



Plenary General Council

Rome, June 1-10, 2012

Number 2

Announcement

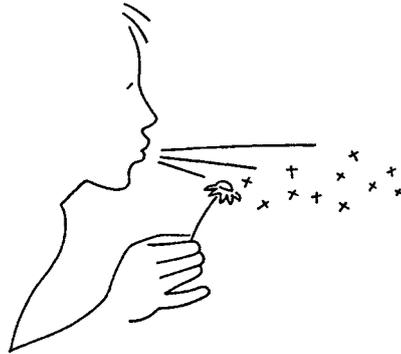
The decisions of this second PGC could be summarized in one word, that of announcement. It concerns the announcement to the Congregation of an event touching its family life, something that really touches it. In short, it is life, love, and death without which a consciousness of the body cannot be established.

The birth announcement is the fruit of an intense and promising work: our three international formation communities, all born on African soil: Ouagadougou for Philosophy in French and for Theology, two houses bearing the name of the Founder: Kinshasa for studies in French and Nairobi for studies in English. To these three births it must be added that the Province of Africa takes on a new face with its division into three regions: the western region (Kinshasa), the eastern region (Butembo-Beni) and that of East Africa (Nairobi). It is a precursor. Tomorrow it will be Europe. Of course the statutes adopted seek to limit the juridical constraints that would impede life, "odiosa sunt restringenda" by avoiding choices that would block the evolution to come.

Formation and mission were also key words at this meeting. A significant step was taken to favor a formation in internationalism. In that sense, Africa takes on the aspect of a pioneer. But Latin America and Europe will soon be in step with Africa and give themselves in middle term international structures, for the novitiates and for theological formation...

It is a question of a greater opening to the mission. In defining the material and human needs of the mobilizing works decided in the General Chapter, in reflecting on the first apostolic affectation of the religious, the PGC wants each religious to be more open to the riches that apostolic ardor and missionary zeal offer.

BLL



TO THE RELIGIOUS
OF THE CONGREGATION

Rome, July 10, 2012

Dear Brothers,

At the end of this 2nd Plenary General Council composed of the Superior General, his Council and the Provincial Superiors, we want to let you know about the major subjects on which we have shared and have made decisions about in the course of these ten days.

The Plenary General Council is a new experience that surprises us, provokes us, harries us, questions us and at the same time imposes on us the responsibility of mobilizing the whole of the Congregation. We firmly believe in the action of the Holy Spirit of God that we felt very present in our discernment and in making our decisions.

Brother Assumptionists, we are living in a time of great changes in the world and the Assumption has not been spared. These evolutions affect us and at the same time we are encouraged to answer through our faith our meeting with the Master. Under such a situation, we would like to let you know of some of the paths of action that want to be so many paths of life. Our last General Chapter singled out whole group of mobilizing works. The PGC tried to place them in order of importance, and place our efforts to answer the human and material needs of these works. In that exercise our greatest care was to respect the value of each religious and his vocation in the service of our brothers.

The Assumption is a great family that has received a mission. In order to be faithful to it we must seek out all the means to form ourselves appropriately with a close accompaniment, so that the spirit of the Congregation that is a cry of freedom might express all its diversity and thus be enriched: "It would be very dangerous not to allow ourselves to be formed according to the principles that presided at the birth of our family." (Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon, ES, 258).

Your respective Provincials will inform you and deepen with you the various points that are indicated here. But as of right now we can inform you of the birth, the fruit of intense work, of three international and interprovincial formation communities: Ouagadougou (Burkina-Faso) for Philosophy in French, Emmanuel House in Nairobi (Kenya) for Theology in English and Emmanuel d'Alzon in Kinshasa (RDC) for Theology in French.

Without leaving Africa, we inform you also of the development of that Province, the increase in the number of its religious, its geographical dimensions and its cultural diversity that has brought us to open a new page in our history: This Plenary General Council has given its approval to the creation of three Regions in the Province.

In this same order of formation, the community of Rome will become a place of preparation for the formation of the formators of the Congregation. There they will be able to grow in the international spirit and deepen the charism of our spirituality.

We are giving a new face to our dear family one of whose traits is already the communion lived in the PGC, the co-responsibility in taking decisions such as the approbation of the 'Capitular Rules' valid until the next General Chapter. That will help us, as the Superior General said: "to establish a consciousness of body in the whole Congregation and thus reinforce its apostolic dynamism." The PGC allows us to live freely meetings among Provincials, to reflect together on the continentalization of the Congregation, to share prayer life, fraternity and joy that are the hallmarks of an Assumptionist.

The young religious ask themselves, perhaps, where is the "first apostolic nomination at?" Fr. d'Alzon reminds us that "the apostle loves the one who sends him, but must love the one to whom he is sent." (Recueil de Pensées, 176). It is love that moves hearts and it is this same love that will make us go beyond our borders; there is no greater motivation than that. It is at the time of the perpetual profession and through a process of discernment together that the brothers will see new possibilities for the mission open up for them. Fear not!

Let us make ours the desire of our Founder who tells us: "we are jealous of the boldness of the martyrs, of the temerity of the apostles." (Recueil de Pensées, 171). The vitality of the Assumption is quite evident, a reflection of the interior health that is shown by the little details of our brotherly life; but we cannot forget that in order to support the apostolic zeal, we will need to manage our resources responsibly. The world is in an economic crisis and the Congregation has also suffered the consequences; we encourage you to always seek a simplicity and sobriety of life, by resisting unbridled consumption and thus witness to the One who called us (cf. GC, no 112).

Love has no measure. May the passion for the Kingdom purify our errors and lead us perhaps where we would never have imagined going.

With our brotherly attachment and friendship,

The Superior General and the members of his Plenary General Council

WYD 2013 in Rio

A program for the young religious of the Assumption Family is being set up. It proposes a missionary week in Eugenopolis with the two parishes there and the 40 Basic Ecclesial Communities (CES), the five days of celebration of the World Youth Days in Rio itself, and a pilgrimage to Aparecida, the top Marian Shrine in Brazil.

RIAD

The next meeting of RIAD (Assumption meeting for Interreligious and ecumenical dialogue) will take place in Bangkok (Thailand) from July 15 to 24, 2013. It will have as its theme "To be an Assumptionist today in Asia". Normally some 15 religious would attend. It would be good if brothers of other continents could be represented. Before this RIAD, an Asian CAFI (See: Doc. II-5b, annex 2). It would be good that brothers from other continents would participate in this Asian CAFI. It will take place from July 4-14, 2013).

Columbia

The region has been suppressed since the month of June. The Council sent a message to the Brothers of Columbia to express at the same time their brotherly closeness and an invitation to perseverance.

"We invite you to hang on, to be men of faith seeking the coming of the Kingdom in Columbia."

The projected visit of Father General will allow for a better discernment of the orientations to take to assure the future of the Assumption in Columbia.

Religious in Formation

"Each religious in formation who does not belong to the Province in which the house of formation is situated is formally transferred to it for the period of his studies. For his future and better accompaniment, the Provincial of his Province of origin will see to the transfer to the Provincial of the host Province a document which indicates his strong and weak points or those to be worked on. The Provincial of the host Province, who becomes his Major Superior, will see to providing information to the Provincial of the Province of origin of the evolution of the religious. At the proper time, it is he who will present the religious to profession and to the ordinations. (Decision of the PGC, July 2012)

The Mission of a Provincial

Recently arrived in Rome, Fr. Emmanuel Rospide was asked by Fr. Benoît to tell the new provincials of his long experience. As an old Wise Man, he took care to recall some principles:

1. "Do not hide if you are needed" That is true for all nominations and obediences.
2. A statement of principle: "One who receives a nomination is very alone".
3. Always be attentive to choose the good moment, remembering that "Chance has hair in the front and is bald in back."

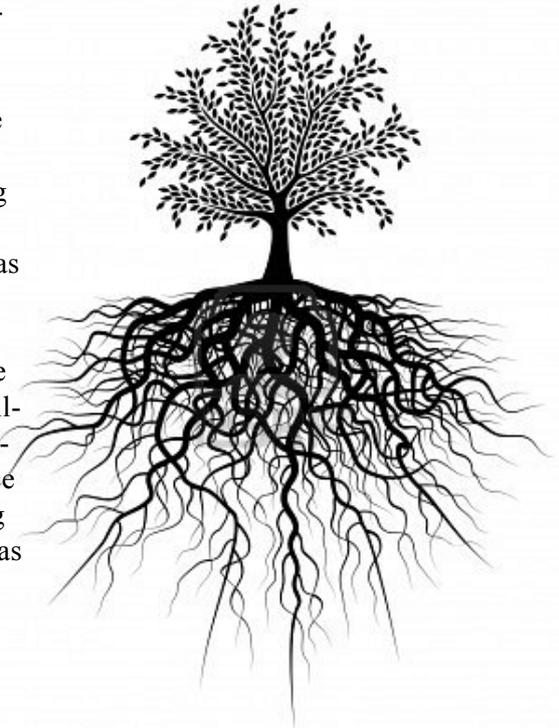
The Experience of Body

The first day of the meeting allowed us to establish the state of the union as each provincial in his own language gave his vision of the life of the brothers: as many faces of the present Assumption. More than a simple exchange, this stage was a communion in the realities lived by each one, a way of appreciating the rainbow of colors that form our Congregation, sign of an alliance with the One who alone is able to mobilize us for the Coming of his Kingdom.

The second day was given to the economic aspects of the life of the Congregation, assorted with a dossier of more than a hundred pages full of numbers and pie-charts. It was something rather forbidding, no? Don't be deceived. We are here at the heart of the Mission of the koinonia of the first Christian communities. With the mobilizing works to be sustained, we must busy ourselves to find the human and financial means. Did you know that it was the Corinthians who thought up the idea to collect money to help the Christians of Jerusalem? This step today hasn't changed. The

tree needs the sap sucked up from all its roots in order to have the new branches of the Congregation grow. We also know that Paul in order to deliver the collection returned to Jerusalem, that he was betrayed there, was arrested, and sent to Rome where he would be executed. And all that for a simple collection! The concrete sharing of our resources belongs to the very nature of what we are and especially of what we will be tomorrow...

The third day, we might say, was the reflection of an obsession: the care of all the Churches. Far from closing ourselves in our limits or of our preoccupations, we are called to carry, as Saint Paul says, "*the care of all the Churches*" (2Cor. 11/26-28). Where better than in Rome can we carry the whole of the preoccupations of a boiling Africa, of old Europe, the Americas, and young Asia? This experience is without doubt a new way of living co-responsibility and to be together as one body.



Vocations, Rise Up!

The promotion of vocations is for a few past General Chapters a major preoccupation. Among the recommendations of the Chapter of 2011, each Province is invited to set up "a pastoral plan for youth and vocations" (126). During this last PGC, the Provinces of Africa and France were invited to present the state of their reflection. In France since the seventies houses to receive young people, hostels for young people and volunteers and thus manifested a care that remains a priority in this province. If in Vietnam and in West Africa there is no need to look for them, it is not the same on the old continent. Difficulties and fragilities accumulate, also, says Fr. Benoît Gschwind : « each vocation is a surprise! » The meeting with and the experience of a community are indispensable elements for the development of any vocation. But as the Provincial of France underscores: "should we not be more audacious and more exacting?"

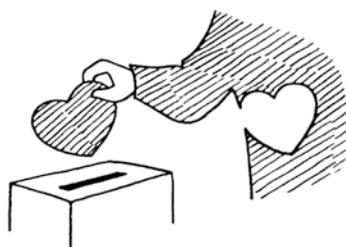
The realities are most contrasting. The Province of Africa does not know a famine in this area. Numerous are those who knock of the door of the Congregation, urged on by their vocational concerns. Certain requests even come from far away and come from Congo-Brazza, from Rwanda, or yet from Nigeria or the Cameroon. But how can we answer when the financial means for this mission are lacking? What strategies can we develop? How can we take for ourselves the "*duc in altum*" of the Gospel? How can we innovate? Surely our schools and the Sisters are a powerful tool. But each of us is invited to seize the question and live one's own vocation as a contagious call. "We must share our apostolic passion with others and show more enthusiasm. Let us mobilize, says Fr. General. And then the youth who come to us will be able to prepare the world of tomorrow." More than ever the debate is open!

Marcelo Marciel

The Economic Aspect

The 2013 Lenten Campaign

It will seek to gather funds for the financing of a micro electric power station for Palmba. *“The religious in parishes, and also those in other works, the Assumptionist Laity, each community is invited to make of this financial support the priority action of solidarity for Lent 2013.”*



The Religious Head Tax

After having studied the balance sheet for 2011, the PGC gave the auditors final discharge to the General Treasurer.

In order to arrive at more equitable general head taxes, it was decided that as of 2013 a new schedule would be used with three levels of taxation:

- The top rate (500 USD) applies to the perpetually professed religious in “developed” countries
- The median rate (250 USD) applies to perpetually professed in “emerging” countries
- The lower rate (150 USD) applies to the perpetually professed in the other countries.

Madagascar

The PGC gave its accord for the enlarging of the diocesan residence of the Ejeda community (Madagascar) with a guarantee of use for 20 years signed with the diocese.

Aid for the Provincial of Africa

An exceptional allocation with all the provinces was given to the new Provincial of Africa to allow him to have a better animation of proximity with the whole of his vast Province.

For all the Religious in Formation

It is repeated that:

“The religious depends entirely on the local community. His expenses as his resources are integrated into the budget of the community; he accounts for it every month. To provide for the cost of the studies the Province of origin will pay a pension. If necessary it will be financed by the Solidarity Fund and/or a scholarship that the Province will obtain from an organism outside the Congregation.”

The Lenten Campaign 2012

had supported the foundation of a new Assumptionist community in a neighboring diocese of Kampala, capital of Uganda. It obtained some \$35,000 and we warmly thank all the parishes and also all the donors who contributed to this collection.



Campaign 2013

is for a micro power plant in Mbau (North Kivu, Congo). It will serve to feed Palmba, an agricultural plantation that will serve to develop the capacity of the Province of Africa to auto-finance its communities. This Province receives numerous vocations: about 25 novices each year and is forming at the moment more than 170 students. It wants to promote self-sufficiency in food for the communities everywhere that is possible by the creation of gardens, fields, rabbit hutches, hen-houses and pig farms.