



# DIARY OF THE CHAPTER

32nd General Chapter of the Augustinians of the Assumption  
Rome, May 2 to 23, 2011

## A change of government for the Assumption!

**The General Chapter adopted the guidelines for the new “community organization” of the Congregation.**

There was considerable relief, last night, among the members of the Chapter. First, of course, because they had successfully elected the tenth Superior General of the Congregation, in the best of conditions! But also because another “big item” on the Chapter’s agenda had finally been resolved definitively, at least in part. You’ve already guessed what it is: our new community organization. Regular readers of the “*Diary of the Chapter*” remember an early article on the question (see #7, Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup>): the “logic of communion” that guided this revision of our structures led to a proposal that will result in a greater solidarity among the different levels of government.

Even before talking about a new geographic reorganization, the Chapter yesterday adopted by an overwhelmingly favorable margin the overall outline of this new plan. The keystone of the plan is the following: a sharing of the decision-making process by an Ordinary General Council, to include the Superior General and his Assistants (the General Treasurer will be one of these) (1) and a Plenary General Council, made up of the Ordinary General Council and the Major Superiors.

The Chapter spent most of its time talking about the Plenary General Council. It replaces the Council of Congregation, which met once a year



and had fairly limited authority. In the revised article for the *Rule of Life* adopted yesterday (#124), this new organ of government, very clearly collegial, will meet “at least twice a year” and will have “as its mission to assure the well-being of the entire body of the Congregation.” “It will study the ways in which the Congregation must adapt itself in the light of the evolution of the world and the Church. Consequently, it will make decisions regarding the needs of the Congregation in terms of the formation that is needed and the advanced studies required in theology and in other disciplines, and will foresee what innovative foundations should be encouraged or launched. This new Plenary General Council has yet other responsibilities. The Chapter decided that from now on, it will be the Superior General’s responsibility, with the consent of the Council,

- To authorize the opening of a house;
- To decide on the distribution of money from the Solidarity Fund;
- To ratify, upon presentation by the Provincial, the nomination of Directors of Formation for each Province, as well as those formators in major houses of formation;
- To give each religious his first apostolic formation at the end of his formation, in close consultation with his respective Major Superior.

Many articles of the Rule of Life have been altered to respect these decisions. Does all of this represent a revolution? Not really, but certainly a logic of communion!

**(1) Didier Remiot (France) was elected today General Treasurer. His portrait will appear in the next number.**

# Letters from our readers



Dear Richard,  
Thank you for your service to the brothers during these 12 years!  
Thank you for your fraternity, for your love for the brothers and for the Assumption!

Dear Benoît,  
Thank you for accepting this service and happy trails!

We are almost at the end of the 49<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil with almost 400 bishops (titular, auxiliary and emeritus). We also have elected a new team for the next few years. I pray for the Chapter and for the Assumption.

Fraternal greetings and may the Virgin of the Assumption and of Aparecida (where we are) bless you!  
+ José Geraldo da Cruz, a.a. Bishop of Juazeiro (Brazil)

I have just heard the news that Fr. Benoît Grière has just been elected Superior General and I want to send him my sincere and warm congratulations! Whole-heartedly, I wish him much courage and I assure him of my prayers that the Lord may help him accomplish his great mission as best he can and that he looks after his health!

*Chantal Flaux, laywoman of the Alliance, France*

Thank you for sending us so quickly news of the election of Fr. Benoît Grière. I can recall his visit to Worcester on the occasion of the meeting "Education-Media" during the summer of 2004 and I want to express my very best wishes for his new mission.

*Marc LePain, Assumption College (Worcester – North America)*

Thank you for this Diary, how fortunate we are to be able to follow thus your works. So many wonderful things .... What wonderful reflections! ...

Fr. Sandro Laini's text has allowed us to reflect at length without leaving the house.

We also very much appreciated Fr. Richard Lamoureux's text and we are happy that for the laity, we are moving toward a rule of life common for all and possibly toward an association of faithful canonically recognized. These are requests that we expressed before 1999, during Fr. Claude Maréchal's term.

Today a new General has been elected. Thanks to the photos placed on the web site we were able to share your joy ... but no champagne! Good luck for the work ahead and for the decisions concerning the reorganization but also for defining the road map for the six years to come. We are united by prayer to all of you and we are certain that the

Holy Spirit is there to guide you. Congratulations for the new General.  
*Monique and Christian Dumont (St-Germain-en-Laye, France)*

The Oblate Sisters of the Assumption of Italy are united to you in prayer and fraternal affection in this joyous occasion of the election of the new Father General. To him we extend our very best wishes and our support in prayer so that the Holy Spirit may show him the way for the Congregation in today's Church.  
*Sr. Gemma Rossi O.A. (Rome)*

The history which you are writing or are describing in "The Diary of the Chapter" has meaning. One need not be an analyst or an exegete to become aware of this. These titles "A gathering with great expectations", "The Chapter is open!", "The Chapter is on track!", "Do not be afraid", "Men and Women of communion", "A step taken", "Towards a new organization of the Congregation", "The program for the future Superior General"! The hour has come. We have a Superior General.

*Adélard Paluku Mayani (Butembo, DR-Congo – Africa)*

Dear Fr. Benoît : the Assumptionists of Argentina send you their cordial best wishes on your election as Superior General of our Congregation. The road ahead may be difficult but you can count on the help of the Holy Spirit and on our collaboration. Everything is for the Kingdom, as Fr. d'Alzon has taught us. Today, May 11, we here remember the apparitions at Lourdes. Therefore, to Our Lady of Lourdes we entrust your ministry and pray that she may shower you

## Today's program

### Apostolic orientations

#### Morning

##### Plenary Assembly:

- Study of Faith Document
- Discussion on the number of Assistants
- Vote for the General Treasurer

#### Afternoon

##### Plenary Assembly:

- Study of Communion document
- Q&A for the Provincials of Spain and Madagascar
- Vote for one Assistant



with humility, with wisdom and with strength. *“Te envian un fuerte abrazo.”*

*Fr. Roberto Favre, Fr. Juan Carlos Marzolla, Fr. Cristián Céspedes, Fr. Luis Ramón Rendón, Bro. Félix López*

Since May 2 2011, I have been following with much interest your General Chapter which is being held in Rome. “The Diary of the Chapter” is a very precious gift that the Assumptionists have offered us free of charge. Thanks to our daily reading of it and by our constant prayers we have become “extraordinary Chapter members”. Today, I wish to congratulate you on the election of Fr. Benoît Grière as the 10<sup>th</sup> Superior General of the AA. Thank you for having put your trust in him. Thank you also for his acceptance and his availability for the extension of the Reign of God. May God grant him the graces necessary for his new responsibility. Always remain standing, sons of the Assumption.

*Sr. Agnès Juliette Makelele, Or A (Créteil, France)*

Our little international community simply wishes to say how much we are in communion with each member of the General Chapter.

We are gladly nourished by your contributions, your reflection and the future perspectives which will strengthen us as universal brothers for the Mission.

Today, we have lived the choice of the new Superior General and in

the days to come we await that of the ordinary council. We assure Benoît and his future council of our prayers and of our fraternity so that at the heart of this difficult world the Assumption may keep its boldness and its dynamism on all continents. Thank you very much to Fr. Richard and his team!

Close to Fr. Emmanuel d’Alzon, we pray that we may not lose any of his passion for Christ, the Church and the world.

*The international community of Nîmes: Joseph (Korea), Juvence (Madagascar), Gervais (DR-Congo), Iulian (Romania), Michel and Michel (France)*

Dear Fr. Benoît, Congratulations and promise of prayers from an old lame brother!

Many thanks, Richard. Hope to see you soon.

*Oliver Blanchette, a.a. (Worcester – North America)*

We have just learned of the election of Fr. Benoît Grière and we heartily rejoice. Please extend to him the sincere congratulations of our group of Lay Friends of the Assumption at Lorgues as well as the hopes which we place in him to bring to fruition the Lay-Religious Alliance.

Transmit to him also all our wishes for good health so that he may be able to assume the heavy burden which will be his! Tell him also that Fr. Pierre Gally this evening has celebrated the Eucharist and asked the Spirit to give him the necessary

strength and that we have prayed much for this grace.

We remain in communion of thought and of prayer with all the brothers present at the Chapter and we assure them of our fraternal friendship.

*Claudette & Michel, L.A.A. (Lorgues, France)*

The Oblates of the Community of Andradas (Brazil) are united with our Brothers to congratulate Fr. Benoît and we promise to pray for him and for his Congregation. When he will come to Brazil, we will be most happy to welcome him. Courage to all for the future.

*Irmã Maria*

In my name and that of the Lay Assumptionists of Spain, I want to transmit our best wishes to Benoît and to thank him for his acceptance. I wish to assure you that you can count on our help and on our prayers that God will assist you in this heavy mission. For everyone your election was very good news and we all rejoice for the Congregation religious and lay for we shall have a good shepherd who, without a doubt, will lead us to refreshing and new waters. Thank you for the work of the Chapter. I can assure you that no Chapter has solicited as much interest as this one has for both the religious and the laity.

*Julián Lucas a.a. (Léganes – España)*

Congratulations for the new Superior General ! United in prayer.

*Sr Anita & the Oblates of the Assumption in the Netherlands*

Thank you to the Chapter members for the election of Fr. Benoît Grière and thank you very much to Fr. Benoît for having accepted this heavy responsibility. I have no doubt that this choice was inspired from above and for a reason. All is grace! At the time when, as a Congregation, we want to seriously reflect on our communal and apostolic structures and on the way we can adapt these structures to our present reality, it is important, more than ever, that we have at the helm of Assumption an sympathetic leader capable of listening, of inspiring hope and of forging a clear vision in fuzzy and nebulous situations, a commander in chief with global spirit and vision. That leader, today, is Fr. Benoît.

*Fr. Salvator Musande, aa (Worcester)*

# My Voice at the Chapter



After having already lived two General Chapters, I would characterize this first week of the Chapter as “soft”. The participants, neophytes for the most part, seem to be at ease. The

distance covered, I must admit, was very well marked out for us, maybe even too well. The rhythm nevertheless was rather quick, at times we even had to sprint after a long marathon. The game rules were innovating, at times surprising. The principal referee never needed to pull a yellow card. His teams were firmly held.

For what is still to come, I hope to find a coherence between our decisions and our Rule of Life. We must reappropriate our Rule of Life. Studied at the novitiate and re-read after, it resembles a course which the student quickly revises and tells himself page after page: “known, known, known”. To be faithful to Fr. d’Alzon is also to constantly come back to the Rule and to dare to be confronted by it in all honesty.

The result of this face to face is also what’s at stake at our Chapter. Are we ready to recognize our poverties and to take the right decisions? Do we really want to share our wealth with all and to welcome the contributions of others? I see signs of openness in our debates. These must not be but brief moments ready, like the porcupine, to close themselves in on themselves at the slightest “threat”.

All renewals are marked by a return to the sources in search of a creative fidelity. I expect to be able to cross the finish line with some specifically Assumptionist orientations.

**Fr. Guy Leroy**  
(Brussels – North Europe)

At the conclusion of a very busy week. I realize that we are making good progress. Slowly but surely, some light is beginning to shine in the midst of this confusion of languages, ideas, experiences, dreams and expectations. Like the others, I feel that the invitation that Jesus gave to his disciples to advance in deep waters (Lc 5:4) continues to call us today, here and now, in this historical moment for the Assumption.

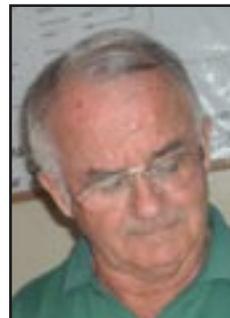
We know that we will not solve all the problems.

In the few days that remain, we still need to offer mutual help and pray that the Holy Spirit of God will enlighten us with inspired ideas. Later, in each Province and community, lay people and religious, each in their own realities, we will find the necessary elements in the documents that will come from the Chapter so that the Kingdom of God may truly grow in the places where we are. I think that our retreat came at the precise and providential moment so that we could become aware that by ourselves and without the presence of God in our lives we could not go very far.

For these next days, there are many more themes waiting for us besides those we have already worked on. My greatest expectation has to do with the community organization. This is, in my opinion, the great challenge. How can we think of a new structure for our Congregation? How can we facilitate communion at all levels? I don’t think that anyone has the answer yet but I’m sure that we will have it one of these days. What I know is that we need to move forward and to contribute to attain this goal. We’re here for that.

I conclude with a quote from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians: “Meanwhile, let us go forward on the road that has brought us to where we are.” (Ph3:16)

**Fr. Luiz Carlos Oliveira (Brazil)**



My impressions of the first week of the Chapter are good. I am struck by a certain serenity in the face of a future whose outlines we do not yet see very clearly: I am thinking in particular of the future entity of Europe, of which we freely speak and with realism and of our openness to laity. My second impression is the (flip flop) of the Congregation towards Africa, which is maybe only a first phase before another possible flip flop towards Asia. Lastly, there is the

Chapter members’ sensitivity to the little positive things that are taking shape here and there: there is in each one’s look a lot of humility, which looks with interest at what is lived in all the provinces.

Over the past eight days we have worked to obtain a general view of the Congregation and of what has been lived these past six years. The frailties and the failures are not hidden, but I retain the great desires which are being affirmed: to go with faith and together to the urgent fronts of the mission and to go there with passion. Will we go alone or on the contrary will we find travel companions?

These travel companions are in the first place the members of our communities. They are also the lay persons who take to heart their share of the realization of these projects. But why not seek these travel companions also in the inter-Assumption, which could be a marker on the road of our Assumptionist identity and mission? Another effort: to resituate ourselves within the Church in the great movement of the consecrated life: I wonder if we give enough importance to the common portion which is proper to all of these families. This is also what it means to be Church.

**Fr. Michel Jary (Vice-Provincial Madagascar)**