
"Let the holiness of God shine forth" (cf. Mt 5, 16)

item 289

Pope asks religious to look to new horizons

"A million dedicated souls is a powerful force for the future of humanity", said Cardinal Joao Braz de Aviz, in Rome on November 25, initiating discussions in the Plenary Session of the Congregation for Consecrated Life on the theme "*New Wine in New Wineskins.*"



A new self-understanding of the human person has called for a new understanding of committed life as well, whether it be in the secular world or in religious life. We have to evolve new approaches to human problems and set new goals to strive after.

The PLENARIA of the Congregation, November 25-30, was being held on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the documents 'Lumen Gentium' and 'Perfectae Caritatis'.

While trust in the surprising ways in which God acts in history was never absent, the Congregation sought to be extremely realistic in

the analysis of the actual situation prevailing among the religious of the world. More than 3,000 leave every year, aging members are unable to keep going with their institutions and even to look after themselves. Other issues are weakening communities hesitating to choose between preserving their identity and opting for merger with other communities with a similar charism, the generation gap between members accentuated also by cultural differences, the search for a new understanding of the feminine charism in religious life, and the struggle between life and faith in the hearts of all persons concerned.

Archbishop Jose Rodriguez Cabballo, secretary of the Congregation, lamented the auto-referential attitude of societies that were more concerned with survival and maintenance than reaching out to respond to new challenges. He referred not only to a fall in mystical fervour, but also low motivation in members and weak religious observance. He spoke of instances of a lack of transparency in administration and an eagerness in individuals for self-fulfilment rather than community achievement.

Despite these weaknesses, the member of the Congregation pointed out, one cannot not be blind to the determined efforts that various religious societies are making to address these limitations themselves,

whether they be in the area of religious observance, community life, simplification of structures, inter-cultural living, trans-cultural services, or apostolic daring.

Further, in response to the new 'signs of the times', new institutes are coming into existence, fresh forms of generosity are becoming visible in answer to new shapes of poverty; creative styles of response to apostolic needs are being developed. New themes of concern are brought to public attention. There is growing generosity. Symbolisms change but meanings and core loyalties remain.

There was a call for a spiritual awakening based on the Word of God, study of the original charism and Spirit-led discernment in diverse contexts.

Consecrated persons in secular life are showing how to bring the spark of the Gospel in various secular contexts. While economic inequality is growing and the figure of poverty and injustice itself keeps changing, initiatives are multiplying for reaching out to the last, least, lonely and the lost.

As the Gospel is being marginalized, a longing is growing in human hearts for its core message. As radical commitment becomes less and less visible in society, its heroic nature seems to exert a magnetic power on the venturesome.

The laity themselves keep urging religious to greater generosity, setting an example in various Ecclesial Movements and showing that a Christ-centred life is possible. A spiritual hunger is noticeable everywhere, even among religious who are drawn to an easier life or mere ideological answers to life's questions.

The Asian and African members spoke enthusiastically about growing number of vocations in their contexts and the great hope they had for the future. They called for greater optimism in all situations, the need to develop a holistic vision of the present trends, deeper discernment, and interpreting charisms in diverse cultural and historical contexts.

Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil was the sole bishop representative from India, along with the Superior General of the Pallottines, Fr Jacob Nampudakam.

Pope Francis received the Congregation in an audience on November 27. He called on the members to have the courage to put aside the 'old wineskins', i.e., outdated structures that give an illusion of security and cramp creative apostolic dynamism. He invited them to develop new ways of community living and new styles of service to humanity that correspond to the needs of those eager for the Gospel. While the Pope urged them to look in the direction of 'new horizons' and search for 'new paths' in apostolic ventures, he also exhorted them, quoting Ignatius of Loyola, to be garbed in 'poverty' as the best safeguard against worldliness.

The members of the PLENARIA took part in a Vigil in the Basilica of Maria Maggiore on November 29th evening, with thousands of religious praying for God's blessings for the **Year of Consecrated Life**. They pledged to take on courageously the new challenges that religious life faces in this fast secularising world and respond to its newly emerging needs.

The concluding Mass at St Peter's was an invitation to all consecrated persons in the Church to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.



report in **MATTERS INDIA** by

Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil SDB – Jowai – INDIA
09.12 14

the Pallottine story in Côte d'Ivoire

In the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine, the history of the church witnessed one of its greatest moments of harmony between politics and religion. It was a relationship which led to the spread of Christianity and the building of many beautiful places of worship.

A similar story happened in Africa when the President of Ivory Coast, Felix Houphouët, decided to build a basilica as an act of thanksgiving for years of peaceful democracy. This place of worship, dedicated appropriately to **Our Lady of Peace**, was completed in 1989 and then given as a gift to the Holy See. Following the basilica's consecration in 1990 by Pope John Paul II, this Marian sanctuary was entrusted to the Pallottines, specifically to the Christ the King province [Poland] in 1991.



With young people soon expressing their desire to join the congregation, the Pallottines felt the need to extend their presence in the country by opening additional missions. In 1996 a new parish was opened in Abidjan, in the diocese of Yopougon, followed in 2006 by another in Grand-Bereby, in the diocese of San Pedro.

The coming of our presence is a story of collaboration between the Polish mother province and existing Pallottine entities in Africa. Numbers of priests from Cameroon and Rwanda helped in building up what is today the **Delegature of Ivory Coast**. That collaboration has been maintained across the years and has found concrete expression in joint pastoral work and formation. It has instilled a spirit of belonging to a larger community, extending far beyond the frontiers of the country itself. At the moment, 13 confreres from Christ the King Province and the Holy Family Region [Cameroon-Nigeria] work together in two parishes, one Marian shrine, a postulancy and a theologate (at the moment under construction). In the past three years 5 priests have been ordained for the Delegature, the very first fruits of the mission in Côte d'Ivoire. 13 others are still in formation in postulancy (4), novitiate (2), philosophy (4) and theology (3).

Our main building project at present is the construction of a formation house of theology in Abidjan, designed to accommodate students from all the other Pallottine entities in Africa. Second to this is the construction of a house for postulants in the city of Yamoussoukro. A proposal to open further missions in

neighbouring countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso or Ghana is also under consideration. Right now the parishioners of Saint Sauveur Misericordieux [Abidjan] are building a much bigger church in order to accommodate more people.



This picture of the Pallottine presence in Côte d'Ivoire would be incomplete without mentioning the Union of Catholic Apostolate. After years of training and formation, a National Coordination Council, with three local councils, was constituted in 2012. The movement is growing slowly but steadily with at present 15 persons having made their Act of Apostolic Commitment and others in the process of joining.

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sac asia oceania e-bulletin

you commented...

- on #150** Thank you for sending it [E-BULLETIN] out so faithfully with such a broad range of people providing inspiration and challenges to my own commitment to living the Gospel. It is much appreciated.

AD 20.12.14

The reflections on Our Blessed Mother was a very spiritually nourishing article. The fact that it was written by a lay person makes it all the more edifying. I hope many more lay members will come forward to contribute to our bulletin.

JN 26.12.14
- on #151** it was life- giving to reflect on this week’s E-Bulletin article focusing on Mary’s yes and the many times I am called to a similar response – hopefully with the same acceptance (unfortunately that is not always the case). Many thanks for all who have written articles throughout the year, they provide much food for contemplation...

CS 24.12.14



THE BABY JESUS STARTS TEETHING.