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

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Coords-Link, March 31, 2011

Dear Fellow Coordinators,

Last February 14-15, 2011 the Executive Committee met in the SVD Provincial House of Angola. All the members were present: Fr. Zeferino Zeca Martins the Chairman, Fr. Tadeusz Grenda the Vice-Chairman and Fr. Xene Sanchez the Zonal Coordinator. With our common accord Bro. Guy Mazola was invited to the meeting particularly because an important point in the agenda, i.e., the Feasibility study for the Common Formation Center (CFC) in Angola, needed his advice. And since many points were also dealing with Formation we asked him to be present in the other sessions. Here are the points dealt with and our deliberations:

- 1. The distribution of CFC and ESP Candidates.** The Execom has made the distribution affirming practically all the propositions made by the Provincials/Regional of the sending provinces namely ANG, CNG, GHA, KEN, MAD and TOG. There were 26 Formandi: 4 theologians and 3 brothers go to CFC Kinshasa-CNG, 1 brother to Nairobi-KEN, 7 theologians and 1 brother to Tamale-GHA, 2 theologians to ESP, 3 theologians to USC, 2 theologians to GER and 2 theologians to PHC. We note that our three CFCs will be full in the next academic year. Already this year we would have 9 excess students had we not arranged to send them to host countries outside of AFRAM.
- 2. Feasibility Study for CFC-Luanda.** Fr. Provincial Zeferino Zeca Martins has presented a text translated in English entitled: *"Field Study for the Common Formation Program in Angola"* We studied the text and revised it after our discussions and our visits "in loco" to the Catholic University of Angola and the actual Propaedeutics House in Viana. He touched all the points raised during the Afram Formation Board (AFB) Meeting in Kinshasa of June 2010. Br. Guy Mazola took notes and was asked to make the final text *"Feasibility Study for the Common Formation Program in Angola"*. Here are the important points treated in the deliberations:
  - a. Lieu for studies.** Plans are made to send our future students to the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Luanda (abbreviated UCAN in Portuguese). It is affiliated to the Catholic University of Portugal which assures graduates to enter other universities. Theology students from other countries can be integrated without problems to the five year program of the UCAN which combines philosophy and theology. The quality of professors is assured. The tuition fee however is 250 USD per month! Hopefully the Association of Major Religious Superiors can negotiate for a lower fee.
  - b. Lieu of residence.** After assessing several possibilities our attention was focused on the Viana Seminary. At present it is the home of the Propaedeutics seminarians which means secondary school students. The Provincial Council is planning to phase out gradually this formation program and replace it with a one year Propaedeutics program for secondary school graduates. This is the Propaedeutics program which corresponds to AFRAM standard formation program. Viana has a very big space to accommodate both communities if we locate there the CFC House. It has an easy access to the UCAN. We have to tackle however two major problems. First, the level of the ground is low and needs costly refilling. Second, the old buildings are cracking thus we need to build new buildings for CFC-Luanda. Where can we get the money?
  - c. Personnel.** The Execom and the Area Coordinator were able to point out six concrete names of confreres who could work as formators. Some already have qualified degrees while others could be sent for studies or formation of formators.

- d. **Visa.** This once major problem is resolved by the new government policies on entry and permanent visas. There are now 7 types of visas including the student visa. The latter is to be renewed yearly until end of studies. There are already lay non Angolan African students who have this visa and study in different university centers and institutions.
- e. **Language.** The province already has the experience of preparing a language learning program for new missionaries. The results are good.

As we can see the Angolan province has answered the questions of the AFB point by point meaning that it is willing and is capable of having a CFC. Planning for the realization of the project may last for three to four years from now. The big challenges to face are the agreement of the tuition fees, the elevation of the grounds of Viana Seminary and the building of the infrastructure. Could funding be found in the province? Can help be expected from the Generalate?

3. **The AFB Recommendations.** The Afram Board Meeting which took place in Kinshasa last June 13-19, 2010 has made 11 recommendations. The Execom examined them in detail and approved all of them with a modification of the 7<sup>th</sup> Recommendation. The revised text (see underlined words) runs like this:

*“This meeting emphasizes that the final approval of formandi for ESP is done ultimately (instead of the word “solely”) by the AFRAM executive committee. Provincials from the sending provinces and the AFRAM coordinator for formation act as advisory body.”*

The intention of the text is to coordinate the sending of candidates by the provincials through the Area Coordinator for Formation and the Execom.

4. **Workshop preparations.** This year there will be two sets of simultaneous workshops. In Nairobi the JPIC and Mission Animation Workshops will be held in July and in Antananarivo the Communications and BPM Workshops will be held in September. We are happy that preparations are on the way.

- **JPIC Workshop.** The Zonal Coordinator had the opportunity to meet the Area Coordinator for JPIC and made a draft of the agenda. The Execom agreed to invite Fr. Zeferino Zeca Martins to give a talk on the JPIC and Mission Animation in the Synod of Bishops for Africa and Madagascar where he was active participant. The Generalate JPIC Coordinator Milan Bubák also proposed his predecessor Fr. Herman Wijtten to talk about Africa-Europe Faith and Justice Network where he was one of the founders. The draft of the agenda is in attached file. Please send a copy to your coordinators.
- **MA Workshop.** The Zonal Coordinator also had meetings with the ANG Coordinator for Mission Animation. Together they made the draft composed of the propositions sent by the Generalate Coordinator for MA, the Area Coordinator from GHA and the Coordinators of KEN, TOG and BOT. We appreciate the rich interaction of Coordinators in the preparation process. The draft of the agenda is in attached file. Please send a copy to your coordinators.
- **COMM Workshop.** The Area Coordinator for Communications is in contact with the Generalate Coordinator and has already laid down the canvass of the Workshop. He has presented a Working Paper for the Coordinators to reflect on. There will be reporting of activities and presentation of actual materials. The Generalate Coordinator will talk about Communication Policy in the Society of the Divine Word. Questions will be raised on how collaboration with other dimensions can be concretized and what the Coordinators can contribute to the General Chapter in 2012. Since the Workshop is still far we have not yet made a detailed schema.
- **BPM Workshop.** The Area Coordinator is soliciting from the BPM Coordinators their propositions. Two important documents have come out recently very relevant or capital to BPM. The Pope has published the Exhortation *Verbum Domini* after the Synod of Bishops on the Word of God. The Biblical Center of Africa and Madagascar (BICAM) has organized a workshop and came out with recommendations. We are still waiting for the reactions of the BPM Provincial Coordinators.

5. **Visits.** Included in the agenda prepared by the Chairman of the Execom were the visits to our SVD communities and missions. Our bishop of Caxito, Mons. Antonio Jaca came himself to fetch us and showed us the present and the future bishop's House. We were very happy to meet our young people in Formation in the Propaedeutics in Viana, in the Philosophy House in Palanca and in the Novitiate who were doing their 30 days retreat in the Poor Clare's Convent. The ANG Province is already running three stages of formation! We visited our Missions in Tomboco and its beautiful secondary school, our Mission in N'Zeto and the lot where a big school will be built. On the way we passed by the Pilgrim

Center of Kifangondo, the Parish and the renovated Novitiate House. Finally we went to the South and came to Sendi. All in all we have travelled around 2400 kilometers! We thank our hosts for all the precious time to show us the vast Angola Province. The urgent need for personnel all the more call for the fourth AFRAM CFC which gives the possibility for our younger missionaries to opt to work in the Portuguese speaking region of Africa.

Fr. Xene A. Sanchez, SVD

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## REFLECTION . . .

A very important point in the meeting was to study the possibility of creating another CFC in Luanda. The trend of having vocations continues to go up so we need more space.

Moreover in Angola the people speak Portuguese. If we continue to expand our mission in Africa we need confreres who speak Portuguese which is spoken in Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe. It is

interesting to note that there are eight countries in the world which consider Portuguese as official language of more than 200 million people!



## SPECIAL REQUEST . . . .

Dear Fellow Coordinators,

For April UPDATE I want to highlight some news about our provinces, region and missions! If you have interesting information please share it with us. A very few lines will do!

Fraternally yours in the Divine Word,

P. Xene A. Sanchez, SVD

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