

# Echoes from the Plenary Council - 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019

## The Media and Social Networks

Stan introduced in a very clear way today's important topic. He began by citing what the 2016 chapter had said in 3.3

*'Cardinal Lavignerie demanded of us that we learn the languages and traditions of the people to whom we are sent. Today a new continent has appeared whose language is digital. The chapter asks us to remain faithful to this insistence of the Cardinal by learning this new language for our Mission of Evangelisation whilst at the same time making any discernment in accordance with our charism.'*

The General Council took seriously the challenge laid down by the chapter and for our Society, provinces, sectors and sections this has to be a priority and it will always be in view of evangelisation. We have all experienced the great task of learning languages, languages that helped us to become more rooted in a culture and be enriched by it. This is also the same with the digital language. Once again it is very much a question of seeing just what we have achieved on the ground wherever we are. This is also very much in view of seeing how we can move forward and make greater efforts to achieve even more. Already in Rome a workshop was held in 2018 concerning communication with each province and section represented. It was a great success and yet still more has to be done. Next year in 2020 workshops will be held in different provinces (SAP, EAP, PAO, PAC) where a greater number of confreres will be able to participate. The workshops will be for 10 days or more. In 2021 it is hoped that the workshops will be held in Ghana/Nigeria and Ethiopia.

The interest is there and some of those that participated in the last session continue to be very active in their various provinces. For example, the jubilee year was a great boost for such efforts in communications and there were many good initiatives taken. Small films were made; radio programmes were aired. We would be surprised by the number of articles, photos, clips that were produced on various M.Afr. web sites. It would suffice to google Missionaries of Africa, Cardinal Lavignerie etc to see the vast amount of material available to the public. In Rome we have equipped the meeting room of the General Council with all the modern means to be able to be in video link with most of our provincials (though we are still learning). We also desire to transform the Petit Echo and the Web Master's office into a joint office for communication. In view of this we will be sending a confrere for media and communication studies next year.

We realise more and more that such means of communication can be an important tool in our proclamation of the gospel as a prophetic and liberating word to the people of our times. Certainly in the face of greater secularisation, ever growing insecurity such communication must help us witness to our solidarity against all forms of conflict, division, injustice. Maybe above all else our skills in communication will help us to build bridges, to be more connected and thus create real and valuable relationships between all people. This surely is evangelisation.