

## **AFRAM FORMATORS' WORKSHOP**



**Lusaka, Zambia (July 27 – August 1, 2008)**

Formators from all over the AFRAM Zone came together for a workshop on “The Impact of Secularization on the Religious Life in Africa and the Different Models of Formation” in Lusaka Zambia. The venue of the workshop was the formation house of the Franciscans (Fрати Minori) in suburban Lusaka. The other two members of the Franciscan family, viz. the Capuchins and the Conventuals too have their formation houses in the same large campus, just a stone’s throw away from each other. They jointly run the Bonaventure College of Philosophy. This is the only example anywhere in the world, they told us, of such a venture in which all three families collaborate!

Twenty confreres participated in the workshop, including Xene Sanches (CNG), AFRAM Zonal Coordinator, Shiju Paul Puthenpurackal (BOT), host Provincial, and Thomas Malipurathu, Generalate Secretary for Formation and Education. Br. Guy Mazola (CNG), Area Coordinator for Formation, was the chief organizer. He was locally assisted by Omir Oliveira and Albertus Babu.

Gabriel Afagbegee from the Lumko Institute engaged the group for the first two days. His presentation on the general social background of the present day Africa, with special emphasis on the way secularization is impacting its culture and value systems was insightful and informative. It was indeed a good starting point for further discussions and reflections on the challenges facing the area of religious-priestly formation in this fast-changing continent. On the third day, Fr. Gotthard Grosner, a former Superior General of the Missionaries of Africa (and presently Provincial Superior of their Zambia province) spoke to the group about the different models of formation and the specific formation needs of Africa. During the following two days, Joy Panamthanam (GHA) helped the group to apply the information received from the inputs of the two resource persons to the specific formation situations obtaining in our provinces/region/missions. These insights were then taken to groups which discussed concrete ways to augment the “basic human formation” component of our formation programmes at various levels. Eventually the participants put together

a few specific suggestions to be submitted to the Provincials of the Zone.

The local host, Omir Oliveira, with the help of Br. Albertus Babu, did a marvellous job in attending to the nitty-gritty of organizing the workshop, ensuring a pleasant stay for the participants of the workshop. The formators showed a high level motivation in participating actively in the various processes of the workshop. There was in evidence a remarkable atmosphere of sharing and mutual support throughout the days of the workshop.