

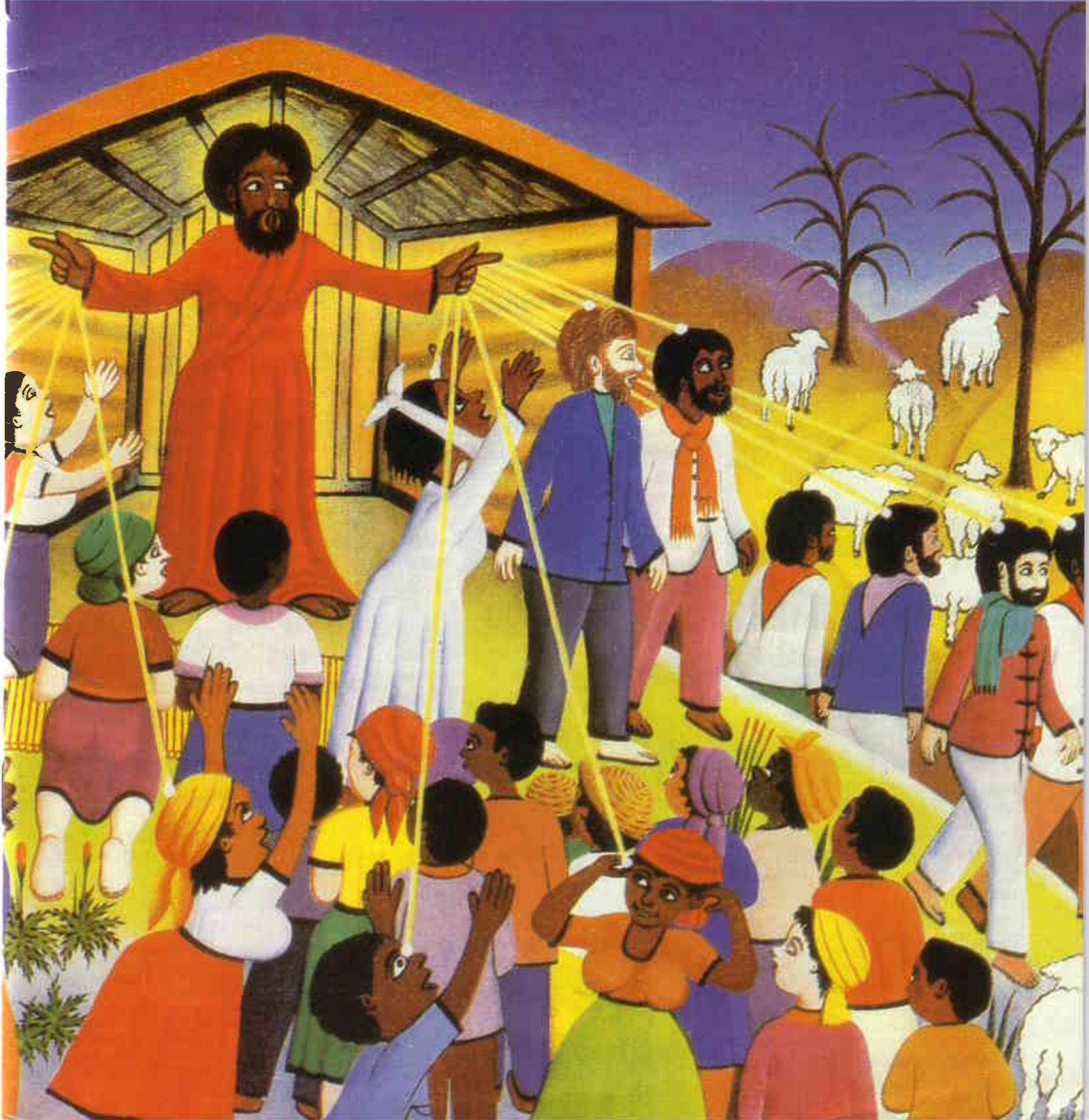
Spiritana

missionary news

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Haiti



The Dawn of a New Day?

Haiti was chosen as the focus of this issue of *Spiritan Missionary News* for a variety of reasons. Firstly, television and the print media have brought its recent troubled history into our living rooms on an almost daily basis. Secondly, the Spiritans have ministered to the people of Haiti since 1780. Thirdly, the team of Spiritans presently working in that anguished country exhibit



Fr. Pat Fitzpatrick and Fr. Dermot Doran with Fr. Jean-Yves Urfié, editor of *Libète*.

dedication, courage, and identification with the people they serve at a level that, without any hyperbole, can be called heroic. When you have read Pat Fitzpatrick's articles, written after a recent visit to Haiti, you will come to realize the calibre of the Spiritans of Haiti. You will share our belief that Antoine, Max, Jean-Yves, William, Pierre and their colleagues represent, at a high level, the spirit of our Spiritan movement.

The first missionaries, from the Spiritan Seminary in Paris, arrived in Haiti in the 1780's to instruct and

baptize the slaves in the sugar-cane plantations, and by 1848, Eugene Tisserand, a colleague of Francis Libermann, was named head of the Church in Haiti. Although born in France, Tisserand's mother was Haitian.

By 1860 the Spiritans were well established in the field of education: a characteristic of Spiritan evangelization. Collège Saint-Martial, founded at this time, was, for a century, the premier high school in the country.

But because the Spiritans, especially those on the staff of Saint-Martial, openly encouraged the people to question the political and economic policies of the dictator, Papa Doc Duvalier, most were expelled. In 1969, in solidarity with the expellees, the Spiritans withdrew all their members, and appointed them to work with Haitians-in-exile in Montreal, Brooklyn and the Bahamas.

When Baby Doc Duvalier was exiled in 1986, the team returned to Haiti and its members have laboured heroically in the works described by Pat Fitzpatrick later in this magazine. In the nine years since their return, they have become closely identified with the illiterate, the oppressed, the urban slum-dwellers, the rural poor.

They need our prayers and our moral support in their quest for justice and peace for a people who have suffered enough. By publishing this issue on Haiti, we wish to express to the Haitian Spiritans our solidarity with them in their struggle and our hope that a new day is dawning for Haiti and its people.

Gerald Fitzpatrick CSSy

CONTENTS:

- 2 Editorial
The Dawn of a New Day?
- 3 Reflection: Lent
Soul Searching
- 4 Reflection: Mission
Formation for What Mission?

HAITI — Daring to Hope...

- 6 The Spiritans in Haiti
- 10 What Happens to a Dream Deferred?
- 12 Going to the roots of Their Suffering
- 14 Audio-Visual Subversives
- 15 Finding the God of Life
- 17 Liberation Theology
- 18 What Is the Spirit Saying to the Church in Haiti?
- 19 Meeting Basic Local Needs
- 20 *Nou Tout se Legliz: All of Us Are the Church*
- 22 No Shortage of Spiritan Vocations
- 24 In a Country of Heroes, He Shines

NEWS

- 25 Spiritans Recognized
- 25 Spiritan Awarded Alternative Nobel Prize
- 26 Lay Spiritan Meeting
- 26 Hospital Chaplain Retires
- 27 Mission Among the First Nations

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Haitian art courtesy of
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Soul Searching

Leave the passing lane,
Ease the pressure on the pedal,
Lentamente, lentamente.
Lent's forty days slow us down
To let the Word of God resound,
Lentement.

Desert Silence:
Listening attention,
Sensing God's real presence
In all this strange immensity:
Pray-ers once again.

Desert Fasting:
Discarding excess weight
In baggage and in flesh
For less encumbered travel.
Fasting so that someone else may be enfleshed
And not remain transparent skin and bone.

Desert Testing:
The Adversary lurks in desert land,
Suggesting we return whence we came,
Suggesting we take hold of
Power and bread and easy popularity.
We fight the tugging whispers
Suggesting it's all folly
To be leaving these behind.

Desert Man:
Accompanying our struggling steps
To journey's end with Him
Outside the city walls,
Deserted,
Raised up above the jostling noise
And strident shouts.
Alone —
Yet dying for us all.

Forty days
Preparing us to take our place
Outside the heedless city
With Mary and the ever-faithful women.
And on the fortieth day
To rise again
Renewed.

— Fr. Pat Fitzpatrick, C.S.Sp.



Formation for What Mission?

"May we watch the race?" The request came from a group of young Melanesian women, mostly barefoot, who presented themselves at the door of the Spiritan house in Aitape, Papua New Guinea. They were postulants from a missionary congregation of Franciscans and the race in question was the Melbourne Cup, Australia's premier horse race, to be picked up by the Spiritan satellite dish (yes, CNN has reached Aitape!). As they gathered around the screen excitedly picking their favourites, I was reminded of a day when, as a senior seminarian in Dublin, I was deputed by class mates to ask the Superior for permission to see a T.V. program. "Absolutely not", was the response with more than a hint that raising the matter indicated a lack of missionary spirit. The program in question? — the funeral of Pope Pius XII! How the concept of mission and preparation for it have changed!

At about the same time as the horse race, Aitape's very erratic mail had delivered a newsletter from our East African Province, a young, dynamic and rapidly growing segment of the Spiritan family. In it, Joe Mashaka, a seminarian who had spent part of his training in Papua New Guinea, shared his reflections on the experience. Pondering his two years in "the land of the unexpected", he posed himself the question: "Do I still understand the mission situation as I did in missiology class, from homilies, conversations and pamphlets? I suppose not." Following a description of his duties as mechanic, ambulance driver, magistrate, politician, nurse, (to name just a few), he was forced to conclude that "for none of these

Dialogue
in
Haiti



was I trained." His soul searching led him to formulate, in a positive vein, the question which headlines this article: "Formation for what mission?" Mission today: what is it, how do we prepare for it?

The changing face of mission

Our confreres in Haiti, that troubled land which is the focus of this edition of *Spiritans Missionary News*, have grappled with this issue during the last thirty years, as they stood bravely with their countrymen and women against the forces of oppression. The very mention of Haiti conjures up a multitude of images: the expulsion of a Catholic bishop in 1961 by "Papa Doc" Duvalier, the expulsion of Spiritan Fr. Antoine Adrien and companions in 1969 for alleged "communistic activities" when they attempted to arouse the consciousness of students and others to the injustices prevalent in the country; the repeated assassination attempts on Fr. Aristide, (recently restored as President of the country), from one of which he was saved by

a quick-thinking Canadian Spiritan who "gunned" a car through dense bush in pitch darkness to escape a hired mob; the stern demeanour of our Holy Father, John Paul II during his 1982 visit, as he rebuked the political leadership and demanded change; heavily armed U.S. marines patrolling the streets and on and on ..Formation for what mission, indeed? How even anticipate the circumstances?

Challenged by the changing face of mission, Spiritans, in common with others, have attempted to reformulate objectives in the context of "the signs of the times", to use the much quoted phrase of Vatican II. While the essential core remains constant — the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus to those who have never heard it, or only partially so — the manner in which this is undertaken will vary according to context and opportunity.

Listening

Mission today consists more in listening than in talking; listening to