



MIAMSI NEWSLETTER N°9

International movement of apostolate in independent social milieus

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The opinions expressed in the articles are exclusively those of the authors

EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

“Go on ! Make disciples of all nations: baptize them in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

This Newsletter, the first of the 2022-2025 mandate, coincides with the return of the movements from the holiday break in several countries. Thus, we will have the echoes of our regions and even of our countries marked by the efforts of each other in the field of the apostolate in the following of Christ. We are taking up the torch revived by the General Assembly in Rome last March around witnessing and commitment in today's world for a more inclusive society.

In this Newsletter with a strong environmental tone, we will share with our readers the results of the activities of some countries, the preparations for the Arequipa meeting which is mobilizing all Latin America, an article devoted to climate change and information and messages that will help us move on.

Good mission to all of us.

Prosper Honagbodé
President

ECHOES FROM OUR REGIONS

EUROPE

ACI France - Vacation university of Dijon: Lessons to be learned from the round tables

Three round tables were organized on the different forms of commitment (look), the meaning of our commitments (discern) and the societal challenges of our commitments (transform). Here you will find lighting from each of these round tables.

Round table 1: The different forms of commitment

The first round table dealt with the different forms of commitment. As a philosophy teacher, Pierre Durand gave us food for our thoughts.

The period is full of opportunities to renew our views on commitment.

Pierre Durand proposes three lines of questioning:

What happens when I am caught in a commitment process? Is there an evolution in the forms of engagement?

What is it to engage in a society in deconstruction?

What benchmarks should be set so that the commitment does not disappear?

In commitment there is **otherness**. When we commit, we lose something, we let go of something, we let go to move towards the unexpected.

In the commitment there is also something of the order of a **responsibility**, responsibility towards a territory, a generation, something that happens and that obliges me. Commitment is not an emotional runaway.

Commitment is based on a **call** that is articulated with a **promise**. Committing is not a personal fantasy, the person who commits enters a framework that precedes him.

Pierre Durand refers to Emmanuel Lévinas and talks about the presence of the face of the other which is an implicit call from which I cannot escape (cf. parable of the good Samaritan).

Commitment also presupposes **donation** and **gratuity**.

In terms of evolution, Pierre Durand tells us that the levers of commitment are no longer carried by activists but in ministerial cabinets, public speech no longer has value, the space for political speech is shrinking, no one thinks of changing the world anymore.

As for the forms of commitment that could remain relevant, Pierre Durand sets aside prayer and insists on the issue of care, which creates a new figure of the committed: **the one who is able to take care, able to look at the needs of others, in a small area**. Pierre Durand also quotes Bruno Latour who raises the question of desire.

Round table 2: The meaning of commitment: can we live without commitment?

Today as yesterday, commitment is not self-evident, getting involved remains a minority phenomenon. However, the fight against climate change, the reception of migrants and local investment are mobilizing new groups of women and men of all generations.

It seems that a vital force, a deep dynamism pushes people to get involved. If this commitment results from an original personal journey, nourished by a family, professional or cultural education, it develops in stages, through encounters and chance.

Jin Zhang, violinist and violin teacher, who led an exemplary career as a musician in Beijing, in accordance with the wishes of her parents and the privileged background to which she belonged, testified to her decision to leave her country to live a different life which seemed to her more exhilarating. Today, it is the transmission of her art to young children that fulfills her passion for music.

Natalia Pouzyreff, MP re-elected in June, explained that concern for the common good, her vision of business and the desire to see women take on responsibilities, made her decide to get involved in politics.

“I only have one life” underlined Gilles Vermot-Desroches, director of the citizenship commitment of the Schneider Electric group, to express the continuity between his professional commitment and his other commitments, to the Economic, Social and Environmental Council and within the Catholic Church.

All of them also testified that it is not possible to truly commit, without learning to hold to one's convictions, an ideal, while managing contradictions and compromises within organizations. You must know how to recover from failures too, face difficulties to finally build your life path. It is it who also gives meaning to our commitments.

Round table 3: Commitment and vision of the world - The challenges for society

Our commitments reveal our vision of the challenges for society: fight against global warming, for the inclusion of vulnerable people, defend culture through music, sport...

They take various forms: assumption of responsibilities, citizen mobilizations... Committing for whom, for what? Commitment reveals how the individual perceives and gives meaning to his environment and the challenges in economic, ecological, social and societal terms that society is going through. Ecological, demographic transition: immigration and retirement, societal and social, democratic: ecological threat to humanity, violence of politics in France and the violence of undemocratic countries and partition of the world. In each of these areas, actions: reception of immigrants, ecological transition, solidarity economy, information and training of young generations, political commitment: which contribute to the general interest and the common good.

For society to be inclusive, it needs everyone to feel a member of this society and through their involvement in work, in family life, in schools and universities, in the associative world, in politics, they contribute to a society which is also a community of humans. Through our

commitments, we seek to promote an integral and united humanism. We are convinced that the power to act is also in our hands and that we are a force for changing society and our living environments.

This round table was held with Catherine Gay (regional elected official), Mathieu Asseman (association activist) and Bénédicte Halba (president of *iriv*).

LATIN AMERICA

SAL - Marching towards ELAM 2022

The Latin American Meeting (ELAM) will take place in Arequipa, Peru, from October 6 to 10, on the theme “Building Fraternity in the new realities of our society”.

Around this theme, the members of the different countries first worked on questions that stimulate “Seeing”. The responses showed that the same issues were observed in the different regions. Based on the answers obtained and shared, the questions that stimulate the “Judging” are being worked on, while the “Acting” will be done by the working groups in Arequipa. More information is available on the website:

www.miamsi-rome.org/members/sal



Members of MIAMSI from Arequipa (Peru) organizing ELAM 2022.

Brazil – The Agricultural Problem and the Devastation of the Amazon and its Peoples

“Everyone has the right to an ecologically balanced environment, common property for people and essential to a healthy quality of life, imposing on the public authorities and the community the duty to defend and preserve it for present and future generations.” Article 225 of the Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988.

The result of the absence of an agrarian reform policy for peasants and the demarcation of indigenous territories, as well as the protection of their life and environment, as required by the Federal Constitution of 1988, transformed the Brazilian countryside, mainly the legal Amazon, into a blood-soaked desert. In several regions of this zone, an area of about 110 million hectares that covers nine states (Amazonas, Acre, Rondônia, Roraima, Amapá, Mato Grosso, Pará, Tocantins and Maranhão), live in about 180 communities, totaling more of 440,000 indigenous people and several isolated groups, who are natural inhabitants of this biome. Peasants, rubber tappers and quilombolas (descendants of fugitives from the time of slavery) also live there and suffer from the violence and devastation of their lands.



Child of the Xavante people (Mato Grosso, Brazil). Photo by Antonieta de Sant'Ana.

The expansion of deforestation, land grabbing for agriculture, mining and logging in recent years has had a devastating impact on the planet's largest biodiversity reserve and its inhabitants like never seen before. In July 2021, the cumulative deforestation alert was 8,512 km², the highest since 2016 ^[1]. Environmental agencies such as ICMBio and IBAMA have been torn apart by the Bolsonaro government, whose clear objective has always been to facilitate all forms of devastation, in terms of deforestation, logging, mining, including the leasing of indigenous lands and the illegal sale of land.

The birthplace of the Apurinã people in the southern Amazon is threatened by NEMUS - an international company that buys land through NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens), i.e. purchases through digital assets. The company commercializes real environmental reserves digitally with the conservation proposal, violating

the rights and without the prior consent of indigenous people. The complaint was filed by Journal Brasil de Fato of August 9, 2022. The Brazilian Public Ministry has already triggered Nemus, however this does not mean the protection of the Amazon.

There are two pressing issues to consider. In the first place, the violence against the people of the forest, repeatedly and continuously performed, perverse, propagated, encouraged and naturalized even more by the Bolsonaro government and its allies fuels a conservative, fascist and predatory society.

The second problem to consider is the desertification of the Amazon rainforest, which will lead to catastrophic impacts all over the planet, since 17% of the forest has already been totally destroyed and an additional 17% is made up of degraded areas, as alerted by the first COP - 26, Scotland, 2021, made in the panel with more than 200 scientists, mostly from the Amazon countries, about this imminent risk. Brazilian scientists include climatologist Carlos Nobre from the University of São Paulo and biologist Mercedes Bustamante from the University of Brasília.



Fire ignited in Conceição do Araguaia (Pará, Brazil) for agriculture. Photo by Antonieta de Sant'Ana.

We must join the fight and save the forest or we will all perish.

Francisca Santos, member of RC Brazil in Rio de Janeiro is also a photojournalist, activist for the indigenous cause, member of the Dominican commission of Brazil for justice and peace and executive director of the Centro Vivo da Memória Contemporânea

[1] Source: INPE - National Institute for Space Research (Brazil)

AFRICA

Senegal: We must save our planet at all costs

The fight against climate change is far from being won. While we are experiencing heat peaks almost never observed and very trying floods, the local authorities of the SEDHIOU region turn a blind eye to the felling of trees in the said area. In total recklessness and alarming impunity, malicious people, without faith or law, cut up the emblematic caïlcédrats bordering the national road (RN 21).



This leads us to wonder about the real motives of such an enterprise, if not the supply of wood and derivatives (charcoal) to a network which has solid roots in the locality. Today, it is clear that the number of these imposing trees has drastically decreased, thus accelerating climate change and its many corollaries.



Security reasons cannot be put forward to fundamentally justify the massacre of these century-old trees, given their juvenile nature.

Moreover, the possibility of pruning the branches which would constitute a danger does indeed exist, rather than having recourse to this ignoble bleeding. Let us recall here that this same species of tree is present in large cities such as Thiès, Mbour and even in Dakar plateau in the city center.

Obviously, our authorities will only have respite when these trees have completely disappeared from our landscape.

This is so unfortunate!

Pascal A. NDEYE, MIAMSI Senegal

Discovering an initiative from MIAMSI Burundi (RCCSL)

The Network of Catholic Christians “Salt and Light” (RCCSL) which is a network of Christians and people of good will who have chosen to promote a more human and more fraternal world, a reconciled, peaceful and prosperous Burundi by developing in society a pluralism made of welcoming differences and mutual individual and collective questioning and deepening communication, communion, and common responsibility in particular regarding the poor and vulnerable groups identified in society has noticed a phenomenon of increasing unemployment especially among young people in our country and decided to give its contribution in the reduction of this unemployment through its program entitled “Saint André Program (PSA)”.

This Saint Andrew Program aims to contribute to the reduction of youth unemployment which is a real challenge in our country. Following the Apostle Andrew, we generously offer what we are and what we possess to improve the lives of young unemployed people, aiming to animate and revive their hope.

The project started on 18/6/2022 and concerns pig farming. The project is very young but the result will not be long in coming. The PSA started with 2 sows, a boar and 3 piglets. Currently the 2 sows will give birth at the end of November and we hope that the litter will give us an average of 8 piglets per sow.

The next project on the RCCSL's agenda is an even more inclusive project and concerns different forms of health insurance. It is a large project and it will help many vulnerable Burundians without health care coverage.

Impressions of PSA youths

1. The Saint André Program is a good initiative that our dear members of the RCCSL (who created us) established, to let them discover all young unemployed people, especially those in Burundi. We welcome this good idea of bringing all young people together by helping them to know how to become united and create development projects. When young people get together they can develop ideologically and acknowledge what to do as this proverb often says: In unity lays the strength. Our ideas focus on development projects between ourselves, and this is a basis that brings us together to feel our spiritual brotherhood.

The PSA comes to help the dioceses of our country to be able to know the young unemployed people who are scattered all over the country. We continue to thank the RCCSL for this PSA program which has put us in place and we ask them to continue to follow us closely and monitoring the activities that we have started, we are beginners in the program, we need their advice and support to achieve our goals. The PSA program brought together a hundred young people advising them on how to put their ideas together, find mutual aid projects, etc. We count on the RCCSL to implement our projects, we are at the beginning of our activities we need a lot of advice and means to better develop spiritually and economically.

2. The PSA is a project inspired by the gospel, which is a source of human and fraternal values. The fact that it brings together young adults without distinction and for a small contribution for the project chosen by consensus is very encouraging. The members of the PSA elected their representatives to the

running of this project in collaboration with those nominated by the RCCSL. The union of ideas with few means is the strength of the PSA. The project will inspire the spirit of unity, leadership and initiative. The RCCSL is at the origin of this inclusive project. Thank you RCCSL for the PSA and all upcoming projects.

ASIA

India – Kanyakumari:

We are having meetings regularly every month. And we are giving some assistance for educational purposes to poor students and we are also giving assistance to healthcare programs and paying for the marriages of poor people. And we spent more than 200,000 rupees last year for economical assistance in studies, healthcare and marriages.

MARIE-LOUISE MONNET : Do you know her?

It was on May 4, 1964 that Marie-Louise Monnet was elected president of MIAMSI, whose first general assembly was held in Rome in September 1964, at the opening of the third session of the Second Vatican Council.

On September 20, 1964, after the mass, Pope Paul VI appointed Marie-Louise Monnet auditor to the Council. The surprise was general, as she is the first secular woman to be appointed to this function. She declares to the journalists: "I am an ordinary woman", which caused her to receive a considerable amount of mail. She entered the council on September 25, her birthday.

In 1966, to devote herself entirely to MIAMSI, she decided to live in Rome: "if you want a Church movement, it has to be in Rome". In 1970, she moved to an apartment in Trastevere, near the Palazzo di San Calisto where the MIAMSI offices are located until now.

Climate change and global crisis: what can we do?

Political, social and ecological crises have worsened on the planet. Global warming has reached an alarming level and ecological disasters are occurring in different parts of the world. As we see the deterioration of nature accelerating, it is no coincidence that military tensions are now so high, with the interminable war in Ukraine, the continued and growing American military presence around the world and in particular in the Middle East, and rising tensions in Taiwan.

The situation of the Amazon rainforest is also very serious. Its guardians, the original peoples of the forest, decimated and oppressed since the arrival of Europeans in America more than 500 years ago, are those who, through their resistance, have ensured that the forest continues to be an important source of oxygen for all of us. But this is unfortunately already changing and some (now devastated) areas of the forest are becoming oxygen consuming. Meanwhile, the original forest inhabitants continue to be pressed and massacred. One certainty: without these peoples, the forest will be decimated at a much faster rate, with unpredictable consequences for life on the planet. A probable fact: we, as members or influenced by Western culture, living in different parts of the world, Christians or not, contribute to this destruction, with the heavy hand of our consumption and our participation in the financial market.

Unfortunately, on all these issues, including global warming, there are lots of talking, but relatively little is done. We must make both political (top down) decisions and produce individual (bottom up) transformations of our way of life. Time is running out and the challenge is growing. The Doomsday Clock ^[1] is an initiative of researchers that aims to predict, based on concrete data, how close we are to a global catastrophe, called “midnight”. According to this prediction, in the current scenario, we are closer than ever, just 100 seconds from “midnight”.

In other words, our society requires profound and increasingly urgent transformations, including in our innermost circle of actions. But where to start?

When we look at the problems of the world, we can struggle to see how we ourselves have contributed to their occurrence. We therefore feel victimized and powerless. On the other hand, if we can identify our role, we have enormous possibilities for transformation and thus nurture great optimism.

One of the biggest challenges in this process is untangling the networks of information, getting closer to the truth, and finding an even more conscious form of social action. However, we know a very powerful method to help us overcome this difficulty: “See”, “Judge” and “Act”. This method is an excellent antidote against fake news at different levels that have multiplied in this reality of accelerated information overload that we live in.

We must deepen our adherence to the “See”, “Judge” and “Act” method to follow the impulse of the voices which are raising, with more or less clarity, in different social categories and nations. During our last general assembly in Rome, our speakers Scholtus and Essayan, the first with a more philosophical reflection and the second with concrete testimonies from Lebanon, drew attention to the fact that the Gospel has been corrupted. In a way, they gave us the invitation to seek to return to the Gospel. A course that is both simple and extremely complex.

A good clue emerged in the recent book written by researchers D. Graeber and D. Wengrow ^[2], which amazingly rescues the cultural and social value of ancient and current forest peoples, indicating possibilities of social organization without trade, without private property, without the need to give in order to receive, without economic oppression, without hierarchies, where everyone has the right to receive care, where everyone can be freer, where everyone becomes more responsible. Isn't this lifestyle much closer to the words of Christ?

Marília Braga, RC Brazil and
International Board member

[1] <https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/>

[2] *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*
(David Graeber and David Wengrow, 2021)

LISTENING TO THE POPE
Preaching the Gospel: Curia Reform

On June 28, 1998, Pope John Paul II, on the eve of the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, published a Constitution on the Roman Curia entitled “Pastor bonus”, in which he analyzed the work of the Roman Curia as a diakonia. On March 19, 2022, Pope Francis published an apostolic constitution, “Prædicate Evangelium”, in which he addresses all baptized Christians, even if he particularly targets the Roman Curia, to say that Christ has entrusted to all his disciples, as the first service, the service of preaching the Gospel.

Christ entrusted to all his disciples, as a first service, the service of preaching the Gospel. This service, the Christian, in the Church, “must render to every man and to all humanity in the world today”. Because every Christian is called to be “light of the world”. The whole constitution given by Francis is based on this mission of service. It is necessary, says the pope, to enter into this mission of service”, which is also a “mission of mercy”, which requires a “missionary conversion”. Service is the very nature of the Church as a mystery of communion. And there is no fellowship except in the act of service. Service requires knowing how to “listen”, because we always have to learn, “faithful, episcopal college, bishop of Rome: one listening to the other and all listening to the Holy Spirit, Spirit of Truth (Jn 14, 17)”.

Service is first and foremost the primacy of the Roman Pontiff, who is the “servant of servants”; it is also the service of the diocesan bishop or the college of bishops regarding the Churches. But it is the particular task of the Roman Curia, which is at the service of the pope who, “as successor of Peter, is the perpetual and visible principle and foundation of the unity of the bishops and of the multitude of the faithful”. On the other hand, the pope, bishops and other ordained ministers are not the only evangelizers. They “know that they were not instituted by Christ to assume for themselves the whole weight of the saving mission of the Church in the world”. This service in the Church is synodal. And here we find one of the great pastoral orientations of Pope Francis. All united, but each according to his function, his mission, his charism.

CALENDER / MEETINGS 2022

26-27 September	Study days for Catholic-inspired INGOs in Strasbourg
6-10 October	ELAM in Peru (Arequipa) www.miamsi-rome.org/members/sal
18 November	European Relay (online)
2-3 December	World Assembly of INGOs of Catholic inspiration in Rome

TRIBUTES TO THOSE WHO PASSED AWAY

Requiem for Father Antonisami Annaraj sj

August 15, 1943 – July 19, 2022
Jesuit Father – 32 years of missionary life in Reunion.

Requiem for Mom Sagara Odile Banou

The Relay of MIAMSI in Africa regrets to announce the passing to God of Sagara Odile Banou, mother of Emmanuel Sagara, president of the MCRC, MIAMSI-Mali, who died on Friday August 12, 2022 at the age of 97. The funeral took place the same day in Dourou, circle of Bandiagara, Region of MOPTI-Mali. Let us pray for the rest of the soul of the concerned person and a thought for our brother Emmanuel at this time when his country is going through a difficult security situation.