

From South Africa to Mozambique

An interview with Fr. A. Borst

Giuseppe Manzoni, scj

1 *Fr. Manzoni: I want to thank you for your willingness to grant this interview on your visit to the Regional of Aliwal (South Africa) and the Region of Mozambique. Your interviews have always been rich and interesting. I recall the first time 1986 on the occasion of your visit to Indonesia, Germany in 1987, Poland in 1988 and the Philippines in 1988. In the present interview I will be asking you about your African experiences. Your view of “apartheid” in South Africa will be of special interest to us as well as the interminable civil war in Mozambique.*

2 **Fr. Borst:** On the South African visit, I was not alone. Fr. John Klingler was with me. We left the airport at Fiumicino by South African Airways on February 7, 1989. Through a friend we secured places in the business class. After a stop at Lisbon, we flew 11 hours straight to Johannesburg where we arrived on Ash Wednesday, February 8, 1989. Without any custom and immigration delays, we took South African National Airline to Port Elizabeth where the Regional Superior of De Aar, Fr. William Pitcavage met us. After a 15 minute ride we arrived at our house where the Regional Superior lives with Fr. Miller and on several days a week Bishop Baaij, the former Bishop of Aliwal North.

3 *Fr. Manzoni: What was your first impression of South Africa?*

4 **Fr. Borst:** It has to be “apartheid”. In fact after supper when the others retired to their rooms, I had a long conversation with Bishop Baaij on the subject of “apartheid”. The Bishop has his own ideas which are not accepted by all. For him, “apartheid” is a natural reality which has always existed among the whites, the coloreds and the various black tribes. Each tribe has its own traditions and it is impossible to pass from one tribe to another. For

example, a black for reasons of employment has to leave the area of his own tribe remains inexorably “up-rooted”.

5 Bishop Baaij does not seem to make a distinction between the natural fact that every one senses himself to be bound to his own people and his tribe and the requirements of the law (as in South Africa) to remain in their own group. These requirements are always in contradiction with the fundamental rights of a person.

6 *Fr. Manzoni: Fr. Adrian, were you able personally to witness the social effects of “apartheid”?*

7 **Fr. Borst:** Certainly, in various ways and in different circumstances since the society is impregnated with it. What strikes one at once is the fact that the various ethnic groups, by force of law, live in their own sections.

8 On February 9, Fr. Miller took us to visit the city of Port Elizabeth and we saw the various townships: the section for the whites, the blacks, the colored and the Indians. Everything well organized and well separated. The various “townships” are worlds apart even though they constitute the same city of Port Elizabeth.

9 The whites live in a rich and well-regulated European style city. Suddenly, I felt that I was in one of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro or in the populated section of the city of Santiago in Chile. Right after, then, in a stately section where the Indians live with eastern style houses. It remains shocking.

10 The rigid separation among the residential sections is rigid and imposed by law. All mixing is forbidden: no black may live in the white or colored section, no Indian, even if he is wealthy, can buy a home in the white section. In the morning the blacks go on foot to work outside their section and return in the evening. One has the impression that all of the whites travel by car and the blacks on foot.

11 We left the city and came into contact with some young men, half naked with painted faces. They belong to the Xhosa tribe and were undergoing their period of initiation for three or four weeks away from their families and struggling to survive. We gave them some money and they allowed us to photograph them.

12 The trip in the area outside Port Elizabeth was striking. One seems to be on one of the sand dunes in Holland battered by the winds, an area without trees with only grass and weeds the color of hay because of the lack of moisture.

13 Fr. Manzoni: *Are there any remains of the old inhabitants who emigrated from Holland in the centuries past?*

14 Fr. Borst: Most certainly, and not only in the language (“apartheid” is after all a Dutch word) but in the names of the people and the places. It was enough to leave Port Elizabeth for the interior as we did on February 10 travelling by car to Graaff-Reinet in the De Aar Diocese. We stopped in Jansenville. The name of the city brings to mind the Huguenots who escaped from France and together with the Dutch emigrants reached South Africa.

15 After Jansenville, we travelled through an area called the “Karoo” (in the past it signified “the land of thirst”). It was a monotonous trip, through a high plain with hardly any trees. We arrived at Graaff-Reinet a city of 5,000 whites, 10,000 blacks and 20,000 coloreds. Here the colored were exceptionally predominant while in South Africa as a whole only they number 4 million, the whites 5 million and the blacks 24 million.

16 The city of Graaff-Reinet is also a reminder of the days of the immigration. It was founded in 1786 by Cornelius James van der Graaff, the Governor of the Cape Colony and his wife Cornelia Reinet. Hence, the name Graaff-Reinet. We visited a beautiful Protestant church (Dutch Reform Church). After, we visited a national park, part mountainous and rocky with the significant name of “the Valley of Desolation”. From a high point we admired the magnificent panorama of Graaff-Reinet and at the same time we were discouraged by the clear reality of the South Africa of “apartheid”. In the white section there a lot of green, trees and gardens; then there was the sections of the black and the coloreds.

17 Fr. Manzoni: *In this social context, so characteristic and difficult, what is the situation of our fathers?*

18 Fr. Borst: On February 11, I separated from Fr. John Klingler who remained in the De Aar Region while I set out to experience the Aliwal Region.

19 I left with Fr. William Wilson for the city of Aliwal North. The trip was again monotonous on the high plain without any trees. We stopped at Middelburg and Burgersdorp (both Dutch names). I had the strange feeling of one who travels in two worlds completely different even though we were in the village of Burgersdorp. Fr. Wilson left me in order to make some purchases and I remained in the car. On my left, I saw a house with a store and a Dutch name and I seemed to be in Europe. On my right, I saw the street that leads to the black section. There were only Africans: women with their multicolored clothes, carrying things on their heads and men with clothes that seemed too large for them and always wearing hats.

20 We arrived at the city of Aliwal North. The residence of the priests, the Bishop, the cathedral, the various institutions and the convent of the sisters

are in the white section. There are 27 SCJs in Aliwal: 17 priests, 2 brothers and 3 students. The ministry is mostly confined to parishes which have been entrusted to us. On Sunday, February 12, I went with Fr. Wilson to his parish of St. Francis in the black section. Looking from the altar, the men were on the left side and the women on the right with children in the front. At the time for the collection, all approached the altar with their offering. All went to communion. Since it was the first Sunday of Lent, after mass all came forward to receive the ashes in the sign of the cross. Even the little babies came in the arms of their mothers.

21 Fr. Manzoni: *Fr. Adrian, you said that “apartheid” is a reality which dominates the country. What do the Bishops and our fathers think about it?*

22 Fr. Borst: There are diverse opinions. All condemn the injustice of “apartheid”. However, considering the context of the country, its history and the actual reality, the solution to the problem is not easy.

23 I met Fr. Edmund Cahi who lives with the sisters in a nice house at St. Joseph’s Institute. He is elderly and ill. I remember meeting him in Rome during my student days. He stated that “apartheid” should not be judged too hastily when one does not live in South Africa every day. The problem cannot be understood so easily.

24 I met Bishop Fritz Lobinger, the Bishop of Aliwal. He recounted for me the meeting of the South African Bishop’s Conference held a little earlier in the year. During the meeting the Bishops prayed for the political prisoners and for the five condemned to death for high treason. This prayer itself is considered as an act against the government. The Catholic Church and all of the churches in South Africa are protesting ever more strongly against policies of “apartheid” and against the injustices which flow from it. The government, for its part, counter attacks the Church by making it difficult to obtain visas for priests and religious to enter the country. There is a proposed law being discussed in parliament which would hinder the flow of funds from outside of the country. Further, to control the finances of the churches, they would impose a tax of 50%. The Bishops, in addition to protesting, have stated that they would not obey such a law.

25 Fr. Manzoni: *What have you seen in the Region of Aliwal and what is your impression of it?*

26 Fr. Borst: With Fr. Notermans I visited two monuments. One in honor of the English who died during the Boer War (1899-1902) and the other was in memory of the Boers who dies in the English concentration camp. One can read a long list of Dutch names, especially of women and children.

27 Again with Fr. Notermans I crossed the Orange River, passing from the Cape Province to the Orange Free State. In my imagination I could picture

the first members of the “Great Trek” leaving from Cape Town with their families and what they possessed and arriving at the Orange River after a 1000 km journey through the Karoo Desert. Passing over the river, they founded the Orange Free State. How many books have I read about that trip without ever dreaming that one day I would visit the place. Let us pass over the dreams of the past and come to the present reality, often so sad.

28 With Fr. Paschal Motsamai I went to visit the parish of Rouxville about fifty miles north of Aliwal. By now I was not astounded to see the whites living in the center of Rouxville while the blacks and the colored lived on the periphery. The church is located in the “township” of the blacks. The church is constructed of brick and very simple. There are about 600 Catholics. There are families living in tents. It is hard to know how they survive. When we arrived it was raining and the streets were a torrent of mud. Only a jeep could pass through. The real tragic situation is the condition of the young. They can be seen in the bars since they have nothing else to do because of the great unemployment. They drink the small amounts of money they have. They drink to forget their misery. We visited the mayor of the section and discussed the situation with him. For him the real tragedy of South Africa today is the blacks massacring the blacks. There is so much strife and hatred. The situation will only get worse.

29 *Fr. Manzoni: Do we have any religious who are native to the region? What is the vocation picture?*

30 **Fr. Borst:** We do have five African confreres and three students preparing for the priesthood. The only hope for the diocese is African vocations.

31 *Fr. Manzoni: Did you visit other houses or parishes conducted by our fathers in the Aliwal Region?*

32 **Fr. Borst:** Yes. I visited all of them. I went to Bethulie where Fr. Nordlohne has been stationed since 1952. He has a somewhat pessimistic outlook about the future. He recognizes that the only hope for the future is African vocations.

33 Then I visited Burgersdorp where one of the younger men, Fr. Martin Mandau is the pastor. The small church, the parish house and the sister’s convent are just outside of the city. It forms a small center surrounded by trees. Burgersdorp, as all of the other places, has a white section in the center of the city, then a section for the blacks and another for the colored. The black section can only be reached by a bridge. While being much poorer than the white section and the Indian section, it is not as miserable as certain sections of Santiago and San Bernardo in Chile. The houses are small and of brick construction according to their means. There is also water and electricity. The

church is poor but it serves its purpose. There is a hospital: one building for the whites almost never full and one building for the blacks. According to Fr. Martin, the health care system is good but the school for the blacks leave much to be desired. There seem to be so few who are able to make use of the study grants.

34 Naturally, I visited Teresa Mission in the Transkei. This area was created by the South African government along with the Ciskei. These are African states with their own government, police force, passports and the like. However, they are not internationally recognized. Teresa Mission is 1560 meters high. Fr. Bernard Sahr, a true priest-missionary, a man of simple and profound faith animated by a great love of his people, is the priest in charge. Fr. Sahr spoke with great veneration about the great missionary Fr. Franz Wamhof, S.C.J., who, with a knapsack on his back, visited the people scattered in the mountains.

35 From Teresa Mission I visited Umlamli where two of our African fathers, Mattia and Zolie work. In Umlamli, I met Fr. Holzenkamp the senior of the Aliwal Region. On Sunday, February 19, I was back at Teresa Mission. At 10 o'clock, I concelebrated the principal mass with Fr. Sahr. The church was full. There were a great many infants present. There was much singing and I became aware that in this deserted corner of the world, on a high mountain, dry and barren, the people participated in the Eucharist with joy and simple faith. Because of the lively color of their clothing, the church had the appearance of a great feast even though the liturgy was somewhat pre-conciliar. Before mass they recited the rosary. During the mass there was a long sermon. There did not seem to be much contact between the priest and the people. After mass they had the Stations of the Cross. Then Fr. Sahr met the people who needed food, those who needed some documents, a rosary or the like. We did not eat until 3:00 P.M. After that Fr. Sahr went to celebrate a third mass at Musong.

36 After he left, I was alone there under the blue sky in that mountainous landscape. I saw the buildings of the mission, the deserted street on which few automobiles passed on their way to Lesotho. I did not see any houses on the nearby hills or the more distant mountains. I felt alone with God. At 4:30 P.M. Fr. Sahr returned "tired but content" as he said in all simplicity since he had been able to be a priest to his people. I admired this confrere for his zeal and as a missionary. He worked for fifty years in South Africa. I thought of him fondly after his sudden death on April 28, 1989.

37 *Fr. Manzoni: It is comforting to learn of missionaries who live a simple heroism each day.*

38 **Fr. Borst:** Fr. Leijens was inspiring for me when I met him on my visit to Walaza. He is elderly and he "formed a community" with Fr. Sahr but only

on Thursday when they met at Teresa Mission where there was room reserved for him.

39 When I arrived at Walaza with Fr. Motsamai, we found the door open but father was not at home. Finally, we found him in the church. There he was reciting the breviary after a tiring day of Sunday masses in the different communities. He is not in good health needing an extended visit to Germany and medical care. He has not had a vacation in Germany since 1974. He does not want to leave because his people will be alone. When he arrived in Walaza forty years ago there was only one catholic. Up to the present he has buried seven hundred. This is his strange way of keeping statistics, counting only the dead and not the living. Father is an enthusiastic missionary. He spoke without interruption for an hour about his pastoral work, his people, their customs, the difficulties encountered, the strong influence of the pagan traditions.

40 *Fr. Manzoni: South Africa has always interested me. I remember having written, some years ago, a long study on our missions in Aliwal and De Aar. They seem to me to be in the stone quarry of the Lord from which beautiful flowers and perfumes have sprung forth. You have given me some good examples.*

41 **Fr. Borst:** Concerning “apartheid” not everything is so stony. Some flowers have sprung forth here and there. It is necessary to be calm in one’s judgment. The matter is much discussed in South Africa. I was surprised by the very objective presentation on South African TV on the question of “apartheid” which I saw one night when I was alone in one of our houses.

42 It was a program which began with the assertion that every person was created by God notwithstanding the diversity of race or color. The program spoke of the various groups: white, colored, black, Indian and of their freedom whatsoever group they were and even of the forming of mixed groups. The program and the accompanying discussion were undoubtedly excellent; but, however, the reality of daily life is quite different. It is difficult or nearly impossible to eradicate the “apartheid” mentality. I recall an incident, simple enough but significant. In Aliwal I went to the Post Office to buy some stamps. There was a black man in front of me in the line. When his turn came, the clerk asked if he had not “robbed” my place. I intervened to assure him that it was not so, the black man was ahead of me. Even though there are no longer separate windows for whites and blacks, the “apartheid” mentality remains. It dies hard.

43 There was a more serious case. Bishop Lobinger had appointed a pastor at Colesburg, a small city in the De Aar Diocese, Father Colin Bowes a colored man, a priest of the diocese for thirty years. As it so happens, the church and the parish house are in the white section. Soon after his arrival, a

stone was thrown through the window of the chapel with a note: “blacks are not welcome”. Fr. Bowes is not black but colored. For the law there is no difference. After the stone throwing incident, there was a petition drawn up, over a hundred whites signed asking for his removal. The petition was sent to the mayor (a woman) as well as to the capital at Cape Town. Recently, the Foreign Minister of South Africa declared: “apartheid is dead”. The situation at Colesburg says something else. The mayor of Colesburg would like to resolve the question in favor of the priest. There is a law which states that a non-white needs a special permit to live in a white section and he has ninety days to apply for it. There was a long discussion in the City Council and with the Bishop. The mayor suggested that Fr. Bowes apply for the permit which would be granted. The Bishop refused since it would be giving recognition to an unjust law. However, if Fr. Bowes does not apply within ninety days, the police will intervene without any ceremony to remove him. The Bishop was of a mind to seek a more public solution. He wanted to have the TV present and have him leave the city in a public manner so as to create an incident and allow world opinion to know what happens in South Africa. Such publicity would not help the situation at Colesburg. It would be better to seek a solution in which both parties could save face. “Apartheid” is far from dead.

44 Fr. Manzoni: *What other communities did you visit in the Aliwal Region?*

45 Fr. Borst: On February 20, I went with Fr. Paschal to Molento, small city which received its name from an Italian family which emigrated to England and then to South Africa. The pastor Fr. Benno Hansel has his house and a small chapel in the white section and a much larger church in the black “township”. We celebrated mass in this church for the elderly. After mass all gathered in the parish hall for tea and coffee and a snack. All those present also received food to take home with them.

46 The black section in Molento was the poorest that I saw. The people live in thatched huts, an indignity to a human being, for which they must pay 14 rand (a rand is a little more than a dollar) a month to rent the land. At the entrance to the black section there was a house for an official whose duty it was to control those entering or leaving. However, there is no official living there. “Apartheid” is dead. It was a concentration camp.

47 There was at one time a siren (now removed) which was used to signal at 9 o’clock in the evening that the blacks had to leave the white section and was sounded again at 6 o’clock in the morning when the blacks could return to work in the white section.

48 Fr. Manzoni: *I believe that we have come to the end of your visit.*

49 Fr. Borst: On February 22 we had a meeting with Fr. John Klingler and eleven confreres from Aliwal and seven from De Aar. We shared information about the Congregation, the work of the General Council, the new field of apostolate in the Philippines, the Commission on Spirituality and Apostolate, the Commission on Justice and Peace. We closed the morning with a concelebration. In the afternoon there were separate meetings: Fr. Klingler with the De Aar group and myself with the Aliwal group.

50 I spoke about my impressions of the visit, insisted on the apostolate of vocations, the importance of guidance for the young in formation, the need for a worked out contract with the diocese and good financial organization. I further insisted on the necessity of preserving the SCJ identity in the diocese. I also spoke of developing an attitude favorable to the future possibility of uniting the Region of Aliwal and De Aar. The majority were in favor of this idea.

51 On February 23, the day of recollection, we concludes with a concelebration and a simple farewell get together.

52 Fr. Manzoni: *Your trip in South Africa was continued for a few more days.*

53 Fr. Borst: On February 25 I travel with Fr. Wilson. I wanted to go the coast of the Indian Ocean. This is tourist place with big hotels and beach establishments. From there we went on to Durban and Marianhill.

54 At the big monastery of the Marianhill Fathers we stayed until February 28. Those were restful days. During the visit I learned more about South Africa. I spoke with the fathers and brothers (German and Dutch). I visited the areas in which the fathers are involved with working for the poor and the struggle against "apartheid".

55 On February 28, I left Fr. Wilson and went on to Cedara where the OMI's have a major seminary for the theology students of the various congregations. Two of our students are there: George in second theology and John in first theology. They are doing well and the superior was very satisfied with them. I met Eddy Beeket at Pretoria who has completed his theological studies. He was the last of our confreres that I met in South Africa.

56 Fr. Manzoni: *I understand that your visit to South Africa was continued in Mozambique.*

57 Fr. Borst: On March 3, I left Johannesburg with Fr. Klingler by plane for Maputo. We were to visit our confreres in Mozambique and Fr. Klingler, the Director of our Justice and Peace Commission was to assist at the first meeting of the National Directors of Peace and Justice for the African

Continent. The airport was crowded. I felt that even though Mozambique was Marxist, many business men and South Africans were willing to invest there.

58 At the airport in Maputo I had the pleasant surprise of being treated as a traveling VIP. We were met by our confreres, Fr. Emilio Giorgi, Fr. Dario Verry and Br. Ossana in the VIP lounge where our baggage was delivered. We went by car to the house, a fine house in the center of the city close to the famous Hotel Polana. In this house Fr. Tarcisio Finazzi, the pastor of Our Lady of Vittoria, Fr. Gianfranco Massieri, a professor at the seminary and chaplain at the jail and Br. Ossana, the Regional Treasurer from the community.

59 There is another house in the area which we visited. This is where the six students who have made first profession live with Fr. Verri, Fr. Della Zuanna and Br. Francisco. We had a meeting with the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Dubeaupain with whom we spoke for about two hours about the complexities of Mozambique. There followed a pleasant evening with the students who were anxious to hear about the congregation.

60 *Fr. Manzoni: What manner of impression did Maputo, the capital of Mozambique make on you?*

61 **Fr. Borst:** We viewed the city from the 33rd floor of a building that was never completed after the Portuguese left. It would be a splendid city if it were not in such a bad state of repair. The streets are not repaired, full of pot holes, many houses are in a very bad state of repair. Maputo is a beautiful city seen from on high. At one time it was the vacation city for the South Africans. Now everything is in bad shape, many of the hotel buildings were left unfinished and look like skeletons on the seashore. It is truly a very poor sight. The government has finally allowed some private initiatives and free markets.

62 *Fr. Manzoni: When was the first meeting of African National Directors of Peace and Justice held?*

63 **Fr. Borst:** The meeting was held in Quelimane, a place that can only be reached by airplane. With Fr. Klingler, once again we were VIPs. We were only allowed to take 30 kgs but I had 15 kgs of potatoes with me for the confreres in Quelimane.

64 We left Maputo at 6 o'clock on the evening of March 4 and arrived in Quelimane at 8 o'clock. It was raining and had rained for the whole week. Quelimane is a hot and humid city. I admire our confreres who are able to survive there; especially, in the situation of continual guerrilla warfare and lacking everything. It is a miserable situation.

65 The meeting with the confreres was very interesting. However, the night, with heat and humidity as well as the croaking of the frogs providing

a concert in the water beneath my window, passed. The following day was Sunday. It was pouring rain and the streets were almost impassable. All of the people came to mass and it was a true liturgical celebration marked by the rhythmic music so typical of Africa. Because of the rain, a celebration was held in our honour in the church with singing and dancing.

66 *Fr. Manzoni: What was your impression of the state of the guerrilla warfare in which our confreres and the people live?*

67 **Fr. Borst:** I do not intend to speak about it since it has been treated in the *Dehoniana* and in the interview with Father General. I can say it all in two words: desolation and misery.

68 I left Quelimane on Monday March 6 with Fr. Emilio Giorgi. On the way we bought some fruit. Since the liberalization of the markets, one can find it more easily. I visited the section where the people live in thatched huts (made of mud and straw) which were completely ruined and collapsing because of the rain. We went to a shop. In the refrigerator, one time used for meat, now there was only some cases of Coca-Cola. They were selling olive oil marked “gift of the Italian government”. There are shops in which one can buy items with dollars as in Poland. These were not state operated but privately owned. We went into one to see what was for sale. Not much: olive oil, sun flower oil from South Africa, chocolate, alcoholic drinks, cans of peas, soap. We then travelled to the port. The Russians formerly had the fishing rights but now the Japanese have them.

69 Our fathers have organized a pre-novitiate with five students in the first year, four in the second year. They will make the novitiate in Gurué and study philosophy at Maputo.

70 On March 8, I drove north about 45 km with Fr. Emilio Bertuletti to a refugee camp. About 10 km from there we visited a field where Fr. Bertuletti had organized a cooperative. After having given a hundred families a piece of land with good irrigation to raise rice in a cooperative, when every thing was going well, the party intervened since private initiatives were not in accord with Marxist doctrine. After that everything went to ruin. Fr. Bertuletti was not deterred. He began another cooperative in a different way so that the party could not interfere.

71 We continued on our way north. There were a number of military blockades but we were able to pass without any problem. The poor had to pay in order to pass through the blockades. The soldiers at the blockades have not been paid for months, in some case not in years. As we continued our trip north along the way we encountered a number of soldiers who were just young boys, ill clothed, without weapons with their feet wrapped in cloth and showing wounds. Fr. Bertuletti informed us that we had reached the limits of

the territory controlled by the government. The “Renamo”, the rebel force occupied about 80% of the country.

72 On the return trip we saw the various refugee camps. We took some of the soldiers with us as far as the blockade post. Fr. Bertuletti pointed out the women with breasts uncovered and with infants. The women bare their breasts as a sign of mourning. Fr. Bertuletti inquired whether they were prisoners. The chief of the soldiers said that they were refugees from Inhasunge. They were captured some weeks back by the “Renamo” when they fled Inhassunge and were taken to Luabo from which they were fleeing and had arrived at this post.

73 Inhassunge is 25 km south of Quelimane and Luabo is still another 160 km south. These poor women had covered over 400 km on foot with their children eating what they found along the road and in the bush. Fr. Bertuletti protested to the one in charge of the soldiers that he had allowed some soldiers, who could just as well have walked, to ride with us, but now would not allow the women to ride with us. The chief of the soldiers was somewhat perplexed and then decided that five women with their children could ride with us. At the parish in Quelimane the women found food and received some clothing and were able to rest before continuing their journey to Inhassunge.

74 We had the occasion to visit the hospital at Quelimane where one of the surgeons is our confrere, Fr. Aldo Marchesini. The hospital has 300 beds and is the only one in the region. They lack everything. Fr. Marchesini has managed for the most urgent needs with the help that comes from his friends in Italy. So, justice and peace is accomplished.

75 *Fr. Manzoni: What can you tell us about the meeting of African National Directors of Peace and Justice?*

76 **Fr. Borst:** After the arrival of Fr. Giovanni Pross of Zaire and Fr. Bernard Groux from Camerouns on March 9, the meeting began. We heard reports on the situation in various countries. On March 10 the meeting continued but we had to leave to be sure of making our connections on March 13, Maputo - Johannesburg - Rome so we left a day earlier than planned. This decision proved providential since the flight scheduled for Monday from Quelimane did not arrive.

77 Our stay in Mozambique was short, too short. We did, however, become aware of the dramatic situation of this martyr nation and of the generosity of our fathers who live with these poor people.

78 We visited the major seminary at Maputo. There are 96 students in philosophy and theology. The participation of the people in their religious life is moving. In the midst of death, destruction and misery, the Church is a mature living reality and growing in the grave difficulties of the past years.