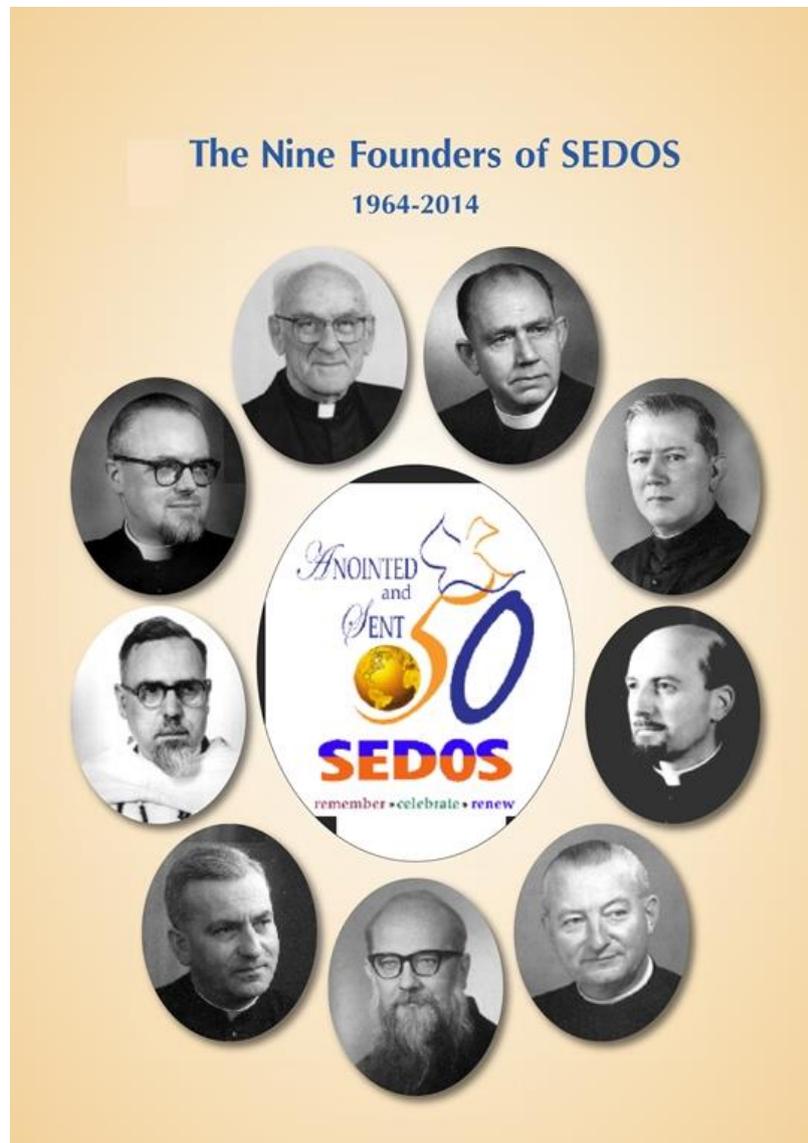


50 Years in Mission

SEDOS: A Timely and Prophetic Initiative.



Sister NZENZILI Lucie MBOMA, FMM

Introduction

The celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council offers a wonderful opportunity to reassess the overwhelming positive impact of the inspirational documents and the prophetic voices of Vatican II. The said impact continues to shape the life and the mission of the Church today. The Conciliar Decree *Ad Gentes*, Vatican II, defined and put emphasis on the missionary nature of the Church; this new concept of mission was a significant paradigm shift in the understanding of mission.

Pope John XXIII taught us how to listen to the world, and how to be receptive both to the world and to the Spirit through continual reading of the signs of the times. The reading of the signs of the times is an effective tool because the challenges emerging from the global megatrends transform the mission situation of today. In fact, we are living in a multi-cultural, multi-religious community and the twofold purpose is, on one side, to show how SEDOS has creatively fostered the dialogical dynamic ushered in by the Nine Superiors General, Council Fathers and the Founding members of SEDOS. Their clarion call to an ongoing inter-congregational dialogue continues to resound in the ears of the SEDOS member Institutes and Congregations. And also, to demonstrate that the structures set up by the nine Founders are still relevant and meet needs of the Church's missionary action today.

We especially want to honour their spirit of creativity, their intelligence, the originality and breadth of their vision to devise a plan capable of breaking the mould of individualism and the triumphalist attitude often prevalent in our missionary Congregations. They invited us to be open to new ways of contemplating the Incarnation of Jesus, the One who invites us to continue his mission with the same attitudes as his and to stimulate the interconnectedness so necessary to missionary cooperation in our globalized world.

The SEDOS Residential Seminar 2014 provided the occasion to gauge the significance of what Mircea Eliade, a well-known historian of religions, wrote: "All traditional religions believe that the world and humankind inevitably grow chaotic as they age through historical time. But they can always be renewed. All that is needed is for a faithful community to gather and recall its creation myth – re-enacted by way of ritual – at the sacred place of its origin as a people".¹

The logo for the celebration of the SEDOS Golden Jubilee encapsulates the main assertion of Mircea Eliade and we experienced it during the Seminar 2014. We came together to **Remember, Celebrate and Renew our Vision**. We highlighted the close relationship that exists between the Conciliar Decree *Ad Gentes* and the Nine Founders of SEDOS who were among the architects who successfully carried out the mission entrusted to the Commission to conceive and elaborate the said Magna Carta of the Missionary Activity of the Church: *Ad Gentes*. Their debates actually took place at the Centro *Ad Gentes*, in NEMI (Rome), a wonderful site conducive to prayer and deep reflection. We believe that the idea to launch a structure to support their vision germinated in NEMI which their unflagging interest gradually brought to realization

¹ Quoted by Fr. Pio ESTEPA, S.V.D. "

and they finally founded, on their own initiative, an Intercongregational Union committed to ongoing dialogue and reflection on the global mission of the Church. Thus, SEDOS as was born.

We explore the meaning of the symbol of "SANKOFA" (bird) to express the essence of the journey we undertook as SEDOS Members:



The word "SANKOFA" comes from West African wisdom (Akan people of Ghana) and loosely translates as "reaching back in order to move forward". Or "return and get it". Symbolizes the importance of learning from the past (*cf.* Internet).

"We look back to our origins and ask: what have we achieved at all since then? Our first modest answer is: our questions through the years –more than our answers– have kept us *inter-congregationally* faithful and creative to our common mission charism. We next look forward and ask ourselves: whither SEDOS henceforth? Let us renew our trusting openness to the Holy Spirit who will surely spur and lead us onwards –if only we keep on asking, searching and knocking *together as mission partners*".²

As an inter-congregational union we modestly realized that we have been faithfully carrying out, for the past fifty years, the prophetic initiative of the Founders who let themselves be guided by the Holy Spirit; and in this period of the history of the Church, we feel that we are called to become more and more "Spirit-filled evangelisers who pray and work; who develop the ability to cultivate an interior space which can give a Christian meaning to our missionary commitments and activities".³ "SEDOS was inspired by the Holy Spirit and was born to help missionaries to find again their proper place in the new historical world situation and in the Church, while keeping faith with their original charisma and yet in touch with the new era."⁴

Sister Maria Pilar BENAVENTE Serrano, MSOLA, underscored the importance and the relevance of SEDOS for us today saying that the context of the mission at the time of Vatican II and today's context are very different. To describe the massive shifts that have taken place, BAUMMANN uses the metaphor of what is liquid, fluid, transitory by contrast with what, before, was experienced as durable, solid and permanent. Each congregation strives for finding ways to answer faithfully and creatively to God's mission in this uncertain context while adjusting its structures to the important changes regarding its financial and human resources. In any case, we can say that, each time, there is a double concern: the why leading to the what: meaning expressed in action and what leading to the how: action decided in wisdom.

² Pio ESTEPA, SVD. "Review of SEDOS Seminars 1990-2014". The SEDOS Residential Seminar 2014: "Sent by the God of Surprises New Ways of Being Missionary".

³ *cf.* Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 262.

⁴ Francesco PIERLI, MCCJ, former President of SEDOS, 1988 – 1991.

However is not enough to do it at congregational level. We need to do it at intercongregational level too, as well as with other organizations with which we share values and purpose. We believe SEDOS would have a role to play in all this.⁵

At the end of the Seminar 2014, participants unanimously affirmed that SEDOS, born during the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, is needed now more than ever.

Therefore the Executive Committee, in order to carry on the founding Fathers' vision in today's context, has undertaken the initiative to re-evaluate the functioning of the structures of SEDOS so as to build a dynamic future, retaining the initial freshness and the enthusiasm the Second Vatican Council gave them.

On the 25th Anniversary of SEDOS, Fr. William JENKINSON CSSp, and Sister Helene O'SULLIVAN, MM, edited and published the paperback on: "Trends in Mission toward the Third Millennium". On our 50th Anniversary, we wish to make the Founders of SEDOS and their vision more widely known. Beyond just a chronicle of events and activities, this jubilee publication aims to highlight how the foundational vision of the founders has evolved through the years and has widened the missionary horizon of the present generation of members. Inspired by this ever dynamic vision, we hope to celebrate the impact SEDOS had made on its member congregations towards a courageous and creative response to the challenges of today's globalized world.

We are grateful to the archivists of the nine congregations for sending a vivid short biography of each one.

The presentation has four short Chapters

Introduction

- I. The Early Years, 1964-1967: *The Genesis of SEDOS*
- II. The Architects of the "Aggiornamento": *The Nine Founders of SEDOS*
- III. SEDOS Through the Years: *Three Perspectives*
 - A. Mrs. Ilaria IADELUCA, *Secretary of SEDOS, since 2000*
 - B. Sister Celine KOKKAT, JMJ, *Librarian and In-Charge of the Documentation Center*
 - C. Miss Philippa Wooldridge, *A Long-time SEDOS Proof-reader*
- IV. Fifty Years of SEDOS: *Blazing Prophetic and Contextualized Missionary Paths*

Conclusion

⁵ Sister Maria Pilar BENAVENTE Serrano, MSOLA. Former President of SEDOS 2009-2011. "The Mission and the Future of SEDOS Some Thoughts on its 50th Anniversary." At The SEDOS Residential Seminar 2014.

Chapter I: The Early Years of SEDOS: 1964 – 1967: the Genesis of SEDOS

The celebration of fiftieth year of the foundation of SEDOS, 1964 -2014, is for us an opportune time to reckon the past and retrace the path trod by the Founders as we move onward to a renewed Vision and a hope-filled Future.

Thanks to the Society of the Missionaries of Africa, SEDOS has now, at hand, the first pages of the evaluation that drew to a close the first two exploratory years of SEDOS. Commissioned by the then SEDOS President, Fr. SCHÜTTE, Superior General of the Society of the Divine Word Missionaries, this Evaluation Report launched SEDOS on the second phase of its journey with a defined future-oriented plan of action.

Providentially, these pages cover a short history of SEDOS which gives us an insight into its humble but prophetic beginning!

As early as the Second Session of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, the nine future SEDOS Founders were inspired to embark jointly on a practical project. On hindsight, theirs was an anticipated response to Pope Paul VI's insightful definition, at the Final Session of the Council, of Pope John XXIII's pivotal watchword:

“From now on *aggiornamento* will signify for us a widely undertaken quest for a deeper understanding of the spirit of the Council and the faithful application of the norms it has happily and prayerfully provided”.⁶

The sixteen Vatican II documents focused on and clarified the desired two-fold renewal of all the “inner” and “outer” dimensions of the Church. John XXIII envisioned primarily a profound inner transformation of the Church, not so much a change in her external structure. This call to renewal demanded a spirit of cooperation which prompted the would-be SEDOS' Founders to widen their circle of partnership.

In the beginning, in Rome, there was FERES – the *Federation of Socio-Religious Research Institutes*. Set up in 1958, its function was to coordinate and consolidate the efforts of Centers to incorporate the social sciences in the works of the Church. The first Secretary General of FERES was Fr Linus GROND, OFM, a farsighted and genuine Franciscan. He worked with Fr. François HOUTART and with a group of FERES men. In time, Fr. Grond realized that Religious Superiors, like Bishops, could also benefit from such a service as being offered by FERES.

In time, this insight was to give birth to SEDOS in the context of three specific intentions, three goals:

1. To pool ideas and forces in a common effort, given that there are some objectives of the religious Institutes that can only be achieved by the various Institutes joining forces. Though always an ideal, this active cooperation has seldom been spelled out in practical terms.

⁶ James H. KROEGER, MM. Exploring the Treasures of Vatican II. Claretian Publications and Jesuit Publications; Philippines, 2011, p. 8.

2. To apply social sciences to help answer the various needs of their Institutes, especially the need to work in common, as referred to above.
3. To "try out SEDOS" given the originality of the above two intentions and their uncertain outcome. The Report concludes this section by stating: "It was only natural for the Fathers General to adopt the 'wait and see' attitude and, consequently, to be hesitant about committing themselves wholeheartedly to SEDOS".

These intentions impelled the Superiors General to give a concrete and creative response to the initiatives of FERES. Informal meetings began in 1963, intensified in 1964, and culminated in a formal meeting in June at the White Fathers' Generalate. A Report by Fr. HOUTART, who succeeded Fr Linus GROND as the Secretary General of FERES, was discussed and a private Study Group was formed.

Later, in September 1964, the Permanent Secretariat of this private Study Group was established. The services of two sociologists and a Secretary were engaged. Rev. Rosario SCARPATI was appointed as part-time Director with Miss Joan OVERBOSS (USA) as his Senior Executive Secretary. Miss ITALA MANNIAS (Italy) was employed as Secretary. This Secretariat was named "SEDOS" (Servizio di Documentazione e Studi [Missionari]). Eventually, the overall organization set up by the Superior Generals' Study Group became SEDOS. The Founders defined the framework of the whole organization.

On 1 October 1964, the first General Assembly of the Superiors General, held at the White Fathers' Generalate, confirmed the following service roles: Fr. Léo Volker, The superior General of the White Fathers, as the first President of the Group; Fr. MONDÉ, SMA, Vice-President and Fr. FERREE, SM, Treasurer.

By the end of June 1965, the General Assembly, in eight meetings, had drafted the Statutes and regulations of the Study Group and formulated the basic policy — the most radical aspect of which was the decision to coordinate the common missionary efforts of the member Institutes.

Structurally, the first year saw the emergence of the Technical Council defined by the SEDOS the Statutes as follows:

"The Technical Council composed of constituent members, selected by the General Assembly, because of their knowledge, may include some personalities, religious, ecclesiastical or secular, not even missionaries, whose cooperation is required because of their expertise in the specific area of interest to the Service program. The Technical Council assists the Director in his various tasks, especially liaison with the religious institutes concerned. It is convened by the Director of the Department with the approval of the President".

In fact the Technical Council soon developed into a group of highly competent men who spelled out in operational terms the policies adopted by the General Assembly and who prepared the way for the new policy decisions by the latter.

Subsequently, the Technical Council developed into a group of highly competent men who formulated, in operational terms, the policies adopted by the General Assembly.

It is worth noting that from its creation up to 30 June 1966, the Technical Council convened for a meeting thirteen times!

Two significant developments marked the second year of SEDOS. First, the Technical Council has become an effective and vital link between the Superiors General, their members, and the Permanent Secretariat. A small but closely functioning group, it offered an invaluable service to the common missionary effort and, in the process, to their respective Institutes and to the Church.

Second, this year also saw the emergence of the Working Groups. As the Technical Council spelled out the technicalities of its various projects, it soon became evident that more specialized organs were necessary. And so, in 1966, a Working Group was formed to direct each programme. One or more of its members belonged to the Technical Council, with others recruited from the various Institutes.

By the beginning of June 1966, the structures of SEDOS have been clearly defined:

The General Assembly: composed of the Superiors General of the Member Institutes (or their delegates), meets five times a year to define policy, make decisions and, in general, assume responsibility for the running of SEDOS.

The Permanent Secretariat: acts as the coordinator and technical organizer for the General Assembly, the Technical Council and the Working Groups. It also provides them with the basic office facilities and secretarial services.

The Technical Council: made up of representatives of each Institute (appointed by the respective Superiors General), meets at six-week intervals to activate the policies and implement the decisions of the General Assembly and, in general, to assume responsibility for the technical and operational side of SEDOS.

A number of **Working Groups**, each consisting of a member of the Technical Council and others who were selected for their competence, were formed to take on the responsibility for the management of the various programmes. They had recourse to panels of advisers and experts for the solution of specific problems. (It is said that, at the end of June 1966, the following groups were active:.) By the end of June 1966, the following groups have been activated:

- Group A – To manage the Census operation
- Group B – To manage the Interview programme
- Group D – To set up and run the documentation department.

These structures would subsequently evolve through the years.

Over the first two years, 1964 – 1966, SEDOS developed and actualized a communication system with a two-fold function. First, the system facilitated sharing of information among the Member Institutes and within each Institute. Second, it served as an instrument of common planning and, ultimately, of good management by the various Institutes for the common apostolic action of the Church.

In June 1966, the Founders defined and finalized the role of the official Study Group. In February 1966, Reverend Benjamin TONNA (from Malta) was appointed Director replacing Rev. R. SCARPATI who resigned in late 1965 in view of his research mission in Venezuela.

As mentioned earlier, the year 1966 marked the end of the exploratory phase. In 1967 Fr. Johann SCHÜTTE, Superior General of the Society of the Divine Word Missionaries succeeded Fr. Volker who completed his mandate as Superior General of the White Fathers. As the President of SEDOS, Fr. SCHÜTTE initiated the evaluation of SEDOS. He also opened the door of their guest house (situated on the grounds of the Divine Word College) and offered to accommodate the Permanent Secretariat of SEDOS in the spacious offices of the first and second floors.

The generous gesture of the Divine Word Missionaries has been of immense help to SEDOS. It has contributed to the effectivity of the services rendered to the Congregation Members. Moreover, the assurance of a permanent residence has given SEDOS a deeply appreciated sense of stability. We will always remain grateful for the quality collaboration with the Society of the Divine Word Missionaries that SEDOS has been gifted with all these years.

The growth of SEDOS through the years has been encouraging. From 9 men religious missionary congregations at its foundation in 1964, membership rose to 72 men and women congregations on its 25th year in 1989. This year, on our Golden Jubilee, SEDOS is graced with an international membership of 58 women and 40 men congregations, a grand total of 96 member congregations!

The Secretary General of the Union of Superiors General (USG: men) and the one of the International Union of the superiors General (UISG: women) have always been an unflinching support for the SEDOS' Executive Director. On many occasions, they have involved the SEDOS Board in the different events organized by different Pontifical Commissions or Pontifical Councils.

From its inception, SEDOS had a clear-cut prophetic role: to update and empower member Institutes to implement, in a concrete and creative way, the vision and aim of the Council, set into motion by John XXIII and brought to completion by Pope Paul VI.

Pope John XXIII wished the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council "to be an opportunity for a spiritual renewal and reinvigoration of the Church that would make it more faithful to Christ's will; and for an updating (*aggiornamento*) of its pastoral attitudes, habits, and institutions to make them more effective in the changed conditions of the modern world. If these two goals could be achieved, the Council would also greatly promote the restoration of unity among Christians".

Through the years, the Executive Committee has been graced by the support and special services of the Rectors and the General Procurators of the Divine Word College. Their presence among us in the Executive Committee has always been a blessing and a joy!

Briefly, we have recounted the birth and growth of SEDOS. Indeed, it can be said that on its 50th year, SEDOS has come full circle. Past Presidents, Directors, Secretaries, and all the men and women who have served SEDOS have expressed their gratitude for the benefits that have accrued to them and to their respective congregations. Each

one strove to find the words that justly spell the significance of SEDOS in their life and mission.

Consistent with the aim of this booklet, the next chapter will highlight the brief biography of each Founder. We invite our Readers to meet each one of them in light of their specific contribution to their respective Congregations and to the Universal Church.

Chapter II: The Architects of "Aggiornamento"

In 1975, the tenth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI reminded the College of Cardinals of the main objectives of Vatican II captured succinctly in this declaration: *to make the Church of the twentieth century ever better fitted for proclaiming the Gospel to the people of the twentieth century* (EN, no. 2).

Early on, in the wake of the questions and hopes surfaced by the Second Vatican Council, the emerging group of SEDOS founders organized a Theological Symposium to discern the paths of mission. In his opening address, the president, Fr. Monde, underscored the challenges that faced the missionary congregations: *"It must be said without equivocation that the missionary institutes are preoccupied, worried and uncertain about the future of missions. This is not to indulge in pessimism. In a changing world which daily poses new problems, it is perfectly normal that the missionary world also should ask questions about its own function in this rapid and often radical evolution."*

Fifty years later, today, we recognize the prophetic import of Fr. Monde's view of "a changing world which daily poses new problems". Indeed, in the last five decades, the world has undergone fundamental changes in varied areas: in technology, arts and sciences, in the global concerns on demography, gender, climate, planetary resources, moral codes and values; in ecclesial, theological, socio-geo-political and cultural trends, etc. As a matter of fact, the concept of change is now seen as too narrow to contain what we are contending with. What is now emerging is the term, "mutation", meaning an irreversibly directed transformation.⁷

As an evangelizer, the Church starts with being evangelized herself (EN, no.15). As the People of God immersed in this world, and often tempted by idols, she needs to constantly and contemplatively "see and hear" the "mighty works of God", source of the freshness, vigor and strength with which she goes forth to proclaim the Gospel. Only a Church evangelized by constant conversion and renewal stands ready to evangelize, in a credible way, this constantly changing world.

In view of this objective, Pope Paul VI points out that "the conditions of the society in which we live oblige all of us therefore to revise methods, to seek by every means to study how we can bring the Christian message to modern man. For it is only in the Christian message that modern man can find the answer to his questions and the energy for his commitment to human solidarity."

⁷ Maria Pilar BENAVENTE Serrano, MSOLA. IDEM.

Hein Monde, SMA (1909-1985)



Henricus Petrus Monde, son of Herman Petrus Monde and Lucia Maria Delphina was born at Scheveningen/the Hague on 1st February 1909. His father, who was an employee of the 'Dutch Railway Company', died young in 1912.

After the death of his father, his mother started a tobacco shop, but she died one year later in 1913.

Henk, as he was called as a boy, had a brother one year his senior, who married Maria Vereecken. His sister, the youngest of the three children, died very young.

The mother of Father Ed Hubert, also a Vereecken, was a sister of Maria Monde. Father Monde stayed at Wies Vereecken's when he visited Holland. The Vereecken family had been a great help to several SMA members during the war (cf. C. Breukel).

Education

After the death of their parents, the Monde children were placed in an orphanage (Warmoezierstraat The Hague). After finishing primary school, Henk went to the minor seminary at Cadier en Keer in 1922. In 1928 he went to Chanly (Belgium) and studied philosophy. He concluded the Noviciate with the oath and became a member of the SMA on 27-7-1930.

After this he went to Hastings (England) where he studied theology from 1930 to 1934. There he was ordained priest by Mgr. Peter Amigo during his fourth year.

The missionary.

Fr. Monde was a clever student but the time was not yet ripe for young priests to be appointed for further studies. He was appointed for the new mission-vicariate of Mgr. Paulissen in Ashanti (the Gold Coast). He left by boat on 2 October 1934 and was appointed for Kumasi town. There he met several, more experienced colleagues. In Kumasi, he got the chance to acclimatise and to study the local language.

After half a year, in 1935, he was appointed as assistant of Father Gerrit de Leeuw in Betchem.

In May 1937, he was transferred to Berekum where Father George Fisher was in charge. Soon after this transfer, Father Fisher went on holidays. In July 1937 Hein, as he was called among his colleagues, became in charge of the parish. He was due for holidays in 1939 but, because of the uncertainty of the war situation, he wanted to wait until the circumstances were somewhat more stable. This, however, lasted until after the war in 1946!

Soon he became a much trusted person in the vicariate. In 1938, two newly ordained priests, Fr. Ad Juin and Jacques Visser, were sent to Berekum for their introduction into missionary life and for a course in Twi, the local language.

In 1939, Father Theo Cup joined him. He opened Kwesibuokrom as a main station. After a year however, at the end of June 1940, Father Cup got seriously ill with black water fever. He sent a message to his friend Fr. Monde at Berekum, approximately 30 kilometers away. When Father Monde arrived, Theo Cup started singing the "De Profundis" in the local language. He told Fr. Monde: "Hein, this is the end". Father Monde administered the sacrament of the sick to his best friend; it was a very emotional occasion for him. There were moments that Father Monde couldn't continue praying and then Fr. Cup himself took over. He told Father Monde: "Don't worry, Fr. Fabre survived only three years and I stayed six. I can't complain." Hein brought the sick man to the hospital at Sunyani where Theo died after a difficult time. Fr. Monde brought the body for burial to Kumasi.

The first Ashanti priest, Father Daniel Tawiah, went for his first appointment to Berekum. Father Monde was his parish priest. He was introduced to the people of Berekum by Mgr. Paulissen personally.

After the war, as soon as there was accommodation on board a ship, Hein went on holidays, after twelve years in the tropics.

He was the representative of the Ashanti Fathers in the provincial counsel of 1946. The council took place in Aalbeek during the summer holidays. This third counsel was in a sense revolutionary. Holland was just liberated and new times lay ahead. The Dutch Province wanted to break with the past; they wanted something new, something else, a new enthusiasm, a new commitment. The Fathers of the various houses in Holland chose their youngest members to be their representatives.

During the meeting some of the students who were not on holidays, spied through a window above the door of the chapel to find out who would swear the anti-modernistic oath. It appeared to be "the tall unknown missionary from the Gold Coast".

When Fr. Hein Monde started his period of provincial superior, he saw it as his task to modernise the province, renovate the buildings and bring the study programme up to date. He worked for the: "jus promovendi" (further studies for the newly ordained) so that they could teach at home in Cadier en Keer and in the colleges in the Gold Coast/Ghana.

Fr. Monde wanted to be personally involved in the financial situation of the province because it had to be modernized. And he wanted to have the final responsibility over the finances. Difficult decisions had sometimes to be taken. He bought "Hotel Tafelberg" in Oosterbeek to replace the old house at Bemelen in the south of Holland.

He wanted a more central place in Holland. The Provincialate, propaganda, administration and fundraising facilities were all brought under one roof in Oosterbeek. Oosterbeek became also the place for retirement, care of the sick and, for missionaries on holidays. He started a tyrocinium in order to receive the young

missionaries and to be able to give them a proper training. For that purpose, he went on visitation to Ghana and, with the help of Fr. Bernard Gootzen, he founded a SMA house at Winneba.

In 1952, he was chosen for another period of six years. On 15 March 1954, the seminary at Cadier en Keer was utterly destroyed by fire. They found new accommodation at LiIbosch/Echt.

Despite the difficult financial situation, the rebuilding of Keer came off with a flying start. Among one of his priorities was the recognition by the state of the college.

In 1956 Fr. Monde became "Officier van de Orde van Oranje Nassau". In 1985, Hein was chosen as the first Dutchman to be general superior of the Society for a period of ten years. This was the only ten year period. In 1986 it was brought back to five years and, in 1986 it returned to the more traditional six years. Hein, however, was chosen again for a period of five years. (Are both dates correct?)

He was known for his rather disorganised administration but famous for his personal relations. He was a pleasant man, easy in relations with others. He was a very able leader and a no nonsense type. He gave form to the Plenary Councils, introduced the meetings for provincial bursars at Rome and introduced a uniform system of financial reporting.

The Irish and American colleagues admired him greatly; because of him the SMA became internationally known in missionary and religious circles. He had contact with other major superiors in Rome and took the initiative in founding SEDOS. He was also actively involved in realising the mission decree, *Ad Gentes*.

He was a welcome guest at the Club of Dutchmen in Rome and at the headquarters of several religious orders. He spoke French and English fluently and this helped him a lot in his functioning.

It is through him that the SMA became known internationally. (redundant because it was stated above) During the 15 years of his leadership practically the whole hierarchy of the SMA territories changed from white to black, from European to African.

He used his same charm in his contacts with African bishops but there were sometimes real fights, for instance over the introduction of contracts between the bishops and the Society.

He bought a piece of land in Rome and built the Generalate on the Via della Nocetta. The old house on the via Dei Gracchi, was sold for a good price.

He assisted the sisters of Tilburg with the building of their house on Monte Cucco and, after his retirement in 1973, he decided to stay in Rome and lived there.

In 1973, he was forty years a priest. On 30 April 1973, at the occasion of his retirement, he received the order van 'Ridder van de Nederlandse Leeuw'.

In 1984, the Sisters handed the building over to a Spanish Sisters' congregation. In consultation with the Dutch Province, and paid for by them, two little rooms were built at the Generalate: one for Fr. Monde and one for Sr. Cunera who had nursed him over the last years at Monte Cucco. At Easter 1984, he started living in his "own" apartment, as he called it.

His death

Although he was in a bad state of health and needed much care, he enjoyed the international contacts immensely. One loved to visit him and to ask him for advice.

When Sister Cunera couldn't possibly care for him by herself Wies Vereecken, the sister-in-law of his deceased brother Jan, came to assist her. Fr. Falco Tuis, the General Superior of the Carmelites, gave him the sacrament of the sick and, at a quarter to one on the morning of 26 December 1985, he died at the age of 74.



Léo Deschâtelets, OMI (1899—1974)



Le Père Deschâtelets est membre fondateur de l'Union des Supérieurs généraux, à Rome, et fondateur de SEDOS (Service de Documentation et d'Etudes regroupant environ 30 Instituts missionnaires). Il a présidé cinq Chapitres généraux, ceux de 1947, 1953, 1959, 1966 et 1972, ce dernier en partie seulement; il a fondé *Studium Generale Superius* en 1950, la Retraite de Mazenod en 1953-54. Il a parcouru souvent les provinces et vicariats de la Congrégation; dans ces voyages, il a souvent présidé ou participé à des fêtes ou à des événements importants qu'on ne peut énumérer ici. Signalons enfin la vive préoccupation de l'ancien Supérieur général et l'action efficace qu'il a menée en faveur de la cause de béatification de Mgr de Mazenod qui connaît le succès après sa mort.

8 mars 1899 : naissance en la paroisse St. Jacques, Montréal.

12 mai 1918 : prise d'habit au noviciat de Ville La Salle.

19 mars 1922 : oblation perpétuelle.

6 juin 1925 : ordination sacerdotale par Mgr J.M. Emard, archevêque d'Ottawa.

30 janvier 1926 : obédience pour le Scolasticat St. Joseph: professeur, archiviste.

20 février 1933 : accompagne le cardinal Villeneuve à Rome qui y reçoit le chapeau cardinalice. Retour le 29 août.

Septembre 1934 : fondateur et président des Semaines Missionnaires du Canada.

13 mai 1936 : représentant à Rome de l'Union Missionnaire du Clergé du Canada au Congrès International de l'UMC. Travail à la Maison générale.

Retour le 10 mars 1937.

24 juillet 1937 : obédience pour la Maison générale. Nommé sous-secrétaire au Secrétariat International de l'UMC.

20 novembre 1938 : Supérieur du Scolasticat St. Joseph, à Ottawa.

21 novembre 1944 : Provincial de la province du Canada-Est.

28 septembre 1945 : secrétaire de la Mission pontificale qui accompagne le cardinal Villeneuve, légat papal à Mexico.

2 mai 1947 : élu 8e supérieur général de la Congrégation des OMI. Premier canadien à occuper ce poste.

6-7 juin 1950 : jubilé d'argent sacerdotal.

30 octobre 1950 : bénédiction de la nouvelle Maison générale (Via Aurelia 290, Roma).

Mai 1961 : fête du centenaire de la mort du Fondateur.

3 octobre 1962 : Jean XXIII le nomme membre du Concile Vatican II à titre de Père du Concile. Participe à toutes les sessions du Concile.

1967 : Paul VI le nomme un des dix représentants des Instituts religieux au Synode

des Evêques de 1967.

2 janvier 1968 : Paul VI le nomme membre du "Conseil des Vingt-Quatre" établi au sein de la S.C. pour l'Evangélisation des Peuples.

18 juin 1972 : subit sa première crise cardiaque; est hospitalisé.

2 mai 1972 : 25e anniversaire de supérieurat général

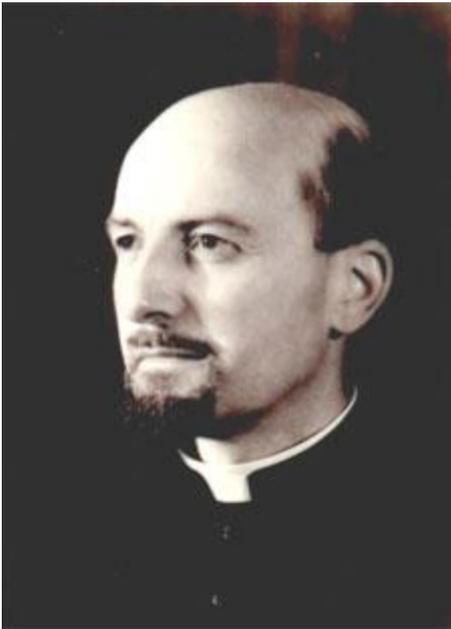
5 mai 1972 : présente sa démission comme Supérieur général au chapitre général qui l'accepte; Elle prend effet le 8 mai. Rattaché à la province St. Joseph, Canada.

16 juin 1972 : obédience pour la résidence Villeneuve, à Ottawa.

11 janvier 1974 : décès à l'Hôpital Général, à Ottawa.

16 janvier 1974 : inhumation au cimetière oblat de Richelieu.

Omer Degrijse, CICM (1913-2002)



Fr. Omer Degrijse was born in Eernegem, West Flanders, Belgium, on 1st August 1913. After finishing six years of humanities in Roeselare (1925-1931), he entered the CICM novitiate on 14 September 1931. From 1934 to 1938, he studied theology at the Gregoriana in Rome. He professed his perpetual vows on September 8, 1936, and was ordained as a priest on 2 August 1937, at Scheut, Brussels.

He taught philosophy at the cicm scholasticates in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, and in Scheut, Brussels (1938-1941). From 1941 to 1946 he taught theology at the cicm scholasticate in Leuven, after which he published his first book "Christelijk Humanisme" (Christian Humanism).

On 26 August 1947, he left for his mission assignment in Congo. For several years he worked as a missionary in Lisala. He became provincial superior on January 1, 1956. During the CICM Chapter of 1957, he was elected vicar general of the CICM Congregation. After the death of the superior general, Fr. Frans Sercu, he was appointed superior general by Rome on 13 September 1961.

Fr. Degrijse attended all the sessions of the Second Vatican Council. After having finished his term as superior general in 1967, the CICM general council entrusted to him the task of founding Euntes, a mission center for study, documentation, and information. He also taught missiology at the Catholic Universtiy of Leuven (KUL) (1969-1983). On 1st March 1971, The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith appointed him as National Director of the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies in Belgium.

Fr. Degrijse also wrote numerous articles and books dealing with the missionary activities of the Church.

Johann Schütte, SVD (1913-1971)



Johann Schütte was born as the third child of Bernhard and Elizabeth, nee Grave, on 23 April 1913, in Essen-Oldenburg at the heartland of Catholicism in Germany. Schütte's father was a stonemason and his mother came from a family of masons. He was baptized the next day in the local parish church and given the name of John the Baptist. Johann attended the local elementary school (1919-1923) and then the Middle School where his main subject was Latin. At the end of the first year, he applied as a second year student for admission to the Divine Word secondary school in Steyl. His uncle had died in an accident while still a student of theology, so he decided that he would "take his uncle's place". Schütte was one of the best students. In March 1932, he passed his Abitur, and in May that year he entered the novitiate of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD).

He took his first vows in the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) in 1934. In the fall of 1936, after a short interruption of his studies Schütte began his theological studies at St. Gabriel's, near Vienna. On 24 August 1939, he was ordained to the priesthood.

After his ordination in 1939 followed by a short period of military service, he went to China in 1940 where he worked in the prefecture apostolic of North Honan (Henan). Schütte soon took on a number of responsibilities serving as pastor, leader, organizer of a middle school and pro-prefect. His foremost responsibility, however, was that of pastor of the main mission station. He was an excellent parish administrator, schoolman and missionary superior. In 1947, he became acting prefect apostolic of Sinsiang (Xinxiang) and, the following year, the regional superior of the order. In 1949, the territory was taken over by the Communists and Schütte had to undergo interrogations, trials, threats and house arrest. Finally, after seven months of rigorous imprisonment and a show trial broadcast over the whole province, on 7 May 1952, he was convicted and immediately expelled from the country. Back in Germany, he earned a doctorate in missiology at the University of Münster with an honours thesis: *The Catholic mission in China in light of the Red Chinese press*. An attempt at a missionary understanding (published in 1957). In his widely noticed dissertation, he demonstrated that the church has to take Chinese culture and religion seriously and to spell out the message of the Gospel anew against this background. He then lectured in missiology in St. Augustine's Major Seminary near Bonn and, in 1955, became mission secretary in the generalate of the SVD in Rome. In 1958, he was elected superior general of the order. In this position (1958-1967) his natural talent for leadership, his missionary experience and formation, as well as his energy and tenacity stood him in good stead. Under his administration, the society took over new missionary activities in Formosa, Angola, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico. Among his constant concerns were the maintenance of missionaries; the fostering of vocations throughout the

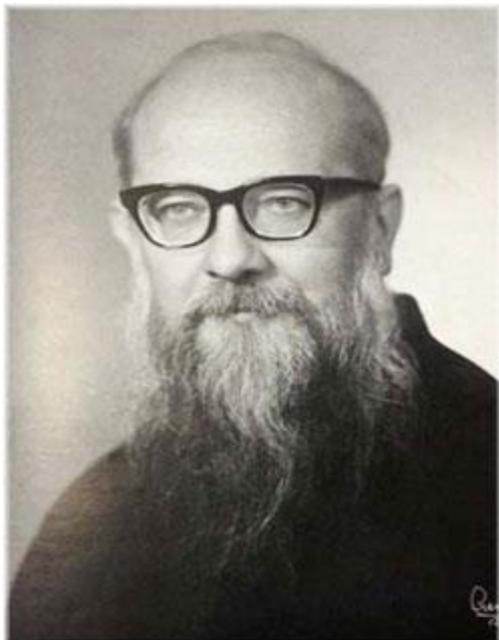
world; the establishment and extension of universities, institutes, and seminaries; the advanced training of personnel for different positions in the Society; and the intensification of mission promotion. His ideas about the preparation of future missionaries in their home countries and his proposals for the formation of catechists and other indigenous missionary personnel arose from his own missionary experience. As a superior general, he was a participant ex officio with voting rights at the Second Vatican Council. In 1964 he became president of the sub-commission for the revision of the schema *De Missionibus*; in this capacity, he made a substantial contribution to the compilation of the mission decree *Ad Gentes*. In October 1965, Schütte as presenter brought the final version of the new mission schema to the council fathers. In the fourth voting session of the council, the decree was passed overwhelmingly, with 2,394 votes in favor and only 5 against - the highest percentage ever received in any such conciliar ballot. Without a doubt the mission decree *Ad Gentes* represents the peak of his work as a missionary and is his true legacy. Fr Schütte became also the President of SEDOS (established in 1964 as Servizio di Documentazione e Studi) the association for the promotion of missionary cooperation among mission societies, which opened its offices in the guest house of the SVD Roman College after Easter 1967.

After the council, he was elected to the Council of 24 in the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. He was a member of the first Roman Synod of Bishops. In 1968, he became vice-secretary of the Pontifical Commission *Justitia et Pax*. His promising activities within the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace did not come to fruition due to his early death on 18 November 1971. He was only 58 when he died in Rome as a result of a car accident.

Schütte devoted himself body and soul to the mission of the church, using all his manifold talents. Richly gifted, he could have made a career in the academic world. But his real strength lay in organizing things. He was a born leader, negotiator, inspirator and organizer. He was not a theorist, but a practitioner. Yet on the basis of his practical experience, he made important contributions not only to concrete mission work, but also to missiological reflection on the missionary task.

Ref.: redacted by Andrzej Miotk, SVD.

Clementinus da Vlissingen, OFM-Cap. (1909-1988)



(Schutijser Johannes Franciscus Maria) - n. Vlissingen, 11.II.1909 (Olanda, Zeeland); dioc. Haarlem-Amsterdam; prov. Olanda; † 's-Hertogenbosch, 3.VI.1988. Min. prov., def. gen., min. gen.

Vest.: Tilburg, 7.IX.1928; prof. temp.: Tilburg, 8.IX.1929; prof. perp.: Udenhout, 8.IX.1932; ord. presb.: 21.IX.1935.

Dopo gli studi filosofico-teologici ed essere stato ordinato presbitero, fu mandato a Roma per perfezionarsi in Diritto canonico, conseguendo il Dottorato ('Pontificia Università Gregoriana', 1939). Tornato in Provincia si dedicò all'insegnamento e alla formazioni dei chierici. Fu guardiano, parroco, giudice sinodale presso il

tribunale della diocesi di Haarlem, definitore provinciale, ministro provinciale, custode generale. Nel 1957 fu nominato visitatore apostolico dalla Congregazione dei Religiosi. Nel Capitolo generale del 1958 fu eletto Definitore Generale continuando ad essere visitatore di vari Istituti religiosi; eletto Ministro generale (1964), partecipò alla terza e quarta sessione del Concilio Vaticano II. Durante il suo mandato il Collegio Internazionale S. Lorenzo da Brindisi (Roma) fu trasferito dalla sua antica sede di via Sicilia ala nuovo edificio costruito sul Grande Raccordo Anulare, dove hanno avuto sede anche l'Istituto Storico e il Museo Francescano. Visitò molte province e le missioni, verso le quali ebbe una speciale sollecitudine, promovendo varie iniziative (lettere circolari, Congresso missionario del 1964, Direttorio per le Missioni). Promosse l'OFS e regolò l'accettazione delle parrocchie da parte dell'Ordine (1969). Dopo il Concilio Vaticano II si è dedicato al rinnovamento dell'Ordine secondo lo spirito dei decreti conciliari, indicando (8.XII.1967) il Capitolo generale speciale (19.VIII.-25.X.1968), nel quale sono state aggiornate e redatte le nuove Costituzioni. Nel 1969 eresse l'Istituto Francescano di Spiritualità presso il Pontificio Ateneo Antonianum. Espletato il mandato, è ritornato in provincia, dove si è dedicato all'Istituto delle missioni. Nel 1971 ha partecipato al Primo CPO dell'Ordine e al Capitolo generale straordinario (1971). In qualità di ex-generale ha preso parte al Capitolo generale del 1974 e poi, come delegato, a quello del 1982. Dal 1970 al 1985 è stato membro e consultore dell'organizzazione cattolica olandese per lo sviluppo del terzo mondo (CMC, Centraal Missie Commissariaat), ed uno dei fondatori del SEDOS (Servizio de Documentazione e Studi sulla Missione Globale). È morto in seguito ad un incidente ferroviario.

Scritti: F. Elizondo, Cartas circulares de los superiores generales capuchinos (1884-1982), in AOFMCap 101 (1985) 234-243 (nn. 601-673).

Bibl.: [Elezione] AOFMCap 80 (1964) 121-145; [Necr.] AOFMCap 104 (1988) 520-522; A. Disch, In memoriam. Bijvitvaart van Clementinus Schutijser, in *Kommunikatie* (1988) P/ 21-24; [Necr.] *Car. Confrater* 22 (1988) 51-52; G. Slaats, *Nieuwe Historische Ledenlijst* 2002, 66.

Paul Hoffer, SM (1907-1976)



Paul Hoffer was born into a tobacco farming family at Binderheim (Bas-Rhin) in Alsace, on 13 February 1907. Brought up by pious parents, and encouraged by his Marianist uncle, Brother Joseph Hoffer, he entered the postulate of the Marianists, a teaching congregation of brothers and priests, in 1920 at Antony, near Paris, making his first profession of vows in the Society of Mary in 1922. Upon earning the necessary credentials for teaching, he was first assigned in 1926 to the École Fénelon in La Rochelle, an institution where he honed the pedagogical skills that would serve him so well the rest of his life. In 1931 he earned the degree of Licenciate in classical literature, and in 1932 was sent to the Marianist International Seminary in Fribourg, Switzerland. Ordained priest in 1936, he completed the work for his doctorate in theology at the University of Fribourg in 1937.

After another five years of teaching at La Rochelle, he was appointed Director of the Marianist Collège Sainte Marie in the rue Monceau, Paris, in the midst of World War II. It was during this difficult wartime period that Paul refined both his pedagogical skills and his theoretical reflections on education, as well as developing a reputation as a spiritual director.

In 1946, at the Marianists' first post-war General Chapter, he was elected to the office of Assistant General for Education, with responsibility for the quality of the schools of the worldwide Society of Mary. His visits to the Americas and Asia brought welcome challenges to his thinking, considerably broadening his views and perceptions of the art and science of pedagogy. The move of the General Administration from Nivelles, Belgium, to Rome, Italy, brought him into a much wider contact with religious superiors from all over the world.

Ten years later, another General Chapter elected Paul Superior General of the Society, an office he held for fifteen years. Adding the name of the husband of Mary to his own, according to the tradition of the Marianists, he was henceforth known as Paul-Joseph Hoffer, the "Good Father" of the congregation. His previous experience, research and reflection bore fruit in his masterly book, *Pédagogie Marianiste*, published in 1957 and eventually translated into several other languages. During his first ten-year term in office, the Society expanded rapidly into Australia, Ireland, Korea, and several of the newly independent countries of Africa: Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, Malawi, Togo and Zambia. Nominated by Pope John XXIII to the Second Vatican Council, as a Council Father he served in the Sub commission for Schools in the Conciliar Commission of Schools and Seminaries, where he was able to contribute his mature ideas on the value and nature of Catholic education.

In 1964, Fr. Hoffer joined with eight other General Superiors to form SEDOS, a group dedicated to the exchange of information and views on the Mission of the Church.

After the completion of his second, five-year term of office as Superior General, Father Hoffer retired to the community of Antony in his own Province of France in 1971. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed by the French bishops as National Chaplain of the Legion of Mary in France. Increasing illness and physical decline took him back to the Marianist community of St. Hippolyte in the Department of Haut-Rhin, Alsace, where he had first experienced the pedagogy of the Marianists as a child, and there he passed away on 28 March 1976.

Leo Volker, MAFR (1906-1970)



Leo Volker was born at Veghel, a village situated between s'Hertogenbosch and Eindhoven. His family had moved there from Germany around 1850 and one of his brothers became the Burgomaster (Mayor). Two elder brothers became priests in local parishes and two others became industrialists at Veghel. Together with two friends, who came from nearby villages, Leo Volker took French lessons at Eerde, during his primary schooling at Ruwenberg.

Volker entered the novitiate at Maison Carrée in 1927 and studied theology at Carthage from 1928-1932. He took the Missionary Oath in 1931 and was ordained priest in the following year. In the same year, he went to Kipalapala Seminary, where he stayed until his Superior General called him to Maison Carrée as a

third General Assistant: 01-06-1947 in Algiers. Then Volker became Assistant: 31-08-1952, left Maison Carrée for Rome, the new General house. He was elected Superior General of the Society on 07-07-1957 and resided in Rome. In June 1963, Fr. Volker suffered a heart attack.

Fr. Volker became a Council Father with deliberative vote, appointed by John XXIII in January 1963. Volker's first concern in the second session was to introduce an amendment on the missionary vocation, in the debate on the dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. On behalf of six missionary societies and twenty bishops, Fr. Volker delivered a powerful speech at the Council. He advocated a new category on "missionary sanctity" which was missing in the document, but he did not succeed. Nevertheless Volker did not give up; for him and for other missionaries, the highlight of the Council was the debate on the Church's missionary activity during the third session. Fr. Volker, in his report to the Society, warmly communicated the intervention made by Bishop Xavier Geeraert (1894-1971), the Belgian Vicar Apostolic of Bukavu, on what became known as the "Missio Dei", the origin of the Church's Mission in God (December 1964). This became a *locus classicus* in the missionary decree *Ad Gentes Divinitus* (cf. *Ad Gentes*, 2). Fr. Volker was an ardent advocate for a special decree on the missionary work of the Church, and he succeeded in bringing together influential Council members, especially other Superiors General of missionary institutes, to the cause. A paper entitled "Commentary on the Schema of Proposals concerning the Missionary Activity of the Church" encapsulated their efforts. It was published in August 1964 and a copy was given to every Council member. The final text of the decree was accepted and promulgated by the Council in its final session. Volker recommended it enthusiastically to the Society in his January 1966 letter. And Volker, in his letter composed on the final day of the Council, made the following comment saying that the text was "one of the most substantial and elaborate texts of the Council". "A by-product of Volker's collaboration with other missionary Superiors General was the foundation of the documentation service SEDOS (*Servizio di*

Documentazione e Studi) in 1964. Volker was the catalyst in this group and presided over its meetings. He was elected its first president by the co-founders".

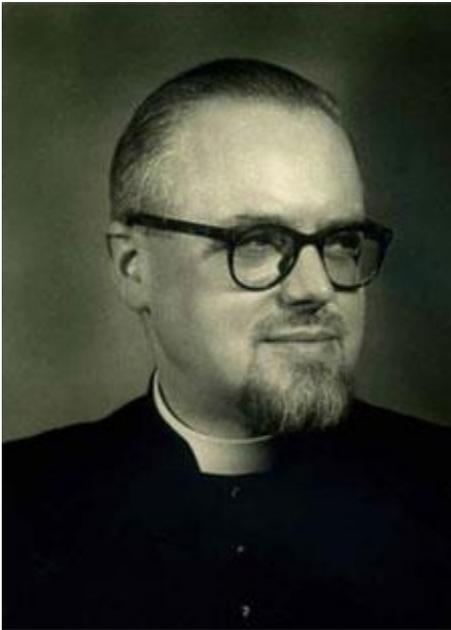
After the closing of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Fr. Volker endeavoured to be in harmony with the changed conditions of his time; he exhorted the members of the Society saying that what was needed was "a new mode of being and thinking", not just another book of rules. And he meticulously prepared the Chapter of 1967, which was to be an aggiornamento Chapter. Fr. Volker wanted the profound meaning of the missionary vocation of the Society to be brought out fully and clearly in the light of Vatican II. At the end of the 1967 Renewal Chapter, Volker withdrew himself from the leadership of the Society because of the state of his health; he went to Geneva where he rendered services in coordinating aspects of the work of international organizations through the Information Centre of Catholic International Organizations. He also made a number of ecumenical contacts, especially with the Christian Medical Commission and the Lutheran World Federation. Accompanying a disabled Vietnamese student driver, Volker was involved in a fatal accident on the Geneva-Lausanne road, on Easter Wednesday, 1st April 1970. He was killed outright [...]. Volker was aged 64.

Volker, Architect of Aggiornamento: the summary of his years as the Superior General is very eloquent, and I quote: "1957-1967 were years of crucial change and unforgettable experience for the Missionaries of Africa. The Society was fortunate to have at its head, during that time, a man who was ready to listen to the new ideas of Vatican II, who was able to read the signs of the times and who was also a man of solid, if traditional, piety. In these respects perhaps, he resembled John XXIII, the ultimate architect of aggiornamento."

Ref.: Redacted by Sr. Nzenzili Lucie MBOMA, FMM — SEDOS Executive Directress.



Joseph Van Kerckhoven, MSC (1909-1974)



Father Joseph Van Kerckhoven, Superior General of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart from 1958–1969, was born in St. Amands, Belgium, on 6 February 1909. He made his first religious profession on 21 September 1928, studied theology at the Gregorian University in Rome and was ordained a priest on July 30, 1933.

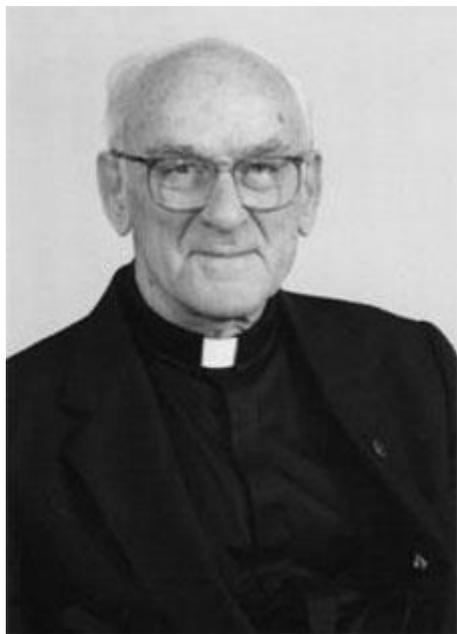
Fr. Van Kerckhoven's first years of ministry were dedicated to formation in the Belgian Province of the MSC and to lecturing in philosophy. From 1950 to 1953, he was superior of the Congregation's mission in the Congo and, from 1953-1958, he served as Provincial Superior of the Belgian Province.

At the General Chapter held in September 1958 he was elected Superior General, a post he held until the conclusion of the Special Chapter of renewal in 1969. He participated in all four sessions of Vatican II and was the spokesperson for the Commission of Religious. He also collaborated in the preparation of the decree *Perfectae Caritatis*. His intervention on the relationship between religious life and apostolic life became part of that decree and is the substance of Canon 675 of the new code of Canon Law.

At the end of his term as Superior General, he returned to Belgium and remained active giving retreats and conferences. He died at Wilrijk, Belgium, on 28 September 1974.



Wilfrid-Joseph Dufault, A.A. (1907-2004)



Religieux de la province d'Amérique du Nord, Provincial (1946-1952) et Supérieur général (1952-1969).

Parcours d'un Responsable hors norme Wilfrid Dufault est un franco-américain, né à Spencer, dans l'Etat du Massachussets, le 11 décembre 1907. Après ses études à Worcester et son année du noviciat, il est élève au collège international de l'Assomption à Rome où il est reçu à la profession perpétuelle le 30 septembre 1933 et ordonné prêtre le 24 février 1934 par le cardinal-vicaire Mgr Machetti-Selvaggiani. Licencié en théologie à l'Institut Pontifical de l'Angelicum, docteur en philosophie à l'Université Laval de Québec, il est d'abord professeur de philosophie, de 1936-1946, au collège de Worcester

où il a fait ses premières armes. C'est lui tout naturellement que désigne la Curie romaine en 1946 lorsqu'est créée la nouvelle province d'Amérique du Nord, détachée du vicariat de Paris, pour en prendre la direction. Il en devient ainsi, tout jeune, à 39 ans, le Premier Supérieur Provincial. Pour des services rendus à la culture française, le Père Wilfrid est décoré de la Légion d'honneur. Le 26 mai 1952, à 45 ans, il est élu Supérieur Général, pour un mandat de 12 ans, au 23ème Chapitre Général tenu à Rome du 2 au 29 mai, en remplacement du Père Gervais Quenard démissionnaire pour raison de santé. Il est vrai que l'élection de ce premier Supérieur Général non français de la Congrégation est sans doute due à des causes indirectes, non dénouées de dissentiments internes, les délégués français ne pouvant s'accorder entre eux sur un nom et les délégués des autres pays ayant manifesté leur désir de soustraire la Congrégation à une direction très marquée depuis ses origines par la prépondérance française. C'est une curie hétéroclite qui entoure le P. Dufault pour ce premier mandat, vite secouée par des démissions en chaîne (P. Germain Filliol en 1952, P. Florentin Kerno en 1954) et des recompositions de fortune. Quoi qu'il en soit le P. Wilfrid réalise très vite la dimension de sa nouvelle charge, en accomplissant de nombreux voyages et soutenant de nombreuses fondations de l'Assomption sous les nouveaux horizons: Nouvelle-Zélande (1952), Madagascar et Uruguay (1953), Côte d'Ivoire (1957), Costa Rica (1962). En 1956, grâce au travail du P. Athanase Sage, le Père Wilfrid peut donner à l'Assomption le livre de sa vie, les Ecrits Spirituels, *compendium* de tous les textes majeurs du Fondateur. Certes les difficultés ou points sombres ne manquent pas en ces années préconciliaires. En novembre 1952, trois religieux bulgares sont fusillés à Sofia; le communisme en Europe de l'Est met en péril toutes les implantations de l'Assomption, réduites à l'état de silence et de dispersion. Le Père Judicaël Nicolas purge en U.R.S.S. une longue peine de détention jusqu'au printemps 1954. Les soubresauts politiques de la décolonisation en Tunisie et en Algérie aboutissent au départ des religieux de ces deux pays (1963 et 1964). L'avenir

est parfois sombre aussi en Colombie et au Congo (1964), touchés par des mouvements nationalistes, séparatistes ou par des idéologies de violence politique. Et cependant le P. Wilfrid entreprend dans l'espérance le grand mouvement de renouveau demandé par toute l'Eglise en Concile. En 1959 il renoue avec les Sœurs missionnaires de l'Assomption du Cap. Réélu le 15 avril 1954 pour un second mandat, il a la joie de participer au renouveau conciliaire comme 'expert' et supérieur d'une Congrégation ayant plus de mille prêtres. Toute la Congrégation se met en chemin conciliaire, travaillant à la révision des constitutions.

La liturgie prend des expressions nouvelles, les communautés locales et régionales ? une force d'animation redéfinie. En 1953 le Père Wilfrid préside à la création de la Province d'Amérique du Sud ; en 1963-1964 c'est autour du Brésil, de fondation hollandaise, de l'Espagne et du Congo-Zaïre de s'aventurer, avec le statut de vice-provinces, sur le chemin d'une première et progressive autonomie. La Belgique ne peut éviter une crise latente qui aboutit à la séparation en deux provinces linguistiques, entre le nord flamand et le sud wallon. En 1964, le 24ème chapitre général donne à l'Assomption une curie nouvelle avec l'arrivée des PP. Paul Charpentier, Léandre De Leeuw et Floridor Vargas. Le P. Remi Munsch, ayant démissionné, est remplacé par le P. Romain/Camille Durand tandis que de nouveaux officiers sont confirmés ou promus: le P. Farne, Procureur, le P. Henri Moquin Econome en remplacement du P. Eudes Hanhart, le P. Domitien Meuwissen reconduit comme Secrétaire (1955). Avec la décennie des années 60, le P. Dufault a conscience aussi d'avoir à affronter en Europe comme en Amérique une profonde crise de sécularisation dont les effets sont ravageurs: baisse des vocations, difficultés de recrutement, fermeture de maisons, départ de religieux. L'effort de croissance des effectifs, déjà ralenti après-guerre, s'inverse rapidement à l'Institut de l'Assomption, comme dans de nombreuses congrégations apostoliques de même type: alors que la courbe avoisinait celle de l'année, le déclin amorcé s'avère irrémédiable: en 1968, les presque 2000 religieux sont devenus 1846. Pour favoriser l'élan d'une nouvelle équipe, toute la curie présente sa démission au chapitre général de 1969. Le P. Wilfrid retiré des affaires, retrouve sa province d'origine. En 1983, il revient reprendre du service à Rome et collaborer aux travaux de la postulation des deux causes du P. d'Alzon et du P. Staub. Grâce aux travaux préparatoires du P. Touveneraud, il peut mener à bien, avec le concours du P. Désiré Deraedt, la mise en forme et l'édition en 1986 du volumineux Dossier Vie et vertus du P. Alzon qui scelle plus de cinquante ans de recherche et de présentations historiques. Le 13 mai 1986, il s'envole pour les Etats-Unis, cette fois définitivement, avec le sentiment reconnu et partagé du devoir généreusement accompli. Malgré l'âge et la maladie, il reste bien présent à tout ce qui fait la vie de sa famille religieuse et de l'Eglise. A la session d'Alzon, tenue à Rome du 23 au 26 avril 1988, le P. Wilfrid brosse l'histoire spirituelle du P. d'Alzon, encadrant son itinéraire intérieur entre les deux devises de l'ART et de l'amour du Christ. En mars 2000, nonagénaire, il participe encore à Paris à la rencontre des anciens Supérieurs Généraux. Le P. Wilfrid est décédé le mardi 24 février 2004 à 96 ans.

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Chapter III. With gratitude and much Joy we celebrated the Beauty of the Fifty Years of SEDOS in Mission.

"Finally an evangelizing community is filled with joy; it knows how to rejoice always. It celebrates at every small victory, every step forward in the work of evangelization. Evangelization with joy becomes beauty in the liturgy, as part of our daily concern to spread goodness. The Church evangelizes and is herself evangelized through the beauty of the liturgy, which is both a celebration of the task of evangelization and the source of her renewed self-giving" (Pope Francis. Evangelii Gaudium, no. 24).

On Saturday, 4 October 2014, Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, our itinerant and ecumenical brother, we remembered with much joy and gratitude the journey made by SEDOS during the past Fifty Years. We shared our experience with deep feeling in order to give hope, strength and energy to the next generation. Pope John XXIII had expressed his great hope in communion and solidarity in the Church to which he thought religious life could greatly contribute. As an inter-congregational union, SEDOS has been striving to realize this hope in communion, by being inclusive. We not only chose the Gospel passage in Luke 24:13-35: the Road to Emmaus, but we enacted it that beautiful afternoon in the lovely grounds of the General Curia of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

Together as Companions on the Journey we re-enacted the Disciples on the road to Emmaus. The Preparatory Team for the Liturgy has appointed different groups with specific roles as the celebration unfolded. The first group was appointed to welcome all the participants gathered in a big circle, by anointing them while we were singing in Italian:

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Luke 4:18-19)*

At this point the motivation on the song by Fr. Gilberto Piñon, OMI, General Councillor, was read in Spanish.

"Hemos cantado "El Espíritu del Señor está sobre mí..." Es la misma proclamación que Jesús pronunció en la Sinagoga de Nazaret hace ya 2000. El Padre lo ungió y le encomendó la Misión de llevar la Buena Nueva a los pobres... nosotros hoy seremos ungidos también para tomar consciencia de que también nosotros hemos sido escogidos para continuar la misión de Jesús. Ungidos por el Espíritu, acogemos la palabra del Papa Francisco que nos dice en *Evangelii Gaudium* # 20: "Cada cristiano y cada comunidad discernirá cuál es el camino que el Señor le pide. . . (para) salir de la propia comodidad y atreverse a llegar a todas las periferias que necesitan la luz del Evangelio."

Todos los que creemos que Jesús es el Hijo de Dios, Salvador de la humanidad, Centro de nuestra fe y Modelo de vida cristiana, recibimos con gozo y esperanza esta unción como signo de nuestro compromiso de construir el Reino de Dios entre los hombres y mujeres de hoy. Es signo de nuestro compromiso para restaurar la dignidad de la persona humana, renovar la comunidad cristiana y construir un mundo mejor como Reino de Dios”.

Lk 24:22-24: *"Some women amazed us... just as the women had said."*

Afterward, as we were about to set out two by two engaged in a conversation about the meaning and implications of the passage and answer to the following question:

What kind of things are the women of the world (especially mothers) telling us that should be a challenge for the future of the Churches?.

“The women spoke in the Gospel and the Disciples were amazed. They proclaimed what they saw, what they heard; what they knew to be the truth; they shared their experience of the Risen Lord and the Disciples believed. The Disciples were converted – changed - by the testimony of ordinary women.

Today, do we listen to the voice of ordinary men and ordinary women? Today also ordinary men and women share their experience of Faith and Hope and Love. They tell us what they think of the political-social-religious and economic situation of humanity; they tell us how they experience the mystery of God; how they live in our Cristian communities. Ordinary women tell us every day how they suffer the violence in Syria, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Nigeria, Guatemala and very near us. . . in many street corners in the Eternal City of Rome. Do we listen to them? Do we recognize the voice of the Spirit in them? Do we believe that the Good Lord Jesus did rise from the dead and is alive and suffering in each one of them?

In the past, the main protagonist of evangelization was the ordained minister, in many situations he was the sole protagonist. Today, the Second Vatican Council is telling us: it is the Laity. The Spirit is talking to us through ordinary men and women. Do we listen to them?” (Fr. Gilberto Piñon, OMI, General Councillor).

SEDOS has always taken into consideration the Ecumenical dimension of the Church desired by John XXIII; thus, we wanted to enhance the quality of the celebration by inviting some members of the Sister Churches. Our joy was complete when we welcomed among us the Reverend Pastor Jens-Martin Kruse, of the Lutheran Church of Rome; and the Most Reverend Archbishop David MOXON, Representative of the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury to the Holy See. Each of our two guests of honour had previously agreed to offer a reflection on the passage we had chosen: Lk 24:13-35. We take pleasure in sharing with our readers these beautiful and profound meditations on the above mentioned selected passages of the Gospel according to St. Luke.

Pastore Dr. Jens-Martin Kruse, Comunità Evangelica Luterana di Roma

Sulla via di Emmaus (Lc 24,13-35) – Riflessioni sulla missione e l'evangelizzazione in prospettiva luterana. Conferenza per la celebrazione ecumenica del 50° anniversario del SEDOS, 4 ottobre 2014

I

Sul pilastro destro, all'inizio di Ponte S. Angelo, in mezzo ai fiumi di turisti e alle auto che passano sul Lungotevere, c'è una statua dell'apostolo Paolo, bella e suggestiva. Lo mostra mentre è assorto nella lettura della Bibbia, che tiene nella mano sinistra. L'apostolo Paolo sta dritto in mezzo alla baraonda, ma sembra quasi che nessuno prenda nota della sua presenza.

È un'immagine che possiede forza simbolica. La Chiesa, oggi, è facile che non sia vista. Per molte persone, quello della fede è un mondo alieno.

L'essere cristiani è qualcosa che impallidisce sempre più. La trasmissione del Vangelo, da una generazione all'altra, non avviene più in modo scontato. Tutto questo pone le Chiese in Europa Centrale di fronte a una grande sfida e le urge a riflettere: la missione è necessaria, soprattutto davanti alla porta di casa.

Non ritiro dal mondo, ma mescolarsi alla vita quotidiana, testimoniare la fede e invitare a una vita cristiana coerente: è questo che Cristo vuole da noi. Solo così saremo all'altezza del compito che Gesù Cristo risorto ha dato alla sua Chiesa: «*Andate per tutto il mondo, predicate il vangelo a ogni creatura*» (Mc 16, 15).

E questo corrisponde, al tempo stesso, alla natura della nostra fede. Chi crede non può tacere. Chi crede, parla (II Cor 4, 13): "*Chi ha fatto esperienza del Vangelo di Gesù Cristo come fondamento portante della propria vita, non può fare altro che renderne testimonianza, fare propaganda per questo Signore e invitare altri ad affidarsi a lui.*"¹

Il teologo Eberhard Jüngel ha descritto la necessità della missione e dell'evangelizzazione per il battito regolare del cuore della Chiesa con una bella immagine, dicendo: "*Se la cristianità sapesse respirare; se inspirasse aria ed espirasse profondamente, allora sperimenterebbe che, nel prendere aria, ci sono due grazie (...) Inspirando, la Chiesa va dentro se stessa; espirando, esce da se stessa...*"² L'inspirare avviene nel culto, in cui viene annunciato il Vangelo e vengono somministrati i sacramenti (CA VII).

Espirando, la Chiesa va sempre di nuovo verso le persone, testimoniando loro come, nella fede in Gesù Cristo, si trovino sostegno, consolazione e senso della vita.

"*Tutti gli sforzi per assolvere al compito missionario della Chiesa cominciano riconoscendo e descrivendo quanto il messaggio cristiano sia bello, necessario e benefico.*"³ Come possiamo farlo, è mostrato, in modo meraviglioso, dall'incontro tra i due discepoli e Gesù, sulla via di Emmaus. In questa estesa narrazione pasquale del Nuovo Testamento, si riscontrano gli indizi e i motivi fondamentali, che, oggi, possono fornirci orientamento per considerare il nostro compito missionario.

II

Anzitutto, prendiamo in esame i due discepoli. All'inizio del cammino verso Emmaus, che si intende come cammino di fede, ci sono il dubbio, la mancanza di fede e l'incapacità dei discepoli di comprendere il messaggio della Resurrezione di Gesù: "*E parlavano tra di loro di tutte le cose che erano accadute*" (Lc 24, 14), dice Luca. Ma, spaventati dal Golgota, non raggiunti dalla Pasqua, la loro comprensione di quanto hanno vissuto non progredisce.

Per Luca, questa non è la situazione speciale di due discepoli; invece, vuole far capire che questa è la situazione di partenza: spesso, i nostri occhi sono 'impediti' e non vediamo che il Signore vivente è con noi. Luca narra come, sulla via di Emmaus, ai discepoli siano aperti gli occhi per vedere questo. E, di nuovo, non si tratta di un evento passato da molto tempo; invece, l'evangelista vuole aprirci gli occhi anche per vedere che anche noi abbiamo a che fare con Gesù Cristo risorto e che egli accompagna anche noi sul nostro cammino di fede.

Ed ora, vediamo come Gesù reagisce a questa situazione dei discepoli.

III

1) "*(...) Gesù stesso si avvicinò e cominciò a camminare con loro*" (Lc 24, 15b). Con questa doppia attenzione, nel venire vicino e nel camminare insieme, comincia l'incontro missionario.

Gesù non lascia i suoi discepoli da soli, alle prese col dolore e il lutto. Viene vicino a loro, prende parte alla loro infelicità e li ascolta attentamente, quando raccontano la loro storia. Mi sembra che, in questo comportamento, ci sia qualcosa d'importanza fondamentale, che possiamo imparare per affrontare la nostra situazione, oggi.

Se vogliamo informare sulla nostra fede, allora dobbiamo, per prima cosa, essere vicini alle persone, considerarle nella loro realtà concreta di vita e ascoltarle attentamente.

2) Sulla via di Emmaus, c'è un secondo passo: Gesù "*spiegò loro in tutte le Scritture le cose che lo riguardavano.*" (Lc 24, 27). Gesù fa in modo che i discepoli partecipino della sua visione della Scrittura e trasmette loro una comprensione teologica dell'agire salvifico di Dio. Così facendo, schiude loro un accesso nuovo all'evento davanti al quale, fino a quel momento, non sapevano che cosa pensare.

I discepoli capiscono che la Croce di Gesù non significa fallimento, ma significa che Dio, in questa morte, vuole cambiare il mondo. Una prospettiva nuova, un rapporto diverso si aprono ai discepoli.

Anche nel fatto che Gesù spieghi la Sacra Scrittura ai discepoli c'è un indizio che merita la nostra riflessione: riacciarsi non significa adattarsi. Andando dai due discepoli nella loro realtà esistenziale, Gesù parla loro, ma non lo fa semplicemente aprendo bocca. Li accompagna nel cammino, ma, allo stesso modo, parla in modo chiaro e inequivocabile di ciò di cui è fatta la fede cristiana, vale a dire dell'agire salvifico di Dio in Croce e della Resurrezione.

Questo rende chiaro che non si può rinunciare facilmente al *proprium* del Vangelo, se si vuole parlare della fede. Non poté farlo Gesù e, naturalmente, nemmeno noi, oggi, possiamo farlo. Parlare della fede cristiana e non dire che Dio, nella Resurrezione di Gesù, ha vinto la morte e ci ha donato vita nuova, è cosa impossibile.

3) Quel che la ragione comprende deve arrivare anche al cuore, affinché determini la nostra realtà. Così, Gesù, in questa storia, fa il passo decisivo ulteriore: *"Quando fu a tavola con loro prese il pane, lo benedisse, lo spezzò e lo diede loro"* (Lc 24, 30).

Nel pasto, nella comunione dello spezzare il pane e del mangiare insieme, avviene il cambiamento che decide tutto. Gli occhi, che prima erano impediti, tanto che non potevano vedere, che è il Crocifisso, il Risorto, vengono aperti e riconoscono chi è stato con loro nel cammino.

4) L'incontro con Gesù Cristo risorto riporta alla quotidianità di questo mondo.

I discepoli sanno, adesso, che Gesù vive e che, pertanto, hanno vita e futuro. Colmi di questa certezza, non possono far altro che ritornare a Gerusalemme per comunicare questa lieta novella alla loro comunità e alle altre persone.

IV

Missione come comunione di cammino. Così si può riassumere il significato di questo racconto pasquale. Il cammino di Emmaus si può intendere come storia di chiamata, che può incoraggiarci a fare il nostro cammino e darci impulsi su come essere all'altezza del compito di Gesù.

(1) Di ciò fa parte, per prima cosa, andare nei luoghi dove vivono le persone e ascoltare attentamente che cosa le muove. (2) Per seconda cosa, accompagnare le persone nel loro cammino e cercare il dialogo con loro. (3) Per terza cosa, raccontare della Parola di Dio e testimoniare la propria fede e, (4) per quarta cosa, essere al tempo stesso prudenti e franchi, chiari e senza paura. Sarebbe fatale se, per un falso senso del rispetto, volessimo tacere la nostra fede. Perché, allora, sottrarremmo agli altri ciò cui hanno diritto, vale a dire il Vangelo di salvezza e libertà di Gesù Cristo.

Da Gesù possiamo imparare a riallacciarci alla fede e alla ricerca delle persone, alle loro domande e risposte per raccontare loro, in mezzo alla quotidianità del mondo, della verità e bellezza della fede. Non possiamo fare niente di più che raccontarla. Ma non abbiamo nemmeno bisogno di fare più di questo. E allora, cominciamo a farlo! Per tutto il resto, ci sono la benedizione e il successo che Dio ci dà!

Vi ringrazio dell'attenzione.

1 "Kirche mit Hoffnung. Leitlinien künftiger kirchlicher Arbeit in Ostdeutschland." Citazione da Rudolph, Barbara: "Einbringung des Kundgebungsentwurfs auf der 4. Tagung der 9. Synode der EKD" (7.-12. November 1999, Leipzig), p. 1.

2 Jünger, Eberhard: Referat zur Einführung in das Schwerpunktthema, in: www.ekd.de/synode99/referate_juengel.html, p. 2

3 EKD-Synode: Kundgebungsentwurfs "Reden von Gott in der Welt – Der missionarische Auftrag der Kirche an der Schwelle zum 3. Jahrtausend, 4. Tagung der 9. Synode der EKD" (7.-12. November 1999, Leipzig), p. 1.

The homely of Archbishop David MOXON,
in the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of SEDOS:
4 October 2014.

"The story of the road to Emmaus is a much beloved account of the revelation of the crucified and risen Christ to two downcast disciples, who were walking along in the shadow of the cross, full of despair and loss of hope. The story is made up of five movements. Firstly there is the journey towards Emmaus by the two, probably a husband and wife, who are talking together of their predicament as followers of a lost cause. Their inspirational leader and messiah has been hunted down, tortured and killed. The messianic dream has been shattered and their future is full of dread and emptiness. Then secondly there is the mysterious stranger who joins them on the road, who joins in the conversation, shifting its ground and pointing to the seeds of hope. Thirdly there is the invitation to the stranger to linger and join them in a meal, an invitation to open the door to him. " He walked as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying " stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is nearly over" So he went and stayed with them." (luke 24: 29-29)

Fourthly, there is the meal where they break bread, and the revelation as the bread is broken that the crucified and risen Christ is the mysterious stranger in their midst, and then fifthly he vanishes from their sight and they reflect on the way in which their hearts were burning within them while he was talking within them on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to them about how the messiah must suffer and die and enter into his glory. The shadow of the cross would be illuminated by the light of the resurrection.

A number of commentators have noted that the turning point in this story is not where you might at first think it was. It isn't the arrival of Christ on the road, or the revelation of the breaking of the bread, but rather it is the opening of the door by the two disciples to the stranger, which means that their hearts are open enough to offer hospitality, **to open a door**, which then makes possible the bread breaking which then issues in a revelation of the real presence. It is the opening of a door by the disciples which makes possible the miracle of Christ risen presence. This Emmaus bread breaking and beautiful communion would not have happened if the open door had not been offered. Let me share a story which sums up this truth in our lives in a very powerful and memorable way. Perhaps you can identify with it as religious, since it is about the religious life in mission, under the shadow of the cross and in the light of the resurrection.

From the first millennium of the Christian era, there is recounted the story of a young monk who had come to a monastery on the edge of a desert in his late teens, with the passionate hope that, by living the life of a brother he might be granted an experience of the risen Christ; like Mary Magdalene, like Thomas and the other disciples. He believed that the lifestyle of the brothers and their vocation in serving the risen Christ would increase his chances of being granted a living encounter with Jesus. Surely if he lived like those early disciples, the risen Christ would come to him, greet him and embrace him? He adopted the apostolic lifestyle of the brothers of poverty, chastity

and obedience; During his first ten years in the monastery, he experienced the deep peace that prayer can bring, the brotherly love that the community of brothers offered and the meaning of servant ministry to the poor, which was the mission of the monastery itself. However he was not granted an experience of the risen Christ as it is found in the resurrection appearances of the Gospels.

After ten years of ministry as a brother, he was asked to pick up the responsibilities of the brother at the monastery gate. This ministry involved supporting and responding to those people who gathered at the gate at noon every day. In the centuries before a welfare state emerged, it was often the monasteries and convents who offered solidarity, hospitality and advocacy to people in the greatest need and to those who had been marginalised by society and by life.

For another ten years, this brother ministered to those who sought the shelter and care of the monastery. A bell would be rung at 11.30am, to signal that preparations needed to be made to meet those who would gather at the gate at noon and then several hours of ministry would follow. During all of these years, the brother was never granted the encounter he longed for. Although he believed in what he was doing, he never achieved the spiritual goal of his life.

One day, at about 11.20am, the brother was kneeling at his prayer desk in his cell. Quite unexpectedly and quite gently, it seemed to him that his cell began to fill with light. The sensation grew and he began to discern a presence in him and around him, full of grace and peace. He realised he was about to be embraced by the risen Christ and every fibre of his being was warmed and quickened. And then the bell went at 11.30am. This felt like a gross violation of his once in a lifetime sacred experience; it seemed so wrong and so badly timed. He wrestled with his conscience; should he stay or should he go? But all those years in the monastery got the better of him and he thought "Someone might freeze tonight if I don't go, perhaps a child might starve if I don't go, perhaps someone will give up in despair if I don't go." So he left the cell and the beginning of the spiritual experience of a lifetime and trudged reluctantly to the gate. He was weeping and he felt cheated in a way. Nothing spectacular happened at the gate, in contrast to the cell. Some of the same people were there, with many of the same needs.

After the usual two hours at the gate, he returned to his cell, deflated and weary of soul. He knelt down at his prayer desk, feeling defeated and empty... and then he discovered that the sense of light and presence was still there, except now it was stronger than it was before. The sense grew until it overwhelmed him with presence and love. He heard a voice deep inside his soul say, "If you had not have gone, I would not have stayed." He opened a door and Christ walked in.

That story is told to witness to the truth of our relationship to the risen Christ. He comes when we are not expecting him, he comes when we need him the most and he comes in the midst of our lives with all their blood, sweat and tears. But above all, this story tells us, as it told the brother, that Christ is always present, unseen, behind the events of ordinary life and ordinary days and ordinary events. This is usually not

an obvious or spectacular encounter, but witnesses to the truth that Christ taught, *"If you do it to the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you do it to me."* This is where we will find the risen Christ most of all, on the rainy days, the boring days and the days of our homes and work places.

In this way, this brother was given the greatest gift of all. Not the mind blowing experience of the cell that day, but the truth that he would always find Christ, and be found by Christ, in the midst of life, particularly where compassion and restorative justice are most active. The risen Christ had always been there for him behind the eyes of the poor, looking out at him with hope. The risen Christ had always been there for him in the love of his brothers, reaching out to him in community. The risen Christ had always been there for him in the liturgy and the prayers, listening to him and accompanying him. As the character, Rebecca, says in Sir Walter Scott's book, *Ivanhoe* :*"Seek the Comforter, who may hide his face from his people... but who ever opens his ear to the cry of those who seek him in sincerity and truth."*

So it is for us, and those we seek to serve. *" Oft, oft goes the Christ in strangers guise"*

The two homilies gave us the opportunity to show gratitude to the wonders the Spirit of the Lord realizes in our lives as Church of Jesus Christ. After a time of reflection on the breaking of the bread we walked down to in the dining room and we listened to the passage in: Lk 24: 28 -35 followed by a meditation offered by Fr. Kennedy KATONGO, OMI, JPIC DIRECTOR

"The breaking of the bread is associated with the prayer of thanksgiving and it has a religious significance of the joint fellowship in sharing and enjoying the blessings of God. As the two disciples at Emmaus, "stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.

So, what does this passage mean for us today? It means that we are called to share our time, talent and easy with others to promote unity in the world. Our world today is hungry and longing for the bread – not just the bread, but Jesus who is the bread of life. We ourselves have received Jesus the Bread of life; we too are invited to share him with others. We can do this by opening our lives to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to work in us, within us and among us. Just like the different grains of wheat form one loaf of bread – we too are called to be united even in our diversity, for we are all part of the One Body of Jesus Christ".

Before we got apart from one another, a candle was handed on to each one as a sign of being sent anew to the world to bring the Good News with joy, and to be a resplendent light..

Chapter IV: SEDOS Through the Years: *Three Perspectives*

The last stage of the commemoration of Golden Jubilee concerned Renewing SEDOS' Vision so as to embrace the future with hope. For this purpose the actual SEDOS' Staff and we include Miss Philippa Wooldridge, (the SEDOS steadfast and meticulous Proof-reader for many years), has been invited to contribute to this research according to their way of experiencing SEDOS. These texts have been used to elaborate a **"Proposal for a qualitative research on the socio-organizational dynamics and perspectives of a Centre for Research and Documentation"** (by Prof. Luca Pandolfi). The evaluation of the structures of SEDOS will be available shortly.

A. Mrs. Ilaria IADELUCA, Secretary of SEDOS, since 2000

Since the foundation of SEDOS up to now there have been many changes, regarding both the various positions and the staff.

The 'great leap forward' came for us too in 2000, when internet, and the digital era began to take their first steps. Fr. Walter von Holzen, SVD, Director of SEDOS for almost nine years, immediately understood the advantages this tool could offer us. He welcomed it, absolutely convinced of the positive impact it would give SEDOS in the years ahead. He was right.

The publication of the Bulletin was, and still is, our strength. It contains a large number of articles on theological and missiological themes as well as the testimonies of mission 'at the grass-roots level'. Over time the Bulletin has attracted the interest and esteem of many Congregations, who become members of SEDOS. Some actually became members at the time of its foundation.

In addition, SEDOS also publishes in the Bulletin, as well as on the SEDOS website, the work or thesis of students. Their interesting contributions have been, and still are, equally valuable and esteemed.

At present SEDOS represents, and is supported by, almost 100 Missionary Congregations through the payment of an annual membership fee and their subscription to the hard copy of the *SEDOS Bulletin*. But also agencies, private foundations and ordinary subscribers (not necessarily religious) from all over the world continue to appreciate and express interest in our work.

Residential Seminars, Public Conferences, General Assemblies: everything is done with the aim of sharing and participating in the great commitment to the overall mission that SEDOS has aimed to support and disseminate from the beginning, in line with the Second Vatican Council.

As mentioned above the digital era has taken over and SEDOS has sought to refine its technological performance year after year.

We have and still are improving the web page (www.sedosmission.org), whose style, despite the continuous changes and improvements, has remained simple and easy to access. Simple windows; soothing colours; essential graphics.



We have understood the importance of immediate communication and its implementation, creating links with all the Congregations to keep them informed, so that they may interact at our meetings. Promoting Co-operation, Seminars and joint Conferences.

Now, the great challenge for SEDOS is the approaching to the world of 'social networking' (*Facebook*, particularly) to which, nowadays, many of the religious Congregations, Associations and Institutions, including the lay ones, are connected, in order to take part in a focused, attentive and aware sharing of the major issues of our time.

A channel through which we can also display our photos to share with those who may have missed a meeting, but can still feel part of it, by observing the atmosphere, the facial expressions and the involvement of those who were present. Also a way to look for other contacts, suggestions and enrollment.

The simple e-mail, by which we used to send long messages, is now outdated, as well as the PDF attachments, unless absolutely necessary. Letters have been superseded. Everything happens and is determined on visualizing a colourful, attractive image, with just a few direct, key words, posted to a link. The recipient reacts and answers the sender.

Today, I smile at the memory of the 'restraint' of the men and women religious, sometimes young, with whom I kept in touch, always maintaining a certain detachment. They are the same people who are now requesting for an immediate and informal sharing of messages.

The numerous Christmas cards that came in the past, are now replaced by cards online. All the Congregations send messages through their web page, *Facebook* or *Twitter*.

The new evangelization, for example, as Pope Francis refers to it, 'runs on the wire' of the new digital era (web 2.0). He has written about the importance of digital communication and given his blessing to the new technologies, provided that man makes a wise, healthy and conscientious use of them.

The interconnection, online dialogue, a public discussion forum. Wonderful opportunities, offered by the social network today: discussion, sharing, and criticism. This technology would allow to everyone to reach anyone anywhere in the world, making it truly global and globalizing.

My wish for SEDOS is that it may take part in all these things. This is just what SEDOS aims to achieve globally in the universal climate that is proper to it ever since its foundation.

MY WORK:

In my work, over 14 years, I have witnessed and contributed to several transformations, with successive Executive Directors, members of the Executive Committee, changes in mentality, planning, expectations, hopes.

In fact, I was engaged in June 2000 as Secretary for Publications. My main task was to insert the articles, selected by the Executive Director, for publication in the monthly Bulletin, in English and French, and revised by our proof-reader.

Through a specific programme, such as 'Page Maker', I formatted the Bulletin, after revision, and completed it with images and photos. Subsequently, the final draft of the material was ready to be delivered to the typography.

For years all SEDOS' contacts with the typography were 'personal' in the sense that I went personally to hand in the monthly issue for printing, because it was

necessary to revise the final draft with the typographers, and approve the first proof. (Today, thanks to the new programmes and the most sophisticated machinery, the Bulletin is delivered by electronic mail).

In addition to the publication of the Bulletin, I was in charge of the articles to be published on the SEDOS web page: they were carefully chosen on missiological, theological or informative arguments.

The articles online were published in four languages: English, French, Spanish and Italian.

The Secretariat's lay staff, which consisted of two employees in 2000 and three in 2002, was reduced to one in 2006, myself. Thus, my duties have increased and also become administrative: monitoring and updating the data of the member Congregations, correspondence with the Congregations, handling the annual membership fees, SEDOS Bulletin Subscriptions.

Today, I am still in charge of the Bulletin, finalizing the final draft, and of correspondence with the SEDOS member Congregations. I record the payments and I update all the changes regarding the General Councils, Secretariats, Delegations and so on, on the SEDOS web page (www.sedosmission.org) and mailing list.

Another innovation was the introduction of an online Registration Form for those wishing to enroll for conferences and seminars. This system helps us to monitor the attendance of our Congregations and to learn which are the most interested and involved. It is a useful way of checking and it also serves to improve our performance, because we can know in advance how many participants there will be at each meeting.

Starting in January 2014 SEDOS has also begun to cooperate with the Italian magazine 'Popoli e Missione', strongly supported and encouraged by Fr Giulio Albanese, MCCJ, its Director. After having taken part in the Residential Seminar 2013, Fr Giulio felt that SEDOS had great potential, especially in terms of international missionary information. The proposal would consist in SEDOS periodically submitting for publication an article of approximately thirty lines under the heading: 'Osservatorio SEDOS'. The focus will be on: our missionary work, our meetings, our men and women religious, and their involvement 'on the ground', besides other missiological, theological and informative topics.

As is well-known, this year SEDOS is preparing to celebrate its 50th anniversary, which will be an important, if not crucial, step in its history and a crossroads at the same time.

For the reasons stated above, I believe that SEDOS has to make big changes: structural, organizational and communicative.

It needs to be renewed, youthful and 'fast' as well as synthetic and up-to-date. Modern, consistent and active in keeping with its tradition, history and style.

I wonder if it is not now time to review the tasks and positions in the office, because I feel that the old Statutes' definition is no longer adapted to the current situation.

For example, the Superiors General are now very busy and often away from their Generalates. How could a Superior on the Executive Committee know the reality of SEDOS and make an informed decision if not present at the meetings? In my humble opinion a delegate, chosen from the member Congregations, and present in Rome, would certainly be of more help.

In addition, in receiving numerous requests, questions, suggestions some Fathers and Sisters have sent to my e-mail address over these almost fourteen years at SEDOS, I have come to the conclusion that the Congregations, as members of SEDOS, think of the SEDOS Office as a kind of service organization as well. An organization ready to support in case it is needed a simultaneous, trustworthy, translator, a translation, a phone number or an urgent contact or someone with specific skills.

To conclude, then, SEDOS also acts as a kind of bridge, a 'headquarters', at the service of the Congregations for which it works, and thanks to which it still exists after fifty years. This liaison service is still possible thanks to the nearly 100 Congregations that support SEDOS and enable it to survive today, despite the very powerful communications media network, and the many other organizations like ours.

B. Sister Celine KOKKAT, JMJ, Librarian and In-Charge of the Documentation Center

I would like to start by presenting myself:- I am Sister Celine Kokkat, JMJ, I am from India Kerala and I belong to the Congregation of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. I am grateful to Fr. Carlos



Rodriguez Linera, OP, the Executive Director from 2003 to 2009. He was the one who contacted my Superior General and asked for a Sister to run the Documentation Department of SEDOS. I have been serving at SEDOS since 2007.

I would like to thank Sr. Nzenzili Lucie MBOMA, FMM for the opportunity she has given me to tell you about myself. I work in the Documentation Department full time from Monday to Friday. My main concern is to update the books which arrive at SEDOS throughout the year. We receive books from the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Editrice Missionaria Italiana (EMI) and others we buy. I enter all these books in our library catalogue under different categories, so that it will be clear for those who visit our website and the library.

We receive various magazines in exchange for our Bulletin. The articles that we feel are important we publish on our website after scanning and editing them. People who need to consult these articles may download them from our Web Site. Together with the Executive Director, I do the same with the good articles that we select for our Bulletin. I maintain the Library with books, magazines and reviews. I have done the scanning of the Bulletin from 1969 to 2000 and kept the PDF file up-to-date so that they can be uploaded on our Website by our web master, Mr. Bernard Perez. I take care of the printing of the labels and the packing and posting of the Bulletin, which is sent out from the Vatican Post Office. I keep the Accounts and send them to Sr. Marian Murcia, SFB, the Treasurer of SEDOS.

With the approval of the President, Sr. Georgeanne Marie Donovan, SMSM, I take the Minutes at the Annual General Assembly and at the other Executive Committee Meetings as necessary. I fetch the post and sometimes Ilaria also helps me. I do all the other work in

collaboration with the Executive Director, Sr. Nzenzili Lucie MBOMA, FMM, and Ilaria IADELUCA, the Secretary, and the Staff.

I am very happy that I could learn so many things by being on the Staff of SEDOS. Indeed SEDOS has also enabled me to interact with various people from different cultural backgrounds, especially thanks to the enriching moments I had during the Residential Seminars. I am grateful for the encouragement I received from the Executive Director, Sr. Nzenzili Lucie MBOMA, FMM. I shall always be grateful to her. I work with commitment, dedication and with sincerity to the Lord who called me.

Thanking you,

Sr. Celine KOKKAT, JMJ

C. Miss Philippa Wooldridge, A Long-time SEDOS Proof-reader

Very creative, a woman of few words and very concise Philippa found joy in crafting the definition of:

S E D O S:

S Servizio –
Serenità –
Serieta' –

E E senz'altro
Energia.

D Diffusione della Documentazione
Con Dedizione.

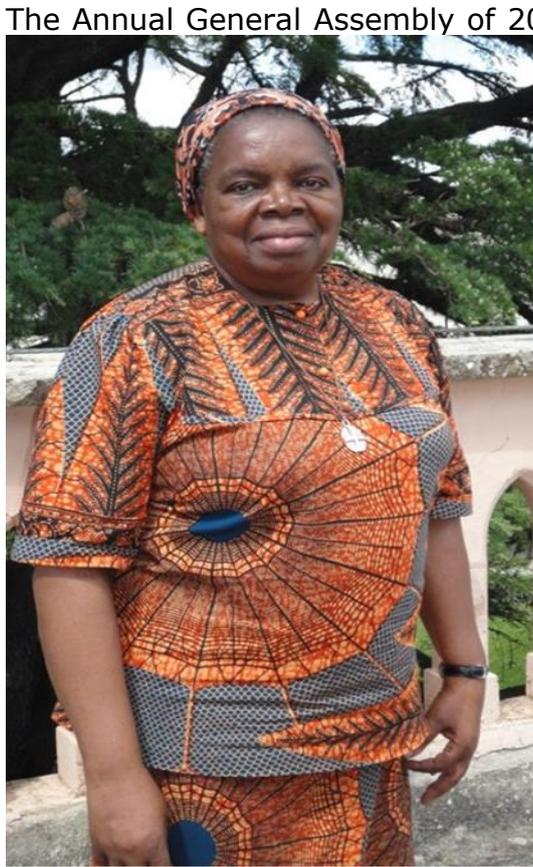
O Opportuna Osservazione,
ossia

S Sapienza e stile, sempre.

Philippa



V. Fifty Years of SEDOS: Blazing Prophetic and Contextualized Missionary Paths



The Annual General Assembly of 2009 appointed me as Executive Director, but I was only able to free myself in January 2010. Fr. Carlos Rodriguez Linera, OP, my predecessor waited for me and took some time to initiate me to the functioning of this meaningful, as well demanding as very gratifying mission. SEDOS in its diverse articulations, has an important effect to the universal mission of the Church because it secures the ongoing formation for mission of its Institutes/Orders members. I discover that SEDOS faithfully keeps with its foundational vision, is an awesome trailblazer of new ways of doing God's Mission in the sense that it has been a very effective and an efficient tool in the study and the deepening of our understanding of the global mission of the Church. Being an outcome of Vatican II, SEDOS Members kept on, for the past fifty years, expressing and translating for today the freshness that gave us the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, which is "the marvelous work of the Holy Spirit" (Pope Francis), and John Paul II singles it out as "a compass by which to take our bearings in the vast ocean of the third Millennium" (NMI 57-58).

We always come together as an inter-congregational union undergirded with the desire to explore new contexts and trends; to experiment new and creative ways to effectively communicate the Gospel in a globalized world, and to experience the overwhelming outcome of networking. We always choose the topics for the SEDOS Annual Residential Seminar after a thorough reading of the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel, the teachings of the Church, and from the sharing of our lived experiences in mission during the Seminars, analyzing as well the opportunities as the challenges. The Working Groups in close collaboration with the Executive Committee determine the objective and conceive the final plan and the strategies to achieve the foreseen goals. The conclusive resultants from the evaluation offer elements that help us to rekindle our passion for God's Mission.

The themes cover a wide range of disciplines from the theology of Mission to the Information and Communication Technology, Sociology,

The centrality of the reading of the signs of the times and the networking is at the heart of SEDOS Mission. A concrete example is reflected in the Summary of Responses on the Megatrends that transform our mission elaborated 2009 by Fr. Pio ESTEPA, SVD, Member of the previous Executive Committee of whose President was Fr. Edward TSIMBA, Superior General of the CICM; Fr. Pio ESTEPA is the one who conducted that very historical Survey from which I have been drawing inspiration as we carried on the planning of Public Conferences and Annual Residential Seminars in

the subsequent years. His conclusion confirms once more that "the vision for which SEDOS was originally founded remains ever valid and vital."

SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSES to the SEDOS questionnaire of October 2009

To start with, Fr. Pio ESTEPS, SVD, sent "Many thanks to the Congregational Leadership Teams that generously responded to the questionnaire!

1. What current global megatrends appear to you as significantly transforming our mission situations of today?

The summary that follows tries to interpret how the megatrends highlighted by the respondents are interrelated within a coherent missiological 'narrative'. Fr. Pio ESTEPA pulled out five global megatrends.

Global Megatrend 1 ► The fiercely capitalistic project of nations to attain 'economic progress' has not only worsened the wide GULF BETWEEN RICH AND POOR, but even between 'developing' and 'developed' countries.

Firstly, at a global scale, it is spawning new forms of CRIME, VIOLENCE and ABUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS (e.g., human trafficking especially of children and women).

Secondly, the worse effect of such unbridled economic exploitation of Nature today is the ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION –the cause of CLIMATE CHANGE threatening our planet with ecological extinction.

Ecclesial Impact ► Mission today as *diakonia*, has to help promote ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE that works for re-creating a healthful habitat for the present as well as future generations of humankind.

Global Megatrend 2 ► MIGRATIONS within and among countries are presently impacting on national populations in two major ways.

Firstly, the population of almost all developing countries is shifting from rural to urban zone at differing rates ... yet faster than their respective governments are ready to cope with the social problems consequent to URBANIZATION.

Secondly, people of differing creeds, classes and cultures come to live side by side in urban settings sooner than they may be ready and willing to resolve conflicts arising from such MULTICULTURALITY.

Ecclesial Impact ► Mission today as *koinonia* has to help promote INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE and INTERRELIGIOUS FELLOWSHIP. In war-torn countries of today, the healing ministry of SOCIAL RECONCILIATION best serves as mediating phase.

Global Megatrend 3 ► Today, anywhere and anytime, one can access electronic and audiovisual 'cyberspace' through the advanced MEANS OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION that are ubiquitous and affordable.

Firstly, this cyberspace is serving as a 'global megamall' for divergent and even conflicting worldviews and value systems –secular and religious alike. Though SECULARIZATION is presumed to be ongoing, RELIGIOUS REVIVAL –ranging from militant fundamentalism to inclusive syncretism (e.g., New Age)– emerges as a surprising global countertrend. Thus, religion is coming back to the public (political) sphere as potent cultural force.

Secondly, cyberspace is also serving as 'global school' where POSTMODERNITY challenges, and competes with, western secular modernity as cosmopolitan 'spirit of the age' (*Zeitgeist*). The latter ethos exalts progress, knowledge, and nation. To the contrary, postmodernity –as generally manifest through the mindset and lifestyle of urban youth worldwide– more highly values the *present* ('the future is now'), *pleasure* ('whatever turns you on'), and one's free and unique *person* ('different folks, different strokes').

Ecclesial Impact ► Mission today as *keryma* has to assume the platform and process not only of ECUMENISM and INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE –but also of INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE with the postmodern youth ... who feel alienated from institutionalized religions.

Global Megatrend 4 ► Concurrent with the global SOUTHERN SHIFT of the Catholic population (since the year 2000, 65% of Catholics live south of the globe) is the NORTHERN SPREAD of Islam in Europe and North America. The latter trend owes its sociocultural force much more to massive migration and natural demographic growth ... than by militant proselytism.

Ecclesial Impact ► As we lose many of Catholic youth to present-day CONSUMERISM, traditional Islam –based on familial upbringing– may be revealing what Catholics have overlooked: that *mission begins at home and family* as locus for handing down the faith.

Global Megatrend 5 ► WOMEN'S LIBERATION today may be seen as resulting from the concurrent impact of urbanization and mediatization. On the one hand, urban multiculturalism is setting women free from the traditional (rural) role that has confined them to childbearing and homemaking. On the other hand, POST-INDUSTRIAL ECONOMY has been briskly tilting national labor force toward the tertiary sector (goods and services). The consequent increase in the demand for information- and people-processing jobs has been luring women to study and compete for such work ... for which they seem better apt than men. To the degree that women gain financial autonomy, they feel free to reshape their social role and personal lifestyle as they please.

Ecclesial Impact ► The priestly ordination of women remains a controversial issue. Yet mission today as *koinonia* urgently calls for finding new ways of 'corresponsibly' sharing ecclesial leadership with women –lay and religious alike– in the Catholic Church.

2. How can SEDOS be of (better) help in the search for envisioning anew the mission enterprise of the Church in our century?

The respondents congratulate and thank the SEDOS leadership team:

- for having offered diverse channels for intercongregational dialogue and ongoing formation around current global issues of vital mission relevance ... all at most affordable prices;
- for empowering religious women in intercongregational leadership ... on equal footing with religious men;
- for giving voice to missionary experiences, reflections and concerns in Rome as ecclesial capital ... that tend to enclose itself in a Europe-centered understanding of Church and Mission.

For these reasons it is unanimously believed that the vision for which SEDOS was originally founded remains ever valid and vital.

The proposals offered for further broadening the vision and aims of SEDOS are:

- to break out from a western- or Europe-centered way of viewing and framing global and ecclesial issues and to reflect more the plural mindsets of the Southern Church;
- to keep on challenging religious congregations –especially the male ones– to break out from being institutional ‘islands’ ... and to sustain the intercongregational search for new prophetic ways/forms of missionary presence and service, especially among the poor and marginalized;
- to explore new ways of intercongregational collaboration, as for examples: {1} networking in and through cyberspace, {2} SEDOS mission animation team(s) roving at the ecclesial grassroots;
- to include and ‘empower’ the laity, men and women, as our dialogue- and mission-partners;
- to reflect on whether SEDOS will be more effective by narrowing down the dialogue on mission *mainly* at the level of congregational leadership, or by broadening it so as to include *even* missionaries at the ecclesial grassroots.

Conclusion

Pope Francis invites everyone to be bold and creative in the task of rethinking... of evangelization. (EG, 33) And he goes on asserting that: “Challenges exist to be overcome! Let us be realistic, but without losing our joy, our boldness and our hope-filled commitment. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary vigour!” (EG, 109)

SEDOS is a timely and prophetic initiative because:

As SEDOS’ Members we draw strength, energy to enkindle our missionary enthusiasm from different activities organized by the Executive Committee and working Groups. Sister Georgeanne Marie DONOVAN, SMSM, Superior General and the President of SEDOS (2012-2013) found the right words to express it when she concluded the SEDOS Residential Seminar in 2013: “We gathered together as a “learning community”, and “a discerning community of faith, seekers on a journey who desire to live our discipleship of Jesus with integrity, with passion and with joy”. A learning and discerning community because we have allowed the Spirit to open our ears to hear with greater clarity and to open our hearts to a new impulse to carry the Word in the depths of our being as we move towards “the other” in genuine respect, acceptance and love. For in the end, love is all there is”.

Another picture of SEDOS’ gathering is sketched by Fr. Daniel IHUNNIA, MSP, who is preparing his doctoral thesis at the Pontifical Urban University. He is a student whom the Executive Committee invited to attend with some other African members of Diocesan Congregations. Fr. Daniel has such a concrete and realistic grasp of what SEDOS is, that we feel his report is worth publishing for those who do not know about SEDOS – what SEDOS means nor what its purpose is.

“During the seminar it was interesting to note the joy, the friendship and the enthusiasm which marked the faces of the participants. The fact that missionaries

travelled from different parts of the globe, bringing a variety of cultural and religious experiences provided that dimension of universality which is one of the essential marks of mission. It was also a balanced and inclusive event because there was that sense of value and appreciation of each other irrespective of whom. The presence and active participation of lay persons gave the seminar a definitive ecclesial balance. People listened and shared with frankness eliciting deep desires to spread the gospel joy in the world but especially among the poor who live in the margins of society”.

“The seminar was very unique because with it, SEDOS celebrated her 50th anniversary; a golden celebration with golden achievements and challenges. The logo of the celebration carries the following slogan, “Anointed and Sent: Remember, Celebrate, Renew”. The theme for the Seminar: “Sent by the God Who Surprises. New Ways of Being Missionary” summarizes all that could be elaborated here. But again, the quality of the experiences and reflections shared during the seminar cannot but be of great importance to the Church and to mission in the current socio-cultural dispensation. The seminar responded to many predominant questions of mission today. However, it encouraged an attentive and continued reading of the signs of the times with a great sense of contemplative interiority which provides the basis for a prophetic mission.”⁸ One of the interesting facts of the seminar was about the role of SEDOS as an institution in the Church. Discovering the intimate relationship between the Second Vatican Council’s Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, *AD GENTES* and the founding of SEDOS in 1964, one can comprehend not only the meaning but also why it is essential that the voice of SEDOS be urgently heard, within and outside the Church.

As an intercongregational union, we feel that many important things unite us! We really believe in the abundantly free working of the Holy Spirit, we always strive to learn so much from one another! It is not just about being better informed about others, but rather about reaping what the Spirit has sown in them and in their respective Congregations, which is also meant to be a gift for us. Through an exchange of gifts, the Spirit can lead us ever more fully into truth and goodness.” (cf. Pope Francis. EG, 246)

⁸ Daniel IHUNNIA, MSP. Student at the Pontifical Urban University and he is preparing his doctoral thesis. From his Evaluation of the Seminar: “**SEDOS SEMINAR 2014 MY EXPERIENCE;**” p.1.