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"We can't row the canoe fast with one paddle"
(African proverb)

Coords-Link, March 31, 2009

Dear Fellow Coordinators,

I'm giving you a copy of the March letter to the Provincials, Regional and Mission Secretaries which of are a great interest to you too.

Africa and Madagascar News. In the month of March we were following closely the turn of events in Madagascar. The power struggle continued. The mayor of Antananarivo was dismissed by the president. But the latter was gradually losing control over the situation. His young rival was gaining grounds. The Churches tried to mediate but to no avail. In Zimbabwe the opposing parties finally came to agreement in forming a coalition government. Positive changes were already felt. Unfortunately the wife of the Prime Minister died in a car accident.

The Pope has visited Africa for the first time and landed in Cameroon on the 17th March. He handed the *Instrumentum Laboris* for the second special assembly of the synod of Bishops for Africa. In Angola the government and the Church were in full preparation for the visit of the Pope both as a head of state and as a pastor. In Congo the joint venture of the Congolese army and the Rwandan forces to neutralize the rebels in the East has triggered a political earthquake. The president of the Parliamentary Assembly has criticized openly the president of the country for lack of consultation. The consequences will be seen when the Assembly resume the sessions. In the Ivory Coast the first African Cup football tournament only for local players concluded with D. R. Congo as champion, Ghana as second, Zambia as third (all three in the SVD AFRAM Zone) and Senegal as fourth.

SVD AFRAM. In the SVD AFRAM Zone the Workshop for Mission Secretaries (MS) was held in Luanda, Angola. We are very grateful to the Provincial of Angola, Fr. Zeferino Zeca Martins and the confreres who gave their best for its success. The visa problem was resolved and the participants were accommodated in the Central House. The Meeting Hall was on the upper floor of the Provincialate very well suited for the Workshop. It's worth noting that all the participants were present from all the provinces (ANG, BOT, CNG, GHA, KEN and TOG), the region of MAD and the mission of MOZ. Almost all the MS except that of GHA and MOZ were newcomers. The reflection on the role and function of the MS was therefore much appreciated. While maintaining the action plan presented in the first area meeting in 2004 the MS have adopted four objectives for the years to come namely:

- *That SVD Mission Secretaries in AFRAM take a PROACTIVE role in spiritual ongoing formation of confreres.*
- *That SVD Mission Secretaries in AFRAM encourage and support every confrere in his role as PRIMARY Mission Animator.*
- *That SVD Mission Secretaries in AFRAM promote SVD-Lay Associations for mission partnership.*
- *That SVD Mission Secretaries in AFRAM explore new and creative ways of fundraising as ministry.*

Dear Fathers Provincial, Regional and Mission Superior I hope that in your next Council meeting you would invite the Mission Secretary to give you a more detailed report of the Workshop and come up with a decision on how to implement the propositions made by them in your level. Please be sure that the Mission Secretary would give a printed copy of the minutes of the Workshop to the Provincialate. To assure continuity Coordinators are encouraged to keep his files and give copies of his documents to the Provincialate for the archives. All documentations on the Mission Secretary Workshop are available in www.svdafram.org and www.svdcuria.org.

I hope we continue to enrich our Website.

Pope's visit. Since the coming of the Pope was very close to the Workshop we were invited by Fr. Provincial Zeferino to participate in it. A few days before he arrived we had the chance to visit the communities in Luanda, Kifangondo and the missions of Kakolo and Kakulama. In the past traveling a thousand kilometers would have taken weeks or months. Thanks to the new road we left in the morning and arrived in the evening of the same day (12 hours with stops). The Pope arrived on the 20th. We concelebrated with him during the Mass for the priests and religious on the 21st with around 900 people. On the 22nd we participated in the Mass for everybody and saw an ocean of people. It might not be exaggerated to say that there were more than one million people. The economic boom (though affected by the global crises) and the visit of the Pope have lifted up the hopes of the people. It's a big challenge for the Church to be present in this evolution. A good number of confreres were actively involved in the organization of the visit.

Final decision. The Workshop and the Meeting of the AFRAM Formation Board (AFB) will push through as planned this coming 8-13 June in Ghana. The Agenda is already set and all participants are receiving communications from Brother Guy Mazola, the Zonal Coordinator and Fr. John Asiedu, the host Coordinator. The points are so important that the Generalate has accepted the invitation to send the Generalate Secretary of Studies Fr. Thomas Malipurathu.

However the **Treasurers Meeting** has to be postponed for the reasons that were already mentioned. Thanks to those who gave their opinion all of which were in favor to hold it later. Please communicate the decision to your treasurers.

Still to be decided. We still are discerning concerning the Workshops for **Communication** and **Biblical Pastoral Ministry**. We are in close contact with the Area Coordinators Fr. Mirek Wolodko and Fr. Krystian Traczyk respectively. From the side of the host, Zimbabwe, Fr; Alex Thomas assured us that the situation has improved and that having the workshop there will not be a problem. The results of the Budget Approval from the Generalate could also strongly influence the final decision.

The Execom Meeting. There will be a meeting of the **Execom** from June 14-15 in Ghana : Fr. Thomas D'Mello, the president, Fr. Joseph Kallanchira, member and host of the next AFRAM Assembly and myself. If you have already some suggestions for the coming Zonal Assembly in 2010 please don't hesitate to send them to me.

Fraternally yours in the Divine Word,

P. Xene A. Sanchez, SVD
AZC