

MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere Loved!



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GENERAL BULLETIN

Dear brothers, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, formandi and members of the Chevalier Family,



As Missionaries of the Sacred Heart we celebrate some dates more intensely. The feast of the Sacred Heart is one of them. Because of the inheritance left by the founder, who saw in the Heart of Jesus the response to modern evil, the Feast of the Heart of Jesus invites us to a constant updating of our charism to continue to find in the Heart of Jesus, the response to the evils of today as well. Updating ourselves, we have the obligation to create new paths so that the Heart of Jesus may be loved today. In other words, we have the obligation to bring the Heart of God into this heartless world.

The article in this issue of our Bulletin, written by Diarmuid O'Murchu (MSC of the Province of Ireland), will help us to think about how to live the Spirituality of the Heart in this 21st century. We recommend that it be read in our communities

and shared with all as part of our Initial and Continuing Formation this month dedicated to the Sacred Heart.

In addition to news about the Accompaniments made by the Leadership Team in our Entities around the world, we have two major new developments happening at the level of our Congregation: 1) the new Office operating in the General House, which is Safeguarding Office and which is under the leadership of Tim Brennan; 2) and our communication platforms through Facebook Social Media and Instagram, launched now to improve our communication.

We wish you all a good Reading and a Happy Feast of the Sacred Heart. We ask you to be bearers of the Good News by sharing this Bulletin with all of the Chevalier Family of your Entity. We ask you to spread our Social Media so that we can be announcers of God's Love everywhere and in every way!

Humberto Henriques, MSC

SOW, EVEN IN LESS FERTILE GROUND: Good News from our Formation Houses in Europe

Much is being asked about the vocation situation in Europe. It is true that at this time, all the Congregations suffer from a lack of vocations and a reduction in the number of their members here on this continent. However, we cannot say that everything is unfinished or that we have no hope.

Proof of this are the young MSC candidates who, rowing against the current, seek meaning for their lives in religious life. They are young adults who, for the most part, already have a degree in other areas - such as chemistry, law, administration, etc. - and who have already had remarkable experiences in the world of work, as well as with affective relationships and have decided to attend to a voice that cries out within us: the voice of the Lord who calls.

In the month of March I had the opportunity to be with the candidates in Dublin as well as with those in Rome. In Dublin, where I spent a week, there is now a post-novitiate house of formation with three formands from three different Provinces. They are: Benjamin Houessou, born in Benin and a member of the Province of France; Giacomo Gelardi, born in Italy and a member of the Province of Ireland; and Jaime Rosique, born in Spain and a member of the Province of Spain. With the help of Joe McGee (formator), as well as two more MSC from the Province of Ireland (Diarmuid O'Murchu and Con O'Connell) who live with them, the House of Formation has a very simple and



familiar atmosphere, facilitating fraternity and mission.

In Rome, because we are neighbours, we are always in contact with those in formation in the Province of Italy. In the parish of Lungotevere, under the care of Fr. Armando Genovese, are the scholastics: Domenico Rosa, born in Italy, and Piotr Tomasz Zlobinski, born in Poland. And in the parish of Piazza Navona, under the care of Father Giuseppe Galiano, are

the pre-novices: Gianluca Pitzolu, Marco Cabras, Rosario Modica and Rosario Vitale (all Italians).

Apart from the above mentioned formands, with whom I have been in March, to talk with and accompany them, we also have Daniel Filipek, a scholastic from the Province of Austria who is in Nitra, and Francesco, another formand from the Province of Italy who is making his Novitiate in the Dominican Republic.

Yes, my brothers, although it is a less fertile ground at this time in history, different from the past where we had European missionaries spread all over the world, the Lord continues to call people from all over the world. I can testify to the joy with which our MSC candidates live their call and the desire to give themselves to the service of God's people in our Congregation. So we cannot give up being God's spokesperson. We must be vocation promoters at every time and place. If you, confrere, have any opportunity to be with teenagers, young people and adults, call them, invite them, talk about being MSC, but above all, be a living witness to the joy of being a consecrated religious.

Humberto Henriques, MSC

MISSION IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY—SEDOS

As a member of the Executive Committee of SEDOS, I attended the annual Residential Seminar on *Mission in a Pluralistic Society* held at Ariccia, 28 April to 2 May. Some outstanding speakers developed the theme and led about a hundred participants in reflection on *interfaith-dialogue*. The opening address was given by Sr. Veronica Openibo, SHCJ, the SEDOS President, who spoke poignantly at the Papal Meeting on "Protection of Minors in the Church" in February. Fr. Peter Baekelmans, CICM, SEDOS Executive Director and his team organised a wonderful seminar.

Sr. Kathleen McGarvey, OLA spoke of Mission as Interfaith Dialogue. President of the Federation of Jewish-Christian Friendship in Italy, Mr. Marco Morselli, teased out the primary importance for Jews of seeking *justice*, and the difficulty of dialogue with Christians who insist on *forgiveness*. A panel of younger religious spoke powerfully of how interreligious experiences changed their lives. Some stories were very raw and heart-wrenching. Mr. Cenap Mustafa Aydin, of the Institute of Jacques Maritain, spoke frankly on Freedom and Islam. Director of the Institute for Oriental Studies in Cairo, Egypt, Fr. Jean Druel, OP, offered insights into the levels of dialogue and truth and the frustrations which come as a result, such as when a symbolic gesture is made by leaders, but without dialogue on doctrinal, or emotional issues. A most humble sharing on charity and Buddhism, was given by Venerable Frank Dewaele, Founder of Zen Buddhist Sangha, in Gent, Belgium. Sr. Maria De Giorgi, MMX, continued the Buddhist reflection from her experience in Japan. Fr. Indunil J. Kodithuwakku, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue spoke on Christian Witness in a Pluralist World.

In recent years we have seen the rise of xenophobia – the fear of foreigners – and its exploitation for political gain. In the face of fear, dialogue is difficult. When Jesus and the Samaritan women dialogue, they transcend fear and in this their thirsts are met and attitudes changed. Dialogue leads to conversion; "the reorienting of a person's life more fully in the direction of God". It is not about a change of religious affiliation. Rather, dialogue takes us into the profound experience of human encounter, where we meet God so fully. A Christian icon of dialogue is the *Vesica Piscis*, the lens shape formed by the intersection of two circles, in such a way that the centre of each lies on the perimeter of the other. Jesus is dialogue - Word enfleshed. In dialogue there is a respectful overlapping of two circles, the other's and mine, without losing the integrity of either. Our circles overlap to the extent that distinctions between one and the other are transcended but not lost. There are no longer foreigners, just people we do not know yet. One loses one's need to defend. One hears the voice of love that transcends political or personal gain and one is enriched by diversity.

Perhaps the most inspiring dialogue of the seminar was an evening of Interfaith chanting from Islam, Buddhist and Christian choralists. If you have seen *Allahu Akbar, Adonai et Ave Maria chantés à l'unisson devant le roi Mohammed VI et le pape François*, you will have some sense of the beauty of what we heard (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPGPSOOQNw4>).



ACCOMPANIMENT TO UAF – FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN UNION

As we all know, UAF is an international, multi-ethnic and multicultural MSC entity: present in four countries: Congo Kinshasa, Cameroon, Senegal and Congo Brazzaville. There are about 100 MSC in the UAF (94 of them born in Africa). We already have some members in Temporary Vows from Burkina Faso.

As an MSC Entity of so much diversity and distance, it possesses a great human and cultural richness but at the same time has many challenges to face. Africa is a continent which, like the other continents, demands our respect. We need to take off our shoes before a land so sacred and so missionary as the countries that make up the UAF.

During my visit, carried out during the months of March and April, I was able to appreciate the great wealth of the UAF, that is, its Members: wonderful MSC confreres, engaged in so many different ministries, possessing a great youthfulness and missionary dreams. Their national characteristics make our confreres in Africa so very welcoming and joyful. I also met some Missionaries from Belgium, Austria and France who, pioneers of the mission, continue to be living witnesses to the mission in these missionary territories.

I had the opportunity to dialogue, both personally and in community, with all the members who live and work in the four countries that make up the UAF. I was able to feel and, through attentive listening to appreciate the life that emerges from the interior of each confrere in the three MSC Districts: Congo, Cameroon and Senegal. I thank God for the opportunity to contemplate and feel their struggles, problems, challenges, divisions, and the "temptations" which, in one way or another, they face with great courage. I was also able to listen to their dreams and hopes for the future: projects and goals to be reached in each of the Districts that comprise the UAF.

Both in Conference with all the members of the UAF and, above all, in the visits to the individual MSC missions, I came to appreciate the important moment that the FAU is living: a time of deepening, of planning, of re-visualization of our Missionary Spirit in the UAF. It is time to take a proactive look at the Mission in Africa, without underestimating the mission "AdGentes" that this Entity has been living so intensely. It is a time to "put out into the deep" of "put out into Africa" in order to be able, in the future, to continue collaborating in other "seas".



There is much beauty and richness in these lands that it would be impossible to describe in this report, but above all I want to emphasize the beauty, richness, intelligence, wisdom, commitment, that our confreres from Congo, Senegal, Cameroon, Brazaville, Burkina Faso showed me with their testimony of Life in all the missions. Certainly in the FAU we face some of the greatest missionary challenges in the Congregation. Thank you, dear confreres, for your courage in facing such difficult rural and urban missions in the complex socio-political situations in which you live.

I invite everyone in the Congregation to pray for our Confreres who are members of the UAF, for their different formation, parish, educational, university projects, etc., that there may be a new "Kairos" in the UAF.

Abzálon Alvarado, MSC



NEW MSC SAFEGUARDING OFFICE



Tim Brennan, msc has joined the MSC General Administration as the founding member of our new MSC Safeguarding Office.

Those of you who follow close the actions of Pope Francis will be aware that in 2019 he has taken a number of actions to make sure children and vulnerable adults are safe in our Catholic Church family.

He called at the Bishops Conferences of the world to a meeting in the Vatican in February. A first Safeguarding of Minors Policy was announced for Vatican City State. A second Motu Proprio in May about sexual abuse made it a legal obligation for all bishops, priests and religious to report any well-founded concerns regarding minors or vulnerable adults.

The General Administration takes its own obligations seriously. Fr Tim Brennan has an extensive background in these matters. He served a term as a Co-Chair of the National body of bishops and religious in Australia. And later served as the National Executive Officer for seven years.

This new office is there to help the MSC family at all levels to make the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults the highest of priorities.

Tim can be contacted at timmsc@msc.org.au

FORMATION AND COMMUNICATION - PROVINCE OF THE PHILIPPINES

I arrived in the Philippines on March 26 to accompany Initial Formation (processes, formators and those in formation) and for a meeting at the Communications Foundation for Asia (CFA).

Between visits, celebrations, conversations and meetings, there is always a break to eat something, since Filipinos are known for their 5 or 6 meals a day, all of which (or almost all) have rice as their main dish. I tried one of the most exotic foods: Balut, which consists of a duck's egg with the bird already in formation inside the egg. In the beginning it was a bit strange, but a delicious taste. In one of the houses I visited, I heard from one of our confreres that "cooking is a way of loving". I am convinced, by the amount of meals, that it is a place where one loves very much.

The Province of the Philippines has four stages of formation: 1) College - consisting of 4 years of Philosophical studies; 2) Postulancy - a stage of formation for "adult" vocations or for candidates who have already completed their graduation from high school; 3) Novitiate - two years of formation for the deepening of the Charism and Spirituality (currently the Novitiate in the Philippines has Filipino, Korean and Vietnamese formandi); 4) Scholasticate - six or seven years of formation consisting of studies in Theology, one Pastoral year and one year living in a community inserted in a very poor area of the Capital.

In the CFA, with Father Filoteo Pelingon, Father Edwin and Michael Angelo, I got to know the whole complex, the employees and the work carried out by them. The CFA is a centre of communication and aims to "serve God through the Media". After this meeting, we hope to be able to depend on the help of this Institution to improve communication throughout our Congregation.

FORMANDI IN PHILIPPINES



ACCOMPANIMENT TO THE CONFRERES OF THE SOUTH AFRICA REGION

On Saturday, May 11, Fr. Humberto and Fr. André left Rome in the afternoon to visit the confreres of the South African region. They arrived on Sunday morning at Johannesburg airport where the Regional Superior, Fr. Frank Gallagher, was waiting for them to take them to the Rigel Avenue regional house in Pretoria. Recently this large house was taken over by the

MSC and renovated because it had been seriously neglected by the tenants. Fr Vincent Sello and Fr. Julius Katjipa (Namibia) and some retired confreres (Bro. Roy Laferla, Frs. Joe Wilson and Martin Morrisey). Humberto lived with them for a few days until leaving on Thursday, May 16 because he was expected in Guatemala.

On Monday Humberto and André had the opportunity to visit the Major National Seminary where our pre-novices are studying philosophy. This seminary hosts 160 seminarians for the 7 years of formation. Our confrere Vincent Sello, in charge of the pre-novitiate, is also working there. Previously the pre-novitiate was established at Chevalier House in Midrand, but following the reduction in staff, the region decided to abandon the beautiful and large property and several parishes. A very difficult decision.

On Tuesday morning Fr. Celestin Beya (UAF-Cameroon) accompanied André to the province of Limpopo, site of the diocese of Tzaneen, in the north of the country where the MSC still have two main ministries One is Our Lady of Peace parish in Louis Trihardt (now Makhado) where Jonas Mokoena is pastor. André stayed in the MSC House across the street from the parish church. There is also a large and beautiful property across from the parish church which used to be used as a place of welcome for retreats etc., but which no longer has an MSC resident - unfortunately.



MEETING OF THE FIRST 5 YEARS (PROVINCE OF CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO)

"Set your troubled hearts at rest, and banish your fears" (Jn 14:27).



It was with great joy that the meeting of the young religious who are in the fifth year of their perpetual vows, took place. The meeting was held in Rio Dulce, in the department of Izabal in Guatemala.

We were privileged to have the presence of Father Jorge, msc (Mexico), because he is responsible for this group at the Provincial level. From the General Council, we were accompanied by Father Humberto Henriques (Brazil), who presented us with the

topics of formation. The participants of the meeting were: Brother Jairo msc, Deacon Irwin msc, Father Martin (Paco), all of them born in Nicaragua. Oscar Chó Maquín msc (Guatemala) and the newly ordained Father Miguel msc (Honduras) also participated. We also enjoyed the presence of Father Lucemir (Brazil) who had joyfully accepted to accompany us in this meeting.

From the 20th to the 24th of May the Young MSC of this Province reflected on their MSC vocation and on the tasks and works in the mission. It was important to return to the theme of self-care of our vocation and of our being MSC. The reflection helped us to understand that we are people who want to respond to God's call, that we come from different contexts with many resources and values. It was interesting to be aware that we share the 'life-style' [sistema] of a Congregation in which we can experience the presence of God that fructifies and broadens our commitment to building the Kingdom of God. The Eucharist that we celebrated each day strengthened our encounter. The moments of prayer reminded us of the need to be in constant communication with God.

This meeting made space for us to share our lives, to rest in order to regain strength and to consolidate the bonds of fraternity among all. Grateful to God and to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, we concluded this meeting and returned to our missions to continue proclaiming with our lives that God's love is alive and present among us.

Miguel Valadares, MSC



PEC MEETING

The Superiors of Europe met last March. Among the topics discussed was the preparation of an Assembly for all MSC's under the age of 60, who live in Europe, to find ways and means of moving forward with the mission.



MEETING OF EUROPEAN FORMATORS



The Annual Meeting of the MSC Formators of Europe took place from 23 to 25 April. The confreres of Valladolid received us with joy and hospitality for this meeting: Humberto Henriques (General Council); Fr. Joe Mc Gee (Formator in Dublin); Fr. Roberto Zambolin (for the Province of Italy); Fr. Norbert Rutschmann and Fr. Marko Stipetic (for the Province of South Germany and Austria); Fr. Raymond Lievre (for the Province of France).



*The Church of Christ
on Mission in the World*

EXTRAORDINARY MISSIONARY MONTH

Pope Francis has convoked the whole Church to celebrate EXTRAORDINARY MISSION MONTH next October. We invite all the members of our Chevalier Family to take advantage of this opportunity to announce the love of God through our charism in our works, communities, parishes, etc. It will also be a good opportunity to make a Vocation Promotion inviting teenagers, young people and adults to join us. Dare to love.



ARTICLE: Discerning our Spirituality of the Heart in the 21st. Century

BY DIARMUID O'MURCHU, MSC (IRISH PROVINCE)

“To be loved by Jesus enlarges our heart capacity. . . . When you have been included in the spaciousness of divine love, there is just no room for human punishment, vengeance, rash judgement, or calls for retribution. . . . it is more about waking up than cleaning up.”

This opening quote from the Franciscan spiritual theologian, Richard Rohr (*The Universal Christ*, 2018), provides the context for the reflections I offer on our MSC charism for the 21st century. It strikes me that we still face a major challenge in discerning the distinction between *Devotion to the Sacred Heart*, and *Spirituality of the Heart*. We like to hold on to both, and certainly I support the kind of theological and spiritual integration that would make that possible. My sense, however, is that two types of value-radiation are at stake, and one has stronger Biblical roots than the other.



The Devotion of Consolation

The devotional approach features strongly in those parts of our world where poverty, suffering, and oppression prevail, and people cry out to God for relief and deliverance. This often results in petitionary prayer, multiplying novenas and devotions, in the hope that we can convince or persuade God to come to our rescue. Such beseeching is often done within the joy filled atmosphere of festivals, fiesta, and processions. The euphoric atmosphere – at least temporarily – enables people to rise above the struggle and pain of daily existence. In some extreme cases, the devotions assume a martyr-like zeal, as in parts of the Philippines whereby people nail fellow humans to Crosses on Good Friday.

I don't wish to make light of such devotional practices because they are often what keep people going in the face of awful anguish and suffering, and they provide a kind of reassurance, comfort, and consolation without which life indeed would be unbearable. However, there are three foundational elements that need a deeper quality of discernment:

a) That suffering and hardship in this life will provide us with a greater chance of eternal happiness after death; that is not incarnational Christian theology.



In this empowering spirituality there is obviously a fine balance that requires a depth of both personal and communal discernment. The heart we draw our strength and guidance from is the heart of Jesus himself. This requires the interior journey of prayer and contemplation. This is the source of our wisdom and guidance. And from this wellspring comes the Gospel sending forth, not simply to preach and teach (the emphasis of the past) but to become the missionary catalysts to bring about what our former Superior General, Eugene Cuskelly, one time described as “A New Heart for New World.”

This is a mission we cannot undertake on our own. In the complex world of the 21st century it requires a concerted and collaborative strategy, incorporating a range of different skills and gifts:

- *systemic* (social/political);
- *legal* (as we try to confront the ravaging exploitation of modern globalization);
- *economic* (to engage the luring commercialization of today’s world);
- *media* (most values are perpetuated through media propaganda);
- *networking* with those several agencies which bring about change from the ground up.

Bringing heart to a heartless world - our mal modern – can only be achieved in a very limited way through our traditional clerical-based ministries. We need an enlarged and expanded sense of vocation. Perhaps more daunting, we need an openness and readiness to collaborate with a vast range of lay colleagues – in areas where we will be challenged to outgrow the old dualistic split between sacred v. secular. And many such collaborators will not be Catholic, perhaps not even Christian. Nor should that matter as long as their hearts are on fire with the liberating and empowering vision of the Kingdom of God.

A Heart on Fire!

As a Congregation, discerning our way through the 21st century, we acknowledge our past as a predominantly clerical inheritance, serving the mainline Church. If we are to undergo the grace of being refounded, we will need to undergo a transformative conversion. It is not so much a case of going back to the vision of Fr. Chevalier, but rather discerning the quality of response he would make if he were alive today. What fire of the heart would awaken his founding zeal today and how would he translate it into an empowering vision? In his own day he employed devotions in negotiating our original founding. My sense of the history of Religious Life suggests that he would employ a different strategy in our time, one which quite likely would embrace several features of the Spirituality of liberation as outlined in this article.

TRANSLATIONS AND CORRECTIONS (ENGLISH) — Tony Arthur, MSC
(Australia Province)