

International Session on the pastoral of vocations

5 to 12 August 2007, Castelgandolfo



The general assembly in session.

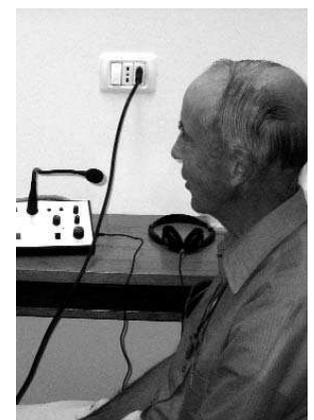
THE GENERAL COUNCIL took the initiative of organizing from 5 to 12 August 2007 a session assembling Brothers delegated by their Province or Sub-province on the theme of the pastoral of vocations. The objective was to respond to the recommendation of the last General Chapter: «an international Mennaisian meeting concerning the pastoral of the youth and of vocations is desirable and is left to the initiative of the General Council». But before preparing such a meeting, planned for 2009, the General Council desired to bring together the first actors of this pastoral. This session wished for a time of formation and preparation for the next international reunion.

The sixteen Brothers, representing all the sectors of the congregation, the members of the General Council, the Secretary General and the two brothers in charge of translations met in the evening of Sunday, August 5th in the recently renovated rooms of the Castelgandolfo building. A few final works remained to be done but the participants benefited of excellent boarding and work accommodations. The magnificent environment of the property and the generous sunshine of the season contributed to

create an excellent climate for exchanges and good humor! And Brother Mario Forino, in charge of the guesthouse, looked after all needs and worked tirelessly to meet the requests of the guests.

The session program aimed more at an exchange of experiences rather than at magisterial or theoretical interventions. Thus all was geared to favor mutual exchanges and common reflections.

. *To begin* with the sectors were invited to report their findings: each brother had received a questionnaire in order to prepare his intervention of 20 minutes. (How is the vocational pastoral organized in your sector? What difficulties and challenges are encountered? How are the lay persons implicated in this pastoral? What links exist with the parishes, the dioceses, etc?) As the presentations progressed, each brother was invited to note his reflections, the questions that arose and the salient points.



The two translators in English and Spanish did not relax during the session.

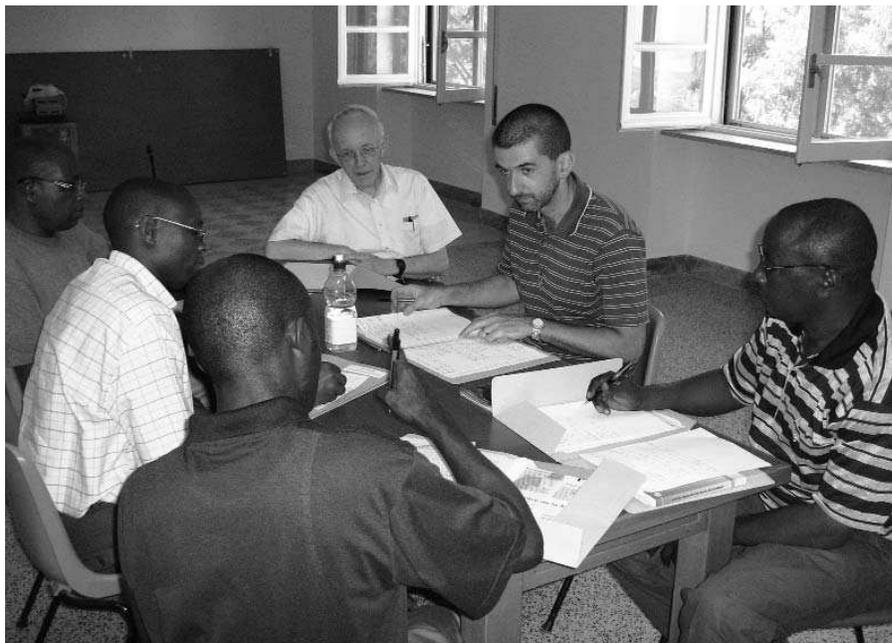
The above was then extended, by linguistic groups and an assembly, to complete this first moment of sharing which tried to highlight some significant elements for the congregation.

. *Secondly*, the work was organized around four themes presented by the members of the General Council. The first theme covered the pastoral of vocations, education along those lines and the pastoral of development. The second theme covered the general pastoral and the vocational pastoral. The third theme covered the vocational pastoral and the life of the communities. The fourth theme covered the vocational pastoral in the shared mission.

To study the themes the methodology alternated between magisterial presentations, time for personal reflection, exchanges in linguistic groups and the full assembly.

. *During the final day* a review of the work accomplished was made targeting the priority trends of development for the entire congregation. It was also the moment to formulate the concrete proposals in view of the organization of the coming international assembly (lay persons and brothers) on the topic of vocations.

Let us also highlight a proposal that the participants enjoy a day of common relaxation in order to favor a good rhythm of work. And for those who are visiting Rome for the first time, a visit of Rome imposes itself as an occasion to discover some of the best monuments and sites of the Eternal City.



One of the crossroads of the English language.

What is to be retained from this session?

It certainly did not have the pretension, as if by enchantment, of answering all the questions of the present vocation pastoral. It only wished to reiterate that the pastoral of the youth and of vocations is a central axis in the animation of the congregation. The letter of the Superior General «Called, the Path of Hope» addressed to the entire congregation and published at the end of this meeting indicates clearly the meaning of this move. «*Engage a new dynamism in the domain of the vocation pastoral, in the enthusiasm and the liberty that the Spirit gives.*»

On the other hand the orientations or the proposals, fruit of the exchange of ideas of the session participants do not constitute an action program for the congregation. Rather, they are a call to proceed with new vigor. It is up to each Province and Vice-Province to initiate pastoral plans adapted to the local situations. Nevertheless these recommenda-

tions offer some interesting paths and can inspire new initiatives in all the sectors of the congregation.

Finally the Brothers of the session have definitely emphasized that this meeting constitutes but a first stage of the process.

An International gathering on the vocation pastoral with the participation of brothers, lay persons and engaged youths is desirable. Also, gatherings on this same theme, by countries or by zones could be held depending on the possibilities of Provinces and Vice-provinces.

Finally, a modest but useful session could take place to encourage each brother to participate in the difficult work of the vocation pastoral and to invite all the sectors of the congregation to mobilize themselves in this urgent task for the future of our education mission and the evangelization of the children and youths.

Br Gildas Prigent