a beautiful testimony.
- The pastoral insertions are consistent with the charism of the congregation: mission of first evangelization, educational pastoral care, street children's ministry, and parish pastoral care.
- There is a great concern to preserve the heritage of the elders, and to live in fidelity to the charism of the congregation. Worthy of note is the work of the confreres in the reception and care of children in difficulty at the *Centre Espérance et Mission d'Insertion* (CEMI) in Port-Gentil.
- The province has many human and financial assets. There has been a real effort to restructure the finances of the province by the provincial administration and all the confreres. There is real financial solidarity, hence the significant improvement in the financial health of the circumscription.
- The province hosts one of the Union's formation houses: the philosophy study in Libreville. The Spiritan parishes largely support the Brottier formation house by providing food or other necessities.

Challenges

- There is a need to redefine what "zones of first evangelization" are in the light of the particular context of Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. Including new challenges such as syncretism, fetishism, social inequalities, health precariousness, sectarian currents, poverty, etc. The province will have to consider the concentration of confreres in urban areas, especially in Libreville. Some urban insertions should be

rethought, in dialogue with the bishops, to strengthen communities in rural areas. Insertion in Equatorial Guinea will have to be revitalized and strengthened.

- There is a lack of investment by the confreres in learning local languages.
- Good relations with bishops should not make us lose sight of the need to sign contracts with dioceses (SRL 234, 234.1).
- The province owes a debt to the Congregation. Repayment efforts made so far remain insufficient.
- Shadows remain regarding the sale of part of the Montagne Sainte property.

2.1.6 UNION OF CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS OF SOUTH CENTRAL AFRICA (UCSCA)

UCSCA's Brief History

The Union of Circumscriptions of South-Central Africa (UCSCA) came into existence in April 2011 out of what was formerly called South Central African Foundation (SCAF) whose member circumscriptions were Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The reorganization of SCAF, that was steadily evolving into a Province, was necessitated by two main reasons: firstly, because of the vastness of the region and the diversity of cultures, which posed a big challenge for cohesion and administration and secondly, because the Foundation had its members by origin who needed to have a sense of belonging to the countries they came from.¹⁴⁷ In 2018, Angola became the Union's sixth member. With the exception of Angola and Mozambique, which are former Portuguese colonies, all the other members are former British colonies.

The governing body of the Union is comprised of the respective superiors of the member circumscriptions and a bursar. One of the Superiors heads the coordination of the Union, for one year in each case. They meet once a year from one country to the other in rotation. The Union's statutes, approved by the General Council in 2010, facilitate and guide their collaboration in mission and formation. However, the Union will have to re-work its statutes in order to embrace the inclusion of Angola Province as its new member. UCSCA has a common reserve fund for formation purposes, which is managed by the Union's bursar appointed for a three-year renewable term.

UCSCA's Brief Socio-Economic and Political Context

The culture of UCSCA's member countries is predominantly *Bantu*.¹⁴⁸ Bantu languages share same language roots and, after mastering one of them, it is easy to learn many others. This is an advantage for the Spiritans working in this region since they can operate from one country to another without experiencing much difficulty in learning a new language.

Politically speaking, all the member countries of UCSCA have democratically elected governments. South Africa and Zambia enjoy relatively mature democracies. Angola,

¹⁴⁷ GC Letter to SCAF members, "Reorganisation of Spiritan Presence in South Central African Region: Union of Circumscriptions of South Central Africa (UCSCA)." Rome, 22 November 2010.

¹⁴⁸ **Bantu peoples**, the approximately 85 million speakers of the more than 500 distinct languages of the Bantu subgroup of the Niger-Congo language family, occupying almost the entire southern projection of the African continent. The classification is primarily linguistic, for the cultural patterns of Bantu; speakers are extremely diverse; the linguistic connection, however, has given rise to considerable speculation concerning a possible common area of origin of the Bantu peoples, the linguistic evidence pointing strongly to the region of the present-day Cameroon-Nigeria border (Editors, Encyclopedia Britannica).

Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi still experience significant challenges in their electoral processes. All these countries belong to the 16-member country economic block called Southern African Development Community (SADC). This community was established in 1992 for purposes of regional integration and poverty eradication mainly through economic development and promotion of peace. The citizens of this region enjoy a 90-day visa free concession which in fact makes the movement of Spiritans within UCSCA quite easy.

In terms of the economy, except for South Africa, the rest of the countries of the Union still face considerable challenges despite their great mineral reserves. Perhaps Zimbabwe has seen the worst of economic times from the year 2000 to date. In the recent years, the Southern African region has experienced a series of droughts that have caused food and electricity shortages and ravaging floods that have caused damage to life and infrastructure.

Early in 2019, Mozambique suffered two fatal cyclones that gravely affected Malawi and Zimbabwe leaving over a thousand people dead and destroying infrastructures. The HIV/Aids pandemic, too, has plagued the region and decimated a good part of the productive section of its population, multiplied the number of orphans, thus negatively affecting the economies of the nations and its peoples. It is in these mission contexts that Spiritans of UCSCA are living and operating. Although the region is rich in mineral resources and the people are hardworking, the majority lack basic needs and cannot afford decent lives. In most instances, the Spiritans are a sign of hope for the people who are so desperate. On a positive note though, Zambia is once again emerging as a robust economy.

As regards religion, the region is experiencing an upsurge of Pentecostalism and the proliferation of independent Churches and evangelical ministries and an influx of self-acclaimed prophets and pastors who are busy preaching the Gospel of prosperity. All these trends have set new mission fronts for the Spiritans and for the greater Southern African Church.

UCSCA's Strengths and Challenges

- UCSCA member circumscriptions collaborate in mission and formation activities. In terms of mission, they exchange personnel and they attend one another's important events and meet regularly. In matters of initial Spiritan formation, their main area of collaboration, they own a common First Cycle community (Balaka-Malawi) and a Novitiate (Lusaka-Zambia). They also exchange students on Period of Mission Experience (PME). After the closure of their Second Cycle community in Harare-Zimbabwe (in April 2017), the circumscriptions are now sending their theology students to other international Second Cycle communities of the Congregation.
- The Union's new member, Angola Province, has all the stages of formation well established within the country and they have opened their doors for exchange in mission and formation for the Union members. In order for the Province to be able to welcome more theology students, the General Council has given financial assistance for the construction of a new theology house in Huambo.
- Generally, the Spiritans enjoy good collaboration with the local ordinaries, the local clergy, and the people of God. Spiritans in the Union are blessed with the commitment of many lay people who are close collaborators of Spiritan Mission such as Spiritan Friends, Vocation Movements or Lay Associates. People best know the Spiritans in the region for their spirit of hospitality, simplicity, zeal and commitment in mission to the most abandoned.

- Most of the circumscriptions of UCSCA struggle for human, material and financial resources for mission and formation. In order to address this situation both the Spiritans and the episcopal conferences in the region are encouraging people to work towards the self-sustainability of the Church. There is hope that things will get better.

Mozambican candidates to Spiritan life have been facing language challenges for, after the postulancy year, they immediately have to study philosophy in English in which they are not proficient.

2.1.6.1 ANGOLA PROVINCE

REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA

AREA: 1,247,000 KM²

POPULATION: 31,825,000

BIRTH RATE: 41‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 81‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 61 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 90.5%, MUSLIMS 0.2%,

UNAFFILIATED 5.2%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 4.2%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 66.0%

GDP PER CAPITA: 5,790 USD/HAB

The Political, Socio-Economic and Religious Context of the Circumscription

Angola is a vast country with a long coastline and a central plateau. The country stretches across the interior of southern Africa between the borders with Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Its main cities, including its capital Luanda, look west towards the South Atlantic towards Brazil, another Portuguese-speaking nation (like itself). Angola gained independence in 1975.

The new administration of President João Lourenço, who took power after general elections in 2017, adopted reforms on several fronts to achieve macroeconomic stability and create an environment conducive to economic growth. After devaluing the currency, the government took further steps towards a more transparent and market-oriented foreign exchange market. However, the country also faces enormous development challenges, including reducing its dependence on oil and diversifying the economy, rebuilding its infrastructure, and improving institutional capacity, governance, public financial management systems, human development indicators and the living conditions of the population. The majority of the population lives in poverty, without adequate access to basic services, despite being a country with large oil and diamond reserves.

Angola has maintained political stability since the end of the civil war in 2002. The war lasted 27 years. In 2010, a constitution established a presidential parliamentary system in which the president is no longer elected by direct universal suffrage, but as the leader of the party that has won the most seats. The 2010 constitution sets a limit of two five-year presidential terms. The country's first local elections are scheduled for 2020.

Christianity is the majority religion in Angola. The Catholic Church has the largest number of members. There is also a small Islamic community in the country. The Episcopal Conference of Angola and São Tomé and Príncipe (CEAST) is the largest institution and representative of the Catholic Church in Angola and São Tomé and Príncipe. "The bishops of Angola were courageous under the repressive one-party regime; they always knew how to understand the will of the people; they were the voice of those who could only speak in silence; they took risks in the name of freedom and democracy" (Tony Neves, 2019).

History, Background and Mission of the Circumscription

The presence of the Spiritans in Angola goes back more than 150 years and, as a Province, more than 40 years. With the country living in peace and in the process of structural development (roads, schools, universities, hospitals, etc.), the Province has also been called to collaborate in this process of reconstruction of the large missionary complexes.

At present, the Province has 107 professed Angolans, including 21 in the second cycle (theology), 19 appointed to Angola, 22 postulants, 3 novices, 7 trainees and 58 in the first cycle (philosophy). The origins of the confreres appointed to Angola are Cameroon, France, Ghana, Nigeria, Madagascar and Portugal,

In addition to parish ministry, the Spiritans of the Province of Angola are involved in other activities such as the Catholic University, professional formation of young people and adults, Justice and Peace, Caritas, Human Rights, education in general and social communications (Radio Ecclesia). The Province is also committed to vocation promotion and has generously invested in the formation of young people for Spiritan life with great success. Above all, the Spiritan presence in Angola continues to be a constructive and relevant factor in Angola and in the whole Spiritan family.

Strengths and Challenges

- The long Spiritan presence in Angola, more than 150 years, has contributed to the construction of the present Church of Angola; the commitment and Spiritan missionary presence in the majority of Angolan dioceses; the existence of many Angolan Spiritans engaged in mission ad intra and ad extra.
- The Spiritans of Angola enjoy a good collaboration with the local Church, even at the pastoral level with the diocesan clergy and other religious; the Spiritan contribution in the field of JPIC of the Church of Angola continues to be important.
- The existence of vibrant houses of initial formation energizes the formation of many young people for the Spiritans. This is not only a good thing, but also a sign of the continuation of the Spiritan presence in Angola and in the world. Formation in Angola should help candidates for Spiritan life to be open to service outside the country.
- The many lay people linked to the Congregation, especially through lay associations for adults and youth movements, is a sign of great collaboration of the people with the Spiritan mission.
- The Province has structures which bring a richness of intercultural and international diversity.
- There are some missions and/or parishes which are not autonomous and where confreres need external help or have recourse to other means, such as teaching.
- Internal solidarity is lacking in the Province and individualism is increasing.
- It is necessary to have a clear strategic mission plan, specifying the priorities of the Province and ensuring community life in view of the growth of the local Church.
- There are also challenges related to internal solidarity and individualism in the Province.
- The high number of communities reduced to two members, due to the lack of personnel, sometimes one of these being a confrere on placement.
- The risk of overburdening the confreres with too many activities. Sixth, at the level of formation.

- The urgency of building schools that will receive a reasonable number of scholastics.
- The Province has no contract with the dioceses where they are on mission.
- The problem of entry visas to Angola complicates appointments to the mission.

2.1.6.2 MALAWI GROUP

REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

AREA: 118,000 KM²

POPULATION: 18,629,000

BIRTH RATE: 34‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 55‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 63 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 83.4%, MUSLIMS 12.8%,

UNAFFILIATED 2.0%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 1.7%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 62.1%

GDP PER CAPITA: 1,064 USD/HAB

Political, Economic, Social and Religious Context

Malawi, officially known as the Republic of Malawi, is a landlocked country in southeastern Africa. It shares borders with Mozambique on the east and southwest, with Tanzania on the north and northeast, and with Zambia on the west and northwest. Lake Malawi, a rift valley lake and one of the largest and deepest lakes in the world, accounts for almost one-fifth of the country's area. Malawi is also called *The Warm Heart of Africa* because of its iconic peace and loving, warm and welcoming people. Malawi people are of *Bantu* origin and they are comprised of different ethnic groups. These include Chewa, Nyanja, Yao, Tumbuka, Lomwe, Sena, Tonga, Ngoni, Ngonde, Asian and European. English and Chichewa are the national languages.

The country became independent from the British in 1964 and lived under Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda's autocratic rule for three decades. The democratic government took over in 1994. The current President, Prof. Peter Mutharika, came into power in May 2014 in Malawi's first ever Tripartite Elections in which presidential, parliamentary and local government elections were conducted at once. In May 2019, however, he was re-elected amid widespread claims of rigged elections. This has led to protests and a serious apathy towards the ruling party.

Agriculture is Malawi's largest economic activity contributing 28.7 percent of GDP and more than 80 percent of export earnings. Malawi had achieved encouraging economic results between 2006 and 2010, which averaged 7.5 percent growth but suffered serious setbacks in 2011 and 2012.

The Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM) is a pro-active and a strong prophetic voice in the country that helped the emergence of democracy with their 1992 powerful pastoral letter that had challenged Kamuzu Banda's regime. ECM dynamically coordinates socio-pastoral programs that the dioceses implement as part of the Church's evangelization mission.

History, Context and the Mission of the Circumscription

The first three Spiritans came to Malawi on the 1st of March 1971 and seven more followed in the course of the same year. These Irish missionaries had initially worked in Eastern Nigeria before the Nigerian federal government expelled them from that country just after Biafra war had ended. In 1973 the Irish confreres were joined by three other confreres from Trans-Canada Province. In 1993, the former West African Foundation (WAF), following an appeal from the Generalate in Rome, sent the first two confreres to join the ageing Irish confreres. In 1996 the remaining Spiritans from the Irish Province, with young WAF confreres reached an agreement to become

members of the Spiritan Malawi International Group. With the dissolution of South Central African Foundation (SCAF), in 2011, all Malawian nationals who belonged to the Foundation, became members of Malawi Group. In 2021, the Group will celebrate 50 years of Spiritan Presence in Malawi.

The membership of Malawi Group comes from Zambia, Uganda and Malawi. There are 24 professed members of origin of whom 17 are ordained and 7 temporarily professed. There are 3 members by appointment (from Zambia and Uganda). Ten members of origin are in mission *ad extra* in Germany, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Papua New Guinea and Italy. In the formation program, they have 7 in second cycle, 7 in first cycle and 3 postulants.

The Group is essentially involved in parish and formation ministries in three dioceses namely, Blantyre (Archdiocese), Dedza and Mangochi. However, as a way of diversifying their apostolate in the country, they have embarked on the construction of *Streams in the Desert Spiritan Spirituality and Retreat Centre* and they intend to embark on the education apostolate and build Spiritan schools.

The circumscription runs its formation programs and activities in collaboration with the Union of Circumscription of South-Central Africa (UCSCA). They send its novices to UCSCA's novitiate in Zambia and their Second Cycle students to Kenya, Trinidad, and elsewhere.

Strengths and Challenges

- The Spiritans in Malawi are highly appreciated by the local Church; they enjoy a healthy collaboration with the local ordinaries, the local clergy and other religious, and the people that they serve.
- There is a guarantee of a continued Spiritan presence in Malawi due to the Group's steady flow of vocations and because of the existence of a vibrant formation program; they have young and energetic confreres. They have a very strong group of Spiritan Friends who support them morally and materially.
- Personnel, finances and the lack of self-sustainability of the parishes where Spiritans work are the main challenges. Malawi Group is lacking sufficient financial resources for the life of the confreres and for running mission and formation programs effectively and efficiently. The confreres do not have a health cover and the Group has not yet established sources of income generation. Lack of personnel limits the extent they can creatively respond to the many needs of the local Church and the diversification of mission frontiers. The Group also lacks experienced and specialized confreres and diversification of apostolates.
- The Group is working towards self-reliance, diversification of apostolates and they are open to taking on new parishes. They will continue to welcome confreres from other circumscriptions in order to make the Group more international and intercultural.

2.1.6.3 MOZAMBIQUE GROUP

REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

AREA: 799,000 KM²

POPULATION: 30,366,000

BIRTH RATE: 38‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 73‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 60 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 57.8%, MUSLIMS 17.2%,

UNAFFILIATED 17.3%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 7.6%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 50.6%

GDP PER CAPITA: 1,093 USD/HAB

POLITICAL, SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION

Mozambique is a country in southern Africa. It borders Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Swaziland. Its 2,500 kilometre long coastline in the Indian Ocean faces Madagascar. About 70% of its population of 30 million people (2018) live and work in rural areas. It is endowed with vast arable land, water, energy, as well as mineral resources and recently discovered offshore natural gas, three deep-water ports and a relatively large potential labour pool. It is also strategically located; four of the six countries bordering it are landlocked and therefore depend on Mozambique as a gateway to world markets.

Mozambique is currently defined as an “authoritarian regime”, with a score of less than four out of ten points in the most recent Index of Democracy according to the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). The report notes a sharp drop in the ranking of the country’s electoral process due to “irregularities and violence against members of the opposition” during and after the October 2018 municipal elections. The country, which became independent from Portugal in 1975, is still suffering the effects of a 16-year civil war that ended in 1992. Despite relative peace, tensions remain between the ruling party, Frelimo, and the former opposition rebel movement, Renamo. Corruption has become a major concern. The discovery of gas deposits off the coast of Mozambique in 2011 could transform the economy of one of Africa’s poorest countries.

Mozambique’s close ties with South Africa, which is the economic engine of the region, underline the importance of its economic, political and social development for the stability and growth of Southern Africa as a whole. Mozambique continues on a slow growth trajectory after the hidden debt crisis of 2016. Macroeconomic conditions are improving, but economic performance has not yet returned to pre-crisis levels. But despite recent economic growth, more than half of Mozambique’s 30 million people still live below the poverty line.

Since 1994, the country has been living in a democracy, and in the last two years the north of the country has been attacked by armed men who have indiscriminately burned villages and killed people. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has cost many lives. Mozambique is one of the ten countries most affected by HIV/AIDS: about 1.5 million people are affected by the pandemic (www.portaldogoverno.gov.mz). Natural disasters have placed people’s lives in a very vulnerable situation. The country’s economy is heavily dependent on imports. Hopefully, the recent discovery of oil and natural gas will improve the lives of the population. With regard to culture and religion, Mozambique is considered a mosaic of diverse cultures: Swahili, Islamic groups and Bantu. The Constitution provides for the right to practice religion freely or not and prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion.

HISTORY, BACKGROUND AND MISSION OF THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION

It is in this beautiful country that the Spiritans arrived in November 1996, after having started with two international communities (north and centre) composed of two Portuguese, two Nigerians and two Angolans. After eight years of mission, the Group opened another community in the north of the country and ten years later a fourth. Currently, the Group has eleven Spiritans of eight nationalities.

The Church in Mozambique has a dimension of first evangelization. The confreres work in the spiritual animation of small Christian communities; in the formation of community leaders; in teaching (youth centres, primary and secondary schools, diocesan seminary and Catholic university) and in various diocesan services.

In the area of formation they have a postulancy, and in the communities there is a confrere who takes care of the vocational animation of candidates for spiritual life. Today we have 5 students in Angola: 4 in philosophy and 1 who is preparing for the novitiate. In Malawi there is one in philosophy. Finally, at the postulancy, there are 2 candidates.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Among the strong points of the Group are internationality and interculturality; community life; the sense of sacrifice and commitment in the mission and parish ministry and the education of young people; the mutual appreciation between the Spiritans and the local Church; the existence of candidates for the Spiritan family.

Since the beginning of the mission, there have been great challenges: the very fragile financial situation; the lack of persistence of the confreres in the mission, which causes instability among the personnel of the group; the low academic level of the candidates for Spiritan life and the lack of confreres with mission experience.

The Group must strive to work for the self-financing of the Group (it is in progress); to strengthen the academic level of the students (academic strengthening); to rely on confreres who already have enough mission experience to integrate the Group and work for its greater stability; to have a larger house to welcome the confreres in Nampula and to increase the number of missionary volunteers.

2.1.6.4 SOUTH AFRICA GROUP

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

AREA: 1,221,000 KM²

POPULATION: 58,558,000

BIRTH RATE: 21‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 35‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 64 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 80.8%, MUSLIMS 1.9%,

UNAFFILIATED 15.3%, HINDUS 1.0%, BUDDHISTS 1.0%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 0.5%, OTHER 0.3%, JEWS 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 94.4%

GDP PER CAPITA: 11,923 USD/HAB

Political, Economic, Social and Religious Context

South Africa came into being through the 1910 Act of Union that united two British colonies and two independent republics into the Union of South Africa. After the establishment of the first colonial outpost of the Dutch East India Company at Cape Town in 1652, South Africa became a society officially divided into colonizer and native, white and nonwhite, citizen and subject, employed and indentured, free and slave. This nation is called a Rainbow Nation because of its social cultural diversity.

The country has made considerable strides toward improving the wellbeing of its citizens since its transition from *apartheid* to democracy in 1994, but progress is slowing, violence still lingers, the land issue remains a cause of disagreement and corruption has significantly undermined the nation's economy quite a lot. The gap between the rich and the poor has widened and service delivery has gone bellow standards. Nevertheless, despite all these economic woes the country remains a giant among African economies.

Overtone of disillusionment, hatred, racism, xenophobia, anger and hatred still linger in the strongly protestant rainbow nation. The Church has remained prophetic and a voice of the voiceless amid all this. Recently, South Africa has become fertile soil for the prosperity prophets and preachers who are obviously cashing in on the poor and the marginalized who desperately seek miraculous riches and healing. It is in this

context that the Spiritans are carrying out the mission of the Lord and the charism of our founders.

History, Context and The Mission of the Circumscription

The Spiritan presence in South Africa dates back to 1902 when the first German pioneers came to settle in the Vicariate of Kroonstad and later went on establishing Bethlehem diocese. The Group was established in 2014 when the concept of "District" phased out. The current membership is comprised of 20 confreres from a number of nationalities: Angola, South Africa, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Nigeria, Zambia, Congo DRC, Congo Brazzaville and Uganda. Only one confrere is South African.

The Group is present in the following four dioceses: Archdioceses of Durban, Johannesburg, and the dioceses of Dundee and Bethlehem. Their areas of pastoral engagement include traditional parish work (10 parishes), chaplaincy to prisons, hospitals, universities, homes of the aged, convents, refugees, immigrants and schools. They are also involved in ministries such as Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation, Marriage and Family life, formation and education, administration of a diocesan pastoral centre (Durban).

In terms of vocation animation and formation, the Group has a confrere responsible for vocation promotion. From early 1980's up to 2010 there was a strong vocation promotion to Spiritan life in South Africa. Many young men who joined us and followed through our formation program ended up leaving for various reasons. A number of them later joined the dioceses. There are still some young men who express their desire to become Spiritans but they often lack the required academic qualifications for entering philosophical consortium in Malawi. Only two eventually became Spiritans in South Africa and, presently, there is no single candidate to Spiritan life at any stage of the formation. Nevertheless, the Group belongs to UCSCA (Union of circumscriptions of South Central Africa) and financially supports the Union's formation activities as much as possible.

Strengths and Challenges

- The Spiritans in South Africa enjoy a good relationship with the local ordinaries, the clergy and the people of God in the mission. The Group is a member of the Leadership Conference of Consecrated life (LCCL) in South Africa. The confreres are dedicated to their respective apostolates in the parishes and in other apostolates and they are sensitive to the care for the poor. The Group has signed contracts with the bishops on almost all the parishes and responsibilities entrusted to Spiritans. They have annual retreats, regional meetings, together and they also celebrate major Spiritan feasts together
- The Group is committed to its well-diversified apostolate. In order to make their works sustainable they continue to make efforts to promoting vocations to Spiritan life and they welcome confreres on mission appointment.
- Although the resources are dwindling due to the dwindling foreign help, the Group has sufficient resources for its number and functioning. The members of the Group come from a diversity of cultures and nationalities. The new Group house in Benoni serves as reference point for the confreres.
- The Group has yet to map-out its missionary vision and strategic plan. The majority of the confreres work in parishes and respond to the needs of the dioceses. Spiritans are not well known as such in the places where they work. The majority of the confreres live alone. Where the confreres are living together, the community life is minimal and in a limited number of communities. Vocations are rare in the local Church and this is affecting the Spiritans as well. Materialism, the

gap between the rich and the poor, violence and single parenthood are challenging aspects in their efforts to evangelization.

- The geographical distances between the various communities where confreres live and work makes it difficult for the animation of the Group.

2.1.6.5 ZAMBIA GROUP

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

AREA: 753,000 KM²

POPULATION: 17,861,000

BIRTH RATE: 36‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 61‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 63 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 97.4%, MUSLIMS 0.6%,

UNAFFILIATED 0.6%, HINDUS 0.1%, BUDDHISTS 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 0.3%, OTHER 0.9%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 83.0%

GDP PER CAPITA: 3,557 USD/HAB

Political, Economic, Social and Religious Context

Zambia, a republic in South Central Africa, shares a border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tanzania to the north, Malawi to the east, Mozambique to the southeast, Zimbabwe, Botswana and the Caprivi Strip of Namibia to the south and with Angola to the west. This land-locked country is regarded as a peaceful and Christian country with a relatively mature multi-party democracy which was born in 1991. Within this period of democratization, Zambia has recorded tremendous economic growth and has attracted a lot of foreign investors. Nevertheless, Zambia still ranks among the countries with highest levels of poverty and inequality globally. Zambia got its independence from the British in 1964.

The 2015 edition of the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) reveals that governance in Zambia had improved between 2000 and 2014, but it has stagnated in the past two years. Zambia was rated 6th out of 12 countries in southern Africa and 12th out of 54 countries on the continent on the governance index.

Zambia was declared a Christian nation by President Fredrick Chiluba's administration. It is important to note that the Catholic Church has a very strong voice in the social-political life of the people. She has played and continues to play a pivotal role in shaping the democracy of the country. Her advocacy and sensitization role in 1990/91 when the country moved from one party to multi-party system cannot be over emphasized.

History, Context and the Mission of the Circumscription

The first group of Spiritans, mainly from Ireland, came to Zambia in 1971, 49 years ago. In the late 70s, they were joined by confreres from East Africa. Spiritan presence was in the southern and western parts of the country, between the Tonga and Lozi speaking people, in Livingstone Diocese. Today Livingstone has given birth to other two dioceses, Mongu and Monze dioceses. In 1980, another presence of Spiritans from the Province of Nigeria was established in the Northwestern part of the country in the diocese of Solwezi. Both groups effectively worked separately until 1992 when the last of the Nigerian group returned home. The Group will celebrate 50 years of Spiritan presence in 2021.

Today, the group has a considerable number of members by origin and by appointment. There are 20 professed Zambian confreres of whom 15 are ordained. There are 10 confreres on appointment from Nigeria, Ireland, Malawi, Kenya and India. Out of the 15 ordained Zambian confreres 1 is working in the circumscription of Congo DR, 1 in Tanzania, 2 in Malawi, 1 in Mozambique and 1 in Papua New Guinea.

The Spiritans in Zambia, live and work in nine communities in three dioceses, namely; Livingstone, Monze and Archdiocese of Lusaka. Among these 9 communities, 7 are parishes (three in Livingstone, three in Monze and one in Lusaka), one is a formation house (Postulancy) and the central house and administration in Lusaka. They have plans to establish a tenth community in the diocese of Ndola (Copper-belt).

In Zambia, the Spiritans are essentially involved in parish apostolate. However, the Group is also committed to Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation and they take care of orphans through Orphanage and Vulnerable Organization (OVO). The Group is blessed with young confreres in the different stages of formation. Candidates to the Spiritan family do their postulancy within Zambia and the rest of the stages are undertaken jointly with the UCSCA, in Malawi and Zambia, for philosophy and novitiate respectively, and theology in any of international second cycle communities.

Strengths and Challenges

- The Group plans for their activities and they support each other in mission.
- There is a good sense of community living in this both international and intercultural Group. They celebrate major feasts of the Congregation together and they have annual retreats and group and zonal meetings.
- The Group has written and signed contracts with local dioceses.
- The Group faces a number of challenges that include: lack of material/financial resources for both mission and formation activities, insufficient personnel caused by confreres who leave the Group after a short number of years, and the absence of self-sustaining projects and a number of young confreres have refused to learn local languages and lack of means of transport in the missions. In order to address the challenge of material resources the is working towards using their lands for viable projects: to build a retreat centre; to open new communities in other dioceses and to build a Spiritan secondary school.

2.1.6.6 ZIMBABWE GROUP

REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

AREA: 391,000 KM²

POPULATION: 14,645,000

BIRTH RATE: 31‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 51‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 61 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 87.1%, MUSLIMS 0.9%,

UNAFFILIATED 7.6%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 4.0%, OTHER 0.3%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 88.7%

GDP PER CAPITA: 1,683 USD/HAB

Political, Economic, Social and Religious Context

Zimbabwe, formerly called Rhodesia after Cecil John Rhodes (1853–1902),¹⁴⁹ is landlocked and situated in Southern Africa and sharing its borders with Mozambique to the east, South Africa to the south, Botswana to the west, and Zambia to the north and northwest. The country traditionally has a strong regional clan structure, with six main groups: the Manyika, the Ndaou, the Zezuru, the Karanga, the Korekore and the Rozvi. These groups are formed based on linguistic and cultural similarities as

¹⁴⁹ Cecil John Rhodes PC (5 July 1853 – 26 March 1902) was a British businessman, mining magnate and politician in southern Africa who served as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from 1890 to 1896. An ardent believer in British imperialism, Rhodes and his British South Africa Company founded the southern African territory of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe and Zambia), which the company named after him in 1895.

they all fall under the same Bantu linguistic family. Zimbabwe became independent from the British rule in 1980.

The land issue¹⁵⁰ in Zimbabwe has brought multi-faceted ills on a country that was once known as *the breadbasket of Africa* because of its vibrant agriculture and food production. From the year 2000 to date, the country's economy continues to experience severe challenges. Poverty is rampant and infrastructure has visibly deteriorated. The people have no money and they continue to experience shortages of basic commodities. The country continues to face sanctions from some western countries. The new government that took power from the late veteran leader, Robert Mugabe, does not seem to be making the situation any better. Prices of basic commodities are too high for the common person and there certainly is a serious dissatisfaction and disillusionment among the citizens. In early 2019, Zimbabwe also seriously suffered from the effects of Cyclone Idai that had landed in Beira-Mozambique, and ripped through its south-eastern part. The country lost life and infrastructure.

Zimbabwe, like its neighbouring countries, has not been spared by the spate of self-acclaimed prophets and prosperity Gospel preachers. Many Catholic faithful are falling prey to these with people often moving from one prophet to the next or from one Church to the other, in search for healing, wealth and knowledge of their fate. Many new religions originating in Africa are also found in Zimbabwe. The most important is the Zionist or Apostolic Church, a kind of revival movement dependent on charismatic leaders. Zimbabwe also has a minority of Muslims, Jews and Hindus.

History, Context and The Mission of the Circumscription

The Spiritan presence in Zimbabwe dates back to April 22, 1984 with the arrival into the country of the pioneer Spiritans from Nigeria. From that year to this present moment, the Spiritan presence in Zimbabwe has grown from strength to strength in the two dioceses of Mutare and Harare.

The membership consists of the 10 members by origin of whom 7 are ordained, 6 members by appointment who come from Nigeria. There is only one Zimbabwean on mission *ad extra* in Mozambique. In formation, there are 2 postulants, 5 students in First Cycle (philosophy), 1 novice and 3 in Second Cycle.

The Group is involved in both pastoral and educational apostolates. In the pastoral field, confreres are working in seven parishes spread over two dioceses. In the education apostolate they are involved both in chaplaincy works in two universities and oversee the affairs of primary and secondary schools which are within the premises of the parishes where they work. The confreres cater for the spiritual affairs of the staff and students, through the celebration of masses, holding of counselling sessions, retreats etc. They have a secondary school founded by the Spiritans known as 'Holy Ghost College Marange.'

Spiritans in Zimbabwe are actively involved in vocation animation and welcome candidates for Spiritan life. In 1999 that the first indigenous Zimbabwean candidates were recruited into the Spiritan postulancy program. Their postulancy is in Marange and they send their First Cycle candidates and novices to UCSCA's formation

¹⁵⁰ In Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe's Government took farms that belonged to white farmers without compensation and gave them to the blacks, most especially the war veterans. Land reform has had a serious negative effect on the Zimbabwe's economy and heavily contributed to its collapse. There has been a significant drop in total farm output, which has led to instances of starvation and famine. Increasing poverty levels combined with the increased informality of farming operations amongst farmers who received redistributed land has led to an increase in the use of child labour especially in the growing of sugar cane.

communities in Malawi and Zambia respectively. Since the closure of UCSCA's Second Cycle house in Tafara-Harare (2017), the Group send its students to SIST (Spiritans International School of Theology) in Nigeria, and to other international formation communities of the Congregation. Since 2011, the Group is supported by Holy Ghost Vocations Movement, a group of lay Spiritan associates.

Strengths and Challenges

- Spiritans in Zimbabwe live in international and intercultural communities and the confreres are committed to their diversified apostolate. They carry their works in collaboration with the local Church and they enjoy good relationship with the local ordinaries, the local clergy and religious and the faithful. Through their diverse types of apostolate they serve the marginalized and help them know the love of God and deepen their faith.
- They are blessed with vocations to the Spiritan way of life.
- The Group faces personnel and financial challenges in its mission and formation activities. They lack reliable self-reliant projects and trained formators, and there is weak community life due to limited personnel. However, there is a visible commitment to becoming a circumscription that is self-reliant in both human and material resources in order to be able to staff and finance mission and formation.

2.1.7 UNION OF CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS OF INDIAN OCEAN (UCOI)

UCOI was founded at the end of the IOF (Indian Ocean Foundation) Chapter in Antananarivo in July 2007, which was convened with the aim of creating the Indian Ocean Province as a new way of ensuring the Spiritan presence in the region. However, aware that the Spiritan mission is not only geographical, the Chapter adopted another modality of this presence, opting for a "Union of Circumscriptions of the Indian Ocean" (UCOI), bringing together the circumscriptions Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion and Seychelles, and respecting both the differences between their islands and ensuring that they continue their missionary commitment to collaboration and unity.

The political, economic and social context of these islands is not the same from one island to another. Nevertheless, there are close relations between them in terms of settlements, the common area colonized by France and the United Kingdom (for Mauritius and the Seychelles), and linguistic links (Creole language, except Madagascar). These four islands are economically grouped within the Indian Ocean Commission.¹⁵¹ Mauritius, Reunion and Seychelles are classified as middle-income islands while Madagascar is classified as a low-income country. Nonetheless, the economic performance of these two groups hides a common denominator: they are all largely dependent on the outside world and are currently experiencing economic difficulties and profound social, religious and cultural changes that are more or less similar.

UCOI Today

The Council of the Union is composed of the four circumscription Superiors and the Union bursar appointed by the Superiors. The roles of the coordinator and secretary of the Union are assigned to each of the four Superiors in turn annually. The animation is carried out by the coordinator on the basis of the statutes, approved by the General Council in 2011, that define the parameters for the functioning of the Union. Common

¹⁵¹ Sermet, Laurent. « L'océan Indien : la difficile intégration dans l'espace régional », *Revue française d'administration publique*, vol. no101, no. 1, 2002, p. 149. (pp.149-156).

areas of collaboration are: formation, personnel, finances, spiritual animation and mission. Two annual meetings of the Union's superiors provide an opportunity to implement and consolidate this collaboration. All decisions taken during these meetings must be approved and signed by all members of the said Council at the end of their work.

Strengths and Challenges

- UCOI has statutes governing collaboration, unity and solidarity between the four circumscriptions and the confreres. The formation of Spiritan candidates, its functioning and financing, is their main area of collaboration. Vocations are flourishing in Madagascar while in the other three only a few have emerged. A common fund, inherited from the former Districts, allows this structure to take charge of the formation of Spiritan candidates in the Union, from the novitiate to the end of the 2nd cycle. The Union has one formation community, the novitiate in Mauritius. Philosophy and theology are done in other circumscriptions of the Congregation – Kenya, Cameroun, and PANO.
- The Union also strongly emphasizes the importance of making known its history through the digitization and sharing of historical documents and the publication of a Spiritan newsletter on the mission in the Indian Ocean. The first edition of this bi-monthly newsletter was published in February 2018. It allows for better communication and sharing of news - the joys and concerns of the common mission. The General Assembly of UCOI is held every three years on a rotating basis, bringing together three confreres per circumscription, in addition to the Union's superiors and bursar, for a time of evaluation and proposals.
- The mission in the region is focused on continuing the commitments inherited from the former Districts. The four islands share similar missionary challenges, especially those related to the marginalized. Over the past eight years, the confreres have clearly felt the urgency of putting in place a creative missionary approach and ensuring the transmission of the faith to the new generations. The last General Assembly of UCOI, held in Mauritius in June 2019, noted a certain inertia and lack of commitment on the issue of the common mission. The Assembly identified areas for a common missionary project in the region: attention to the marginalized, drug abuse, interreligious dialogue and ecumenism, prison ministry, the pastoral care of migrants, education, the formation and animation of the Spiritan Fraternities and of the Lay Spiritans, and finally the questions of Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation.
- Finance is a challenge for common missionary projects; of particular concern is the ability of the Union to continue the funding of initial formation from novitiate to the end of 2nd cycle formation. The Union members are aware that the annual contributions and the money in the reserve Fund are no longer sufficient to address all the financial demands of the Union. They recognize an urgent need to create new sources of financing to support their missionary projects. To that effect a self-financing commission led by two confreres under the direction of the Superiors was to be established, but unfortunately this has not yet begun its task.
- UCOI will also have to put into practice the orientations adopted at the General Assembly in Mauritius concerning the urgency of a common creative missionary approach on the pastoral care of the marginalized in the region, namely the question of drugs and migrants, in addition to interreligious dialogue.

2.1.7.1 MADAGASCAR PROVINCE

REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR

AREA: 587,000 KM²

POPULATION: 26,969,000

BIRTH RATE: 33‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 43‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 66 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 84.7%, MUSLIMS 3.1%,

UNAFFILIATED 7.3%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 4.7%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 71.6%

GDP PER CAPITA: 1,358 USD/HAB

The Republic of Madagascar is an African island state consisting of a large island in the Indian Ocean separated by the Mozambique Channel from the rest of the continent. An independent country since 1960, it has experienced several political crises. In 2018, tensions were very high in the months leading up to the presidential election. Madagascar is one of the least developed countries with a very low human development index. Social inequalities (more than 80% of the population live below the poverty line at \$2 a day) and geographical inequalities (80% of the population live in rural areas, sometimes very isolated), as well as the degree of corruption in the public sector, are very marked.

Presentation of the Circumscription

The province of Madagascar is a constituency created by the dismantling of the former Indian Ocean Foundation (FOI). The transition of the district to provincial status on 02 October 2014 was an important event, raising a real awareness in favour of its management: animation, administration, training, and finance. It is part of the Union of Indian Ocean Circumscriptions (UCOI). The province of Madagascar collaborates with the UCOI, mainly in the field of Training.

Spiritans work in five dioceses: Antananarivo, Fenerive Antsiranana, Port Berger, Antsiranana, and Mahajanga. The province currently has 65 professed members, 20 of whom are in initial formation. Among the 36 confreres priests and two brothers from the province, 17 work in Madagascar and 21 in mission ad extra in 14 districts. Seven confreres come from other circumscriptions (2 France, 2 Poland, 2 Nigeria and 1 Cameroon). Seventeen members of the Fraternity and 2 Lay Spiritan Associates live and share the spirituality of the Congregation.

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

- The missionary priorities of the district are perfectly in line with the mission of the congregation: first evangelization work (urban and rural parish ministry), formal education in primary, secondary and high schools in Mampikony, and apostolate with street children (NRJ Centre). The commitment of the confreres to serve street children at the NRJ Energy Centre or poor children in the Mandroseza district (Antananarivo) responds to a major challenge in the Malagasy urban society.
- The confreres are young, dynamic and willing to continue the work of evangelisation begun by the European Spiritan elders in the north-western regions of the island. They take more and more seriously the issues of environmental protection, justice and peace and the integrity of creation, the fight against corruption and injustice in the places where they work.
- The province remains very attentive to the ad-extra mission and responds positively to the calls of the congregation.

- The province has two formation houses: the postulancy of Foyer Brottier in Diego-Suarez, and philosophy at Foyer Laval in Antananarivo. Theology is done in Dakar, PANO or Nairobi, Kenya (UCEAF).

Challenges

- The province's finances are limited, although major efforts have been made in recent years to set up self-financing projects. There is still a lack of awareness on the part of some confreres of the precarious financial situation of the province.
- The province's works are currently experiencing some financial stability. But the sources of funding do not seem sufficiently diversified, especially to perpetuate certain important works.
- Although much effort is being made to raise the level of French in young people in training, this remains a challenge.
- Lack of professed Spiritan confreres who could accompany the Fraternity and the lay associates.
- The province has not established contracts with the dioceses.

2.1.7.2 MAURITIUS GROUP

REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

AREA: 2,000 KM²

POPULATION: 1,270,000

BIRTH RATE: 10‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 13‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 75 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 32.8%, MUSLIMS 17.4%,

UNAFFILIATED 0.8%, HINDUS 48.4%, BUDDHISTS 0.4%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 0.4%, OTHER 0.1%, JEWS 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 92.7%

GDP PER CAPITA: 20,189 USD/HAB

Mauritius has experienced three periods of colonisation: the Dutch (1598 - 1710), French (1715 - 1810), and English (1810 - 1968). It became an independent republic on 12 March 1968 from the United Kingdom. It is part of the Commonwealth and has a long tradition of stable, multi-party parliamentary democracy. It includes Rodrigues Island, the Agalega Islands and the Saint-Brandon Archipelago. The population represents a rich multi-ethnic and multi-religious mosaic: Hindus, Muslims, Sino-Mauritians, Creoles and Franco-Mauritians... it is often in the political context that ethnic considerations take their importance.

The country's economy is being driven by the service sector around tourism - catering, accommodation, leisure, etc. - and financial services. Mauritius is classified as a middle-income country due to its economic performance. However, as growth increases, so do wealth and income disparities. The country is heavily confronted with problems related to alcoholism, drugs and prostitution.

Presentation of the Circumscription

The Spiritans arrived in Mauritius in 1841, the year Father Jacques-Désiré Laval (1803-1864) arrived in Mauritius. The history of the local Church and that of the congregation are closely linked through the figure and work of Father Laval. The Venerable François Libermann and his first confreres of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary were incardinated in the diocese of Port-Louis thanks to the welcome of Mgr William Bernard Allen Collier o.s.b. (1802-1890). Spiritans have had a profound impact on the life of this country, both in the field of pastoral care and education. Coming from France, Ireland, England, Canada and Poland, more than two hundred and fifty Spiritans have left their mark on the functioning of the local Church over the

years. With the opening of the College of the Holy Spirit in 1938, the Spiritans had created a priestly vocation nursery.

The Mauritius group consists of 16 confreres: Mauritius 4, France 4, Rodrigues 1, Tanzania 2, Poland 1, Ghana 1, Nigeria 1, Madagascar 1, and Congo Kinshasa 1, with a diocese, Port-Louis, usually with a Spiritan confrere, Maurice Cardinal Piat, and an apostolic Vicariate in Rodrigues whose bishop is Mgr. Alain Harel.

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

- The internationality and interculturality of the members enrich the communities and remain a wonderful testimony in a country where the communities are well identified (Creoles, Hindus, etc.).
- The confreres are involved in several types of ministries: parish pastoral care, chaplaincies, formation, lay pastoral care, the development of the Spiritan spirituality at the Père-Laval Centre in Sainte-Croix in connection with the pilgrimage to the tomb of Blessed Jacques-Désiré Laval and interreligious dialogue, from the School of Interreligious Dialogue in Pont-Praslin.
- The diocese has entrusted the Spiritans with the entire site of the pilgrimage to Sainte Croix, the responsibility of the Centre Père Jacques Désiré Laval as well as the animation of the annual pilgrimage to its vault.
- Sharing the Spiritan spiritual heritage through the creation at *Sainte Croix* of the Spiritual Centre for the spiritual formation of the laity. It has a long tradition of welcoming lay people who share our spirituality. Several of them are engaged in the mission of evangelization alongside the confreres. They take part in the diffusion of spirituality in the context of local pastoral care.

Challenges

- There is a fear of questioning the current insertions and implementing the decisions of the Group's Chapter regarding missionary commitments. While relying more on the priorities of the diocese, the group could focus more on the missionary commitments defined by their chapter: presence among migrants, foreign workers and students, more particular attention to the Creole world, and finally education.
- The group lacks staff to strengthen existing teams and free up confreres for other types of extra-parochial ministries.
- Although the group has been enriched by the arrival of new confreres, the welcome of the latter seems to suffer from a lack of planning, thus preventing a reasonable time to learn Mauritian languages (French or Creole) and culture. In order to respond to the pastoral needs of the local Church, the necessary period of induction is sacrificed.
- The Group has not yet established a contract with the Vicariate of Rodrigues. The ongoing one, between the diocese of Port-Louis and the district could be revisited to integrate the new missionary reality of the group.

2.1.7.3 REUNION GROUP

REUNION, REGION OF FRANCE

AREA: 3,000 KM²
POPULATION: 889,000
BIRTH RATE: 15‰

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 87.6%, MUSLIMS 4.2%,
UNAFFILIATED 2.0%, HINDUS 4.5%, BUDDHISTS 4.5%,
FOLK RELIGIONS 0.4%, OTHER 1.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 3‰
LIFE EXPECTANCY: 80 YRS

ALPHABETISATION: 99.8%
GDP PER CAPITA: 24,295 USD/HAB

Reunion Island, overseas department and French island, 70 km as the crow flies from North to South and from East to West. It is located 200 km southwest of Mauritius and east of Madagascar. Reunion Island is often cited as a model for the mixing of different races, cultures and religions. There is a mixed population: “cafres” (black), whites, “Malabars” (of Indian origin), Chinese, Malagasy etc. There is relative harmony between these different groups, as evidenced by mixed unions.

Presentation of the Circumscription

It can be said that the history of the Church of Reunion cannot be understood independently of the primary inspiration of the Spiritan missionaries of the Province of France: Fathers Guilloteau, Levavasseur, Monnet, Warnet, Mgr Le Roy, Boiteau, Berthou, Raimbaud, Rigolet, Réniers, are outstanding and popular figures. More than 260 Spiritans have participated in the work of evangelization in Reunion Island during the 203 years of missionary presence. The group includes 18 confreres of 8 different nationalities: 5 French, 4 Malagasy, 3 Congolese from Brazzaville, 2 Tanzanians, 1 Angolan, 1 Swiss, 1 Senegalese and 1 Congolese from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

- The Congregation of the Holy Spirit is deeply rooted in the Church and in the Reunionese society: the history of the local Church and that of the congregation are closely linked. Spiritans are recognized as having a decisive role in the maintenance of the island's historical and spiritual heritage: highlighting the great spiritual figures, research, publications, conferences, accompaniment of the Sisters of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary, founded by Mother Mary Magdalene of the Cross with the support of Father Frederic Levavasseur CSSp.
- The formation of lay people remains a priority in evangelization in Reunion Island. The group continues to invest in this field, in particular by maintaining our presence within SEDIFOP (the Diocesan Ongoing Formation Service).
- The group enjoys a fairly good financial health, and also benefits from a Reunionese tradition of generosity and support from faithful and friends.
- Lay people are associated with the Spiritan mission and share our spirituality.

Challenges

- There are many new possible fields of intervention on the island, in which Spiritans could well engage, including interreligious and intercultural dialogue, so relevant in a society as mixed as that of Reunion Island: meeting with Hindus (Malabars) and Muslims. There is also a call to support social and religious practices in the face of individual or collective fears, addictions and anxieties expressed through popular religiosity.
- By responding positively to the diocesan calls to serve parishes, the Spiritans have lost in variety of ministries and pastoral approaches: sea world chaplaincy, ministry in prisons and hospitals, commitment to Justice and Peace.
- The project to create a Father Frederic Levavasseur Spiritual Centre on the Rivière-des-Pluies site has still not been completed. This Centre will be a place for the promotion of the Spiritan spirituality, for interreligious and intercultural dialogue,

for the accompaniment of pilgrims and for the evangelization of the popular religion.

- The system of financial functioning based on individualism must be reviewed to ensure compliance with the Spiritan Rule of Life and our identity as religious.

2.1.7.4 SEYCHELLES GROUP

REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES

AREA: 455 KM²

POPULATION: 98,000

BIRTH RATE: 17‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 14‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 73 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 94.0%, MUSLIMS 1.1%,

UNAFFILIATED 2.1%, HINDUS 2.1%, BUDDHISTS 2.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS < 0.1%, OTHER 0.6%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 94.0%

GDP PER CAPITA: 26,077 USD/HAB

The Seychelles Islands form an archipelago whose three largest islands are: Mahé, Praslin and La Digue. The archipelago has been an independent state since 1976. It experienced a long period of Marxist-inspired single-party rule until 1993, when the first pluralist presidential election was held, following the adoption of a new Constitution. It is a relatively young democracy. Since then, the seizure of power has been through elections.

Economically, the archipelago is prosperous. Two sectors constitute the two pillars of its economy: tourism, whose sector has been growing for several years, and fisheries, particularly industrial tuna fishing. While its economic growth is accompanied by a sharp increase in the demand for labour, Seychelles is increasingly turning to expatriate workers. However, in an uncertain global economic context, the possibility of an increase in poverty, unemployment and vulnerability is a cause for concern and a certain increase in juvenile delinquency.

Presentation of the Circumscription

The evangelization of the Seychelles was the work of the Capuchins in 1850. Having become an apostolic vicariate in 1880, this territory became the diocese of Port Victoria in 1892. The Spiritans arrived in this local church at the request of Bishop Xavier Baronnet, SJ, in September 2000, after the then General Council validated the project and entrusted it to the Indian Ocean Foundation. The Seychelles group was part of the Indian Ocean Foundation (FOI) until 2007. After the restructuring of this Foundation, it became a member of the Union of Indian Ocean Constituencies (UCOI). The first chapter took place in January 2011. The district has 14 confreres of 8 nationalities: 2 Nigerians, 1 Malagasy, 4 Congolese from Brazzaville, 2 Kenyans, 1 Ghanaian, 1 Senegalese, 1 Central African, and 2 Congolese from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The ordinary of the place, Bishop Denis Wiehe, is a Spiritan. The diocese has 7 diocesan priests, 4 of whom are able to perform a pastoral ministry. The confreres are present in Mahé, Praslin, and La Digue.

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

- The group's mission focuses on four axes: the pastoral care of migrants and people on the move, education, lay formation, and parish ministry. The confreres have responsibilities in diocesan structures: Caritas, Office of Migrants, different chaplaincies.
- The group is responsible for the pastoral animation of nine of the 20 parishes in the diocese. The diocese asks the Spiritans to provide missionary workforces

permanently in 5 parishes: Sainte Thérèse de Plaisance Parish, Sainte Anne de Baie Sainte Anne Parish, Praslin, Saint Joseph Grand-Anse, Praslin, Notre Dame de l'Assomption, La Digue, and Paroisse du Saint-Esprit, Ile Persévérance.

- The Spiritans have brought a new breath of fresh air to the local Church. The diocese has donated land to the Spiritan group so that it becomes its owner (cf. contract signed on 10 February 2015). The group is building a small building with twenty rental apartments for its own financing. A great effort has been made to raise funds for the construction of the Spiritan house.
- In the process of returning to the public school curriculum of religion courses (catechesis), the Spiritans have become involved in the teaching of religion (catechesis) in public schools. The diocese and the Spiritan group are working on a project to build a Catholic school on *Île Aurore*. The diocese wishes to entrust the management of this school to the Spiritan group.
- The collaboration between the Diocese of Port-Victoria and the Spiritan Group is governed by a contract signed in 2011, and updated in 2019.
- Many Seychellois lay people are getting closer to the confreres and expressing the desire to share the Spiritan spirituality. They are organized in Spiritan Fraternities, which constitute a considerable financial support force for Spiritan projects: Spiritan house, Catholic school project, etc.

Challenges

- In the face of the drug scourge that is rampant among Seychelles' youth, the group's missionary project must include it in its priorities.
- The group lacks capital. Its financial resources are insufficient due to lack of self-financing projects. The construction of the Spiritan house could contribute to this in the future.
- For a long time, some confreres remained alone in the parishes, although a small community operating structure is gradually being set up in some places. In general, pastoral requirements take precedence over community obligations. Relations between confreres sometimes lack mutual trust and are marked by individualism.

2.1.8 OTHER CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS IN AFRICA

2.1.8.1 ALGERIA GROUP

REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

AREA: 2,382,000 KM²

POPULATION: 43,053,000

BIRTH RATE: 25‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 25‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 77 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 0.2%, MUSLIMS 97.9%,

UNAFFILIATED 1.8%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS < 0.1%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 75.1%

GDP PER CAPITA: 13,802 USD/HAB

Background

After more than a century of French rule, Algerians struggled for much of the 1950s to gain independence in 1962. The main Algerian political party, the National Liberation Front (FLN), created in 1954 as part of the struggle for independence, has since largely dominated politics. The Algerian government introduced a multiparty system in 1988 in response to public unrest, but the rise of political Islam triggered a full-blown civil war, which experienced intense violence from 1992 to 1998, resulting

in more than 100,000 deaths¹⁵². Abdelaziz Bouteflika, with the support of the army, won the presidency in 1999 and went on to win the following elections three times. At the end of February 2019, against the backdrop of a worsening economic situation¹⁵³, demonstrations broke out throughout the country against President Bouteflika's decision to run for a fifth term. Bouteflika resigned on 2 April 2019 and was replaced by a provisional regime, still controlled by the army. However, the Algerian people remain mobilised for the departure of the entire system and denounce the army's stranglehold on the Algerian state. In this tense context, the various political organizations, as well as civil society associations, are seeking the conditions for a way out of the crisis.

The Spiritan Presence

The Congregation has been present in the diocese of Oran since 1901. It was first established in Misserghin, to take over responsibility for a technical and agricultural training centre. This institution had a great influence throughout the Oranie and beyond, until 1975, when it was nationalized as part of the agrarian revolution. The Spiritans then put themselves at the disposal of the diocese, first in Oran (1978-1974), then in Sidi-Bel-Abbès (1980), Mascara (1991) and Ghazaouet (2001). In collaboration with religious sisters and lay people, they animated small local Christian communities and platforms for meetings between Christians and Muslims.

Today, the Group of Spiritans in Algeria is composed of five members, (three French, one Central African and one Nigerian¹⁵⁴) forming two communities: one in Mascara, and the other in Sidi-Bel-Abbès. The ages range from 33 to 78 years (average 55 years).

The activities of the confreres at the service of the Christian community and Algerian society take several forms:

- Pastoral services: animation of small parish communities, chaplaincy of sub-Saharan students, prisoners and migrants.
- Inter-religious dialogue: meeting with Muslims open to dialogue with believers of other religions; animation of Islamic-Christian groups.
- Activities within "meeting platforms": library, school support, reading club, advanced foreign language courses for adults, promotion of women, sports activities, dispensary.
- Insertions in the activities of the society (cultural, sports, leisure...) according to the possibilities and opportunities.
- Solidarity towards the needy.

Strengths

- The confreres are motivated and resolutely committed to their mission of presence, dialogue and service. They are remarkably integrated into the human and ecclesial fabric of Algeria.
- The group makes an effort to acquire an in-depth knowledge of the social, cultural and religious realities of contemporary Algeria. The Chapter of 2018 decided that,

¹⁵² Including the Bishop of Oran, Bishop Pierre Claverie, and 18 martyrs, who were beatified in Oran on December 8, 2018

¹⁵³ Algeria is experiencing a difficult economic situation: the growth rate has been declining since 2016 and stood at 1.7% in the third quarter of 2018. The low price of hydrocarbons (94.5% of the country's exports) since the summer of 2014 is putting strong pressure on public finances and the trade balance. In April 2018, unemployment affected 11.1% of the working population and 26.4% of the 16-24 year olds (source: France Diplomatie).

¹⁵⁴ In addition to this, a young Gabonese colleague, recently assigned to the Group, will be joining the Group.

in addition to the initiation, apprenticeship and ongoing formation of the confreres on a daily basis, “a more complete time of specialized formation in Arabic and Islamology be offered to confreres to improve their pastoral action and immersion in this Arab-Muslim country”.

- Community life is a priority. The two communities, small but intergenerational and intercultural, are places of simple fraternity, mutual support, dialogue and prayer.
- The Group has come out of a certain isolation, valuing opportunities for meetings, exchanges and cooperation with other Spiritan circumscriptions, especially in Africa.

Challenges

- The Algerian context is demanding and social and political control is very constraining. This imposes discretion, modesty and requires special provisions on the part of the confreres for a form of “mission of presence”.
- Finding confreres available for this mission remains a challenge, aggravated by generally restrictive methods of access (visas) and complicated administrative procedures. In addition, there is another source of fragility and instability in the group: over the years, many confreres sent for specialisation studies have not returned to Algeria once their formation has been completed.
- Strengthening the group with competent and motivated confreres would, however, make it possible to respond to the invitation of the diocese to consider a Spiritan commitment in an urban parish in the regional capital of Oran.

2.1.8.2 CONGO KINSHASA PROVINCE

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

AREA: 2,345,000 KM²

POPULATION: 86,791,000

BIRTH RATE: 41‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 100‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 60 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 95.8%, MUSLIMS 1.5%,

UNAFFILIATED 1.7%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 0.7%, OTHER 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 77.0%

GDP PER CAPITA: 796 USD/HAB

Country Overview

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a vast country richly endowed with mineral resources. The country has experienced several political crises. The disintegration of the formal economic structures and the political instability of recent years have distanced this beautiful country from the paths of development, making the living conditions of the population precarious. The Catholic Church plays an important role in the search for solutions to the problems and accompanies the Congolese people in their daily difficulties. The security situation, especially in the east of the country, remains worrying due to the actions of many armed groups. The illegal exploitation of natural resources continues to be a source of serious humanitarian crisis in that area. The Ebola epidemic, which has affected the eastern part of the country and has claimed several victims, remains for the time being confined to a few provinces of the country, but other provinces and neighbouring countries remain under surveillance, given the risk of its spread.

Presentation of the Circumscription

The first Spiritan missionaries to set foot on Congolese soil were French. They arrived in 1880 and stayed until 1890. Forced to leave again for political reasons, it was not until 1907 that the Spiritan missionaries returned, this time of Belgian origin. They

then resumed the evangelisation of the Congo. In 1986 the Foundation of Congo Kinshasa was created, and on 2 October 2015 it became a Province.

The Province has 71 confreres, 56 of whom are in perpetual vows, there are 15 young professed, 4 novices, and 18 non-professed. 29 confreres are in ad-extra appointments, 23 ad-intra and 3 in irregular situation, and one confrere is a bishop. The members in ad-extra appointments are in 14 circumscriptions, namely: Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Gabon, Cameroon, Ghana, PANO, Seychelles, France, Italy, Europe Province, Canada, USA, Paraguay and Brazil. The confreres appointed to the Province of Congo Kinshasa are 7: 1 from Cameroon, 1 from Ghana, 1 from Zambia, 3 from Nigeria and 1 from CAR. The main house is in Lubumbashi. Given the size of the country, the circumscription comprises three regions, namely: the Eastern Region (Kindu, Kongolo, Manono), the Southern Region (Lubumbashi and Kolwezi), and the Western Region (Kinshasa). The confreres are divided into 14 communities in 7 of the 46 dioceses of the country. Of the 14 communities, 9 are parish communities, 1 is the provincial administration and 4 are formation communities, distributed as follows: Pre-postulancy, Philosophy, Novitiate, and Theology.

The missionary priorities are threefold: parish ministry (first evangelization and deepening and strengthening of the faith) and accompaniment of the basic communities; education for human promotion, and commitment to JPIC issues.

Strengths

- The Province is young, with confreres who show enthusiasm, a spirit of sacrifice, and generosity in their missionary commitments, and very often in difficult conditions.
- The openness of the Province to internationality and interculturality, by welcoming confreres on missionary appointments from other circumscriptions, is noteworthy.
- The rigorous management of funds and financial solidarity are the beginning of a solution to the financial problem of the circumscription, and almost every confrere participates. A project management team has been set up to study various projects as a means of taking financial responsibility for the Province.
- There is a group of Lay Spiritan Associates and a group of Spiritan Fraternities, especially in Lubumbashi, Kolwezi, and Kongolo. They are an important financial support to the missionary activities of the Province.

Challenges

- Insertions in areas of first evangelisation lack adequate personnel and financial means, thus weakening the effectiveness of the confreres' work. The bishops of the dioceses concerned express their difficulty in finding funding to support the work of the apostolic workers in their dioceses. The majority of the insertions do not have signed contracts with the dioceses.
- The Province does not have reliable sources of income on which to rely for its expenses; self-financing projects are insignificant compared to its needs. Difficulties and costs of travel do not facilitate the animation of the Province or its unity.
- All the training courses are carried out in the circumscription. A major difficulty with this arrangement is that the students lack openness to internationality and interculturality. There are also important financial consequences due to the cost of travel. There is also a lack of trained formators.
- Given the isolation of the Congo Kinshasa Province, the General Council had asked it to join the UCSAC (BG.6.8.1). A number of people are reluctant to do so.

Two reasons were given: the fear that the Province would lose its “autonomy” and the financial implications of travel by students and the provincial.

2.1.8.3 CABO VERDE GROUP

REPUBLIC OF CAPE VERDE

AREA: 4,000 KM²

POPULATION: 550,000

BIRTH RATE: 20‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 20‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 73 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 89.3%, MUSLIMS 0.1%,

UNAFFILIATED 9.0%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 1.4%, OTHER 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 86.8%

GDP PER CAPITA: 5,893 USD/HAB

Political, Socio-Economic and Religious Background

Cape Verde is located 500 km from the west coast of Africa. This country is composed of an archipelago of ten islands. It is estimated that it has 520,500 inhabitants on nine of the islands. Only 10% of its territory is classified as arable land, and the country has limited mineral resources. The country was a Portuguese colony and after four centuries of intense exploration, the original vegetation has practically disappeared. Independence was not achieved until 1975.

Politics in Cape Verde has been largely consensus-oriented, and since its independence from Portugal in 1975, Cape Verde has not suffered a single coup d'état. Elections are considered free and fair and the ruling parties alternate regularly. The current government of Cape Verde has been in power since the presidential and legislative elections of 2016, which led to a change with the victory of the opposition Democratic Movement (MpD) after 15 years of government under the Cape Verde African Independence Party (PAICV). These two parties dominate Cape Verde's political scene and are both fairly centrist. There is also a third party, the Independent and Democratic Union of Cape Verde (UCID), which has slightly increased its share of the vote.

Cape Verde's economy is supported by tourism, based on an attractive year-round climate, beautiful beaches, stable democracy, limited security risks and proximity to Europe. The country's small population is spread over nine islands scattered over a large area of water. It is a major obstacle to growth and development. It limits economies of scale and creates significant connectivity problems and challenges for the provision of services, including energy, water, education and health.

History, Background and Mission

The history of the Spiritan presence in Cape Verde began in 1941. This presence was begun by the Spiritans of the Portuguese Province and, thus, we celebrated our 75th anniversary in 2016. The contribution of the Spiritans to the building of the diocese is appreciated. With the election in 2008 of the first Cape Verdean Superior and the presence of a greater number of members from the diocese, this has facilitated a greater Cape Verdean identity in the group and has allowed a better articulation and rooting of the Spiritan vocation in the local Church.

The Cape Verdean Group has 18 members from the country, including 11 priests, 2 bishops (one has just died), 5 professed students. Among the original members, 6 priests and one bishop are on an “Ad Gentes” mission. About 14 Spiritans work in the circumscription: 5 from Cape Verde, 6 Portuguese, 1 Nigerian (South-East) and 1 Ugandan intern. In November 2018, another Nigerian was appointed to the Group. Don Paulino Évora, CSSp. was the 33rd diocesan bishop of Santiago in 1975 and retired in 2009. He died on 16 June 2019. During his episcopate, he gave great

pastoral impetus to the diocese since the country's independence and contributed to the transition from a single-party to a multiparty political system.

The main work of the Group is to collaborate with the local Church in Cape Verde through the running of four parishes and chaplaincies, convents, prisons and immigrants (English-speaking). In the main house in the city of Praia, the confreres strive to provide social and sacramental assistance to those who come seeking pastoral help. The Group has also taken over, in collaboration with the United States Province, in 2016 the parish of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Central Falls, Rhode Island, which has a community of Cape Verdeans and where the Portuguese confreres have worked for more than 30 years. In addition to the 4 parish commitments in the diocese of Santiago and one in the United States, the Group feels itself challenged also in areas other than pastoral action, more in line with JPIC. For this reason, in collaboration with the diocese, the Group is developing two new fields of action with immigrants and prison ministry.

The Group is also involved in vocational animation and initial Spiritan formation. Candidates follow the postulancy in Cape Verde, philosophy (Braga) and theology in Portugal (Porto) and the novitiate in France (Chevilly) until 2019. This year they have 2 novices and 1 postulant.

Strengths and Challenges

- The Group has a long tradition in the islands of Cape Verde and its contribution to the life of the local Church has been important and well recognized in the construction of parishes, in the structuring of dioceses, in professional animation and in the formation of local clergy.
- The Group is well aware that the mission "ad gentes" is part of our charism and that it must continue to send missionaries beyond the country. Almost all the members of the Group live in communities. There is an openness to internationality within the Group in terms of accepting and welcoming missionary appointments and trainees.
- The Group is involved in the animation of spiritual missionary spirituality with the "Spiritual Fraternities", the "Youth without Frontiers" and the "Missionary Animators".
- There is a lack of diversity of missionary frontiers within the Group. The apostolate with migrants and prisons and the exploration of possibilities to engage in JPIC activities need to be further consolidated.
- The Group will need to maintain and develop a spirit of openness and collaboration with other groups.
- The Congregation in Cape Verde is not yet registered as a juridical entity, which has serious implications for the original members.

2.1.8.4 NORTH-WEST AFRICA PROVINCE (PANO)

REPUBLIC OF GUINEA

AREA: 246,000 KM²

POPULATION: 12,771,000

BIRTH RATE: 37‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 81‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 61 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 10.8%, MUSLIMS 84.6%,

UNAFFILIATED 1.8%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 2.7%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 32.0%

GDP PER CAPITA: 2,067 USD/HAB

REPUBLIC OF GUINEA BISSAU

AREA: 36,000 KM²
 POPULATION: 1,921,000
 BIRTH RATE: 35‰
 INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 82‰
 LIFE EXPECTANCY: 58 YRS

RELIGIONS:
 CHRISTIANS 18.9%, MUSLIMS 46.1%, UNAFFILIATED
 4.4%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%, FOLK
 RELIGIONS 30.6%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS <
 0.1%. ALPHABETISATION: 45.6%
 GDP PER CAPITA: 1,552 USD/HAB

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA

AREA: 1,031,000 KM²
 POPULATION: 4,526,000
 BIRTH RATE: 34‰
 INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 79‰
 LIFE EXPECTANCY: 65 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 0.3%, MUSLIMS 99.1%,
 UNAFFILIATED 0.1%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,
 FOLK RELIGIONS 0.5%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.
 ALPHABETISATION: 45.5%
 GDP PER CAPITA: 3,592 USD/HAB

REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL

AREA: 197,000 KM²
 POPULATION: 16,296,000
 BIRTH RATE: 35‰
 INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 45‰
 LIFE EXPECTANCY: 67 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 3.3%, MUSLIMS 96.6%,
 UNAFFILIATED < 0.1%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS
 < 0.1%, FOLK RELIGIONS < 0.1%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS
 < 0.1%. ALPHABETISATION: 42.8%
 GDP PER CAPITA: 2,384 USD/HAB

The North West Africa Province (PANO) covers four countries: Senegal, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Mauritania. The historical, political, social, cultural and religious realities of each of these countries are very different, but the populations are united in a certain way: common ethnic groups are distributed on both sides of the borders¹⁵⁵, while the regional migration phenomenon adds to the mix of peoples¹⁵⁶.

The Spiritan Presence

The circumscription is the heir to long-standing Spiritan contacts¹⁵⁷, which later gave rise to the creation of the two “Districts” of Senegal (including Mauritania) and Guinea. The missionary project in Guinea Bissau is more recent (1979). The Foundation of North West Africa (FANO) was created in 1999, bringing together the missions of the four countries in the same animation structure. It becomes a Province in 2014.

The Province has 31 members by origin, 19 of whom are in ministry or studies in the PANO and 12 in mission ad extra. 20 confreres from other circumscriptions are appointed to the PANO. The average age is 46 years.

The number of members in the houses of formation is as follows: philosophy, 10 (8 of whom are from the PANO); novitiate, 4 (all from the PANO); theologate, 15 (6 from the PANO).

The confreres dedicate themselves to pastoral commitments in conformity with our charism: mission of first evangelization in peripheral regions, urban and rural parishes where concern for the poorest and witness to interculturality is expressed, teaching, dialogue with Islam and with traditional religions.

Strengths

- The Spiritan family is rooted in the Churches and in the local communities. During their long history in the region, the Spiritans have had a considerable role

¹⁵⁵ Bassaris and Coniagis in Guinea and in Sénégal ; Manjacks in Guinea Bissau and in Sénégal ; Wolofs and people of mixed race in Mauritania and in Sénégal.

¹⁵⁶ Guineans and Manjacks in Sénégal ; numerous tribes in Mauritanie.

¹⁵⁷ Arrival of missionaries of the Holy Spirit at Saint Louis and along the coast from 1778 ; arrival of Libermann's missionaries at Dakar in 1845 ; foundation in Boffa (Guinea) in 1877.

and have made unique contributions in the historical, cultural, scientific and linguistic fields. Even today, the confreres are remarkably well integrated into the social and ecclesial fabric, and the number of requests they receive in various dioceses testifies to the esteem in which they are held.

- The leadership is concerned to ensure the permanence and renewal of the Spiritan presence in all our places of commitment, while at the same time striving to respond to new calls. This active policy of renewal is also based on a great openness to welcoming confreres on missionary appointment.
- The Province has well-organised formation structures and competent, committed and dedicated formators. The formation communities, humanly speaking, are strongly multicultural and fraternal, and are guided by the principles of co-responsibility and co-management. PANO also has a generous tradition of welcoming students from other Spiritan circumscriptions.
- The Province has substantial assets, inherited in particular from wise investments made in the past, which constitute a basis for covering current expenses and, to a certain extent, make it possible to envisage other projects for self-sufficiency. It is supported by a competent, efficient and educational financial administration.

Challenges

- The efforts of animation face the challenges of a circumscription formed by four countries: the size of the Province, the scattering of communities, the difficulties of access and communication.
- The weight of history and tradition, or the sense of responsibility for the missions founded by the Spiritans, understandably underlies certain missionary commitments, but there is a lack of an effort to re-evaluate methodically and periodically the locations and choices.
- The mission of the Province lacks an overall vision and strategy: there is a plethora of commitments, often suffering from extreme mobility and instability in the management of personnel. The Province must commit itself to a vast effort of revision of its missionary strategy: definition of the priorities, objectives and means to be used, taking into account the particularities of each country.
- The Province does not take advantage of its tradition of welcome when it comes to missionary appointments: too many young confreres, among those who have been welcomed into the PANO for their mission experience or for studies, are reluctant to be appointed there. It suffers from a lack of image, which is nourished, among other things, by some negative experiences, which call for more reflection.
- In its day-to-day management, PANO tends to operate beyond its means: the cash actually available is insufficient, and the Province often resorts to its capital in an emergency to cover its current expenses. In addition, it tends to multiply large-scale projects without being quite sure that it has sufficient financial and human resources. The provincial government needs to make a major effort to promote the use of capital: analysis of resources and expenses, systematic re-evaluation of the commitments (Bagamoyo 5.4) and reinforcement of internal solidarity.

2.2 ASIA AND OCEANIA

2.2.1 UNION OF CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS OF ASIA AND OCEANIA (UCAO)

Context¹⁵⁸

Asia, with its 4.6 billion inhabitants, now accounts for nearly 60% of the world's population.¹⁵⁹ Its population is young¹⁶⁰ and increasingly urban, a phenomenon that will continue to grow.¹⁶¹

The region, which was characterized during the 20th century by strong population growth, is undergoing a major transition, in particular due to proactive birth control policies.¹⁶² The challenge in this regard is that not only will population growth continue to slow down, but ageing will increase in the coming years.

Asian countries have undergone major socio-economic transformations since the end of the Second World War. These transformations are characterized by the establishment of capitalist regimes, high rates of economic growth associated with considerable demographic weight, urbanization phenomena and a strong dynamic of insertion into globalization with aggressive trade policies. Emerging Asian countries, such as China and India, are today the locomotives of world growth, even if these two giants are slowing down.¹⁶³

Political stability, through authoritarianism in some states, remains to be qualified by the revelation of many regional tensions (India-Pakistan conflict; China claiming to be the “godfather” of Southeast Asia) or internal tensions (political demands of civil society, growing economic inequalities, marginalization of minorities, etc.).

Asia can be considered as the cradle and space of diffusion of the great world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Christians, who are largely in the minority in Asia (7%), number 300 million, slightly less than half of whom are Catholics.¹⁶⁴ Catholics are in the majority in their country only in the Philippines and East Timor. They are also a strong minority (up to 10%) in Viet Nam and South Korea. Elsewhere, Catholics are often only 1-3% of the population. However, it must be agreed that Asian Christians, by their numbers and diaspora, constitute a significant group within the Christian world.

The consequence of this minority situation is that these Catholics are often perceived as foreigners in their own country, in contradiction to the fact that the presence of Christian communities goes back to ancient times, before the wave of European colonisation. Some Asian Catholic churches are also churches of immigrants from other Asian countries. Sometimes, Catholics are recruited from discriminated or oppressed minorities in the country, and this still gives the Catholic Church a

¹⁵⁸ Here we discuss the Asian context. The UCAO extends into the Asia and Pacific zones, but the particular context of the Pacific will be described in the section dealing with the Oceania group.

¹⁵⁹ World Population Prospects, United Nations, 2019.

¹⁶⁰ 24% of Asians are under 15 years of age while only 12.5% are over 60 years (UN data 2018 <http://data.un.org>).

¹⁶¹ The United Nations foresees that the urban population will increase from 49% of the current population to about 56% by 2030.

¹⁶² The population growth rate is currently 8,7% (World Population Prospects, United Nations, 2019).

¹⁶³ GDP growth of 6.1% in these two countries in 2019, for a global rate of only 3% (IMF estimates).

¹⁶⁴ For this overview of the Catholic Church in Asia, we are largely dependent on the presentation made by the National Service for Universal Mission of the French Bishops' Conference (Antoine Sontag, *The Catholic Church in Asia*, 2015, <https://mission-universelle.catholique.fr>).

“foreign” face, which only reveals the situation of injustice in which these categories of second-class citizens live. This discretion by the number of Catholics in Asia contrasts with the importance and prestige of their institutions, especially in education, health or social services.

The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), a permanent structure for cooperation and reflection established in 1970, has produced some noteworthy pastoral documents over the years. In particular, it has recommended as a guiding principle the involvement of Asian Catholics in a threefold dialogue: with the religions of Asia, with cultures, with the poor.¹⁶⁵

Among the challenges facing Christians in Asia is the rise of fundamentalism, within Hinduism (India), Islam (Pakistan, Indonesia) and also Buddhism (Sri Lanka, Myanmar), which undermines the will to live together in pluralistic societies and endangers the security and even the existence of minority communities.

In economically expanding and unequal societies, Christians also need to find a relevant language that speaks to both the victims of globalization and to the people who are affected by it to the wealthy classes who have lost their spiritual bearings.

The Union Today

The UEASC (Union of East Asian Spiritan Circumscriptions) came into being in December 2007; following the decision of the General Council to split the Taiwan-Philippines group into two independent circumscriptions. In view of the integration of the Oceania group and the community of India (attached in 2015 to the Taiwan-Vietnam province), it became UCAO (Union of Circumscriptions of Asia and Oceania) in 2015.

Today the Union includes the groups of the Philippines and Oceania (Australia-Papua New Guinea) and the Province of Taiwan-Vietnam-India. An invitation has been extended for several years to the group from Pakistan. Although this group has not formally responded, the dialogue continues and there are already areas of mutual collaboration.

The Union has statutes, approved by the GC in May 2013 and revised in 2015. The annual meeting of the major and regional superiors constitutes the Council of the Union. One of the superiors, appointed for two years, ensures coordination and by the superior of the house of formation in Manila, who assumes responsibility for the permanent secretariat of the Union.

A main dimension of the Union's work is the organization and financing of the second cycle of formation in Manila: students have access to renowned institutions such as the Loyola School of Theology (Ateneo de Manila University) or the Maryhill School of Theology. The members of the Union have embarked on a vast project to build a Spiritan House of Formation, which has been the object of an ambitious fund-raising campaign. The Superior General inaugurated the building, the fruit of this unifying project, in December 2016. In Vietnam, the novitiate of Cù Chi, originally built for Vietnamese novices, now also welcomes Indian novices and is, in fact, the novitiate of the Union.

Thematic meetings are organized, with a view to nourishing reflection and fostering collaboration among Spiritan missionaries in Asia: Meeting of the formators of the Union (2015; the next one is planned for 2020) and meeting of newly assigned confreres (2017, with the participation of Pakistan).

¹⁶⁵ First Plenary Assembly of the FABC, Taipei, 1974.

The missionary project exploring how to put the Spiritan charism at the service of the Church and societies of mainland China (“China Project”) has been entrusted to the UCAO since 2014. Finally, the circumscriptions and regions of the UCAO collaborate in welcoming students for short pastoral experiences or for missionary internships.

Strengths and Challenges

- Over the years, the different components of the UCAO have developed their autonomy in the animation, functioning and mission. This led to the separation of the Philippines from Taiwan-Vietnam (2007), and more recently to the project of separation between Taiwan and Vietnam-India (Chapter decision of the TVI Province, 2019). This natural evolution should allow each circumscription to put the Spiritan charism more and more at the service of the societies and churches of Asia in a logic of rootedness and enculturation. They are thus called to respond to the intuitions of the Post-Synodal exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia*, which affirmed that the evangelizing mission of the Church in Asia would be made more meaningful, intelligible, effective and fruitful if it is given an authentic local Asian face.¹⁶⁶
- The Asian societies in which we are implanted present missionary challenges that need to be faced in a courageous and creative way, beyond an activity centred on parish ministry. (Challenges like) inter-religious dialogue based on a deep knowledge of religious cultures and traditions, social inequalities and injustices, inter-community conflicts, the situation of minorities and aboriginal peoples, the local impact of climate change and natural disasters, etc. In this context, it is imperative that confreres acquire appropriate skills.
- Vietnam and India are special cases, in that severe state constraints considerably limit the assignment of foreign missionary personnel and hinder the legal recognition and consolidation of the Spiritan presence. This has led the Congregation, going against its traditional way of doing things, to place vocational pastoral care and formation at the centre of its initial project. The assignment of some confreres from these countries should allow, in the medium term, the establishment of apostolic communities committed to a true missionary project in fidelity to the Spiritan charism, and ensure the stability of the Spiritan presence, including from the legal point of view.
- The strengthening and renewal of the formation teams remains a challenge: The Congregation struggles to identify competent and experienced confreres who can put themselves at the service of the UCAO formation communities, and also faces access restrictions in some countries (Vietnam, India).
- The considerable investment required for the learning of languages (Chinese, Vietnamese, Tamil, Bisaya) is an obstacle to the mobility of confreres between Asian circumscriptions and consequently to a possible path of renewal of missionary personnel.
- Collaboration among the superiors of the Union is today very satisfactory and fruitful: after certain tensions at the beginning, marked by the concern of each one to safeguard first of all the interests of his circumscription, the atmosphere today is one of cooperation, in complementarity, at the service of the same mission, and the meetings are true experiences of fraternity. On the other hand, the Union is often seen as a matter for superiors, and the challenge is to make it a reality and a value shared by all the confreres.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, § 20-22, 1999.

- In conjunction with the General Council, the Union is carrying out an ongoing reflection on the future of the Spiritan mission in Asia. If, faithful to our missionary charism, we must remain open to new calls on the continent, requiring a work of discernment and dialogue (Bagamoyo 1.19-20), it is, however, also essential to consolidate existing commitments.

2.2.1.1 PHILIPPINES GROUP

REPUBLIC OF PHILIPPINES

AREA: 300,000 KM²

POPULATION: 108,117,000

BIRTH RATE: 21‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 28‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 71 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 92.4%, MUSLIMS 5.7%,

UNAFFILIATED < 0.1%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS <

0.1%, FOLK RELIGIONS 1.6%, OTHER 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 96.4%

GDP PER CAPITA: 9,154 USD/HAB

Context

The Philippines is made up of more than 7,000 islands, but most of its fast-growing population lives on just 11 of them. The country is prone to natural disasters (earthquakes and typhoons). The great majority of the population is Christian and the Catholic Church traditionally plays a vital role in the social and political arenas.

On 4 July 1946, the Philippines attained its independence. A 21-year rule by Ferdinand Marcos ended in 1986, when a popular movement in Manila, supported by the Catholic Church, forced him into exile and installed a democratic regime. The actual President, Rodrigo Duterte, was elected in 2016 in a landslide win on the back of hardline promises to tackle crime and corruption. An affirmed populist, he has since attracted intense controversy for a bloody drug war and a string of controversial remarks and attacks, notably against the Church. Despite being criticized by the international community and human rights groups that say his policies amount to human rights abuses, he remains largely popular among a good number of Filipinos. He generates polarization, including in the Church. The Philippine Government faces threats from several insurgent groups in the southern Philippines. In 2017, the armed forces battled an ISIS-Philippines siege in Marawi City, Mindanao, which forced the government to declare martial law in the region.

The Spiritan Presence

The Spiritan presence in the Philippines started in December 1997, when four Spiritans from different continents settled in Iligan, Northern Mindanao, the predominantly Muslim area of the archipelago. Initially, it belonged to a single Philippines-Taiwan Group, which 10 years later was divided into two independent circumscriptions. The Group has gradually expanded and has begun ministries in various places. Spiritan communities are now in three islands: Mindanao (dioceses of Iligan and Pagadian); Leyte (diocese of Maasin); Cebu (archdiocese of Cebu) while, in the northern island of Luzon, the 2nd cycle house of formation belonging to theUCAO is located (Metropolitan Manila).

The Group has 12 professed confreres from Nigeria (8), Cameroon (2), Sierra Leone (1) and Ghana (1). There are two Filipino confreres, members by origin, who have been appointed ad extra.

The confreres are involved in a variety of ministries : peri-urban and rural parishes in neglected places; outreach to aboriginal/tribal people; apostolate to the Chinese-Filipino community; chaplaincies in hospitals and prisons; youth and campus

ministry; formal and informal education; various development projects or emergency-relief actions; JPIC advocacy campaigns; spiritual services and accompaniment (Holy Spirit shrine and retreat centre in Iligan).

After an interruption, essentially due to financial constraints, the Group has engaged in recruitment and initial formation again. There are currently 5 students: 2 postulants and 3 in philosophy.

There are also several vibrant and large groups of Lay Spiritan Associates, who are committed and supportive of the Spiritan mission.

Strengths

- The confreres are engaged in a variety of works in diverse locations. Their commitments are very much in line with the Spiritan charism and correspond to the needs of the society and the Church in the Philippines. The Group is so far characterized by its dynamism and creativity, a good organization and a leadership which has the ability to make things move and happen. The confreres are very much inserted into the local Church and are appreciated by the bishops, clergy and laity.
- There is broad support and encouragements for Spiritans, and the Group has an impressive network of local benefactors who support the mission in various ways.
- The Group faces financial challenges with courage and imagination. There are multiple initiatives to support the mission with income-generating projects. Confreres are making sacrifices to contribute to internal solidarity. The leadership has established a financial system based on accountability and co-responsibility.

Challenges

- The Group is presently overstretched by the multiplicity of ministries. There is a need to develop a common vision and strategy, to define priorities in the commitments and to foster a sense of common ownership and responsibility.
- The Congregation first opted for Mindanao in order to engage in interreligious dialogue. But this project is hampered by a volatile situation and an uncertain future due to political instability, terrorism and communal tensions.
- Because of financial limitations, the Group struggles to support the formation programme, and has to constantly adapt it according to its resources.
- The Group has to find external resources to maintain non self-supporting missions which correspond clearly to the Spiritan charism.

2.2.1.2 TAIWAN-VIETNAM- INDIA PROVINCE

The Spiritans have been in Taiwan since 1997, as part of the Taiwan-Philippines International Group. Ten years later, Taiwan became an independent circumscription. A confrere from the British Province, Brian Fulton († 2006) settled in Saigon on behalf of Auteuil International and of the Congregation. His presence and ministry led to the establishment of the actual Spiritan group in Vietnam, in 2007. Taiwan-Vietnam became a Province in 2014 and has incorporated the community of India on Pentecost 2015. The Province thus presents the unique character of being spread over a whole continent, from Chennai to Hsinchu. However, the provincial chapter in June 2019 has requested to separate the Province into two independent circumscriptions: Taiwan and Vietnam-India.

TAIWAN

REPUBLIC OF CHINA

AREA: 36,000 KM²

POPULATION: 23,774,000

BIRTH RATE: 8‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 5‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 80 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 5.8%, MUSLIMS < 0.1%,

UNAFFILIATED 13.7%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS <

0.1%, FOLK RELIGIONS 43.8%, OTHER 15.5%, JEWS <

0.1%. ALPHABETISATION: 99.9%

GDP PER CAPITA: 25,534 USD/HAB

Context

Taiwan has *de facto* been independent since 1949, when the defeated nationalist government fled to the island as the communists swept to power in mainland China. However China considers it as a rebel region that must be reunited with the mainland - by force if necessary.

China insists that nations cannot have official relations with both China and Taiwan, with the result that Taiwan has formal diplomatic ties with only a few countries. Despite its diplomatic isolation, Taiwan prospered and has become one of Asia's major economic players, and one of the world's top producers of computer technology.

Until the end of the eighties, the nationalist government ruled Taiwan under a martial law declaration dating back to 1948. Since then, the democratization process expanded rapidly and the country has experienced several democratic changes and a peaceful transfer of power.

The Spiritan Presence

There are currently 9 confreres in Taiwan, coming from Nigeria (4), Congo-Brazzaville (2), Ghana (1), USA (1) and Ireland (1). The Spiritans have been given responsibility for three parishes in the diocese of Hsinchu and more recently one in the diocese of Taichung.

Besides the parish apostolate, the confreres are involved in a variety of ministries: youth work, university chaplaincy, prison chaplaincy, pastoral care of migrant communities (principally Filipinos and Vietnamese), formation of laity. They also have developed solidarity projects for the youth and rural communities in Vietnam.

It is necessary for all confreres to first learn Mandarin Chinese, which requires a lengthy investment of time and a strong personal commitment.

There is a developing group of Lay Spiritan Associates, with a desire to share our Spiritan spirituality and work. A guide, written in Chinese and English, outlines their project.

Strengths

- The group promotes the value of inter-cultural living as a testimony which is very pertinent in contemporary Taiwanese society.
- The confreres invest constantly in deepening their knowledge of the Chinese language and culture and they are very at ease in the local context.
- The energy, availability and adaptation to the context shown by the Spiritans are highly praised by the laity and clergy. Some of them have been given key responsibilities at the diocesan level.

Challenges

- Living and working in a challenging context, with tiny and ageing Christian communities, minimal sacramental demands, secularism and hyper-consumerism

in the society, little recognition of clerical status, requires inner personal resources, tolerance, self-discipline and creativity, as well as active community support.

- The evolution of the Taiwanese Church and society, with ageing communities, scarcity of ministerial vocations, growing importance of migrant and expatriates groups, demands a constant re-evaluation of our missionary priorities and strategies. It is predicted that in the near future the dynamism of the Church in Taiwan will depend on migrants.
- Despite a continuous and dynamic involvement in the world of youth, there is so far little prospect of local vocations.
- Taiwan is a natural place to experience mission as interreligious dialogue (with Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism). Apart from some individual initiatives, the group has not developed a common approach in this essential field of mission.
- Despite repeated debates and chapter decisions, the mission to the aboriginal people in central Taiwan has not yet materialized into a defined project.

VIETNAM

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

AREA: 331,000 KM ²	RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 8.4%, MUSLIMS 0.2%,
POPULATION: 96,462,000	UNAFFILIATED 29.9%, HINDUS < 0.1%,
BIRTH RATE: 17‰	BUDDHISTS < 0.1%, FOLK RELIGIONS 45.0%,
INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 21‰	OTHER 0.4%, JEWS < 0.1%.
LIFE EXPECTANCY: 75 YRS	ALPHABETISATION: 93.5%
	GDP PER CAPITA: 5,859 USD/HAB

Context

Vietnam became a unified country in 1975 when the armed forces of the communist north seized the south. This followed three decades of bitter wars, in which the communists fought first against the colonial power of France, then against South Vietnam and its US support.

Despite the return of peace, for over a decade the country experienced little economic growth because of conservative leadership policies, the persecution and mass exodus of individuals - many of them successful South Vietnamese businessmen - and growing international isolation. However, since the mid-1980s, Vietnamese authorities have increased economic liberalization and enacted structural reforms needed to modernize the economy and to produce more competitive, export-driven industries. Nonetheless, the communist regime maintains a tight control on political expression and on civil society.

The Catholic Church is a small minority, but remarkably vibrant, organized and supportive of its personnel. The Church is not yet allowed to run educational or health institutions, but these restrictions could change in the future.

The Spiritan Presence

There are 5 confreres currently in Vietnam: 3 from the US Province (of Vietnamese origin), 1 from Prov. Europe (Belgium) and 1 from Ireland.

The activities are centered on vocation animation and the initial formation. There are three formation communities in Vietnam. Two are based in Ho Chi Minh City (HMC): the Aspirancy (11 students) and the first cycle (10 students). The third one, the Novitiate (6 novices), is in Cù Chi, a rural district 25km from HMC. In addition, 7

students are on PME in various circumscriptions and 13 are studying theology in Manila (Philippines). The Congregation owns the Novitiate land and has acquired a plot in HMC in view of building a central house.

Beside their task as formators, the confreres have a mission outreach, within the limits of what is available and tolerated: supplying in local parishes or expatriate communities, chaplaincy in orphanages and counselling. Students are involved in helping in local charity institutions. A student from Kenya is currently on PME in Vietnam.

For the first time, six Vietnamese confreres made their final profession in August 2019. The presence of Vietnamese nationals in the Congregation is a condition to secure legal recognition and plan for Spiritan missionary projects in the country.

Strengths

- In an inward-looking Church, still recovering from years of severe oppression, vocations for priestly and religious life are booming. But there is a very low missionary consciousness. Therefore there is a definite need, to which a missionary Congregation like ours can respond with pertinence.
- The formation programme is well structured and with a serious on-going process of discernment. Students are mentored well by competent formators who are themselves an example of the essential principles of religious life.
- The Province is committed to sending students on Period of Missionary Experience (PME) in another circumscription of Africa, Europe or Asia. This is crucial, considering the absence of Spiritan apostolic communities in the country with which candidates could identify themselves.
- Despite the absence of regular sources of income, a tremendous and continuous fundraising effort and the generosity of local supporters allow the group to cover for its needs.

Challenges

- The context is very limiting. There is no legal recognition of the Congregation and confreres have to adopt a low-key attitude. Being officially recognized by the State will be a long and tedious process.
- For foreign personnel, staying in Vietnam (likewise in India) is complicated and remains totally uncertain. Foreign priests are not allowed to work in parishes. Access to the country is quite restricted. As a result, the appointment of new personnel has proved to be a very complicated task.
- The recruitment process needs to always match the situation on the ground in term of facilities and qualified formators so as to ensure optimal formation conditions.

INDIA

REPUBLIC OF INDIA

AREA: 3,287,000 KM²

POPULATION: 1,366,418,000

BIRTH RATE: 18‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 39‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 69 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 24%, MUSLIMS 15.4%,

UNAFFILIATED 0.1%, HINDUS 78.9%, BUDDHISTS 0.7%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 0.5%, OTHER 2.1%, JEWS 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 69.3%

GDP PER CAPITA: 6,353 USD/HAB

Context

India is the second most populated country in the world and is blessed by a vibrant economy. However the economic growth has significantly slowed down and

joblessness has seen a worrying increase in recent years. Social life is marked by severe inequalities (economic, access to education, rural-urban divides) and by the persistence of discriminations originating in the caste system, which affect even the internal life of the Church. The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, first elected in 2014, remains a figure of controversy domestically and internationally over his Hindu nationalist beliefs. His government's policy, in many aspects driven by his Hindu nationalist ideology of the "Hindutva" - which defines India as exclusively Hindu -, has led to the rise of religious discrimination, marginalization of the lower castes and insecurity for foreign Church personnel.

The Catholic Church in India, with its 17 million followers, represents a tiny minority. Nevertheless, its power of witness is immense, particularly through its educational and charitable actions: the Church welcomes twenty million students in 25,000 institutions and manages 25% of the country's hospitals and health centres. The vitality of the Church is also illustrated by the high level of participation, the extraordinary multiplicity of religious congregations or movements and the number of vocations. Nonetheless the Church is also facing the effects of societal changes accompanying economic growth and has entered a period of abrupt transition.

The Spiritan Presence

The Spiritans were present for some years in India in the XIXth century: in Pondichery (1878-1888) and Chandernagor (1862-1888). The Congregation returned to India in 2010, with a project based initially on vocation promotion and formation. The purpose was to establish the foundation for a Spiritan presence in a country where access to foreign Church personnel is extremely restricted and to put the Spiritan missionary charism at the service of the Indian society and Church. Fr Gabriel Myotte-Duquet (France) started by establishing an impressive network of contacts throughout Tamil Nadu (south Indian State). He was later joined by two other confreres, from France and Mauritius. The confreres were first hosted by local bishops and then moved in 2012 to Poonamallee, in the outskirts of Chennai, to a rented house which is up to now the single community of formation. After having been an independent circumscription between 2011 and 2014, the Spiritan community in India was integrated into the Taiwan-Vietnam-India Province in 2015.

Over the years, several Indian candidates have joined the Congregation and, after having completed their first cycle in India, were sent for novitiate and theology in Africa. More recently, students have joined the UCAO novitiate and theologate.

There are currently two confreres in India, both functioning as formators, while one of them is at the same time a doctorate student. Confreres can only be in India either on a student visa or on a tourist visa. In that case, after 6 months one has to leave the country and reapply for another tourist visa.

There are 5 aspirants and one in first cycle (Chennai) and 2 in Theology (Manila). Three Indian confreres, members by origin, have already been sent on mission appointment to other circumscriptions (Kenya, Zambia, UK).

Strengths

- India presents a "natural environment" where the Spiritan charism can be expressed at its best, through commitments to the poor and marginalized and options for inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue.
- Lauded for their resilience, their energy and their simple lifestyle, the confreres have built an impressive network of friends and supporters in the local Church and established in only a few years a potential for a solid presence in India.

- The formation programme has a clear international and intercultural dimension: it includes 2 years PME on other continents and novitiate and theology in other countries of the Union.

Challenges

- The precarious legal status of the confreres, who are there with tourist or student visas. The uncertainty of their situation has an undermining effect on the continuity and stability of the project.
- As long as the Congregation does not receive legal recognition, public ministry will be impossible, reducing considerably the scope for a pastoral project. This also limits the perspective of welcoming young confreres on mission appointment.
- The community and formation programme are entirely dependent on external financial support.

2.2.1.3 OCEANIA GROUP

The circumscription of Oceania was officially created in 2012 following the decision of the previous GC to merge the Australia International Group and PNG Group. The two countries which constitute the circumscription of Oceania are different in all aspects. While Australia is vast and highly developed, PNG – a former colony of Australia - is small and one of the poorest countries in the world, although it is richly endowed with natural resources (mineral, agricultural, forestry and fisheries).

The Group of Oceania is a member of the Union of Circumscriptions of Asia and Oceania (UCAO).

AUSTRALIA

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

AREA: 7,962,000 KM ²	RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 61.7%, MUSLIMS 3.0%,
POPULATION: 25,203,000	UNAFFILIATED 28.6%, HINDUS 1.7%, BUDDHISTS 1.7%,
BIRTH RATE: 13‰	FOLK RELIGIONS 0.7%, OTHER 0.9%, JEWS 0.5%.
INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 4‰	ALPHABETISATION: 99.9%
LIFE EXPECTANCY: 83 YRS	GDP PER CAPITA: 43,560 USD/HAB

Social, Economic and Ecclesial Context

The country of Australia together with the Islands of Tasmania, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia's Western New Guinea form a continent. Although a highly developed nation, a section of its population, notably the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, the majority of whom are located on the western side of the country, is socially and economically isolated, deprived and in poverty.

The social-political and religious landscape of the country is changing and diversifying rapidly. In recent years, Australia has seen considerable religious demographic change and in particular a significant decline in the number of Catholics. As elsewhere in the developed world, Australian society has been affected by religious indifference, individualism and consumerism. Religion has considerably lost its influence on the contemporary Australian society.

The child abuse crisis which has involved members of the Catholic Church hierarchy, has seriously undermined the credibility of the Church in Australia. In the words of Archbishop Coleridge of Brisbane Archdiocese *“the church in Australia is going through a time of humiliation, but also a time of discovering anew a grand design of God's call to mission beyond human betrayals.”* In what has become a highly

secularized society it will be a major challenge for the Church in Australia to reclaim the formidable institutional trust, authority and social influence it once enjoyed.

Spiritan Presence in Australia: The Congregation had a short-lived presence in Western Australia with the first members of Libermann's Society of the Holy Heart of Mary from 1846-1848. However, the present Spiritan missionary insertion in Australia, with its organizational structure, began in the early 1970s following the arrival of Irish Spiritans who were expelled from Nigeria after the Biafra civil war. They took pastoral commitments in mainstream Catholic parishes in Queensland and New South Wales. They worked in collaboration with their fellow confreres who were stationed in PNG. As the number of Spiritans assigned to work in Australia increased, confreres began to search for ministries with a Spiritan focus. Gradually confreres went and took parishes in the dioceses of Broome and Geraldton in Western Australia where there is a significant population of aboriginal people, both in urban and remote communities.

Mission engagements: The Oceania Group has the following priority commitments:

- Ministry to the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in Western Australia.
- Pastoral care of multicultural parish communities (of low income earners) in Eastern Australia.
- School and hospital chaplaincies in Eastern and in Western Australia.

Statistics: At present there are 10 confreres working in Australia: 2 in Western Australia and 8 in Eastern Australia. Confreres are from the following nationalities: Irish 2, Nigerians 3, and Tanzanians 5.

Challenges

- Adaptability to the Australian tradition and the context of mission and meeting people's expectations is initially a slow process. Patience and ability for intercultural living are essential qualities a confrere going to work in Australia must develop and appropriate.
- The Group lacks experienced and committed confreres for the aboriginal ministry, which requires patience, flexibility, understanding, openness and above all untiring commitment. The special qualities required for this ministry present major challenge for the appointment of young confreres on mission appointment.
- Given the small number in the Group and the fact that they are dispersed in different places of the vast country, effective animation of the Group and replacement of confreres (when they leave the Group for various reasons) are major challenges.
- Although is a stated priority, the Group lacks commitment to ministry among the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. The majority of the confreres are involved in pastoral ministry in Eastern Australia. The uncoordinated early beginnings of Spiritan insertion in Australia may not have been helpful in this regard.

Plans for Future: The Group is resolved to review its involvement in the aboriginal ministry and agree on a strategy on how to reinforce this unique Spiritan apostolate. To achieve this objective the Group needs to recruit both experienced and young confreres with passion for the apostolate and also to ensure that members of the Group develop a collective sense of belonging and ownership of the circumscription.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

AREA: 463,000 KM²

POPULATION: 8,776,000

BIRTH RATE: 27‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 53‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 64 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 99.2%, MUSLIMS < 0.1%,

UNAFFILIATED < 0.1%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS

< 0.1%, FOLK RELIGIONS 0.4%, OTHER 0.2%, JEWS

< 0.1%. ALPHABETISATION: 64.2%

GDP PER CAPITA: 3,403 USD/HAB

Context: As mentioned earlier, PNG is blessed with natural resources in abundance. However, these resources remain largely unexploited because of the rough terrain, land ownership issues, political fragmentations and the high cost of developing infrastructure. 85% of the PNG population relies on subsistence farming.

PNG is effectively a country that continues to need the presence of missionaries. Overall, the Catholic Church in PNG plays a prominent role in society through social service delivery, particularly in the much-needed health and education services.

Spiritan Presence in PNG

Spiritan presence in PNG dates back to 1971 when a group of 7 Irish confreres arrived in the Hagen region and established a community there. Another group of 4 confreres from Trans Canada Province arrived in 1981 and set up a community in Aitape, Sandaun Province. In 1988, 4 confreres from the then Indian Ocean Province also arrived in PNG to reinforce the Spiritan presence and mission there. Later the confreres opened up a new community in the neighbouring diocese of Wewak in East Sepik Province. The early Spiritan missionaries in PNG made a valuable contribution to the local Church but for a variety of reasons, in particular, the ageing profile of those involved, the Group declined in numbers. Another group of Nigerian confreres arrived in PNG in 1994 and after some years of missionary service, they left PNG thus leaving the mission on the brink of being closed in 2012. The mission was kept alive, thanks to a couple of committed and hardworking confreres who continued to labour under challenging circumstances until the last GC took the decision to merge PNG with Australia International Group. This move to merge was considered the most practical way of ensuring continuity of the Spiritan presence and mission in PNG. This move was also intended to find a better organizational structure to guarantee both personnel and financial resources for the sustainability of the mission. There are encouraging signs now that the mission is being revitalized following the arrival of 3 young and enthusiastic confreres who have settled well in PNG and are doing a commendable work. 3 more confreres are expected to join them soon. This will bring the number of confreres in PNG to 7 from 7 nationalities (one confrere by origin, then one each from Madagascar, Ghana, Cameroon, Malawi, Zambia and Tanzania).

Missionary Engagements: The Spiritans are presently working in two dioceses: Wewak and Aitape respectively. Their principal commitments are parish pastoral work in areas of primary evangelization, health ministry and justice peace and integrity of creation.

Papua New Guinea, especially in West Sepik and Sandaun Provinces, is one of the most difficult missions of the Congregation for a number of reasons: 1) difficult terrain, 2) very poor transportation infrastructure, 3) cultural and behavioral norms and practices, 4) lack of recreational facilities/services close to the mission posts, and 5) high cost of living.

Plan for the future: The Spiritan presence and mission in PNG is very fragile. The current team of young confreres would benefit if they had experienced confreres to

mentor them. It is hoped that the circumscription's leadership will continue the challenging work of strengthening the Spiritan presence and mission in PNG. To this effect, the Oceania leadership team needs to draw up a long-term strategic mission plan for PNG.

2.2.2 OTHER CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS IN ASIA

2.2.2.1 PAKISTAN GROUP

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

AREA: 796,000 KM²

POPULATION: 216,565,000

BIRTH RATE: 29‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 75‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 67 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 1.6%, MUSLIMS 96.5%,

UNAFFILIATED < 0.1%, HINDUS 1.9%, BUDDHISTS 1.9%,

FOLK RELIGIONS < 0.1%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 57.0%

GDP PER CAPITA: 5,311 USD/HAB

Context

The Muslim-dominated State of Pakistan was born out of the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, and has since faced domestic political upheavals and regional confrontations. Created to meet the demands of Indian Muslims for their own homeland, Pakistan was originally made up of two parts, which eventually broke up in 1971 into two countries: Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Development in Pakistan has been hampered by Islamist violence and economic stagnation. Relations with its key neighbours India and Afghanistan are often fraught with tension. Pakistan and India, both nuclear powers, have clashed militarily on four occasions (in 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999). Internally, the country has been engaged in a decades-long armed conflict with militant groups that target government institutions and civilians. The army and the security apparatus have a dominant institutional role in the affairs of the nation.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan imposes severe limitations on religious freedom. Control and restrictions are imposed by public legislation and by a society that is not very open to diversity and respect for its minorities. However the Catholic Church is a highly organized body, with proven structural and organizational skills in managing a network of dioceses, schools, dispensaries, hospitals, training centres etc. The clergy and community leaders often join forces with emerging social movements in order to put on the public agenda the political and social challenges facing Christian communities.

The Spiritan Presence

The commitment of the Spiritans began in 1977 in response to the call of the local Episcopal Conference, who wanted to make the "tribal apostolate" a priority. The confreres have always combined ministry among two ethno-religious minority communities: the Bheels, a marginalized Hindu tribe, and the Punjabi Christians. Both are victims of ostracism and stigmatization, because of their religion, their cast-origin and their occupations.

Over the years, the Group has focused on primary evangelization, working for justice and peace and interreligious dialogue among the Bheels, seeking to manifest concretely the liberating character of the Gospel through various activities such as: educational projects, health care and health promotion, socio-economic development (including a large micro-credit programme), participation in traditional devotional events, research in cultural and religious fields. The apostolate among Punjabi

Christians is carried out in the more familiar context of parishes. In the broader Pakistani society, various forms of dialogue with Islam are also a constant feature. In 2015, a process of discernment led the Group to leave its historical mission in Southern Punjab and regroup the confreres in Mirpurkhas, Sindh province. The Group has changed significantly in recent years. There are currently 6 confreres in the group, from Ireland, Uganda, Madagascar (2), France and Zambia.

Strengths

- The Group is focused on priorities which are essential elements of the Spiritan charism (SRL 12 and 14; Bagamoyo I).
- The confreres are courageous, enthusiastic and committed, and they respond, with prudence and responsibility, to the needs of the mission in this challenging context.
- The confreres are remarkably at home with the people they serve. They are welcoming, well aware of the cultural standards and boundaries, generous of their time and adopt a simple lifestyle.

Challenges

- Pakistan is marked by political instability, social violence, and a growing religious intolerance. The everyday life of our confreres and their missionary outreach are regularly impacted by this context of insecurity.
- The vision and priorities of the Group are not sufficiently appreciated by the local Church, which is more driven by a model of upward mobility.
- Although the Group made the decision 15 years ago to accept local vocations, for various reasons this has never come to reality. Evangelization among the Bheels was always the number-one concern and, in view of limited resources in personnel, there was never a consensus to give a certain priority to vocation work.
- The Group is totally dependent on external financial support.

2.3 EUROPE

2.3.1 UNION OF CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS OF EUROPE (UCE)

The European Context

For 75 years, Europe has experienced a period of peace over most of its territory that is unprecedented in its history. The European Union¹⁶⁷, with its historical roots in the Second World War, has been the key instrument of this era of peace, prosperity and cooperation, and has enabled the fruitful integration of the countries of Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Europe, with its 747 million inhabitants, is the third most populated continent (distinguishing between North America and Latin America and the Caribbean¹⁶⁸). But its population is aging: 20% of Europeans are now over 65 years old. Europe is struggling to renew its population¹⁶⁹, despite a large-scale migratory phenomenon, as evidenced by a population growth rate¹⁷⁰ of 0.8%, the lowest in the world¹⁷¹.

¹⁶⁷ The European Union is made up of 28 states.

¹⁶⁸ Source for this demographic data: World Population Prospects. United Nations. 2019.

¹⁶⁹ European birth rates (10.2 ‰) and fertility rates (1.6 children per woman) are the lowest of all continents.

¹⁷⁰ Sum of the natural balance and the migratory balance.

¹⁷¹ Compared to Asia (8.7%) and Africa (24.7%)

Since 2014, the beginning of the migration crisis, nearly 2 million migrants have reached European shores. After the peak in 2015 (more than 1 million), which saw mainly Syrian and Iraqi migrants leaving for Greece, it is now the Mediterranean route, which links Libya to the Italian islands, which is the most used by exiles, mainly sub-Saharan¹⁷². Some of these migrants cross borders in search of better economic and social opportunities, others are fleeing political or security crises. These massive movements of refugees and displaced persons have provoked xenophobic reactions and calls for tighter border controls in many places, and have led to serious tensions between European Union states¹⁷³.

Against a background of economic uncertainty, migration and global terrorism, a growing proportion of the inhabitants of European countries are tempted by populist solutions and nationalist withdrawal.

The vast movement of secularisation in Europe, which began in the 16th century, reached its height at the turn of the 21st century, deeply shaking countries such as Ireland or Poland, hitherto considered bastions of the Catholic Church. Throughout the continent, new societal issues are being raised for public debate, particularly in reaction to the traditional positions of the Catholic hierarchy. In response, Christian communities are experiencing a crisis of identity and legitimacy, further aggravated by scandals concerning sexual abuse by clerics and religious. In this context, there is a considerable weakening of the forms of support, primarily material, traditionally enjoyed by religious personnel.

UCE Today

The European circumscriptions have been working together in different areas for some 30 years. UCE now brings together 10 provinces or groups : Croatia, Spain, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Province Europe, Switzerland. The communities of Italy have had observer status since 2017.

The Union has a Charter, adopted in 2013 and substantially amended in 2016. Appendices deal with the novitiate, the second cycle, the specialization studies of missionary appointments, Spiritan projects in Europe, and the statutes of Kibanda (European Spiritan Centre for Development Cooperation) and the CESS (European Spiritan Solidarity Account).

The annual assembly of provincials constitutes the Council of the Union and coordination is ensured by an executive council which meets three times a year, as well as by a permanent secretary, based at the headquarters of the Union in Brussels, where the solidarity services (CESS and Kibanda) are also housed.

In order to support cooperation and reflection between provinces, the Union has set up commissions bringing together Spiritans involved in various sectors of activity.¹⁷⁴ Each year, at the end of the assembly of provincials, letters of guidance are sent to the commissions, which also have great freedom of operation.

Some provinces have formation communities (initial and specialized) but the Union ran a common novitiate, which was closed in September 2019. There are also no longer any apostolic communities under the direct authority of the UCE.

¹⁷² Sources: International Office for Migration and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees.

¹⁷³ Of the 512.4 million people living in the European Union on 1 January 2018, 22.3 million (4.4%) were third-country nationals (source: Eurostat).

¹⁷⁴ Ces commissions sont les suivantes : Economes et procureurs, Formation, Appel à la mission, Archivistes, Communications, JPIC, Affectations missionnaires, Laïcs associés (qui se réunissent en congrès tous les 4 ans).

Strengths and Challenges

- The multifaceted crisis that European societies and churches are experiencing must be seen as a moment of Kairos, calling the Congregation to show missionary creativity and dynamism. In fact, recent years have seen a missionary renewal in many European circumscriptions, which previously considered themselves irretrievably in decline. Two movements have come together to make this new dynamic possible: the identification of new calls and new missionary situations (multicultural parish communities, support for migrants and victims of torture, apostolate to young people) and the appointment of many confreres, young or experienced, coming from other continents and integrating themselves into this common vision of a Spiritan mission in Europe.
- The European societal and ecclesial context demands a capacity for adaptation and pastoral creativity for which our style of initial formation, in many cases, does not prepare us sufficiently. It is partly in response to this challenge that many circumscriptions welcome students for a missionary placement (SME), as a step towards possible longer term appointments. It is in the same context that the European provinces and the GC have recognised the relevance of maintaining structures of initial, undergraduate and graduate formation in Europe.
- Some commissions function well and regularly because they have a clearly identifiable, motivating and unifying project (e.g. Formation, Bursars and Procurators). On the other hand, others sometimes find it difficult to identify their *raison d'être* or to define common objectives (e.g. Call to Mission, Communications). The JPIC Commission does a remarkable job of reflection and strategic proposals, especially in response to the challenges of migration and trafficking in human beings, but lacks visibility and has difficulty in translating them into reality. An evaluation of the functioning and impact of each commission is needed to determine their relevance and effectiveness.¹⁷⁵
- The nagging question of the status and mission of the Province of Europe, and as a consequence, of its contribution to the community budget, has caused weariness and frustration in the assembly of provincials in recent years. The clarifications made by the General Council should allow for a calmer approach to this aspect of relations in the Union.
- Some circumscriptions are weakened by the decrease in their numbers. The question of their future will soon arise for them: means of acquiring a new vitality, integration into a neighbouring province, or another form of association?
- The CESS and Kibanda continue to play an invaluable role in supporting Spiritan missions. The General Chapter of Bagamoyo, in a rather vague statement, recommended optimizing their functioning and contribution.¹⁷⁶ The creation of the Central Development Office, with which the UCE has been closely associated, should clarify the respective roles and allow for a synergy between Spiritan actors of solidarity and development.

2.3.1.1 BRITISH PROVINCE

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

AREA: 242,000 KM²

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 59.1%, MUSLIMS 6.1%,

POPULATION: 67,530,000

UNAFFILIATED 31.2%, HINDUS 1.6%, BUDDHISTS 1.6%,

¹⁷⁵ Cf Directoire pour l'Organisation de la Congrégation, 2016, N° 3.3.5.

¹⁷⁶ Cf Bagamoyo 5.10.

BIRTH RATE: 12‰	FOLK RELIGIONS 0.1%, OTHER 0.8%, JEWS 0.4%.
INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 4‰	ALPHABETISATION: 82.9%
LIFE EXPECTANCY: 81 YRS	GDP PER CAPITA: 39,116 USD/HAB

The first Spiritan to set foot in England (1792-1802) was Fr. Jacques Bertout, from France, taking refuge from the persecution against the Church during the French Revolution.

The first permanent establishment of the Congregation in England was in 1904, with the creation of a formation community for French and Irish candidates. Local recruitment started and, in 1920, England became a Vice Province, and a Province from 1947. The Spiritans moved to Scotland in 1956. Over the years most of the confreres were posted to missions in Sierra Leone, Nigeria and East Africa.

There are today 53 confreres appointed to the Province: 15 members by origin and 38 from other circumscription. 6 confreres are appointed outside. There is also a group of 7 Lay Spiritan Associates. The average age is 59 years in the Province. The Province also welcomes confreres from other circumscriptions for mission appeals or for temporary ministry (“pastoral sabbatical”).

The Spiritans have been entrusted 12 parishes¹⁷⁷ in 8 dioceses, where they form international communities. A good number of these parishes are in disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods, with a multi-ethnic population. Community life is strongly emphasized. The multicultural Spiritan communities, based in parishes or not, are centres for ministries in line with the Spiritan charism: school and hospital chaplaincies, prison ministry and, more recently, an inter-faith chaplaincy at Heathrow international airport.

The Province has also two innovative projects:

- Revive (2002): a community project, which provides free practical and emotional support to refugees and asylum seekers. It provides a range of high-quality services, including guidance and support on immigration, housing and healthcare issues, language learning, emergency provisions, advocacy and volunteering opportunities.
- Just Youth (1998): a youth ministry project which provides creative formal and informal educational activities for young people. The project works in partnership with schools and colleges and has created a “Spiritans Youth Centre” in Salford.

Strengths

- The changing face of the Province: the circumscription has experienced a spectacular transformation characterized by a rich diversity of membership, a welcoming environment, and relevant missionary projects. Sustained by its inner dynamics, it is looking towards the future and not the past.
- The collaboration with other circumscriptions in the areas of personnel and solidarity has been and remains a decisive factor in the transformation of the province.
- The solid organization of the Province, that has elaborated various policies which facilitate a smooth integration of newly arriving confreres. The regional grouping of communities with local coordinators contributes greatly to the animation of the Province and fosters the sense of common ownership of the mission.

¹⁷⁷Ten years ago there were 5 Spiritan parishes.

- The diversity of mission projects, which are in line with our Spiritan charism and priorities of the Congregation and correspond to the needs of the Church and society in the UK. All these works are carried out in close collaboration with various partners - particularly lay people (volunteers, parish leaders).

Challenges

- Despite a long tradition of work among the youth, the Province doesn't attract any local vocations to Spiritan life.
- In a rapidly changing society, increasingly marked by secularism and ever-changing control policies, the cultural integration of appointed confreres can be a demanding process.
- The spectacular expansion of parish work needs to be evaluated in view of the potential of the Province for continuity and sustainability. Facing the demands and invitations of the local Church, the Province has to continue to respect essential Spiritan principles for new commitments.

There are naturally questions about the stability and sustainability of relevant but non self-supporting projects such as Revive and Just Youth: how will they be assured of appropriate and sufficient human and financial resources?

2.3.1.2 CROATIA GROUP

REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

AREA: 57,000 KM²

POPULATION: 4,130,000

BIRTH RATE: 9‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 5‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 78 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 93.3%, MUSLIMS 1.6%,

UNAFFILIATED 5.1%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS < 0.1%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 99.1%

GDP PER CAPITA: 22,162 USD/HAB

Chronology:

- 1981: Creation of the Podvinje community (belonging to the German Province); 2 confreres.
- 1996: Profession of two Croatian confreres, who belong to the German Province.
- 2002: Becomes a circumscription (International Group).
- 2006: Extension of the project (missionary animation) – Creation of a second community in Osijek.
- 2008: First chapter.
- 2013: Creation of a third community in Šibenik (Dalmatian coast).

The Group is international, with eight members from three different nationalities: Poland (5), Tanzania (2) and Sierra Leone (1). There is one Croatian confrere, member by origin, who is currently in mission ad extra in Tanzania. One Croatian student is doing theology in Kenya.

There are two communities in Slavonia (eastern part of the country): Podvinje and Osijek (Đakovo archdiocese); and one in Dalmatia (southern coastal belt): Šibenik (Šibenik diocese).

The Group is committed to various ministries at the service of the local Church: parish ministry (4 parishes); chaplaincies in prisons, hospitals and university; family counselling; education (one confrere teaches at the University of Zadar); assistance to children with special needs (orphanage, juvenile centre); retreats and seminars.

Strengths

- The multicultural character of the group responds to the initial objective of the creation of the Spiritan mission in Croatia: mission animation in order to widen the horizon in the local Church and society. By forming international communities, our confreres try to promote the missionary consciousness and cultural tolerance in a context marked by rampant nationalism. It must be noted that the first African priest in Croatia was a Spiritan.
- The confreres are well inserted into the local Church and are appreciated by the bishops, clergy and laity.
- Through various activities among young people, in the university and in parishes, the Group is committed to the dynamics of new evangelization. Despite many obstacles and setbacks, the Group has made continuous efforts to present the Spiritan charism and foster local vocations to the missionary life.

Challenges

The group faces two major challenges today. The future of the Spiritan mission in Croatia, and what form it will take, depends on the capacity of the Group to respond to these challenges:

- Mission and vision of the Congregation in Croatia: The changing trends in the post-communist Croatian society, with growing secularization and consumerism, call our confreres to respond creatively to people's needs and expectations. The work in our parishes is essentially oriented towards sacramental ministry. There are calls and opportunities for other types of ministries, which would be more in line with our Spiritan charism, that require creativity and adequate skills. The Group needs to work on identifying and planning consensually its missionary priorities, not limited to parishes, that include outreach to the poor, pastoral and social assistance to migrants, new evangelization, youth animation, etc.
- Unity of vision and purpose: Overall, there is a lack of vision and consensus on the missionary project of the group. The internal life of the group is marred by frustrations and interpersonal conflicts. The leadership has a very difficult task in trying to overcome these tensions and create a common direction. In the animation of the Group, priority has to be given to restoring unity, building a team spirit and a sense of common ownership of the Spiritan mission.

2.3.1.3 FRANCE PROVINCE

REPUBLIC OF FRANCE

AREA: 552,000 KM²

POPULATION: 65,130,000

BIRTH RATE: 11‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 4‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 82 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 58.1%, MUSLIMS 8.3%,

UNAFFILIATED 31.9%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS <

0.1%, FOLK RELIGIONS 0.4%, OTHER 0.2%, JEWS 0.5%.

ALPHABETISATION: 99.0%

GDP PER CAPITA: 39,254 USD/HAB

The Province of France is the oldest Province of the Congregation. It has had the status of Province since 1856. It was on October 2, 1906 that its administration was detached from the General Administration, following the decision of the Superior General, Bishop Alexandre le Roy. The first provincial council as such was held on January 3, 1907 and the first provincial chapter on August 25, 1913¹⁷⁸.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Jean Ernout, *Histoire de province spiritaine de France*, Mémoire spiritaine études et documents n° 5, Paris, 2000, p. 61-76.

The Province had districts in the French Overseas Departments and Territories and in Africa, but they have now become autonomous circumscriptions. The community of St. Pierre and Miquelon was closed because of the decision of the Holy See to suppress the Apostolic Vicariate of St. Pierre and Miquelon on March 1, 2018.

With 238 original members and 233 appointed confreres, the Province of France is the second largest circumscription of the Congregation, after the Province of South East Nigeria. It still has 45 confreres appointed on mission *ad extra* while welcoming 41 confreres from other circumscriptions.

Strengths

The Province has restructured its missionary project around pastoral ministry in Auteuil, parishes in multicultural environments, youth animation, welcome houses and the sharing of spirituality. It has also made a point of keeping its commitment to mission *ad-extra*. The number of confreres coming from elsewhere and appointed to the Province is increasing and they are integrated into the missionary project of the Province.

The development of apostolic, multi-generational and multi-cultural communities (Blanc Ménil, Fontenay-aux-Roses, Rennes, Nantes, Lille and Lyon) in charge of parishes is welcome and in keeping with our charism. These parishes allow the expression of Spiritan know-how and give back vitality to the confreres.

Several initiatives are taken within the framework of youth animation: youth volunteering within the framework of Operation Amos, Catholic Delegation for Cooperation (DCC); group visits abroad; homes for young students and professionals in Paris, Fontenay-aux-Roses and Strasbourg; spiritains-jeunes website.

JPIC remains one of the priorities of the Province: a confrere is appointed JPIC coordinator at the level of the Province.

The Province welcomes a number of confreres from other circumscriptions for the 2nd Cycle (Rue Erasme, Paris), specialised formation, formation of formators and renewal.

The pastoral ministry of communications is an asset for the Province. The production of the various magazines is now coordinated. The website of the Province is also a tool for animation. The Province remains very involved in the missionary review *Spiritus* which is supported by several missionary institutes.

France remains a source for Spiritan spirituality and it is deployed in the houses of welcome in Alex and Chevilly-Larue. The Centre Poullart des Places, Rennes is an imaginative project which offers the possibility of initiation into the spirituality of the founders.

Spiritans associates, Spiritan fraternities and lay networks bring freshness to the Spiritan identity and mission in France. They bring the Spiritan charism even to those places where there is no longer a Spiritan community.

Challenges

The Province is facing a shrinking population due to aging. More and more confreres are having to take on many tasks that were previously assumed by several confreres. Some confreres are noticeably overburdened.

The province has had to close several houses in recent years: Piré-sur-Sèche, Meudon, La Meinau, Valence, Bordeaux and La Croix-Valmer.

With the closure of the first cycle in Lille and the novitiate in Chevilly-Larue, the Province has only one house of formation, namely the 2nd cycle in Paris (Rue Erasme).

The question arises of professional care in the houses of the older confreres, Chevilly-Larue, Langonnet and Wolxheim, in a context where legislation is becoming ever stricter.

The Province is seeking to clarify the conditions for the welcoming of guests in these houses designated for this purpose, including at Rue Lhomond. This requires large financial investments.

2.3.1.4 GENERAL ADMINISTRATION (INCL. CONFRERES IN PALMAROLA, TORINO AND THOSE APPOINTED TO THE GENERALATE SERVICES)

REPUBLIC OF ITALY

AREA: 302,000 KM ²	RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 80.8%, MUSLIMS 4.9%,
POPULATION: 60,550,000	UNAFFILIATED 13.4%, HINDUS 0.2%, BUDDHISTS 0.2%,
BIRTH RATE: 8‰	FOLK RELIGIONS 0.2%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.
INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 3‰	ALPHABETISATION: 98.8%
LIFE EXPECTANCY: 83 YRS	GDP PER CAPITA: 35,299 USD/HAB

Spiritan Presence in Italy: Our presence in Italy goes as far back as 1853 when, on the personal initiative of Pope Pius IX, asked the Spiritans to undertake the foundation of the Pontifical French seminary in Rome for diocesan students. The Spiritans took charge of the seminary for 156 years, until 2009 when a decision was taken to withdraw due to the inability of the Congregation to continue to provide personnel from the Province of France. Another notable development was the transfer of the Spiritan Generalate from Paris to Rome in 1966. This move marked the beginning of a significant Spiritan presence in Italy. The presence of the Generalate in Rome has opened up new opportunities and possibilities for pastoral ministry other than the administrative roles of the Generalate and presence at the French Seminary. Consequently, in 1999 the GC opened the first Spiritan Parish in Italy, in Palmarola, North-West of the city of Rome. In 2010, a Spiritan community, which had been initially established at *San Tomaso* Church in the Archdiocese of Turin without the required permission of the GC, was officially regularized. In 2014, the GC established another community of specialized studies in Rome (Villa Notre-Dame) thus bringing the number of Spiritan communities in Rome to three, namely the Generalate, Villa Notre-Dame and Palmarola, together with two communities in Turin (*San Tomaso* and *San Gaetano*), the second of which was created in October 22, 2017.

Creation of Regional Community: Following a process of discernment and in dialogue with confreres in Italy and the Union of Circumscriptions of Europe (UCE), the Superior General with the consent of his Council created a Regional Community in Italy (RI) on Pentecost Sunday 15 May 2016¹⁷⁹ and nominated a Regional Superior. The Regional Community is placed under the direct authority of the GC. The role of the Regional Superior is to animate and organize the Regional Community in close collaboration with the GC.

Membership and Works of the Communities in Italy

1. **Generalate Community:** The community has 18 members. It includes the Superior General and his Council (8 confreres). Eight other confreres are

¹⁷⁹ Spiritan Rule of Life, 153.2

responsible for the different Generalate services: the general secretariat, co-coordinators for Communication, Spiritan Formation, Education, JPIC, Development, the Procurator to the Holy See, Generalate archivist, the Assistant General Bursar, and the Generalate Community Superior. The Generalate's principal work is that of the animation of the whole Congregation. The community is characterized by absences of the Superior General and councilors (when not in session) because of their canonical visitations to circumscriptions, to attend Chapters and Assemblies of circumscriptions. At different times and for different reasons, members of the Generalate service team travel for reasons of animation of the confreres, to attend meetings, workshops and to do other works that are related to their service portfolios.

The Generalate house is therefore a structure of animation of the Congregation and functions as a house of hospitality for our confreres, Lay Associates, friends, collaborators in mission as well as groups of confreres who come for particular meetings.

2. **Villa Notre-Dame Community (Rome, Established in 2013):** The community is located in the Southern part of Rome. The Congregation acquired the community house in 2013. Originally, the property belonged to the Sisters of *Maria Ausiliatrix*. The aim of establishing the community is to offer opportunity to circumscriptions to send confreres for training as formators,¹⁸⁰ specialized studies and renewal programmes. The community is international and has the capacity to welcome eight students. It also serves as a regional community for all Spiritan students in Italy.
3. **Palmarola Community (Rome, established in 1999):** Palmarola is the name of the city suburb where the confreres are working. At present there are two confreres, one from Congo Brazzaville and another from Nigeria NE, who are responsible for the pastoral care of St. Bridget of Sweden Parish in the Archdiocese of Rome. It is a poor parish on the outskirts of the city, characterized by the presence of immigrants.

Priority works of the community:

- Pastoral care to immigrants and Italian Catholics.
- Youth ministry in collaboration with the confreres in Turin.

Challenges: Up to the present moment, the community is living in a rented apartment and the Church is only a room on the ground floor of a larger building. Plans for a new parish Church and presbytery have been drawn up and permission to build granted by the Archdiocese of Rome. However, the construction work cannot begin until official clearance is obtained from the City Authority. Other difficulties encountered by the confreres are those related to cultural and racial differences and prejudices.

4. **Turin Communities (Regularized in 2010):** There are two communities in Turin: St Thomas Community and Saint *Gaetano* Parish Community. Each community has three confreres originating from four countries (Angola, Cameroon, DR Congo and Ghana).

Priority works of the Community: The communities in Turin are engaged in the following missionary works:

¹⁸⁰ Bagamoyo 3.10

- Pastoral work with migrants, the majority of them from Africa. To this effect, confreres work as chaplains to three linguistic groups: Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone. They do the apostolate in close collaboration with the Director of the Archdiocesan Office for migrants. Confreres are assigned to work in the Pastoral office for Migrants (UPM). Their work in the UPM is to support arriving migrants with counselling and offer them emergency humanitarian help.
- At St *Gaetano* Parish, confreres are available in the day-to-day pastoral care of the parishioners as well as care of *San Domenico* Shrine located within the Parish area.
- Prison and hospice chaplaincy.

Overall, confreres are well appreciated by the laity and by the Archdiocesan authorities for their zeal in ministry and for the uniqueness of their missionary apostolate, for which the local Church would struggle to find workers. Confreres are encouraging laypersons to participate in our Spiritan mission and to share in our spirituality.

Challenges:

- Finding experienced and open-minded personnel with the required language skills to function in the mission contexts of Italy is a major challenge.
- Sometimes confreres encounter cultural and racial biases.
- Collaboration, fraternal communication, sharing of responsibilities, accountability, collective sense of ownership and belonging, present special challenges for confreres working in Italy, arising partly from the manner in which the original commitment in Turin was undertaken.

Plan for the Future: The number of confreres in the Regional Community has increased and its organizational structure has, in recent years, improved significantly. It is hoped that our presence and mission in Italy will continue to grow and, in the not too distant future, the Regional Community be raised to the status of a circumscription and become a member of UCE.

To achieve the above, the Regional Community in collaboration with the GC, must carry out an audit of its mission, personnel and financial resources and, based on this analysis, put in place a clear vision and mission plan.

2.3.1.5 IRELAND PROVINCE

AREA: 70,000 KM²

POPULATION: 4,882,000

BIRTH RATE: 13‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 3‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 82 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 89.7%, MUSLIMS 1.5%,
UNAFFILIATED 7.9%, HINDUS 0.3%, BUDDHISTS 0.3%,
FOLK RELIGIONS 0.2%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 99.9%

GDP PER CAPITA: 53,754 USD/HAB

The Province

The Congregation decided in 1859 to open a house in Ireland in order to provide English speaking personnel for the missions in Africa. This work was first entrusted to Fr. Jules Leman and three companions. On seeing that Irish Catholics were very poorly served in the area of secondary education they decided that running a secondary school would be the best way to secure vocations for Africa while also making a worthwhile contribution to Ireland. In time the Congregation was to launch

five such secondary schools in Ireland,¹⁸¹ which count among the most prestigious colleges in the country. Spiritans have contributed significantly to give a missionary dimension to the Irish Church and over the years hundreds of missionaries have participated to the development and life of the Church on all continents.¹⁸²

The Irish circumscription became a Province in 1921. There are today 193 members by origin, among them 51 are appointed ad extra. In addition, 14 confreres from other circumscriptions are appointed to Ireland. There are 16 Lay Spiritan Associates. The average age in the Province is 77 years.

Spiritans are engaged in various missionary projects and commitments including:

- Four urban parishes in Dublin, in multicultural context, where confreres minister among persons living new forms of poverty, social exclusion and family problems.¹⁸³ Some confreres serve also in other dioceses in Ireland or as chaplains in health institutions.
- Ardraccon, a centre for contemporary and Spiritan spirituality offers opportunities for exchange, profound spiritual experience, faith formation, solidarity and encounter (ecumenism, interfaith dialogue).
- Spiritan Asylum Services Initiative (SPIRASI): although direct participation has decreased, there is an important institutional link and a renewed commitment to support this service to asylum seekers and victims of torture.

The schools are placed under the responsibility of the Spiritan Education Trust (SET), a company established by the Congregation to direct and supervise its educational mission.

Its purpose includes guaranteeing the Spiritan ethos in a context of increased autonomy from Congregational control. Some confreres are employed as chaplains by SET.

Strengths

- The Province has made an invaluable and unique contribution to Spiritan mission, both in Ireland and abroad. This heritage is appreciated and nurtured, notably by maintaining links and solidarity with circumscriptions where Irish Spiritans have worked, and also through the work of the archives and publications. A significant number of confreres are still engaged in mission ad extra.
- The Province is open to welcome young confreres on mission appointment or experienced confreres.
- The Province is remarkably well organized and benefits from the professional expertise of lay managers in all sectors of activities (Finances, Development office, Health care, Safeguarding, Communications, etc.). This style of organization is an appropriate response to the circumstances, the local context (with an increasing restrictive legal framework, calls for accountability and responsibility, etc.) and the actual needs of the Province.
- In education, the SET is an appropriate and exemplary structure to respond to the needs of the time, and is encouraged to review and update the role of the Spiritans as guarantors of the Spiritan ethos in education.

¹⁸¹ Blackrock, Rockwell, St Mary's, St Michael's and Templeogue.

¹⁸² The first Irish Spiritan to be sent to the missions was Brother Francis Carey, appointed to Chandernagor, India in 1862.

¹⁸³ The Province is in the process of disengaging from a rural parish in the west of Ireland.

Challenges

- The face of Ireland is changing considerably, with an increasingly open society, both culturally and economically. The crisis caused by sexual abuses by members of the Catholic clergy and religious has been a source of anger and disillusionment and has significantly contributed to the transformation towards secularism. This challenging context, calls for a constant re-examination of our identity and mission.
- The actual forces and resources are declining. A large number of the confreres are not able to take an active part in the mission of the Province. A significant amount of energy, time and human resources are naturally spent on administration and maintenance and especially on the care and well-being of the ageing confreres.
- In view of the foreseeable financial challenges ahead, the Province will need to review realistically the structures of animation and management at the service of its mission, measure the financial implications and prepare transition strategies: what is and will remain essential to support the mission in Ireland and to maintain its solidarity within the Congregation?
- Regarding the mission of education, the fundamental question remains: How to put the massive resources of the schools – belonging to the Province - at the service of a larger number, and particularly of a poorer component of the population, in fidelity to our charism? The Province needs to clarify its vision and expectations.

2.3.1.6 NETHERLANDS PROVINCE

NETHERLANDS

AREA: 42,000 KM²

POPULATION: 17,097,000

BIRTH RATE: 10‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 3‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 82 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 47.3%, MUSLIMS 6.9%,

UNAFFILIATED 44.3%, HINDUS 0.6%, BUDDHISTS 0.6%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 0.2%, OTHER 0.2%, JEWS 0.2%.

ALPHABETISATION: 99.9%

GDP PER CAPITA: 47,900 USD/HAB

The Church in the Netherlands operates in a very secularized context. Religious Congregations have in common a high average age and a serious shortage of vocations. Most of them are concerned with the care for their elderly and disabled members. However, more and more congregations, like the Spiritans, have opened their doors to younger members coming from outside the Netherlands to reinforce the local communities in missionary and pastoral commitments.

48 confreres originate from the Province, while 55, including 9 from other circumscriptions are appointed there. There are still 5 confreres from the Province on mission *ad extra*.

Strengths

The Province experienced a phenomenal renewal in the recent years due to the arrival of young confreres from Africa. New missionary commitments were opened in Eindhoven, Rotterdam, Heerenveen, Groningen and Amsterdam. A new community has been established in Gemert. Confreres are also involved in Migrants pastoral in Eindhoven and Rotterdam. The commitment to the centre for the poor and the marginalized in Eindhoven is also commendable. A confrere gives a course on Duquesne JPIC online program. The Province is committed to youth ministry. The relationship with Youth and Mission (S-Hertogenbosch) which sends young people to

Africa and Latin America is commendable. There is a confrere in charge of vocation animation: *appel a la mission*.

The Province dedicated the property in Berg en Dal to the ongoing formation of Spiritans from other circumscriptions. It has 10 rooms and is close to the Catholic University of Nijmegen. The house opened in in September 2014 and works in collaboration with the General Council.

A good number of lay people work with Spiritans at different levels. Some belong to a more structured group Medestanders (Eindhoven), while others constitute another group of Spiritan friends (Rotterdam). They share Spiritan spirituality and mission.

The Spiritan commitment to the Conference of Netherlands Religious is commendable. The conference supports the congregations in the Netherlands in different matters, for example, dealing with cases of sexual abuse; getting resident permits for foreigners; contact with the government; etc. Spiritans are involved in different working and study groups of the conference: JPIC, welcoming expatriate missionaries.

Aged confreres living in Gennep are well taken care of. The medicalized house, Libermannhof is entrusted to a private company, Proteion Thuis. This helps to provide professional care in conformity with the local legislation.

The financial situation of the Province is stable and well managed. The retirement fund is sufficient to take care of all the members of the Province. The Province continues financial solidarity with other circumscriptions through CESS/KIBANDA and COR UNUM.

Challenges

A great challenge is finding personnel from outside the Province for the new projects. The lack of personnel makes the Province a fragile circumscription.

Adaptation to the language, culture and Church in the Netherlands requires a lot of effort and openness on the part of the younger confreres and considerable financial resources from the Province.

The Province had to sell its properties in Gemert and Gennep because of lack of personnel and cost of maintenance. As such, the Province has no major property of its own.

2.3.1.7 POLAND PROVINCE

REPUBLIC OF POLAND

AREA: 313,000 KM²

POPULATION: 37,888,000

BIRTH RATE: 10‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 4‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 78 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 92.5%, MUSLIMS < 0.1%,

UNAFFILIATED 7.3%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS < 0.1%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 99.8%

GDP PER CAPITA: 26,150 USD/HAB

The Spiritans in Poland

The idea of a Spiritan presence in Poland was born at the end of the 19th century in the United States, when Polish Spiritans belonging to the province of Germany had put themselves at the pastoral service of the many Polish immigrants. But it was not until the end of the First World War that this project came to fruition, when Polish-born American Spiritans joined the Polish army trained in France as chaplains to fight against the Soviet invader. When they arrived in Poland, these Spiritans laid the

foundations for what would become the vice-province of Poland¹⁸⁴ almost 100 years ago, in 1921, in Bydgoszcz.

The German occupation (1939-1945) and then the communist regime (1952-1989) were periods of trial for the Polish confreres: many of them were interned in concentration camps or prisons and the province was in many respects cut off from the life of the Congregation. Since 1989, in a context of regained freedom, the Province has been living an era of development and integration in the Spiritan area.

The Polish province currently has 54 members, 33 of whom are assigned to the province (all Poles) and 21 missionaries *ad extra* (Europe, Africa, Latin America). Remarkably for a European province, the average age is 58 years.

The formation has two Polish students, a theologian and a brother in specialization studies, and has also recently welcomed two scholastics from Kenya.

Divided into 7 communities, the confreres are engaged in the service of 5 parishes, chaplaincies of hospitals, prisons and a social care home, in youth ministry, vocational and missionary animation.

The province has experienced a period of crisis in recent years. An independent financial audit (2017) uncovered serious financial malpractice and questionable practices over a period of ten years, leaving the finances drained and the province on the brink of bankruptcy, and requiring the Congregation's solidarity (General Council and UCE). Those responsible for this situation have been subject to canonical sanctions.

In addition, serious problems in the conduct of the province, causing serious unrest and dissension among the confreres and in the public arena, thus damaging the credibility and reputation of the Congregation, led the General Council in 2015 to intervene by replacing the leadership elected a year earlier with a provisional administration.¹⁸⁵ Thanks to the efforts of the latter, the Capitulary General Assembly of 2017 marked the return to calm and demonstrated a reaffirmed willingness to live together in the service of a common mission.

Strengths

- The province is organized and dynamic. The confreres, mostly in the prime of their lives, devote themselves to varied and significant activities of our charism. In a difficult context, the new leaders were able to join forces and create the conditions for reconciliation and a renewed commitment to a common missionary project.
- On the financial side, thanks to drastic reforms and everyone's efforts, the province has returned to balance. She is now able to patiently rebuild reserves and honour her commitments to creditors and solidarity in the Congregation.
- The province is very open to the world, as evidenced by the number of confreres on mission *ad extra*. It is now entering a new phase, welcoming confreres from other constituencies who will participate in missionary witness in Polish society and the Church. The choice of Lichen for the hosting of the General Chapter is a celebration of this new era.

Challenges

- The province must re-examine its missionary project in the light of recent developments in the Polish society: European integration, migration to and from

¹⁸⁴ Which became a province in 1976.

¹⁸⁵ These troubles led some confreres to leave the Congregation.

Poland, new forms of poverty, the temptation of nationalist withdrawal, etc. It is a question of examining how to put the Spiritan charism at the service of the Church and the society, without limiting itself to a parish ministry.

- In the parishes entrusted to the Congregation: the confreres must define a model and practice of parish Spiritan ministry as a space for collaboration and missionary openness to the peripheries and to all forms of poverty, fighting against the temptation of “diocesanization”.
- Fostering vocations to religious and missionary life among young people and accompanying their discernment remains a challenge in a constantly evolving youth culture. In this context, vocational animation and formation must be based on teamwork and be consistent with the orientations of the Congregation.

2.3.1.8 PORTUGAL PROVINCE

REPUBLIC OF PORTUGAL

AREA: 92,000 KM²

POPULATION: 10,226,000

BIRTH RATE: 8‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 3‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 82 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 90.5%, MUSLIMS 0.4%,

UNAFFILIATED 8.6%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 0.2%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 94.5%

GDP PER CAPITA: 27,315 USD/HAB

History and Current Reality

In 2016-2017 the Spiritans celebrated the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Province and, in 2019, the 150th anniversary of its restoration. Two significant dates, which were marked by many public celebratory events and publications, that allowed confreres and lay partners to recall the missionary history and diversity of the province, and to look to the future with hope. In 2007 there were 117 members by appointment in the Province. Currently there are 83 confreres by appointment in Portugal, including 7 from other circumscriptions actively involved in ministry, and 18 on mission ad extra. There are also 8 lay associates. The Province has 10 communities: 4 in the south, 1 in the centre and 5 in the north which also includes a 2nd cycle formation house with 12 students from 5 circumscriptions outside of Portugal.

The current commitments of the Province include: 5 communities responsible for 20 parishes and a number of chaplaincies to immigrants, prisons, hospitals and schools; CEPAC, which provides services to immigrants; CESM, spirituality and missionary animation centre; Lar Anima Una, a home that cares for elderly confreres and lay senior citizens; missionary animation, involving 9 confreres, through lay organizations such as LIAM, Jovens Sem Fronteiras, SOLSEF, MOMIP, Fraternities and Lay Spiritan Associates; publications and communications include a monthly newspaper Ação Missionária, books by Spiritan authors, the review “Missão Espiritana,” leaflets and posters, website and Facebook of the Province. Priority has been given to youth ministry and vocations animation with 4 confreres being specifically assigned to this area.

Political, Economic, Social and Religious Contest

Portugal is a country with a rich history of seafaring and exploration. For almost half of the 20th century Portugal was a dictatorship in which for decades Antonio de Oliveira Salazar was the key figure. This period was brought to an end in 1974 in a bloodless coup, picturesquely known as the Revolution of the Carnations, which ushered in a new democracy. The 2011-2014 debt crisis and austerity measures had a significant impact on all sections of society, especially the poor. The socialist prime minister Antonio Costa formed a left-wing coalition government in 2015, and in the

October 2019 elections his party and the left wing improved their tally of seats. The current economic situation is one of relative stability and growth. Portugal has one of the highest economic growth rates in the European Union, fuelled by record tourism, an upswing in the housing market, a growing tech sector and strong exports. However, balancing the budget deficit and repaying the public debt, which is almost paid off, has been at the expense of public investment in infrastructures, which represented 2.1% of GDP in 2018.

Catholicism plays a major role in the lives of the Portuguese people as is evident in the social services provided in most parishes and organizations in the villages and cities across the country. The celebration of Saints Days and other festivals is very popular, especially in the rural areas. It is estimated that over 18% of Catholics attend Mass and participate in the sacraments regularly.

Strengths and Challenges

The contribution of the Province to the life of the Church, both within Portugal and ad extra, is well recognized and appreciated. The identity of Spiritans is clearly seen as generating missionary vitality and commitment among the laity within the local Church and in maintaining a missionary presence “ad gentes” in other part of the world. Over the years, through careful renovation and development of its properties, the Province has managed to transform its assets so as to secure its financial self-sufficiency. SOLSEF is a Spiritan ONG that supports development projects in other countries. The provincial chapter of 2018 approved a Global Missionary Project (GMP), which outlines the current reality of the circumscription, defined orientations for action and determined three priorities for the Spiritans in Portugal, namely:

- a) Authenticity of life; living in intercultural fraternal communities, simplicity of life, and the integration of the laity;
- b) Vocations; transmission of the charism and youth ministry;
- c) Re-dimensioning; restructuring of management models, reorientation of infrastructures in line with the goals and objectives of the GMP of the Province.

Apart from the implementation of the three priorities identified in the GMP, other challenges include entrusting responsibility and leadership to key lay partners in administrative areas in lay Spiritan organizations and within the Province; deepening Spiritan identity in a parish context; openness to internationality and welcoming confreres from other circumscriptions.

2.3.1.9 PROVINCE EUROPE (INCL. REGIONS OF BELGIUM AND GERMANY)

KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

AREA: 31,000 KM²

POPULATION: 11,539,000

BIRTH RATE: 11‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 3‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 81 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 60.5%, MUSLIMS 7.5%,

UNAFFILIATED 31.0%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 0.2%, OTHER 0.1%, JEWS 0.3%.

ALPHABETISATION: 99.0%

GDP PER CAPITA: 42,156 USD/HAB

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

AREA: 357,000 KM²

POPULATION: 83,517,000

BIRTH RATE: 9‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 4‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 81 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 66.0%, MUSLIMS 6.9%,

UNAFFILIATED 26.3%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS < 0.1%, OTHER 0.1%, JEWS 0.3%.

ALPHABETISATION: 99.0%

GDP PER CAPITA: 46,136 USD/HAB

Province Europe (PE) was created in 2005 under the name of Circumscription Europe. It was born out of the desire the General Council and the provincials of the Union of European Circumscriptions (UCE) “to ensure the presence and permanence of the Spiritan mission in Europe”. The initial objective of the foundation of Circumscription Europe was to offer the older European provinces and those with few personnel a supportive structure, so that Spiritan presence in the old provinces could be guaranteed and the works could be continued with a new impetus in the spirit of our founders. This would be done especially through missionary animation, the establishment and continuation of missionary projects, solidarity in obtaining funds and assistance for Spiritan projects, participation in the commissions of the Union of European Circumscriptions (UCE) and the integration of those provinces that request it. The Circumscription Europe held its foundation chapter in 2010 in Montana (Switzerland) with the participation of all the provincials of Europe.

With the subsequent renewal of the other provinces of Europe, only two former provinces, Germany and Belgium, joined the Circumscription Europe and became regions. Following the decision of Bagamoyo (2012, no. 6.9.3) the General Council erected the Circumscription Europe as a Province on October 2nd, 2014, giving it the name Province Europe (PE).

There are 59 confreres from the Province, while 87 are appointed to it. Of the latter, 37 come from other circumscriptions. There are still 8 confreres on mission *ad extra*.

Strengths

Thanks to the contribution of young confreres from other circumscriptions, especially from Africa, PE has succeeded in giving a new breath of life to Germany and Belgium. In addition to its traditional commitments in the mission *ad extra* and its accompaniment and care of the elderly members, PE promotes mission locally through new commitments discerned according to the signs of the times. The internationality of the Province is a great richness.

The Province welcomes and assumes the service of the mission through classical parish pastoral care, presence in sensitive neighbourhoods as builders of relationships/neighbourhood links, inter-religious dialogue and encounter, the field of JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation) and advocacy for a more just and equitable world through VIVAT, AEFJN and NAD, the welcome and accompaniment of the most needy (immigrants, undocumented migrants, refugees).

In Belgium, five missionary projects have been set up in the last five years (Molenbeek, Charleroi, Gentinnes, Turnhout and Anderlecht). The Province has achieved a stronger and closer collaboration with Belgian dioceses and bishops as well as with other Church and civil society groups which now recognize the EP as a partner representing the Spiritans. Thanks to the contribution of confreres coming from the other circumscriptions of the Congregation, as well as to the efforts of the provincial animation team, the Spiritan presence in Belgium is being reborn with new perspectives.

In Germany the Province has succeeded in consolidating old projects and taking new initiatives in pastoral work and commitments. A new community and a new missionary project have been born at Weissach, near Stuttgart, with the responsibility for a pastoral unit.

In addition, the Province has continued and developed five flagship projects in Germany.

- MaZ (Missionaries for a Time) under the responsibility of an association, “Spiritanerstiftung” for young adults.

- NOTEL, to accompany and support drug addicts, with nine full-time employees and about twenty volunteers and one who provides chaplaincy;
- the chaplaincy of the Heilig-Geist-Gymnasium;
- the pastoral care of the English-speaking African community in Broich, with a confrere as chaplain appointed by the diocese of Aachen;
- the Basilica of Knechtsteden which is both a place of pilgrimage and an important cultural centre.
- The apostolic community of Rostock where the confreres help the local church in the archdiocese of Hamburg to open up to the universal Church in a post-communist society.

Challenges

The great challenge is that of the relevance of the existence of the Province of Europe. The fact that other aging circumscriptions have no plans to join Province Europe leaves only the Province as an entity with two regions, Germany and Belgium. Even though the Province has helped to revitalize the mission in these two regions, they continue to function as two entities. They keep their financial autonomy and their councils, so that the provincial administration appears as an office in Brussels.

Moreover, there are real difficulties of communication between the confreres, because of the three languages, German, French and Flemish. There is also the question of legislation (laws) specific to each country, and a lack of common projects.

Many confreres on both sides find it difficult to see how the two regions can continue together as one Province. The Enlarged Provincial Council of 2018 expressly asked the present Provincial Council to make a clear presentation of the different options for the future of the Province of Europe and to make every effort to reach at a decision at the next Provincial Chapter.

2.3.1.10 SPAIN PROVINCE

KINGDOM OF SPAIN

AREA: 506,000 KM²

POPULATION: 46,737,000

BIRTH RATE: 9‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 3‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 83 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 75.2%, MUSLIMS 3.3%,

UNAFFILIATED 21.0%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 0.1%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 98.3%

GDP PER CAPITA: 34,258 USD/HAB

History and Context of the Circumscription

Although Libermann saw the need for a presence in Spain, it was only on the 28th of October, 1951, that three Portuguese Spiritans arrived and established the first Spiritan community in Madrid. Soon afterwards, on the 21st of February, 1969, Spain became an autonomous Province.

The Province has 28 professed members, 15 by origin and 13 by appointment (Angola 3, Cameroon 2, Nigeria 3, Ghana 1, Poland 1, Portugal 3), and 7 lay Spiritans. A further 5 members are on mission "ad extra" in Angola, Cameroons, Paraguay, Tanzania. Within Spain, the missionary project includes living in 4 intercultural and intergenerational communities located in Madrid, Cordoba, Pedrezuela and Aranda de Duero; pastoral commitments in 3 regions that include 10 parishes; JPIC projects among prisoners and immigrants, in particular, the Karibu project which welcomes marginalized and undocumented African women in situations of vulnerability; creating

missionary awareness within the Spanish Church, youth ministry and vocations animation.

Political, Economic, Social and Religious Contest

Spain's modern history is marked by the bitter civil war of 1936-39, and the ensuing decades-long dictatorship of Francisco Franco. In 1975 Spain made the transition to democracy. The country's 17 regions have their own directly-elected authorities, but separatism remains a live issue in wealthy Catalonia in the north-east.

In the wake of the global financial crisis that began in 2008, Spain experienced a prolonged recession with the result that unemployment was more than 26% in 2013. In 2013 it was necessary for the government to shore up struggling banks, exposed to collapse due to the depressed real estate and construction sectors. In January 2014 Spain completed an EU-funded restructuring and recapitalization program for its financial sector and in recent years has returned to economic growth, largely due to increased private consumption. A wide range of structural reforms has contributed to the recovery, however, not without social unrest and political gridlock.

Although the majority of the population claims to be Catholic, only 14% attend Mass regularly. Additionally, it appears that the Spanish population continues to undergo a generalized secularization, which is occurring throughout western Europe. Only 3% of the population, when questioned in a survey, reported that religion was one of their top three values.

Strengths and Challenges

In 2019, the Province celebrated its golden Jubilee with a number of celebrations throughout the year, recalling its past and looking to the future. A characteristic of the circumscription is its missionary animation work and collaboration with a wide network of lay people and volunteers, including Lay Spiritans. The eight chapter of the Province, held in 2018, committed itself to continue supporting missionary initiatives that express Spiritan ideals of going to the margins and where it is difficult to find pastors in responding to the emerging needs of the local Church, to sending missionaries "ad extra;" to living cultural diversity in prayerful and welcoming communities; to sharing with youth and lay persons our Spiritan missionary spirituality and charism. The Province also has an annual program of retreats for all members and lay associates. The newsletter MIES and Carta Familiar provides up-to-date communication on members and events within the Province.

Similar to other circumscriptions in Europe, the Province faces the challenge of keeping alive the Spiritan missionary spirit in a radically changing society and Church. Challenges for the future include: managing the advancing age of a significant number of the 22 members of origin (average age of 67 years); the lack of local vocations and how to engage young people today; welcoming new members from other circumscriptions and adaptation to intercultural community living.

2.3.1.11 SWITZERLAND PROVINCE

SWISS CONFEDERATION

AREA: 41,000 KM²

POPULATION: 8,591,000

BIRTH RATE: 10‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 4‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 84 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 70.0%, MUSLIMS 5.6%,

UNAFFILIATED 22.8%, HINDUS 0.5%, BUDDHISTS 0.5%,

FOLK RELIGIONS < 0.1%, OTHER 0.2%, JEWS 0.2%.

ALPHABETISATION: 99.9%

GDP PER CAPITA: 57,625 USD/HAB

Spiritans in Switzerland

As of 31 October 2019 the Province of Switzerland has 29 confreres, 5 of whom come from other circumscriptions (Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria [2], Poland); since the 2012 Chapter, 10 confreres have died. 3 confreres work outside Switzerland (Cameroon, Congo, Rome).

The average age of the confreres coming from the Province is 78.3 years, that of the confreres coming from other Provinces and appointed to the Province is 54.2 years, compared to 74.4 and 53.5 respectively in 2012.

The confreres appointed to the Province live in the communities of Fribourg, Le Bouveret, Geneva and Vouvry. 2 confreres live outside the community. 4 are in retirement homes. The confreres of Fribourg and Le Bouveret are in apostolic activities, while others are retired or semi-retired. The community of Geneva includes three confreres: 2 confreres (from Nigeria) are in charge of a pastoral sector made up of 4 parishes, while another (from Poland) works at VIVAT and with the United Nations agencies, in the field of Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation. In the community of Vouvry (Valais), two confreres (from Ghana and Switzerland) work in a pastoral sector of 4 parishes, and one confessor (from Madagascar) works in the parish of Collombey.

Priorities and Challenges

The confreres of the Province are very involved in the local Church and are active with real pastoral zeal. In the Church of Switzerland, many priests from other countries and cultures are already active, and there is a real openness in this respect. The dioceses are looking for young and dynamic pastoral communities, and our missionary orientation is always well received.

Like the other provinces in Europe, the Province of Switzerland is faced with an aging and shrinking membership. The sustainability of the Spiritan presence in Switzerland depends on openness to other pastoral and missionary commitments, and to the coming of younger confreres from other circumscriptions, especially from Africa. The invitation of Pope Francis to reach the peripheries must also be implemented in Switzerland, and if we do that there is a future for the Spiritan mission.

The Province of Switzerland has begun a great work, which it will have to carry out: the renovation of the guest house at Le Bouveret. The building is to be refurbished and adapted to current safety standards. In addition to the financial challenge, this operation requires the setting up of an animation project, which cannot be carried out without the commitment of lay people, salaried employees and volunteers. This requires the Province to reflect globally on its future and its pastoral choices. Among the apostolic tasks devolved to a province, the Province of Switzerland should also place emphasis on missionary animation and vocation awakening (RVS 160), with the imagination and creativity needed to meet the complex world of today.

2.4 NORTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

2.4.1 UNION OF CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS OF NORTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (UCNAC)

UCNAC comprises the circumscriptions of Canada, TransCanada, USA, Mexico, Puerto Rico + Dominican Republic, Haiti, Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guyana

and Trinidad. English, French and Spanish are the principle languages used in the Union.

Political, Economic, Socio and Religious Context

The circumscriptions of UCNAC cover a vast territory including part of South America with an estimated population of 520 million. The social and economic realities differ greatly, with the U.S. being one of the richest nations and largest economy in the world with a GDP of US\$ 54,941 while at the other end of the scales is Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world with a GDP of US\$1,903. In general, economic, social and religious issues within the particular countries where Spiritans live and work are diverse and, as such, are best dealt with when considering each circumscription individually.

Nevertheless, migration and poverty continue to dominate the political, economic and social agendas in Northern and Central American countries. In recent years, television screens have transmitted images across the world of caravans of people, principally for Southern Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, journeying on foot, sometimes up to 3,700 km with small children, crossing multiple countries in the hope of entering the USA. The fundamental reason for much of this migration is poverty, sometimes provoked by climatological crises, such as hurricanes, earthquakes and droughts, that have decimated livelihoods. Other contributing factors are violence, insecurity and a lack of economic prospects for the future.¹⁸⁶

Spiritans in UCNAC

In North America, the first meeting of superiors of circumscriptions was held in 1972 in Trinidad. The next meeting did not take place until 1977 but there afterwards the meetings were organised on an annual basis. Each superior receives the other superiors on a rotating basis and is responsible for the organisation of the meeting. The secretary of the Union has a particularly important role in ensuring preparation, continuity between meetings, follow up on decisions and the publication of a UCNAC Newsletter. The main common project of the Union is the Spiritan mission in the Dominican Republic, under the leadership of the superior of Puerto Rico. Also within the Union, efforts are made to support each other in terms of personnel and finances. Regrettably, a number of Superiors fail to attend the UCNAC annual meeting or to send a representative. The statutes of the Union were approved by the General Council on the 20th of February, 2019.

Strengths and Challenges

1. One of the biggest challenges of UCNAC circumscriptions is ensuring the renewal of membership by welcoming confreres from other locations who are willing to participate in the mission and life of these provinces and Groups. One possible way forward is in welcoming Spiritan students from other circumscriptions to do their pastoral experience or theological studies in UCNAC circumscriptions and there afterwards a mission appointment within the Union.
2. Vocations to Spiritan life are few within the Union, nonetheless, there is wide support for vocations animation. However, animation in this area is generally weak or non-existent. With few exceptions, more investment and effort is needed, especially where the missionary vocation is still attractive to young adults. A possible way forward could be to facilitate greater cooperation, through annual

¹⁸⁶ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Atlas of Migration in Northern Central America, 2018, pp.5-6

meetings, of those responsible for formation and vocations animation. Considering the limited numbers of candidates within UCNAC, greater collaboration between circumscriptions is necessary so as to overcome a sense of isolation and offer a quality formation program.

3. Within the Union there is a small number of candidates for Spiritan life from Haiti, Mexico, Puerto Rico and USA. The fact that the candidates come from diverse languages has not facilitated common structures for initial formation at novitiate or 2nd cycle levels within the Union. Currently, two centres for theology are operating within the Union, in Haiti and Trinidad. By way of facilitating greater collaboration in initial formation, the General Council has asked formators and Superiors to consider designating one centre for the study of theology within the Union.
4. Lay Spiritans in the provinces of Canada and the USA were among the first to develop this form of membership within the Congregation. New members continue to join the Lay Spiritans after participating in an official formation program. Currently some Lay Spiritans are involved with professed members in Spiritan projects, while others are involved in ministries or projects within their local context or internationally. Other circumscriptions within the Union also have a long history of collaboration with lay partners and friends who are active in supporting Spiritan mission.
5. Over the last 8 years a considerable number of cases of confreres, from other circumscriptions, in irregular situations in Canada and the USA have been resolved amicably. However, approximately 26 known cases still remain and regrettably new ones continue to emerge in spite of many attempts to encourage Superiors and confreres to follow correct procedures as outlined in SRL 159.3, 182.1, and the General Council guidelines for Confreres in the USA Province from other Circumscriptions, 2 February, 2016. In some cases dialogue between Superiors has been difficult and post-factum agreements reached have not always been respected, thus creating sentiments of mistrust and lack of cooperation. A perception exists that the North American Superiors and circumscriptions are not welcoming and closed to confreres from other parts of the world. While on the other hand, some Superiors and confreres from outside the North American context are perceived as not realizing the complications, legal and financial risks, that a member in an irregular situation can incur. Additionally, from the North American perspective, the existence of independent groups and confreres taking on ministry without any reference to the missionary projects or life of the local circumscriptions, gives the impression that the Spiritan charism and mission is splintered and diluted. Going forward, it is clear: that the commitment of Superiors is needed so as to avoid new and resolve ongoing cases of confreres in irregular situations; that agreements reached need to be respected so as to build trust between all the parties involved; that as new situations and needs arise, past negative experiences must not be allowed to determine future collaboration between circumscriptions.
6. New forms of partnerships and ways of doing mission are areas needing greater consideration within the Union. Over the last number of years, the Spiritan Beyond Borders¹⁸⁷ project, between the USA, Canada and TransCanada provinces, has developed and gone in new directions, including focusing on

¹⁸⁷ A collaborative initiative to explore the future of Spiritan mission within the three North American Provinces.

peripheral areas among minority groups as new missionary frontiers and creating intentional intercultural communities.

7. Due to the diversity and linguistic realities within the circumscriptions of UCNAC, some Superiors do not see the point of participating in meetings. Looking to the future, perhaps a separate French speaking structure or Union within the Caribbean could be explored so as meet their particular needs and facilitate greater collaboration between these circumscriptions.

2.4.1.1 CANADA PROVINCE

AREA: 9,985,000 KM ²	RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 66.4%, MUSLIMS 2.8%,
POPULATION: 37,411,000	UNAFFILIATED 24.5%, HINDUS 1.7%, BUDDHISTS 1.7%,
BIRTH RATE: 10‰	FOLK RELIGIONS 1.2%, OTHER 1.2%, JEWS 1.1%.
INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 5‰	ALPHABETISATION: 99.0%
LIFE EXPECTANCY: 82 YRS	GDP PER CAPITA: 43,433 USD/HAB

Local Context: Quebec

Quebec is one of the 13 provinces and territories that make up Canada's confederation. It is also the only province where French is the official language.¹⁸⁸

In Quebec, the Catholic religion long played a predominant role in society and public affairs until the early 1960s, when what was called the "Quiet Revolution" began, which was a real peaceful upheaval in all areas: social, political, economic, religious and academic. Quebec society then secularized itself in depth.

The Catholic Church remains in the majority in terms of declarations,¹⁸⁹ but the links between Quebecers and the institutional Church have become considerably weaker. Many call themselves "non-practising Catholics" and the figure of 5% of regular practitioners is mentioned.

Spiritane Presence

Canada is at the heart of the Spiritane history: from the very beginning of our foundation, priests trained at the Seminary of the Holy Spirit participated in the evangelization of the French-speaking territories of Western Canada (Acadia, Newfoundland, Quebec). The true foundation of the Spiritane presence is the creation of an establishment in Gatineau, which will become the prestigious *Collège Saint Alexandre*, from which many Spiritanes were born. The Province was founded in 1946 and Canadian Spiritanes were particularly active in Nigeria and Congo (formerly Zaire).

The Province has 24 members: two are missionaries *ad extra* (Paraguay and Mexico) and 22 are present in Canada and divided into four communities. Among them, there are 5 confreres from other countries (DRC and Madagascar). There are also 4 Lay Spiritane Associates. The average age in the province is 75 years.

The confreres are involved in parishes in three different dioceses: *Notre Dame des Neiges* (Montreal) and *Auguste Delisle* (St Jean-Longueuil), serving multicultural urban populations, and *Saint Alexandre*, in a rural area on the outskirts of the Archdiocese of Gatineau. Beyond the animation of parish communities and sacramental pastoral care, these insertions make it possible to reach and accompany newly arrived migrants, ethno-cultural communities, people in difficulty and the sick.

¹⁸⁸ Although there are also French-speaking minorities in other provinces and territories.

¹⁸⁹ 74.7% of Quebecers declared themselves Catholics in 2011. (National Household Survey, Statistics Canada, 2011)

Strengths

- Despite the decrease in the volume and diversity of activities, due to a lack of human and financial resources, the mission is still a significant element of the life and project of the Province.
- The welcoming of Spiritans from other circumscriptions, both young confreres on missionary assignment and those that are more experienced, is positively experienced. It is this option that allows us to continue the mission in Canada today and has contributed to giving new life to the Province, even if it is not of the desired size, particularly because of administrative constraints (visa).
- There is real care in the Province for community life, local animation, conviviality and the well-being of the confreres. The communities involved in parish ministry are multicultural and multi-generational. They thus give a significant testimony, through their profile.

Challenges

- The aging and decline of its membership and the drying up of its resources, which are predicted to be depleted in the short term, have a clear impact on the Province's mission. Within a few years, it was forced to sell almost all of its real estate assets. As a result, there are real questions about its ability to meet the needs of its members while considering new commitments.
- The general context of the Canadian society reflects that of secularized Western societies but, in some respects, is more notoriously marked by the loss of reference points, the crisis of religious identity, a highly restrictive legal and societal framework. This renders traditional pastoral approaches obsolete and illusory and calls for creativity and modesty in ministry. Not all of them, old or young Spiritans, are prepared for this.
- The reception of migrants is considered today as Canada's great challenge and the Church wants to respond to it with a dynamic and adapted pastoral care. There are calls to dedicate themselves to other cultural communities: Lusophones, Vietnamese, Spanish speakers, Italians, etc. The Spiritans are invited to take their full place in this pastoral ministry, thus expressing the current relevance of their presence and mission.

2.4.1.2 GUADELOUPE GROUP

GUADELOUPE, REGION OF FRANCE

AREA: 2,000 KM ²	RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 95.9%, MUSLIMS 0.4%,
POPULATION: 400,000	UNAFFILIATED 2.5%, HINDUS 0.5%, BUDDHISTS 0.5%,
BIRTH RATE: 12‰	FOLK RELIGIONS 0.4%, OTHER 0.4%, JEWS < 0.1%.
INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 5‰	ALPHABETISATION: 90.0%
LIFE EXPECTANCY: 82 YRS	GDP PER CAPITA: 20,895 USD/HAB

A French colony from 1635 to 1946, Guadeloupe became a French overseas department in 1946 and an outermost region of the European Union in 1958. It is located in the southern Caribbean Sea and is composed of two large islands: *La Grande-Terre* and *La Basse-Terre*. Five other islands make up this Guadeloupe archipelago: *Les Saintes*, *Marie Galante*, *La Désirade*, *Saint Martin* and *Saint Barthelemy*. The territory of the diocese includes all the above-mentioned islands. Religion plays an important role in the lives of people, and superstitions are still quite prevalent. The Catholic Church is the most widespread.

Presentation of the Circumscription

The Spiritans arrived in Guadeloupe in 1854, at the request of Bishop Forcade, with the opening of a Spiritan community at the *Basse-Terre* school. From 1912 to 1970 the three dioceses of the Ecclesiastical Province (Guadeloupe, Martinique and Guiana) were entrusted to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Despite the presence of a few Guadeloupean priests, the diocese still has to rely on clergy from elsewhere: Spiritans, *Fidei Donum* African priests, Montfortians, *Redemptoris*, *Voluntas Dei* Institute, Missionary of *Notre Dame de la Salette*.

From 75 French confreres in 1973, the group now has 12 confreres, including 5 Haitians, 3 Congolese from Brazzaville, 2 Tanzanians, 1 Gabonese, and 1 retired Frenchman from the Province of France.

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

- Spiritans are the founders of the local Church and play a considerable role in the animation of parish communities. The confreres are involved in several parishes: *Massabielle*, *Le Gosier*, *Moule*, *Lamentin*, and *Trois Rivières*. The confreres are close to the people, welcome them, listen to them, and are always available to meet their needs.
- The bishop has just entrusted the Spiritans with the pastoral care of the *Association Saint Jean-Bosco*, a project in favour of Guadeloupe's youth in difficulty. The objective is to provide these young people with an appropriate training and education framework to promote their reintegration.
- The group has two real estate properties (*Maison Massabielle* and the apartment in the commune of *Le Gosier*).
- A financial effort is required from each confrere and everyone participates. Some communities and confreres show great generosity towards the group.
- There is a contract between the Spiritan group and the Diocesan Association of Basse-Terre and Pointe-à-Pitre.

Challenges

- The reflection on different possible extra-parochial commitments in the diocese and on the material and financial means to respond to them must be continued.
- The group does not have its own sources of financing. The current system does not promote a real pooling of financial resources and carries the risk of accentuating individualism. In addition, *Maison Massabielle*, the group's main house, needs a major renovation that will weigh on the group's finances.
- At the request of the General Council, after consultation with the confreres of the Guadeloupe and Martinique groups, a merger project was launched in 2018. The two groups agreed on a gradual integration. A mixed commission, Martinique Guadeloupe, has been set up to work on the practical modalities of unification and prepare the Founding Chapter.
- The question of the relevance of the Guadeloupe group's membership of UCNAC was raised, as their pastoral situations and concerns seem to be out of step with the constituencies of North America (Canada, Trans Canada, and the United States). One could imagine the creation of a Union of Caribbean constituencies - Martinique, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Guiana.

2.4.1.3 GUYANE GROUP

FRENCH GUYANA, REGION OF FRANCE

AREA: 215,000 KM ²	RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 67.9%, MUSLIMS 6.1%,
POPULATION: 291,000	UNAFFILIATED 2.0%, HINDUS 23.3%,
BIRTH RATE: 26‰	BUDDHISTS 23.3%, FOLK RELIGIONS 0.2%, OTHER 0.6%,
INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 10‰	JEWES < 0.1%.
LIFE EXPECTANCY: 80 YRS	GDP PER CAPITA: 7,447 USD/HAB

French Guiana is a French department, the largest in France, although it is located in the north of Latin America. It has two major characteristics: the coastline, where a large part of the population lives, and two rivers (the Maroni and the Oyapok) that flow into the forest and border Brazil and Suriname. This French territory has only one diocese. It is the French region with the highest proportion of the immigrant population.

Presentation of the Circumscription

The first priests to arrive in Guiana were the Capuchins in 1612, then the Jesuits. The Congregation of the Holy Spirit, in charge of Guiana in 1775, sent four priests from the Seminary of the Holy Spirit. Expelled from Guiana in 1893, the Spiritans returned in 1912 through an order from *Propaganda Fide* to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit to take charge of the former colonial dioceses of Martinique, Guadeloupe and Reunion Island, and the apostolic prefectures of Saint Pierre et Miquelon and French Guiana. The Apostolic Vicariate of Guiana became the Diocese of Cayenne in 1956.

The group is international and made up of 14 confreres, from Nigeria (6), France/Martinique (1), Haiti (1), Gabon (1), Ghana/Benin (1), Madagascar (1), and Congo Brazzaville (3). There are three (3) regional communities: Cayenne and its surroundings (*Maison Stellina, Paroisses Sainte-Famille, and Saint-Antoine*); West: Mana, Javouhey, *Saint-Laurent*, Apatou, and finally Haut-Maroni: Grand-Santi, Papaïchton, Maripasoula and *Pays-Amérindiens*.

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

- The group has formed an association recognized by the French administration.
- The internationality of the members is an opportunity and a beautiful testimony in a territory where the communities are well identified (Creoles, Bush-Nenge, Hmong, Haitian), but often compartmentalized and gathered in the same sector, even in the same parish. They promote dialogue between different communities, thus participating in the construction of ecclesial communities that bring together the diversities of Guianese society.
- The Bishop entrusted the Spiritans with the responsibility for the western part of the diocese (coastal area and the Maroni River). Missions in line with our charism, whether in coastal communities (Cayenne) or on a first evangelization mission in remote areas along the Maroni River.
- A contract between the diocese and the Spiritan group is being signed.
- There is a lively Spiritan Fraternity established several years ago that accompanies the confreres in their mission.

Challenges

- The presence of the Hmong populations from Laos and Vietnam seems to be a missionary call for the congregation and a possible space for collaboration with the new Spiritan districts in Asia.

- The group has no fixed source of income. The system of financial contribution by each of the confreres to the benefit of the group is not in conformity with SRL 65. The new financial system adopted, which is more consistent with the SRL, will only come into force after the contract with the diocese has been signed.
- The group's membership in UCNAC, although exciting, is out of step with the group's missionary situation. There are more common themes between Martinique, Guadeloupe, and French Guiana than with the other members of UCNAC. Cooperation with Martinique and Guadeloupe is potentially the most promising, realistic and dynamic.

2.4.1.4 HAITI PROVINCE

REPUBLIC OF HAITI

AREA: 28,000 KM²

POPULATION: 11,263,000

BIRTH RATE: 25‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 81‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 64 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 87.0%, MUSLIMS < 0.1%,

UNAFFILIATED 10.7%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 2.1%, OTHER 0.3%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 48.7%

GDP PER CAPITA: 1,655 USD/HAB

The Spiritans have been present in Haiti since 1843. They are working tirelessly to build a more vibrant local church and a more balanced society. The Spiritans have experienced several exiles, the last one lasting 18 years (1969 - 1987). The current province of Haiti, created on October 2, 2014, is the result of the last return from exile. They continue to accompany the Haitian people with devotion on their path to emancipation in a context of extreme poverty, violence, political instability and vulnerability to the vagaries of nature.

Spiritans, like the entire Haitian population, have had to endure the trauma of the 2010 earthquake. This painful event, which cost the life of a Spiritan student, has had and continues to have a significant impact on the deployment of the province's missionary project. Spiritans have played a major role in the reconstruction of infrastructure for pastoral care after the earthquake, drawing on the extensive network of Spiritan solidarity.

The Province has 30 native confreres, 10 of whom are on mission outside the country. On the other hand, 18 confreres are appointed to the province, 3 of whom come from other circumscriptions.

Strengths

The province's mission has four major dimensions: parish ministry, education and solidarity, which includes assistance, development projects for disadvantaged populations and initiatives for justice and peace and the integrity of creation.

The Spiritans are founding members of CIFOR, the Inter-Institute Centre for Religious Formation, which offers programs in philosophy and theology. They participate by both sending students and teachers.

The main education work of the province remains the prestigious *Petit Séminaire Collège St Martial*, which will be 120 years old in 2020. This college has trained generations of executives, intellectuals, politicians and clergymen in a spirit of service to the Haitian society as a whole.

St Martial also houses the Library of the Spiritans of Haiti. It is a national heritage. Some of the old collections are classified on UNESCO's collections.

A confrere is involved in a multidisciplinary project in Fondwa: school and university of agronomy, veterinary clinic, community development program, cooperative microcredit bank and health centre. Even if this work developed in a somewhat parallel way, it corresponds to the Spiritan charism. This scheme receives many volunteers from Haiti and various countries.

The Province has initial formation structures: Propaedeutic (postulate) and Philosophy. The option for Central Africa in terms of Novitiate and the Period of Missionary Experience(PME) is widely considered in the Province as a positive development.

The provincial team has succeeded in stabilizing the Province. The last chapter is perceived as positive and has allowed the Province to clarify its missionary options.

The Province has set up structures that are both services and self-financing means, in particular a Procure store in St Martial and a Development Office.

Challenges

The latest socio-political crisis has plunged the country back into insecurity and paralysed all sectors, economic, social, educational and even pastoral.

Due to a lack of human and financial resources, insertion in parishes where the Spiritan charism could be deployed is now limited to two dioceses. Maintenance, employees, salaries, transport, health care and insurance are the responsibility of the Spiritans.

The Province has few specialized confreres able to invest in educational works in parishes and St. Martial.

The Province does not have an adequate structure for vocational animation. Moreover, there is still no clarity about where students will do their theology. Some are concerned that the option of continuing in Central Africa or elsewhere could weaken CIFOR, where Spiritans are collaborating with other religious institutes.

Having been affected by the earthquake, the Province's needs for equipment and daily operations remain considerable and far exceed its current income. The reconstruction of St Martial remains a major concern for the province. Therefore, the confreres must constantly strive to find other sources of income.

The last chapter of the Province in July 2019 insisted on the need to work for greater fraternity and unity among the confreres. Some still hold grudges due to past conflicts or old frustrations, or because of too personal projects that are not shared by the whole province. This maintains an unease between the confreres present in Haiti or with those outside.

The Province also needs more internationality in its members and openness to other constituencies.

2.4.1.5 MARTINIQUE GROUP

MARTINIQUE, REGION OF FRANCE

AREA: 1,000 KM²

POPULATION: 376,000

BIRTH RATE: 10‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 6‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 82 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 96.5%, MUSLIMS 0.2%,

UNAFFILIATED 2.3%, HINDUS 0.2%, BUDDHISTS 0.2%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 0.2%, OTHER 0.6%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 97.7%

GDP PER CAPITA: 25,514 USD/HAB

Martinique is an overseas island of France, located in the Caribbean. Its culture reflects a distinctive mix of French and West Indian influences. Its economy,

consisting of the production and export of bananas, sugar cane and rum, is supported by subsidies from mainland France and Europe. The few industries in this department are only small or medium-sized companies. Spoken languages are French and Creole. There is a strong tendency towards the magico-religious. Liberation from slavery took place in 1848 but today it still shows many traces in people's behaviour.

Presentation of the Circumscription

The Spiritans have been present in Martinique since 1843. Their presence here dates back to the time when the Propaganda Fide in Rome entrusted the Congregation of the Holy Spirit with the responsibility of the colonial dioceses of Martinique, Guadeloupe, Reunion Island, the Apostolic Prefectures of *Saint Pierre et Miquelon* and French Guiana, concerning their spiritual direction and providing them with apostolic workers. Today, Spiritans collaborate with other religious congregations in the pastoral vision of a well-structured local church with committed clergy and laity.

The group has 12 members: 3 Haitians, 2 Congolese from Brazzaville, 3 Ghanaians, 1 Gabonese, 2 Martinicans, and 1 Malagasy. A young Martinican confrere has just been posted to Taiwan. Two other confreres from Martinique are on mission in French Guiana and the Province of France.

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

- The history of the Church of Martinique and that of the Congregation are closely linked.
- The confreres are involved in the animation of parish communities: *Paroisse Sacré Coeur* ("Balata"), *Paroisse Saint Christophe* (Fort de France) and *Sainte Thérèse* (Emmaüs), *Paroisse Saint-Etienne* (Le Marin), *Paroisse Immaculée Conception* (*Rivière-Pilote*), *Sanctuaire de Notre-Dame de la Salette* (*Sainte-Anne*), *Paroisse Sainte-Face* (*Le De Briant*). Presence in the animation of some chaplaincies: prison, hospital, and the MEC (Catholic Student Mission) and at the Centre *Eaux Jaillissantes*, for the reception and accompaniment of people in moral or spiritual distress.
- The group has some entries generated by *Maison Spiritaine de Didier* (*Pension retraite de deux prêtres diocésains*), *Chapelle de Didier* (mass collections, mass intentions, etc.), and the marketing of solar energy (photovoltaic). It has two real estate properties: *Maison Spiritaine de Didier* and the apartment on the heights of Fort-de-France, in the *Terres Saintville* district, awaiting sale.
- A contract between the Spiritan group and the Archdiocese of Saint Pierre and Fort-de-France is being signed. This will specify the terms and financial responsibilities of the Spiritan group and the archdiocese.

Challenges

- The excessive involvement of Spiritans in the parish results in the loss of a variety of ministries and pastoral approaches. A real missionary strategy, based on extra-parochial needs and the new peripheries of poverty, will have to be considered.
- The group's financial system does not correspond to our commitment as Spiritans. A new financial organization, which is in conformity with the Spiritan Life Rule, is to be set up.
- The pastoral ministry - parishes and chaplaincies - in which the spiritan confreres are involved, does not promote community life.

- The question of the Martinique group's membership in UCNAC is being posed due to the shift in missionary situations between the West Indies and North American circumscriptions. It would certainly be more beneficial to consider regrouping the Caribbean circumscriptions into a Union - Martinique, Guadeloupe, Haiti, and French Guiana.
- At the request of the General Council, after consultations with the confreres of the Martinique and Guadeloupe groups, a project to unify the two groups was launched in 2018. The two groups agreed on a gradual integration. A mixed commission, Martinique-Guadeloupe, has been set up to work on the terms of this merger.

2.4.1.6 MEXICO GROUP

UNITED MEXICAN STATES

AREA: 1,964,000 KM²

POPULATION: 127,576,000

BIRTH RATE: 18‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 16‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 75 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 94.1%, MUSLIMS < 0.1%,

UNAFFILIATED 5.7%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS < 0.1%, OTHER < 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 94.5%

GDP PER CAPITA: 16,944 USD/HAB

History and Current Reality

The first Spiritans who arrived on the 22nd February 1971 were members of the US West Province (American and Irish) and began their missionary work in Tanlajas, located in the newly created Catholic Diocese of Ciudad Valles, San Luis Potosí, 450 km north of Mexico City. Their ministry was to the very poor Tének and Náhuatl peoples.

Currently the Group has 17 members, of which 5 are Mexicans, and comprises 8 different nationalities (Mexico, Canada, Portugal, Nigeria, Gabon, Ghana, Poland and USA). There are also four Mexican students and two confreres from Uganda on missionary experience. The members of the Group continue to work in 8 parishes: 5 rural parishes with a predominately indigenous population and 3 urban parishes (Mexico City, Tampico, Cuernavaca).

Political, Social, Economic and Religious Context

The Mexican economy has had an unprecedented stability, which has helped to reduced inflation and interest rates to record lows and has increased per capita income. A growth rate of 2.3% is expected for 2019. In spite of this, enormous gaps remain between the urban and the rural population, the northern and southern states, between the rich and the poor, and 52 % live below the food poverty line in urban areas and 40% in rural areas. High crime rates have and continue to plague the lives of citizens, making Mexico one of the most dangerous countries in the world to live in. Authorities opened 33,341 murder investigations in 2018 as compared to just over 25,000 the previous year. The main reason for the high homicide rate is that Mexico has become a major center for the transit of illegal drugs to the United States, with criminal gangs or cartels, in brutal competition with one another, carrying out horrific acts and killing thousands. Moreover, violence has become increasingly intertwined with local, regional and national politics. For Mexico's new left-wing President Andres Manuel Lopes Obrador, who took office on the 1st December, 2018, raising living standards by reducing poverty and inequality, addressing the public debt currently at 54% of GDP, tackling governmental and judicial corruption, reducing the endemic crime and violence rates, and strengthening the rule of law, are all serious

challenges. A further challenge is the uncertainty related to migration, border control and trade relations with the United States.

The history of the relationship between Church and state, following independence in 1810, involves a series of successive conflicts and compromises in the government's efforts to curtail the Church's influence and is marked also by strong anti-clerical sentiments. In the late 60s and 80s the Church grew increasingly vocal in its criticism of the state, in terms of the failing socioeconomic model and its authoritarian political practices. In general, Mexican Catholicism tends to be very traditional, but within the Church there are different currents from far right/conservative views to more socially progressive approaches.

Strengths and Challenges

The youthfulness and intercultural membership of the circumscription is striking. The yearly calendar of the Group includes a retreat and assembly, regular meetings in regions and celebrations of the feast days of the Congregation. The strengths of the Group include: its commitment to working with rural indigenous communities in the Huesteca Potosina; efforts being made at local community level in financial self-reliance projects; openness to receiving Mexican vocations and working with other circumscriptions in initial formation, as well as receiving Spiritan students on pastoral experience; interest of lay collaborators in the mission and spirituality of the Congregation.

The Group continues to be dependent on external financial support from UCNAC members to maintain the circumscription. In the past, internal conflicts between members have mitigated against creating a better sense of unity and trust within the Group. Some confreres have had difficulty in adapting to the reality and priorities of the Group, in learning languages and working in the Huesteca, in adapting to the local culture and Church. Over the years, there has been a high level of mobility among the confreres, especially among mission appointments.

2.4.1.7 PUERTO RICO-DOMINICAN REPUBLIC GROUP

COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO

AREA: 9,000 KM ²	RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 96.5%, MUSLIMS < 0.1%,
POPULATION: 2,933,000	UNAFFILIATED 2.1%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,
BIRTH RATE: 7‰	FOLK RELIGIONS 0.8%, OTHER 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.
INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 6‰	ALPHABETISATION: 93.3%
LIFE EXPECTANCY: 80 YRS	GDP PER CAPITA: 18,700 USD/HAB

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

AREA: 49,000 KM ²	RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 88.0%, MUSLIMS < 0.1%,
POPULATION: 10,739,000	UNAFFILIATED 10.9%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,
BIRTH RATE: 20‰	FOLK RELIGIONS 0.9%, OTHER 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.
INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 29‰	ALPHABETISATION: 92.0%
LIFE EXPECTANCY: 74 YRS	GDP PER CAPITA: 13,921 USD/HAB

History and Current Reality

The Spiritan mission in Puerto Rico was founded by the U.S. Province in 1931. The early mission was concentrated on establishing parishes in rural and urban centers as well as education, including laying the foundations for the Pontifical Catholic University of PR. With the inauguration of Spiritan formation in 1976 many local vocations entered the program. However, by the 90s the Group began to experience a

dramatic fall in numbers. In 1981 the District became a Foundation and in 1994 the first Puerto Rican was elected Superior of the circumscription. The last US Province member in the Group, living in PR, died in 2017. The mission in the Dominican Republic was established in 2004 as a project of UCNAC, but under the jurisdiction of Puerto Rico.

Working within PR+DR are 10 members, 5 Puerto Ricans, 3 Nigerians, 1 American and 1 Haitian. One Puerto Rican is a member of the Group of Amazonia. The Group has 1 temporary professed member studying theology in Trinidad. Current commitments of the Group within Puerto Rico include 2 parishes (Canóvanas and Luquillo), the Spiritan Sanctuary of the Holy Spirit and Centre for Missionary Animation, and a member works as National Direction of the Pontifical Mission Society; within the Dominican Republic the Spiritan commitment includes 2 parishes in the diocese of San Juan de la Maguana with 3 confreres and 1 student on PME.

Political, Social, Economic and Religious Context

Puerto Ricans have US citizenship as the island is a territory of the United States since the 1898 Spanish/American War, but do not participate in Federal elections nor elect voting members of Congress. While Puerto Rico has the same economic and financial system as the U.S.A., nonetheless, bad administration and corruption has submerged the economy and Puerto Rican government in bankruptcy. This situation was made worse by the devastating hurricane, Maria, that struck the island in September 2018. The national debt is estimated at US\$ 70 billion and the damage done by hurricane Maria is estimated at another US\$ 60 billion. Within 4 months after hurricane Maria, approximately 400,000 Puerto Ricans immigrated to the USA. Positively, in the last 5 years the Church has experienced an openness to missionary dynamism, to the point where Puerto Rico will host the upcoming VI American Missionary Congress in 2023, with a Spiritan as General Coordinator.

The Dominican Republic occupies two thirds of the island of Hispaniola with Haiti and has one of the fastest growing economies in the Latin American region, with an average growth rate of 6.6% between 2014-2018. This growth is fuelled by an increased domestic demand stimulated by tourism, telecommunications and the free trade zones which are now the country's major employer and key sources of revenue. However, the country continues to suffer from high levels of poverty in certain regions and income inequality, with the poorest half of the population receiving less than 20% of GDP, while the richest 10% control 40%. Danilo Medina Sanchez was re-elected as president in May, 2016; and oversaw the introduction of a naturalization law which led to the descendants of thousands of Haitian immigrants becoming stateless. While Catholicism is dominant, nevertheless, African-rooted traditional religions are widespread.

Strengths and Challenges

The Group has opened up to receiving new mission appointments and made serious efforts to help newcomers to adapt to the language, culture and ecclesial reality. There is a good mixture between experienced and young confreres. Within Puerto Rico the Spiritans have a strong missionary identity and a network of benefactors that help to sustain the Group. However, this network has dwindled due to a number of factors and a new impulse is needed if the missionary identity of the Spiritans and this source of financial support is to be maintained. Members meet annually for a retreat and come together for congregational events throughout the year.

The membership of the Group is spread between two countries. Although geographically close, visas to enter PR and DR can be difficult depending on your nationality. This creates barriers in visitation and the participation of all confreres in retreats and assemblies. The Group has little by way of financial reserves. While confreres in Puerto Rico are more or less self-sustaining and live very frugally, the mission in the Dominican Republic is predominately dependent on UCNAC members for financial support. Like many Latin American circumscriptions, the Group is struggling to organize an effective vocations ministry. Further reflection is needed on the future direction of the mission in the Dominican Republic if the Spiritan presence there is to develop.

2.4.1.8 TRANSCANADA PROVINCE

CANADA

AREA: 9,985,000 KM ²	RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 66.4%, MUSLIMS 2.8%,
POPULATION: 37,411,000	UNAFFILIATED 24.5%, HINDUS 1.7%, BUDDHISTS 1.7%,
BIRTH RATE: 10‰	FOLK RELIGIONS 1.2%, OTHER 1.2%, JEWS 1.1%.
INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 5‰	ALPHABETISATION: 99.0%
LIFE EXPECTANCY: 82 YRS	GDP PER CAPITA: 43,433 USD/HAB

History and Current Reality

On the 18th of October, 1954, Irish Spiritans arrived in Ontario and established what would become the Province of TransCanada, comprising all the English speaking provinces and territories of Canada. Starting with a parish in Woodstock (Diocese of London), they were soon invited to Toronto to open a boys' secondary school – Neil McNeil in 1958. By 1964, there was a presence in Western Canada, primarily in education and parochial apostolates. The early 1970s saw a further increase in numbers as more Irish Spiritans, displaced by the Nigerian civil war, came to Canada. The 1970s was also a time of expansion and new initiatives: Volunteer International Christian Service (VICS) in 1971; Lay Spiritans in 1974, and outreach by them to the First Nations peoples in northern Ontario; the creation of a Province in 1976; mission apostolates in Malawi and Papua New Guinea. The early 1980s witnessed a spike in vocations and a number of ordinations. However, as the vocations diminished in the late 1980s, the pre-novitiate house opened its doors to refugees.

The Province has 24 professed members (7 nationalities), with an average age of 71 years, and 12 Lay Spiritans. Over the past two decades the Province has withdrawn from Western Canada and in 2007 sold Neil McNeil High School and the main Spiritan residence due to changing state educational policies. Current commitments of the Province include 3 parishes (2 parishes, including the Caribbean ministry, within the Archdiocese of Toronto and 1 parish in the diocese of Hamilton); VICS, Brottier Refugee Services; the Spiritan Magazine; the care of the sick and elderly members of the Province. Individual members are involved in a variety of works such as Director of the Pontifical Mission Society for English speaking Canada, chaplaincy ministry in hospitals, part-time pastoral commitments in local parishes and to specific ethnic groups, collaboration in projects with other religious such as Becoming Neighbours (welcoming refugees). The Lay Spiritans, apart from direct collaboration in Brottier Refugee Services & on the JPIC Committee, are for the most part active in their local communities in JPIC issues.

Political, Social, Economic and Religious Context

A federation of former British colonies, Canada is a stable democracy with a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary government and is officially a bi-lingual (French & English) country. However, in reality it has a very large multicultural diverse population. In recent decades there is an increased awareness of the First Nations peoples, approx. 4% of the population, who have become more politically vocal in re-vindicating past injustices. As the 2nd largest nation on earth in geographical size, Canada has vast oil reserves and is a major exporter of energy, food and minerals. Consequently, Canada is one of the world's top trading nations and is economically very rich; nonetheless, there is a growing gap between the "haves" and the "have nots."

With Christianity in decline after having once been central and integral to Canadian culture and daily life, Canada has become a post-Christian secular state, whereby most consider religion to be unimportant in their daily lives and a private matter. Officially the government is committed to respecting religious pluralism and has no official Church. Census figures show that the fastest growing group is the none religious affiliated.

Strengths and Challenges

Confreres and Lay Spiritans live in close proximity to each other within the greater Toronto area. Through careful planning and investments, the current housing and financial needs are well organized and sufficient to meet foreseeable requirements. Elderly confreres are well cared for, either in Spiritan communities or elsewhere, in accordance with their needs. Both VICS and Brottier Refugee Services continue to adapt in responding to new needs.

Different visions have existed among members regarding the future of the Province, either to concentrate forces in the Toronto area or to invite experienced confreres from other circumscriptions into the Province to take on new ministries/parishes in Western Canada or above the arctic circle where bishops have difficulty in finding priests. In considering the future, a number of important issues need to be taken into account such as: since the average age of the membership is 74 years, greater levels of health care will be needed in the future for many members; dioceses within the Toronto area are more or less sufficient in clergy; some newer appointments have not worked out, for a variety of reasons, creating tensions and divisions among members; questions exist around the availability of confreres for new initiatives or leadership roles. In considering opening up new mission frontiers in Western Canada, there is need to take into account the vast geographical distances that would exist between members, the strong possibility of confreres living alone and in locations isolated from the main group in Toronto thus affecting their participation in the life of the Province. For some, it is seen as sad and tragic that the Province would appear to be in decline and ending its journey, while others see that the purpose for which the Province was founded has reached its fulfilment and it is important to be able to accept that as part of the journey. Faced with these tensions and other difficulties, such as dealing with historical safeguarding cases, a challenge is to articulate a future vision and mission plan for the Province in what is becoming an increasingly secular society.

2.4.1.9 TRINIDAD PROVINCE

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

AREA: 5,000 KM²

POPULATION: 1,395,000

BIRTH RATE: 13‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 26‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 73 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 66.3%, MUSLIMS 5.8%,

UNAFFILIATED 1.8%, HINDUS 22.3%, BUDDHISTS 22.3%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 2.0%, OTHER 1.4%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 99.0%

GDP PER CAPITA: 28,622 USD/HAB

History and Current Reality

The Spiritans arrived in Trinidad in 1863 in response to a request to work in education and established three schools: St. Mary's College (1863, currently with 1200 students), Fatima College (1945, currently with 900 students) and St. Anthony's College (1969, currently with 800 students). Enrolment in these all male institutions includes students and staff from diverse faiths and cultural backgrounds. Noteworthy also is the educational work of SERVOL, co-founded and led for many years by a Spiritan, which was born out of the challenges of the country's Black Power Revolution of 1970. For many years the District was staffed by Irish Spiritans until it was made the province of Trinidad in 1963. Since then four members have been called to serve as bishops within the Caribbean Church.

Currently the Province has 20 members by origin and 2 by appointment (Holland and Ghana). Four members of origin live outside Trinidad, (2 actively retired and two in full-time ministry). The average age of all 22 confreres in 2019 was 70.6 years and the median was 74 years. In 2019, 6 confreres were appointed to 5 parishes and 1 confrere full-time in education, as principal in Fatima College. In spite of advancing age, many confreres are active in assisting local parishes or as chaplains. The Province has three communities, St Mary's and Fatima College, which are predominately retirement centres, and Tisserant House, for initial formation, located in the parish of Arouca.

Political, Social, Economic and Religious Context

Trinidad and Tobago got its independence from the UK in 1962 and is one of the wealthiest countries in the Caribbean due to its oil and gas reserves. However, dependence on international oil and gas prices has led to a large foreign debt, widespread unemployment and labour unrest. As a major trans-shipment point for cocaine, drug addiction and gang-related violence have affected the lives of the poor and the tourism industry in Tobago. The population of the two islands is mostly of African, Indian, European and Chinese descent. The inter-racial mix of peoples from different continents and religious backgrounds has created a society that is culturally rich and famous for calypso music and steel drum bands.

Strengths and Challenges

The main ministry identified with the Congregation in Trinidad is education in what are today government-assisted schools. In the past Trinidadian Spiritans have generously participated in the wider mission of the Congregation, especially in Nigeria, where 16 members worked at one time and also in the founding of the mission in Paraguay in 1967. The Province has also opened its formation house to receive students from other circumscriptions to study theology and invested in the training of a formator, which has helped in giving a sense of hope for the future. Through long years of service, the Spiritans have developed a large number of friends and admirers, who are a potential source for life and vitality. The Province also continues to be open to welcoming new mission appointments.

Three General Councils, including the current one, have expressed deep concern regarding the future of the Province. Over the last 8 years the tendency towards isolation from the wider Spiritan family has increased as the membership gets older and the Province numerically smaller. Currently, there are no Trinidadian students in initial formation and vocations animation is challenging. However, the fundamental challenge remains that of developing a realistic vision for Spiritan life and mission for the future in Trinidad.

2.4.1.10 USA PROVINCE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AREA: 9,834,000 KM²

POPULATION: 329,065,000

BIRTH RATE: 12‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 7‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 79 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 75.5%, MUSLIMS 1.1%,

UNAFFILIATED 18.6%, HINDUS 0.7%, BUDDHISTS 0.7%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 0.3%, OTHER 0.8%, JEWS 1.7%.

ALPHABETISATION: 95.3%

GDP PER CAPITA: 54,941 USD/HAB

History and Current Reality

The Spiritan presence in the USA began in 1872 with the objective of serving recent immigrants in parishes and through education. The current USA Province was established on June 16, 2009 with the merging of the former West and East Provinces, which were established in the 1960s.

As of March 31, 2019, the total number of confreres was 75, of which 50 are members of origin and 25 by appointment. Currently 11 members by origin are working outside the US in Tanzania, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Taiwan and Vietnam. A further 10 members are retired. There are also 16 Lay Spiritans who have made a formal commitment to the Congregation. In 2019, the average age of the members by origin was 68 years of age.

The current mission projects of the Province include: the education apostolate, involving 21 members, with the majority assigned to Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, and Holy Ghost Prep., Philadelphia, others are engaged at the University of San Diego, Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, University of St. Thomas (Houston), and Notre Dame High School (Phoenix); parish apostolate involving 20 Spiritans working in 20 parishes in rural to urban settings, serving African-American and recent immigrant communities; ministry to the province, 5 members involved in administrative and animation positions and the Spiritan Office for Mission Advancement (SOMA – Development office). Lay Spiritans serve in a variety of ministries (JPIC, education, advocacy, hospice care) in collaboration with Spiritans and in their local communities.

Political, Social, Economic and Religious Context

The US Constitution, which was drafted in 1789 and has remained unchanged in form since its inception, established a federal system of government. As the political, social and economic context within each state is very different, the United States as a country is extremely multi-faceted and diverse. The diversity of approaches to issues became apparent during the election campaign of 2016, whereby Mr. Donald Trump presented himself as an agent of change who would bring manufacturing jobs back to the US, discontinue unfavourable trade deals, reform health care and curb illegal immigration. Generally regarded as one of the most acrimonious elections in living memory, Mr. Trump drew accusations of racism and misogyny, and managed even to alienate many members of his own party. In office, his rhetoric, amplified through

online social media, has continued to divide Americans and is considered by many to be toxic and troublesome. At the federal level, the current political climate has created a form of paralysis in discerning a common purpose or direction for the country. The US economy has continued to do well in recent years, as the unemployment rate was down to 3.7 in August of 2019 and wages in real terms, after inflation is taken into account, increased by 1.5%. However, possible trade wars with China and the European Union, and escalating tensions in the Middle East, have raised fears over the future of the global economy and unsettled international markets.

The ongoing sexual abuse scandals and recent Grand Jury Reports have stunned the faithful and created a deep crisis within the leadership of the Church in the US. The impact of these cases will continue to be felt into the foreseeable future as legal and civil claims come into the public domain. However, this crisis also creates a new opportunity for conversion and evangelization with a more authentic commitment to living the Gospel, within a Church that is more humble and with a clear emphasis on the servant model of ministry. Public pressure to be transparent is leading to more and more dioceses and religious communities to publish lists of members who have been accused of sexual abuse of minors.

Strengths and Challenges

One of the strengths of the US Province, is its commitment to education and parish ministries which focus on serving the African-American community and recent immigrants. Other strengths include: international membership which has enriched the mission of the Province and added to the intercultural dimension of community life; support of diverse missions projects, both within the Province and in other circumscriptions; welcome and accompaniment of confreres who are open to participating in the mission of the Province; openness to developing a new model for Spiritan Mission and community life at the service of the poor, building on the North American project of Beyond Borders and SPARC (Spiritan Alliance for the Renewal of Communities).

The recent Provincial Chapter in 2018 identified three priorities for the Province which serve as a focus for going forward: Strengthening our Mission, Pastoral Planning, and the Promotion of Vocations. Other challenges include: fostering community relationships and a greater sense of inclusiveness among the membership; establish a new home for Spiritans studying at Duquesne University with clear procedures similar to other centers within the Congregation; securing prior agreements with other circumscription Superiors for confreres wishing to study or engage in ministry in the US and resolving outstanding cases of members in irregular situations.

2.5 SOUTH AMERICA

2.5.1 UNION OF CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS OF LATIN AMERICA (UCAL)

UCAL consists of 6 circumscriptions in South America: 4 in Brazil (Province of Brazil and the Groups of Alto Juruá, Amazonia, Southwest), Group of Bolivia and Paraguay.

Political, Economic, Social and Ecclesial Context

Latin American is made up of 20 countries and 13 dependencies, with an estimated population in 2016 of over 626 million, whereas, South America is home to 12 countries and has an estimated population of 432 million. Democracy has grown in

Latin America in recent decades, and after the rise of presidents with a more leftist tendency, there is a propensity to return to the right in some countries. In general, the economy of Latin America continued to grow in 2018 by 1.5%, but at a significantly slower pace than previously forecast. However, overall the region is marked by “high uncertainty and volatility”¹⁹⁰ in responding to the global economy.

Regrettably, poverty and extreme poverty (those plagued by hunger and lack of shelter) levels rose in Latin America after more than a decade of decline in the majority of countries. In the whole of Latin American, in 2014, 28.5% of population were in a situation of poverty (168 million people), a percentage that increased to 30.7% in 2016 (186 million people). Extreme poverty rose from 8.2% in 2014 (48 million people) to 10% in 2017 (62 million people). The biggest obstacle to poverty reduction and social development is structural inequality, in terms of disproportionate access to income and to basic services such as sanitation, electricity, health care, education and communications (roads and internet).¹⁹¹ Corruption in the political and judicial systems, along with sky high levels of violent crime and murders rates, are also major contributors to the lack of social progress.

It is estimated that 39% (425 million) of the world's Catholics live in Latin America. However, census figures indicate that the region has become less Catholic over the last number of decades and it is predicted that by 2030 Catholics will no longer be in the majority. According to the Pew Research Center, the primary beneficiary of the decline in Catholic numbers (currently at 62%) are the Evangelical Pentecostal Churches (19%) and the nonaffiliated (17%). The most important event for the Catholic Church of South America was the recent Special Synod of Bishops for Amazonia, held in October, 2019. The Pan-Amazonian region is seen by the Church as of vital importance for the whole planet, and as being in a deep crisis triggered by prolonged “environmental destruction and exploitation and by the systematic violation of the rights of indigenous peoples, ... [which] comes from economic and political interests of the dominant sectors of today's society”.¹⁹² The Synod took place in the context of the Encyclical *Laudato Si*, on the Care for Our Common Home, by Pope Francis, and as the Preparatory Document indicated, its “reflections transcend the strictly ecclesial-Amazonian sphere, because they focus on the universal Church, as well as on the future of the entire planet.”¹⁹³

Spiritans in South America

During the last eight years a reconfiguration in the composition of the members in the circumscriptions has continued, with the exit of many Europeans and the arrival of other confreres, mainly from the African continent. From 1998 to 2018, 74 missionary appointments to the Union were made by the General Council, and of that number, some 32 (43% including 5 members of origin of the Union) are still present. However, the overall presence of professed members in UCAL continues to decrease, from 115 in 2007 to 90 at the beginning of 2019. Since 2012, circumscriptions have engaged in a process of either consolidation, revision or acceptance of new priorities.

Collaboration between the circumscriptions in South America has a long history going back to 1974. The general and specific objectives of UCAL are outlined in the

¹⁹⁰ https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2018/08/23/economia/1535040589_566204.html 19/03/2019.

¹⁹¹ <https://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/poverty-latin-america-remained-steady-2017-extreme-poverty-increased-highest-level> 5/01/2019.

¹⁹² Pan-Amazon Synod. The Working Document for the Synod of Bishops, no 14.

¹⁹³ <http://www.sinodoamazonico.va/content/sinodoamazonico/en/documents/preparatory-document-for-the-synod-for-the-amazon.html> Pan-Amazon Synod, Preparatory Document, preamble.

statutes of the Union, which were approved the by General Council in 2009. Areas of common solidarity and collaboration include:

- a) “*Encontrão da Família Espiritana*” (Meeting of the Spiritan Family). The 13th *Encontrão* was held in 2018 in Asunción, Paraguay, with more than 100 participants (professed Spiritans, Sisters and Lay Spiritan Associates). The next *Encontrão* will be held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia.
- b) Initial formation, novitiate in San Lorenzo, Paraguay, and theologate in São Paulo.
- c) Meeting of those on Mission Appointment during their first 5 years in UCAL;
- d) Lay Spiritan Associates, accompaniment and participation in a Congress every 4 years;
- e) Spiritan Missionary Youth (Juventude Espiritana Missionária - JEM), accompaniment and support; f. Vocations animation within the circumscriptions;
- f) Annual meetings: of all major Superiors who form the council of UCAL and of the formation council of UCAL, consisting of formators and vocations animators.

Strengths and Challenges

1. As already pointed out, the composition of the membership of UCAL is changing. Over the years, the GC has sought to strengthen the Spiritan presence in Latin America, especially through Mission Appointments. The result of this is that some circumscriptions with new members have been able to maintain existing projects or to take on new ones. But, as the numbers also show, over half of these appointments for various reasons have left, many after a short time. A consequence of this is that Spiritan mission in UCAL is constantly being weakened and at times there is difficulty in ensuring stability and continuity in some frontier missionary projects.
2. Although a significant number of Mission Appointments have successfully adapted to life in the Union, several have left due to misconduct or inability to adapt. Others have had difficulties in accepting fraternal advice or being challenged about some of their behaviours and attitudes. On the part of confreres coming from other circumscriptions, “openness of hearts, heads and hands is needed in order to unlearn models, receipts, schemas and pre-set structures.”¹⁹⁴ While progress has been made in the accompaniment of new members, nevertheless, avoiding the temptation to get to work immediately and giving more time/investment in language and culture learning must be prioritized.
3. Statistics indicate that there are significant numbers of confreres, both from Latin America and elsewhere, who are advancing in age and with specific health challenges. Some will have no alternative but to return to their circumscriptions of origin. Looking to the future, greater planning in the arrangements or structures for specialized care and accompaniment of aging and sick confreres will be needed, as well as in providing adequate pension funds.
4. Future membership and vocations to the Spiritan missionary religious life have long been a major concern in UCAL. What is clear is that more accompaniment, preparation and discernment of candidates is needed before they enter and during 1st cycle formation. In all the circumscriptions, greater commitment, perseverance and patience is needed in promoting the Spiritan vocation in all its forms, professed brother or priest and lay associates.
5. As traditional sources of income dry up, there is an urgent need to create new sources to finance the life of the circumscriptions and, in particular, the relatively

¹⁹⁴ Pan-Amazon Synod. The Working document for the Synod of Bishops, no 129.3.

high costs of 2nd cycle formation. Creative initiatives to help in financial sustainability have been undertaken. However, the lack of capital to invest, of people trained in the technical areas of real estate management, financial management, project writing and planning for future financial needs, remain challenges for all the circumscriptions for the foreseeable future.

6. The question of integration among the 4 circumscriptions in Brazil has been discussed for some time at different levels. However, any movement in this direction needs to take into consideration the historical, pastoral, cultural and geographical realities involved in each circumscription.

FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL

AREA: 8,516,000 KM ²	RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 88.1%, MUSLIMS < 0.1%,
POPULATION: 211,050,000	UNAFFILIATED 8.4%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,
BIRTH RATE: 14‰	FOLK RELIGIONS 3.2%, OTHER 0.1%, JEWS < 0.1%.
INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 15‰	ALPHABETISATION: 91.7%
LIFE EXPECTANCY: 76 YRS	GDP PER CAPITA: 13,755 USD/HAB

Political , Economic, Social and Religious Context

Even though Brazil has the sixth largest economy in the world, it is struggling to recover from a recession and has more than 12 million unemployed (12% of the workforce). A slew of scandals has sent many high ranking politicians to prison for corruption including the former president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who during his term of office helped to lift approximately 30 million Brazilians out of poverty. In recent years, these crises have consumed Brazil and there has been a notable shift in political, social, and religious attitudes towards the right and more traditionally-conservative opinions. This shift is particularly evident in matters of law and order. Observers have ascribed this phenomenon to Brazilians' increasing fear of violent crime which is on the rise. Perhaps the clearest articulation of this shift has been the rise of Jair Messias Bolsonaro, an ex-military officer-turned-congressman, who was elected president of Brazil at the end of 2018. In a time when corruption has tarnished Brazil's political class, his zeal for law and order, rapport with Brazil's evangelicals and his extreme right wing discourse, turned what would ordinarily be glaring weaknesses in his electoral campaign into strengths that got him elected.

This rightward shift has been accompanied by a massive growth in the country's Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches, which constitute the greater part of Brazilian Protestantism (approximately 70%). Although Brazil has the largest Catholic population of any country in the world with 123 million, some experts estimate that by 2030 they may well be a minority. The growth of Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches is mainly within poor neighbourhoods and more profoundly seen in the north of Brazil, which has the smallest share of the country's GDP. These Churches have done a particularly good job of adapting to Brazilian culture, where many people rely on their personal subjective tastes and experiences. Generally known for their charismatic practices, such as the laying on of hands for healing, exorcisms and speaking in tongues, they emphasize a personal relationship with Jesus as the answer to all their followers personal and financial problems. It should also be noted that these Churches in Brazil are now a major political force and have secured a voting bloc in the National Congress that enables them to influence the future direction of the country.

Specific Context of Acre (Alto Juruá) and Amazonia

Because both states have many natural resources, the tendency is for diverse interest groups to exploit these resources without taking into account the consequences of

their actions for the indigenous and other local populations. Therefore, over fishing of stocks, the destruction of the environment and lakes remains a challenge throughout the region. As the working Document of the Pan-Amazon Synod confirmed, “the devastation of the region and poverty have caused a great displacement of the population in search of a better life”(70). This in turn has led to a growth in migration and urbanization in the region, whereby many now find themselves living in cities and towns that “lack infrastructure and public resources required to meet the needs of urban life”(71) while rural communities struggle to survive. Unemployment is high, especially among young people and violence has grown considerably in recent years. The most stable work is as a State or Federal employee. While there are many large ranches, mining, wood cutting and fisheries projects in both states (AC and AM), for ordinary people fishing, subsistence farming and small businesses are common. Also, being a border region, illegal human and narcotic trafficking, local drug use, all continue to be major social problems even with a strong military presence within the region. These problems are compounded due to the geographical location of both states, where transportation is often only by plane or boat, and depending on the option, is sometimes very expensive, unreliable or time-consuming.

Both in the urban centres and in the riverside communities, practicing Christians are in general very committed to their faith community. Catholics have a strong emphasis on popular devotion (patron Saints festivals, novenas) and the celebration of the sacraments. However, in the riverside communities one of the greatest difficulties is the infrequent pastoral visits by priests and pastoral agents, along with the constant migration of trained leaders. This has made continuity difficult and has facilitated the growth of evangelical sects throughout the region.

2.5.1.1 ALTO JURUA GROUP

History and Current Reality

The Spiritans have had a continual presence in the Valley of the Upper Juruá, Acre, since 1917. In 1919 the region was taken on as a missionary area of the Province of Germany. In 1931 the prelature of Alto Juruá was founded which, in 1987, became the diocese of Cruzeiro do Sul. With the departure of Dom Mosé Pentelo CSSp at the beginning of 2019, the continuous line of Spiritan bishops in the region has come to an end.

There were 13 members in the circumscription in 2007. Currently there are 8 from 4 countries, namely Germany, Angola, Ghana and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The headquarters of the Group is in Cruzeiro do Sul, located 730 km from the capital Rio Branco. The Group has the following projects and commitments: two parishes (Aparecida in Cruzeiro do Sul and São José in Tarauacá with the area of Jordão) and the pastoral missionary area of Santa Luzia. Other activities include: health and prison ministries; pastoral assistance to the riverbank communities; involvement in two projects for the recovery of drug addicts; Spiritan vocations animation; Lay Spiritan Associates.

Strengths and Challenges

The first point to highlight is the presence of six young confreres from various countries in Africa. The history and contribution of the Spiritans in the region is well known and appreciated among the people and in the local Church. Each year the Group holds an assembly and other meetings that bring together all the members, which are important moments of sharing, dialogue, evaluation, planning and celebration. In recent years, the Group has renewed links with the neighbouring

circumscription of Amazonia and they are discussing a common formation community for first cycle in Manaus.

Over the last 10 years, many German confreres have left and the internationalization of the Group has taken place. However, there remains a strong German mentality and a sense of external dependence for the financial viability of the Group. The principal challenges include: creating a sense of welcome, belonging and long term commitment to the mission among those arriving; the organization of finances and sources of income which has become an increasingly urgent matter for the sustainability of the Group; the absence of Brazilian Spiritans, which would help in inculturation and forge links with other Spiritan circumscriptions.

2.5.1.2 AMAZONIA GROUP

History and Current Reality

The history of the Spiritan presence in the region began in Belém, Pará, in 1885. However, in 1897, the Spiritans began working in Manaus and with indigenous peoples and rubber tappers in Tefé and along the rivers within the region. In 1946 the Apostolic Prefecture of Tefé was entrusted to the Province of Holland and, in 1952, the Prelature of Tefé was created. Dom Sergio Castriani was the last Spiritan bishop of the Prefecture from 1998 until 2012, when he became Archbishop of Manaus.

There were 13 members by appointment in 2007. Currently the Group is composed of 9 members from 6 nationalities (Brazil, Puerto Rico, Portugal, Paraguay, Tanzania, Nigeria). There are also three Mission Appointments due to arrive. One former member is the bishop of Ponta de Pedras, Pará. The administration of the Group is in the city of Tefé, located 525 km by air or 595 km by river west of Manaus. The commitments of the Group are: 3 parishes (Tefé, Fonte Boa, Mission) in the Prelature of Tefé and 1 parish in the Archdiocese of Manaus. Confreres are also involved in prison ministry, religious assistance to the riverside communities; projects for the recovery of drug addicts and the prevention of human trafficking. The Group also has 3 candidates at different stages of initial formation.

Strengths and Challenges

The Group has a much valued presence in the Prelature of Tefe. Spiritans have been instrumental in the creation of pastoral structures, in the training of an adult laity and in the care of the environment, including a long commitment in the preservation of fish stocks and lakes within the region. All the members live in community and each year the Group holds two assemblies. Confreres have made efforts in welcoming new members and the Group has updated its customary. The Group has secured a property in Manaus and, in collaboration with Alto Juruá, intends to establish a 1st cycle community. The Group has also opted to accompany and engage in the formation of Lay Spiritan Associates.

The principal challenges include: a) the high turnover of people arriving and leaving the mission after a short time, for various reasons including lack of preparation and inability to adapt to the reality of the Amazon; b) the need to invest in local Spiritan vocations for the Congregation; c) seeking short and medium term solutions to the question of financial self-reliance.

2.5.1.3 BOLIVIA GROUP

PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA

AREA: 1,099,000 KM²

POPULATION: 11,513,000

BIRTH RATE: 22‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 49‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 71 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 94.0%, MUSLIMS < 0.1%,

UNAFFILIATED 4.1%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 0.8%, OTHER 0.9%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 92.5%

GDP PER CAPITA: 6,714 USD/HAB

History and Current Reality

The Spiritan mission in Bolivia began on February 5, 2003, commemorating the 300th anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation by Claude Poullart des Places. The first community was composed of three members, one Mexican and two Brazilians (including a Lay Spiritan woman), in the parish of San Juan Bautista, Santa Cruz de la Sierra. In 2009 a Spiritan Central House was inaugurated, dedicated to Father Claude Poullart des Places and on March 9, 2014, a second community was opened in the interior town of Buena Vista, also in the Archdiocese of Santa Cruz. At the request of the members of the mission and the superiors of UCAL, the General Council approved the creation of the Group of Bolivia on Pentecost Sunday, June 9, 2019.

The Group has 5 confreres (1 from Cape Verde, 2 from Portugal, 1 from Ghana, 1 from Haiti), a Lay Spiritan and student on PME from Tanzania. Currently, a Brazilian diocesan priest, who is interested in joining the Spiritans, is also participating in the mission. The commitments of the Group include: 2 parishes in the city of Santa Cruz (San Juan Bautista and Maria de Nazaret) and 1 parish in Buena Vista (Los Santos Desposorios). Members are also involved in: JPIC activities in the environment; in VIVAT (human rights); prison ministry in Pamasola, which is the largest prison in the country; hospital chaplaincy ministry; a centre (Centro Espiritano de Capacitación CESCAP) for integral human development, prioritizing women and children; vocational animation; accompaniment of a group of Spiritan Lay Associates and Spiritan youth.

Political, Economic, Social and Religious Context

Bolivia is a resource rich country which is mostly attributed to its natural gas reserves (2nd largest in South America) which are exported primarily to Brazil and Argentina. However, Bolivia remains one of the poorest and least developed countries in Latin America with substantial income inequality and, in this regard, is ranked 30th among 32 countries in the Americas region, only above Cuba and Venezuela. An estimated 40 percent of the country's workforce is employed in the agricultural sector and Bolivia is one of the world's top producers of coca, by the poorest farmers, the plant used to produce cocaine. Over the past 3 years (2015-18) government spending has amounted to 41.1% of the country's GDP and budget deficits averaged 7% with public debt equivalent to 51% of GDP. In spite of economic gains, poverty and social tensions remain with nearly 40% of Bolivians living below the poverty line. Other social indicators, such as school enrolment and life expectancy, also fall well below Latin American and Caribbean averages.

Bolivia is the highest country in South America with roughly a third of the nation in the Andes Mountains, with 2/3 of the population being indigenous peoples. Consequently the highland cultures of the Aymara and Quechua influence much of the nation's way of life. Many Bolivians, even in cities, maintain their native indigenous culture and mix Catholic practices with Andean religious holidays, beliefs and traditions. This is especially evident in the commemoration of the 1st of

November, “*la fiesta de los muertos.*” Politically, military dictatorships have governed Bolivia for much of its history since independence in the early 1800s. In the late 20th century civilian rule returned. In 2005, voters elected Evo Morales, regarded by many as the nation’s first indigenous president, who is currently seeking a 4th term in office. Despite recent social developments, corruption, political interference in the freedom of speech, human rights violations, threats to judicial independence, impunity for violent crimes and domestic violence against women, and child labour, are all major concerns.

Strengths and Challenges

The internationality, youthfulness and energy of the members is striking. The Group has had a vision for mission from the beginning and continues to work on a plan for its financial sustainability. The lifestyle of the members is marked by simplicity and there is a strong emphasis on living in community. The members gather for regular meetings and other celebrations on Spiritan dates throughout the year and special occasions with the people where they work. The Group has initiated an agricultural project and local financial contributions of the parishes have improved. Currently there is one candidate doing 1st cycle studies in Paraguay and preparing for the novitiate. Potential for other candidates exist and for creating a group of Lay Spiritan Associates.

Since the beginning of the mission there has been a high mobility in personnel, e.g., of the 12 mission appointments made between 2002-2018 only 5 remain. Reasons for this include: difficulties in accompaniment; a lack of personal maturity, personal conflicts and suitability for community life; inability to adapt to the rhythm and culture of the people; overstepping ministerial boundaries; difficulties in accepting the model of Church and local religious practices; difficulties in learning Spanish. The principal challenges include: the stability of the Group, through more emphasis on the accompaniment of new members in their adaptation; the ability of members to work on interpersonal relationships, especially when conflicts arise, so as to create supportive intercultural communities; the collaboration of all the members in working towards the financial sustainability of the Group, especially in meeting costs of international holidays, health care, retirement plans and a future formation program; the future expansion of the Group into a second diocese in Bolivia.

2.5.1.4 BRAZIL PROVINCE

History and Current Reality

The Province was founded on February 2, 1990, from one of the six districts (District of Brazil South - Germans) existing at that time. Its headquarters is in the city of São Paulo. The Brazilian confreres who belonged to the other Districts automatically became members of the new Province. Since its creation, the Province has made initial formation a priority with the other circumscriptions collaborating by sending formators, candidates and financial resources. In 2003 the Southeast District (Portuguese) and in 2011 the Central District (Dutch) were integrated into the Province.

There were 49 members by appointment in 2007 (including the 14 confreres of the Central District). Currently there are 39 members by appointment (27 Brazilians and 12 from other circumscriptions) of seven nationalities. Four Brazilians and one German confrere, originally members of the Province, are bishops in Brazil. There are also another four Brazilian confreres appointed to other circumscriptions and two temporary professed members. In 2019, the Province had 6 pre-novitiate candidates. The commitments of the Province include: 8 parishes in 5 states, which involve leadership

formation, health ministry, prison ministry, social works such as day care centres and assistance to the homeless; 2 formation communities in São Paulo; administration in São Paulo; and ministry in university education. The province has a large number of lay people, including youth, interested in collaborating in Spiritan mission.

Strengths and Challenges

The Province has an annual assembly and retreat, both of which are normally attended by all members. Within the Province there is a strong emphasis on community living. Over the last eight years, the Province has continued to invest in the health care of all confreres and to work on the question of financial sustainability; contracts with seven dioceses, the continuation of the Pro-Ame project (voluntary monthly financial support for formation), income from six leases, and the contributions of each salaried confrere. New missionary appointments have been welcomed and efforts made to integrate them into the life and mission of the Province. In general, confreres are known for their commitment and hard work, simplicity of lifestyle and engagement with the poor.

From its foundation, two works in the poorer regions of the north and northeast (Vilhena and Juazeiro) were initiated and seen as representative of the new mission of the Brazilian Province. However, both were closed for a number of reasons. Also, a pastoral area in eastern zone of the city of São Paulo and a new missionary initiative in Rio Sono, Tocantins, were both ended as Spiritan projects in 2017 and 2018 respectively. Consequently, the current commitments of the Province are basically inherited from the former Districts. The principal challenges include: a) clarifying the missionary identity of the Province; b) the ongoing training and specialization of confreres able to respond to new missionary challenges, including administration and initial formation; c) the management of financial resources; d) the preparation of an appropriate space for the caring of sick and elderly confreres; e) the reorganization and collaboration with other circumscriptions in vocations animation and accompaniment of Lay Spiritan Associates; f) the welcome of members from other circumscriptions on PME and Mission Appointments.

2.5.1.5 BRAZIL SOUTH WEST GROUP

History and Current Reality

The Brazil Southwest Group began with the arrival of six confreres from the Province of Ireland in Rio de Janeiro in 1963. The first Chapter of the District, with 31 members in 1971, took place in a context of implementation of the recent conclusions of the Second Vatican Council and the Medellin Conference (1968). Assuming the “option for the poor” as the principal orientation, many members moved to the new peripheries emerging in the large Brazilian cities and new areas of migration such as the newly opened up state of Rondônia.

There were 22 members in 2007, but currently the Group has 13 members by appointment, 11 Irish and 2 Cape Verdeans. The Group has also welcomed one student from Zambia on PME, and one Angolan confrere has recently been appointed. The Group requested Mission Appointments to continue its priorities: pastoral work in the favelas (slums) of Vila Prudente, São Paulo; working with youth and youth leadership training in the Spiritan-founded Centre for the Empowerment of Youth (CCJ) www.ccej.org.br, which is recognized as a national and international training centre; and the peripheral parish of Santíssima Trindade, Perus, Brasilândia, in the Archdiocese of São Paulo. Other confreres continue to work part-time in peripheral pastoral areas and in prison ministry, especially among foreign prisoners.

Strengths and Challenges

The Group has two annual meetings for all members, including an open day for volunteers and employees associated with the Group. This open day has proven to be important in creating a positive atmosphere and sense of life for the circumscription. In their strategic plan (2019-2021) there is consensus that the future of the Group will be with fewer members of various nationalities, focused on specific priorities among the most needy. The Group continues to support and participate in common projects of UCAL, such as initial formation, Lay Spiritan Associates, Spiritan Missionary Youth (JEM) and vocations animation.

The principal challenges include: the welcome and accompaniment of new mission appointments and students on PME; the preparation of members and prevision of structures that support intercultural community living; the organization of current financial resources to ensure the future sustainability of the priority missionary projects and circumscription, as the Group is currently dependent on outside sources and has no fixed income in Brazil.

2.5.1.6 PARAGUAY GROUP

REPUBLIC OF PARAGUAY

AREA: 407,000 KM²

POPULATION: 7,045,000

BIRTH RATE: 21‰

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 21‰

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 74 YRS

RELIGIONS: CHRISTIANS 96.9%, MUSLIMS < 0.1%,

UNAFFILIATED 1.1%, HINDUS < 0.1%, BUDDHISTS < 0.1%,

FOLK RELIGIONS 1.7%, OTHER 0.2%, JEWS < 0.1%.

ALPHABETISATION: 95.1%

GDP PER CAPITA: 8,380 USD/HAB

History and Current Reality

The Group of Paraguay began in 1967, when confreres of the Province of Trinidad arrived to “found” the Mission of Lima, in the Diocese of Concepción. In 1975 there was a persecution of the Northern Church of the country, especially the Base Ecclesial Communities, which began in a community belonging to the Spiritan run parish of Lima. These events and the different pastoral approaches of members created divisions within the Group. At the Enlarged General Council in 1977, Paraguay was declared a “priority” for the Congregation, along with Angola and Pakistan, and an appeal was made to bring together volunteers to form an international team.

In 2007 there were 16 members by appointment. Currently there are 12 confreres of 9 nationalities: Nigeria, 3; Portugal, 2; Mexico (from the Province of Spain), 1; Paraguay, 1; Cape Verde, 1; Angola, 1; Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1; Sierra Leone, 1; Malawi 1. Also the circumscription has a Spiritan bishop, and one member of origin on mission in the Amazon. The Group has one finally professed and one temporary professed student, studying theology in São Paulo, and 3 pre-novitiate candidates. Commitments of the Group include: 2 parishes in the diocese of San Pedro (Lima, General Resquín and Villa del Rosario) and 2 parishes in the cities of Asunción (San Pablo) and San Lorenzo (Nuestra Señora Virgen del Rosario); 2 houses of formation, in San Lorenzo the international novitiate of UCAL and, in Fernando de la Mora, the 1st cycle and the aspirancy programme. The central house, Casa Jacques Laval, in Asunción serves as the administrative centre and place of welcome for members and all visitors. The Group has developed and is accompanied by a number of local benefactors. Lay Spiritan Associates, “Gotas de Amor” a street children’s project, and Spiritan youth (JEM) are part of the missionary animation of the Group.

Political, Economic, Social and Religious Context

In spite of political unrest, corruption and chronic economic problems since its emergence from the dictatorship of the late Gen Alfredo Stroessner in 1989, Paraguay has managed over the last 15 years to set a path of economic growth, with improvements in infrastructures such as roads, electricity, sanitation, internet, etc. Paraguay's economy is reliant on hydroelectric power and agriculture, with much of the land owned by a small number of individuals. Successive governments have been slow to implement land reform. With an economy growth rate of 4.5% between 2004-2017, there was a reduction in indices of total and extreme poverty, reaching historic lows of 26% and 4% respectively. There has also been fast income growth among the bottom 40% of the population. The middle class has almost doubled since 2003, becoming 38% of the total population in 2015. Despite the advances made, reducing poverty still remains a major challenge. To ensure continued social development and to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty and inequality, the State will need to increase its capacity in delivering public services such as health, education (primary and secondary) and a professional / skills training system for its citizens. The Triple Frontier region, where Paraguay meets Argentina and Brazil, has long been associated with drug-smuggling and other contraband trade. Most of the population is of mixed Spanish and Guarani descent. The indigenous language Guarani is widely spoken, especially in rural areas, with Spanish spoken mostly in urban settings.

Strengths and Challenges

The Group continues to be very international in composition, with young and experienced members focusing on the interior and urban missionary contexts. The Group has regular meetings which are attended by all the members. Regarding financial sustainability, the Group is making important efforts to establish local sources of income: local community contributions; a network of local benefactors; the development of a piece of land in Fernando de la Mora as rental accommodation. Even though there are few vocations, there is interest in the religious and missionary life. The Group membership is active in UCAL meetings and events.

The principal challenges include: the continued fragility, both financially and in terms of personnel of the Group, despite the many efforts made; the high mobility of confreres which has forced the Group to withdraw from some priority works and hindered continuity in a number of commitments; the accompaniment of new Mission Appointments and students on PME, before and after arrival, especially in language learning (Spanish and Guarnai) and in adapting to community life and mission.

III. SPIRITAN MISSION AFTER BAGAMOYO

3.1 JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

In his 1849 rule, our Venerable Father Francis Mary Paul Libermann encouraged his missionaries to *make themselves the advocates, the supporters and the defenders of the weak and the little ones against all who oppress them* (N.D.X, 517; SRL 14). This has motivated Spiritan multifaceted actions for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC). Spiritan JPIC was given a stronger impetus at the General Chapter of 2012 held in Bagamoyo, Tanzania. Discerning the signs of the times and the various realities in our postmodern world that demand action for justice, peace, and integrity of creation, Bagamoyo 1.21 mandated every circumscription “and where possible every Union of circumscriptions” to have a JPIC Coordinator.

3.1.1 JPIC ACTIVITIES POST BAGAMOYO

The JPIC service at the Generalate contacted superiors of the different circumscriptions requesting the appointment of a confrere/associate who would be responsible for JPIC in their circumscriptions and collaborate with the JPIC office at the Generalate. Many circumscriptions responded, with some coordinators requesting a job description. The Generalate office responded to this need and drafted a job description for a circumscription’s JPIC coordinator, which was sent to Superiors and coordinators of every circumscription. It is disappointing that, despite repeated reminders for circumscriptions and Unions to comply with Bagamoyo 1.21, only a small number have done so, and even more regrettable is the fact that sometimes some of those nominated have remained coordinators on paper but are not very active locally.

The Union of Circumscriptions of Europe (UCE), which prior to Bagamoyo 2012, had a functioning JPIC office and a Coordinator, and the Union of the Circumscriptions of Eastern Africa (UCEAF), organized meetings of their JPIC coordinators in response to Bagamoyo 1.21. Currently, UCE is in dialogue with the Spiritan Conference of Circumscriptions of Africa and the Islands (SCCAI) to initiate a Spiritan response to the “Mediterranean tragedy” of migrants coming from Africa and the Middle East seeking better living conditions in Europe. They proposed a Spiritan response to this tragedy in the countries of origin, transit and final destination. UCEAF developed a JPIC syllabus for circumscriptions in East Africa drawn from the Guide for Spiritan Formation, detailing the content and method of introducing confreres in formation to the dynamics of JPIC activism.

Bagamoyo 1.27 noted that JPIC action can be closely linked to Interreligious Dialogue (IRD). In effect, the General Council (GC) gave expression to this relationship by entrusting the JPIC Coordinator with the task of coordinating IRD activities in the Congregation. The JPIC/IRD office created a quarterly JPIC/IRD newsletter. The newsletter draws from various JPIC/IRD initiatives in different parts of the world and has become a vehicle for the animation of confreres. It is a tool for sharing Intra Spiritan JPIC experiences and of learning from one another. The Spiritan JPIC newsletter, as well as the news brief from the JPIC office of the USG/UISG, were regularly sent to circumscription Superiors and coordinators.

Several Unions and circumscriptions organized events for reflection and formation on JPIC issues, facilitated by the Generalate JPIC Coordinator: these included the Spiritan Assembly of Portugal (Barcelos 2018), Latin American Mission Symposium

(UCAL 2019), the JPIC visit to Angola (2019) and the International Meeting of Formators (Dakar 2019). These events functioned as platforms for disseminating JPIC-related ideas, ideals, issues and themes through news on radios, websites, newspapers and social networks.

3.1.2 COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

3.1.2.1 VIVAT INTERNATIONAL

Our Congregation is a full member of VIVAT International (VI), which is a faith-based network of 13 religious congregations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations (UN). VIVAT has offices in New York and Geneva, and Spiritans contribute both human and financial resources to advance the vision and mission of VIVAT. Building on Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si*, VIVAT advocates for an integral ecology and regularly updates her members through her Eco Life and Action publication. (Bagamoyo 1.26; <http://vivatinternational.org/eco/>).

VIVAT organizes workshops for its members, introducing them to specific UN methods for advancing social cohesion in the world by advancing justice for migrants, refugees and the most vulnerable (Bagamoyo 1.25). The Generalate JPIC office worked with VIVAT to organize workshops in Belgium, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria and the Philippines. In these countries, we have local Spiritan circumscriptions who were encouraged to participate in the workshops and also to avail of the opportunities which are provided by VIVAT.

- Information and newsletters from VIVAT are regularly sent to circumscription superiors and JPIC coordinators.
- There are also possibilities for short Human Rights courses and internship in Geneva. These trainings provide opportunities for using the protocols of the Human Rights Council in advocacy. Superiors of circumscriptions and JPIC coordinators are regularly reminded of these training opportunities.
- In January 2019, VIVAT Board of Directors called for the evaluation of VIVAT International and appointed an external evaluator. The evaluation report will determine our future involvement with VIVAT.

3.1.2.2 AFRICA EUROPE FAITH AND JUSTICE NETWORK (AEFJN) AND AFRICA FAITH AND JUSTICE NETWORK (AFJN)

We belong to AEFJN, an advocacy network of about 48 male and female religious congregations. AEFJN lobbies the European Union on social and economic issues that affect Africa. AEFJN advances JPIC through animation and advocacy on issues such as sustainable economic growth, the negative effects of governments and multinational operations in Africa through land grabbing and corporate injustice. Spiritans are members of the executive committee of AEFJN and also contribute financially to its upkeep as a faith based organization. The present Executive Secretary of AEFJN is a Spiritan.

AFJN is a sister organization to AEFJN which lobbies the US Congress on JPIC issues in Africa. Spiritans were among the initial founders of this organization and the USA Province represents the Congregation on its executive committee. AEFJN sometimes co-hosts events and workshops with AFJN.

3.1.2.3 DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY (DU)

The JPIC office collaborates with the office of the Vice President for Mission and Identity at DU. Through this office, the JPIC online course developed by the JPIC office at the Generalate was being offered as part of a summer course by DU. Unfortunately, this online summer course stopped running in 2018 because of few users, thus prompting DU to withdraw its financial support for the program. An endowment by the former President of DU, Prof. Charles Dougherty, established an annual Integrity of Creation (IOC) conference, which brings together scholars and practitioners to discuss IOC issues. The JPIC office collaborates in the planning of this conference and each year identifies confreres from the grassroots who confront IOC issues as participants at the conference (Bagamoyo 1.26).

The office of the Vice President for Mission and Identity at DU linked the JPIC office with the Caribbean Theological Forum, where scholars and practitioners discuss issues related to climate change and its effects in the Caribbean islands.

3.1.3 POST BAGAMOYO CHALLENGES

Many confreres are engaged in various JPIC activities either for their circumscriptions or in a private capacity. Unfortunately, these are not known by the JPIC office at the Generalate. Making our ministries visible among the less privileged and in those areas where the church has difficulty in finding workers should not be misunderstood as self-promotion. We should not hesitate to make our Spiritan experience in JPIC activities and Spiritan charism known, thus highlighting the plight of the people we serve.

Bagamoyo 1.22 mandated circumscriptions to commit to working with the local Church to help promote JPIC, and to draw up a plan at the local level. The JPIC office at the Generalate created and distributed the job description for local JPIC coordinators to assist in this process. However, the GC has not received any response from circumscriptions on the implementation of this mandate from Bagamoyo.

Some circumscriptions were open to receive training in JPIC (Bagamoyo 1.23) and some circumscriptions also participated in the DU JPIC online course. However, very little feedback was received on how these training sessions assisted in advancing JPIC in their contexts.

In the recently revamped website of the Congregation, a section was created for JPIC (Bagamoyo 1.24) to serve as a repository for JPIC resources. Very few came from the circumscriptions and most of what is contained in the website is from the Generalate office.

We are not making optimal use of VI, AEFJN, and AFJN as tools for advancing our mission. These organizations provide very useful resources and could help us to network with other religious congregations and civil society organizations in the struggle for social justice.

Our 2nd cycle formation communities could profit from the IOC conference which takes place at DU every year and whose proceedings are published. The conference brings into conversation academics, grassroots activists and government officials in seeking for solutions to the climate crisis.

Circumscriptions often tend to focus on the charity model of advancing JPIC, with little done on the justice model, which mandates us to challenge structural injustices within society. Circumscriptions and confreres could benefit and do more on the justice model by way of closer collaboration with local dioceses/episcopal conferences and, by linking up with other local and international human rights advocacy organizations.

3.1.4 THE WAY FORWARD

Bagamoyo 2012 and other General Chapter documents have provided us with good resources for advancing JPIC, which is an integral part of our life and identity as Spiritans. We recommend the following:

- that we continue to insist on the appointment of a JPIC coordinator for each circumscription and, where possible, Unions of circumscriptions. Close collaboration between these coordinators and the Generalate is necessary.
- that the JPIC formation guide (elaborated in the GSF Annexes) be taken seriously and be implemented at all levels. Equally important is the need to create a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the JPIC curricula.
- that JPIC formation and animation programs be organized within Unions in collaboration with the Generalate JPIC office.
- that in the light of Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter "*Laudato Si, on care for our common home*", and given the impact of climate change on the environment and the poor whom we are called to serve, every circumscription and Union of circumscription, beginning from initial formation, sensitize their members, students, and the people with whom we work to make conscious efforts to protect and care for the earth. We are called to adopt an ecologically friendly lifestyle wherever we are and work.
- that we avail more of the opportunities provided by DU, VIVAT, AEFJN and AFJN to enhance our commitment in JPIC. Spiritans who are present in Africa and Latin America where many countries are struggling with poverty, land grabbing, inter and intra continental migration, human trafficking, etc., need to make more use of these organizations as tools for advocacy (Bagamoyo 1.25).
- that UCE initiative of collaborating with SCCAI is to be encouraged. Indeed other circumscriptions and/or Union of circumscriptions need to be more involved in issues of migration and human trafficking in collaboration with UCE, SCCAI and other organizations with similar mission objectives.

3.2 INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

3.2.1 THE PROGRESS TO DATE

The Bagamoyo General Chapter 2012 identified Inter-Religious Dialogue (IRD) as an essential aspect of our Spiritan calling, that "*deserves to be a priority of our Congregation*", observing that the practice of dialogue at different levels helps "*to establish genuine peace between believers in true mutual trust and in the refusal to become prisoners of our own fears.*" (Bagamoyo 1.11). To transform this priority into a reality, the chapter stressed the necessity of sending confreres into the field of Inter-Religious Dialogue and equipping them with a solid basis, both through specialized studies and on-going formation (Bagamoyo 1.13-14).

To support and implement these orientations, the General Council entrusted the JPIC coordinator based at the Generalate with the task of animating and coordinating IRD activities and reflection in the Congregation. Prior to that, there were coordinators for the dialogue with Islam (René You, 2003-2006 and Marc Botzung 2007-2013), who were working from their own mission-base.

The JPIC/IRD office contacted confreres working in missions where there are different religious traditions requesting that they share stories of their specific approach to IRD as Spiritans. The response from the confreres enriched the

publication of the JPIC/IRD newsletter through which Spiritan IRD efforts and experiences in different countries were shared. Thus, the newsletter offered confreres the opportunity to learn about efforts of individual confreres - such as Cardinal Dieudonné Nzapalainga in advancing IRD for peace in Central Africa - and also presented an analysis of various significant events and documents as resources for confreres. The newsletter also challenged confreres in missions where we should be involved in IRD efforts to recognize, in the spirit of Bagamoyo, that it is an essential part of our Spiritan mission and to engage practically in this ministry.

Given our presence in countries where different religious traditions co-exist, a member of the General Council and the coordinator regularly participated in the USG/UISG IRD meetings in Rome, which brought together different religious congregations working in IRD settings. This collaboration led to the organization of various thematic seminars and of a meeting with the Vatican Dicastery for IRD, which explored how to improve our collaboration as a Church on issues of IRD. Spiritan participation in this forum helped us to learn how other congregations are working in similar contexts. It also contributed to making the Spiritans known as significant actors on the IRD scene.

Responding to the mandate given at Bagamoyo, the General Council has taken as a primary task to identify and appoint confreres to places where dialogue with other religious traditions (including African traditional religion) is - or needs to be - a vital component of the Spiritan mission, such as: Algeria, Mauritania, Pakistan, Taiwan-Vietnam-India, Philippines, Amazon, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Central African Republic, Congo Brazzaville, etc. A number of young confreres have generously responded to that call, which enabled the General Council to strengthen, renew and give a fresh vitality to frontline Spiritan groups. In certain situations, this also directly addressed Bagamoyo's preoccupations regarding the circumscriptions "*at risk of disappearing*" and demonstrated that their activities are a priority (Bagamoyo 1.16).

Associating itself with an initiative of the Spiritan Conference of Circumscriptions of Africa and the Islands (SCCAI), the General Council jointly engaged, administratively and financially, in the organization of a Spiritan forum for IRD in Zanzibar, Tanzania, in December 2018, and therefore opening it to confreres actively committed to IRD, not only from Africa but also from Asia, Europe and North America. The forum brought together 26 Spiritans (among them one Lay Spiritan Associate), currently working in the field of dialogue, and several resource-persons chosen for their particular experience or qualifications. This event offered all the opportunity to discuss their practical experience, questions and vision in order to open new paths for the future of the Spiritan mission of dialogue.

The forum was an occasion to set up a real network of colleagues involved in the same ministry, and it is heartening to know that the WhatsApp group created for the event continues today to serve as a way of keeping in touch and sharing the joys and challenges of Spiritans working in IRD contexts.

A significant number of the participants were young confreres, sent quite recently on mission appointment to IRD missions. This in itself illustrated the commitment of the Congregation to IRD and its capacity to find volunteers for this type of mission. These young confreres expressed their appreciation for the efforts initiated by the General Council to support them and for the opportunity some of them received to learn about the religion and culture of their missions before their arrival.

The Zanzibar forum has produced a final document presenting future recommendations to the Congregation and in particular to the 2020 General Chapter. This document was made available to all confreres in a special issue of the JPIC/IRD

newsletter (N° 8), while the papers and stories presented at the forum were published in a special issue of *Spiritan Horizons*.

3.2.2 CHALLENGES

Finding young or experienced confreres for these missionary situations remains a challenge. Often, young confreres at the end of their initial formation are not prepared for a style of ministry which requires patience, endurance, flexibility and pastoral creativity. It is not uncommon that young confreres require a change of appointment after only a few years of missionary presence or that confreres sent for specialized studies related to IRD do not return to their place of mission after the completion of their training. This lack of availability or excessive mobility creates instability and lack of continuity in the mission, and in some places jeopardizes its very existence.

In an increasing number of countries getting entry permits can be a considerable challenge. The General Council recognizes the stress and frustrations that some confreres experience while waiting for entry permits to some missions of IRD ministry. At times, where the process of obtaining a visa is excessively long, the General Council may decide to change their mission appointment.

In many cases, IRD is lived in the context of frontline missions, where there are little – if any – prospects of securing local financial resources. Such missions have usually depended on the generosity of benefactors or on the solidarity within the Congregation. The future of our missionary presence in such situations will more and more depend on the capacity of the Congregation to support confreres financially.

The Zanzibar forum revealed the current impact of violence on missionaries involved in IRD. In several countries where the Spiritans are working, violence attributed to religious differences or conflict between religious or ethnic groups has very negative consequences on the stability of our mission, the security and well-being of our confreres. In such stressful situations, confreres need an adequate – and sometimes professional - support.

It was also observed that in some countries where the circumstances are calling for dialogue among believers and efforts towards conflict resolution, Spiritan groups or individual confreres are unable to respond to these missionary challenges or don't share the conviction that "*dialogue is a necessary condition for peace in the world, and so it is a duty for Christians as well as other religious communities.*"¹⁹⁵ On the other hand, certain confreres actively committed to a work of dialogue may feel that they are isolated and insufficiently understood or supported.

3.2.3 THE WAY FORWARD

The Zanzibar forum presented a set of specific recommendations, which constitute a framework within which we can guarantee the future of the Spiritan mission in Inter-Religious Dialogue. From these recommendations, and in the light of the General Council's experience, some priorities emerge:

- The reality of our world today with increasing religious intolerance invites us as Spiritans to live "mission as dialogue" and to promote human fraternity¹⁹⁶ as a

¹⁹⁵ EG 250.

¹⁹⁶ The Declaration on Human Fraternity, signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyeb in Abu Dhabi, 4 February 2019, affirms "*The firm conviction that authentic teachings of religions invite us to remain rooted in the values of peace; to defend the values of mutual understanding, human fraternity and*

project of God for humanity. Each circumscription needs to respond to that call with creativity and realism, beyond traditional forms of ministry, and place IRD at the heart of its missionary project and strategy.

- Spiritan missionaries need to be prepared and equipped for the ministry of dialogue. The practice and theology of dialogue need to be integrated, at the appropriate level, in each stage of the initial formation programme.¹⁹⁷
- Before joining a context requiring dialogue with other religions, newly appointed confreres should follow a short course on the relevant religion(s) in appropriate centers. After some years of ministry in that context, certain confreres need to receive a specialized formation for the benefit of the Congregation and the mission. In that case, it must be ensured that, after completion of their studies, they remain committed to their ministry of dialogue.
- Confreres engaged in Inter-Religious Dialogue carry out a vital mission in the Church today. Therefore, they need to be recognized, genuinely supported and encouraged by their circumscriptions and confreres. It is a particular responsibility of the leadership to give special attention to confreres living in situations of conflict, violence and religious tension.
- We need to build on the experience acquired by all confreres involved in IRD ministry. The coordinator for IRD at the Generalate will maintain a dynamic network of communications and collaboration in this field. The General Council should plan for another Spiritan IRD forum in the next five years, so as to evaluate the manner in which Spiritan IRD ministry has evolved since Zanzibar 2018, to identify lessons learned and to make suggestions for the future.
- The Congregation needs to take financial responsibility for certain frontline missions dedicated to IRD, which are at risk of disappearing in the short term due to lack of resources. Funds need also to be made available for specialized training in that area.

3.3 DEVELOPMENT

“From the heart of the Gospel we see the profound connection between evangelization and human advancement, which must necessarily find expression and develop in every work of evangelization.” (Evangelii Gaudium 178)

“Our faith in Christ, who became poor, and was always close to the poor and the outcast, is the basis of our concern for the integral development of society’s most neglected members.” (EG 186)

Along these lines, one of the important focal points of the General Chapter of Bagamoyo 2012 was the reflection on “*mission in a globalized world*”, which calls us “*to renew our methods of evangelization*” with special attention to “*groups of people who are marginalized with a view to their integral human development.*” (Bagamoyo 1.7) In addition, the chapter stressed the need for a reinforced practice of solidarity: “*The mechanism of KIBANDA will be expanded to increase access to funds from outside the Congregation, and CESS will be developed with a view to greater equity in sharing among circumscriptions.*” (Bagamoyo 5.10)

harmonious coexistence; to re-establish wisdom, justice and love; and to reawaken religious awareness among young people.”

¹⁹⁷ The Guide for Spiritan Formation mentions IRD for the PME and after the novitiate (GSF 65.2 and 72.2.2).

3.3.1 THE PROGRESS MADE SO FAR

For some years now, a genuine concern in the congregation for formation on the issue of development led to the training of a number of confreres: at the former Kimmage Development Studies Centre in Dublin (17) and at workshops organized by the Salvatorian Office For International Aid (SOFIA) in Rome (15). Over the recent years, some circumscriptions have also set up their own development office.¹⁹⁸

Following the first SOFIA workshop, in 2015, a meeting was held at the Generalate with the participants who expressed their desire to network together and outlined the need for a structure of animation, coordination and training on development at the level of the congregation. This had already been expressed during the SCCAI¹⁹⁹ meeting in Bagamoyo in August 2015, which also focused on the issue of financial self-reliance of the circumscriptions. Consequently, a meeting was convened at the Generalate for the managers of the existing Spiritan development support organizations²⁰⁰ (CESS-Kibanda,²⁰¹ SOMA,²⁰² ODO²⁰³), which also called for the creation of a central organ for development. After the Enlarged General Council of 2016, which also recommended the creation of a development office, a feasibility study (carried out by Mr. Ronan White, international development consultant) was launched and led to the establishment of the Central Development Office (CDO) in Rome on 2nd February 2019. Fr. Philippe Engel was appointed as its first director.

The feasibility study far exceeded expectations and initiated a real reflection on the place of development at the heart of the Congregation's mission of evangelization by highlighting our strengths and weaknesses in this area. The first initiative of the Central Development Office was to launch a survey in all circumscriptions. The results made it possible to appreciate better what actions had already been carried out in many circumscriptions - confirming an undeniable "Spiritane experience" in this field - and to highlight the expectations of the confreres. On the basis of this survey, it has been possible to define the immediate priorities of the CDO and to propose a "Spiritane Development Charter" for discussion,²⁰⁴ as a first draft of the Congregation's development policy.

3.3.2 CHALLENGES

- To come to a common understanding of development throughout the Congregation;
- To realize that integral development is essential and constitutive of the mission (RVS 14): every circumscription doesn't yet give adequate place to development as part of its vision and commitments;

¹⁹⁸ To date, 8 circumscriptions have a functioning office.

¹⁹⁹ Spiritane Conference of Circumscriptions of Africa and the Islands (formerly called UCAI and CCAI).

²⁰⁰ These are offices that have been set up in some circumscriptions or Unions in the North to help other circumscriptions with their development projects (design and writing, financing, monitoring, etc.). They usually act as an intermediary between project owners and funding agencies (brokering).

²⁰¹ CESS (Compte Européen de Solidarité Spiritane) is a solidarity fund of the European provinces (UCE) to help other circumscriptions, focusing particularly on self-reliance projects. Kibanda (European Spiritane Centre for Development and Cooperation) is an association under Belgian law set up by the European Provinces (UCE) to process development projects presented by other circumscriptions (expertise and brokering). Both are based at the UCE office in Brussels.

²⁰² Spiritane Office of Mission Advancement, based in Houston; belongs to the USA Province.

²⁰³ Overseas Development Office, Dublin; belongs to the Province of Ireland.

²⁰⁴ The charter has been presented and debated at various meetings attended by the CDO director: SCCAI meeting, Unions meetings, New Superiors meeting.

- To clarify what is development and what is financial self-reliance,²⁰⁵ as there is often a certain confusion between these two concepts, which can lead to misinterpretation and false expectations;
- To ensure the continuity and sustainability of our structures (Local Development Offices) in terms of personnel and financing and to mitigate the excessive mobility of qualified personnel;
- To elaborate and implement strategic plans at all levels (Congregation, Unions and circumscriptions);
- To ensure the management, supervision (leadership) and animation of local offices. To develop necessary skills;
- To implement procedures in term of risk management related to development projects, as well as strict procedures of control and accountability. Some past experiences of mismanagement or lack of accountability have affected our relationships with donor agencies and, in some cases, damaged the reputation of the Congregation;
- To help circumscriptions to face various priorities with often limited resources (personnel and finances), in consideration of their essential needs (organization, formation, etc.) and of the demands of the local churches.

3.3.3 THE WAY AHEAD

We need to build in a collaborative way a common Spiritan vision of development that is shared and constantly evaluated.

This vision will be linked to different aspects of our commitments: JPIC, interreligious dialogue, education, communication and formation, allowing us to have an integrated approach of the Spiritan mission.

A priority in the short term will be to strengthen existing structures at all three levels: local offices (circumscriptions or Unions), development support offices (Kibanda, etc.) and the central office (Rome). In collaboration with the circumscriptions and Unions the CDO will help in setting up local developments offices and organize training in view of capacity building.

This will require particularly, at all three levels, to identify confreres with an interest in and aptitude for the work of development, to equip them with the relevant skills (specialized training etc.), and to ensure that they commit themselves for a sufficient period to their work.

The general administration will provide the CDO with qualified staff and with an adequate operating budget.

The CDO will consider as a primary task to design strict and comprehensive procedures for risk-management and accountability at the benefit of the circumscriptions. The circumscriptions' leadership remains the final guarantor of every development project.

The CDO will develop the necessary tools and animation for an effective networking between all actors of development in the Congregation.

²⁰⁵ A development project is financed by donors and aims to improve the living conditions and standards of local populations in a country or region. A self-reliance project aims to generate long-term income for a circumscription to support itself and its mission. It requires significant investment and may turn out to be unsuccessful and therefore generate losses.

In this field of development, we cannot work on our own: it is vital to link up locally and centrally with other partners like Congregations, NGOs, etc...

3.4 EDUCATION

Historically, educational works - formal and informal - have been part of the Congregation's strategy for evangelization and a trusted tool of imparting human and spiritual values. However there has never been a general Spiritan guide for all educational works throughout the Congregation, though some individual circumscriptions endeavoured to put in place policy documents, which covered their local education ministry.

The recent General Chapters of Maynooth (1998) and Bagamoyo (2012) highlighted the growing number of education initiatives in the Congregation, especially among the younger circumscriptions, and called for a more coordinated approach. Both Chapters saw education as integral to Spiritan mission. Bagamoyo mandated the General Council (GC) to *elaborate a Guide for Spiritan education for the whole Congregation*.²⁰⁶ In collaboration with major superiors, Spiritan experts in education, Spiritan partners and Spiritan education stakeholders, the GC implemented the Bagamoyo mandate by elaborating the present Spiritan Guide for Education (SGE). The SGE has been well received by circumscriptions, especially those with significant investment in educational works. The Guide has become a valuable tool of animation as it puts in evidence our *raison d'être* in education, namely the evangelization of the poor.

3.4.1 THE AIM OF THE SPIRITAN GUIDE FOR EDUCATION

- To provide general orientations and criteria for the formulation of policies relevant to each circumscription;
- to sustain the vision and mission of the Congregation in and through educational works;
- to assist circumscriptions in the transmission of the Spiritan identity and ethos in their respective educational works;
- to provide inbuilt mechanisms of evaluation and verification of compliance with our charism in the area of education.

To help circumscriptions to implement and assimilate the spirit of the SGE, the GC asked the Generalate Coordinator for Formation to also coordinate the Education office. His role includes promoting networking among circumscriptions with educational works, facilitating contact among Spiritan education stakeholders, sharing of information,²⁰⁷ and most importantly ensuring transmission of the *Spiritan vision and ethos to all those involved in our educational establishments*.²⁰⁸ The biannual electronic newsletter, *Spiritan Education Forum* (SEF) was created in June 2016 as a modest contribution to fulfil the above objectives.

3.4.2 CHALLENGES

- a) The GC does not have the same direct hand in monitoring the establishment or management or oversight of educational works as it does for example in the area of initial formation.

²⁰⁶ Bagamoyo 1.28

²⁰⁷ Bagamoyo 1.30

²⁰⁸ Bagamoyo 1.32

- b) Some individual confreres or circumscriptions have gone ahead to establish capital intensive educational works, or have entered into contracts related to educational investments, without first seeking the permission required in SRL 234.3 and 248.3.4.
- c) Some of our education institutions seem to be more business-oriented than at the service of our charism. Their fees are high and therefore only the rich can afford to pay. In such facilities, access by the less fortunate is limited.
- d) While each educational work, (formal or informal), is required to produce its own Safeguarding policy document, as well as provide for its implementation and the training of all personnel involved, the reality is that there are still many Spiritan institutions which have not yet complied with the policy requirement. Even more surprising is the growing number of new education works being established without ensuring the presence of appropriate safeguarding conditions.
- e) Furthermore, for the institutions already with safeguarding policies in place, there are doubts over the quality of training and safeguarding education being provided to the stakeholders in the institutions.
- f) There is a tendency for some circumscriptions involved in education ministry to function in isolation whereas they would benefit more by collaborating with other circumscriptions having similar projects. This militates against Bagamoyo 1.30, which calls for networking and exchange of personnel. Even more surprising is the lack of collaboration and branding of education works within a circumscription itself whereby individual educational works sometimes function independently with no connection to the Province or Group.
- g) The Generalate's efforts to establish a useful education database, which would reflect the extent of the Congregation's involvement in education worldwide, did not receive the required collaboration. Only five circumscriptions responded to the questionnaire, which was sent twice to all circumscriptions by the Generalate Coordinator for Education, followed by several reminders.
- h) Some circumscriptions do little or nothing for the induction of lay collaborators in education into the spirit and charism of the Congregation.

3.4.3 WAY FORWARD

- a) All new educational works that necessitate entering into contracts or need additional investment of money and of manpower, require the permission of the GC which must be requested and granted.²⁰⁹
- b) Circumscriptions with educational institutions need to explore ways of making the fundamental element of the Spiritan charism a reality by ensuring that our institutions give opportunities to the less fortunate members of our society and that fees are affordable.²¹⁰
- c) Every educational work owned or managed by the Congregation must have a Safeguarding policy document and implement a training program for all employees and animation of parents and students on matters concerning safeguarding.²¹¹ In line with this policy, the GC believes that the following must be implemented as a matter of urgency:

²⁰⁹ SRL, 234.3; 248.3.4

²¹⁰ SGE, 2.1

²¹¹ SGE, 8.1.b

- every Spiritan institution must have clearly demarcated spaces where members live and ensure that they are separate from dormitories and other educational structures.
 - all forms of corporal punishment in Spiritan education institutes are unacceptable and must be eliminated.
- d) All circumscriptions involved in education works should make conscious efforts to promote collaboration with others for mutual benefit.²¹²
- e) While the Spiritan Education Forum (SEF) biannual electronic newsletter needs to be more interactive, both the feedback and the collaboration of all Spiritan education stakeholders are indispensable.

²¹² SGE, 7.4

IV. SPIRITAN SPIRITUALITY

Pope Francis, in his Apostolic letter on the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life, reminded us that as members of a religious institute we are heirs to a rich charism, which has its origins in the *“hand of God who, in his Spirit, calls certain individuals to follow Christ more closely, to translate the Gospel into a particular way of life, to read the signs of the times with the eyes of faith and to respond creatively to the needs of the Church.”*²¹³ Claude Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann were two such individuals who were touched by the creative hand of God. Past generations of Spiritans, recounting our founders originating intuitions down through the course of time and in new contexts, have successively kept alive their vision and values right up to our own times. Our founders’ inspirational ideas remain the interior essence or the source from which we drink and Pope Francis, in the same letter mentioned above, goes on to suggest that it is in *“grateful remembrance”* of our heritage that we are led to *“listen attentively to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church today, to implement ever more fully the essential aspects of our consecrated life,”* so that we may *“embrace the future with hope, ... conscious that the Holy Spirit spurs us on so that he can still do great things with us.”*

BAGAMOYO GENERAL CHAPTER 2012

One of the central messages of the 2012 General Chapter in Bagamoyo was an appeal for the continual conversion and renewal both of individuals and of communities/circumscriptions, so as *“to translate into day-to-day living the many principles and values we profess”* (2.10.7), or in other words, to *“truly appreciate and live the spirituality and mission we have received from our founders.”*²¹⁴ The Chapter recognized that although we have many texts on our spiritual heritage, community life and mission, nonetheless, we Spiritans need to acknowledge the gap between these documents and how we live in reality. Furthermore, it was acknowledged that what was needed was not more documents, but rather a plan to live more authentically who we say we are. Therefore, the Chapter decided that *“During the next eight years, our priority will be animation as a process of ongoing formation to build and strengthen our identity”* and also suggested a number of “tools” that were to be used and that the General Council (GC) develop “a plan for this animation” (2.10).

4.1 THE ANIMATION PLAN OF THE CONGREGATION

From the start, the Animation Plan was meant to be a collective enterprise engaging all the members of the Congregation with the General Council animating it. To this end, the General Council elaborated a plan in four stages based on a re-reading of the Rule of Life. After consulting the Major Superiors in March 2013, the GC sought to design an Animation Plan that would fit into the existing structures and events of the circumscriptions. The following stages were decided:

<i>Stages</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Timetable</i>
Spiritans Identity & Vocation SRL chap. I	Confirm the confreres in their vocation (SRL 193)	2-10- 2013 2 – 2-2015

²¹³ Pope Francis, Letter to all Consecrated People on the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life; 21 November 2014.

²¹⁴ John Fogarty, Letter on phase two of the Animation Plan, beginning 2 February 2015.

Holy Spirit, life in the Spirit	Openness and availability so as to overcome barriers	2 -2- 2015 Pentecost 2016
Community life SRL chap. III , IV	Create a shared sense of belonging (SRL 21)	2 - 10 – 2016 2 - 2 – 2018
Mission/Evangelisation SRL chap. II	Zeal for mission	2 - 2 – 2018 2 -10 – 2019
General Chapter		2020

In the opening message on the 2nd of October 2013 launching the first stage, John Fogarty invited all members of the Congregation to personally see it as “*an invitation to rediscover the true meaning of my own call and of what unites me at the deepest level to my brothers and sisters in the Spiritan family,*” and to use the materials being provided by the General Council in this process. Materials provided for the Animation Plan included letters by the Superior General at the beginning of each stage, videos with questions for group reflection, three novenas per year (in preparation for the feasts of Francis Libermann, Pentecost and Claude Poullart des Places), a Spiritan international essay competition for students in second cycle formation for the different stages, a new edition of *Anima Una on Community Life* (Bagamoyo 4.6), engaging circumscriptions in reflecting on mission as part of the preparations for the upcoming General Chapter and in organizing symposiums on Spiritan mission within Unions.

4.1.1 EVALUATING THE ANIMATION PLAN

As the Animation Plan became more widely known, some circumscriptions took elements of it on as part of their own internal animation, e.g., creating their own materials, organizing retreats and assemblies around the themes of the different stages, adapting prayers, etc. Interestingly, the novenas produced in different continents were generally very well received by communities, which may be due to the fact that they gave small “sound-bites” of information not previously widely known by confreres and lay partners. This approach may also indicate a possible way forward in generating interest and making known better elements of Spiritan history and spirituality. Positive also was the interest and participation of students in 2nd cycle in the three International Essay Competitions, Spiritan Identity and Vocation (15 essays), The Holy Spirit (6 essays) and Spiritan Mission Today (9 essays). It is also important to point out, that over the last 8 years, the GC in addition to many confreres were involved in creating useful resources that can be drawn upon and used in a variety of ways in the future.

From some of the earlier visitations and from the evaluation of the first period of the Animation Plan, the General Council had the impression that many confreres either did not know about it or had a somewhat passive attitude towards it. The early videos produced did not generate the interest hoped for; however, they were useful animation tools for General Councillors on visitation to talk to confreres on the ground. Other problems included a lack of communication between the GC and some circumscriptions, as well as difficulties in the internal dissemination of materials within circumscriptions.

The General Council in its own evaluation of the Animation Plan questioned as to how realistic the goals and objectives were from the beginning and as to its effectiveness at the grassroots level. What became clear is that for an Animation Plan to be successful on the ground, more is needed than the materials and animation provided by the GC.

Therefore, without the involvement of the local leadership team of the circumscription, any plan will have a very limited impact. While it is in some respects difficult to evaluate how successful the Animation Plan was or not in bringing about renewal among members, there is no doubt that many circumscriptions took up the challenge of the Animation Plan and successfully adapted some elements to their local reality.

4.2 PROMOTING SPIRITAN SPIRITUALITY

4.2.1 CENTER FOR SPIRITAN STUDIES, DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

Responding to the need for spiritual renewal within the Congregation, the previous GC established in 2005 the Centre for Spiritan Studies <https://www.duq.edu/about/centers-and-institutes/spiritan-studies> in collaboration with Duquesne University and the then USA East province. From its beginning, the Centre has endeavoured to ensure the availability of materials in promoting the spirituality, charism and history of the Congregation. Since 2012, the Centre continued to build on the work already achieved and completed the digitalization of many of the primary and secondary Spiritan writings, some in the three languages of the Congregation, and to make them accessible on the website of the Duquesne Library <http://digital.library.duq.edu/cdm-spirit/>. In 2013 the Scholar-in-Residence Program²¹⁵ began with the aim of preparing a new generation of specialists. At the request of the General Council the Centre also has provided new resource materials on the Holy Spirit, see <https://www.duq.edu/about/centers-and-institutes/spiritan-studies/the-holy-spirit>. The Centre has also continued to be active in the publication of the journal Spiritan Horizons, 14 issues as of 2019, which combines academic articles on Spiritan themes and on contemporary issues, as well as the organization and publication of other specialized studies related to Spiritan spirituality or history. Currently, the Centre is coordinating the preparation of a second volume of the Spiritan Anthology. Also worthy of mention is the work done by the Centre in coordinating the International Essay Competition among 2nd cycle students and a survey on Spiritan initial formation on behalf of the Generalate.

Although the Centre for Spiritan Studies in Duquesne University has many resources that are accessible through the website and two full-time scholarships available for the Scholar-in-Residence program, nonetheless, making the different resources known throughout the Congregation and finding suitable candidates to participate in the Scholar program has not been easy. Although there are many texts in French and Portuguese, another difficulty is the perception that the website is accessible only to those in the English language and not the other two languages used in the Congregation. Also, at a meeting in Chevilly, July 2017, evaluating and reflecting on the future direction of the Centre, it was felt that the General Council itself needed to be more involved in promoting the spirituality of the Congregation and that perhaps it was time to think about establishing a coordinator for Spiritan Spirituality as part of the overall mission animation team in the Generalate.

4.2.2 THE SPIRITAN SPIRITUALITY COMMITTEE

In response to the suggestions made at the Chevilly meeting, the GC decided to establish a Spiritan Spirituality committee of 8 members to reflect on the needs and future

²¹⁵ The Scholar-in-Residence Program, is a full scholarship for selected Spiritans to research aspects of the Spiritan charism and tradition for an academic year at Duquesne University. See website for more details <https://www.duq.edu/about/centers-and-institutes/spiritan-studies/scholar-in-residence-program>

directions. This committee is made up of representatives from the different language groups and geographical regions of the Congregation and has met on two occasions, in 2018 and in 2019 in preparation for the General Chapter. Advisory in nature, the committee also fulfils the role of raising questions and acting as a “sounding board” for the GC. A quick review by the members from around the Congregation showed a number of positive achievements in transmitting Spiritan Spirituality:

- a) The setting up and/or development of centres in Duquesne (USA); Rennes (France); Silva (Portugal); Sainte-Croix (Mauritius) and Ardraccon (Ireland);
- b) Publications and multi-media materials by the Generalate and within provinces on themes related to our founders, charism, history and spirituality;
- c) The organization of workshops and meetings for professed and lay partners, training for formators in the area, conferences and retreats with specific Spiritan themes;
- d) Celebrations commemorating important days in the Spiritan calendar and anniversaries in the life of the circumscriptions.

4.2.3 CHALLENGES

There is no doubt that a characteristic of the modern world is that of continual and rapid changes in people's lives and it is in that context that we as Spiritans are called to be present and live more authentically. In such an ever changing world we, as a collective body, are faced with the question as to what can be legitimately expected of all Spiritans, professed, ordained, or Lay Spiritan Associates (LSA), by those we claim to serve in the light of our charism and spirituality?

The sense of belonging and loyalty to the Congregation and its mission can decrease once outside of initial formation. Within Church circles, it is recognized that a significant number of ordained members of religious congregations “*are dedicated almost exclusively to the life of a diocese and less so to community life, which is thereby weakened.*”²¹⁶ Within our own Congregation, apart from those who have decided to leave Spiritan religious life and follow a different path in life, there were 29 petitioners for incardination into dioceses since 2012, who presumably felt a closer affinity to a diocesan identity and spirituality as compared to a Spiritan one. We may well ask ourselves as to why members are leaving the Congregation after final profession and/or ordination? While the real reasons may vary, the figures and human stories indicate an underlying personal crisis, which CICLSAL suggests may “*not always of an affective nature, ... but the result of some disappointment at living an inauthentic common life*” or “*deviation between what is proposed in terms of values and what is actually lived.*”²¹⁷ Furthermore, in the quest for renewal and updating most confreres are more likely to turn to other sources, other traditions, courses, contemporary authors, etc., that respond to the problems, needs and hopes of today's world as compared to Spiritan sources or our founders. While these issues are not new and have been articulated in previous documents, nonetheless, leadership within the Congregation needs to give more attention to renewal and updating among the confreres.

More and more, there is a need to articulate a spirituality that fosters a stronger sense of identity and belonging, that supports the many confreres who face new missionary situations, of violence, migration, new forms of slavery, ecological challenges, ecumenical and interfaith dialogue, dialogue with secularism, conflict in intercultural community living, challenges to living in an inter-cultural pastoral setting, dealing with

²¹⁶ CICLSAL, *New Wine in New Wineskins, The Consecrated Life and its Ongoing Challenges since Vatican II*, 2017, n 23.

²¹⁷ *New Wine in New Wineskins*, n 12.

personal failure, traumas, illness, retirement, aging and death. Consequently, if our Spiritan charism, identity and spirituality are to be relevant, attractive and nourishing in the contemporary world, then more creativity in bringing alive the story of our founders' inspirational ideals and living tradition in responding to the signs of the times.

4.2.4 FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE GENERAL CHAPTER

1. There is widespread agreement on the necessity of handing on of the Congregation's charism and spiritual heritage across generational and cultural boundaries and on the need to train a new generation of confreres with in-depth knowledge of our founders. However, in reality this seems not to be a priority area for many circumscriptions or Unions, especially for the newer ones which are dealing with many difficult challenges and urgent needs in terms of personnel. On the part of confreres, although there is interest among many in learning more about Spiritan Spirituality, nevertheless, it does not appear to be attractive in terms of specialization. Even though the GC has made appeals and is willing to fund studies for a Master's degree in spirituality and afterwards specific Spiritan studies in this area, we have not been able to generate much interest in this area of specialization. The scholar-in-residence program itself, with all expenses paid, has had 4 candidates so far since it was launched in 2013. Looking to the future, what is clear is that if a number of confreres are not identified for training over the next 8 years there will be a serious lack of competent persons with in-depth knowledge of our founders, charism and spirituality within the Congregation. Possible candidates for such training could include young confreres who participated in the International Spiritan Essay Competition.
2. Encouraging a sense of Spiritan identity and knowledge of the Spiritan charism and spirituality is something that needs to begin in initial formation and for which each member has a responsibility to deepen throughout their Spiritan life. In particular, greater attention needs to be given to the human dimension in the early stages of initial formation, so as to promote the integral growth of candidates given that "*a correct and harmonious spirituality demands a well-structured humanity...*"²¹⁸ It is also important to note that, just as there are different ways of living out the Spiritan vocation (brother, priest, LSA), it is imperative that each be formed in a spirituality appropriate to their calling in deepening their vocation. Of vital importance for all Spiritans is ongoing formation (SRL 142-147, GSF 76-106), especially during times of transition in life and ministry. Experience has shown that some confreres can encounter serious difficulties after 10-12 years in ministry and that others are in need of some pastoral, human and spiritual renewal as Spiritans.
3. It is easy at a Chapter to make decisions, but without good communication and explanation of the rationale behind them it is unlikely that they will be implemented or bring about change. Experience has demonstrated that without the active collaboration of superiors and formators, the General Council is extremely limited in what it can do in creating a common vision or a stronger sense of identity and belonging within the Congregation. While it is acknowledged that more animation from the Generalate in promoting the charism and spirituality of the Congregation is needed, nevertheless, it was decided that establishing a new post of Coordinator for Spiritan Spirituality would need to be considered in the

²¹⁸ Congregation for the Clergy, *The Gift of the Priestly Vocation, Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, 2016, n 93.

overall restructuring of the services in the current Generalate setup, so as to create greater integration between personnel and areas of responsibilities.

4.2.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR THE WAY FORWARD

1. That the GC, in collaboration with Unions and circumscriptions, continue to encourage candidates to do a Master's degree in spirituality followed by a 1 year course in Spiritan Spirituality, either at CSS Scholar-in-Residence program or a guided study programs in France or Portugal.
2. That all future novice directors, apart from doing formation courses be required to do a program in Spiritan Spirituality.
3. That the Congregation plan and organize a 3-4 month renewal program for all professed members who have completed their initial 10-12 years of ministry.
4. That a confrere with particular responsibility for the animation of Spiritan Spirituality, with a clear job description, be included within the Generalate services.

V. FORMATION FOR CONTEMPORARY MISSION

5.1 INITIAL FORMATION

5.1.1 ENSURING QUALITY SPIRITAN FORMATION

The major concern of the General Council was to ensure quality formation for contemporary Spiritan mission in accordance with the decisions of Bagamoyo, especially Chapter III.

Guide for Spiritan Formation: In order to address the above concern, the General Council published the *Guide for Spiritan Formation* (GSF) and the Annexes in 2013 (Bagamoyo 3.3). This guide is the result of a long Congregation-wide consultation that started in 2006 and was perfected at the International Meeting of Spiritan formators (Nairobi 2010). It was then reviewed and approved by the General Chapter in Bagamoyo 2012. It renews and updates in two volumes the original *Guide for Spiritan Formation* published in 1997. The first volume details the guidelines for initial, ongoing and specialized formation. The second, *Annexes*, provides programs for training on specific issues at different levels of formation: Common Program for Spiritan Novitiates; Post-novitiate Spirituality Program; Formation for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in the Congregation.

Visitation of Formation Communities: The General Council made considerable effort to visit all the formation communities. Some communities were visited more than once with follow-ups by the Coordinator for formation. In accordance with a *Vade-mecum* prepared by the GC, the length of time consecrated to a particular community was in proportion to the number of students or novices. The visit involved a certain number of meetings and encounters aimed at listening to the concerns of the confreres and the *formandi*, their problems and challenges. Special attention was paid to the program of formation, the academic curriculum and the implementation of the *Guide for Spiritan Formation*. The financial accounts of those communities were examined. The living conditions, the formation environment as well as the state of the infrastructures and the buildings were also verified.

Construction and Maintenance: The General Council invested considerable funds in the consolidation and maintenance of the infrastructures of different formation communities. Significant support was also given to the construction of new formation structures. As at October 2019, the GC has given out the sum of 1,807,329 Euro for this purpose.

Period of Missionary Experience(PME): PME is particularly important in the discernment of vocation before the final vows and ordination. The GC made efforts to strengthen this stage of formation for a better preparation for apostolic life in accordance with GSF 68-74 and SRL 136.

- Circumscriptions superiors were strongly encouraged to send students on PME outside their culture and country of origin in accordance with SRL 136.1 and GSF 68.
- GC also set aside a portion of Cor Unum to support flight tickets and language programs (See General Bursar's Report 3.7.2).

Qualitative Survey on Spiritan Formation: In 2018 the GC commissioned the Centre for Spiritan Studies (CSS) Duquesne to help prepare and carry out a qualitative survey on Spiritan formation.

The survey had three objectives:

- To evaluate Spiritan initial formation and how it responds to the demands of mission today.
- To evaluate how each stakeholder in Spiritan initial formation practically plays a part in the whole process.
- To assess the quality and quantity of our human and material resources and how they affect the outcomes of Spiritan initial formation programs.

Questionnaires were designed to cover every stage and aspect of Spiritan initial formation: First Cycle, Second Cycle, Novitiate and PME. The questionnaires were sent out to second cycle students, to those on their first mission appointment (1-6 years), to formators and to superiors of circumscriptions. 654 questionnaires were sent out. 190 responses were received, which is 32.6%. The Report of the survey was completed in February 2019 and presented to the General Council.

After a careful study of the document, the GC noted the following in the report:

- The participation of the key stakeholders in Spiritan formation (those on mission appointment and Superiors) was extremely low; therefore, it is difficult to draw valid conclusions from the results of the survey.
- Globally, students in formation showed a general satisfaction about the formation they were receiving or received. Novitiate formation received relatively high ratings. PME was seen as formative and helpful in discerning and deepening the Spiritan vocation. There was general satisfaction about the academic training and training for intercultural living.
- Nevertheless, the report raised a good number of concerns, among which are : the lack of personal accompaniment by formators, the duration of PME, the formation of brothers, clericalism in formation, finances for formation, inadequate emphasis on human and spiritual development, choice and training of formators. These concerns will be appear later in the challenges and way forward.

Formation of Formators (Bagamoyo 3.10/5.6)

Quality formation depends on competent formators. Formation requires some specific skills that have to be acquired through a specific formation. Formators suffer if they are not well prepared for the posts to which they are assigned. Students suffer as well because they expect to be accompanied by formators who are competent and skilled.

- The GC has tried to make sure that more formators are trained by urging circumscriptions and Unions to send confreres to train as formators and to have a long-term plan for personnel in their houses of formation.
- 5% of Cor Unum is set aside every year for the formation of formators (Bagamoyo 5.6).
- In addition to the Duquesne House of Studies which helps to train Spiritans for different needs of the Congregation in different academic areas, like philosophy, theology, psychology and communication, the GC established Villa Notre Dame in Rome for the formation of formators, specialized studies and renewal programs. Two other houses were opened in Berg-en-Dal, Holland and Strasbourg, France in collaboration with the Provinces of Netherlands and France respectively. From 2012 to 2019, the GC facilitated and financially supported the training of 16 confreres as formators for the different stages of formation. The GC also supported Specialized studies for 27 confreres. It is worth noting that the majority of those who do specialized studies also end up in formation communities, it is easy to imagine the impact of the GC's investment in this regard.

- The GC also drew up and circulated to all circumscriptions a list of places for formation of formators, specialized studies and renewal courses in different parts or the world. The General Coordinator for formation liaises with superiors and helps them to discern suitable places to address their respective needs.

Courses on Spiritan Spirituality for Formators: The GC continued the Courses on Spiritan Spirituality for formators in different linguistic zones started by the precedent General Council. They were held in the following places: Tafara-Zimbabwe 2012 (10 participants); SIST-Enugu-Nigeria 2013 (34 participants); Ngoya-Cameroun 2013 (25 participants); Bagamoyo-Tanzania 2014 (20 participants); Silva-Portugal 2014 (21 participants). Although there was widespread appreciation for the programs, it was not deemed practical to repeat them during the GC's mandate.

International Formators Meeting in Dakar: Following the recommendation of the General Chapter of Torre d'Agulha that an International formators' meeting be held every eight years (TA 6.18) an international gathering for formators from every Union was organized from 24th June to 5th July 2019. The meeting helped

- to identify the strengths and challenges of the current initial formation program of the Congregation in training future missionaries;
- to evaluate and measure the impact of the *Guide for Spiritan Formation* approved at the last General Chapter.
- to build the capacity of those working as formators:
 - by providing a platform for an exchange on their intercultural experiences which will help them to prepare students for mission in different continents;
 - by identifying new emerging trends/challenges/concerns in initial formation communities and possible ways of responding to them as a formation team;
- to make recommendations in preparation for the 2020 General Chapter regarding initial formation for mission in the contemporary world.

The recommendations of the Dakar meeting are available for consultation.

5.1.2 CHALLENGES

- Some formators, especially at the initial stages (postulancy and novitiate) are not trained or well-trained while some others who are trained are not doing the work for which they were prepared.
- Some formators have stayed for a very long time in formation communities and consequently experience the phenomenon of diminishing returns.
- After at least 10 years of formation, some students do not seem to be adequately prepared to assume a mission appointment in the Congregation. This brings into question the relevance of formation offered today. How do we refocus Spiritan formation on its essential purpose namely, preparation for mission?
- Superiors tend to use the PME to serve various needs: provide teachers for schools, provincial houses and parishes. This is not to the benefit of the students.
- Superiors tend to interpret SRL 136.1 minimally. PME is normally for two years with one year as minimum in exceptional cases.
- This stage of formation is not always well prepared for. Some students are not well accompanied before, during and after PME.

- The fact that the majority of our formation communities are affiliated to Universities forces them to lay more emphasis on academics than on formation for missionary apostolic life.
- Although the GC has the role of supervision over the policies of formation in the entire congregation (SRL 106), it depends on the goodwill of superiors in exercising its role.
- In some Unions, there is insufficient communication between the different levels of formation and the respective formators. Consequently, discernment is weakened by lack of follow up and continuity through the entire formation process. When students move from one formation community to another, especially when the next formation community is outside their province of origin, there is often no follow up: personal files and relevant information are not forwarded to the next stage.
- Large numbers in a formation community militate against a proper discernment process. In some places, the formators meet the students only once a year for a one on one discussion, which is clearly unsatisfactory.
- At times, superiors undermine the recommendations of formators in regard to the advancement of students. In intercultural communities some superiors use the excuse of cultural bias to overrule the recommendations of formators.
- Inadequate care for formators' welfare also militates against quality formation. This explains partly why many confreres do not want to serve as formators.
- The formation process is weakened by lack of adequate funds. Some superiors find it difficult to pay the school fees of their candidates. Some circumscriptions were obliged to stop recruitment for some time. In others, students had to bear the shame of being sent home because their superiors had not paid their fees.
- While formators are encouraged to take initiatives in raising funds for formation, some administrations tend to leave them completely on their own to look for funds.
- In some Unions, school fees are substantially higher than in local seminaries. Hence the temptation to consider putting students in the local seminaries as a better option.

5.1.3 WAY FORWARD

- More attention needs to be given to human formation, particularly at the introductory stages, like the Postulancy, in the light of GSF (31) and the recent Vatican Documents: *New Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (2016: 94-97) and *New Wine in New Wineskins* (2017: 14),
- Special attention should be paid to the theme of the protection of minors and vulnerable adults (GSF 36.7).
- The number of students should be manageable in such a way that they receive acceptable accompaniment. The Congregation has a responsibility to give every candidate a proper formation. Consequently, if a student offers himself to become a priest/religious missionary, the Congregation has the moral obligation to help him to discern his aptitude for such a vocation.
- Superiors should also ensure an adequate ratio of formators to students with a view to providing proper accompaniment. It is the responsibility of superiors to ensure a sufficient number of trained formators at all stages of formation. They should avail of the possibilities offered in the Congregation for the training of formators.

- Superiors and formators should pay more attention to the preparation of students for PME as well as their accompaniment during and after this vital period. They should explore how to use PME more effectively to introduce the students to a deeper experience of the missionary priorities of the Congregation and prepare them for their future mission appointments.
- The General Council believes that SRL 136.1 on PME should be revised in order to avoid the tendency to settle for the minimal interpretation of “one year “. It should be clearly stated that PME is for 2 years.
- Formators in a particular circumscription or Union should have forums to come together and reflect on their overall vision for formation within the Union/circumscription. There should be a formation commission in every circumscription/Union.
- Students’ reports should follow them through the different stages of formation.
- If a superior simply overrules the recommendations of the formators, in the absence of grave reasons, the whole dynamic of formation is weakened. Some students can feel untouchable and protected by their superiors and by consequence become resistant to the formation process in the community.
- The material welfare of formators and their working conditions need to be taken very seriously.

5.1.4 REORGANIZATION OF SECOND CYCLE

Bagamoyo 3.7 asked the General Council, in collaboration with the Circumscriptions and Unions, to coordinate second cycle formation in the congregation. This includes to:

- decide the places of international formation communities;
- see to the proper distribution of students and formators;
- see to the proper distribution of finances for this stage of formation.

5.1.4.1 REASONS FOR THIS DECISION:

- To deepen the quality of Spiritan formation;
- To ensure more internationality in 2nd Cycle formation communities;
- To respond to the insufficiency of the number of trained formators;
- To better manage the financial resources for formation. Formation communities are scattered in different circumscriptions and hence the dispersion of rare financial resources available for formation;
- To ensure more equity in the access to funds. Different formation communities in circumscriptions do not have equal access to financial resources.

5.1.4.2 PROCESS OF REFLECTION

By way of preparation for the Enlarged General Council of 2016, the GC carried out a detailed quantitative survey on 2nd Cycle formation. This helped to determine:

- the number of students each formation community can accommodate;
- the actual number of students and the formators;
- the ratio of trained formators to the number of students;
- the type of certificates issued;

- the availability of infrastructure;
- the total cost of formation in each house per student;
- the possibility of getting a visa for entry into the country;
- the question of security in the country.

The report on the survey was presented at the Enlarged General Council in 2016. While there was general agreement on the need to rationalize the number of 2nd Cycle formation houses, caution was urged on the local impact of closing of formation communities.

Letters were then written to the Unions for consultation and reflection. From the feedbacks emerged the following convictions: For better quality formation, it is important to reduce the number of 2nd Cycle formation communities. However, it was suggested that other important elements also be considered.

- Closing formation houses could undermine the intake of vocations in growing Provinces and Groups and destabilize institutions/consortia where the Spiritans are cooperating with other local partners.
- The Congregation needs centres in Europe to train confreres who would be ready and competent for mission in Europe. Centres such as Paris and Porto could offer possibilities for further specialized formation in the local universities.
- The visibility of the Congregation by having young confreres in formation even in older circumscriptions is a value not to be underestimated.
- Closing some formation communities could result in the creation of bigger communities that may not produce the expected result.
- The notion of reorganization/restructuring of 2nd Cycle formation does not exonerate the circumscriptions and/or Unions from their formation obligations as per SRL 248.2.10. For good management, authority and responsibility should not be separated.

5.1.4.3 DECISION

Considering the above reflection and measuring the financial implications of reorganization/restructuring as well as sensitivity to the geographical and linguistic spread of the congregation, the GC decided that the future 2nd Cycle formation communities will be:

- Francophone Africa: Ngoya (Cameroun) and Dakar (Senegal);
- Anglophone Africa: SIST-Enugu (Nigeria) and Lang'ata (Kenya);
- Lusophone Africa: Huambo (Angola);
- Europe: Paris-France(Francophone) and Porto-Portugal (Lusophone);
- Asia: Manila-Philippines;
- Latin America: São Paulo-Brazil;
- UCNAC should move towards having one centre for the union.

This means that the GC will of necessity have to play a greater role in the coordination of formation in the designated formation communities.

5.1.5 HOW TO DISTRIBUTE STUDENTS IN THE DIFFERENT FORMATION COMMUNITIES (Bagamoyo 3,7.3)

Statistical information from the quantitative survey of 2016 shows that the full capacity of 2nd Cycle formation communities is 310 students. At present we use only

2/3 of that capacity (*See the table of the distribution of students*). We need to make better use of the spaces available in the designated formation communities.

The GC sees two possibilities for the distribution of students :

- The GC can leave the distribution of students at the discretion of Circumscriptions and Unions. In that case, there needs to be more reflection on how to guarantee internationality in the 2nd Cycle formation communities.
- The other possibility would be that the GC determines the number of students and their distribution in the different formation communities. In that case each circumscription/Union would be assigned a fixed number of students to send to the designated formation communities. Here, more reflection needs to be done as to how to control the movements in order to avoid excessive costs of transport, air tickets.

5.1.6 HOW TO DISTRIBUTE THE FORMATORS (BAGAMOYO 3.7.3)

The reorganization of 2nd Cycle implies that the GC will have more hand in the distribution of formators. This could involve the following:

- The GC could take the responsibility of designating confreres to be trained for the purpose of formation. Formators would be recruited and trained according to the needs of the Congregation and not only from the circumscriptions that have candidates.
- The GC could see to the rotation of formators.
- Following the example of new superior's meetings held annually in Rome, the GC could create a program for the orientation of formators according to their categories (Postulate Directors, Novice Masters, Directors of Formation). This would help to give all the formators a common vision grounded in Spiritan charism.

5.1.7 FUNDING 2ND CYCLE FORMATION (BAGAMOYO 3.7.3)

In principle, the reduction of the number of houses will help to manage better the overall cost of formation.

In the long term, less houses will also mean less money for construction and for maintenance of houses. It may therefore be possible to reduce the percentage of *Cor-unum* allocated to construction.

All things being equal, GC counts on France and Portugal to continue funding Paris and Porto while the General Council will continue to support 2nd Cycle formation in other circumscriptions.

The GC sees two possibilities for the use of Cor Unum money to fund 2nd Cycle.

- The GC could use the total of the 70% of Cor Unum to fund 2nd Cycle . However, judging from 2018 Cor Unum distribution, the available fund was 727,003 Euro while the total cost of 2nd cycle formation according to the requests was 876,097 Euro. This means that Cor Unum would be covering 80% of the fund required for 2nd Cycle (*See table **Costs of 2nd Cycle 2018***). This will have the following implications:
 - (i) The GC would have to find the remaining 20 % (149,094 Euro).
 - (ii) The circumscriptions will have to find money for all the stages before 2nd cycle (*See table **Costs Without 2nd Cycle 2018***).

- (iii) Circumscriptions that have more students in the 2nd cycle will be more favored to the disadvantage of those that have less (See table **Hypothesis 70 % 2nd Cycle**).
 - (iv) Poorer circumscriptions will be disadvantaged since they are also those that have less students in the 2nd Cycle.
 - (v) The number of intakes will have to be pegged in every circumscription to assure that the GC will be able to fund 2nd cycle.
 - (vi) Since the GC cannot guarantee the stability of Cor Unum revenue per year, alternative sources of funding have to be sought.
- The other alternative would be to continue the present system of using Cor Unum fund for all stages of formation and reflect on how to make it more equitable by giving more money to the poorer circumscriptions.

5.1.8 TRAINING OF FORMATORS

Playing a greater role in the coordination of formation means also that GC will have more hand in the training of formators. This is already being done through:

- The use of 5% Cor Unum to support the formation of formators.
- The training of formators and the support of specialized studies in Duquesne, Rome, Berg-en-Dal, Strasbourg and other places in collaboration with different circumscriptions.
- Since many of those doing specialized studies are meant to work in the formation communities, GC has offered them the possibility of doing an extra program for formation of formators after their specialization.
- The provision and updating of the list of institutes for the training of formators.
- The creation of a database of trained formators and their areas of competency.

5.1.9 WAY FORWARD

- The General Council is convinced of the necessity to reorganize 2nd Cycle formation in view of better quality formation for Spiritan mission.
- Nevertheless, for the reasons given above, it is not possible in the present circumstances for the General Administration to take over the total funding of 2nd Cycle.
- Alternative sources of funding should be explored especially for poorer circumscriptions.
- To ensure that funds are actually directed to formation, the GC would like to see a situation where Cor Unum for formation is paid directly to the formation communities. This does not exempt the circumscriptions from taking their part of responsibility in funding formation.

5.2 MISSION APPOINTMENT

The evangelization of the poor is the *raison d'être* of our religious missionary Institute. Since the foundation of the Congregation until today, in accordance with the spirit of our Founders (SRL 1,2,4), we are “set apart” by the Father to work and give our lives for the poor, oppressed and marginalized in many countries. In the past, it was common practice for circumscriptions to organize a special ceremony called “Consecration to the Apostolate” to send confreres on mission in obedience to the Spirit. It is essential that

the process of discernment leading to the appointment of a young confrere to a particular circumscription be taken seriously by all parties involved. The success or failure during the first years on mission can mark a confrere for life. The Rule of Life assigns this responsibility to the Superior General and his Council (SRL 158, 249.2.3), in order to strengthen the missionary orientations of the entire Congregation, and to ensure interdependence and continuity in the work of the Congregation (Maynooth 2.33-2.38; Torre d'Aguilha 2.4). This is why the role and place of mission appointment in the life of the Congregation cannot be overemphasized.

5.2.1 PROCEDURES

The General Council has put in place procedures and a timetable to make the mission appointment process more efficient. Over the years, successive General Councils have used various means, such as listening to the confreres during visits, exchanges with superiors, New Superiors' Meetings, Union meetings, Meetings of young confreres, to refine this process of discernment, to make it more effective for the success of our mission. Each year, the General Council sends a letter, indicating the missionary priorities of the Congregation and the needs for personnel, drawn up from the requests received different circumscriptions, to the formation communities of the second cycle and to the superiors of the circumscriptions. The parties involved in this process of discernment are: confreres at the end of initial formation, formators and superiors of the circumscriptions of origin. They must engage in a serious dialogue of discernment, and respect procedural rules and the established timetable. Unfortunately, all too often, the circumscriptions of origin do not send the duly written files to the Generalate on time, which delays and complicates unnecessarily the process.

5.2.2 BAGAMOYO DIRECTIVES

Our initial experiences quickly made us feel the need to review the procedure, to better respond to Bagamoyo's directives. The Bagamoyo General Chapter had asked the General Council to pay particular attention to those circumscriptions at risk of disappearing, whose activities are a priority, those in a context of interreligious dialogue, and those who are engaged in a first or new evangelization (Bagamoyo 1.7, 1.13 and 1.16). We thus opted for a division of the list of the Congregation priorities into two parts: the first part includes the circumscriptions that we identify as priorities each year, and the second part indicates the needs of other circumscriptions. A single letter is addressed to all parties involved in the process - superiors, formators, and young confreres. Each confrere requesting a mission appointment is now being invited to include among his preferences, at least one of the priorities indicated by the General Council and to attach to his request his telephone number, his e-mail address, as well as a digital passport photo. Overall, significant progress has been made, and this has allowed us to strengthen the most fragile missions as directed by the Bagamoyo General Chapter.

5.2.3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTIES INVOLVED

The Guide for Mission Appointment 2009 (GMA) clearly defines the responsibility of all the parties involved: the confrere at the end of initial formation, the formators and superiors of the circumscription of origin, the superiors of the circumscription of appointment, as well as the communities receiving the confreres on mission appointment. Collaboration, consultation, and sufficient dialogue and discernment, in prayer and reflection, between all parties concerned should be privileged.

5.2.4 CONFRERES REQUESTING FOR MISSION APPOINTMENT

Confreres requesting for a Mission Appointment have the primary responsibility to prepare themselves for mission and the obligation to report to their circumscription of appointment without undue delay. They must realize that this process is not just a matter of indicating their three preferences among the long list of possibilities, but of discerning God's will in the light of their own talents and the needs of the Congregation.

Some young confreres seem unable to articulate the reasons for their preferences or the areas of pastoral ministry corresponding to their gifts, or their understanding of the Spiritan mission or their own mission experience. A number have had difficulty in accepting willingly an appointment that is not among their preferences, while some others have found it difficult to accept an appointment where they did their pastoral missionary experience (PME) after completing initial formation.

More and more young confreres are losing interest in studying languages and cultures, at the risk of developing a damaging lack of knowledge of the populations they are sent to serve. In some cases, confreres tend to remain too much attached to their homes (family and friends) through social media instead of concentrating their efforts to get to know their new missionary environment and the people to whom they are sent. This might indicate a lack of "true self-giving, joyful missionary zeal, the ability to last in the places where we are sent, as well as availability to the Congregation" (Bagamoyo 1.5).

5.2.5 CIRCUMSCRIPTION OF ORIGIN

The circumscription of origin plays its role through formators, superiors and councils. It is their main responsibility to accompany young confreres throughout their formative years. The notion of availability needs to be stressed in the early stage of formation. Discernment for Mission Appointment has to commence at the start of the second cycle formation for all the candidates, with a special focus in their final year. During the discernment process, these young confreres need the help of their formators and circumscription superiors. The formators are the ones who know them best. Superiors and their councils should pay close attention to the formators' assessment reports in the proposals and recommendations they make for Mission Appointment.

Often, the formators' assessment reports on young confreres do not help the General Council to match a confrere's gifts and abilities to an appropriate type of mission or ministry. It is necessary for formators and superiors to distinguish clearly between the assessment for Mission Appointment and the one they present before final vows or ordinations. The latter must highlight the candidate's ability to live the Spiritan life, while for the Mission Appointment, it is a question of emphasizing the strengths and limitations of the confrere, as well as the best context in which he can live his missionary commitment.

There have been complaints of undue influence by some superiors on young confreres to choose their circumscriptions of origin as their first preference, while in principle they should be appointed in a cross-cultural mission situation. This practice reinforces a nationalistic vision of the circumscription instead of an international one. The General Council, while recognizing that the circumscriptions of origin have missions requiring personnel, insists that superiors accept that their needs for personnel can be met by confreres from other circumscriptions.

The superior of the circumscription of origin is responsible for ensuring that relevant information on the young confrere going on mission is communicated to the superior of the circumscription of appointment (GMA 3.2.d; Torre d'Aguilha A 2.7).

5.2.6 CIRCUMSCRIPTION OF APPOINTMENT

The circumscription of appointment provides the necessary community environment and support for the young confreres. Unfortunately, more and more, the young confreres are often left on their own or are not sufficiently accompanied. The process of induction and integration of newly appointed confreres is left mainly to the responsibility of the host communities. We cannot run the risk of posting young confreres in places where community life and the necessary support are inadequate, simply to meet the pastoral needs of a diocese. Young confreres should be guided, especially in their early years, by a mentor who is interested in promoting authentic communication and who gives them a sense of belonging to the circumscription. Our Rule of Life (SRL 27, 28) and the General Chapters (Maynooth 4.3 and Torre d'Aguilha 1.1.2; 2,4) explicitly emphasize the primordial importance of community life and accompaniment. In some places, this support is also provided at the Union level through regular meetings during the first five years of their appointment. These meetings are important moments for sharing experiences.

In some circumscriptions, there is a lack of framework and monitoring for language learning. And where this is done, time allocated for this purpose is often insufficient. The first year should be mainly devoted to acquiring the necessary tools for the work: language, knowledge of the country and local realities. The right conditions must be created to this end. (Maynooth 3.3; Torre d'Aguilha 2.8; Bagamoyo 1.17). During this first year, pastoral necessities and emergencies must not be allowed to reduce the time necessary for learning a new language and culture.

5.2.7 CHANGE OF MISSION APPOINTMENT

In the spirit of the Rule of Life and the Bagamoyo Chapter (1:18), the duration of the mission appointment is not limited. Any change, during the first six years, requires the agreement, not only of the two major superiors concerned, but also of the General Council (SRL 159.2). During his Mission Appointment, the confrere must understand that he is an integral part of the circumscription, and participate fully in its missionary project (TA 2.4.) Over the past eight years, the General Council made 444 Mission Appointments²¹⁹. There have been a total of 42 changes of Mission Appointment for various reasons: health issues, the recall of a confrere, with the approval of the General Council, for another mission, difficulties in obtaining a visa, misconduct, psychological stress, inability to integrate into the life and mission of the circumscription of appointment, etc.

5.2.8 SOME CONSIDERATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Throughout our mandate concerns were expressed about the late arrival of some newly appointed confreres. This undue delay in reporting to one's place of appointment is increasing every year. Sometimes, two years or more, after perpetual vows and/or priestly ordination, the confreres have still not arrived at their place of appointment. This can be a source of frustration for the circumscription of origin or for the circumscription of appointment, and also for young confreres. In some instances,

²¹⁹ See the annex for the overall table on Mission Appointment figures.

tensions between superiors have emerged over this delay. A number of reasons were identified:

- In certain cases, young confreres, for reasons not acknowledged, may not wish to go to their place of mission and consequently delay the process themselves;
- In other cases, the superiors of the circumscription of origin do not properly assist the young confreres in acquiring the necessary travel documents;
- Sometimes superiors ask young confreres to serve for a while in their home circumscription before reporting to their circumscription of appointment;
- There are also difficulties in obtaining visas;
- Some circumscriptions, facing particular financial difficulties, have not been able to meet the material needs of young confreres, such as airfare, travel expenses, etc. –dialogue with the circumscription of appointment can resolve this.

The Guide for Mission Appointment provides many guidelines that addresses these questions. (3.1, c; 3.2, a; 3.2, e). Unfortunately, these are not always followed by superiors and councils.

In order to ensure a smooth mission preparation process and a timely arrival of the confrere in his place of mission, the General Council asked each circumscription to appoint a delegate for Mission Appointment, preferably a member of the council, with the responsibility to follow-up on Mission Appointment issues. The Coordinator for Formation and Education in the Generalate, has been asked by the General Council to follow up with circumscriptions' delegates on this matter. As crossing borders and visa issues are becoming more complicated in many countries, causing delays, part of the role of the mission appointments delegate is to accompany and encourage the delayed confrere. The General Council, through the correspondent of the circumscription of appointment, will do the same and will maintain ongoing contact with him.

Over the period 2012-2020, some circumscriptions have never requested confreres on Mission Appointment. No tangible reasons are given other than that they do not need personnel. Such an approach has potential negative consequences for the circumscription. They risk being stuck in a particular way of doing mission and failing to reach out to new peripheries in fidelity to our charism.

In dialogue with circumscription superiors, the General Council has sought to ensure an international and intercultural balance in every circumscription. However, we also had the experience of circumscriptions that were reluctant to accept confreres coming from particular areas for reasons best known to them. The General Council is concerned that such an attitude undermines the international and intercultural dimension of the composition of our Congregation today. In a fractured world marked by division and all sorts of conflicts and tensions, as a Congregation, we should be promoters and models of intercultural living and builders of truly international and intercultural communities.

5.2.9 SUGGESTION

Given that more and more young confreres request a Mission Appointment to their home circumscriptions and when they do accept an appointment to a circumscription that is not among their preferences, they blame the General Council for any failure or difficulty they encountered. In the light of this, the General Council suggests a review of the current procedure with regard to the three preferences: the young confreres be asked to indicate only the types of pastoral commitments that they are interested in

rather than countries. The General Council will then have the flexibility to match the types of pastoral commitments with a given country or mission.

5.3 ONGOING FORMATION

Ongoing formation is a vital necessity which helps “self-questioning and updating in order to be able to respond to new challenges” which emerge in our life and work (GSF 76). It “implies a permanent process of conversion and renewal” (GSF 76).

5.3.1 CENTERS FOR ONGOING FORMATION

Bagamoyo 3.9 called for the strengthening of centres for ongoing formation, Three centres in Africa have been envisaged for ongoing formation: Bagamoyo-Tanzania, Kinsundi-Congo Brazzaville and SIST-Enugu-Nigeria. However, only SIST is operational and in a limited way. The centre in Kinsundi never took off. The structures in Bagamoyo have been absorbed into the new Marian University, with a promise that they will eventually be returned to the Congregation but with no definite timeframe for doing so.

The GC has financially supported the biannual SIST Program for the Ongoing Formation of Formators and Missionaries entrusted to SCCAI andUCAWA. The program is open to other Congregations and the Local Church. About 10 Spiritans benefit from this program every two years.

5.3.2 INTER-CONGREGATIONAL ONGOING FORMATION (ICOF)

In partnership with the Missionaries of Africa, Missionaries of Our Lady of Africa, Society of African Missions and the Sisters Our Lady of Apostles, the GC established an Inter-congregational Ongoing Formation Program (ICOF) in 2016. It is meant to provide Catholic priests and religious in Africa with opportunity, space and time for personal renewal in view of better service of the Gospel in the concrete reality of Africa today. (ICOF contact email: icofprogram@gmail.com ; Website: icofprogram.org

Blog: <http://icofprogram.blogspot.com>).

ICOF started with a yearly two months program in Bagamoyo, Tanzania, June-July 2016 and June-July 2017. It then developed into two programs: a six months *Sabbatical Renewal Program* in English from 3 January – 28 June 2018(Bagamoyo) and from 13 January-20th June 2019 (Arusha);

A one month renewal program in French at Institut Catholique Missionnaire d’Abidjan (ICMA) in August 2018 which was later extended to two months in 2019. The same programs will take place in 2020 and 2021.

ICOF also developed a program for trauma management specifically designed for Central African Republic in collaboration with the CAR Episcopal Conference. Two sessions were organized in November 2017 and September 2018. This program is suspended for now pending further request from the local Church.

The renewal programs are well appreciated by the partner congregations and the Local Churches. Unfortunately, it has been difficult to get Spiritans to attend. Only five Spiritans have participated until date. Moreover, the programs are expensive in local terms, although considerably less so than similar international programs in Europe or USA. It has been difficult to get donor agencies to support the programs financially.

Spiritans circumscriptions, particularly in Africa, should avail of these opportunities for renewal which are designed to be appropriate for the contemporary context on the continent.

Regrettably, many people don't actually see the need of ongoing formation. Sabbatical often takes the form of a period of ministry or specialized studies. Unfortunately, the lack of available fund for sabbatical/renewal programs in many circumscriptions is often the determining factor in the choice of the form of sabbatical undertaken by conferees who are genuinely in need of renewal after several years in active ministry.

VI. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS / ETHICS IN MINISTRY

6.1 SAFEGUARDING OF MINORS & VENERABLE ADULTS

6.1.1 THE SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS WITHIN THE CHURCH

The sexual abuse of minors has been and continues to be a widespread phenomenon found in all cultures and societies, which over the last 25 years has rocked the Catholic Church on a global scale. There is no doubt that the sex abuse scandals have seriously damaged the moral authority and credibility of the Church and its leaders.²²⁰ While the reported acts of sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults are abhorrent and shocking, even more damaging and disturbing for many of the faithful is how some bishops and superiors reacted; they are effectively seen as complicit in the cover up of some of those crimes and as having turned their backs on the abused victims. A consequence of this is that both bishops and superiors have now come under intense scrutiny as to how they have dealt with and continue to deal with such cases. There is no doubt that the root causes of sexual abuse and the abuse of authority within the structures of the Church that led to cover-ups must be addressed. What is now being insisted upon in the public domain is a principle of justice and of greater transparency and accountability, whereby no one is above the law or basic moral and ethical standards.

As a Congregation we are not immune to this crisis, both in terms of sexual abuses committed by individual members against minors and vulnerable adults as well as in the mismanagement of cases by some entrusted with the responsibility of leadership. What is clear is that a defensive attitude or one of denying or blaming others is not going to help us to be credible witnesses to the Gospel or to effectively combat abuse within the Congregation, the Church and the countries where we are present. Also inadequate is a purely canonical or administrative approach to the abuse crisis. Instead, what many sources see as needed is a more proactive and multifaceted approach in Safeguarding by those in leadership and above all a pastoral response. At a deeper level there is need for conversion in adopting Safeguarding as part of our commitment in all our apostolates as Spiritans and to bringing justice to all the victims of abuse who have been wounded.

6.1.2 BAGAMOYO 2012

At the General Chapter in Bagamoyo, 2012, the Safeguarding of individuals (minors and vulnerable adults) was discussed and the outcome was a short chapter that included:

- a) An apology to survivors of abuse by Spiritans (7.1);
- b) A decision mandating the General Council (GC) “*to provide child protection guidelines for the entire Congregation*” and to provide “*for the education and training of confreres in best practice for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults*” (7.2.1);
- c) A decision mandating “*the incoming General Council to work immediately on ensuring the elaboration of these guidelines in every circumscription*” (7.2.2) (i.e. a policy and procedures document).

²²⁰ Pope Francis, concluding address, Meeting “The Protection of Minors in the Church” 21-24 February 2019, Vatican City.

6.1.3 GENERAL COUNCIL GUIDELINES ON SAFEGUARDING MINORS & VULNERABLE ADULTS

The first document published by the current General Council (GC) in December 2012 was on Safeguarding Minors, which provided general guidelines for the entire Congregation. The objective of the document was to provide practical help to circumscriptions in writing their own policy and procedures document. It acknowledged that it could not cover every possible aspect involved in Safeguarding and recognised that adaptations would need to be made taking into account local legal requirements and cultural practices in each country. A review of this document was carried out in 2016 and an amended version presented at the Enlarged General Council (EGC) held in the same year in Rome (see Safeguarding Minors, Guidelines 2016).

In following best practice, separate guidelines for the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults were published by the GC in 2018. Also republished as an annex to the guidelines was the document "*A love that is Genuine (1 Jn 3:18) A call to Integrity in our Relationships*, by the General Council, 2003, devoted to the vow of chastity, which calls all Spiritans to honesty, integrity, transparency, humility and conversion in their relationships with the people of God.

6.1.4 SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Another initiative in Safeguarding of the newly arrived GC was the setting up of a Safeguarding Advisory Committee, bringing together 8 people with different cultural backgrounds from around the Spiritan world and with expertise in this area. The committee first met in June 2013, and again in April 2016. The role of this committee is to assist the GC in fulfilling its mandate in Safeguarding by reflecting with members of the Generalate team on current Safeguarding issues in the Congregation. Part of the ongoing work of the members of the Committee was to provide individual and direct feedback to circumscriptions on their policy documents and procedures. In addition to this committee, a wider Safeguarding Reflection Group met in May 2019 to consider concrete proposals in preparation for the 2020 General Chapter.

6.1.5 DEALING WITH SAFEGUARDING ALLEGATIONS AND COMPLAINTS

It is important to state that it is the primary responsibility of the Superior of the circumscription to deal with all matters pertaining to the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults (Safeguarding Minors, Guidelines 2016, 3.1). All concerns or allegations of abuse made against a confrere, regardless of the source or date, must not be ignored, but must be followed up by the circumscription Superior. He must also inform the GC and provide up to date information on the case. The GC, during its 3 sessions per year, discusses Safeguarding issues and updates are given on individual cases. When a case has been proved to be credible and the dossier completed, the GC reviews it and the Superior General normally writes a *Votum* (opinion) similar to that of the circumscription Superior before it is sent to the Vatican.

According to *Normae de Gravioribus Delictis*, a minor is a person below the age of 18 years (Art.6.1.1) and cases of sexual abuse against such persons by a cleric are reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) or CICALSAL in the case of a religious brother. CDF is therefore the relevant Vatican dicastery alone which has the competency and authority to decide on cases of sexual abuse. In the experience of the GC, further steps are usually indicated by the CDF, such as asking the Superior General to initiate an administrative juridical process.

6.1.6 SAFEGUARDING POLICY DOCUMENTS WITHIN CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS (Bagmoyo 7.2.2)

In the Safeguarding Guidelines of the Generalate (2012), all circumscriptions of the Congregation were “*requested to submit their individual policies and procedures to the Generalate before 31st of December 2013.*” Regrettably a significant number of circumscriptions did not meet that deadline. In response, the GC on the 29th of October, 2014, sent a letter to all provinces and groups yet to submit a policy document to the Generalate requesting that they do so by the 1st March 2015. Encouragement and assistance was offered by General Councillors during visitations to circumscriptions and at Union meetings. As of the 1st of January, 2020, nearly all the circumscriptions/regions have submitted their policy document or officially adopted norms of the local Church; however, some other circumscriptions are yet to do so.

It is true that great strides have been made in the writing and implementation of policies and procedures throughout the Congregation. Although Safeguarding issues are discussed during the Meeting of New Superiors, nonetheless, serious questions have emerged as to how some Superiors understand their responsibilities and, in some cases, the GC has had to directly intervene and request that proper procedures be followed. Reluctance of Superiors to follow up on cases can be for a number of reasons including cultural, financial, uncertainty as how to proceed, dynamics within the circumscription.

6.1.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Generalate, in collaboration with Spiritan Safeguarding Officers, organize workshops within regions and by language groups for those in leadership in circumscriptions to study and reflect on relevant issues in Safeguarding such as: accountability and transparency; meeting alleged victims and survivors; accompaniment of confreres who have been accused, cultural sensitivity in responding to situations of abuse; co-responsibility and involvement of lay professionals, etc.

6.1.8 A SPIRITAN CULTURE OF SAFEGUARDING: EDUCATION & TRAINING (Bagamoyo 7.2.1)

In trying to create a culture of Safeguarding in the Congregation we must recognize that values, what is accepted and seen as important, are neither easily changed nor influenced by documents coming from the Generalate. Countries differ greatly in their laws, and national and local cultural issues play an important part in how Safeguarding issues are understood and treated. In some cases the problem has not been perceived in its gravity or the depth of suffering it causes. Among some members there is passive resistance which is sometimes expressed as a denial of the seriousness of the consequences of sexual abuse for the survivor. Also, there has been a tendency to see it as a European or North American problem and not relevant in one's own context or circumscription. These attitudes and other influences shape the current Safeguarding culture that exists within circumscriptions of the Congregation. However, the horrific reality of abuse of children and vulnerable adults in all their forms (sexual, kidnapping and trafficking, commerce of organs, sex tourism and prostitution, enslavement, starvation, violence, etc.) are global issues and present in virtually every local context/society where Spiritans are called to be “*the advocates, supporters and defenders of the weak and the little ones against all those who oppress them*” (Rule of 1849; N.D.X 517, SRL 14).

Experience shows that effective change can only be brought about in the culture of an institution over time and through consistent efforts in education and updating of oneself. This implies that while the training of specialized members in Safeguarding is essential for the future, it is equally urgent that a culture of training in Safeguarding of minors and vulnerable adults be promoted and made part of the ongoing formation programme of each circumscription. Praiseworthy are the initiatives taken by some circumscriptions in organising courses in Safeguarding for their members. However, the reality is that not every circumscription is at the same place on the learning curve. A question, therefore, of the current GC was how can we help raise the level of competency in Safeguarding within the different circumscriptions? Part of the vision of the GC is that each Union have a least one Spiritan (professed or lay) with specialized training in Safeguarding, who could be part of a team capable of organizing and providing training at Union level and within circumscriptions. An important advantage of a specialized person in this area in each Union is that of having someone who is more sensitive and aware of the social, cultural, linguistic and legal contexts as compared to an individual or a team coming from outside. To achieve this, the General Council in 2017 began to sponsor Union candidates for the Diploma in Safeguarding of Minors at the Centre for Child Protection, Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome (see <http://childprotection.unigre.it>). By the spring of 2020, five candidates, from African and Latin American Unions, will have completed the diploma course and a further two candidates will hopefully begin the program in October 2020.

6.1.9 SAFEGUARDING AND INITIAL FORMATION

Spiritane formation is a life long journey within which initial formation has a prominent place and is allotted large amounts of financial resources and personnel of the Congregation. Both the Guide for Spiritane Formation (36.7) and the Generalate Guidelines 2012 and 2016 (5.1) see education and training in Safeguarding in initial formation communities as essential. The Congregation of Clergy in its document on priestly formation also states that, *“the greatest attention must be given to the theme of the protection of minors and vulnerable adults”* and insists that *“specific lessons, seminars or course on the protection of minors are to be included in the programmes of initial and ongoing formation.”*²²¹

Existing literature would seem to suggest that clerical sexual abuse is motivated more by psychosexual and developmental challenges, as well as situational and environmental factors, rather than psychiatric disorders. From a Safeguarding perspective, this would indicate that more professional training in the human sciences is needed for formators to empower them in the careful screening of candidates and the discernment of a missionary vocation. More attention is needed on the integration of the spiritual and human dimensions of candidates in the early stages of initial formation, specifically before and during the novitiate. Formators need skills in recognizing signs of aberrant tendencies that may indicate future behavioural problems or unsuitability for the religious missionary life. Additionally, as society becomes more open in discussing issues of abuse, formators will need skills in providing appropriate accompaniment for those candidates who themselves may have had traumatic experiences and been victims of sexual abuse.

²²¹The Gift of Priestly Vocation, Ratio Fundamentalibus Institutionis Sacerdotalis, 2016, number 202.

A recent CICALSAL document states that “*the clericalisation of the consecrated life has intensified in recent decades.*”²²² While it is difficult to establish a direct link between clericalism²²³ and the different types of abuses (sexual abuse, spiritual abuse and the abuse of power and conscience), nevertheless, the way in which the role of the priest and priestly ministry is conceived can play a deceive role in abuse. Clericalism within a formation setting creates an environment that facilitates a hierarchal understanding of vocation and authority. As one religious sister speaking about initial formation put it, “*it worries me when I see ... young seminarians being treated as though they are more special than everyone else, [given] exalted ideas about their status, ... which can lead them [and also] young religious sisters ... to a false sense of superiority over their lay sisters and brothers, that their calling is a ‘higher’ one.*”²²⁴ From a Safeguarding perspective, this raises the question as to what needs to change in the structures of how we accompany candidates in initial formation so as to avoid training younger members in a clerical model of religious life and the priesthood. A further question follows as to what needs to be done so as to provide a deeper and more holistic understanding of the human person and role of the Spiritan religious who is also an ordained minister.

6.1.10 SAFEGUARDING AND MISSION APPOINTMENTS

“One of the most important moments in the life of a Spiritan is that of mission appointment.”²²⁵ Living and working in transcultural situations as ministers of the Gospel is an exciting and enriching experience, but it also makes certain demands in terms of inculturation and in becoming familiar with “*the norms of acceptable behaviours and cultural boundaries that vary from culture to culture.*”²²⁶ In this process, Major Superiors have an important role in facilitating the accompaniment and adaptation of newly arrived confreres to Spiritan mission in their circumscription. For their part, those who are new to a culture have the responsibility of familiarizing themselves with acceptable local standards of conduct in ministry and communication in public.

6.1.11 SUGGESTIONS FOR THE WAY FORWARD

1. That the Generalate, in collaboration with Unions, continue to coordinate the training of Safeguarding Officers at the level of Unions.
2. That the Unions develop a job description for the Safeguarding officers with clear orientations as to their role in ongoing training and education of members, their

²²²CICALSAL, *New Wine in New Wineskins*, number 23.

²²³ In the report of the Australian Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, December 2017, clericalism is described as “at the center of a tightly interconnected cluster of contributing factors within the Catholic Church that enabled abuse to happen” and “is linked to a sense of entitlement, superiority and exclusion, and abuse of power,” that has enabled sexual abuse, other types of misbehaviour and cover-ups to happen. Whether fostered by members of the clergy themselves or by lay persons, clericalism is often described as both a mindset and a culture which allows one to overlook questionable behavior and problems among clergy, therefore creating a culture of “secrecy.” While honestly confronting clericalism in all its forms will go a long way in correcting some of the root causes of sexual abuse, nevertheless, it cannot fully explain all the underlying issues in the current sexual abuse crisis.

²²⁴ Sister Veronica Openibo, Presentation entitled, *Openness to the World as a Consequence of the Ecclesial Mission*, at the Meeting “The Protection of Minors in the Church,” 23 February 2019, Vatican City.

²²⁵ Congregation of the Holy Spirit, *Guide for Mission Appointment*, 2009, p.3.

²²⁶ Congregation of the Holy Spirit, *Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, Guidelines 2018, Boundaries in Ministry*, p.12.

responsibilities when an accusation arises, in accompanying formation communities, ongoing formation within circumscriptions.

3. That each circumscription be required to develop a code of conduct that is culturally sensitive and promotes ethical standards in ministry.
4. That the presence of professional and competent lay persons be encouraged at all levels in Safeguarding, including training programmes and structures of accountability.
5. That all educational institutes belonging to the Congregation have their own separate policy and procedures as required in the documents Safeguarding Minors, 2016, 5.3, and the Spiritan Guide for Education 8.1.b.
6. That the long-term planning and preparation of all confreres as formators must include some training in Safeguarding, as well as the prioritization of the spiritual and human dimensions in the early stages of all candidates in Spiritan formation programmes.
7. That provision be made in the academic curricula and/or internal Spiritan formation programme for training in Safeguarding, boundaries in ministerial relationships, and the pastoral care of victims of abuse.
8. That circumscription leadership teams provide for the introduction to the local culture and standards in ministry of newly arrived confreres. That newly arrived confreres be familiarized with the circumscription's code of conduct.

6.2 FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

In the area of accountability and transparency, the first rule is control: that managers are accountable, and that the bodies responsible for control actually exercise that control.

SRL explicitly requires this practice: every year the circumscription bursar presents to the General Administration a budget and balance sheet approved by the Circumscription Superior, with the consent of his council (173.4). The same applies to the bursars of communities and works which come under the circumscription council (173.3). On the occasion of the Chapter the bursar of the circumscription presents a detailed financial report (174).

The responsibility in the event of a problem is twofold: there can be a bursar who refuses to be accountable, but there can also be a superior or council who does not control anything, leaving the bursar on his own, with the temptations and pressures that can arise.

If this fundamental rule is neglected, it is an illusion to dream of good management. The risk of collapse is great, and at any time the situation can degenerate. Most of the problems that the Congregation has experienced in recent years in the area of financial management could have been avoided if this rule had been respected.

SRL also lays down a certain number of prescriptions for good management: the double signature, the authorization of the competent authorities for expenses and important transactions, the updating of property titles, the drawing up of insurance contracts, the drawing up of contracts with dioceses, the separation of the management of the works from that of the Spiritan management, etc. It also insists on the supervisory responsibilities and decision-making power of the various organs of the Congregation (Cf. "Prescriptions according to the SRL").

In recent years, the General Bursar's Office has done a great deal of work in proposing management tools and minimizing risks. These will be examined in the financial report. We can mention :

- The Spiritan Bursars' Guide;
- List of SRL Prescriptions;
- The Ethical Charter for our investments;
- A chapter of the Guide for Administrative Relations with the Generalate;
- The Guide for the transfer of circumscription superiors' services;
- The Guide for the transfer of circumscription bursars' services.

In addition to the instruments provided by the General Council, there is a real effort to be made at the local level: we must seek from our friends and benefactors the professional skills we lack, and not be afraid to submit to external control of our management. The preferred instrument for this is financial advice. Made up of competent Spiritan leaders and lay people, it helps us to implement good management, both in terms of the efficiency of our expenditure and investments and in terms of the adequacy of our practice in relation to legal, ethical and professional standards. This financial advice can help our circumscriptions, our communities and our works, each in its own area of expertise. Several boards may be established at different levels within a circumscription. They are an extension of the wider "network" that accompanies us in our missionary work.

6.3 CONFRERES IN IRREGULAR SITUATIONS

The last three General Chapters have stressed the urgent need to deal with the matter of confreres in irregular situations (Maynooth (1998) 4.19; 4.20; Torre d'Aguilha (2004) 1.3.8; and Bagamoyo (2012) 2.11). Many of these irregular situations had existed for several years and successive leadership teams in the circumscriptions concerned had failed to bring them to a resolution. We have a responsibility to the Church and to the Congregation as well as to the confrere himself to bring this matter to a conclusion. Confreres in irregular situations are a cause of scandal, especially to young members in formation. In addition, they have the potential for bringing the Congregation into serious disrepute as well as potentially having serious financial consequences.

6.3.1 FORMS OF IRREGULARITY

The following are the situations where by a confrere may be considered to be irregular, either in his own circumscription of origin or in another circumscription:

- A confrere who is illegitimately absent from his community and mission appointment for a period of at least six months successively (c. 696§1, SRL 77.1, 77.2, Bagamoyo 2.11)
- A confrere who is living in another circumscription without the prior agreement of the two circumscription superiors involved. (SRL 182, 182.1, 77.1, D O 2.10.2)
- A confrere who no longer participates in community life, either local or regional, or in the life of the circumscription, who has chosen his own residence and remains financially independent of the circumscription.(c. 696§1, SRL 63, Bagamoyo 4.3)
- A confrere who habitually neglects the obligations of consecrated life and repeatedly violates the sacred bonds (c. 696§1, Bagamoyo 4.1)

- A confrere who has de facto left the Congregation but has never regularized his new situation.

6.3.2 THE GENERAL COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

Circumscription Superiors, according to the last three General Chapters cited above, are mandated to seek ways of reaching out to those confreres who have distanced themselves from the Congregation and to work with them to regularize their situation, ultimately imposing sanctions, if deemed necessary. At the level of the General Council, we realized that a systematic approach to the problem was necessary if this issue was to be addressed effectively throughout the Congregation. In 2015, a confrere was appointed Assistant Secretary for Canonical Affairs at the Generalate for this purpose with a two-year mandate. Letters were written to all Circumscription Superiors insisting that they deal with cases of irregularity in their circumscriptions, and if necessary, eventually initiating a canonical process which could lead to dismissal. (cf. SRL 245.1.6 and 267).

Considerable progress has been made to date: a complete database of confreres whose situations had been deemed to be irregular was drawn up, several outstanding historical cases were resolved, the overall number has been reduced. As of 29 May 2019, 70 cases were still unresolved compared to 185 at the beginning of our mandate. The General Council elaborated procedures and templates in three languages to assist Circumscriptions Superiors resolve cases, which is also introduced at the New Superiors' Meetings. Many more cases (i.e. attempted marriage/concubinage) could be quickly dealt with by Circumscription Superiors and their councils, given a sense of urgency. The General Council had asked that circumscription superiors appoint a delegate to attend to these cases on their behalf, but only very few have appointed a delegate to date. Unfortunately, new cases of irregularity continue to emerge despite the progress made.

6.3.3 CHALLENGES

Although significant progress has been made, the concerns remain that this issue seems not a matter of the greatest and most urgent concern to some Circumscription Superiors. In the light of our experience, the following are some of the challenges:

- The continued failure of a number of Circumscriptions Superiors to take significant steps toward resolving cases of irregularity in their circumscriptions;
- The wrong impression that collaboration from a confrere is necessary in order to proceed with canonical process in historical cases;
- The incorrect assumption that it is necessary to be able to contact a confrere to take action;
- The lack of support in the council and the unwillingness to address the issue of older confreres or influential ones;
- The lack of cooperation on the part of some Circumscription Superiors (origin and appointment) creates tensions between Superiors in addressing cases, even when agreement has been reached;
- The failure by confreres or Superiors to respect and comply with an agreement;
- The failure by busy Circumscription Superiors to accept the General Council's suggestion to appoint a delegate to expedite matters in the circumscriptions;
- A Circumscription Superior coming to an end of his mandate and leaving the cases for his successor to deal with;

- An improper filing system and documentation, and handovers not properly done.
- A number of confreres seek exclaustation from the Congregation rather than comply with the lawful instructions of their Superiors. The General Council does not consider the desire to escape from the lawful authority of one's superior as constituting a sufficiently grave reason for the granting of exclaustation (SRL 252).

Finally, if the objective set by the Bagamoyo General Chapter, to bring this situation to an end, is to be fully achieved, the ongoing collaboration of circumscriptions superiors with the General Council is essential, as they hold the primary responsibility for this matter in Canon Law and in the Spiritan Rule of Life. It must be stressed that it is the task of the local circumscriptions superiors and council, not the General Council, to deal with each irregular case. The General Council can provide advice and necessary accompaniment but cannot replace the Circumscription Superior in his role.

VII. ADMINISTRATION AT THE SERVICE OF MISSION

7.1 GENERAL SECRETARIAT

7.1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

The secretariat is a department of the General Administration entrusted with certain administrative duties, maintaining records, overseeing and as well as performing duties of correspondence. It is a canopy under which a number of inter-related but separate activities are carried out. The Secretary General oversees the Secretariat. He works in collaboration with other functionaries in the department, at the service of the Superior General and his Council. The Spiritan Rule of Life describes the function of the Secretary General as follows: the Secretary General “registers and preserves the administrative acts. He communicates important information concerning the Congregation. He is normally present at meetings of the General Council”. He is also “responsible for the minutes of the General Council. He supervises the keeping of the Archives and the editing of the Bulletin of the Congregation” (SRL 209).

7.1.2 DOCUMENTATION

The collation and management of documents, especially the Administrative Acts, are the basic responsibilities of the Secretariat. The Administrative Acts are the actions and decisions of the Superior General (and his General Administration) in conformity with his “authority to govern and to animate the Congregation according to the Spiritan Rule of Life and in keeping with the directives given by the General Chapter” (cf. SRL 189). The General Secretariat ensures the recording, registering and communicating of the General Council decisions to the appropriate destinations. The Secretary General records and preserves the minutes of meetings of General Council and ensures that official correspondences with the Holy See and with other institutions and agencies, Visitation Reports, contracts signed with dioceses, and other important documents relating to Spiritan circumscriptions are carefully filed and properly preserved.

7.1.2.1 ARCHIVES

The Spiritan archives are essential sources of information on all areas of secular and ecclesiastical history that have been closely connected with the life and mission of the Congregation in centuries gone by. Effectively a number of the canonical norms on diocesan archives can be applied to the Spiritan Archives. Canon 486 requires all documents to be protected with the greatest care, and that an archive be established in a safe place where documents and writings concerning both the spiritual and temporal affairs of the diocese (the Congregation) are properly filed and carefully kept under lock and key. An inventory or catalogue of the documents with a short synopsis should be made. The keeping of an inventory, with a synopsis, is an important tool for the efficient recovery of document. The modern day digital technology facilitates the process of searching for the required material.

7.1.2.2 SPIRITAN GENERAL ARCHIVES IN CHEVILLY

There are Archives in the Generalate in Rome where we keep the records of the immediate past and the existing administrations in addition to the personal files of confreres. These are under the direct supervision of the Secretary General. Other Administrative Acts, documents and records of all the administrations of the two immediate past ones, are transferred to the main General Archives in Chevilly. Also included in this category are all files of the dead

confreres and those who ceased to be members of the Congregation, by departure or dismissal, during the Administrations preceding the last two.

The Spiritan Archives have been adapting and fulfilling those important roles in the canons mentioned above, for the service of the Congregation and of some non Spiritan researchers. Our Archives contain an immense wealth of information and knowledge. They are open to researchers, particularly those interested in history of African countries, evangelization, colonization, slavery, education, etc. Many researchers either go physically or send requests through email to the Archivists to obtain the information they require. In recent years, there has been a steady increase in number of those who consult our General Archives, both Spiritans and non Spiritans. The information obtained from the Archives has been of great help in the process of the course for the beatification and canonization of our saintly confreres. We need to preserve the Spiritan Archives due to the important roles they play in the life and history of our Congregation and the invaluable help they offer to researchers from far and near.

As regards the archives in the rest of the Congregation, it seems that many Circumscriptions fail to take the keeping of archives seriously. Superiors and confreres need to embrace once more the healthy tradition of keeping records of our activities for posterity. Confreres need to understand the importance of constituting archives by keeping community journals. We also need to learn that such archival materials should be kept in well-organised, suitable environment and ordered manner. All these entail appointing someone in each circumscription to be responsible for the management of the archives. In 2012 the "Guide for Spiritan Archivists" was updated and a second edition printed in the three languages of the Congregation as a help to those responsible in the circumscriptions. However, there are serious challenges facing the keeping of Archives in the tropical regions. The inclement humid weather, attacks by rodents and termites, lack of stable and constant electric power supply for air conditioning and lack of qualified archivists are among such challenges.

There are cases of some dioceses from the places where Spiritans served as missionaries asking for the repatriation of the entire archival collections that originated from the local Church. This is understandable. Either the original or a photocopy thereof, however, needs to be kept in our Archives.

7.1.2.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Archives to remain relevant and offer the required services to the Congregation and to humanity we make the following recommendations:

- **Modernisation:** There is need to invest in renovating the Archives building to be made conducive for the workers and users of the facility, to update to electronic archives and the use of modern management software, to equip the offices with computers and servers capable of storing large amounts of digital information, and to transfer the existing digital documents from obsolete to up-to-date mediums.
- **Photo Archives in Chevilly:** this section of the Archives contains an immense treasure of historical/missionary importance, consisting of tens of thousands of photo albums, numerous photo negatives, cartons of photo slides, photo glass plates of various dimensions, several rolls of films for cinema, VHS video cassettes, tapes, CD-ROMs etc. Though in Chevilly, the Photo Archives still belong to the French Province. However the Province proposed to the General Administration take it over. Due to the importance and of these photographic materials, it is necessary that the proposal be given a serious consideration.
- **Local Archives:** While confreres are encouraged to develop the consciousness of keeping well organised Archives in their various Circumscriptions, we should all note

that the General archives are the concern of the whole Congregation, and not just the Province of France. We recommend that some materials or copies of materials from the Circumscriptions and missions, especially, historical documents and photographs that record Spiritan missionary activities, be systematically sent to enrich our General Archives. Those in charge of Archives in the regions prone to the harmful effects of the vicissitudes of the weather, attack by rodent and/or insects could send original, microfilmed or scanned copies of their important archival documents to the General Archives for safekeeping.

- **Preservation of electronic documents:** A good number of our confreres write beautiful homilies, articles and letters that are archival materials. Most of these documents are not printed but are left on electronic (Internet) platforms. We should look for ways get those documents for our Archives and preserve them for posterity.
- **Personnel:** The recent employment of a lay professional archivist to assist in the Archives brought in fresh ideas and professional touch. However, to ensure continuity, it is necessary to have a competent Spiritan also in the Archives. Younger confreres need to be trained to become professionals in archiving and to take up the work in the near future. In the event of the General Administration deciding to take over the Photo Archives, it will be necessary to urgently get a photo Archivist, preferably a Spiritan, to understudy the Archivist who has worked there for many years, so as to be able to eventually replace her.

7.1.3 PUBLICATIONS, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

The Superior General and his Council reach out to confreres, Circumscriptions and sometimes to non Spiritans through the various publications. The publications are compiled, produced and disseminated by General secretariat. A number of them have been published since the inception of this administration in 2012. The publications are classified in three categories:

7.1.3.1 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Bagamoyo 2012: XX General Chapter.

Spiritans Rule of Life 2013: Following the changes and new elements decided on in the 2012 General Chapter of Bagamoyo, the Spiritan Rule of Life was reviewed, updated and published in 2013.

The General Bulletin: It is the responsibility of the Secretary General to publish this and it is a record of administrative decisions and statistical information. The Bulletin is published periodically, every two to three years.

Enlarged General Council 2016 Newsletter: This was published after the 2016 Enlarged General Council of 2016.

Directory of Personnel: This document depends greatly on the information and collaboration of all the Circumscription Superiors and/or Secretaries who send in the appropriate information concerning their personnel. The most challenging aspect of publishing the Directory is that it is very difficult to obtain up-to-date information from many circumscriptions. A number of them do not send in the needed information – no records of transfer, of first professions or advancement to orders – as and when they should. Since September 2017 we resorted to publishing the available information on the completely revised, more efficient and user-friendly database in Spiritan website. We are publishing a revised edition of the paperback Directory in 2020 based on the information available to us.

7.1.3.2 DOCUMENTS FOR SPIRITUAL ANIMATION

Superior General's Letters: Every year at Pentecost and Christmas the letter of the Superior General to all Spiritans and lay Spiritan Associates is circulated.

Novenas: At the request of the GC, formation communities, groups and individual confreres have composed prayers and reflections used in the various novenas in preparation for the respective yearly celebrations of the feasts of Libermann, Pentecost and Poullart des Places.

Liturgical Ordo: this is a liturgical calendar published annually. It indicates the Church's liturgical events as well as those events that are specific to the Spiritans and is still in demand in several circumscriptions.

'Spiritans Life' and 'Anima Una': The animation plan to a large extent took precedence in publications. Effectively the two publications were discontinued in a regular way. Consequently, only one issue of each was published since 2012:

- 'Spiritans Life': No. 24 *Interreligious Dialogue*, September 2014;
- 'Anima Una': No. 65 *Community Life*, April 2017.

The question remains as to whether or not the publications should continue in the Congregation.

7.1.3.3 OTHER DOCUMENTS

The following documents were published as enabling instruments in the organisation of the various aspects of the life and mission of the Congregation:

- Guide for Spiritan Formation 2013;
- Guide for Spiritan Formation 2013: Annexes;
- Directory for Organisation 2016;
- Spiritan Guide for Education 2016;
- Guide for Lay Spiritan Associates 2016;
- Safeguarding Minors: Guidelines 2016;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults: Guidelines for 2018;
- Guide for Spiritan Bursars 2018;
- Guide for Administrative Relations with the Generalate 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2020.

7.1.4 COMMUNICATIONS

This is essential in every organisation and vital for animation. To be effective, every leadership team needs to communicate within itself and with those it serves. The General Administration has therefore been reflecting on and searching for the best way to make the Communications Office more effective in its service to the General Council and the Congregation. Even before and during the present Administration, it has been an uphill task to find adequate and competent personnel to staff the office. Since the last confrere concluded his term in that office, GC has not been successful in finding a capable coordinator for Communications. The idea of employing a non Spiritan to do the job was considered and dropped due to the unavailability of the necessary and capable mentor for the would be employee. Meanwhile, members of the Communications Committee made up of the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General, the General Assistant responsible for communications combine this task with the respective responsibilities of their various offices. Information is disseminated electronically (email, website, Facebook and YouTube) or by postage. The essential publication media we use are the following:

‘Spiritan News’: This information bulletin replaces reports on the life of circumscriptions formerly carried in the General Bulletin. Normally, it is published quarterly. An increase in postage costs obliged us to suggest to circumscriptions to print electronically sent issues, and distribute to the confreres accordingly.

‘Spiritan Newsflash’: This consists of brief but important or significant items of news of interest to the whole Congregation. To ensure that everybody receives the Newsflash regularly all e-mail addresses need to be updated.

Website: The Spiritan website, spiritanroma.org, has been updated. The site is adapted to the present day needs with the main pages accessible in the three official languages of the Congregation. It has a section that is accessible to the public, Spiritans and non Spiritans alike, and another section which is only for members.

7.1.4.1 TRANSLATIONS AND PROOF-READING, PACKAGING AND POSTING

The General Secretariat is also responsible for the translation into the three official languages of the Congregation, all the documents and material for publication and for animation produced by both the General Council and its various offices (JPIC, CDO, Education and Formation offices). This is a very crucial activity and without the generous collaboration of many confreres who are available for this translation work, the burden on the secretariat would be so much greater. When documents are returned, proof-reading is the next step which is also necessary and very time-consuming. The editorial board composed of the Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General, and two other confreres of the Generalate Community, has been carrying out this responsibility. The secretariat then ensures the electronic communication and/or the printing, packaging and posting of the material in question. In recent years, postage costs have greatly increased, but with the help of the printers whom we have been using for many years, this packaging and posting is now done by them and the documents are sent out through a facility offered by the Biblicum Press in Rome, which allows for tracking sent materials.

7.1.4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The importance of information management, publication and communication in the running of any organization cannot be over emphasized. To ameliorate the present standard of the Spiritan Communications, we suggest the following:

- (i) **Need for training of confreres in communication:** The General Administration in collaboration with the Superiors of Circumscriptions should make greater efforts to get confreres interested to be trained in modern communication methods.
- (ii) **Need for feedback on deliveries of Generalate Communication with Circumscriptions:** It is often difficult to measure to what extent the various communications from the Generalate, whether they be by electronic means or traditional postal services, actually reach all the confreres; there is evidence to suggest that many confreres receive very little of what is sent out, so some kind of system informing the secretariat of reception of documents needs to be worked out. The role of circumscription Superiors and their secretaries in this is of crucial importance.
- (iii) **Need for a wider pool of translators:** with only a small number of confreres available to help with translations from one language of the Congregation to another, confreres who also have their own jobs to do in their various circumscriptions, there is a need to have a wider pool of confreres available for this task. Alternatively, we could consider making a special plan/budget for hiring professional translators for the job.
- (iv) **Need for updating the Website and Database:** the website, the database and Directory of Personnel need to be continually updated. To achieve this end, the

General Secretariat will need the collaboration of all Circumscription Superiors and Secretaries. We need prompt and up to date information on first and perpetual professions, ordinations, change of appointments, transfers and other relevant events taking place in the Circumscriptions.

- (v) Every Circumscription should have an official email address with which official information is communicated to the Generale Administration. Private email address should not be used by Superiors, Secretaries or bursars.

7.2 PROCURATOR GENERAL TO THE HOLY SEE (SRL 210)

7.2.1 THE ROLE OF THE PROCURATOR IN THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

The Procurator serves as a liaison between the General Administration and the various departments of the Holy See to deal with personnel or administrative matters concerning the Congregation. The Procurator always works in conjunction with the Superior General and his Council and within the limits of the powers received (RVE 210).

The Procurator General to the Holy See notifies the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life of the election of the Superior General (RVE 237.2).

7.2.2 SERVICES OF THE PROCURATOR

7.2.2.1 RELATIONS WITH THE DIFFERENT ROMAN DICASTERIES

He prepares the processes of laicisation, incardination, secularisation, abuse of minors and vulnerable adults, sale of property or land exceeding the amount fixed by the Holy See and prepares the dossiers of dispensation from perpetual vows and hands them over to the competent Congregations according to the respective cases. The guidelines for preparing these different processes are contained in the Guide for Administrative Relations - GAR.

Sending and verifying the processes and documents that are to be sent to the Holy See: Congregation for Religious, Clergy, Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Evangelization of Peoples, Secretariat of State, Cause of Saints, Doctrine of the Faith.

He receives and delivers the official correspondence from the various Roman Congregations to the General Council.

7.2.2.2 Preparation and Sending of Letters for Visas

The Procurator prepares and sends different letters of invitation for visas to confreres who come to Rome at the request of the GC or for other reasons, such as coming for studies or to do some specific course. Between 2012 and September 2019, about 240 official letters/invitations were written for confreres to apply for visas in the different Italian embassies spread around the world.

Due to the great problem of mobility of people in today's world, it is becoming more and more difficult to obtain visas in some countries. Because of this, different governments are creating difficulties and the inspection is more and more rigorous, so we must be attentive to this situation. It is important to remember that letters are only made for members of the Congregation.

7.2.2.3 Other Services: General House, Circumscriptions and Confreres

The Procurator takes care of the various requests made by the circumscriptions and the confreres:

- He prepares and sends various documents to the Vatican Government;
- apostolic blessings;
- obtains tickets for Audiences, different liturgical celebrations and other activities that take place in the Vatican;
- helps the Spiritan bishops in Ad Limina Visitations, Synods and other activities;
- renews the signature of “Osservatore Romano”;
- takes care of the daily correspondence to be sent to the Vatican Post Office;
- checks the different documents published by the Vatican and informs the Superior General and his council.

7.2.3 CHALLENGES FOR THE PROCURATOR GENERAL

7.2.3.1 TO SEARCH FOR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOR THE GC THROUGH:

- **Contacts with various Vatican officials.** Faced with the complexity of the current cases, it is necessary to seek information and orientations for the General Council. To achieve this, it is extremely important to have contacts with various officers in different dicasteries.
- **Contacts with other Procurators of different Congregations.** Participate in the meetings of the Procurators to obtain information and orientations for the GC. In certain cases, we ask for the advice of some who are “expert” canonists.

7.2.3.2 TO INFORM AND HELP UPDATE THE GENERAL COUNCIL ON THE NEW DOCUMENTS PUBLISHED BY THE VATICAN

In recent years, the Church has published some important documents concerning Religious Life and Priestly Life. These documents deserve to be studied with the help of “experts” for a possible update in our documents. Examples:

- “*Communis Vita*” of March 19, 2019, by which some norms of Canon Law are changed;
- Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons of March 26, 2019;
- “Light of the World” of May 7, 2019.

The challenge for the Procurator is to keep up to date and be informed in order to follow the new guidelines that are appearing in the new Vatican documents and other guidelines that may arise from the different Roman Dicasteries.

7.2.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- The Procurator’s term of office is for 3 years. Due to the importance of the work, as well as its long preparation, it is important that the mandate of the Procurator be in line with the mandate of the General Council, i.e., be appointed for four renewable years.
- Preparation of the Procurator: to do a good job as Procurator it is necessary for him to have the necessary time to learning the Italian language, if possible with an internship in a community where only this language is spoken. You have to prepare yourself well in order to communicate in Italian.

- It would be convenient for the Procurator to take the course organized by the Congregation of Religious Life This course prepares him for the work he will have to do.
<http://www.congregazionevitaconsacrata.va/content/vitaconsacrata/it/pubblicazioni/studium.html>
- Orientation for requesting the official letter to obtain a visa: the confrere speaks with the Provincial, the latter - in turn - speaks with the correspondent of his circumscription at the GC and, finally, the councillor makes the request to the procurator.
- Due to the increase in cases and the work involved in this, it is recommended that there be a canonical secretary, with adequate formation, appointed to prepare the dossiers of special cases, which require the drawing up of decrees and letters to the Vatican on behalf of the Superior General. Also to follow up the cases of irregular confreres, since these too need to be resolved.
- The Major Superior of a circumscription is directly responsible for resolving the cases of confreres in irregular situations. Depending on the number of cases which exist in a particular circumscription, a confrere could be appointed as secretary to do this work by helping the Major Superior, who already has many other functions.

7.3 THE CAUSES OF SPIRITAN CONFRERES IN VIEW OF THEIR BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION

7.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Currently, we have four causes presented to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints (CCS) in Rome. For the advancement of these causes, the reputation for holiness of our confreres must be continuous and growing, and this is an indispensable condition.

From this perspective, the people of God have everything to gain by knowing the life and spirituality of our founders and also of other courageous missionaries of our Spiritan family. However, the challenge is to invite not only members of the Spiritan family but also other members of the Christian community to get to know them and pray that the causes of our confreres make progress.

7.3.2 RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONDITIONS TO BE A POSTULATOR

For a Postulator to be recognized and approved by the CCS certain responsibilities and conditions must be met:

- It is the responsibility of the Postulator to carry out research into the life of the Servant of God, Venerable, Blessed and Holy, in order to know his reputation for holiness and the ecclesiastical importance of the cause and to refer to the Superior General;
- The Postulator is entrusted with the task of administering, according to the norms given by the CCS, the goods offered for the cause;
- the Postulator, approved by the same Congregation, must be resident in Rome;
- the postulator must be constituted by the superior general and his council with a mandate of appointment;
- the Postulator has the right to be substituted, with a legitimate mandate and with the consent of the Superior General and his council, by others who are called vice-postulators.

- It is a necessary condition for being a Postulator to attend the course organized by the CCS.

7.3.4 APPOINTMENTS

7.3.4.1 APPOINTMENT OF THE POSTULATOR GENERAL

On 24 September 2016, the General Council appointed Fr. Orlando Zanovelli as Postulator General to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints for the causes of our Spiritan confreres. He attended the postulator's course required by the Congregation and received his certificate of completion on May 28, 2018.

7.3.4.2 APPOINTMENT OF POSTULATOR FOR THE CAUSE OF BISHOP JOSEPH SHANAHAN (PROT. N°2108)

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary, for its part, has asked Father Orlando Zanovelli CSSp, to be the Postulator for the cause of Bishop Shanahan. After consultation with the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, Fr. Orlando was appointed Postulator General of the Cause on June 6, 2019. For his part, he appointed Sister Catherine Asomugha in Onitsha (Nigeria) and Sister Chinyeaka Ezeani in Dublin (Ireland) as Vice-Postulators of the Cause. Since January 2020, Sister Chinyeaka Ezeani is attending the Postulator's course required by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. At present, the Cause is at diocesan level.

7.3.4.3 APPOINTMENT OF THE POSTULATOR FOR THE CAUSE OF OUR CONFRERES, THE MARTYRS OF KONGOLO

On 27 July 2019, Mgr. Oscar Ngoy Wa Mpanga CSSp - Bishop of Kongolo - issued the decree appointing Fr. Etienne Ngoy as Diocesan Postulator of the Cause of our confreres the Martyrs of Kongolo, assassinated on 1 January 1962. Fr. Etienne is attending the Postulator's course organized by CCS which began in January 2020. At present, there has not been an official opening of the cause, but it will probably happen with the return of Fr. Etienne to Kongolo.

7.3.5 SERVICES OF THE POSTULATOR

The Postulator's main service is to accompany the causes of our Spiritan confreres. Here is the state of these causes in October 2019.

7.3.5.1 VENERABLE FRANCIS MARY PAUL LIBERMANN (PROT. N°1129)

The decree on the heroic nature of his virtues was issued on June 19, 1910. For the cause to advance towards beatification, a miracle is needed. We are still waiting for such a miracle for his beatification. In 2019, a possible miracle was reported in California, in the United States, but there has not been a complete healing of the person.

7.3.5.2 BLESSED DANIEL BROTTIER. (PROT. NO. 737)

Beatified by Pope Saint John Paul II on November 25, 1984. Father Yves-Marie Fradet is the Vice-Postulator of the Cause in France. To move towards canonization, a miracle is needed. Since 2017 we have been following possible miracles that have been presented. We have two in France and one in Argentina. We are following them, but up to the present moment we have nothing certain that will lead Blessed Daniel Brottier to his canonization.

7.3.5.3 BLESSED JACQUES DESIRÉ LAVAL. (PROT. NO. 301)

He was the first to be beatified by Pope Saint John Paul II on April 29, 1979. To advance towards canonization, a miracle is needed. In 2018, news of a possible miracle came through Father Bernard HYM, Vice-Postulator for Mauritius. Practically all the documents are already there: examinations, tomographies, analyses, medical reports and photos. On September 9, 2019 (Feast of Blessed Laval), we received from the Congregation for the Causes of Saints the name of two neurosurgeons who work on case-analyses in this realm. If there is a positive response from the neurosurgeon who will analyse the case, saying that there was something extraordinary in the cure of the sick person, we will follow up with the necessary procedures for a possible canonization of Blessed Laval.

7.3.5.4 CLAUDE FRANCIS POUILLART DES PLACES. (PROT. NO. 2679)

In order to advance his case, so that he be declared Venerable, you must resubmit your dossier to the CCS. The diocesan process was concluded and the dossier was presented to the CCS in 2005. It was opened and the study revealed some shortcomings. The required complements were handed over to the Congregation in 2008; the decree validating the diocesan process was signed on 24 May 2008. On 12 June 2010, feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, “a *Positio*” in recognition of the heroic nature of the virtues of Poullart des Places was handed over to Fr. Daniel Ols, appointed reporter of this file by the CCS on the 7th November 2008. A second re-reading of the “*Positio*” showed that it had not been prepared according to the criteria of the CCS. Unfortunately, since 2010 the cause has not advanced. In order to continue the process and to have it written according to the criteria of the CCS, the General Council, in May 2016, asked Fr. Yves-Marie Fradet to do this job. We are waiting for this job to be done so that the “*Positio*” can be handed over again to CCS.

7.3.5.5 OTHER CAUSES

We have received news of various processes which have been opened, either by dioceses or by Congregations, of Spiritan confreres who have been bishops in different dioceses, or founders of Congregations, or even of confreres who, because of their simple and holy lives, have had a reputation for holiness among the Catholic faithful or even among members of other religions. These causes needed to be followed more closely in order to move forward as well.

7.3.5.6 OTHER SERVICES

The Postulator must present an annual financial report on the causes we have in progress for the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. He must also attend the meeting of the College of Postulators.

7.3.6 CHANGES

Since Pope Francis began his Petrine ministry in Rome, he has paid special attention to the Causes of Saints. In this sense he has made some significant changes so that the various processes which lead some servant of God to canonization are more equitable and just.

- On 10 March 2016, he approved the new “Rules on the Administration of the Goods of the Causes of Beatification and Canonization”. The objective of these new rules “given the peculiar nature of the public good of the causes, bears its costs, in which those involved participate through a contribution, and ensures that the fees and expenses are met and do not hinder the continuation of the process”. To help the people involved who have financial difficulties, a solidarity fund has been created which is made up of gifts donated by people from other causes who receive many gifts. Financial help can also be

requested from the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in order to maintain the cause. Each year, I must present a financial report of the causes we have in progress in the Congregation.

- On August 24, 2016, the Congregation approved the Rules of the Medical Council of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in order to update the rules for a possible miracle of a Venerable or Blessed. It is not a question of “facilitating” the verification of a possible miracle, but of having clear and objective rules for the Actors and Postulators of the various Causes.
- On July 11, 2017, the Congregation promulgated in the Apostolic Letter, in the form of “Motu Proprio”, the third way – The Offering of One’s Life - to recognize the Holiness of Christians who “*are worthy of special consideration and honour, those Christians who, following more closely the norms and teachings of the Lord Jesus, voluntarily and freely offered their lives for others*” and persevered “*to the death for this purpose.*” They are Christians who attain the grace of holiness by offering their lives. Ex: St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe (He was canonized as a martyr, but is an example of someone who gave his life freely and spontaneously to save another life).

7.3.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- To appoint other vice-postulators in different circumscriptions in the world to spread and encourage our confreres and other people to know the spirituality of our founders and also to invite them to pray that their reputation for holiness may grow ever more. The Fame of Holiness must be lasting and grow with time - this is an indispensable condition for a cause to advance.
- Put together the gifts received for the different causes of our confreres. The gifts that different circumscriptions receive for this purpose should be sent to the General Secretariat. This is necessary because the present Postulator has also been appointed administrator of the funds and goods for the causes of our founders.
- To give the names of our founders and beatified confreres as patrons of our Spiritan works.
- To notify the Postulator General immediately when a possible miracle has occurred. At the same time, be discreet and not publish anything on social networks or other media.
- Create websites in circumscriptions where they don’t yet exist that show the life and spirituality of our founders and confreres.
- Draw attention to the need to specify very clearly which servant of God has been invoked for such and such a miracle we wish to present! This is really very important!
- To make known, on the occasion of the different meetings of confreres and lay Spiritans, the life and spirituality of our founders. The retreats which are already organized, as well as the novenas sent by the General Council, are very important.
- Printing pictures / making videos / composing music / proposing their names for meetings of young people, choirs and other groups.
- To pray as a circumscription or as a group for a cure which we hope for.

VIII. FINANCE FOR CONTEMPORARY MISSION (GENERAL BURSAR'S REPORT)

8.1 REFLECTION

8.1.1 A TRIPLE TRANSITION

The Congregation made its mark with remarkable missionary momentum all through the evolution of the Church since the nineteenth century. Though seldom discussed, the financial aspect of this development was essential and omnipresent.

Even today, finances concretely condition and enable action on the ground. Thus, in order to understand the current financial state of the Congregation, and especially the dynamics in which it is engaged from a management point of view, it must be viewed in the context of the recent evolution of the Congregation and of the Church and society more broadly. In the last thirty or forty years, the Congregation has undergone three major transitions. The first was demographic, with the centre of gravity shifting from the Global North to the Global South.²²⁷ The second was structural, with the exercise of authority and leadership passing from European missionaries to confreres of the new circumscriptions. Finally, the third transition was financial, witnessing the decline of mission funding by Churches and donor networks of the confreres of the North.

A characteristic of the *demographic* transition was its inevitable acceleration, owing to the simple fact that aging is slow at first, then accelerates. We age less quickly between the ages of thirty and fifty than we do between seventy and ninety. The confreres of the North stayed at their posts as long as they could, then departures accelerated. This phase has been nearly complete for over a decade.

Structural transition is always difficult, for no one is willing to question long-standing, proven modes of operating that change may destabilize. The most senior confreres exercised their responsibilities as long as they could remain in office. Their accelerated departure often left circumscriptions without truly experienced leaders, seeing that the transition was not really prepared for. Some confreres with little experience had to assume responsibility. Currently we are seeing the emergence of new superiors who have had experience with circumscription councils and animation and the exercise of authority at various levels of the circumscription. They also have not lived through the frequently conflictual transitional phase. Now that the demographic and structural transition is almost complete, these new leaders realize that the destiny of their circumscription is really in their hands.

The third major shift, the *financial* transition, lags slightly behind the other two, because confreres of the North, once back in their home circumscriptions, continued to help the circumscriptions of the South, raising funds through their various networks. Established self-help channels continued to exist for some time; in some cases, circumscription reserves helped to cushion some of the shock of the transition.

These three transitions allow us to outline some features of the Congregation's current situation from a financial standpoint.

²²⁷ We use the terms "North" and "South" to refer to the old and new circumscriptions. This simplifies the matter, despite the limitations of these terms.

Circumscriptions in the North are experiencing a threefold challenge. First, the society that could once be described as Christian is no longer so, or only minimally. The missionary drive of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries no longer exists. As a result, gifts and inheritances that were essential for missionary life at that time have become insignificant and no longer make it possible to finance missionary activity. The confreres no longer have vibrant and lively parish communities behind them providing support.

Second, the networks of confreres' families, and so of the circumscriptions themselves, have aged along with them. As these networks dwindled, their support also decreased considerably.

Finally, resources are declining, to the point that some circumscriptions are in difficult financial situations. Revenues in northern circumscriptions came mainly from support networks and parishes (ties that need to be maintained through contacts and events, etc.), but also from works, and more recently, from pensions of retirees and the salaried work of confreres in parishes and various organizations. With the diminishing work capacity of aging confreres and the financial difficulties of the Churches in the North, income is no longer sufficient for the life of the circumscriptions, especially since the care of older and sick confreres is becoming more and more demanding. As a result, circumscriptions are seeing their real estate patrimony diminish, to such an extent that we must consider the prospect of no longer having enough to live on in the next ten or fifteen years.

Circumscriptions in the South face other challenges. As a result of transitions experienced by the Congregation, they inherited structures (buildings, works) and mission territories that required a certain amount of financial resources to sustain, at a time when those resources no longer exist. The Churches and the local population often do not have the means to help priests and support their works.

In order to operate, the circumscriptions face many expenses: the training of seminarians, which is expensive and consumes a large part of the resources; the structures of formation; frequent and costly travel for students, those on overseas experience, confreres on missionary appointment, meetings of the Unions, international meetings, confreres' vacations, etc. The provincial administration must also find resources for its own functioning.

Finally, for lack of means, certain circumscriptions are unable to accept positions of first evangelization or ministries for which the local church cannot find anyone, which is nevertheless an essential part of our charism. In many circumscriptions, the only regular income comes from parishes, particularly urban parishes. This is not without its problems, as diocesan clergy often wish to take over these parishes themselves. There is "competition" which puts our status as "missionaries" in question.

One of the first consequences of this triple transition is that the assistance provided by *Cor Unum* and the personal contribution to the General Administration will decrease quite rapidly in the future. In addition, the northern circumscriptions need the solidarity of those in the South to continue the Spiritan mission, which still has its place in their countries.

In the South, many circumscriptions are almost in a state of re-founding. The changes have been such that they have to be almost completely rebuilt. For this, they must begin with the foundations: establish the bases of their subsistence, and gradually structure their institutions and their action. One cannot start a building on the first floor - one cannot have more students than confreres.

In the current global environment, this overhaul includes, among other things, self-reliance projects, the establishment of a network of benefactors, and the establishment of a network of NGOs and funding agencies.²²⁸

Such is our assessment of the current financial situation of the Congregation. To contemplate the future, we must deepen the analysis and identify the challenges that await the Congregation in view of its evolution and that of the Church.

8.1.2 GOVERNANCE

8.1.2.1 CULTURES AND GOVERNANCE

The triple transition mentioned above occurred within the context of a much more fundamental trend: the shift from a movement-oriented Congregation, the “go ye afar,” the *ad extra* mission, to a Congregation connected to local Churches, immersed in them, where the missionary spirit must be brought. The Congregation was founded in the context of a geographically expanding Church, and today we live in a Church with a large presence in the world, with vibrant local Churches and flourishing vocations, with this paradox, that the northern Churches that initiated the missionary movement are in sharp decline, while young Churches are growing vigorously.

From a material, administrative point of view, this has important consequences, particularly for governance, in the areas of entrepreneurial culture and financial management.

The gravitational shift of the Congregation - and of the Church - from the North to the South has led to considerable changes, particularly in the cultural sphere. This observation is not extraordinary and seems to state an obvious reality, but curiously, this issue of interculturality has received little attention in current thought. We may talk about it within international and intercultural communities, but it is not really a priority topic of reflection and even less an element of the Congregation's strategic thinking and animation.

However, there are fundamental issues in the wake of the transitions experienced by the Congregation.

8.1.2.2 INSECURITY AND SECURITY

From an anthropological viewpoint, a culture is a set of representations, beliefs, and behaviours developed by a human group to adapt to its environment. This simple definition will suffice for our purposes. Of all the approaches to analysis of culture, one model seems particularly interesting: that of Clair Michalon, who situates cultures not in the usual terms of “tradition” or “modernity,” but on an axis that runs from “Insecurity” to “security.”²²⁹

Each human group has an unconscious purpose, a fundamental task: to ensure its preservation and reproduction. In precarious societies, survival is not guaranteed because material and human resources are limited and uncertain. The group must be united, and all must work for the common good. Children, the sick and the elderly—in other words, those who are not autonomous and cannot fully contribute to the subsistence of the group—must

²²⁸ The Central Development Office, which is currently being set up in Rome, wants to meet this requirement and promote the coordination and establishment of this network at the level of the Congregation.

²²⁹ Michalon, Clair, “Les systèmes de références culturelles,” *Silo, Cahier d'information*, No. 17 (June 1991).

Everything we say here about insecurity and security societies is taken from her analysis, which is extremely rich. We only take up a small part.

be cared for. Natural disasters, poor harvests, epidemics, conflict can quickly put everything in question and endanger the whole group. Social control must be very strong.

In secure societies, institutions were gradually set up to reduce this insecurity and ensure the future: pensions for the elderly, insurance against illness, accidents, unemployment, improved health, etc. Society has become more complex and specialized, and the accumulation of wealth secures the future. When the preservation and reproduction of the social group is assured, the main concern becomes the improvement of the standard of living.²³⁰

Absolute security hardly exists, nor does absolute insecurity, except in the case of violent and lasting conflicts with large displacements of the population.

This model of analysis makes it possible to locate all human groups somewhere along the axis from insecurity to security.

“On this axis, it is fairly easy to place certain social groups in the” precarious zone,” particularly groups from Africa. On the other hand, Asian societies are probably in a middle zone, full of uncertainties and ambiguities, a source of strong tensions. The confrontation of social logics is undoubtedly at the root of clashes between generations, between urban and rural life, between the new industrialization and proletarians, between the new rich and those who are marginalized. More broadly, this median zone is obviously the most blurred, one in which many developing societies find it difficult to locate themselves. Their capacity for dialogue is diminished accordingly.”²³¹

Contrary to the commonly used “tradition-modernity” schema, this model is not a discourse elaborated by one generally dominant society over another; but rather, a model that makes it possible to locate all human groups, whoever they may be, on the same axis. On the other hand, though the definition of culture as adaptation to an environment is relevant, classical anthropology devotes a great deal of study to cultures, but much less to their environment. Yet a society is a living whole, in constant interaction with its environment, which is itself in continual evolution. This flux shows the difficulty of understanding a culture in its dynamic and creative dimension. And the element that makes reality even more complex in today’s world is the speed of environmental change on every level: the natural environment, technology, communication, economics, migration, conflicts, and so on. One can say that the world has changed more in the last fifty years than in the preceding two or three centuries. Everything evolves very quickly, and on a global scale, demanding great reactivity and creativity of human groups. On every continent, one can find groups living in great insecurity directly opposite groups living in comfort and security in the same country or the same city.

As far as our Congregation is concerned, we can see that many of our circumscriptions are located to a greater or lesser degree on the side of precarious societies. A majority of confreres come from this type of society. This is also where we are destined to work, since we want to go to the poorest.

This has direct consequences for governance, on two fundamental points in particular: relationships and financial management.

²³⁰ See Michalon, “Les systèmes,” 4.

²³¹ Ibid., 14. He wrote this in 1991, almost 30 years ago. The rapidity of the changes in the world since that time requires that we relativize the geographical divisions he mentions and reinterpret his remarks in a global way.

8.1.2.3 RELATIONAL SOCIETIES AND FUNCTIONAL SOCIETIES

As we have said, in precarious societies, everyone must work for the common good. Each person is important and indispensable, and must adhere fully to the objectives of the group. The dissident, the marginal, is potentially dangerous because he can sow discord and thus increase risks and insecurity. In this type of society, relationships are essential. It is necessary to know one another, to observe each other, also to maintain a unity that must always be consolidated. To identify who contributes to the common good and who puts it in danger is essential. Solidarity manifests this unity, and no one can escape it; it also plays the role of “insurance” for old age, health and the vagaries of life. These are also highly hierarchical groups, where everyone must know his place and those of others, know his role and stick to it. Social control is omnipresent.

In secure societies, a single individual cannot put the life of the group in danger; the logic of accumulation favours quantitative benchmarks. A person becomes part of a more complex structure and is replaceable. What matters is not the person, but his function.

A typical example: in secure societies, when people meet, they introduce themselves by saying their name and their job. This locates them on the social ladder by salary level and function. In precarious societies, people say their name and then their family and their village. They are positioned in relation to their network of relationships.²³²

Whether one is in a situation of more or less insecurity or relative security, in more relational or more functional societies, has important consequences for financial management. In *secure societies*, people are used to managing inventories, surpluses, and an accumulation of goods. These are societies that make “investments.” The phrase is significant: money is immobilized, usually in banks, which then invest it in industry, services, real estate, etc. This money produces wealth for the investor, as part of a globalized and integrated economic system. Investment in the stock market can even show gains without being connected to any productive activity, purely by speculation. In *precarious societies*, the majority of the population has little or no money. Nobody can become rich by himself, and whoever becomes rich must make his riches available to all who supported him in his ascent, whether politically or economically. In ordinary life, the constraints are many: housing, food, clothing, health care, schooling, etc. Solidarity also has a high cost: support for the needy, the sick, family members, funeral expenses, celebrations, etc. In other words, people are constantly having to deal with shortages, and everyone helps everyone inside the solidarity group, whether it be family or at the level of the neighbourhood, community association, or the village. It should be noted that a person usually belongs to several circles of solidarity. This financial logic is contrary to that of “investment”: the more money circulates, the more it creates ties. The person who helps another has a “credit,” but it is a social investment, not an accounting one. As precarious societies are highly relational, individuals find themselves comfortable in this “social accounting.” Everyone knows his economic ties with his surroundings, as well as his rights and duties of solidarity. This system generally works in a balanced way, because anyone who does not respect his commitments or does not fully enter the solidarity circuits will be excluded. Everyone will be wary of him and he will no longer be accepted in any group because he will be deemed unreliable. Thus, in this context, the poor man is not the one who has no money, but the one who has no relationships.²³³

²³² Ibid., 6.

²³³ See Ndione, Emmanuel, *Le don et le recours, Ressorts de l'économie urbaine*. (Dakar, ENDA Editions, 1992) - *The Gift and the Recourse, Mainsprings of the Urban Economy*. In this book, the author describes steps taken by a local NGO, after gradually becoming aware of the economic functioning among inhabitants of a district in Dakar, to adapt its action to this relational and social economy.

On one hand, we have functional societies, which have management based on financial investment, and on the other, relational societies, with management based on social investment.

In the context of the transitions from the North to the South that the Congregation has experienced, these two models met, confronted each other, and mingled, as in the world today. No society is totally on one side or the other, and individuals must learn to live in both worlds, according to both models. The majority of our confreres, as we have already pointed out, come from societies of more or less insecurity and work there. Concretely, for a bursar, how is he to manage the often low reserves of the circumscription in order to assure formation, maintain buildings, provide health care, plan for the needs of aging confreres, on one hand and on the other hand, respond to the requests of communities or confreres who sometimes live in conditions of extreme poverty? Not to mention that a confrere can also be involved in a number of solidarity networks, particularly at the level of his family. This last problem is particularly delicate. In light of what we have described above, to ask a confrere to cut himself off from his familial solidarity network is to ask him to exclude himself, to be rejected, to give up something that has profoundly shaped and structured his personality since childhood ... One possible solution to this kind of situation is to have the community, the circumscription and the Congregation also function as a network of solidarity, which is already the case in many areas.

It may be noted in passing that this helps us to better understand the gravity of Christ's demand when he asks his disciples to leave everything - for those who lived in precarious societies, this amounted to throwing themselves into the unknown, with no more attachments, no security for their future.

Making provision for the future when the present is precarious is difficult, and the margin of manoeuvre very narrow when it exists. During a training session of the new circumscription superiors in Rome, when it was pointed out to a provincial that his circumscription had more students than confreres and that financially it was impossible to sustain, he replied, "If we don't have young people after us, who will take care of us when we can't work anymore?"

In this context, one can also ask: what is the real meaning of the vow of poverty? In many countries we live better than the average population. And how to share or pool assets that we do not have, or over which, in fact, a solidarity network has a "right of access"? In societies where true wealth is one's network of relationships, it is perhaps this network that should be pooled and shared. In countries where the rule of law is very weak and where corruption is commonplace, a broad and influential relationship network is essential and just as important as money to carry out projects and manage the structures of the circumscription. Sharing and solidarity are to be implemented within circumscriptions, but also between circumscriptions and in the Unions.

8.1.2.4 A GOVERNANCE IN TRANSFORMATION

In the realm of governance, secure societies, oriented towards the organization of various functions, aim for efficiency and put in place stable and rigorous structures. Thus, over time, the Congregation has established an extremely efficient network of missions and procures. In the countries where it was present, it was able to produce and provide all that was needed for missionary work in all domains: buildings, pastoral care, health, schooling, mechanics, printing, etc. These structures functioned like real banks, allowing efficient and fast money transfers. Everything was based on trust and adherence to common rules and

procedures passed down from generation to generation. The structures remained operational even in cases of conflict or war; often they were the only ones still effective, when state services had ceased to function. The flip side of the coin is that this kind of structure requires a lot of resources: financial means, rigorous administration, strict procedures, and continuity. Individuals may come and go, but the system must remain stable because the most important element is the permanence of its operation. It also requires a very hierarchical system. Authority and communication go from the bottom to the top, then instructions and information return from the top down. Until the General Chapter of 1968, the Congregation was structured on this pyramidal and centralized scheme.

In insecure societies, social organization is also very hierarchical, but people's belonging to multiple networks of sociality and solidarity creates a society made of interconnected networks. Authority and communication are vertical, but also horizontal, no longer according to the image of the pyramid, but of the "fishing net."

With the transitions experienced by the Congregation, we have mostly moved into a situation where we no longer manage reserves, but insecurity. When everyday life is a struggle to find the resources necessary for the life of a circumscription, we have to be flexible and inventive, and we especially need to have large networks which multiply the chances of finding solutions. In these cases, relationship networks are more important than administrative rigour. This is precisely where the great challenge for governance in the Congregation lies: in order to sustain an organization of roughly 2,700 members in over sixty countries, good organization is needed, to which everyone adheres: common rules, procedures, ongoing relationships, risk analyses, reliable statistics, good communication, as well as the transmission and continuity of knowledge and procedures. At the same time, in many countries, vital and urgent needs mobilize most of the energies, and the organizational aspect takes second place.

We now find that the indispensable verticality of the relation of authority is still present, but horizontality tends to develop. For this, social networks are a boon. They allow transversal communication, between confreres, as well as communication with the persons in charge. We can even say that the phenomenon goes beyond communication to enter the realm of interaction, which could open new horizons of governance.

Respecting the pyramidal hierarchy and intensifying networks are not incompatible, but reconciling them requires an awareness of these types of functioning and the conflicts of interests that they can arouse, along with the will to solve them. The enterprise is difficult, and in this type of situation, the great temptation would be to return to greater centralization, considering that if we centralize the problems, we have a greater chance of centralizing the solutions. In fact, this approach does not work because it amounts to separating responsibility and authority. To avoid this, it is useful to recall a principle as fundamental as it is old: subsidiarity.

"The principle of subsidiarity is often confused with delegation. It consists in considering that all responsibility must be assumed by the level directly confronted with the problem to be solved, the higher echelons intervening only if the answer to be given exceeds the capacities of the level in question ... the principle of subsidiarity has been adopted by business from the 1980s onwards. It has its origin in the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas and in several authors whose reflections have influenced the writing of the Encyclical

Rerum Novarum, (1891), the founding text of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church.²³⁴

If the social doctrine of the Church insists on this point, it is not that it wants to be a manual of business management, it is rather a question of human dignity and respect for the person. For self-actualization in one's humanity, one needs to undertake things, succeed, be fully responsible and recognized. It is therefore necessary - and generally more effective - to distribute responsibilities widely, and not make people merely carry out tasks, thus limiting their initiative and creativity.²³⁵

In our Congregation, the General Council has a preeminent role in ensuring the unity of the Congregation, promoting and coordinating solidarity, supervising the work of circumscriptions, and ensuring their fidelity to the Spiritan vocation.²³⁶ The General Council has a strategic role in the general plan of the Congregation, while the circumscriptions are at the operational level. They have a greater responsibility in the concrete implementation of the orientations of the General chapters and the strategies fixed by the General Council. It is the Circumscriptions that have the resources, partly sustain the General administration, provide personnel and financial contribution, sustain solidarity and a certain rationalization of resources in the Congregation. In the exercise of subsidiarity, the closest link to action is the Circumscription. It is therefore the "highest" operational level according to the principle of subsidiarity.

Another principle to be added is that of collegiality, which is sometimes aligned with synodality, which Pope Francis has been trying to promote since the beginning of his pontificate. The principle of collegiality means that persons in a position of responsibility, when they make a joint decision in the framework of a board or an executive body, defend the collective decision in public debates, even if it contradicts their personal position. Without this principle, authority is considerably weakened.²³⁷

8.1.3 CONCLUSION

The transitions we have mentioned, and their consequences, are a huge challenge, as we have seen, especially from the point of view of management and governance. The journey is not yet complete, but the Congregation is well on its way to meeting this challenge.

Since the nineteenth century, and throughout the twentieth century, the mission was rooted in northern Christian communities and experienced a long period of expansion. At the moment, the challenge of mission is to take root in the Christian communities of the South. This rootedness is essential to the accomplishment of the triple transition that the Congregation has experienced over the past fifty years. We will be able to draw new life for our mission and give new breath to the Spiritan charism. We are not a multinational company that expands by founding branches through investments, but a communion of brothers, communities and works, rooted in a people and a Church, that acts as a ferment, as a seed that grows and produces fruit.

²³⁴ Verrier, Gilles, "*Le principe de subsidiarité: une clé*" at <https://www.rhinfo.com/thematiques/management/le-principe-de-subsidiarite-une-cle/> 17/08/2017 ["*The principle of subsidiarity: a key*"].

See General Chapter 1968-1969, *Directives et Decisions*, Rome 1970. At no. 149, it defines subsidiarity as follows: "The Congregation is a unity, the organization of which must be in accord with the principle of subsidiarity, leaving to individuals and intermediate bodies initiative and responsibility in the tasks proper to them. All higher authority, moreover, has the duty to sustain and encourage the efforts of the intermediary bodies. It should intervene when these latter, or do not, adequately fulfill their function (GS, 86a; GE, 3, 6)"

²³⁵ The vow of obedience is also a commitment to initiative and creativity, in fidelity to the mission of the Congregation.

²³⁶ SRL 198.1

²³⁷ SRL 198 and 198.1 also refer to subsidiarity and collegiality.

8.2 ACTION

8.2.1 GOVERNANCE

8.2.1.1 MEMORY

The first aspect I would like to raise, which is fundamental in governance, is memory. It allows continuity over time and permanence in the functioning of the circumscriptions and the Congregation. That is why transmission is extremely important. In our administrations, the superior, the bursar, the secretary and the archivist play a central role. With years of experience, they acquire an in-depth knowledge of the workings and functioning of institutions. The transfer of services, whatever the function, must therefore be done with great care. The necessary time must be devoted to this. This is crucial to the robustness and efficiency of our operations.

To assist in the handover of services, the General Council has developed a guide for superiors and circumscription bursars. This lists the main areas and points of attention that require special care and includes in an annex all the administrative guides and documents produced by the General Administration which are essential for those taking up responsibilities.

These guides for the handover of services can be used by analogy for superiors and bursars of communities and works, choosing the relevant sections.

When the transfer of services is not well done, or when the superior, the bursar, the secretary and the archivist change at the same time, there is a great risk of disrupting the continuity of operations. This leads to a weakening of organizational capacities that can even jeopardize the existence of the circumscription. Relations within the Congregation also become more difficult, reducing the effectiveness of all missionary action.

8.2.1.2 SUBSIDIARITY AND COLLEGIALLY

We have already commented on these two points. They are part of the structure of our Congregation, as it was conceived from the very beginning. We have a strong tradition of decentralization and subsidiarity, just as others have a tradition of greater centralization. For subsidiarity to work effectively, care must be taken to ensure that responsibility and authority are never separated. It is also necessary to respect the specific allocation of duties of the different bodies of the Congregation at different levels, with the normative level (general and circumscription chapters), the strategic level (general chapters and General Council, chapters and circumscription councils) and the operational level (circumscription councils, communities and works).

As for collegiality, it is based on the fact that a religious Congregation is above all a communion of persons.

8.2.1.3 RISK MANAGEMENT

Unfortunately, the Congregation has experienced cases of mismanagement or fraudulent appropriation of property, with sometimes extremely serious consequences. The most significant malpractice often occurs over the long term, with the complicity of several people, due to lack of control and supervision by the authorities concerned.

Canon law gives little room for manoeuvre to dismiss confreres guilty of embezzlement, despite Bagamoyo's request (Cf. RVS 267)²³⁸. For this reason, the General Council insists on prevention. A number of tools have been developed to this end.

First of all, we must mention the *Spiritan Bursars' Guide*, which allows us to discuss the principles and practices of management in the Congregation. It is intended for the bursars of circumscriptions, communities and works. Superiors can also find what they need to know to understand how financial management works in their area of expertise.

The General Bursar's office has also produced a document that explicitly addresses risk management. This document simply takes up the prescriptions of the Rule of Life in terms of management. If these requirements, which are widely used in civil institutions, are followed, most internal risks can already be eliminated.

Another important instrument for prevention and good governance is financial advice. The world of management is becoming more and more complicated, and requires great professionalism and advanced technical knowledge. On the other hand we are finding it increasingly difficult to find bursars capable of meeting the ever-increasing demands of current management. To this end, the establishment of a financial council is essential. Composed of specialists from different fields (law, construction, management, etc.), it allows us to seek advice for our day-to-day management and projects, whether for development or revenue generation. This council may also have a control and audit role and make recommendations to the provincial and his council, which remain the bodies responsible for the control and operation of management.

In practice, you should never hesitate to consult professionals in different fields (lawyers, notaries, trustees, architects, etc.). A good thrifty person is not one who knows everything, but one who knows when to call on specialists.

In terms of ethics in financial management, it is also necessary to set clear lines and be able to report on them. To this end, the General Bursar's office has drawn up an ethical charter that details our options for respecting Christian ethics and socially responsible practice in our investments. This ethical charter was discussed in the Financial Council and presented to the General Council for approval. It is annexed to the Guide for Spiritan Bursars.

8.2.1.4 ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY

The last point concerning governance is intended to focus on the efficiency of our organization.

In a decentralized Congregation like ours, present in more than sixty countries, with more than 2,500 members, it is important to have an efficient administrative structure, so that information flows in a fluid, constant and rigorous manner. For this purpose, the main tool is the circumscriptions' Directory of Personnel. The information it contains serves as a basis for coordinating solidarity (Cor Unum, Pension Fund, personal contribution, etc.) and for disseminating information (newsletters, news, reports, administrative documents, etc.). In recent years, there has been a very marked deterioration in the quality and reliability of the information contained in the Directories of Personnel. When changes in appointments, temporary or perpetual professions, diaconal or priestly ordinations, are not reported, which is unfortunately too often the case, the centralized file becomes a source of errors and potential damage from a financial point of view. It is essential that the circumscriptions have their personnel records rigorously updated at least once at the

²³⁸ Des cas de malversations continuent à se produire régulièrement.

beginning of the year, and that they communicate them without fail to the General Secretariat (as requested by the Congregation's administrative guide). At present, some confreres ordained several years ago appear in the file as scholastics professed under temporary vows...

Communication by e-mail and internet allows a remarkable job to be done, but still too often messages are lost or do not reach the desired recipient. In this sense, updating information on the status of personnel is crucial, but it is also important to set up e-mail addresses specifically linked to the various functions. The use of a personal address for a superior or bursar in a circumscription or community makes it considerably more difficult when changes occur. The same applies to a secretary or an archivist.

8.2.2 ROLE AND LIMITATIONS OF GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

The General Administration is a changing reality: confreres come to work there for a time, made available to the Congregation by their circumscriptions, then leave for other missions. It is, in a way, an extension of the circumscriptions.

From a financial point of view, it is the circumscriptions that support it since the personal contributions they make for each confrere under 75 years of age constitute about half of its budget.

The General Administration was never conceived as a fundraising agency, but as a body for coordinating and distributing solidarity in the Congregation, which is exercised through Cor Unum, the personal contribution, the fund for apostolic projects, the emergency fund, extraordinary donations, etc. In addition, the General Bursar's office draws up a budget each year for the General Council, the services and the community of the Generalate and manages it.

The needs of the circumscriptions increase year after year, but the resources of the General Administration are limited. With the foreseeable decrease in the personal contribution, consideration should be given to keeping the activity of the General Administration within current limits rather than strengthening centralization.

When we hear or read that "the Congregation should take charge of..." this or that activity, this or that circumscription, we must be aware that we are referring to the General Administration, whose resources are limited, as we have pointed out.

8.2.3 ORGANISATION OF THE GENERAL BURSAR'S OFFICE: FINANCIAL COUNCIL

After the Bagamoyo Chapter, the General Bursar's office saw its staff decrease. Previously, the General Bursar (Fr. José Lopes de Sousa) was accompanied by an Assistant General Bursar, who was mainly responsible for daily management and accounting in Rome, as well as accounting relations with the circumscriptions (Fr. Felisberto Sakulukusu, then Fr. Joachim Abellan). There was also a "coordinator" at the General Bursar's office for self-financing projects and the training of bursars and for the systematic analysis of the financial reports received by the General Bursar (Fr. Firmino Cachada). Another colleague was in charge of the management of associations, public limited companies and capital in Fribourg (Fr. Jean-Marc Sierro).

When Fr. Jean-Marc Sierro was appointed General Bursar (1 January 2015), he was not replaced in Fribourg. The reduction in the number of associations and the delegation of building management to a management company have made it possible to reduce the workload, which is currently around 30%, some of which can be done from Rome. The Assistant General Bursar continues his work (Fr. Joachim Abellan, then Bro. Jean-Claude

Kibinda). Thus, the office is limited to two confreres. In our experience, we have noticed that this weakness in human resources is felt in the support of the circumscriptions and in animation in the field of management, particularly in the monitoring of the use of Cor Unum funds, formation houses and buildings and the financial situation of the circumscriptions, especially those in difficulty.

An important element of the functioning of the General Bursar's office is the Financial Council of the Congregation. It is currently composed as follows:

- The Superior General;
- 1 General Councillor;
- 6 provincial Bursars or experts;
- The Assistant General Bursar;
- The General Bursar.

This council meets once a year. It examines and discusses the budgets and accounts of the General Administration. It also meets with the managers of the Congregation's funds in Switzerland, who report on the management of the past year and discuss with the Council the management policy for the coming year.

Following this, the Financial Council makes recommendations to the General Council concerning the accounts and investment policy. The General Council discusses these various points and gives its approval and instructions.

Even if this board only meets once a year, it is valuable because it allows an external and competent look at the management of the General Administration and the medium and long term strategic options. It assists the General Bursar in fulfilling his mandate of providing income to the General Administration and preserving the capital of the Congregation. It is also regularly consulted by the General Council on specific issues.

8.2.4 TRAINING OF BURSARS

With the end of the centralized training that was previously offered in Rome at the inter-Congregational level, the General Administration undertook to set up its own training, with Fr. Firmino Cachada, who offered this training in English, Portuguese, French and Spanish, in an itinerant manner. The effort was considerable, but the result was somewhat disappointing: changes of bursars were very frequent, and the number of confreres trained in management quickly ran out. In this regard, the Financial Council of the Congregation suggests that the appointment of circumscription bursars be approved by the General Council. This would avoid an excessive turnover of bursars, which negates training efforts and is detrimental to the continuity of services and the proper functioning of circumscriptions.

Currently, we are moving towards more professionalism, with a certain number of confreres trained at university level. However, the demand remains very strong, not only for circumscription bursars, but also for community bursars. Providing centralized training in Rome is difficult, as such an organization requires a lot of resources, in terms of human resources and finance. It is necessary to bring together many stakeholders, with very diverse skills, and the scope of the subject matter requires a significant amount of time for training to be efficient.

On the other hand, while accounting rules may be universal, each country has its own legislation, from a tax, real estate, association, etc. point of view. Each country also has its own economic, political and contextual characteristics, and training needs to be as close as possible to realities on the ground. In this sense, training could be set up at the level of

national conferences of religious, or at the level of Unions among Spiritans, thus giving greater proximity. In any case, the effort for the formation of bursars must be intensified, because religious congregations are called upon to implement high standards in terms of competence, transparency and example. Religious congregations are closely observed in today's world, and the financial field represents a significant potential risk to their reputations.

8.2.5 FINANCING OF THE CONGREGATION

The recurring question when we talk about finance is that of increasing resources and new ways of financing our activities.

A number of observations can be made:

- The assistance provided by Cor Unum and the personal contribution to the General Administration will decrease quite rapidly in the future;
- The circumscriptions of the North need the solidarity of those of the South to continue their mission;
- Many circumscriptions in the South are in a state of re-foundation. They need to be rebuilt. To do this, they must start with the foundations: establishing the bases of their income, and gradually setting up their infrastructure and action;
- The sustainability of the financing of our missionary work depends mainly on:

Income Generating Projects

It is difficult to set up a single large project that is sufficient for provincial administration, formation, community support, first evangelization... It is often necessary, and simpler, to undertake several small, more modest, but also less risky projects. Autonomy must be promoted as widely as possible, knowing that there are a number of missionary projects where autonomy is not an option.

To set up income-generating projects, it is necessary to be able to invest or benefit from pre-financing. Opportunities in this area should be explored, for example in the form of short- or medium-term loans, for specific, well-documented and monitored projects.

Building a Network of Friends, Advisors and Benefactors

Bringing together a large number of men and women of good will ready to help us in our mission has always been an important and indispensable resource for our works. A network of people close to us and our mission helps us to manage and develop our works.

The Construction of a Network of NGOs and Funding Agencies

Asking in the right places, designing, implementing and monitoring projects requires know-how and professional structures that we must strive to promote throughout the Congregation.

At the moment it is very difficult to find funding for formation, for the functioning of an administration or for the care of elderly or sick confreres. This means that Spiritan funds must be allocated mainly to these areas.

For our projects and works, it is easier to find funds from self-help and funding agencies, whether ecclesial or lay, especially when these projects or works have a development component. With a little perseverance and professional competence, it is quite possible to find funding for schools, clinics, agricultural projects, farms, etc. In this sense, the creation of a centralized development office in the General Administration will make it possible to support circumscriptions and Unions in setting up professional and effective structures to access funding agencies, state and even multilateral aid.

Another area of work is to increase the efficiency of our investments and expenditures:

- **Maintenance:** we need to improve our movable and immovable assets. Maintenance is an investment that brings added value.
- **Growth:** our resources must generate income and interest.
- **Sharing:** equity is a fundamental criterion in the distribution of resources to people and works.

The efforts to diversify and consolidate our works must continue. We have to make our structures more efficient from an administrative and financial point of view. For this, the establishment of local financial councils is essential. People who know us, who know our spirit and mission, and who have professional skills in different areas related to management and administration are a valuable help in an increasingly complex world. They can help us implement methods and techniques to analyse the efficiency of our expenditures and the return on our movable and immovable investments. In many cases, it is possible to improve the financial efficiency of our works and ensure that what little capital we have is used in the most efficient way possible.

In many circumscriptions the financial situation is precarious. If you are poor, but the management is good, you can improve. But if, in addition to poverty, management is bad, the situation certainly worsens.

Until now, one of the major responsibilities of circumscriptions and Unions has been the funding of formation houses. Another challenge is on the horizon: more and more circumscriptions must consider establishing structures for elderly confreres. One possible approach would be to set up care structures for the elderly that are open to the public or other congregations. This would make it possible to obtain funding from agencies. Collaboration with specialized congregations in this field could be an asset.

In all the countries where we work, there are many religious congregations, and conferences of major male and/or female superiors exist almost everywhere. It is an important area for collaboration, because the congregations all have common needs: formation of superiors and treasurers, care for elderly brothers and sisters, health-insurance, retirement pensions, representation of religious life in the local Church, etc. Working together allows economies of scale and greater efficiency.

Last point: in the Congregation there is an old unwritten tradition according to which the circumscriptions, when they sell a property, give 10% to the General Administration. Circumscriptions in Europe and the United States have thus provided the Congregation with significant donations. As this comes from the patrimony of the Congregation, the General Council decided to allocate these funds to the acquisition of patrimony in other circumscriptions. This generosity has made it possible to help real estate investments, with a preference for projects that provide a regular income. We could make this custom a standard for all circumscriptions, with necessary adaptations in certain particular cases of sale for renovation.

Solidarity has always been on a voluntary basis, and this has borne fruit through generosity and sharing. It would be interesting to be able to determine the financial capacity of the circumscriptions on objective and measurable criteria. In this way, the General Administration could provide more precise information on each other's financial situation, so that the common burden could be shared even more equitably. The first essential step for such a practice would be to work towards greater rigour in the relations between the circumscriptions and the General Bursar, with accounts drawn up locally according to professional and duly controlled standards.

8.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF BAGAMOYO

8.3.1 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT GUIDE

5.3 The General Council will produce a Guide for Financial Management in the Congregation. This guide will include the following elements:

5.3.1 Compliance with SRL: procedures in relation to financial transactions in circumscriptions, orientations on investments, presentation and approval of budgets (SRL 175.3);

5.3.2 Training of bursars and superiors of circumscriptions and communities;

5.3.3 Collaboration with lay advisors;

5.3.4 Training of confreres in fundraising and in financial management;

5.3.5 Details regarding audits, financial analysis, rendering accounts;

5.3.6 Action and sanctions in cases of financial wrongdoing or mismanagement

5.3.7 An appendix which will gather together the sections of SRL relevant to financial management.

The Guide was published in September 2017, under the title “*Guide for Spiritan Bursars*”.

As requested by the General Chapter of Bagamoyo, this Guide is both a manual of general formation and a guide to the procedures and reports proper to the Congregation.

After a brief introduction on the role of the Bursar (ch. 1), the Guide discusses the fundamental principles of the legal situation (ch. 2) and the administration of property (ch. 3). There follow some considerations on the strategies and personal relationships of the Bursar with the various authorities of the Congregation, the ecclesial world and society (ch. 4). Then the Guide addresses the more practical issues of annual reporting to the General Administration (ch. 5) and reports on the circumscription (ch. 6).

The next chapters deal with a challenge facing the Congregation: the path to self-sufficiency (ch. 7) and an extremely important reality, which is basic to our common management - namely, Spiritan solidarity (ch. 8).

The Guide concludes with a chapter on development projects, from conception to implementation, up to the final report (para. 9)

Two documents are given in the appendix:

- Relevant texts of the Rule of Life, the General Chapters of Maynooth, Torre d’Aguilha and Bagamoyo, and Canon Law. These texts are arranged in the order of the chapters of the Guide.
- Our ethical charter for management and investments. These are the principles that we apply in our strategic and operational choices for Congregational management. We encourage circumscriptions to think about this issue and adopt their own ethical charters.

The *Guide for Spiritan Bursars* with its annexes, was presented to and approved by the Enlarged General Council in Rome in June-July 2016.

Point 5.3.6 has not been developed in the Guide. As we have said, Canon Law does not allow for the dismissal of a confrere for financial misconduct and does not provide for any particular sanction. As cases of wrongdoing are becoming more and more frequent in the Church, there may be a change in the law in the coming years. In the meantime, provisional measures must be taken on a case-by-case basis, mainly at the level of circumscriptions.

8.3.2 STRATEGIC PLAN

5.4 All circumscriptions, in collaboration with the General Council, will develop a 3-year plan based on an analysis of needs and resources, in order to arrive at self-reliance in circumscriptions and equity in the distribution of resources. The General Administration will do likewise.

Only a few circumscriptions have submitted a three-year strategic plan to the General Administration. In fact, it is a strategic animation plan, and not a strictly financial plan. Also, it appears that many circumscriptions are struggling to find trained bursars capable of managing communities, works and circumscriptions in an increasingly complex world. Competent staff resources are a major challenge: before thinking about developing strategic plans, reliable and realistic financial reports should already be presented. Some circumscriptions are unable to do so. For many, the difficulty of obtaining the accounts of communities and works prevents them from submitting a complete and consolidated report, which gives a realistic view of the financial situation of the circumscription.

On the other hand, when a circumscription lives on a day-to-day basis, without reserves and without fixed incomes, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to establish a relevant strategic plan.

In the General Administration, resources come from the personal contribution and capital interests. The expenses concern the General Administration and are regular. In the context of resources that do not depend on the General Administration and fixed and irreducible expenses, a strategic plan is not necessary, especially since it is not possible to aim for self-financing.

At the level of management itself, the strategic options are discussed each year by the Financial Council. They mainly concern the investment and wealth management strategies of our assets, which must be considered each year and adapted to the global economic situation.

8.3.3 INVENTORY AND SOLIDARITY

In addition to the establishment of a monitoring mechanism, the following points should be taken into account:

5.4.1 The need for each circumscription to keep an up-to-date inventory of its movable and immovable goods and to send it each year to the General Administration.

In their annual reports, circumscriptions generally indicate the amount of their real estate assets. However, with fluctuations in the value of real estate, it is difficult to update this inventory each year. Particular attention must be paid to land that is gaining in value as part of the expansion of cities and neighbourhoods dedicated to residence and business. It is even possible to plan to acquire land on the outskirts of cities, land that will increase in value in the long term.

5.4.2 An emphasis on solidarity, on the invitation to share, based on discernment as to whether resources are proportional to needs, and an evaluation of the use of the circumscription's goods.

Solidarity is a constant and very present concern in the Congregation.

Despite the difficulties, most circumscriptions are doing their utmost to participate in solidarity in the Congregation. This is reflected in the fact that the total amount of solidarity is not decreasing as quickly as statistics and financial reports would suggest.

The idea behind the real property inventory was a greater sharing of assets. This has led circumscriptions to focus on their real needs. The “discernment of needs” for the future is quite complex, especially when it comes to the care of elderly confreres. Many parameters must be taken into account, a number of which are difficult to predict, particularly the evolution of living and health care costs and the life expectancy of confreres. By entrusting this examination to qualified professionals, some circumscriptions have realized that they could find themselves in great difficulty in less than 15 years. The transfer of assets from the best endowed circumscriptions to the poorest is a generous idea, but in the long run it may prove counterproductive if it focuses on income, without taking into account the expenses of donor provinces. Some circumscriptions, such as Ireland and Canada, have commissioned actuarial studies from professionals. They have thus been able to see that they will need significant sums to ensure the maintenance of elderly colleagues in the future and that their assets will not be sufficient in the long term. They will be forced to find other sources of funding to cover the costs of the circumscription and its works.

During its term of office, the General Council noted a positive evolution in the awareness of internal solidarity within the circumscriptions. It brings the confreres together around a common project.

Some circumscriptions have set up a system of “taxation” where each member must contribute to the expenses of the circumscription. If this practice makes it possible to exercise real solidarity, certain pitfalls must be avoided.

First, paying a tax to the circumscription could support the idea that it is legitimate for a confrere to keep his or her income to himself or herself, which is completely contrary to SRL, which clearly states that “...gifts, salaries, pensions, grants, insurance benefits, mass stipends and every other income we may derive from our work - belongs to the Congregation” (Can. 668.3) (SRL 65). Such a system of “taxation” can cause serious damage to the life of the circumscription²³⁹. It introduces a difference between salaried confreres and others, between old and younger, between those who remain in the circumscription and those who live elsewhere. On the other hand, it could encourage confreres to refuse non-salaried services, in particular spiritual training and the management of the circumscription. This kills solidarity, and when internal solidarity is weak, solidarity with the Congregation follows the same path.

On the other hand, taxation must be studied so that everyone makes the same effort, according to the different economic contexts (for example, the possibilities are very different between a parish in a large city and one in a large area of rural villages, an area of old or recent evangelization, etc.).

8.3.4 BUDGETS

5.4.3 Budgeting (will be taken into account) by the circumscriptions and the General Administration, with particular attention to priorities.

The circumscriptions generally send their future budget to the General Bursar.

The General Administration carefully reviews each year the budgets of the General Council, the services and the functioning of the Generalate. This budget is submitted to the Financial Council of the Congregation, before being presented to the General Council for discussion and approval.

²³⁹ In some circumscriptions, a great part of the financial problems would be resolved if there was an effective sharing of income.

8.3.5 PROCURES AND RISK MANAGEMENT

5.4.4 An assessment (is to be made) based on local legislation of the risks involved in holding non-Spiritan accounts.

5.4.5 A move (is to be made) to eliminate non- Spiritan accounts in the short term.

Procures are in danger when funds deposited by third parties are used for another purpose and are no longer available for the eventual repayment of creditors. Otherwise, it is sometimes a valuable service to help those who do not have access to bank accounts. Procures have ceased their account management activities for non-Spiritans.

In some cases, the accounts could not be closed due to historical links, due to the difficulty of transferring large amounts of money from one country to another or the fact that in some countries it is impossible to open a bank account where deposits are secure. What we call “historical links” mainly concern dioceses or works that were once managed by Spiritans, and which have become autonomous.

In all cases, the risks of potential insolvency have been eliminated.

Concerning the Congregation’s portfolio, the situation is different: it is not a procure, but an investment fund, in which there are no depositors, but investors who clearly know the risks and accept them. Moreover, there remain very few non-Spiritan investors, all of whom are historically linked to the Spiritans (the Spiritan Sisters, 4 former Spiritan Dioceses and a *Foyer de Charité*).

At the General Bursar’s Office, there are about fifteen non-Spiritan accounts. These are for bishops for whom we sometimes pay a few small bills, obtain pontifical blessings or subscriptions. It also allows them to have some cash when they come to Rome. The amounts deposited are minimal, and do not involve any risk of insolvency for the General Administration.

8.3.6 REVENUE-GENERATING PROJECTS

5.4.6 (There will be) A periodic evaluation of our income generating projects.

Income generating projects have not been systematically identified.

This began in June 2019, as part of the establishment of the Central Development Office.

8.3.7 SOLIDARITY

8.3.7.1 PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION

5.5 The contribution for the General Administration is based on the number of confreres in each circumscription under the age of 75 and is the equivalent of two weeks average salary in the country.

The personal contribution was regularly paid by the circumscriptions, with rare exceptions. In some cases, the minimum wage applied seems very low. Some circumscriptions calculate their contribution on the basis of the number of members from the circumscription, but it is the number of members appointed to the circumscription that must be taken into account in the calculation.

8.3.7.2 COR UNUM

5.6 Cor Unum is the official channel of solidarity in the Congregation. Annually, 5% of the Cor Unum fund will be used for the formation of formators.

5.7 Communities and circumscriptions will include in their annual budgets a sum for solidarity. The funds collected will be used to build up the funds managed by the General Council.

Cor Unum is the main pillar of formation-support in the Congregation. The funds available are steadily decreasing, but the provinces that can do so are making great efforts to continue to contribute as much as possible to this solidarity, because they are aware that it is fundamental.

In 2016, the General Council reformulated certain criteria for the allocation of Cor Unum funds.

After the 5% of the total amount for the formation of formators was deducted, the general distribution defined by Maynooth (6.11) remained unchanged:

- Ordinary subsidies (for ordinary formation) 70%.
- Subsidies for construction (buildings for formation) 20%.
- Extraordinary aid 10%

Regular subsidies 70%:

Until 2016, the distribution was:

- Novitiate, 1st and 2nd cycles 85%
- Postulancy, mission placement 15%.

In 2016 it was set as follows:

- 1st and 2nd cycle 75%.
- Postulancy and novitiate 25%.

The Period of Missionary Experience has been removed from the list because it is paid for by the circumscription in which the placement is carried out.

Buildings (20%) :

Concerning the subsidies for the construction of formation houses, the General Council wanted to ensure the most efficient possible use of funds by specifying two options:

- Encourage construction projects rather than maintenance.
- Encourage Union projects, serving several circumscriptions.

For this purpose, obtaining subsidies was conditional on the sending of a precise and documented project, with a detailed financing plan.

Extraordinary aid (10%):

Extraordinary assistance is requested for the life of the circumscription without any further details. The General Council has decided to allocate it more strictly to formation, to help circumscriptions pay for student travel and language learning, two items that significantly increase costs, especially for circumscriptions that have to send all their students abroad, especially for the Period of Missionary Experience.

Distribution Method

The General Council tries every year to distribute aid in the most fair and equitable way possible. It tried different calculation methods, based on scientifically established economic indicators: Gross National Product per capita, Human Development Index (UNDP), Purchasing Power Parity Comparison, Average Wage Comparison (ILO), etc. No method was satisfactory because it did not correspond to the real situation in our circumscriptions. It turns out that reality is impossible to translate into mathematical

formulae. Our circumscriptions are infinitely diverse, because of their history, their seniority or their youth, because of the economic, political and security context of the country, the members who compose it, etc. In fact, the most objective criterion remains the knowledge that the General Councillors have of the circumscriptions for which they are the correspondents.

The method adopted was therefore as follows: about 85% of the amount available for formation was distributed mathematically, according to the number of students at each stage of training. The balance, i.e. about 15%, was distributed according to the particular difficulties of the circumscriptions, in order to balance the strict mathematical distribution.

Over the years, the General Council has become convinced that certain circumscriptions should have their subsidies reduced and gradually eliminated. At the beginning, Cor Unum was conceived as a means of ensuring solidarity for formation, with the aim of the circumscriptions becoming financially autonomous. With the foreseeable decrease in the resources devoted to solidarity, we will have to move towards a reduction in subsidies, favouring the most deprived circumscriptions. With the current system, we have arrived at a certain paradox: the poorest circumscriptions must limit their recruitment, thus limiting their development and growth, whilst the bigger and more solid circumscriptions can form more young personnel and thus develop.

8.3.7.3 FUND FOR APOSTOLIC PROJECTS

5.8 The fund for apostolic projects (Jubilee Fund) will be strengthened to allow financial support for new projects, for first evangelization and for fragile missions.

Circumscriptions regularly contribute to the fund for apostolic projects. These contributions are added annually to the basic capital that had been set up by extraordinary donations during Spiritan anniversaries (jubilee funds).

Initially, only the interest on the capital was distributed. As the interest rate is about 2% per year, this represents a sum of € 20,000 for a capital of € 1,000,000, which is very low. After consultation with the Congregation's Financial Council, the General Council decided that the annual interest and 80% of the contributions would be used to support circumscriptions, and 20% of the contributions would be added to the capital to ensure its steady growth. This allows the General Council to have more resources to help the circumscriptions.

The General Council established in 2015 the criteria and procedures to access this fund, which the Bagamoyo Chapter intended to support the confreres in their ministry of first evangelization and in fragile missions, where it is difficult to receive local or foreign financial assistance for the confreres' activities. This fund does not support development projects, but is intended for the subsistence of the confreres and their material needs.

Applications for grants from this fund must be submitted through the circumscription (or Union) correspondent to the General Council, with specific requirements regarding diversification of funding sources, local participation, budgets, reports and a strategy for achieving autonomy.

8.3.7.4 EMERGENCY FUND

5.9 An Emergency Fund will be established by inviting all circumscriptions to contribute from their reserve fund. The Emergency Fund will be available to the General Council to help financially needy circumscriptions.

During the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the General Council noted that it had no reserve funds for natural disasters or urgent needs that did not meet the criteria of Cor Unum or the fund for apostolic projects. Following this, Bagamoyo requested the creation of this fund to respond to specific cases.

The circumscription contributions are used in full for assistance in the event of natural disasters or special difficulties.

The contribution to this fund was an additional effort for many circumscriptions. For some, especially those with few resources, as the money available for solidarity is limited, what is given on one hand must be removed on the other... thus reducing other contributions. There is a limit to the multiplication of requests for solidarity.

8.3.7.5 KIBANDA MECHANISM

5.10 The mechanism of KIBANDA will be expanded to increase access to funds from outside the Congregation, and CESS will be developed with a view to greater equity in sharing among circumscriptions.

The creation of a Central Development Office responds to this request from Bagamoyo.

In 2017, an audit was undertaken by an external consultant, who met with the General Council, the directors of Kibanda (Brussels), IODO (Dublin) and SOMA (Houston), as well as the offices of other religious congregations active in the development field. Following his report and recommendations, Fr. Philippe Engel, former Director of Kibanda/CESS (Brussels), joined the General Administration and began the establishment of the Central Development Office.

8.3.7.6 PENSION FUNDS

5.11 Pension fund. This fund was created on an internal basis in the Congregation assuring a pension to all confreres over 65 years in countries which do not have a social security system. In order to ensure the financial equilibrium of this fund, the General Chapter proposes that at all Enlarged General Council meetings and at all General Chapters, the General Bursar will present an analysis of the financial state of this fund, and that the necessary corrections be made when required. Circumscriptions which begin to receive the pension funds of confreres over 65 years are requested to set up a local fund for the financial support of those who are old or ill.

The Spiritan pension fund has been in operation since 1995. It is based on the so-called “mutualist” principle: the contributions paid annually make it possible to pay an old-age pension for confreres who have reached the age of 65. It is therefore not subsidized from outside. With the evolution of the age structure in the Congregation, the contributions paid are not able to compensate for the pensions paid.

Currently, the annual membership fee is €75 per member. The annual retirement pension for confreres over 65 years of age is €1,500.

The circumscriptions of appointment are responsible for the payment of contributions at the request of the General Bursar's Office. Pensions are paid to the circumscriptions of origin, which are responsible for the care of elderly confreres. For the payment of contributions and pensions, it is essential that the database of the confreres' status in the General Administration is up to date. An urgent appeal was made to the circumscriptions to keep their membership records up to date and to communicate them regularly to the General Secretariat.

8.3.7.7 HEALTH INSURANCE

5.12 Health insurance. Torre d'Aguilha (7.7) envisaged that all confreres be covered by health insurance. Some circumscriptions have not yet complied with this orientation. This chapter requests that they do so, either through EMI or through a similar health scheme.

The circumscriptions have continued their efforts to affiliate their confreres to health insurance schemes. Many circumscriptions use the EMI, and the system works well, with coverage tailored to the needs and opportunities of each country.

A number of circumscriptions have been able to find nationally accessible insurance. 73% of confreres are insured, 16% are partially insured and 11% have no insurance.

8.3.7.8 GENERAL ARCHIVES

5.13 General Archives. The General Archives of the Congregation in Chevilly are the property of all the circumscriptions that have their records there. The Province of France offers this space free of charge. However, the upkeep of the building is the responsibility of all the circumscriptions.

As planned, the operating expenses of the General Archives were shared among all the circumscriptions, in proportion to the number of confreres in the circumscription. The province of France has never invoiced the Generalate for maintenance work.

In 2018, faced with the difficulty of finding a second confrere to work as an assistant in the archives, and in order to ensure continuity, a layperson was hired. As his salary and social security contributions amount to approximately €40,000, the General Council considered that this would be too heavy a burden for the circumscriptions to bear. This expenditure has therefore been included in the regular budget of the General Administration.

8.4 CONCLUSION

In the young Churches where we work, with our specific mission, we now find a place that has changed considerably since the origins of the mission. *“It is essential to start from a theological perspective of communion in order to fully understand openness to the universal Church and, at the same time, the need and commitment to collaborate with the local Church. When communion is not the foundation of all ecclesial relations, there is a risk of falling into a logic of mutual claims. It is therefore necessary to promote relationships based on the principle of communion, which is based on fraternity and doing things together.”*²⁴⁰

A professor of missiology said: “Even if one day the whole world is evangelized, there will always remain a specific role for missionaries, to remind us that in every community, every Church, there must be a place for the stranger”²⁴¹.

Our missionary life leads us to live in other cultures, to learn other relationships with God and others. In a world of travel and migration, our experience allows us to build links, to build bridges between cultures and religions, between people. If those with this experience don't do it, who will? Could this be the place of a new poverty and one of the new faces of mission?

²⁴⁰ Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Economy at the Service of Charism and Mission*, n° 30.

²⁴¹ Personal recollection of the author.

8.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Improve governance by optimizing relations between the Generalate and the circumscriptions.
- Ensure the transmission of information and procedures through a rigorous handover of service from superiors and bursars, as well as secretaries and archivists.
- Help local authorities to analyse management risks and implement good prevention practice.
- Pay particular attention to sending information and staff movements to the General Administration.
- Keep the activity of the General Administration in line with financial resources.
- Strengthen the General Bursar's office for better animation.
- Encourage circumscriptions to work with national conferences of religious men and women for the training of bursars, care of the elderly, insurance, etc.
- Promote and encourage:
 - The implementation of income-generating projects;
 - Building a network of friends, advisors and benefactors;
 - The construction of a network of NGOs and funding agencies;
 - The establishment of financial councils in circumscriptions that do not have them;
 - Maintenance and improvement of the real estate assets.
- To establish as standard the unwritten tradition of giving the General Administration 10% of the proceeds from the sale of buildings.
- Encourage circumscriptions to undertake actuarial and prospective studies to assess future needs, with particular emphasis on the care of elderly confreres.
- Clarify and regulate the practice of "taxation" of confreres by their circumscription of origin.
- Cor Unum: improve the distribution method by favouring the weakest circumscriptions and plan for a predictable decrease in aid.
- Coordinate the financing of projects in Unions and circumscriptions by the Central Development Office.

IX. STATISTICS OF THE CONGREGATION

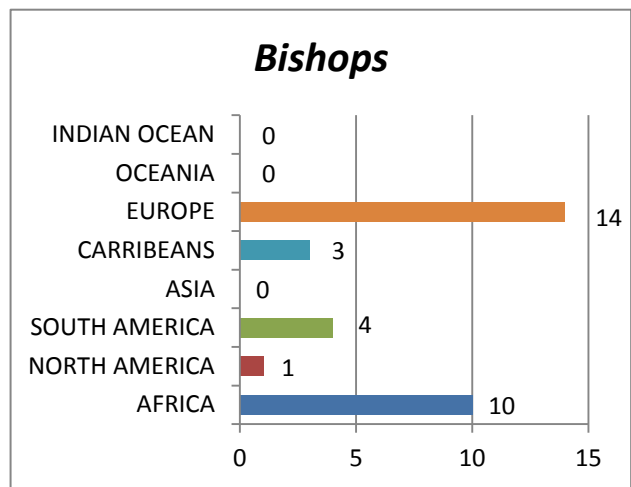
9.1 MEMBERS BY CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS OF ORIGIN

<i>AFRICA</i>		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
ALG	Algeria	0	0	0	0	0
ANG	Angola	3	71	1	30	105
PANO	Africa North-West	0	30	1	12	43
CAB	Cap-Verde	1	11	0	5	17
CAF	Central Africa	1	23	2	6	32
CAM	Cameroun	0	76	0	20	96
CBR	Congo Brazzaville	0	57	4	9	70
CKI	Congo Kinshasa	1	51	1	15	68
ETH	Ethiopia	0	1	0	2	3
GAM	Gambia	1	3	0	1	5
GGE	Gabon - Equatorial Guinea	0	16	2	15	33
GHA	Ghana + Benin	1	106	4	22	133
KEN	Kenya + South Sudan	0	41	0	34	75
MAL	Malawi	0	9	0	16	25
MOZ	Mozambique	0	0	0	0	0
NNE	Nigeria North-East	0	99	0	23	122
NNW	Nigeria North-West	0	39	0	21	60
NSE	Nigeria South-East	0	375	4	68	447
NSW	Nigeria South-West	0	17	0	20	37
SLN	Sierra Leone + Liberia	0	26	0	8	34
SOA	South Africa	0	1	0	0	1
TNZ	Tanzania	2	117	0	23	142
UGN	Uganda	0	19	0	26	45
ZAM	Zambia	0	11	0	10	21
ZIM	Zimbabwe	0	7	0	6	13
TOTAL		10	1206	19	392	1627
<i>NORTH AMERICA</i>		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
CAN	Canada	1	16	1	0	18
MEX	Mexico	0	5	0	1	6
TRC	TransCanada	0	14	0	0	14
USA	U.S.A.	0	49	1	1	51
TOTAL		1	84	2	2	89
<i>SOUTH AMERICA</i>		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
ALJ	Alto Juruá	0	0	0	0	0
AMA	Amazonia	0	0	0	0	0
BOL	Bolivia	0	0	0	0	0
BRA	Brazil	4	20	2	3	29
BRO	Brazil South-West	0	0	0	0	0
PGY	Paraguay	0	1	1	2	4
TOTAL		4	21	3	5	33

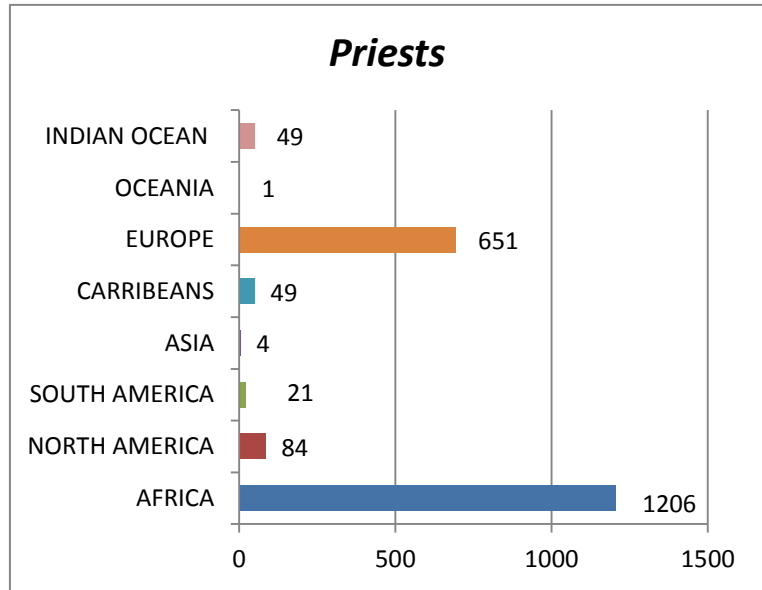
<i>ASIA</i>		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
PAK	Pakistan	0	0	0	0	0
PHL	Philippines	0	2	0	0	2
TVI	Taiwan - Vietnam - India	0	2	0	18	20
TOTAL		0	4	0	18	22
<i>CARIBBEANS</i>		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
GUA	Guadeloupe	0	0	0	0	0
GUY	Guyane	0	0	0	0	0
HAI	Haiti	0	25	0	7	32
MAR	Martinique	0	2	0	1	3
PRD	Puerto Rico - Dominican Republic	0	5	1	1	7
TRI	Trinidad	3	17	0	0	20
TOTAL		3	49	1	9	62
<i>EUROPE</i>		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
ADG	General Administration	0	0	0	0	0
BRI	Britain	0	20	0	0	20
CRO	Croatia	0	1	0	1	2
ESP	Spain	0	13	1	0	14
EUR	Europe	2	49	8	0	59
FRA	France	8	192	32	1	233
IRE	Ireland	4	180	6	1	191
NED	Netherlands	0	41	5	0	46
POL	Poland	0	47	5	2	54
POR	Portugal	1	85	9	0	95
SUI	Switzerland	0	23	1	0	24
TOTAL		14	651	67	5	737
<i>OCEANIA</i>		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
OCE	Oceania	0	1	0	0	1
TOTAL		0	1	0	0	1
<i>INDIAN OCEAN</i>		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
MAD	Madagascar	0	42	2	15	59
MAU	Mauritius	0	7	0	0	7
REU	Reunion	0	0	0	1	1
SEY	Seychelles	0	0	0	1	1
TOTAL		0	49	2	17	68
		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
TOTAL		32	2065	94	448	2639

	<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>AFRICA</i>	10	1206	19	392	1627
<i>NORTH AMERICA</i>	1	84	2	2	89
<i>SOUTH AMERICA</i>	4	21	3	5	33
<i>ASIA</i>	0	4	0	18	22
<i>CARRIBEANS</i>	3	49	1	9	62
<i>EUROPE</i>	14	651	67	5	737
<i>OCEANIA</i>	0	1	0	0	1
<i>INDIAN OCEAN</i>	0	49	2	17	68
TOTAL	32	2065	94	448	2639

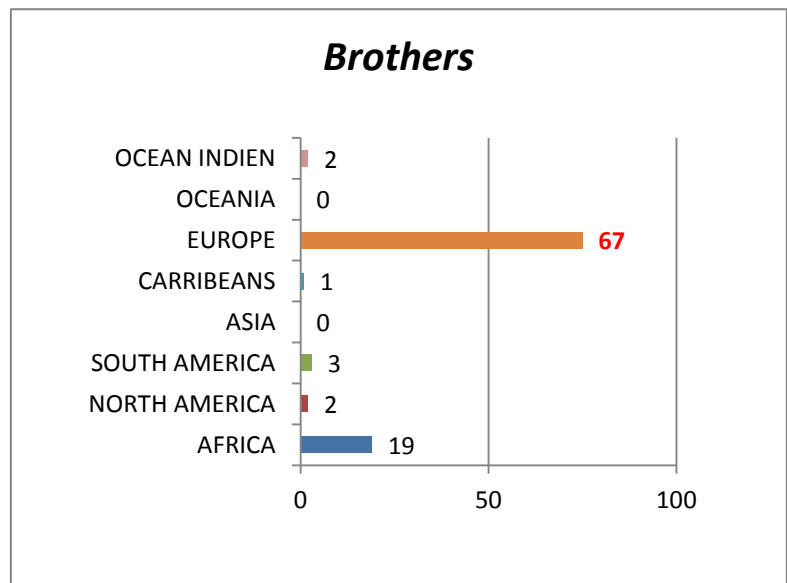
	<i>Bishops</i>
<i>AFRICA</i>	10
<i>NORTH AMERICA</i>	1
<i>SOUTH AMERICA</i>	4
<i>ASIA</i>	0
<i>CARRIBEANS</i>	3
<i>EUROPE</i>	14
<i>OCEANIA</i>	0
<i>INDIAN OCEAN</i>	0
TOTAL	32



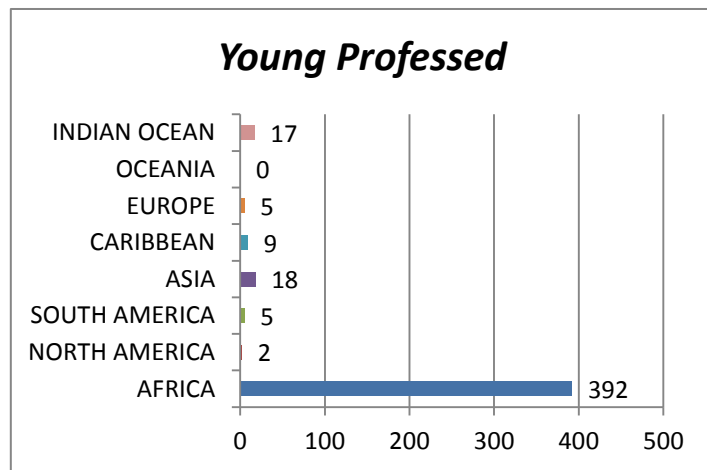
	<i>Priests</i>
<i>AFRICA</i>	1206
<i>NORTH AMERICA</i>	84
<i>SOUTH AMERICA</i>	21
<i>ASIA</i>	4
<i>CARRIBEANS</i>	49
<i>EUROPE</i>	651
<i>OCEANIA</i>	1
<i>INDIAN OCEAN</i>	49
TOTAL	2065



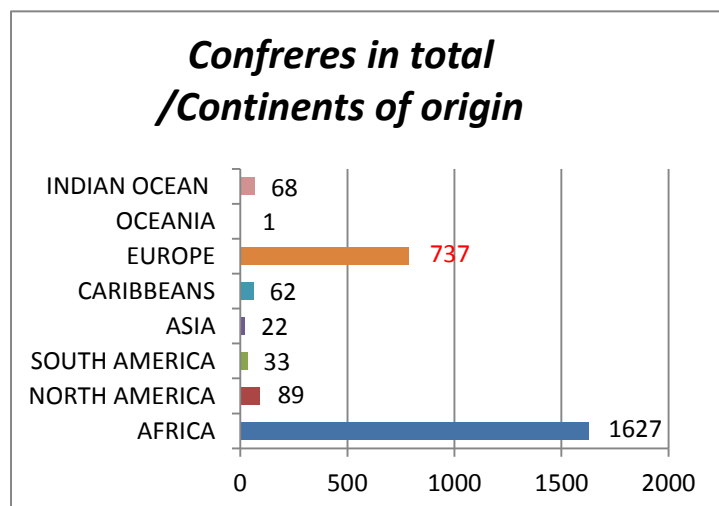
<i>Brothers</i>	
AFRICA	19
NORTH AMERICA	2
SOUTH AMERICA	3
ASIA	0
CARRIBEANS	1
EUROPE	67
OCEANIA	0
OCEAN INDIEN	2
TOTAL	94



Young Professed	
AFRICA	392
NORTH AMERICA	2
SOUTH AMERICA	5
ASIA	18
CARIBBEAN	9
EUROPE	5
OCEANIA	0
INDIAN OCEAN	17
TOTAL	448



	Total
AFRICA	1627
NORTH AMERICA	89
SOUTH AMERICA	33
ASIA	22
CARIBBEANS	62
EUROPE	737
OCEANIA	1
INDIAN OCEAN	68
TOTAL	2639



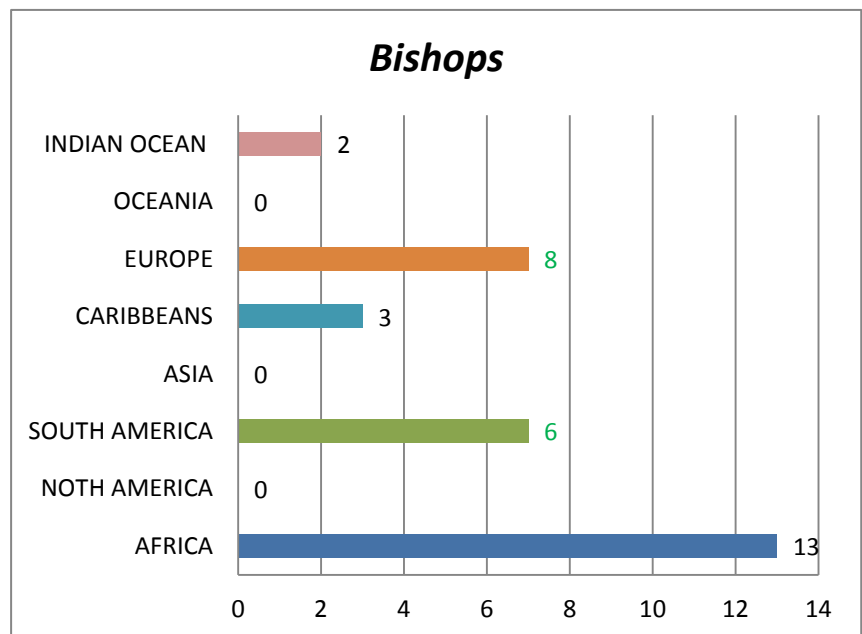
9.2 MEMBERS BY CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS OF APPOINTMENT

<i>AFRICA</i>		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y. Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
ALG	Algeria	0	4	1	0	5
ANG	Angola	3	69	2	30	104
PANO	Africa North-West	0	39	1	12	52
CAB	Cap-Verde	0	12	0	5	17
CAF	Central Africa	1	18	2	6	27
CAM	Cameroun	0	64	0	20	84
CBR	Congo Brazzaville	2	26	2	9	39
CKI	Congo Kinshasa	1	34	1	15	51
ETH	Ethiopia	0	9	0	2	11
GAM	Gambia	1	14	0	1	16
GGE	Gabon - Equatorial Guinea	2	39	3	15	59
GHA	Ghana + Benin	1	61	2	22	86
KEN	Kenya + South Sudan	0	47	0	34	81
MAL	Malawi	0	11	0	16	27
MOZ	Mozambique	0	11	0	0	11
NNE	Nigeria North-East	0	53	0	23	76
NNW	Nigeria North-West	0	32	1	21	54
NSE	Nigeria South-East	0	209	3	68	280
NSW	Nigeria South-West	0	47	0	20	67
SLN	Sierra Leone + Liberia	0	19	0	8	27
SOA	South Africa	0	15	0	0	15
TNZ	Tanzania	2	90	0	23	115
UGN	Uganda	0	16	0	26	42
ZAM	Zambia	0	17	0	10	27
ZIM	Zimbabwe	0	17	0	6	23
TOTAL		13	973	18	392	1396
NORTH AMERICA						
<i>NORTH AMERICA</i>		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y. Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
CAN	Canada	0	23	1	1	25
MEX	Mexique	0	16	0	0	16
TRC	TransCanada	0	21	0	0	21
USA	U.S.A.	0	73	1	1	75
TOTAL		0	133	2	2	137
SOUTH AMERICA						
<i>SOUTH AMERICA</i>		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y. Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
ALJ	Alto Juruá	0	7	1	0	8
AMA	Amazonia	2	12	0	0	14
BOL	Bolivia	0	5	0	0	5
BRA	Brazil	3	26	2	3	34
BRO	Brazil South-West	0	14	0	0	14
PGY	Paraguay	1	11	1	2	15
TOTAL		6	75	4	5	90

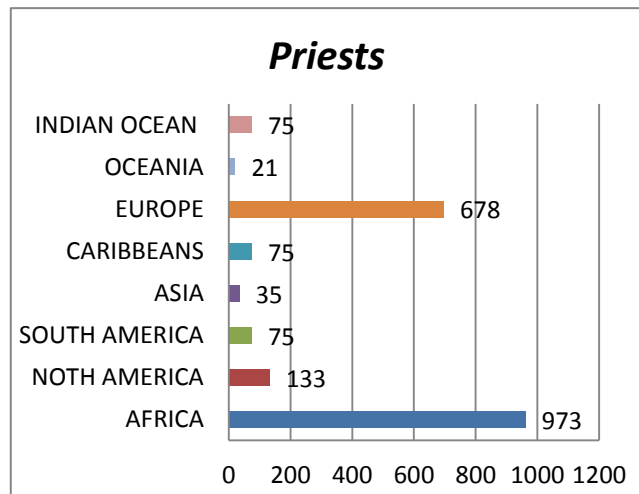
ASIA		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
PAK	Pakistan	0	5	1	0	6
PHL	Philippines	0	12	0	0	12
TVI	Taiwan - Vietnam - India	0	18	0	18	36
TOTAL		0	35	1	18	54
CARIBBEANS						
CARIBBEANS		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
GUA	Guadeloupe	0	8	0	0	8
GUY	Guyane	0	14	0	0	14
HAI	Haiti	0	18	0	7	25
MAR	Martinique	0	11	0	1	12
PRD	Puerto Rico - Dominican Republic	0	8	1	1	10
TRI	Trinidad	3	16	0	0	19
TOTAL		3	75	1	9	88
EUROPE						
EUROPE		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
ADG	General Administration	0	24	3	0	27
BRI	Britain	0	47	0	0	47
CRO	Croatia	0	8	0	1	9
ESP	Spain	0	21	1	0	22
EUR	Europe	2	77	8	0	87
FRA	France	3	195	32	2	232
IRE	Ireland	2	147	6	0	155
NED	Netherlands	0	45	5	0	50
POL	Poland	0	26	3	2	31
POR	Portugal	1	65	7	0	73
SUI	Switzerland	0	23	1	0	24
TOTAL		8	678	66	5	757
OCEANIA						
OCEANIA		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
OCE	Oceania	0	21	0	0	21
TOTAL		0	21	0	0	21
INDIAN OCEAN						
INDIAN OCEAN		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
MAD	Madagascar	0	26	1	15	42
MAU	Mauritius	1	19	0	0	20
REU	Reunion	0	17	0	1	18
SEY	Seychelles	1	13	1	1	16
TOTAL		2	75	2	17	96
		<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
TOTAL		32	2065	94	448	2639

	<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Y.Professed</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>AFRICA</i>	13	973	18	392	1396
<i>NORTH AMERICA</i>	0	133	2	2	137
<i>SOUTH AMERICA</i>	6	75	4	5	90
<i>ASIA</i>	0	35	1	18	54
<i>CARIBBEANS</i>	3	75	1	9	88
<i>EUROPE</i>	8	678	66	5	757
<i>OCEANIA</i>	0	21	0	0	21
<i>INDIAN OCEAN</i>	2	75	2	17	96
TOTAL	32	2065	94	448	2639

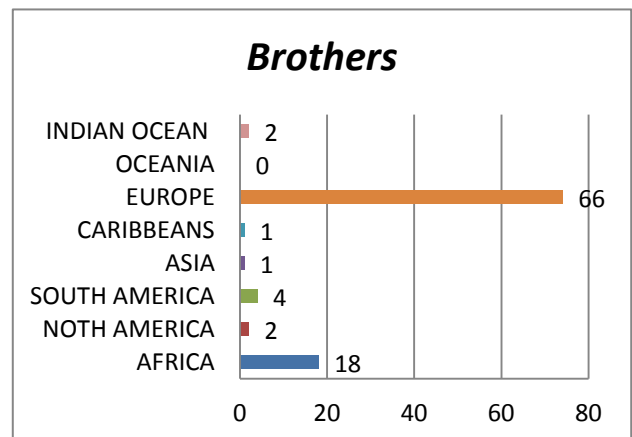
	<i>Bishops</i>
<i>AFRICA</i>	13
<i>NORTH AMERICA</i>	0
<i>SOUTH AMERICA</i>	6
<i>ASIA</i>	0
<i>CARIBBEANS</i>	3
<i>EUROPE</i>	8
<i>OCEANIA</i>	0
<i>INDIAN OCEAN</i>	2
TOTAL	32



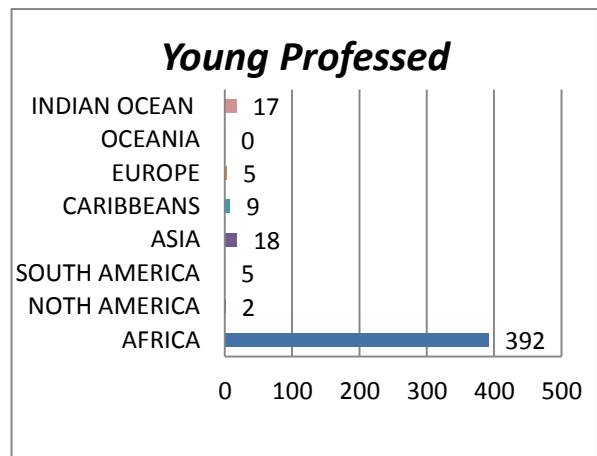
	<i>Priests</i>
AFRICA	973
NORTH AMERICA	133
SOUTH AMERICA	75
ASIA	35
CARIBBEANS	75
EUROPE	678
OCEANIA	21
INDIAN OCEAN	75
TOTAL	2065



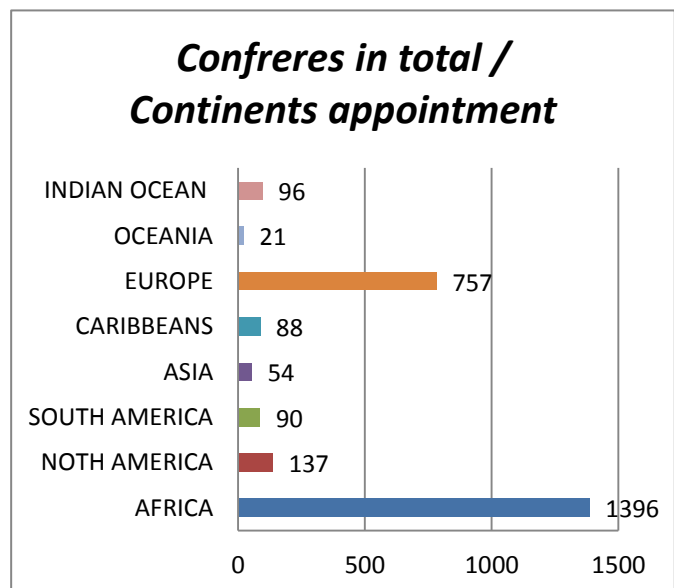
	<i>Brothers</i>
AFRICA	18
NORTH AMERICA	2
SOUTH AMERICA	4
ASIA	1
CARIBBEANS	1
EUROPE	66
OCEANIA	0
INDIAN OCEAN	2
TOTAL	94



	<i>Y.Professed</i>
AFRICA	392
NORTH AMERICA	2
SOUTH AMERICA	5
ASIA	18
CARIBBEANS	9
EUROPE	5
OCEANIA	0
INDIAN OCEAN	17
TOTAL	448



	<i>Confreres</i>
AFRICA	1396
NORTH AMERICA	137
SOUTH AMERICA	90
ASIA	54
CARIBBEANS	88
EUROPE	757
OCEANIA	21
INDIAN OCEAN	96
TOTAL	2639



9.3 EVOLUTION / OVERALL MEMBERSHIP BETWEEN 2011 AND 2019

Year	Number of professed		in the Congregation					Newly professed are	
	1 st Jan.	31 Dec.	Deceased	Left	First-Vows	Balance	Priests Ordination	Deceased	Left
2012	2851	2831	64	28	74	-18	49	0	22
2013	2831	2785	69	26	49	-46	52	0	22
2014	2785	2763	48	22	48	-22	41	1	18
2015	2763	2709	77	18	41	-54	42	0	10
2016	2709	2674	57	17	39	-35	47	1	10
2017	2674	2696	48	6	76	22	38	0	3
2018	2696	2736	42	5	87	40	42	1	4
2019	2736	2710	60	11	45	-26	34	0	2
2020	2710								
TOTAL			465	133	459	-139	345	3	91

Left			
<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Scholastics</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
40	2	91	133

Deceased				
<i>Bishops</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>Scholastics</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
5	416	41	3	465

Decrease			
<i>Period</i>	<i>Dead</i>	<i>Left</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
2012/2019	465	133	598
2003/2011	633	163	796

Increase		
<i>Period</i>	<i>P/Professions</i>	<i>Ordinations</i>
2012/2019	459	345
2003/2011	693	479

9.4 MISSION APPOINTMENTS & CHANGES 2012-2019

CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS BY CONTINENT	MISSION APPOINTMENTS		CHANGES OF MISSION APPTS	
	NO. OF APPOINTEES FROM	NO. OF APPOINTEES TO	NO. OF APPOINTEES CHANGED FROM	NO. OF APPOINTEES CHANGED TO
AFRICA				
Algeria		5	1	
Angola	12	14	1	
Cape Verde	3	3	1	
Central Africa	9	12	1	1
Cameroon	24	17		3
Congo Brazzaville	13	12		1
Congo Kinshasa	16	11	4	
Ethiopia	1	9	1	
Gambia		5		
Gabon-Equatorial Guinea	14	11	1	1
Ghana + Benin	42	18	2	4
Kenya	13	16		
Malawi	10	6		
Mozambique		5	2	
Nigeria NE	49	11	1	3
Nigeria NW	14	14		3
Nigeria SE	80	22	3	7
Nigeria SW	11	13		1
PANO	13	19	1	1
Sierra Leone + Liberia	13	9	1	
Southern Africa		7	1	
Tanzania	25	18		1
Uganda	14	9	1	
Zambia	6	10	2	
Zimbabwe	4	8		3
Total	386	284	18	29
ASIA				
India		1		
Pakistan		4		
Philippines	2	8		
Taiwan-Vietnam-India	9	9	2	
Total	11	22	2	
CARIBBEAN				
Guadeloupe		5	1	
Haiti	5	6		
Martinique	1	3		
Puerto Rico-Dom. Republic		5	1	1
Trinidad		1		
Total	6	20	2	1

EUROPE				
Administration General (Italy)		2		2
British Province		6		1
Croatia		2	3	1
España		5		
Europe	1	7	1	
France	3	7		
Ireland	1	5		
Nederland		8		
Poland	4	4		1
Portugal	4	2		2
Switzerland				
Total	13	48	4	7
INDIAN OCEAN				
Madagascar	23	9		1
Maurice		4		1
Reunion		4		
Seychelles		3		1
Total	23	20		3
NORTH AMERICA				
Canada		2		
Mexico		4	1	
TransCanada	1	1		
USA	1	1		
Total	2	8	1	
OCEANEA				
Total		9	3	
SOUTH AMERICA				
Alto Jurua		4	1	
Amazonia		5	1	
Bolivia		1		
Brasil Province	2	8		1
Brasil South-West		4	1	
Guyane		6		
Paraguay	1	6	3	1
Total	3	33	6	2
TOTAL		444	42	

9.5 MISSION APPOINTMENTS BY CONTINENT OF APPOINTMENT 2012-2019

Year	Afr	AmN	AmS	Asi	Car	Eur	Oin	Oce	total
2012	44		2	3	2	2	1		54
2013	28	2	3		1	6	1		41
2014	38	1	6	4	2	8	2	1	62
2015	39		5	4	3	7	5	3	66
2016	37	2	3		5	6	3	1	57
2017	38	1	5	3	4	6	4	1	62
2018	32	1	5	3		6	1	1	49
2019	28	1	4	5	3	7	3	2	53
TOTAL	284	8	33	22	20	48	20	9	444

9.6 MOVEMENT OF PERSONNEL (SELECTED SMALL CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS)

CIRCUMSCRIPTION	No. APPOINTED	PRESENT	AWAITING VISA	NEVER ARRIVED ²⁴²	LEFT WITHIN 6 YEARS ²⁴³	LEFT FOR HEALTH	LEFT OF OWN VOLITION ²⁴⁴	ASKED TO LEAVE ²⁴⁵
Algeria (2005) ²⁴⁶	9	2	1	4	1		1	2
Alto Juruá (2004)	10	5	1		4	1	2	1
Amazonia (1999)	18	4	3	1	5		6	1
Bolivia (2002)	12	5		1	4		1	4
Cabo Verde (2000)	9	3			2		3	
Croatia (2003)	10	7	1		3		1	1
Gambia (2000)	10	7			3		1	1
Guinea Bissau (2000)	10	4			2		2	
Malawi (2002)	15	5	2		2	1	4	
Mexico (1999)	24	13			?		5	5
Mauritania (2000)	5	2			3		3	
Mozambique (1998)	20	7		1	6		5	4
Oceania (2002)	15	6	2	2	3	1	1	3
Pakistan (2000)	16	4	1	3	2	1	4	
Paraguay (2000)	22	10	1	3	7		2	4
Philippines (1999)	20	11	1	2	?	1	?	3
Puerto Rico (2002)	13	6		2	4		4	
South Africa (1999)	22	10	0	2	7	1	2	
Taiwan-Vietnam-India (2006)	15	10	2	2	1		1	
Uganda (2000)	21	13	1	1	?	?	?	
Zambia (2000)	29	14	3		4?			2
Zimbabwe (1999)	28	12	3	3			4	2
TOTAL	353	160	22	27	63	6	52	33

²⁴² Mostly due to difficulties in obtaining a visa.

²⁴³ A significant number of others left on completion of their sixth year in the circumscription.

²⁴⁴ The reasons included personal difficulties, an inability to adapt to a different culture/style of Church, lack of community support, etc.

²⁴⁵ Confreres who were transferred back to their circumscription of origin because of serious personal difficulties

²⁴⁶ The date in brackets indicates the date from which the statistics are compiled.

9.7 LAY SPIRITAN ASSOCIATES

AFRICA			Lay
ALG	Algeria	<i>Gr.</i>	0
ANG	Angola	<i>Pr.</i>	0
ANO	Africa North-West	<i>Pr.</i>	0
CAB	Cap-Verde	<i>Gr.</i>	0
CAF	Central Africa	<i>Pr.</i>	0
CAM	Cameroun	<i>Pr.</i>	3
CBR	Congo Brazzaville	<i>Pr.</i>	0
CKI	Congo Kinshasa	<i>Pr.</i>	0
ETH	Ethiopia	<i>Gr.</i>	0
GAM	The Gambia	<i>Gr.</i>	0
GGE	Gabon - Equatorial Guinea	<i>Pr.</i>	0
GHA	Ghana + Benin	<i>Pr.</i>	0
KEN	Kenya + South Sudan	<i>Pr.</i>	3
MAL	Malawi	<i>Gr.</i>	0
MOZ	Mozambique	<i>Gr.</i>	0
NIG	Nigeria	<i>Disc.</i>	0
NNE	Nigeria North-East	<i>Pr.</i>	0
NNW	Nigeria North-West	<i>Pr.</i>	0
NSE	Nigeria South-East	<i>Pr.</i>	0
NSW	Nigeria South-West	<i>Pr.</i>	0
SLN	Sierra Leone + Liberia	<i>Pr.</i>	0
SOA	South Africa	<i>Gr.</i>	0
TNZ	Tanzania	<i>Pr.</i>	0
UGN	Uganda	<i>Gr.</i>	45
ZAM	Zambia	<i>Gr.</i>	0
ZIM	Zimbabwe	<i>Gr.</i>	0
Total			51
NORTH AMERICA			Lay
CAN	Canada	<i>Pr.</i>	6
MEX	Mexico	<i>Gr.</i>	0
TRC	Transcanada	<i>Pr.</i>	12
USA	U.S.A.	<i>Pr.</i>	25
Total			43
SOUTH AMERICA			Lay
ALJ	Alto Juruá	<i>Gr.</i>	0
AMA	Amazonia	<i>Gr.</i>	0
BOL	Bolivia	<i>Gr.</i>	0
BRA	Brazil	<i>Pr.</i>	6
BRO	Brasil South East	<i>Gr.</i>	3
PGY	Paraguay	<i>Gr.</i>	0
Total			9

ASIA			Lay
PAK	Pakistan	<i>Gr.</i>	0
PHL	Philippines	<i>Gr.</i>	0
TVI	Taiwan - Vietnam - India	<i>Pr.</i>	0
Total			0
CARIBBEAN			Lay
GUA	Guadeloupe	<i>Gr.</i>	0
GUY	Guyana	<i>Gr.</i>	0
HAI	Haiti	<i>Pr.</i>	0
MAR	Martinique	<i>Gr.</i>	0
PRD	Puerto Rico - Dominican Rep	<i>Gr.</i>	0
TRI	Trinidad	<i>Pr.</i>	0
Total			0
EUROPE			Lay
ADG	General Administration	<i>Ad.</i>	0
BEL	Belgium		1
BRI	British Province	<i>Pr.</i>	4
CRO	Croatia	<i>Gr.</i>	0
DLD	Germany		1
ESP	Spain	<i>Pr.</i>	6
EUR	Europe	<i>Pr.</i>	0
FRA	France	<i>Pr.</i>	19
IRE	Ireland	<i>Pr.</i>	16
NED	Netherlands	<i>Pr.</i>	2
POL	Poland	<i>Pr.</i>	0
POR	Portugal	<i>Pr.</i>	8
SUI	Switzerland	<i>Pr.</i>	0
Total			57
OCEANIA			Lay
OCE	Oceania	<i>Gr.</i>	1
Total			1
INDIAN OCEAN			Lay
MAD	Madagascar	<i>Pr.</i>	0
MAU	Mauritius	<i>Gr.</i>	19
REU	Reunion	<i>Gr.</i>	0
SEY	Seychelles	<i>Gr.</i>	0
Total			19
Total			180

Total Lay Spiritans Associates	
<i>AFRICA</i>	51
<i>NORTH AMERICA</i>	43
<i>SOUTH AMERICA</i>	9
<i>ASIA</i>	0
<i>CARIBBEAN</i>	0
<i>EUROPE</i>	57
<i>OCEANIA</i>	1
<i>INDIAN OCEAN</i>	19
TOTAL	180

