

# CONTACT

CONTACT - KONTAKT - CONTATTO

U.I.G.S.E. - F.S.E.

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## THE WORD OF THE FEDERAL COMMISSIONER



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Scouting,

In the 50 days since we have celebrated the resurrection of Christ, I was in 5 amazing places.

I worked with General commissioners in **Bratislava**, where many Hungarian kings coming from the House of Habsburg were crowned who were at the same time ruling the Austrian Empire. Then in **Cracow** I took part in the FSE WYD participation for 1,500 Guides and Scouts of Europe. In Cracow I saw the sanctuaries of Divine Mercy and of St John Paul II. One week later the Federal bureau met in **Cologne**, close to Machabäerstraße where the FSE was born 60 years ago. You know the

Maccabees from the Bible, so courageous in testifying their faith. Then the First World War battlefield of **Confrécourt**<sup>1</sup> hosted me together with 60 rangers and rovers. We celebrated daily Mass in the casemates where Father Doncœur gave communion to the young soldiers immediately before they left to the battle via small stairs next to the altar. Father Doncœur seeing their faith and courage started ideas how to make their talents beneficial for peace and unity in Christ among Europe's peoples. Later he was the spiritual advisor for the French rovers. Later he was the advisor spiritual for the French rovers. His ideas are still alive in our movement. Finally, I met pilgrims from all over the world united around Our Lady of the Rosary of **Fatima** celebrating the 99th anniversary of her first apparition to three shepherd children.

The House of Habsburg, First World War, Fatima, St John Paul II, Maccabees Street, Rosary, Divine Mercy... Must I tell you that the assassinate of the successor to the throne of the House of Habsburg-Lorraine started the First World War? That thousands of young soldiers left from home with their Rosary and pictures of their girlfriend, but also of the Divine Heart of Mercy? That the Holy Virgin asked the world to pray the Rosary and to do sacrifices for the sinners only half a year before Russia has started to suffer from communism for 72 years? That Our Lady of the Rosary saved Saint John Paul II being nearly shot in 1981 – probably on behalf of the Soviet communists? That he inaugurated the Feast of Divine Mercy on the first Sunday after Easter?

Every Guide and Scout of Europe has a Rosary in the pocket. We are consecrated to the merciful hearth of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We never, never forget the history of Europe. We are courageous and firm to look for and fulfil the will of God everywhere and always – like the Maccabees.

We have a realistic look at what happens in today's Europe. We know that also Europe in 2016 is part of the history of salvation. It is in this minute that we are called to deepen our Law, our Promise, our Method. Because this is how we serve Europe and the world!

Ad Mariam – Europa!

Martin Hafner, Federal Commissioner



<sup>1</sup> Watch the movie produced by French rangers and rovers and translated in many languages: „1914 – Le secret de Confrécourt“ (<http://1914-le-secret-de-confrecourt.fr>)



## DISCUSSION ABOUT THE POPE'S EXHORTATION

**A lot of things are good in *Amoris Laetitia*; chapter 8 is not so good because of its imprecision.**

In April, Pope Francis published the apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (AL). It contains precious impulses about love in the family. They are so concrete and close to life that this text deserves to be read – in particular by us, scouts, because a lot of what is described can be applied in our units. For instance, chapter 4 explains how love can be maintained, reinforced or restored in a community. Chapter 7 speaks of the education of children and the “value of punishment as a motivation” – when would a pope have expressed himself on this subject before? The Pope also finds clear words concerning the gender ideology. In a word, it is worth reading it.

### ***Reduction to one question only : the admission to Eucharistic Communion***

All these approaches have found very little support in the public. Already before, the interest had been reduced to *one* question: will Pope Francis allow the divorced and remarried to receive the sacrament of Eucharist? This reduction is really deplorable. But what is even worse is that, since the publication of AL, people are discussing to know whether the text allows the access to Eucharist or not. Cardinal Kasper explains: “there are some openings, it is quite clear”. Other cardinals such as Cordes or Brandmüller are convinced of the contrary.<sup>2</sup>

### ***What does Amoris Laetitia say exactly?***

The question of the pastoral of divorced and remarried is treated in chapter 8 and can be summarized as follows:

#### *1. To have a pastoral discernment*

The concrete contexts of broken couples are various ; all the concerned persons do not have automatically the same guilt. This is why a “responsible personal and pastoral discernment of particular cases” is necessary (AL 300).

#### *2. Gradual integration*

The result of point 1 is that the consequences for the participation to the life of the Church vary for each believer in a so-called irregular situation. According to his individual guilt, a differentiated integration is possible, for instance: the participation to social tasks, groups of prayer, even catechesis.

#### *3. Integration up to the access to the sacraments*

In the notes nr. 336 and 351 at the bottom of the pages, AL explains that, in some cases, the access to the sacraments is possible. Here confession and Eucharist are clearly mentioned.

### ***Interpretation A: AL does not say anything new***

We can read chapter 8 as a continuation of the teaching of the Church until now. Pope John Paul II had already required some differentiation and some integration in the pastoral of the divorced and remarried in *Familiaris Consortio* (FC) in 1981. The access to the sacraments was also possible, according to FC 84, if man and woman remained together for the sake of their children, provided that they “take on themselves the duty to live in complete continence, that is, by abstinence from the acts proper to married couples.”

Pope Francis does not mention anywhere this restriction of FC 84 but he does not cancel it either. This is why, according to AL, - according to what some theologians say – the current rule remains valid.

### ***Interpretation B: Amoris Laetitia changes the practice of the Church***

The absence of a reference to the restriction of FC 84 leads other theologians to conclude the reverse : Pope Francis did not mention FC 84 any more on purpose in order to change the practice of the Church and to allow the access to Eucharist in some individual cases.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Die Tagespost*, 12.4.2016, S. 4-5 and <http://kath.net/news/55036> (3.5.2016)

**A or B? What is really at stake**

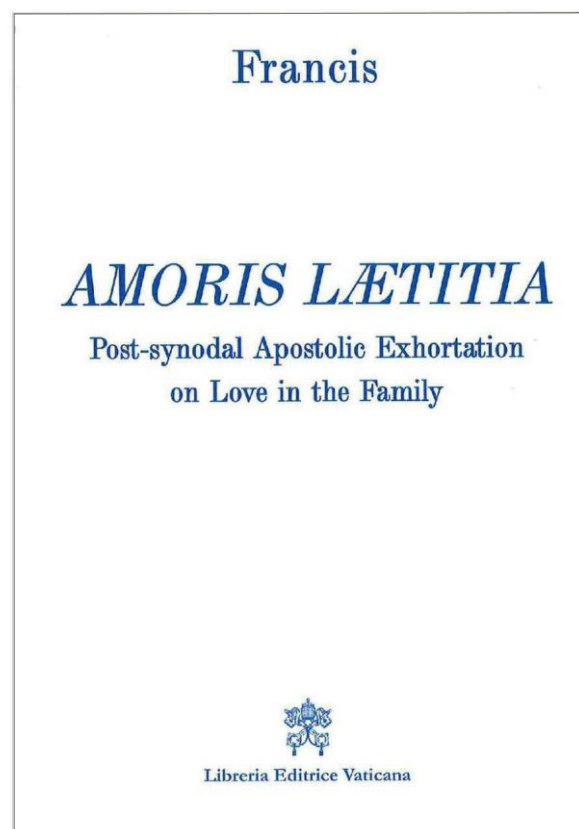
The ones and the others may refer to AL. A fatal situation. The point is not only about the individual case but about the question: is there an objective order which is appropriate for the life of the Church ? Or can personal conscience cancel a general norm? If divorced and remarried can receive Eucharist by referring to their conscience, this also applies to practicing homosexuals. And to doctors practicing abortion. And to Protestant Christians. And also to our muslim neighbour who is well integrated and has good will. In a word, to everybody. *This is the real challenge*. If AL has to be interpreted according to B, the permission for divorced and remarried is only the first step.

**Conclusion: many things are good in *Amoris Laetitia*; chapter 8 is not so good because of its imprecision.**

AL contains many precious impulses. We must thank Pope Francis for this, with all our heart. On the point of the access to Eucharist for divorced and remarried, the document did not bring any clarity but increased the confusion. This happens in a situation precisely needing clear words.

This critical conclusion is neither a refusal of papacy nor a refusal to obey from a believer. The pope is infallible – but in clearly defined limits, that is to say when he presents a doctrine of the faith or of morals in a definitive way. The advice that the pope gives concerning pastoral (rather like homilies do) do not belong to this infallibility but have to be read in light of traditional faith. If a pope makes ambiguities or even mistakes in this field, the criticism of a pontifical document may be legitimate, or even necessary.

Let us pray for Pope Francis, may the Holy Spirit guide him in his heavy task.





## THE QUALITIES OF THE CHIEF ACCORDING TO SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

The aim of scouting is to revive something of the spirit of chivalry. Consequently, it is quite natural that troop and patrol leaders should look for the contents of their duties in what the greatest doctor of the Middle Ages, saint Thomas Aquinas, has written. But not all of them have the "badge" of Latinist yet, nor the one of theologian. So let them allow a troop chaplain to tell them what the three qualities requested from any chief by saint Thomas Aquinas are.

The famous theologian develops this subject about Our Lord Jesus Christ, the outstanding chief (Summa Theologica, IIIrd part, question VIII, art. 1). To have an idea of what constitutes a chief, he observes what makes the distinction between the head and the other members of the human body : all know indeed that **the word "chief" comes from a Latin term meaning "head"**.

1. « If we consider first **the place occupied by the head**, we can see that it is located above all the other members. It is also what characterizes a chief at first glance: to be located above the others. This fits perfectly with Our Lord : he is superior to all men because his humanity belongs to a divine person. But is it the only thing that some ambitious boys look for, when they dream of becoming patrol leaders and even troop leaders? In a sense, they are wrong; for they must always remember that the scout law is inspired from the Gospel, in which we can read: "Those who want to be first will be last". But the troop and patrol leaders must not forget that they have been placed above the others : they do not have to look for a poor-quality popularity by going down, but they must try to lift up the others to their level. Besides, there is a good way of having one's authority respected without "being proud", it is to fulfill the second condition mentioned by saint Thomas Aquinas to be a real chief.
2. "As a matter of fact, if we consider the head and the members **according to their respective perfection**, we see that the head has the plenitude: by itself, it contains the five senses while only touch is spread out in the rest of the body. It is also the main quality of all those who are called to command: they must be more perfect than their subordinates. Jesus well deserves his title of chief, as he possesses the plenitude of grace and virtue".
3. But if we go on applying this to the various scout leaders, are we consequently going to request from any troop leader and even from the youngest patrol leader to conquer by himself all the "badges" ? No : the sleeves of his shirt would not be long enough to receive all the emblems : nobody can boast of having universal aptitudes. But what we request from him is to be the most skilful in the speciality of his troop or of his patrol, to be the most exact to apply the motto and to incarnate better than the others the scout spirit and its virtues.
4. "Finally, when we study the **influence of the various parts** of the body between themselves, we see that the head is the principle of the activity of all the other members led by it. Isn't it what a chief should aim at, finally ? To be the soul of the group he is responsible for, and to exert a true action upon all his collaborators. Once again, Our Lord gives us a perfect example since, in the order of grace, we are all depending on his redemption.

"But this is also what is most delicate in the art of commandment. To make the others act in the direction that we want is much more difficult than to do everything by oneself. However a good chief will try to exert it: he will remember that he is not there only to show the example but to give an impulse. He will reach it gradually, observing the psychological energies of everyone and being able to make them act at the right moment, using with opportunity the threat or the promise, trying above all to form his patrol members with a neutrality that he will control, finding ways to be loved, esteemed, that is to say deserving trust..."

Abbé Richaud, review Le Chef nr. 13, March 1923, p.176-177



## 60 YEARS, IT IS QUITE OLD FOR A YOUTH MOVEMENT ! - 2

**So, let's come back to the fresh times of our youth, just for our anniversary. Not to take refuge in them but to check whether the commitments taken on All Saints' Day 1956 have borne fruit and if we are still their heirs.**

After the choice of the eight-pointed cross<sup>3</sup>, an event happened and for a long time it was considered as insignificant : the meeting on August 8<sup>th</sup> 1957 in Porlezza, a small Italian town on the banks of the Lake Lugano, with Bishop Jean-Baptiste MONTINI, the future Pope Paul VI, then archbishop of Milan.

This meeting took place during a Europa-Camp in Northern Italy, with the Orthodox troops 1<sup>o</sup> and 2<sup>o</sup> Paris of the Russian Scouts exiled in France led by Serge SELIVERSTOFF and Jean LEOPOLD, the Catholic troop 1<sup>o</sup> Münster FSE in Germany with Joseph HEIRINGHOFF as troop leader, and the Lutheran troop of 1<sup>o</sup> Marburg am Lahn FSE with Günter OLBRICH. Karl SCHMITZ-MOORMANN was responsible for the whole Europa-Camp.

For many years, this meeting was considered as incidental, but later we discovered that it was not true<sup>4</sup>. Karl SCHMITZ-MOORMANN, because of his project of thesis on Father THEILHARD de CHARDIN, who was quite controversial at that time, knew Bishop MONTINI for meeting him already on this subject.

Karl intended to show to Bishop MONTINI his project of European scouting because, as a good Catholic, he needed to submit it to the Church. Did he take an appointment ? Anyway, the meeting did take place.



*Photo Josef Heiringhoff :  
Bishop MONTINI during  
his speech. The three  
scouts with their hats are  
Italian scouts from the  
ASCI.*

Here is the presentation of this meeting in the French *Passat*<sup>5</sup> nr. 3 of June 1958<sup>6</sup> :

*His Eminence spoke to our boys in French and in German, with great kindness. Previously, he had had a short talk with the General Commissioner of the Federation, asking about our aims*

<sup>3</sup> Contact nr. 1, March 2016

<sup>4</sup> Meeting of March 2009 between Serge SELIVERSTOFF and Maurice OLLIER in Châtel-Montagne.

<sup>5</sup> « Passat » was the name of the magazine for young people. It was the name of a big sailing boat, a training-ship of the German merchant navy, very famous beyond the Rhin. Its twin, the "Pamir" boat, is more famous. At the beginning of the movement, there was a German issue as soon as December 1957, then a French issue from April 1958 on, then a Belgian issue from 1960 on. The French "Passat" became "Scout d'Europe" in January 1965.

<sup>6</sup> The German issue of *Passat* gave also a report of that meeting.





and our activities, as well as how we intended to achieve them. The bad weather prevented him from visiting our camp but, during the reception in Porlezza, His Eminence asked for the presence of our scouts. So we fetched them and during that reception Bishop MONTINI said what follows :

**« It is a great joy for me to have been received in this way by young European people who are for me the guarantee of the formation of the future Europe, since these young people are starting to build it. I am particularly pleased to see here around me German boys, with Russian and French boys, fraternally mixed ; even more Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants who have come to welcome me with the same heart when I arrived here. I wish most heartedly that their work for Europe and for Peace be fruitful and happy. Scouts of Europe, I wish you all the best ! »<sup>7</sup>.**

For Karl SCHMITZ-MOORMANN and his team, this was a fantastic encouragement. Just after that meeting, Karl redacted the *Religious Directory*, which is at the basis of one of our oldest core texts.

Sixty years later, we may be surprised : the description that Bishop MONTINI made of the movement in 1957, less than one year after its foundation, has become a reality nowadays with the apparition of the movement in the Orthodox world in Russia and Rumania and in the Greco-Catholic environment in Ukraine and Belarus.



Photo Josef Heiringhoff : Bishop MONTINI is getting into his car. At the first row, we can see scouts with berets. They are Parisian explorers of the Russian Orthodox troops in exile. We can observe that they wear on their beret the metallic lilly flower with Saint George slaying the dragon, typical for Russian scouting. On the wall of the parish house, we can see Baden-Powell's portrait.

We could also compare the speech of Jean-Baptiste MONTINI to the improvisation pronounced by Pope Paul VI on Saint-Peter's square in 1975. The word "**always**" may have had a precise meaning in the mind of the Pope, who spoke perfect French. Maybe he remembered that meeting of Porlezza ? In this case, the word "**always**" can be interpreted as "still", like in the expression "he is still the same" for instance.

**« There is also the pilgrimage of Guides and Scouts of Europe. You must know that you will always be friends to Us. We have great confidence in your presence, in your work, in your association and in the spirit of scouting. Be blessed ! Go back home with the memory of the jubilee that you have just attended as well as with the sense of firmness and faithfulness to Christ and to his teaching ».**

In conclusion, Bishop Jean-Baptiste MONTINI was the first bishop of the Catholic Church to support us from the very beginning. He had had first-hand information indeed !

<sup>7</sup> That improvised speech was not registered but redacted as well as possible just after the ceremony.



As the whole history of Catholic scouting shows it, Popes are often those who see the future. In January 1913, Cardinal MERRY DEL VAL, State Secretary to PIUS X, gave a "special blessing" to the "Belgian Catholic Scouts". Yet, despite that Vatican support, Catholic scouting was then attacked from everywhere by the intransigent fringe of the Church. On June 15<sup>th</sup> 1916, Pope BENEDICT XV named the Jesuit father Giuseppe GIANFRANCESCHI general chaplain of the Association of Italian Catholic Scouting (ASCI). Starting from 1920 for the "Scouts de France", Father SEVIN had to go several times to Rome to get some support, in front of the French Episcopate who mistrusted Baden-Powell's work.

Maurice Ollier



*Photo Josef Heiringhoff : the Parisian troops of Russian Scouts in exile in France, near Lake Lugano.*



*Photo Joseph Heiringhoff : Serge Seliverstov, troop leader of the 2° Paris of the Holy-Blood. In 1959, he became president of the French association and was national commissioner for the green branch until 1961.*



## GUIDES AND SCOUTS OF EUROPE : WHO ARE WE ?

(part 2)

An international community of faith, prayer and action

In the middle of the cold war, just after the huge catastrophe that they had been witnesses of – and sometimes victims –, some dozens of young Christians met in Cologne, Germany, on All Saints' Day 1956. These young Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox, who had suffered from the war, thought that scouting could try and bring peace and solidarity in Europe. They wanted to create an international scout brotherhood that would also be the means of experiencing the catholicity of the Church and ecumenical dialogue. After three days of debates, they founded the « *Fédération du Scoutisme Européen* »<sup>8</sup>, an international scout association composed of national sections, the objective of which is to educate young people by using Baden-Powell's scouting methods, within the frame of European idea and on the Christian bases postulated by the idea of united Europe »<sup>9</sup>. They also decided to put the traditional fleur-de-lys of scouts on the eight-point red cross reminding of the eight beatitudes on the *Sermon on the Mount* <sup>10</sup>.

In their minds, beyond the national associations that were soon created, the movement that they were building was clearly the Federation of European Scouting and, until the 1990s, it was the general term used to speak of Guides and Scouts of Europe, at the national and international level. We are members of a « European scout community », « one same community of faith, prayer and action »<sup>11</sup>, with the same core texts, the same ceremonial, the same vision of the world and of scouting, and the hope that one day the Lord will gather us around the same bread and the same wine. For us, Europe is not just a « dimension » ; the « *European ideal* »<sup>12</sup> is eminently constitutive of the « identity » of our movement.

For about twenty years, that reality of scout brotherhood was registered nowhere and so had no legal personality. At the federal council of Brussels, on All Saints' Day 1976, the members decided to redact new *Statutes* and to get a legal personality, required to obtain a consultative status with the Council of Europe and, later on, a recognition by the Holy See.

One month later, on December 5<sup>th</sup> 1976, the federal council of Clamart – composed of two associations only, Belgium and France<sup>13</sup> – adopted the new *Federal statutes* : « *The international organisation called 'Fédération du Scoutisme Européen' (...) changes its name, which becomes 'Union Internationale des Guides et Scouts d'Europe – Fédération du scoutisme européen (FSE)'* »<sup>14</sup>. At that time, four associations were postulating : the *Katholische Pfadfinderschaft Europas* (Germany), restarted under the impulse of father Andreas Hönisch and Günther Walter, the *Associazione Italiana Guide e Scouts d'Europa Cattolici* (Italy)<sup>15</sup>, the *Fédération nationale des Scouts et Guides Européens du Luxembourg* and the *Éclaireurs Baden-Powell* (Québec, Canada).

<sup>8</sup> This expression is in French in the original text of All Saints' Day 1956, although the text was redacted in German.

<sup>9</sup> *Federal statutes* of the 'Fédération du scoutisme européen', November 1<sup>st</sup> 1956, art. 1.

<sup>10</sup> This anchored cross appeared at the beginning of the XII<sup>th</sup> century on the shield of the Abbey of Morimond, Burgundy, the fourth daughter of Cîteaux. Then it was adopted by the Order of the Hospitallers of Saint John of Jerusalem. Several times in *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell quoted the knight of Saint John as the example of the explorer of former times. When Baden-Powell was knighted, this anchored cross and the fleur-de-lys of the compass were put on his coat of arms. So the choice of this badge wanted to express the attachment of the Federation of European scouting both to Christ and to the inheritance of Baden-Powell.

<sup>11</sup> *Canonic Federal statutes* of the International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe, September 26<sup>th</sup> 2003, art. 1.2.1. This expression was taken from a quotation of father Werenfried Van Straaten (1913-2003), the founder of Aid to the Church in Need.

<sup>12</sup> These words come from the preamble to the draft of *Federal statutes*, so called 'of Louvain', proposed by the Belgian and German associations in 1961, especially under the initiative of Karl Schmitz-Moormann, German general commissioner.

<sup>13</sup> So these two associations are mentioned as being the « founder associations » of the International Union (*Federal statutes* of the International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe, October 10<sup>th</sup> 1977, art. 1.1.1).

<sup>14</sup> Report of the federal council, December 5<sup>th</sup> 1976, art.1.2.2.1. 'UIGSE-FSE' and not 'of the FSE' in order to show clearly the continuity.

<sup>15</sup> These two associations were recognized during the federal council of Matzenheim, Alsace, on October 29<sup>th</sup> 1977.





In spite of the Roman Catholic inflection given to the International Union (it « *is composed of Catholic scouting associations* » and « *acts and makes decisions according to the rules of this faith* »<sup>16</sup>), the German Lutherians wanted to go on with the experience of the Federation of European Scouting, as an association member of the International Union. They *refused to be located in a « reformed » Union, as they considered that it would be marginalised within the Federation. To be members of a Catholic international Union was not a problem for them, as long as they could, according to the Religious Directory, keep their autonomy, especially for what concerned the education of faith, in the spirit of the founders and of the « preamble of Louvain ».*

Happily, the desire of the German Lutherians to be full members of a Catholic International Union led to the fact that an article was added in the *Federal statutes* ; it reminded of the initial ideal of our movement, « *the ecumenical openmindedness that could not be separated from the hope of coming back to the spiritual unity of Europe* »<sup>17</sup>. And the *Evangelische Pfadfinderschaft Europas* was welcomed as soon as October 1977 as « candidate ».

The double acronym explains what can sometimes appear as a paradox in our texts : at the same time a 'Union' gathering Catholic associations, even if it is also open to other Christian confessions as long as they wish and admit « *without any modification the whole of the core texts of the movement* »<sup>18</sup>, an « *international community of scouts* » represented at the federal council by the general commissioners and the national religious advisers ; and a 'Federation' that « *may not be totally linked to one Church only* »<sup>19</sup>, gathering associations with various Christian confessions on the interconfessional basis defined in the *Religious Directory* and represented at the federal council by the presidents and the national secretaries.

So in this spirit, the French association in only the representative in France of the Federation of European scouting, transformed in 1977 into the International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe ; the French association does not 'adhere' to the Union, it is its 'daughter'. The role of the 'Association of Guides and Scouts of Europe of the Federation of European scouting (FSE)' is to be the Union on the French territory, that is to say to give life and develop the intuitions of the movement, especially « *to take an active part, on the one hand, to the process aiming at creating for youth a Europe of peoples and, on the second hand, to the ecumenical dialogue in the Churches* »<sup>20</sup>, thanks to Father Sevin's scouting ; the non virtual international openness by international activities (Europa-camps, Eurojam, Euromoot...) <sup>21</sup> ; a wider openness towards our separated brothers ; the promotion of the idea that a non-coeducation of girls and boys is an asset for the formation of youth...

Besides, this is the meaning of the 'investiture' of the general commissioners by the federal commissioner. Admittedly, they are chosen by the board of directors, who entrust them with a mandate and to whom they report. But the federal commissioner incarnates the unity of European scouting and the living community of Guides and Scouts of Europe of the various countries ; he does not 'receive this 'investiture' as a person but on behalf of the federal council of the Federation of European scouting, who 'receives' its new members.

Gwenaël Lhuissier



<sup>16</sup> Canonice *Federal statutes* of the International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe, art. 1.2.9, September 26th 2003.

<sup>17</sup> *Federal statutes* of the International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe, October 10<sup>th</sup> 1977, art. 1.3.2.

<sup>18</sup> Report of the federal council of Matzenheim, October 29th 1977.

<sup>19</sup> *Religious Directory* of the 'Fédération du scoutisme européen', art. 4, November 16th 1997, coming from the 1<sup>st</sup> article of the Religious Directory of November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1957.

<sup>20</sup> Declaration of the federal council of Bruges, on All Saints' Day 2000.

<sup>21</sup> Until 1983, the general assembly, every three years, was considered as 'international days'.



## A PERSON OF SCOUTING : JEAN CORBISIER

The first Belgian troop was founded in Brussels in 1909 by an Englishman, Harold Parfitt, for the boys of the British colony, which was very numerous at that time. This novelty aroused the curiosity of Belgian young people and, with the help of the English, the first troop completely Belgian was created. In December 1910, the association of the "*Boy Scouts of Belgium*" (BSB) was born. The association was multiconfessional and at the beginning it used the English



uniforms and badges. On a Spring Sunday of 1910, Father Jules Petit (1878-1949), a young curate in the parish of Béguinage, Brussels, went with the oldest boys of his oratory centre for an excursion in the Soignes forest. There they met a scout patrol having its outing. Enthusiastic about this meeting, the boys asked Father Petit to let them become scouts too. The priest asked for some information, read *Scouting for Boys* and embarked on the adventure of giving birth to Catholic scouting. In Spring 1911, three Catholic troops started in Brussels: one in the parish of Béguinage, one in Saint-Louis school and the third one in Saint-Michel Jesuit school.

Father Petit asked Jean Corbisier (1869-1928), who taught mathematics in Saint-Michel school of Brussels, to take these three troops in charge. In order to support and develop that initiative, Corbisier and Father Petit founded the "*Belgian Catholic Scouts*" (BCS) association in May 1912. In four years time, about twenty troops were founded in Brussels, half a dozen in Namur and many others throughout Belgium, in the

French speaking part as in the Flemish one.

The newly born association received the support of many political, religious and civil personalities. Let us remember Cardinal Mercier, Primate of Belgium, who expressed himself officially in favour of the new association, as well as Jules Renkin, Minister of Colonies, who accepted to become a member of the Honourary Committee.

Corbisier was named "Scout Chief" of the new association. With Father Petit and a delegation of leaders, in December 1912, Corbisier went to Great Britain where he met personally Baden-Powell, who allowed him to give his name to the new association. Thus, in 1913, the association adopted the name of "*Baden-Powell Belgian Boy-Scouts*" (BPBBS). The journey in Great Britain gave them also the opportunity to know scouting better and to suppress some tendencies of the beginning which were rather militaristic, as far as terms and activities were concerned.

Historically, Jean Corbisier was the first to give to Baden-Powell's scouting a Catholic interpretation: in 1912, he planned to include in the promise the service "to God, to the Church and to my homeland" whereas Baden-Powell had planned it "to God and to the King". He was the first to formulate the Principle: "*The scout is proud of his faith*". He was the first one to translate the scout Law into French and, in that translation, he gave to the 3<sup>rd</sup> article a more Christian connotation. Baden-Powell's third article said: "*to be useful and to help others*", whereas Corbisier's translation was more ambitious: "*to serve and to save my neighbour*". By using the word "save" for the first time – then Father Sevin would use it too – Corbisier opened for the first time the way to missionary and evangelizing scouting.

On December 30<sup>th</sup> 1912, Jean Corbisier wrote to the Holy Father. On January 18<sup>th</sup> 1913, he received an answer from cardinal Merry del Val, Pope Saint Pius X's Secretary, encouraging him and praising the initiative. It is the first pontifical document mentioning scouting. Cardinal Merry del Val, a former pupil of the Jesuits in Brussels, wrote: "*I have much appreciated the interesting details on the recent formation of the 'Belgian Catholic Scouts', whose chief you are, on the purposes of this excellent work for youth, which has already met the approval of H.E. Cardinal Archbishop of Malines and of the Belgian Episcopate [...]. The Holy Father, who has personally appreciated this news with satisfaction, sends you wholeheartedly his special Blessing, sign of celestial favours*".



In 1914, on the eve of the outbreak of the Great War, Jean Corbisier put his scouts at the disposal of the Minister of War, M. de Broqueville, who accepted; and the scouts committed themselves in services of dispatch riders. However, in spite of the treaties which foresaw the neutrality of Belgium, Germany invaded a big part of the Belgian territory and, among others, forbade scouting, which started again only at the end of the war, with renewed enthusiasm.

In 1920, at the Jamboree of London, with the Earl Mario di Carpegna and Father Jacques Sevin, Jean Corbisier was one of the founders of the "*International Office of Catholic Scouts*" (O.I.S.C.), the aim of which was to maintain contacts and to create exchanges of experiences and of information between the Catholic scout associations in the world.

But towards 1920, between the Belgian leaders, more specifically between Corbisier and Father Petit, a gap appeared about the role of the religious adviser in scouting. It had started already before the war. In Belgium, in a parish or in a Catholic school, the various existing associations depended on the clergy, so on a priest who was generally the "director", and the formation of young people was devolved to the priest. This type of approach conflicted with scouting, where the role of direction was attributed to the chief, whereas the religious adviser was one of his collaborators. At that time, although the value of lay people in the Church was acknowledged, the notion of apostolate of lay people was not openly mentioned; neither were their rights and duties as baptised people.

Jean Corbisier and Father Jacobs, who was general religious adviser of the association from 1923 to 1931, defended the principle that within the "*Baden-Powell Belgian Boy-Scouts*" responsibilities at all levels had to be assigned to lay people and that priests were there to help them. The others contested this disposal and wanted the leading responsibilities to be attributed to priests, with lay people to help them. They also objected that many Catholic people were convinced and practicing but that it was not always the case: there were also lay people who were rather "lukewarm" as faith was concerned. Hence the doubt on the opportunity of implying this second type of lay people in the direction of scout units, particularly in a moment such as the after-war when the Belgian Church intended clearly to recuperate its action towards youth.

In the absence of an agreement, a split took place in 1920 and Father Petit, who supported the supremacy of priests upon lay people in scouting, created once again the "*Belgian Catholic Scouts*", with their own structure, whereas Jean Corbisier remained at the head of the "*Baden-Powell Belgian Boy-Scouts*".

For the "*Belgian Catholic Scouts*", there was no doubt that Catholic scouting had to be open only to convinced and practicing Catholics, placed under the direction of a priest helped by lay chiefs, as that had always been done in the oratories and in the other Catholic associations. The "*Baden-Powell Belgian Boy-Scouts*" defended the opposite opinion, maintaining a wider openness towards less practicing boys and the sharing of responsibilities between chief and religious adviser.

The "*Belgian Catholic Scouts*" also contested the fact that the "*Baden-Powell Belgian Boy-Scouts*", while being Catholic, depended on a body such as the "*Boy Scouts International Bureau*", which was not explicitly Catholic, and that they had common references with Protestant England. They feared the danger of leading scouting towards religious indifference.

In 1927, after the intervention of Cardinal Van Roey, the new Primate of Belgium, unity was restored between the two associations and the "*Baden-Powell Belgian Boy-Scouts*" adapted their statutes in order to consider also the opinions of those who had been members of the "*Belgian Catholic Scouts*" and in order to welcome them again within the association. Jean Corbisier withdrew in order not to hinder the action of reunification.

Jean Corbisier turned back home to the Father on March 12<sup>th</sup> 1928. The difference between his testament and Baden-Powell's one is significant. Baden-Powell wrote: "*Try and leave this world a little better than you found it and when your turn comes to die, you can die happy*".

With Jean Corbisier, it is more the believer than the wise man who speaks: « *The true reason of dying happy is not only to have served the others but rather to go to God* ». His testament ends with these words : « *In spirit, I remain among you and I will ask God that our work may spread out and perpetuate for the good of youth and the glory of our Holy Religion* ».

Attilio Grieco



**NEWS - NOUVELLES - NOTIZIE****A new delegate of the Federal Commissioner for Scotland**

Those among us who took part in the Federal Council of Prague, in October 2015, certainly remember Steven Smith and his kilt.

The Federal Council had then welcomed the quite new Scottish association as an observer within the Union.

As Steve had to leave his mission, it is Ailish Lanahan, his collaborator from the very beginning, who was invested by the Federal Commissioner as delegate for Scotland, on April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016.

It was a very familial ceremony, in her garden, in the presence of her husband and their children, as well as some friends interested in scouting.

Ailish has now to constitute a new team and to establish links with the Church, focusing on prevention policy, which is quite a sensitive issue there.

Let us pray for Scotland.



*Ailish Lanahan's investiture*

**ORIUR has a new national Religious Adviser**

Father Alexander Pankratov, 53 years old, in charge of the Orthodox parish St-Anastasia in Saint-Petersburg, has accepted the mission of national Religious Adviser of ORIUR, our sister association associated to the UIGSE-FSE.

For many years, he has been in touch and in good terms with several scout associations in Russia. Those who know Russian can discover his portrait on :

<http://st-anastasia.ru/tsercov/kliir/protoierej-aleksandr-pankratov.html>

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