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Mouvement international d'apostolat des milieux sociaux indépendants

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EDITORIAL

- **Words of our president**
- **Next MIAMSI General Assembly**
- **Lebanon: Difficulties and hope**
- **African Relais:**
- **On the move with blasé African youth**
- **Secretary of Latin America:**
 - Projets du SAL
 - Amazonie
- **European Relais:**
 - ACI - France
 - Italy: from city to city, let's talk about Europe
- **Indian Ocean Islands:**
 - A context common to the 4 countries, we share the same realities
 - Pope Francis in Madagascar
- **Announces**

Dear friends

What kind of world do we want? This is hardly a strange question for us.

Every day, the respective societies in which we operate are subjected to numerous stresses expressed by crises and hardships. Climate, injustice, power, migration, education, health, development ... it's a long list. These subjects are signs of a desire to live together that is complicated but often unifying, expressing hope for a better world.

In this newsletter you will find a lot of news from different countries which are involved in building a world full of love and gratitude where today we are craftsmen called on to carry on the work of our Creator.

Thank you all for your energy and perseverance.

Maryse Robert
President

Next MIAMSI General Assembly

Monday 26 - Thursday 29 October 2020
in a beautiful setting at Notre Dame du
Mont (Adma Fatka, Our Lady of the Mount)
near Jounieh in Lebanon.



Notre Dame du Mont

1/ The Statutory General Assembly where we will elect the next MIAMSI board for four years.

This general assembly is open to presidents of the movements.

2/ The forum where all members and friends of the movements are invited.

The topic:

"How to bear witness and engage in today's world for a more inclusive society?"

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but shall obtain eternal life. For God sent His Son into the world, not to judge the world, but to save the world through him."

Saint John (3, 16-17)

We will work more specifically on these aspects:

In our personal, social and political lives, we have all been witnesses and even players, in

situations that involve our relationship to:

POWER (Corruption, Violence, Transparency, Legality, Equity, ...)

MIGRATION and LIVING TOGETHER (harmony in differences, respect for minorities)

INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (respect for the environment, work, security, peaceful solutions)

Three speakers will help us reflect (a former MP, a Caritas representative and an expert representative of training and Islamic-Christian dialogue.

3/ Support for **Eastern Christians**. A special evening will be organized to better understand the issues in these countries and the future for Christians.

Come to share this beautiful experience where you will find 25 countries in the world from four different continents!!! By your respective membership dues, you are all MIAMSI members, we are looking forward to meeting you all.

Maryse Robert



The Lebanese team hosting us.

LEBANON, Difficulties and hope :

You have probably heard of Lebanon, known as "the cedar country" quoted in the Bible several times and designated a "message" country by Pope John Paul II.

Lebanon used to be thought of as "the Switzerland of the Middle East", the envy of all its neighbours, and enjoyed a golden age of prosperity until the so-called 1975 "civil war." But it is unfortunately no longer the case and is still paying the price of the post-war period.

Forty years have passed since then, and the Lebanese are now living in a world of corruption, and instability that is either political, military or economic. Poverty is rising, so is unemployment, not to mention the emigration of young people seeking a better future.

Our country, which has been invaded and occupied for centuries by different cultures and foreign armies, be they the Ottomans, the Allies during the War, the Arabs, the Jews and all kinds of armies, undergoes such interference, both social and cultural or otherwise, and resists in spite of everything.

Since the war was officially declared at an end in 1990, the Lebanese have still been suffering from the aftermath. A warlord can never be a peacemaker (De Gaulle-Churchill ...). Those who have hated each other, shot at each other in the name of some political or religious belief, come back and take over the reins of successive governments plunging citizens into political, economic and military insecurity. The bad management of the waste problem is proof of this, citing also the high cost of living that forces young people to emigrate, not to mention the lack of any notion of citizenship and community life.

Despite all these obstacles, there is currently a desire among the Lebanese, especially the young, to live and rebuild the land of their ancestors by learning from the mistakes of the past, updating the constitution, trying to inculcate this spirit of citizenship and sharing at the expense of denominational or doctrinal partisan notions.

For some time now, this constructive, positive spirit of revolt has been spilling over and more and more NGOs are opening up, with the specific aim of meeting the citizens' needs, both for city dwellers and villagers. The spirit of corporate responsibility is taking shape in some companies, ecology and environmental protection are starting to be part of the children's upbringing in some homes.

Among the activists, we can cite Ms. Marie Joëlle Tager, an agronomist who left France to return to Lebanon and lead her fight for environmental protection.

Of course there is corruption, civil disobedience, non-respect of others, distrust of state institutions has not disappeared, but the hope springing up in villages, civil society, universities, and schools, is matchless and is becoming an example to follow that will snowball.

Carole
20/09/2019

AFRICA

ON THE MOVE WITH BLASE AFRICAN YOUTH

The continent's situation of insecurity, repeated terrorist attacks and youth unemployment has not changed much in recent years. It seems even worse in recent times in a continent where over 65% of the population is made up of young people.

In education, the situation is worrying. *"Education at risk in West and Central Africa"* is the title of a Unicef report published on August 23, that highlights the negative impact of armed conflict on children in Africa. In June 2019, 9,272 schools were closed due to insecurity in eight countries in the region - Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo and Chad - three times the number recorded at the end of 2017. This situation affects over 1.91 million children and nearly 44,000 teachers who are denied education and employment respectively. Insecurity in northwest and southwest Cameroon has forced over 4,400 schools to close in these areas. More than 2,000 schools are closed in Burkina Faso, and over 900 are closed in Mali, because of increasing violence in both countries. In these countries, school closures due to attacks and threats of violence have increased sixfold in just over two years.

We cannot talk about young people in Africa without mentioning the particularly harsh conditions in many countries that make it difficult or impossible to exercise freedom and consequently choose a genuine life: poverty, hunger, exclusion, unemployment, exploitation, abandonment or absent parents and family, lack of valid educational models, counterexamples or even adult scandals, school dropouts, delinquency, crime, forced marriages, the phenomenon of child-women, street youth or those enlisted in irregular militias, etc. Obviously, such a picture spoils the young's joy of living, which leads to disillusioned, sad, depressed, melancholy youth with often no other alternative than artificial paradises (conformism, superficiality, hypocrisy, corruption, fraud, cheating, lying, relativism, immorality, permissiveness, laxity, escape, alcoholism, sexual debauchery, drugs, pornography, prostitution, money-grubbing, seeking the easy life, "instant gratification").

If all this seems hopeless, there is still a note of hope related to the Church's good news and the actions of people of goodwill committed to the apostolate, whether members of MIAMSI or other social organizations, that reach out via various actions to these young people seeking meaning to their lives. They are not alone.

Like the disciples of Emmaus with whom Jesus was travelling, the Lord continues to walk with today's youth through his Church. To listen to them, the young people of Africa recognize themselves perfectly in these two characters walking away from Jerusalem that Jesus brings back (Cl 24,33). Indeed, today Christ still wants to walk with this youth experiencing a deep crisis of meaning and turning their backs on the Jerusalem of their country, family, the Church and ethical values to take the road to Emmaus.

May the Holy Spirit support everyone's efforts in this journey.

*Prosper HONAGBODE,
Vice-president of MIAMSI for Africa*

LATIN AMERICA

Youth Mission

Following on from the previous team's work, the Latin American Secretariat has prioritized the youth mission for building up and expanding our movement.

We are experiencing changes so profound that some writers consider this a change in age. We are witnessing a qualitative leap in human consciousness that involves changes in culture, relationships, and global organization. Today's young people act differently and see the world with different eyes. These new features of youth are a

challenge and an opportunity to evangelize them in a new light.

The experience of the youth group in Bolivia together with the marriage of Carolina Loureiro and Enrique Herbas shows us that we can provide young people with a space for listening, acceptance, recognition, tolerance and inclusiveness based on their needs.

SAL is proposing the youth mission. To do this, it will encourage the movements in each country to form youth groups or build up existing ones. Then, Carolina and/or Enrique will make a mission visit to meet and motivate the youth group and train the companions for this new experience of working with youth.

Relationship between SAL and national movements

SAL has organized virtual videolink meetings with leaders in Bolivia, Peru and Uruguay. In Brazil, a SAL member paid a visit. The objective is to establish dialogues to find out the needs and challenges of the Movement in each country.

National Assemblies

The Peruvian Movement's National Assembly was held on 28 September - 2 October in Arequipa. Similarly, the Brazil RCB National Assembly, Statutory Assembly and National Council will meet on 21 - 26 October in Olinda, Pernambuco. Both assemblies will be attended by SAL members.

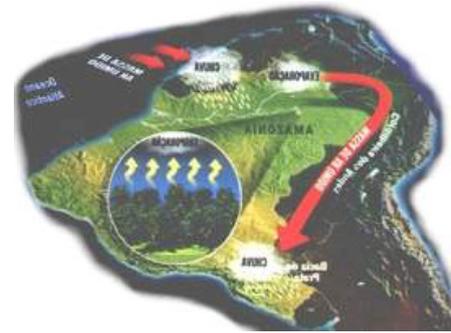
The Amazon Synod

The Amazon is a vast green territory known as "the world's lung," that covers a large part of the territory of Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and as far as Paraguay. The

Synod is part of our movements' ecological awareness motivated by the reflection on the encyclical *Laudato Si*. The scope of the Amazon Synod goes beyond the local environment and extends to a reflection on the Church's role in today's world.

It also coincides with a huge forest fire occurring in this region, an ecological disaster covering the land of several countries. This fire has sparked great ideological discussions about its causes. The topics of renewal in our Church and the ideological discussion on the fate of this global ecological reserve will be the backdrop to the Synod.

Gerónimo Bellasai
Vice President for Latin America



Amazon

What happened in the Amazon in August 2019

Faced with alarming data on increasing devastation of the Amazonian forest detected by satellite systems, the Federal Prosecutor is investigating an advertisement in a state newspaper in Pará, calling on farmers to promote the "fire day" on August 10th.

Smoke has affected aircraft flights, boats and local hospitals, causing respiratory problems mainly in children and the elderly.



European countries in the amazonic zone

The American biologist Thomas Lovejoy has been studying the Amazon for 50 years. Noting the many changes the area has undergone during this period, he warned that the current situation was "the antithesis of Sustainability combined with encouragement by Heads of Government." According to him, this time, there is a drastic drop in command and control.

The combination of extensive deforestation, fire abuse and climate change is damaging the hydrological cycle.

Caption: "Flying Rivers" Trail



"Flying rivers" are the massive air currents in the form of water vapour from tropical areas of the Atlantic Ocean and fed by moisture evaporating from the Amazon rainforest. These rivers of moisture, which quickly cross the atmosphere over the Amazon to reach the Andes, cause rainfall over 3,000 km away in southern Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and northern Argentina and these are vital to agricultural output and the lives of millions of people in Latin America.

This time, the winds that swept them into the centre-south of the country brought images of smoke, soot and ash.



The smoke that set in Sao Paulo at 3 pm on August 19 must be seen as a message: it is time to stop current destructive practices and return to sustainable management and protection of the great forest.

*Anna Maria Nigro
Sao Paulo / Brésil 30/08/2019*

EUROPE

Let's live Europe! Last November, our four European ACI movements, Belgium, France, Italy and Portugal, met with the European Board to work on the topic "With our differences, take up common challenges for evangelization today."

Here are a few examples:

Portugal: Re-Evangelization

Italy: From City to City Let's Talk About Europe

Brussels: Testimony from a Syrian couple

France: Many cities have worked on this topic (Europe and us / Participation in Europe / Europe Day, what place for Christians? / A Europe open to the world / Which Europe do we want? Would the Fathers of Europe recognize their children? / What participation is there by Christians in European construction?)

You can find all this and Florence's text on the French ACI website

www.acifrance.com

ITALY – from city to city, let's talk about Europe



"Europe at a crossroads between globalization, sovereignty and populism."

"The Europeans, in a process of, that might be called, with some exaggeration, refounding the Union, are called on to look to the future while thinking of the present, by becoming what everyone can see," characterized by "ever more incisive globalization, not only in economics, that upsets old forms of sovereignty by making any sovereignty that inspires them unrealistic, but which at the same time reveals the inanity of populism faced with the global spread of ruthless economic competition." This is what Giuseppe Dalla Torre says, Rector Emeritus of Lumsa and Presiding Judge of the Vatican State Court, who, along with other intellectuals including Paola De Gasperi, daughter of the great Italian statesman who was one of the founding fathers of the European Union, is signing the leaflet launched by Rinascita Cristiana for the European elections on May 26 to remind us of the "European project that the proposed candidates will achieve."

According to Dalla Torre, "to defend the great values that express the continent's civilization – individual dignity, inviolable rights, freedom, equality, solidarity - Europeans are called on to strengthen cohesion in the Union by strengthening internal democracy, knowing that everyone's contribution guarantees seeking the common good, to safeguard the liberties resulting from the various identities, which are historical reserves of vital resources, in a

coherent, clear and united framework, to reaffirm the Union's independence in the concert of world powers, but knowing that in a globalized world, it is necessarily part of a dense network of relationships that makes everyone interdependent.

INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS



"No peace without justice ... Promoting justice and peace in our islands"

"A context common to the 4 countries, we share the same realities"

First of all, a great opportunity to make a statement on the state of society in our various islands:

In a context common to all four countries:

unemployment

poverty and the huge contrast between rich and poor

the drug issue, corruption

breakdown of the family unit

The people in these Catholic Action Teams testified that they find Hope to Commit in their faith and through their monthly friendly meetings.

They firmly believe that God precedes them and that acting where we are for a better world is to bring God into the spaces of the Kingdom already there at the heart of our societies.

Hence the importance of doing one's bit ... God at work in this age, as Father Kerhardy reminded us during one of our retreats.

"We are not the prophets of a world lost, we are the witnesses to a world saved "

- The lack of war does not guarantee peace

- The need for training in awakening political awareness among our fellow citizens in our islands
- Reconciliation, then justice and peace while considering our history, which is sometimes burdensome or unknown to the population.
- We baptized must act against the degradation of this world, connect the realities of life to prayer and serve the world.
- Justice means adapting to others and helping them adapt their lives as adults
Adapting oneself also means becoming aware of great causes of injustice, to move towards this consciousness.

Following input from Dr. Jonathan RAVAT, director of the ICJM social studies team, who renewed our approach to the 3 stages of Catholic Action spirituality in our context today.

And we found **"Trust, renewed hope"** Sharing was rich. We left with avenues for action:

- Take time in the family to seek ways of peace
- Seek the causes of poverty and act to reduce it
- Take an interest in politics and vote wisely
- Understand our country's economy and question it when it creates injustice
- Take action to build bridges between communities and work towards changing our mindsets.

Consequences of this meeting:

Reunion ACI asked Jonathan Ravat to come and hold a training session for its members on two weekends in April and August of this year.

They were great meetings where the faith and thought of those present were shaken up!

Both weekends taught us that:

- our teams are called on to be ecclesiola, small, domestic churches where we can personally experience an intimate, ecclesial relationship with God: plunging into the intimate relationship with God, in his Love and prime Energy, and resurfacing to act in an ecclesial dimension;
- our movements are also called on to participate in the changes in the structures of sin, reflecting on it and questioning constantly;

- and, above all, before anything else, our movement, with the two missionary aspects above, will persist only if it is carried by spirituality, the Spirituality of Faith and Life Catholic Action; in doing so, and only in this way will it be the privileged movement that will enable Christians - priests, deacons, religious, laity - to discover and live the Church's social teaching.

But in a Church that is called on to experience a transition, we will have to do a life review:

- on the future of our movement structures.
- on the notion of an independent milieu that has lost all its original meaning in our contemporary 21st century societies.

Church in transition, movement in transition ...
It's up to us to be part of this change...

Geneviève and Françoise

Pope Francis in Madagascar.



This Saturday Pope Francis spoke to the authorities of Madagascar, one of the poorest countries on the planet

Some of us attended the 2008 General Assembly in Madagascar and visited the Akamasoa model town. The Holy Father's words echo many of our beliefs and our hopes, but we are Independent Milieus, decision-makers. Will we hear these words and really change?

Combating "inhumane" poverty, fighting endemic corruption, the need to serve one's fellow citizens ... From the outset, the Pope reminded

politicians that their primary mission was to promote conditions for dignified, fair development in the Island and how human beings, especially the most fragile, should be at the heart of such development.

Taking care of what he calls "our common house", listing, in passing, various oh-so-topical threats that weigh on the island such as **excessive deforestation** for the benefit of a few, **poaching** or the **unbridled logging of precious wood**.

Then, quoting an excerpt from his encyclical *Laudato Si* on ecology, he recalled that **"there are no two separate crises, one environmental and one social, but a single, complex, socio-environmental crisis."**

Then he made a point of warning the international community. While recognizing the help it gives, Francis nevertheless stressed that being too ready to help Madagascar open up to the world, risked locking the country into **"a so-called universal culture that despises, buries and removes each people's cultural heritage."**

This is a call to respect everyone's way of life and an invitation to the Malagasy people to become the forgers of their own destiny.

So to succeed in this great enterprise, the Pope reiterated the need to pay attention and respect to local civil society, the very one that, by its actions, makes *"the voices of those who have no voice"* more audible. A civil society that today is still struggling to make itself heard on the Great Island and which was expecting a lot from the Pope's speech.

The Argentine pope, visibly ecstatic, then came to enjoy the model town of his fellow-countryman, Father Pedro Opeka, a former pupil of his at the seminary. The place most closely embodies the central message of his pontificate, turned to those who are excluded and have revolted against social inequalities.

The founder of the town of Akamasoa ("good friends" in Malagasy) has lifted thousands of people out of poverty by creating a town of 25,000 inhabitants on a former rubbish dump. He is described as "the arm of God" or "the second pope" by those who owe their better lives to him.

Side by side with the charismatic, 71-year-old white-bearded Argentine priest, the 82-year-old pope entered a gymnasium in the town crowded with nearly 10,000 delirious young people, waving flags in perfect unison. "Akamasoa is the expression of God's presence in the midst of his poor people," said François in his opening words.



Notices :

The African Board met in Bamako, Mali, on 12 - 15 September.

Training sessions were held in Reunion Island on 13-14 April and 30 August - 1 September

The European Board in Lisbon, Portugal on 12 - 13 October.

The SAL GA will be held in Olinda, Brazil on 22 - 26 October

INGO Forum on 5 - 7 December in Rome