

BEFORE THESE MEETINGS, I THOUGHT I WAS ALONE

When I met Father Gabriel PHALIP, I was far from imagining that my way of living my Faith was going to change directions. I felt alone with my Faith. A multitude of Christians surrounded me and I felt alone, what an idea! Father Gabriel proposed that I go to Paray-Le-Monial in 2016. I said Yes right away. What an idea! I did not know anything about Congregations!

After Paray-Le-Monial, I slowly began to live my Faith with more serenity; I also expressed myself more easily. But I often walked "alone".

What was my joy at Sister Sabine's Farewell Mass when I realized that the priest before me (and whom I did not recognize) was Dominique RAMEAU. Dominique was my mentor when I was a coach at Young Christian Workers...

I finally understood: NO, I have never been alone! Jesus was always with me and I did not see him. Yet I felt his presence... I am surrounded by a multitude of Christians just like me. Super!...

Alzira SCHERRER, Montgeron

PRAYER COMMISSION, SECULAR BRANCH

Elfi KUHMAN (Germany) was delegated to the General Chapters in September 2018 by the *Prayer Commission* that Marie-Agnès ROUSSIALE (France) animates since the International Meeting of the Secular Branch in Escorial in July 2017.

Both are reminders that we can draw inspiration from the prayers collected. They can be found on the site ssccpicpus.com or by this link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Op85kYJB7TkEwtu95nhzc7jgpPO1asO8>

You will find 7 sections in various languages: prayers, personal adorations, community worship, commitment formulas, commitment celebrations, Saint John Francis Regis, miscellaneous.

COMING EVENTS:

PARIS REGION: Saturdays, 26 January, 30 March and 08 June 2019

"REST AREAS FOR THE HEART" formation days in Paris

PARIS

MEAUX: Saturdays, January 05, 2019 in This (94) is so with the community of ss.cc. founded in September 2018

MONTGERON: Wednesdays, January 09, February 20, March 20, April 24, May 22, June 26, 2019 at 18h

BRITTANY: Saturdays, 16 March and 25 May 2019

POITOU

PARAY-LE-MONIAL

NATIONAL WEEKEND: Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd September 2019



NEWSLETTER SECULAR BRANCH SS.CC. - SECTOR FRANCE

N° 65 - DECEMBER 2018

EDITORIAL

The events in France plunge us once again into an ambiance contrary to this long awaited period that is Advent; this time of waiting and preparation for the coming of our savior that will lead to the beautiful celebration of Christmas. But what color will it take on this year, that of contestation, degradation, tuning out, or that of reconciliation, benevolence and listening? No one knows, but everyone is the actor of his own life and, according to his conscience, he can be antisocial, an anarchist or, on the contrary, he will take the path of an artisan of peace.

For this newsletter the theme: "an encountering" has been proposed. Understand the encountering of a people and its history, the sharing between two groups of the Secular Branch, the meeting with priests... Others may understand being inspired by one of these.

Here we are at the gates of Bethlehem, the star is above the stable, a child will be born, a savior will be given to us!

In my own name

and on behalf of the members of the Secular Branch ss.cc. Sector France,
I wish you all very nice Christmas filled with peace and fraternal love.

Christophe PAVARD
Coordinator



MEETING OF THE SECULAR BRANCHES FROM GERMANY AND FRANCE DECEMBER 1 AND 2, 2018 IN WERNE (GERMANY)

Friday, November 30, 6:30 pm, beginning of my trip to Germany.

Indeed, in the context of the international relations of the Secular Branch, we are used to exchanging with the German branch which, for many years, comes to participate in our annual meetings in France. This is the second time I have been to Werne after a failure last year as I had car problems. It was a very quiet trip, except for the Belgian



yellow vests that blocked me for almost half an hour. I arrived around 1:00 am; Father Ludger and Annegret had the courage to wait for me to welcome me and help me settle in. For an anecdote, two years ago, I spent the night in my car, but that's another story.

After a good night's sleep, it was breakfast time and time to meet the Fathers of the community on the one hand and the participants for this weekend on the other hand. Marie-Agnès ROUSSIALE of the MONTGERON group arrived the day before by train, Elfi KUHMANN and Annegret ZEYEN were present, unfortunately Hiltrud GIERSCHE was not free due to professional obligations. And of course Father Ludger WIDMAIER who was our speaker for the weekend. All in all, it was a great joy to be there, to share those two days.

Then came the time to make our small gray cells work. Fortunately, everyone speaks French because, I dare say it, my German is very far in my memories; I understand it, but to speak is another story. When there was something to translate, Annegret and Ludger shared the task. Elfi, who was invited to the General Chapters, gave us a return of what had been said to the Sisters and to the Brothers. During this meeting, we discussed: on the one hand, the report of the final orientations for the Secular Branch and, on the other hand, what Elfi shared with us. All this information received has allowed us to discuss the life of our respective groups and to become aware of the points that may keep us from moving forward.

In the afternoon, Ludger and Elfi made us discover the city of Werne, with its history, its architecture (a bit peculiar at times) then, after two hours of walks, we resumed the discussions after a good coffee to warm us up.

We enjoyed taking part in prayer with the community. Then, after the evening meal, we prolonged our fraternal exchanges and worked on the implementation of the liturgy for the next day by choosing songs in French, but also in German for the animation of the Sunday Mass.

These two days passed very quickly, and the time to say goodbye had arrived. A big thank you to the community of the Fathers of Werne who received us very well and with whom we had spent an enjoyable moment. Many thanks to the Secular Branch for inviting us, and thanks to Father Ludger for his kindness and patience. It was a great joy to celebrate this first Sunday of Advent with our German brothers and sisters, in communion with our communities in France.

Christophe PAVARD, Coordinator

IN ARMENIA. Lasting memories

We had the chance to travel to Armenia for nine days. As large as a French department, its population is 3,000,000 inhabitants of which 1,200,000 in the capital of Yerevan alone. Its mountainous terrain is rocky; the average altitude (1900 meters) is practically that of Lake Sevan, the real lung of the country. As a result, its climate is rigorous: winter -5 to -7° on average and summer up to 40°.

Armenia is the first country to adopt Catholicism as a state religion. Evangelized in the 2nd century by Saint Gregory the Illuminator, it was not until the 5th century that the Church adopted its own rite, under the authority of a pope: the Catholicos. Only 7 to 10% of Catholics are of Roman obedience now. The whole country is dotted with monasteries; they are usually empty under the effect of communism but some serve as parishes and are then animated by 1 or 2 monks. Their construction is in black basalt and the architecture is practically identical for all the monasteries, although two of them have especially caught our attention: the monastery of Tatev and that of Hovhannavank.

It is a country still poor today but very endearing. Its history is littered with tragedies such as the 1915 genocide which left 1,300,000 dead, to whom must be added the missing in the concentration camps; in fact, there are 2,000,000 dead people to talk about, and among them all the intellectuals, journalists, missionaries, diplomats, religious, etc.

There are also earthquakes, especially the one of 1988. The city of Gyumri has been virtually destroyed, as well as many monasteries; it is still 50 000 dead and more than 500 000 homeless that the country has had to support. Moreover, the Soviet regime has reigned supreme over the whole territory since 1920; it has left its lot of poverty since its independence in 1991.

Armenians are working courageously to rebuild their territory. What is built now is more worked and finer; but there is so much to do! On the spot, it is possible to see, for example, the Saint-Gregory-the Illuminator cathedral, of Yerevan, brand new, that skirts a district of corrugated metal houses.

Though their music is tinged with nostalgia, we have never detected a bit of vengeance or warlike animosity, linked to the past; maybe only a little bitterness. We remember well its population which remains serene, peaceful and non-aggressive. Remembering will not erase their suffering.

François AYMER de la CHEVALERIE, Brittany