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

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Dear Fellow Coordinators,

Greetings from the AFRAM Zone! I share with you the important points that were brought up during the meeting of the Generalate together with the four Zonal Coordinators. While some of the topics concern more the Major Superiors the discussion on the Zonal Area Meetings concern particularly the Area Coordinators.

Big challenge to face. The month of June is very significant for the AFRAM Zone as well as for the whole Society. On the first day of the month we began the new triennium of the new leadership administration. It is interesting to note that in terms of personnel our Zone consists only of 10% of the SVD International. We have six provinces, one region and three missions working in 14 countries out of 54 countries of Africa (26 %). And if we look at the map we notice that we are still completely absent in North Africa. Furthermore, I was struck to read that 25 % of the habitable surface of the world is in Africa. With our water still non-polluted and nature less exploited we can imagine that direction of emigration might one day turn to our side. With all these, we realize that the AFRAM Zone has a big challenge to face.

Meeting with the Generalate. Last June 16-17 the Generalate met with the four Zonal Coordinators. I have given you a copy of the AFRAM Zonal 2011 Report in May UPDATE. The PANAM ZC Gary Riebe-Estrella has been succeeded by Alberto Klein, from Argentina working in Colombia. The ASPAC ZC William (Bill) Burt will finish his term this October. I would like to share with you some points treated during the meeting.

- **Feed-back/Evaluation of General Visitations.** As you remember the Visitations started in AFRAM in 2006. It ended in ASPAC in 2011. The echoes were very positive. The letters addressed to the Zones show that our provinces, in their diversity, share many things in common. AFRAM has succeeded in having a Zonal Vision-Mission statement.
- **Zonal Statutes.** Emmanuel Fianu, the General Secretary is preparing the publication of the Statutes of AFRAM, ASPAC, EUROPE and PANAM. Just to recall, our Zone was born in 1990. The drafting of our Statutes was finished and approved in Nairobi, 1996; ratified in Luanda in 2003; amended in Kinshasa in 2007 on the function of the Executive Committee and in Togo in 2010 on the succession of its Chairman.
- **17th General Chapter.** A report on the first International Preparatory committee was given by its head, the Generalate Admonitor Bob Kisala. He informed us of the second preparatory commission who will meet near the end of January 2012. God willing the General Chapter will be held in June 2012. Fr. General himself, Antonio Pernia gave us an overview on the electoral process for the next General Council.
- **Interpretive Summary.** Fr. General has sent a circular letter to all Provinces, Regions and Mission to respond to the "Interpretive Summary" of the Provincial reports made by the First Preparatory Commission. It was proposed that there should also be reflections on the Zonal level to be submitted before the Second Preparatory Committee meeting. Could it be possible to hold a meeting of Provincials before January 2012? It might be very expensive to meet just for this. It was suggested that the discussion be done through emails or other means of communication.

- **Yellow Book.** All the provinces, regions and missions have already submitted the articles for the SVD Mission 2012. The Generalate Mission Secretary Pio Estepa underlined that the so-called “Yellow Book” (because of its color) is intended first of all to the Capitulars, i.e., the participants of the General Chapter. It was conceived to spare the Capitulars from listening to the readings of all the reports during the General Chapter! On the other hand they are expected to read the Yellow Book beforehand.
- **Policy on Sexual Abuse of Minors.** The General Council decided to revise the G4 section of the Handbook for Superiors concerning cases of child abuse. A commission of three was formed at the Generalate for an initial revision headed by Bob Kisala. Afterwards Mark Weber (USC) was invited to Rome to help draft the new policy. Other experts in the field of Canon Law and sexual abuse of minors were consulted before the final text was approved by the General Council on 14th June 2011.
- **Zonal Overview.** The Zonal Coordinators are asked to write three pages of an overview of the whole Zone. The composition of the text should have been preceded by a common reflection of the Zonal Assembly. Since it is not possible to do so it was suggested that all provincials, regional and Mission Superiors read already the reports of AFRAM and draw out the common elements or features that they perceive. In due time I will give you the reports with more detailed guidelines on how to do it. Reading the reports of others is one way of bonding with the confreres working in the same Zone.
- **Zonal Area Meetings.** The evaluation of the Zonal Area Meetings (Workshop) has provoked a lively discussion. We all know the big amount of money spent for these. Are they worthwhile? Unfortunately some Workshops were not well prepared and others ended without an action plan or without any report to the Generalate. A recommendation was passed giving the Execom the responsibility to cancel Area Workshops if there was no agenda presented three months before the event. Area Coordinators are therefore exhorted to incite their members to participate actively in the preparations of the Workshop. The Provincials, Regional and Mission Superiors can help a lot in the implementation of the action plan.
- **Invitation.** The Generalate has taken into serious consideration the foundation of a new mission in the Diocese of Yei in the new country of South Sudan. The bishop is asking for help since he has only 12 priests in his diocese. The area is very poor and the SVD could not expect financial support from the local church. On the other hand our SSpS sisters are already working there with much enthusiasm. Fr. General will organize an exploratory trip and leave to the new General Administration the final decision.

Workshop for New Provincials. On June 19 the Workshop for New Provincials began by the celebration of the Holy Eucharist presided by Fr. General himself. There were 28 new major superiors (20 Provincials, 5 Regionals and 3 Mission Superiors). What touched the participants was the presence of the whole Generalate. From the AFRAM Zone we have Provincial Willibrord Kamion (CNG), Provincial Peter Accorley (TOG), Regional Siby Jnarackal (MAD), Mission Superiors Tadeusz Grenda (ZIM), Paul Nadolny (MOZ) and Achille Mpila (TCD). In the July-August issue of the Arnoldus Nota there is a rich and interesting report of the Workshop. We wish our New Provincials a fruitful ministry.

AFRAM Formators Formation. The Formators’ Course has started in Nsawam, Ghana last June 12 under the direction of Fr. John Asiedu, SVD. The planning took place already a year ago and the whole program is for one month. There are 16 participants, 5 from Ghana, 3 from Congo, 3 from Kenya, 2 from Angola, 1 from Togo, 1 from Zambia and 1 from Zimbabwe. We pray that this course bear much fruit. More news about it next month.

Fraternally yours in the Divine Word,

P. Xene A. Sanchez, SVD
AZC