



# Monialibus

International Bulletin n° 1

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## A word from the 'editor'

Last year an international bulletin (**Number 0**) was sent to the members of the commission of nuns and to the Master of the Order. It was a proposal for a model of what could be possible. The idea was to present something simple, which could start off with only a few pages, perhaps twice a year. A copy of the bulletin could be sent to the members of the commission in Spanish, English or French and then the member could, in turn, send it out to her region in one of these languages or, if possible, she could find a way to have it translated into a language understood in her region.

The reactions, for the greater part, were very positive.

Therefore with the strong and clear encouragement from Br. Timothy some of the members have decided to give it a try. So here is "Number 1"!

It is a modest attempt to establish a way for us to communicate with one another, reinforce the communion, and help us to pray for one another, the Master, and the whole Order, in a more intentional way.

You will find in the bulletin the itinerary of the Master so as to keep him in our prayer as he makes his visitations. After his visit to Africa you can be certain that he would appreciate prayers for the people of these beautiful countries which are ravaged by sickness (AIDS) and war.

The itinerary of brother F. Manuel Merten, the promoter, has also been included. In the future, he may want use the bulletin to share with us the fruit of his visits to the nuns around the world. In this issue you will find an interview with him..

So as to help us know one another better you will find small articles or extracts from letters from various communities throughout the world.

Let us know what you think or expect.



## Carry the Master in Prayer

**December / January 2001**  
Nigeria, Angola, Ivory Coast

**Feb./ March/April**  
Malta, Ecole Biblique de Jerusalem, Province of Switzerland, and Theology Faculty of Fribourg

**May** (Plenary Session of the General Council devoted to the preparation of the General Chapter, in July/August 2001).



## Where in the world is the Promoter ? Follow him in prayer !

### January :

22 - 28 Dax (prioresses of French Federations)

### February :

Mexico, Nicaragua, Cuba,

### Mars :

Rome, Germany, Norway



## Summary

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conference ... fr. Timothy Radcliffe o.p.

## An interview of our new promoter, F. Manuel Merten

**S. Claire (of France) :** Where are you from ?

**F. Manuel:** Due to the situation in Germany at the very end of the second world war I wasn't born in Wuppertal, where our family used to live until our home was destroyed by bombing. Thus I came to birth in a hotel not far away from Limburg, which is located in the middle West of Germany.

**S. Claire:** Have you brothers and sisters or an interesting childhood anecdote to share ?

**F. Manuel:** I have one brother and one sister. Both of them are older than me. My brother and I are very close. During my childhood we shared our room. When my brother came home, even if it was very late, he always woke me up, to tell me what he had done and ask how my day had been. Then he would invite me to play chess. I was nearly always the loser. Nevertheless, I enjoyed playing with him.

**S. Claire:** When did you enter the order ? How or why?

**F. Manuel:** I entered the order when I was 20 years old, in 1964. I already knew the Dominicans at the time since I attended a High School, which our province ran (and still runs) for more than two years. The brothers teaching there were so exceptional that I thought: If a bunch of such special and different people can really live together in peace, there must be space for myself as well.

**S. Claire:** What was your formation?

**F. Manuel:** I did my Philosophy and Theology at the studium generale at Walberberg from 1965 to 1972 while studying, at the same time, at the University of Bonn. In 1970 I passed my exam as teacher for German language, Mathematics and Religion. In addition to that, I studied Education and Psychology for two more years. Later on I attended classes for psychological counselling, moderation of groups and spiritual accompaniment.

**S. Claire:** What sort of missions have you been confided in the order ? Your ministry ?

**F. Manuel:** Already in 1966 I began serving in a pastoral and teaching role in a village for socially handicapped children and adolescents, which was run by the Dominican Sisters of Bethany. I enjoyed this work very much. When I finished my studies I became responsible for the village and did this with enthusiasm for ten

years. I felt sad, when my provincial asked me to become his socius in 1982. Anyway, I had to obey. Two years later I was appointed as student master and I fulfilled this service during two terms until our Provincial Chapter in 1992. This is when the brethren elected me Prior Provincial which I also fulfilled for two terms, until May, 2000. But already at Pentecost in 1999, the master of the order asked me to take over the service of the promoter. Why and how I agreed is another story, which I would like to tell, when I'll visit the monasteries at a future time.

**S. Claire:** What kind of qualities do you think you might bring to this role ?

**F. Manuel:** Well, I think that generally I'm an optimistic person. I love the order and the church, even if I see not only their strengths also their many weaknesses. I think that this is human and so I don't suffer from this. I love people as they are and don't always have the concern that they should be better or more "holy". This is, because I really trust in God's love and mercifulness.

**S. Claire:** Have you been involved with the nuns?

**F. Manuel:** I have a great deal of experiences with men and women religious but I have to admit, until now, I have not had that much contact with the nuns, apart from those of the monasteries in my own Province. Some years ago the Master asked me to be his vicar for the monastery in Luxembourg. It was a sad task because I had to help the nuns close their monastery and find new places to live for the future.

**S. Claire:** Do you have anything that you are desiring to tell us or ask of us ? Hopes ? Dreams ?

**F. Manuel:** O yes: Please be patient with me. I don't have all the languages that brother Victor has and I have so much more to receive and learn from you than I have to give. I am interested in hearing from you and learning what you would expect of me and would like me to do. I assure you that I'm really willing to serve you. So please don't hesitate to contact me, to make proposals, to criticize etc. and please, don't forget to pray for me.

