



# DIARY OF THE CHAPTER

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

## “Do not be afraid.”

### Editorial

Cal 2017

Fr. Claude Marechal, aa  
Former Superior General

Yes, who does not remember the first words from John Paul II after his election, words often repeated in the Scriptures: “Do not be afraid.” But the words that followed are equally important: “Open, open wide the doors to Christ, to his saving power. Open the national frontiers, the political and economic systems, the immense domain of culture, of civilization and development.” What a wonderful program for a General Chapter whose task is to set the tone for the next six years for the entire Congregation and determine the means to tend toward it if it cannot be perfectly realized. “Men of communion, proposing the Faith, in solidarity with the poor.”

Six years later, the goal remains the same. Is this the easy solution? Yes, if we only change a few words. No, if in faith and prayer, attentive to the four continents so obviously present in the faces of the brothers here, we listen to “what the Spirit has to say to the Churches.”

At the rate that all things change, six years means that this is no longer the same world, the same Church, the same people either in Asia or in Africa, in Europe or in America. It is, of course, the same Gospel, the same Rule of Life, but they need to be lived differently. We need to be faithfully creative and keep our moorings in a faith that is solid and shared in community always open to the Spirit.

Lay people and Religious, living the same spirit, making new advances together, empowered by the same basic conviction: “In truth, the one that God has sent says the words of God because God gives him the Spirit in abundance.”



### The « eldest daughter » of the Assumption

France occupies a singular place in the Assumption planet. Of course, it is a Province like all the others, with its strengths and weaknesses, his fears and hopes. And it is also a Province not at all like the others, because it was the here that our Congregation was born and where it has had, since its beginnings, the greatest number of religious: for a long time, the absolute majority of AAs coming from within the borders of France or the territories attached to it; afterwards, it remained the largest of all the Provinces. But from now on, it must be said “was”, because the 32nd General Chapter is the first in history where a Province – Africa (see our previous editions) – has more religious than France. In presenting his report this morning in plenary session, Fr. Benoît Grière, Provincial of France, painted a picture, at once realistic and optimistic, of what one might call the “eldest daughter” of the Assumption: the total

number of religious is decreasing (252 today, compared with 281 six years ago), but that of young in formation (102) is increasing and, all of a sudden, the average age (62) is going down. Who would have imagined? Fr. Grière highlighted some of the challenges that face the Province of France: to plan ourselves at the service of communion (especially in the area of ecumenism, but within our communities, first!), re-launch a vocation ministry (there is not one Frenchman among the 17 novices currently being formed in France, Vietnam and Togo), without overlooking an openness to China which, both in France and in the Philippines, is now part of the Assumption scene. Conclusion of the Provincial, in the form of a conviction: there is a future for the consecrated life in secularized Europe, but our communities will not be able to incarnate it outside of the international dimension.



## My word as a lay person

In the days I am her now, I feel as if I am one of them all. We are asked to discuss all the questions on the daily agenda and sometimes we lay people have our own meetings.

Especially the personal discussions in the small language groups are very good. In these groups we are with members of all different provinces, lay people and religious. Here we can really discuss with one another about what's concerning us in case of communion, faith, solidarity and poverty. For me these personal reflections are much more inspiring as the plenary sessions and the general comments.

Actually everything is well prepared, and discussions and decisions can be done in one week or one week and a half. I hear all around me the needs of inspiration, real leaders or promoters. I think a good question for a renewal of the congregation could be: Why do we have to do all? Why do we have to be a manager and a leader/promotor all in one person? Why don't we trust management things on those who are qualified for it and arrange that this will find place in democratic and open ways, so that we can make time and place for those who have a special charismatic kind of leadership? Of course we need them both, but not in one person. Not all the provincials, assistants and delegates have to be busy with things which are, in fact, not common and not very well known for him.

I know this mark is very naughty, but it's only meant to make a General Chapter more inspiring and pleasant for **all** the members.

I am specialised in administration and organisation for more than 20 years. Others are, for example, teachers and priests for more than 30 years. We can learn a lot of each other, but I will never be a teacher, and the priest never will be an administrator. But we can learn a lot of each other. I am very pleased to let me inspire by a "leader" or formator. That comes right into my heart and soul. That's why I like to be here in the chapel or in the small groups talking about what is really concerning us and how to work on mine/our mission for a world of peace, love and hope.

Adveniat regnum tuum.

**Sjaak Beirnaert**  
**Lay of the Dutch Region of the North European Province**

## My Voice at the Chapter

I am happy to note that the Chapter is well on its way. We are presently discussing in depth the fundamental options that were given in the Chapter of 2005: "Men of communion, proposing the faith, in solidarity with the poor." If these orientations become for us a constant call to conversion as well as to personal and community convictions, we will be able to continue to elaborate concrete and practical programs that will allow us to be a significant and charismatic presence in the midst of our various societies wherever we may be.



This is my first Chapter and I am the youngest member. The Assumption expresses her diversity and wealth, not only by our presence in 30 countries each with its own culture, distinctive joys and challenges, but also in dialogue with the different generations and aware of what each one can offer from his personal experience.

*En todas partes donde estamos insertos, somos invitados a dar pruebas de nuestro deseo de unidad y comunión, también entre las generaciones. Lo cual implica escucharnos unos a otros con respeto e interés. Así nuestras comunidades se enriquecen cada día con la sabiduría de aquellos que ya vivieron tantos años en la Asunción y con el deseo de aliar la tradición con los caminos dinámicos y creativos que sean para el mundo de hoy un signo, no solo de nuestra unidad, más bien un signo de vitalidad de nuestra propuesta en todos los tiempos y en todos los lugares.*

**Fr. Marcos Antonio Dias**  
**(Brasil)**

### Today's Program

A theme ;  
« **Solidarity with the poor** »

#### Morning

Plenary Session :

- Getting the day started

Language Groups :

- Working group: « Solidarity with the poor »

Plenary Session :

- Presentation Province de France and Vice-Province of Madagascar
- Province of North America: response of Provincial to questions

#### Afternoon

Plenary Session :

- Lay-religious Alliance (follow-up)
- Approval of minutes

## Letters from our readers

Hello to all of you, dear brothers and sisters in the Assumption !

Thank you for having us thus participate in your General Chapter – congratulations for this wonderful openness. The information is delightful – when will there be elections, decisions and orientations? Our prayer accompanies you!

*Sr. Pauline Talbot, Superior General of the Sisters of St. Joan of Arc (Quebec – Canada)*

I am happy to read and to follow your Chapter : Thank you !

With my prayer and friendship.

*Sr. Jeanine Gindrey, Orante of the Assumption (France)*

A live Chapter, it wasn't like this in 2005. I also hope to get to know all the other persons present at the Chapter who are working in the shadows: the interpreters, the typists, from the invited guests to the errand boys and the honor girls. Why not post progressively each day's schedule! We are praying for you. Recommend to us some prayer intentions for the more delicate points where conversion is still difficult to realize, the points on which the Chapter members are perplexed. Our prayer can displace the mountains of closure.

*Rigobert Paluku Kipandauli (Kinshasa – DR-Congo)*

Thank you for this excellent initiative which makes it possible for us to follow "live" the workings of this Chapter, oh how important!

Thank you for us, poor residents of Lorgues, the Lay Friends of the Assumption, who in two years, have lost our Assumptionist priests and then our Sisters the Oblates of the Assumption!

We are with you by our prayer and we wish you fruitful Chapter work.

*Claudette & Michel Charrot*

*Lay Friends of the Assumption at Lorgues (Var – France)*

From Rwanda and Arusha, we are whole heartedly with you. Prayer keeps us attentive to support "your works that may be modest but bold, inventive but prophetic". It is a great joy of recognition that you offer us in allowing us to participate in this way. You may count on the prayer of all the Oblates of the Assumption in the Eastern Region of Africa.

*Sr. Regina Marsden, Provincial of the Oblates of East Africa*

This diary of the Chapter is truly a happy initiative which allows us to feel that we are in communion with the congregation: thank you.

Good work to all the Chapter members, our prayer accompanies you.

*The EVA 5 (Bourg en Bresse, France)*

As I read the message Pope Benedict has addressed to the members of the 2011 General Chapter, I am all the more conscious of the objective of "Evangelization", which directs the activity of the Assumptionist

apostolate: "the means of communication, education and ecumenism". To cite but the media, we know the "Bayard Press Group", some publishing houses, the department of social communication at the Emmanuel D'Alzon Higher Institute (Butembo), etc. Since its beginning, Assumption has been very sensitive to communication, trying not to reduce the latter to the media and to the transmission of information, or to the capacity to produce social effects. I pray and thank God for this attentiveness at the Assumption to make of communication a veritable mediation of the incarnation of the Gospel in the life of human beings of all times.

*Fr. Omer Kamate Kasyakulu (Rome – Province of Africa)*

Thank you for this Chapter Diary. For us who are far away (at the novitiate and at the Vice- Provincial House of Tuléar, Madagascar), this helps us all the more to be united with you. The faces help us to recall meetings and the community life shared in fraternity. Thank you and good reflection!

*Fr. Thierry Randrianarison (Madagascar)*

Thank you and bravo for this diary which from day to day allows us to unite ourselves by both thought and prayer at this great rendez vous !

Is this not a foretaste of the communion and of the unity at the heart of the family!!!

Courage to all of you who carry us a bit in your suitcases !

*Catherine Voyant (Montoire sur le Loir, France)*

I am reading about you each day out of love for my Congregation. This is for me a good occasion to know the orientations of my religious family. Please continue sending me each day's theme.

*Zacharie Wasukundi, aa (Bulengera, DR-Congo)*

Dear brothers and sisters, religious and lay, It is with pleasure that I follow, from Toulouse, the missionary and prophetic adventure that you are living in the eternal city!

May the Spirit breathe on you as of old on our founder and his companions so that we may continue to witness to the hope that is within us! ART

*Geoffrey-Kamen Defebvre, aa (Toulouse, France)*

### Today's sentence

*Question of a member of the Chapter:*  
"Is the situation for vocations in Quebec hopeless?"

*Answer of Father Marcel Poirier,  
Provincial of North America:*

"It is not hopeful!"



◀ Dear friends in the Assumption,  
What a beautiful idea to have us share the enriching experience of a General Chapter by this diary which informs us of the advancements of your works. Thanks to the diary we also learn about the other provinces and the brothers of the other continents.

We are members of the numerous lay people of France and we are very happy to be part of the large family of the Assumption.

We thank you very much because this daily information allows us, by reading and prayer, to be in communion with you.

Thank you, courage and good work.  
*Martine and Bernard Klaeylé, Lay Assumptionists  
(Didenheim – France)*

We are proud of the 'Diary' which helps us to remain attentive to the calls of the Holy Spirit who speaks to us through the General Chapter. Today's title "Men and Women of Communion" has helped us to reflect on the meaning of sharing at the heart of our community and of the quality of our attention to others.

Dear brothers in Chapter, we salute your numerous and vigorous efforts for the blossoming of our religious family the Augustinians of the Assumption.

*Jean-Paul Musangania, aa  
(Kinshasa – Dr-Congo)*

Thank you ever so much for keeping us regularly in touch with the unfolding of the General Chapter.

Thanks to your communication competence, we live the Chapter as if we were taking part in it directly. This is a very laudable initiative. We pray that the Chapter, an historical moment of the Congregation, may be the place for the renewal and recommitment of the Congregation for new missionary perspectives. The challenges are numerous and the Chapter is the ideal place where collectively they are to be approached. God loves the Assumption and blesses it: it is the instrument at the service of the coming of his Kingdom.

*Gilbert Dhego,  
Former Assumptionist (DR- Congo, Goma).*

---

### *Live the 32nd Chapter as if You Were There*

- Visit the Congregation web site with daily updates posted by our webmaster, Fr. Jean Guillaume Kavasa Kasoko [www.assumptio.org](http://www.assumptio.org).
- Subscribe to the Journal du Chapitre, edited daily by Loredana Giannetti and free on line at the Congregation web site [www.assumptio.org](http://www.assumptio.org).
- React to the work of the Chapter members by contributing to Letters from our Readers on line. Send your messages...brief, please.. to the editor in chief... [michel.kubler@gmail.com](mailto:michel.kubler@gmail.com)