



SSS Grapevine

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New Leadership for the Senegal Province

By Father Louis Demba Ndione SSS

Under the patronage of our Blessed Mother, whom our founder, Saint Peter Julian Eymard, honored as Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, the Province of Senegal has been entrusted to her loving and motherly care from its beginning as a province. Our province called her "Our Lady of Africa." It evolved from a "Delegation" to a "Region" until it was officially established as a "Province" on Monday, June 20, 2017. We worked closely with the Italian Province. The Province of Italy visited Senegal, bringing the Eucharistic flame through their Blessed Sacrament (SSS) Missionaries. These missionaries closely engaged with the people, nurturing vocations and fostering a love for the Eucharist and prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in parishes and schools. They founded communities aligned with the local church's needs and realities. Through their testimony and service to the local church, the charism of the SSS spread across Senegal. Many dioceses invited the SSS to take over some parishes and continue sharing their love and devotion to the Eucharist through celebration and adoration.



Bishop Martin Tine SSS, Father Louis (*the author*), and Father Philip Benzy Romician SSS (*Superior General*)

Since then, the Eymardian legacy and spirituality have been well preserved. In collaboration with the mother Province of Italy, the young Province of Our Lady of Africa – Senegal, is now moving toward independence. We held the first Provincial Chapter in 2018

and the second in 2022. In line with the Chapters' directions, all members are committed to working closely as custodians of the Eymardian legacy and spirituality entrusted to us by the Italian missionaries. Today, the Province of Our Lady of Africa has 34 priests, 3 students, 2 novices, and 4 postulants. The province attracts many young people interested in our way of life, but the high cost of formation makes recruitment challenging. Nonetheless, no vocation is overlooked, and the province continues to provide guidance, support, and discernment to everyone who seeks us.

We gathered for our 3rd Provincial Chapter to find better solutions for many of these challenges and expectations. Hopefully, with the new Provincial Superior, Father Bernard Noel Tine SSS, and his council, the province will respond to current realities and challenges related to its life, formation, and the specialization of its members in areas that can enhance our mission and life. A key program and topic at the chapter was the principle of internationality and the economy of communion. This is a collective effort by individuals, the community, and the Eymardian Family, building on the foundation of the SSS spirituality and charism. Our Lady of Africa Province collaborates with many other provinces, such as Italy, Brazil, Colombia, Sri Lanka, France, and the United States' Province of Saint Ann, through the presence of Father Louis Demba Ndione SSS. This exemplifies the principle of internationality promoted by the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament (*and its General Chapters over the years*) and its concept of "economy of communion." The Province of Our Lady of Africa is still young and committed to witnessing to the Eucharistic Lord through mature and responsible participation in the Eucharist—celebrating, adoring, and living it out—while responding to the needs of our times, especially in the Senegalese context.

In Senegal, where most of the population is Muslim, the flame of the Eucharist becomes our way to light our missionary journey and our enthusiasm for sharing the Christian faith. We have seven dioceses in Senegal, and among them, the SSS are present in four dioceses, including two parishes in the Archdiocese of Dakar, the capital, along with our house of formation, the postulancy, and one parish in the Diocese of Thies, also hosting the Inter-African Novitiate. The Inter-African Novitiate is where all the African SSS candidates gain their novitiate experience, representing countries such as Senegal, Uganda, the Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Mozambique, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. We have one parish in the Diocese of Kaolack, where the Blessed Sacrament is under the care of his Most Reverend Father Martin Boucar Tine SSS, who serves as the religious superior. Before he was appointed bishop, he was a General Vicar of our Congregation. In southern Senegal, we have two additional parishes: one in the Diocese of Kolda and another in the Diocese of Bissau (*Republic of Guinea-Bissau*). The province has also enthusiastically responded to France's invitation to send missionaries there, with SSS Religious serving in the Archdiocese of Rouen since 2013 and in the Diocese of La Rochelle-Saintes.

The province has, through its growth, development, and autonomy, invested in its human resources and in some projects to sustain its formation and achieve independence. But the challenge remains significant and heavy for a very young province. One of the biggest projects in the future is to build a eucharistic shrine where the charism will be fully expressed and shared with everyone. Concerned with its young religious and the rapid growth of vocations, the province is open to collaboration. The Province of Our Lady of Africa welcomes provinces for French learning experiences, such as India (*1 Confrere*) and Vietnam (*4 confreres*), and is open to SSS missionaries for different experiences, in keeping with the principle of internationality. Therefore, since its founding, the province continues the journey of “Disciple-Apostle,” carrying the burning flame of the Eucharist through our honest witness and testimony of eucharistic life.

This 3rd Provincial Chapter has become a very meaningful moment of discernment and reflection. With the visit of the Apostolic Nuncio, Bishop Martin of SSS, and the archbishop, accompanied by the new Coadjutor Bishop of Kolda, all capitulars were able to witness the words of gratitude toward our Eymardian Family for their active presence and collaboration with the local Church. Our Province is made up of religious priests and members of the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament, Eymardian youth, and Eymardian children. As in the Cenacle, we, as a province, work together with our Aggregates, youth, and children. The Eucharist serves as the lens of our life and calls us to continue our journey of faithful discipleship and apostleship in perfect harmony and

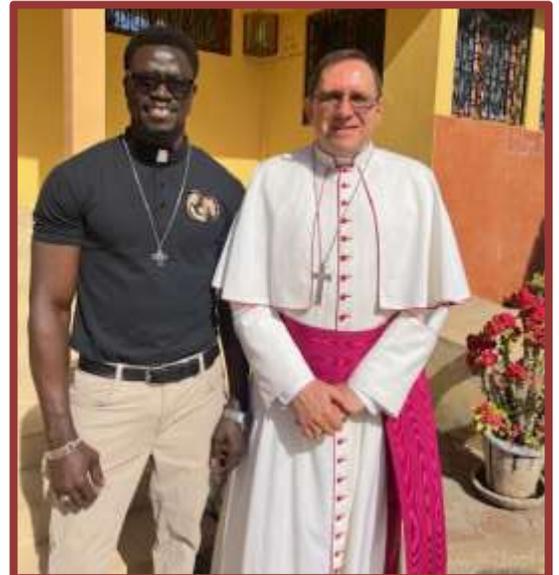


The new Provincial and Provincial Council (left to right: Father Boniface, Father Bernard, Father Abraham, and Father Ernest)

communion of love, understanding, vision, and charism. We elected a new Provincial Superior, Father Bernard Noel Tine SSS, and a new Provincial Council to lead the province for the next four years. Trusting in God's providence and guided by the glorious intercession of our founder, Saint Peter Julian Eymard, and the loving care of Our Lady of Africa, we dedicate all the outcomes of this Chapter to God. May His Eucharistic Kingdom come! Fraternally yours in the Eucharist.



The delegates to the Provincial Chapter with Bishop Martin Tine SSS and the papal representative in the front; middle right – the Apostolic Nuncio with outgoing provincial superior, Father Yves Sagna SSS, and Superior General Father Philip Benzy Romician SSS



Father Louis (*the author of the article*) with Archbishop Waldemar Stanislaw Sommertag (*The Apostolic Nuncio*)



The Apostolic Nuncio with outgoing provincial superior, Father Yves Sagna SSS, and Superior General Father Philip Benzy Romician SSS



The new provincial superior and provincial council with Father Superior General, and Vicar General Father Anaclet Bambala SSS: [left to right: Father Boniface (*Secretary*), Father Bernard Tine SSS (*Provincial*), Father Ernest (*Provincial Treasurer*) and Father Abraham (*Vicar Provincial*)]