



# DIARY OF THE CHAPTER

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

## A step taken

### Editorial

#### “Pilot on Board”

**Fr. André Antoni**  
**Promotor of the Chapter**

The first experience of the Chapter's Promotor cannot be very far from what a pilot experiences when for the first time he finds himself in the cockpit trying to figure out how to make the plane take off. But very quickly, he's joined by co-pilots and stewards, who fortunately speak all of the languages. As for the runway, fortunately it was well laid out by the professional work of the Preparatory Committee.

After a week, and the turbulence of the first days, we have the impression that the Chapter has achieved cruising speed. Seen from the sky, the landscape of each Province that we've visited reveals its majesty—please, we refer to it as the Kingdom—even if we sense that, up close on the ground, things are much more complicated. But from these heights, the frontiers become invisible between North and South, East and West. We might even discover new apostolic fields or “mobilizing works” that appear brilliantly under this Roman sun.

For sure, we might find it difficult to adjust the flight plan from one day to the next, that the commander on board will not necessarily be the same at the end as at the beginning or that we're still not sure on which runway we'll be landing. We just need to trust the Spirit whom we invoked at take-off, that He will direct us toward the horizon of 2017...avoiding in the process, as much as we can, the winds that work against us. As for the Promotor, even if he doesn't know exactly where we're headed, he'll do his best to see to it that the landing gear is in good order.■



*Marie-Pierre Girard and Fr. Richard Lamoureux*

## A renewed Alliance

The Chapter is not finished, and a dossier as sensitive as the Lay-Religious Alliance is far from having been completed. But the first week of our work is coming to an end and with it the presence – which has seemed to all as almost natural – of the lay delegates to our Chapter assembly. It is thus a good moment to evaluate where we are in this reflection. There has been a true debate! First, in a task force dedicated since Tuesday to this subject led by Marie-Pierre Girard. The discussion was animated, including that among the lay participants, with marked sensitivities according to the continents. The debate was then brought to the plenary assembly in three successive sessions, based on a working document on which we finally arrived at a consensus.

The Chapter has come to an agreement on the definition of a lay Assumptionist : “A man, a woman, who commits him/herself to living his/her baptismal vocation and the mission that derives from it within the Assumption, in the Church and in society.” The Chapter has given

thanks for the “dynamic source” that this reality, in full growth, represents for the religious and the communities. It then expressed the wish that an additional step be taken. On the one hand, by establishing a “Way of Life” for these lay Assumptionists, so as to help them to live fraternal life (within their families, at work, with the religious) and the apostolic life, prayer and the evangelical councils. On the other hand by envisaging the possibility of erecting canonically an “association of faithful” for those who would ask for it. We noted the beautiful variety which characterizes this Alliance in its various modalities: conviviality, prayer, service, mission ... There remains nevertheless a few points separating those who prefer on site partnerships (“It is life which counts !”) and others who want clear situations from the point of view of the Church's law. Nothing, however which would question everyone's conviction that: henceforth the Assumption is both religious *and* lay. Without confusion, nor separation!



## My voice at the Chapter

I will begin with my personal history. Delegate of the South Belgian Province to the General Chapter of 1987, it is there that I heard for the first time of the foundation in Asia. Since the 'Korean' project had become firm and since I had become available, I volunteered and I left for

Korea at the end of 1991 with two other brothers.

Invited to the General Chapter of 1999, I already had to argue the justification of our presence there in the face of the questions concerning its slow development. Threats of its definitive closing were in the air, for want of finding the two volunteers promised by the General Chapter of 1993 to back up the first arrivals. I did not participate in the General Chapter of 2005, which in a spectacular rebounding made Asia one of its priorities, envisaging the foundations of Vietnam and of the Philippines.

And here we are at the Chapter of 2011 during which we will have, among other tasks, to reappropriate the question of the mission in Asia in its current and future reality as influenced by our work on the community organization.

It is no doubt good to recall that the Assumptionist reality taking shape in Asia is minute and fragile, but it exists. It will still need of a lot of faith, of boldness, of generosity and of disinterestedness to attain its maturity. The desire for immediate visible results can only lead to failure. How long does it take to approach the other, to enter his home, to sit with him, to listen to him, to gain his confidence and to speak to his heart?

What we are living in this Chapter is a major moment of demanding international fraternity, of sharing and of concrete solidarity which counts as much as the texts produced even if meticulously done.

A Chapter makes projects, always expresses its share of dreams, is never without its share of being naïve but everyone knows that they will quickly be confronted by the reality of the lack of personnel and by the martyrdom of few financial resources. But so be it.

We have the occasion to repeat and to verify our determination to continue together with lay brothers and sisters our mission at the heart of the Church in today's world following Emmanuel d'Alzon. Unrepentant sinners, the Chapter members will produce, like each time, an abundant literature. My wish is that the portion that will be voted upon will be done with responsibility and implemented with determination.

**Fr. Frans Desmet  
(Gwangju - South Korea)**

## My word as a lay person

In the first meeting of the group of lay people participating in the 32nd General Chapter, we began by introducing ourselves. After that, Jimena Garcia, the coordinator of the group and member of the International Commission, asked us: "What are your expectations for the Alliance?", and: "What do you have to offer?" We were asked to answer in two words. The ones that came up most often were "Advance" and "Fidelity".



ADVANCE, because we cannot stay put when the Chapter of 2005 took the initiative, and because this is the time to pursue what was started at the international encounter in Nîmes in 2009.

ADVANCE As Fr. d'Alzon said, the laypeople, also, need to leave the sacristy because otherwise we risk becoming too attached to our comforts. Today everything is done by remote control: the TV, the air conditioner, the garage door... We can even get a Master's degree without leaving the house. Let us move ahead in community, knowledge, and why not in commitment?

ADVANCE, for me, means to be part of the worries and concerns of those who leave their comforts, give themselves to others in small or great measure, without becoming installed. Building the Kingdom is like the workers of old who built those immense gothic cathedrals. They spent their entire lives building pillars a few meters high, but those who came after them worked on this solid foundation that supported the weight of the entire construction. Let us pray so that those who build the Kingdom after us will also have a solid foundation.

### Today's Program

#### After one week of work...

##### Morning

###### Plenary assembly:

- Synthesis and discussion of "In solidarity with the poor"
- Alliance
- Bicentenary feedback
- Province of France: answers to questions

##### Afternoon

###### Plenary assembly:

- Presentations of the Provinces of Spain and of North Europe
- Alliance
- Apostolic priorities and mobilizing projects
- Profile of the General Superior

##### After Diner

###### Festival Evening!

FIDELITY: a word that we hardly dare use. We see that marriages do not last. Today, it seems too much to respect one's word or one's commitment. I try to be faithful to the Gospel, as I have done these many years with a religious community that lived with us in Almeria. Faithful to the Gospel and to their Founder, they became involved in the neighbourhoods where they lived, trying to provide the people with a basic education. They worked with alcoholics, drug users, prisoners and prostitutes. They went where man is threatened.... How these words resound in me. To demonstrate their generosity and zeal, they founded a new community in Elche. This is a real model for us all.

**Paco Rentero  
(Spain)**