

A News of the Assumption



EDITORIAL

Always much further

« I appeal to the entire Congregation that each of us invests in a search for greater fidelity to the Gospel. »

Agenda

Plenary General Council

- **December 1-11, 2017**, preceded by a formation for new Provincials (November 28-30).
- **June 1-11, 2018**

Ordinary General Councils

- **December 13-15, 2017**
- **February 5-9, 2018**
- **April 9-13, 2018**
- **May 14-18, 2018**

Benoît

- **October 24-November 8** : Vietnam.
- **December 24** : reunion with Assumptionist Superiors General in Paris.

Marcelo

- **October 26-30** : Albertville.

Didier

- **October 19-25** : United States.
- **November 10-18** : Economic Council of the Congregation (Rome).
- **November 22-24** : Financial Advisory Council (Paris).

Thierry

(In Rome)

Miguel

- **November 15-24** : Inter-Asiatic Coordination (Philippines).

Nomination

Father Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the approval of his Plenary General Council, has appointed

Father Bernard LE LÉANNEC (Province of Europe) **Postulator General of the Congregation.**



« Let us not forget »



Dear Brothers and friends,

It has already been five years since our brothers, Jean-Pierre, Edmond and Anselme, were kidnapped by armed soldiers. Since then, we have been waiting in hope and prayer. Unfortunately we remain without the slightest bit of reliable news and our waiting goes on in absolute uncertainty. I am writing this letter with the sole purpose of keeping our hope alive. Christians cannot resign themselves to a state where they allow silence and death to prevail. Our God is a God of life.

As their brother in faith I once again turn my attention to members of their grieving families. For them this disappearance is a tragedy that never ends. The absence of any information and the ongoing incompetence of civil authorities cause further bitterness and sadness. I reiterate my friendship with the religious of the Province of Africa and more particularly with the Assumptionists, the Oblates and Orants of the Assumption, and all those in the consecrated life in the diocese of Butembo-Beni. Still today you remain subject to violence and abuse. Our brother, Fr. Vincent Machozi, comes immediately to mind; he was shot in cold blood with his mother looking on. Nor do I wish to forget the two diocesan priests who were kidnapped a little more than 100 days ago. I pray as well for the people of North Kivu who regularly endure acts of violence and abuse at the hands of armed factions who criss-cross the region. We Assumptionists stand side by side with this population on whom such evil is exacting a tremendous toll.

I encourage all of you to redouble your efforts for peace and reconciliation. Of course, prayer must be of the highest priority. But it is also necessary to work for unity as our recent 33rd general chapter called for. We are « men of communion in a divided world ». It is my wish that justice and peace committees and commissions of parishes, provinces, and Catholic Action movements with whom we collaborate embrace this theme of unity. We can contribute to the coming about of a new world founded on the dignity and respect of the human person. Our small family, present in more than thirty countries, must inform public opinion of this cause of peace in the Congo and get the word out to the media of the enduring hardships of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) who have suffered for too long. I pray that Our Lady of the Assumption make of us all artisans of peace and unity.

Fraternally,

Rev. Benoît GRIÈRE, A.A.
Superior General

Rome, October 19, 20 Editorial <<torial <<rial

Always much further

I don't know if you are familiar with the motto of Charles Quint, King of Spain and Roman Emperor (1500-1558), probably the most powerful Christian monarch of his time. I will quote it in Latin "Plus ultra." We might translate it in today's terminology, "always much further" or "always better". Charles Quint's aspiration was that of a conqueror who dreamed of expanding his territory, of solidifying his lineage and of imposing his laws on the known world. He was an avid warrior and his conquests were numerous. He had the power of life and death over all "in an empire where the sun never set" that extended from Asia to South America; from Madrid to Santiago, Chile; from Manila to Mexico.



Fr. Benoît Grière
General Superior
of the
Augustinians of
the Assumption

Like all human endeavors marked by pride and excessiveness, his empire collapsed after his death. Why talk about such an ancient ruler and one who is not well-known today? I would like us to familiarize ourselves with his motto in order to put it into practice following the 33rd General Chapter. Certainly, we won't view it with war-like ambitions but rather with evangelical enthusiasm. When Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole of creation" (Mk 16:15). I find this message to be a Christian version of an ambition that is purely human and all-encompassing like that of Charles Quint.

The General Chapter gave us texts for application. We have six years ahead of us within which to put them into practice, to incorporate them into our daily lives. The urgency of the Kingdom propels us to put our decisions into practice. If we hesitate too long, we risk doing nothing. Therefore, the issues for the future of our world will be overwhelming. Seeking unity is an absolute priority. Too many conflicts, too many divisions jeopardize peace

and the honest development of nations. The Christian vocation calls us to foster brotherhood. This begins at the very level of community life. As such, international communities should be models. We can even go further. . .but the religious life is not self-seeking, as Pope Francis often says. It exists "to serve the world." We have our struggles and hardships to undertake for the dignity of the men and women of today. The General Chapter placed a priority on education which compels us to act with urgency toward nurturing the youth with a sense of humanity and Christianity. Let us adhere to the educational values fostered by Father Emmanuel d'Alzon. Going further also means working toward the preservation of creation. Our common home is in danger and we have to invest in defending nature. Let us look concretely, in community, to see what we can do.

What is most essential is to deepen our faith, hope and love. I am not elitist. I think that the Christian way of life is possible for everyone. I do not subscribe to a Pelagian view of salvation that restricted the gospel to a select few of humanity. God offers salvation to everyone. However, God does not like mediocrity for those who have chosen to follow Christ. The Assumption cannot be content with being mediocre, as it would become insignificant--salt without flavor, a lamp without its brightness.

George Bernanos, a French author from the early 20th century, wrote: "The grave tragedy of this world, the great sadness of this world, is not that there are impious people, but that there are Christians who are lukewarm." I share this opinion and I challenge the whole congregation to invest itself in a search for greater fidelity to the Gospel. We cannot complain of the decadence of our time without springing into action within our world. Let us go forward, the Kingdom does not wait. ■

Calls, nominations, changes...

Father Benoît Grière, Superior General, with his Council, has called

■ TO PERPETUAL PROFESSION

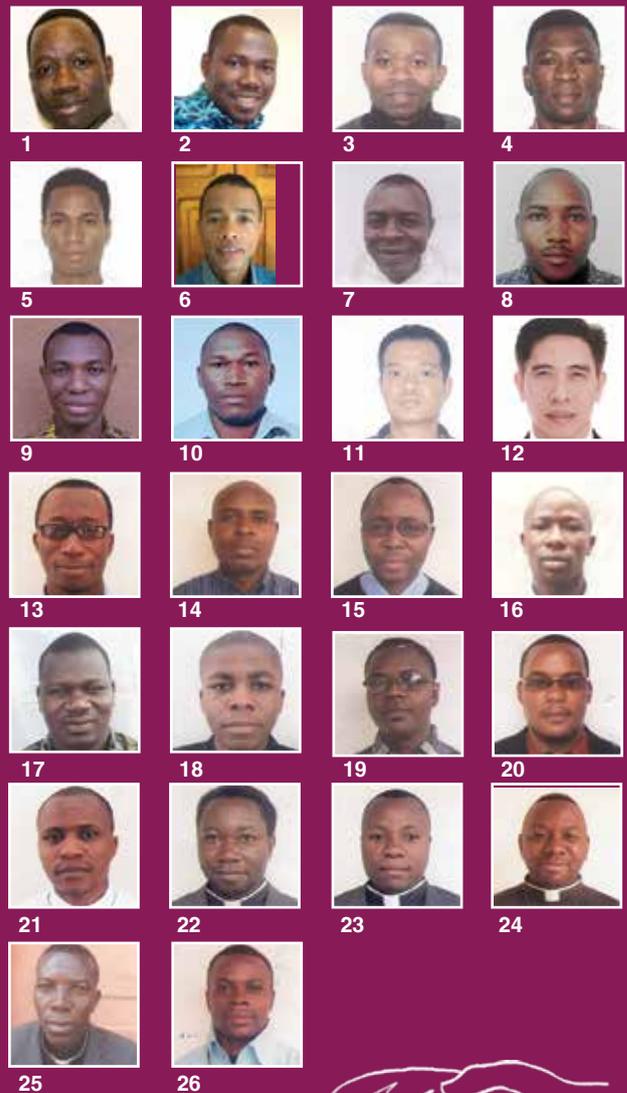
- 1) **KIENTEGA, Rémi Clovis**
(Europe) (09/10/2017)
- 2) **TALAKE, Martin Makawouna**
(Europe) (09/10/2017)
- 3) **KASEREKA MASTAKI, Theodard**
(Andean Prov.) (09/10/2017)
- 4) **PALUKU WAYOMEKA, Faustin Maurille**
(Andean Prov.) (09/10/2017)
- 5) **RANDRIANANDRASANA, William Johnes**
(Andean Prov.) (10/01/2017)
- 6) **RASOLONJATOVO, Jean Aime**
(Madagascar) (10/01/2017)
- 7) **FAWIE, Lidaou Armand**
(Africa) (10/01/2017)
- 8) **GITAU MACHARIA, Morris**
(Africa) (10/01/2017)
- 9) **PIESSOU, Olayéssan Agbéko**
(Africa) (11/10/2017)
- 10) **SAKAWA MOGIRE, Kennedy**
(Africa) (11/10/2017)
- 11) **LÊ TUẤN PHƯỚC, Thiện Joseph**
(N.A.-Phil.) (11/10/2017)
- 12) **NAVARRO, Rex**
(N.A.-Phil.) (11/10/2017)

■ TO ORDINATION TO THE DEACONATE

- 13) **AKELESSIM BANIGAMBE, Fabrice**
(Europe) (12/10/2017)
- 14) **CHIBALONZA, Lubanja Marc**
(Africa) (12/10/2017)
- 15) **KAKULE LUTUNDE, Marius**
(Africa) (12/10/2017)
- 16) **KATEMBO KAGHOMA, Dieusé**
(Africa) (12/10/2017)
- 17) **DOKOUI, Kodjo Vivien**
(Europe) (13/10/2017)
- 18) **MUHINDO VAHOTERANA, Eric**
(Africa) (13/10/2017)
- 19) **MUKWAMA LUWALA, Jean Glory**
(Africa) (13/10/2017)
- 20) **MUME BADESE, Toussaint-Flavien**
(Africa) (13/10/2017)
- 21) **VIHAMBA MUSOSOTYA, Jean Paul**
(Africa) (16/10/2017)

■ TO ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

- 22) **KAKULE MUTAHYA, Augustin**
(Africa) (16/10/2017)
- 23) **KAMBALE MALYABWANA, Uzima Ni Mali**
(Africa) (16/10/2017)
- 24) **KASEREKA MOLOVERYA, Muyisa**
(Africa) (17/10/2017)
- 25) **MUHINDO MATHE, François**
(Africa) (17/10/2017)
- 26) **MUHINDO NGALYAVUYIRA, Emmanuel**
(Africa) (17/10/2017)



... through the eyes of the Promoter



**Fr. Willy Kasereka Kibanda,
Promoter of the 33rd General Chapter**

How did you experience the Chapter given your unique position as Promoter?

To go directly to the question, I was surprised to find myself with the responsibility of being the Promoter of the Chapter, a decisive Chapter, in my opinion, for our Congregation at this turning-point as this compass moves from North to South. These sessions were a learning curve for me. It was an experience in “learning by doing” accentuated by the patience of my brothers throughout this time. The coordination team, in particular, was extremely collaborative in helping me in this new role. My position as Promoter allowed me to learn the “mechanics” of the Chapter, to live out the human and spiritual expectations, and to understand the essential purpose of the Chapter.

What struck you in the manner in which the Chapter unfolded?

Many things. I especially stress that we are an international community made up of men and women of faith. We have a myriad of human ambitions as a diversified community of mercy and celebration as expressed by Jean Vanier.

In your opinion, what was a wonderful surprise and a frustration as a result of the Chapter?

The wonderful surprise was the confidence the participants placed in me, as I was not expecting that at all. My frustration lies in that I came from an insignificant place, with little acceptance by certain brothers. As a result, at times, I felt unable to affirm the members of the Chapter during moments of difficulty. However, finally, the Chapter ended with much needed new wineskins so that Christ could effectively speak to men and women of our time. We succeeded in focusing the attention of our Congregation on an important aspect of our charism: to work toward unity within numerous apostolates wherever the Spirit calls.

Five months later, how do you see the importance of the Chapter for our Congregation?

Five months later, I remain fulfilled for having lived this three-week experience of hard work with little time for rest. It was a time to discover the internationality of our family, with the spiritual, intellectual and human depth of our religious brothers, sisters and Lay Alliance.

At this time, how are those within your local community and within the Province at large receiving this message?

Our Chapter of Application was an occasion to revisit the General Chapter with the capitulants from the Province of Africa. In my opinion, the call to religious renewal and to the reform of structures was well-received in the Province of Africa. Many ideas from the General Chapter enlightened the African capitulants to integrate these proposals to be enacted for the next six years, for example:

For the formation of a resolution toward conflict within the heart of our communities and of our works, in order to promote peace in a multi-cultural Africa ISEAB will help our Province to live this orientation by organizing sessions of initiation for the resolve of these conflicts

For the better sharing of our resources which implies the potential restructuring of the administration of the Province into Vice-Provinces and Vicariates within the timeframe given by the Chapter. ■

... from the perspective of charism



Unity, or : our charism put into practice

Fr. Dominique Greiner,
Rapporteur of the Chapter Commission
on Charism

Why did we reformulate the charism of our Congregation?

The two previous general chapters permitted us to understand more deeply our religious identity from a three-fold view as men of faith, of communion and of solidarity with the poor. This is now well integrated. The Chapter felt the necessity to continue the reflection responding to a strong demand pervasive in the provinces and in communities. It is to eliminate criteria for choosing apostolic endeavors. Rather than propose criteria that would be too general, the Chapter deemed it more important to return to the charism. We looked for a way to reformulate the charism, not in an abstract manner, but rather in looking at how it is carried out in various activities and works throughout the world. In his apostolic letter published on the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life, Pope Francis invited institutions to share their stories, a move “indispensable for keeping alive their identities, and also for reaffirming the

unity of the family and the sense of belonging of its members.” That is what we did.

Why refocus on unity?

A chapter is a time to listen. The theme of unity was, in part, given to us while listening to the various contributions from the provincial chapters and from the needs of the world. Accordingly, we discovered how important this theme was to Father d’Alzon. For our founder, the spirit of the Assumption is one of unity. We can read in Spiritual Writings (ES, p.704), “Our divine master asked of his disciples---unity with his sacred being, unity with the Catholic Church at its very core, unity with one another, unity in their works.”

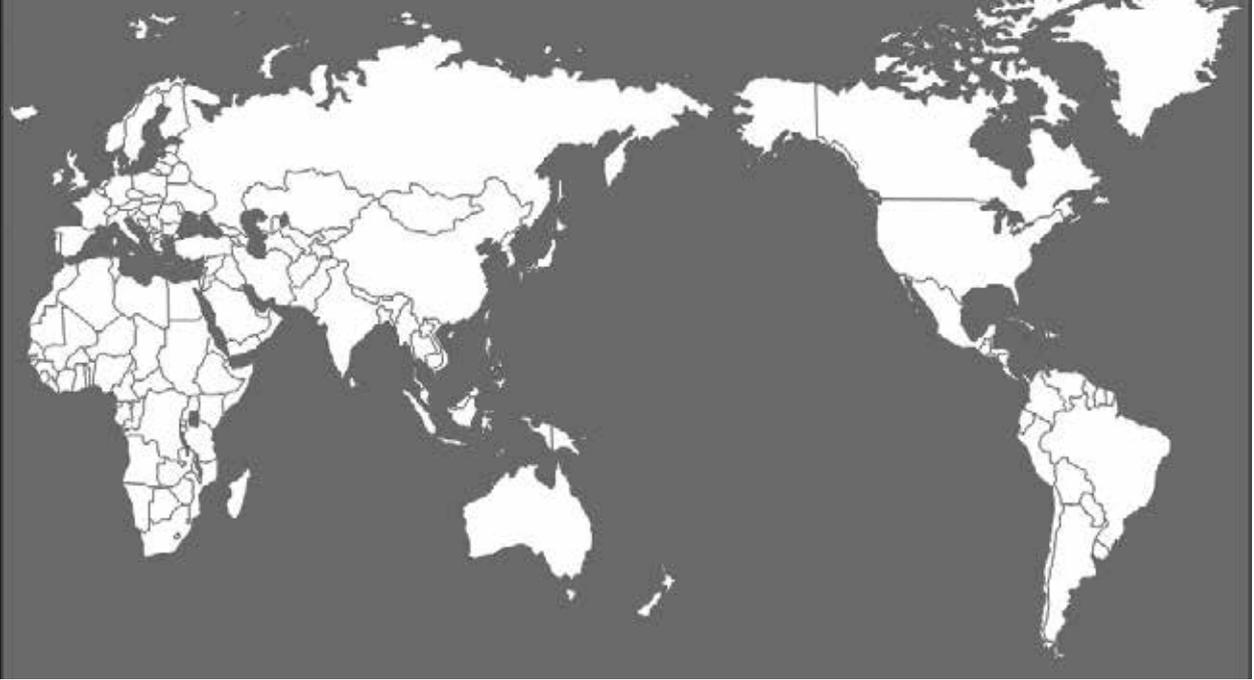
The call to unity comes from Christ, It runs through our personal lives, our community life and our apostolates. Therefore, it is a very central theme.

How can this « conductive thread » from the Chapter bear fruition for religious life and for communities, for our works and our parishes, etc.?

The Chapter texts begin by identifying the great spiritual resources of the Assumption: faith, joy, community life and the lay-religious Alliance. These themes constitute the criteria that can serve to redefine our religious lives and our various apostolates. The texts continue to evoke the different places where this charism of unity can be found. It is not limited. It is an invitation for each province and each community to ask itself how it will contribute to embodying this unity.

What kind of feed-back to the Chapter have you seen in your immediate locale and in your Province?

It is a little too early for an initial assessment. The receptivity of such things is a process that takes time. To begin with, the provinces and the communities have to think about what tools of animation they will use to discuss the Chapter documents, so that the documents will nourish their discussions and help them make good choices. ■



... from the point of view Of community organization...

**Fr. Bernard Holzer,
Delegate of the Superior General
for Asia**

One of the major themes of the last General Chapter was « community organization. » It prompted many discussions in the sessions of the Provincial Chapters continuing with perspectives on demographics and on the preparatory works on the “colors of the Assumption”, “the extension of the Assumption”, “internationality and interculturality”, “the mission of the Orient” and many

others. The preparatory files to be discussed in the Chapter proceedings were not lacking. Were they always discussed and assimilated before the members of the Chapter arrived at Valpré? I doubt it. The debates during the Chapter took place after revisiting the approach toward charism, defining the priorities regarding apostolates and recalling the urgency of an Assumptionist formation.

The challenge was to put into place a larger co-responsibility among the Provinces, an anima-

tion of closeness that necessitates experiencing a much larger “mutualism” (a new term in the Assumptionist vocabulary) of our human and economic strengths.

The creation of Vicariates will address this challenge and the desire to see the recent foundations initiate greater autonomy and a richer involvement in the life of the Congregation, particularly in conjunction with the Plenary General Council. The Vicariates are called to become schools for the responsible in the framework of co-responsibility and subsidiarity.

In addition to the creation of the Vice-Province of East Africa attached to the Province of Africa, the General Chapter decided upon the creation of three Vicariates: that of West Africa attached to the Province of Europe, that of Kinshasa attached to the Province of Africa and that of Asia-Oceania attached to the Province of Europe. These new establishments will be in place by December 31, 2019.



>> The General Chapter..

The Chapter also recommended to the Province of North America (Québec, USA and Mexico) that they put into place a working group that will address the future including that of the two mobilizing works (Bayard and Assumption College). They asked that the Province of Europe pay particular attention to its European roots as they relate to apostolic priorities, of which the issue of vocations is tantamount. The Chapter also made recommendations for the Mission of the Orient.

The Chapter also asked the Superior General to study, in council, (for the next General Chapter), if the suppression of the statutes of the Provinces would favor a better development and animation of the Congregation.

The question of community organization, therefore, is not closed. It is to be implemented and must evolve with the Congregation, recognizing the fact that there is a true shift from North to South. The composition of the next General Chapter will reflect that reality.

The participants of this General Chapter experienced first-hand this shift, along with the challenge of the passing on of memory and charism, as well as with the mechanics of the elections and decision-making---that are not always the same for each culture. Therefore, the most important role of the Plenary General Council is to connect the responsible locations with their reflections and deliberations.

The response from the General Chapter

I had the opportunity to participate in two Chapters of Application, one for Europe (my future Province) and another for North America/Philippines (that I leave

at the end of this year after twelve years of my life and of my sharing).

In these two Chapters, I can attest that the Acts (provisions) of the Chapter were read and assimilated to a great degree. Thanks go to the participation of the members of the General Chapter and their attention to these proceedings. The Acts of the two Provincial Chapters were greatly inspired by the latter.

Basically, we are waiting impatiently for the final version of the Acts of the General Chapter, and for the English version for the Philippines. The challenge will be to share the human and spiritual experience of the participants as they lived through the General Chapter.

In order to prepare for the local Chapters, we worked particularly on the documents dealing with charism and priorities. ■

The face of the Congregation is now the following:

- **Province of Europe:** Europe and the Mission of the Orient, the Vicariate of Asia-Oceania (Vietnam, Korea, New Zealand and the Philippines) and the Vicariate of West Africa (Togo and Burkina Faso)
- **Province of Africa,** Vicariate of Kinshasa
- **Vice-province of East Africa** (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda)
- **Province of Madagascar**
- **Andean Province**
- **Province of Brazil**
- **Province of North America** (USA, Canada and Mexico).





...experienced by the lay members

Victoria Prada (Colombia)

It was about twelve years ago, during a formation event, that I encountered my first Assumptionist. From that moment, I began to participate in an experience that now takes up most of my personal life, both familial and professional, and on which I count. During this time, I saw the Alliance of Lay-Religious constructed as a force that stimulates and energizes the life of the Congregation; there is still much to be done, but the opening that has been created poses a strong foundation, like a rock upon which we can build.

During 2017, I had the honor of taking part in the General Chapter, and of getting to know the lay and religious who came from countries where the Assumptionists are present. This opened up connections for me that are hard to describe. Despite the fact that we didn't speak the same language, we spoke a universal language of the Assumption: the passion to extend the Kingdom that we all possess within our hearts. Additional-

ly, we were able to get to know the realities of each Province and their mobilizing works, which allowed for a deeper, clearer understanding of the Congregation. Finally, the idea of observing how each document was developed and written, and shared in a unique manner by each participant, made us realize that this final document was the work of the Holy Spirit.

The General Chapter always motivates everyone to become connected; this results in a desire and a hope to rise above the challenges ahead. The situation worldwide is complex, and more so for the Christian population. New paradigms view the day-to-day world in human interactions and it is up to Christians to face them and to actually live the reality of the Kingdom of God. It is necessary to take a new approach to the Gospel and to translate it into our lives. The charism must propel the way of life and the mission.

One can clearly see an advancement in perception among the religious and the lay regarding their sharing in the same vocation, but in different forms. This reinforces the conviction that we, the lay

members, do not wish to be solely collaborators but also co-responsible parties. We want to draw from the same source, the charism of our founder. We must cultivate the same reciprocal confidence and share in the same missionary zeal. We must build relationships that are stable and long-lasting, that are open to the spirit and to the heart. With boldness and creativity, we can rediscover our complementarity. We can begin to say, "our present", "our future", "our charism", and "our founder".

The path initiated by the General Chapter and the propositions of the Provincial Chapter lead us to be optimistic: it is up to us to maintain that spirit and to live out what has been proposed to us, so that the fruits (of our labor) become abundant.

It is clear to us, the Lay Assumptionists, that we must work in the coming years. There are still many inroads to be made! We need to understand that an affirmed charism becomes significant and contagious once we imbed it into a context of family, politics or economy: a charism is formed by those who live it. ■

Europe



The location for the Provincial Chapter of the Province of Europe was the same as that of the General Chapter, 2017--the Hotel Valpré at Ecully. The participants were in greater number than the General Chapter, which made us reflect on the amazing diversity of a Province that keeps on growing and that continues to face new challenges for the future.

The Assumption functions in a time of huge transformation. The Province of Europe is not lacking in big decisions that concern the entire body of Assumptionists. All the brothers are aware of being partakers of new realities in the Congregation. We rejoice over vocations that flourish in certain regions, knowing full well the fragility that exists with their accompaniment, and also being aware of the priority placed on vocations. We will not forget, either, the future emergence of the Vicariates of Asia-Oceania and West Africa.

The brothers responded well to the texts of the General Chapter, which were in alignment with the previous work done by the Provincial Chapter. They also showed great sensitivity to the

encyclical, "Laudato Si".

What launched the Provincial Chapter itself: new wine. . . new aspirations. The call of the Spirit invited all to confront issues that are dealt with on a daily basis: community life, which should be reinforced; the experience of the charism; JPIC and what that entails in terms of collaboration and closeness to the poor.

A province that accepts the challenge of change is one that is alive. The Chapter made some strong realizations--namely, the accompaniment of youth and the nurturing of vocations. We need to be present to the youth of our world. To do this, the internet and other platforms of social media open up all kinds of possibilities.

For wineskins, the religious of the Province oversee four mobilizing works of the Congregation: Bayard Press, Adveniat, Accompagner and the Center of St. Peter-St. Andrew of Bucharest. These have been handed down from a long tradition that is both embraced and nourished. At the same time, as Pope Francis says, one must live the present with hope and face the future with passion.

The laity were also very much present at the Chapter, which

confirms what the Superior General told us: "We started on this path and there is no turning back." The presence of the laity encourages us and reinforces our common goals. The Province is very clear regarding its weaknesses, but it didn't shy away from making proposals that dealt with the new face of its works and apostolates and in becoming more international and intercultural. The brothers un-

derstand that as long as the body of the Congregation is vibrant, it cannot remain indifferent nor can it become paralyzed by fear.

The discussions during the Chapter on the Mission of the Orient and on the colleges continued to resonate with us.

The Province of Europe wants to enter into dialogue with a world that is forever changing. The Province knows that religious who take hold of this mission will find their happiness in communities that are more fraternal and authentic---those that have found the joy of the Gospel.

The Province bears a large responsibility today towards the unity of the Congregation, and each one has his part--- from the elderly brothers, who often live in silence, to those who work in mission.

The Chapter chose the governing body of the Province with Fr. Benoît Bigard at its head. I am certain that each one of us will give our utmost to carry out the initiatives of the Chapter and contribute to the works of the Province that have been executed for many years.

(Fr. Marcelo Marciel)

Brazil

The Assumptionists of Brazil reunited on August 17, 2017, in the Center of Spirituality of Eugenopolis (Minas Gerais) to conduct the 4th Provincial Chapter, from the light of inspiration provided by the General Chapter. In effect, many of the urgings of the General Chapter were already adopted and worked on by our little Province. This second session of our 4th Chapter was also a mo-



ment for rejoicing, because of the celebration of the 65th year of the foundation of the Assumptionist Community at Eugenopolis. We were able to celebrate in an atmosphere of prayer and thanksgiving.

The text of the General Chapter helped us to understand the need to develop a culture of vocations: we are in close harmony with the General Chapter regarding the necessity to further develop the connection between pastoral vocations and the youth. Also, we hope to make furthering vocations one of our primary concerns, which implies that we are attentive to an aspect of formation that takes place from the very first contact with the Congregation.

Along with formation, we were able to stress, from the text of the General Chapter, the need to become crafters of peace, servants of unity and disciples of mission. We understand that we must promote, in formation, an approach that permeates all of its stages. There are other fruits that we reaped from our reflection on the Chapter: the expansion of our data bank, in Portuguese, for each

stage of formation. Additionally, the General Chapter taught us to thoughtfully consider combining community life, intellectual and pastoral, in order to develop a well-rounded individual. Therefore, we are always faced with the challenge of living a fraternal life of quality.

Internationality is being rediscovered as one of the treasures of our Province. The presence of the young Congolese religious enriches the life of our Community. It opens up the possibility of taking more concrete steps toward the realization of our missionary endeavors, which promote our own self-awareness. The enthusiastic welcome provided at the International House of Formation in Argentina and at the Latin-American Novitiate in Brazil is a sign of the times.

Reflecting on the possible practices for animation, we have considered that the structures, as indicated by the General Chapter, should be adapted in light of proximity. We worry about the Provinces that are expansive, in which the Provincial is not able to

animate the life of the communities to which he is entrusted.

For that which concerns our apostolates, we believe it is necessary to show our charism where we are in place. We must do our best so that our parishes serve as a place of communion and solidarity. As we reconsider our apostolates, we are fully aware of the importance of the apostolic community on the part of the individual religious. This is crucial in eliciting activism and a priestly presence, as the General Chapter points out so well.

Finally, we realized that the text of the General Chapter, as it relates to the Lay-Religious Alliance, poses a series of challenges for us. The main point that we have gained is that we must take care to give a new dynamism to this reality. We already encourage the presence of the Lay Alliance in the vocation ministry, but we must also include them in other aspects of our life. We must offer them the Assumptionist spirituality as a way toward sanctity and religious accompaniment.

Fr. Marcos Antônio DIAS

Madagascar



Through the work of the Holy Spirit and guided by the fruits of the 33rd General Chapter, that took place at Valpré (Lyon), a second session of the Provincial Chapter of Madagascar was organized from August 1-4, 2017. This Chapter addressed different themes on apostolic communities, formation, apostolic missions, and the mission of community, the mission of parishes, district chaplaincies, education, and social work issues that the Assumptionists pursue in Madagascar.

We specifically addressed the question of justice and peace and the integration of creation. Ultimately, the Provincial Chapter of Madagascar, like the General Chapter, agreed to pursue the commitment of the Province to social communication and the question of poverty and economy. It was in that sense that the Prov-

ince reflected on the question of self-finance.

In general, the religious of the Province of Madagascar have accepted, with admiration and enthusiasm, the results of the Assumptionist General Chapter. We agree that the theme, “New wine in fresh wineskins,” inspires the religious to understand that “throughout its history, the Assumption has lived a dynamic mission ... Our communities have become more international and intercultural. Our actual experience is profoundly marked by these changes” (Acts of the General Chapter of the Augustinians of the Assumption, n° 50).

We might say that at this stage in the Province, many new wineskins were chosen so that the new wine of our religious engagement would become possible. The Chapter recommends that within

three years the Provincial Council and the Province seriously reflect, and make a decision, regarding a new installation in Madagascar or elsewhere. It becomes apparent that the growth of our Assumption body, within the Province, will be of great significance. For that reason, the Provincial Chapter of Madagascar reaffirms its responsibility to pursue a collaboration with the Province of Africa and of Europe as part of the Vicariate of West Africa.

Regarding formation, the Chapter requests that the Commission of Formation of the Province of Madagascar review the document on formation, in conformity with the Ratio Institutionis’ revision from the 2017 General Chapter. This particularly addresses criteria of recruitment, offerings, duration and stages of formation (cf. Acts of the Provincial Chapter of Madagascar, p. 29).

In brief, the 2nd Session of the Provincial Chapter of Madagascar, held following the General Chapter, outlined many recommendations to effectively explain the charism of the Assumption, which is at the service of a divided world. The call is for “a unity held in all that we are---that which we live, that which we undertake. The relevance of our works and of our apostolic priorities can be verified in the light of this call” (Acts of the General Chapter of the Augustinians of the Assumption, n°2).

Fr. Louis Martin RAKOTOARILALA

Andean Province

The 2nd Session of the Provincial Chapter of the Andes took place June 12-16, 2017, in Bogota. The participants included 4 official members, 14 elected delegates and one lay delegate (the other three invited lay delegates were not able to attend). They represented the four countries of the Province: Argentina, Chile, Columbia and Ecuador. Internationality was very evident: 3 Argentinians, 7 Chileans, 3 Colombians, 2 Ecuadorians and 4 Congolese.

Ten subjects were discussed : charism, fraternal life and prayer life, youth and vocations, parishes and shrines, education, the Lay-Religious Alliance, economy, formation---both initial and permanent, promotion of the cause for the beatification of Father d’Alzon and the Statutes of the Province. These subjects were already discussed at the first session, but only in a preliminary way. During the second session, we adopted as our challenge: “Look to the future with hope.” For each theme discussed, we sought to: 1.) identify the points we could make regarding

the realities of our Province; 2.) reinforce the convictions that will animate our religious life and our apostolic mission; 3.) commit to implementing certain proposals or decisions.

The texts of the General Chapter were a rich source of inspiration, helping us expand upon our own documents (even though we couldn’t rely on the official texts or the Spanish translations). The document on Charism was adopted as it was.

I would say that the “new wine-skins” must be found in the organization of the Province (Statutes, International Commissions, economic restructuring). The “new wine” will be a better integration of the religious and their works in the same Province---a more intense co-responsibility of all for the common good. It is marked by a more straightforward collaboration among those responsible for the institutions in the different countries: colleges, shrines, parishes, etc.

We might also say that our Province is in the process of living a spirit of internationality in a new way. In the past we shared community life and mission with

brothers who were French, Belgian and Spanish. In the past few years, Congolese brothers



came to us, for purposes of study or to help with our mission. Among the 54 religious in the Province, 10 are Congolese! Within the last year and a half, the International School of Theology in Buenos Aires gives a new look to our Province with two Congolese, one Malagasy, one Filipino, one Mexican and one Brazilian.

The three Assumptionist brothers and the three lay associates who participated in the General Chapter, shared their view with us of the Assumption of today: a vibrant international body with significant growth in Africa and in Asia; a charism, inherited from Father d’Alzon and the founding fathers, with a firm reality and gifts of which we are proud. There are also new initiatives (mobilizing works, new foundations) that provide us with a future full of hope.

Fr. Julio NAVARRO ROMÁN



North America and Philippines



It's not as a new wine-skin that our recently named Provincial would first imagine himself. But he was the one called by the General to lead the North American Province for the next three years and consequently to preside over the Province's Implementation Chapter. Not new to leadership in the Province and in the mission, Fr. Dennis Gallagher nonetheless comes with a fresh set of ideas and consummate pastoral skills to lead a Province in the midst of considerable change.

The Implementation Chapter convened on July 25 in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Its lay and religious members, from Canada, Mexico, the Philippines and the United States, were given two key documents: the Acts of the General Chapter and those of the Provincial Chapter held in January. A careful reading of both led the Chapter members to draw up a list of topics that they thought should be addressed: Charism, mission and spiritual renewal; formation (and internationality); vocation ministry; education; lay-religious alliance; finances and resources; and community orga-

nization. They did so in light of the General Chapter's formulation of the Assumption charism in terms of unity. We wondered how we were being called to live unity today.

For example... In just a few months, the mission in the Philippines will become the responsibility of the Province of Europe in view of the creation of an Asian Vicariate. The Filipino delegation, nonetheless, played an active role in the Chapter's work, reminding us that new structures will not weaken the bond that unites the young mission and the founding Province. The Congregation-wide reflection on structures strengthened in us the conviction that we are part of one Congregation-Body and that very concretely the Filipino mission will remain close to the heart of the North American Province. Its religious will continue to collaborate with brothers from Mexico, Canada and the US in a number of ways.

The collaboration will not simply be between North America and the Philippines. Every community in the Province is international, intentionally and of necessity. The Chapter, taking into account what was said at the General Chapter, confirmed some of its own convictions about the opportunities and difficulties that living and working in international communities present. Thinking consistently of the Congregation as one Body is not easy and calls us to a genuine conversion, an effort

to go beyond ourselves and our own personal or Provincial interests.

Our own fragility, driven home to us by the recent unexpected death of Fr. Claude Grenache and the departure of a number of brothers for other missions, was a healthy reminder that our lives and our mission are in God's hands. The desire for power, for riches, for great numbers should not distract us from the one thing necessary: to do God's work as best we can.

Perhaps the poorer we become, the more we realize what is truly essential. It was striking to see this Chapter insist on some very concrete ways to bring about a deeper life of faith: personal prayer together in community, regular (weekly) meetings that are planned in a way to make them life-giving, local chapters that take clear decisions that call us to obedience. Even our discussions regarding structures was marked by this awareness of our poverty. With fewer resources, we need to depend more on each other; we sensed a real growth in trust among the religious from the very diverse countries where the Province has communities. This manifested itself as Fr. Dennis proceeded to choose his Council, choices that were met with universal acceptance. Elections to the Council of Province proceeded peacefully, with no sense that any group was pulling in its own direction.



This same spirit marked our reaction to the General Chapter decisions regarding the organization of the Congregation. The Chapter members agree that they are a natural development. The move to an Asian structure seemed evident to us, though we understood that it will not be easy. The major shift in the Congregation toward the East and the South is in many ways a grace, but we noted the pitfalls to be avoided: a sense of entitlement and the seductive appeal of power due to a growth in numbers, a preoccupation with finances that can easily become excessive, the danger of polarization at a time when unity should be the focus... We also had some concerns about the place of the two “super Provinc-

es” in the Congregation (Europe and Africa) and the role that the smaller realities of our Congregation might be able to play. Finally, we believe that the “developed world”, old as it is and impoverished in many ways, has a wealth of experience to bring to the “new wineskins” that we were imagining, but with formation mostly taking place in the “developing world” we wondered if and how this experience of the “old” Assumption would be transmitted.

Our Provincial Chapter concluded with a visit to the newest foundation in the Province, a formation/parish community in Orizaba, Mexico, where we celebrated the installation of the new pastor, Fr. Oswaldo Garcia,

a fitting sign of the “new wineskins” that we hope will allow us to work even more fruitfully for the Kingdom. At the closing celebration of the Eucharist, the Provincial commented on the text from the Acts of the Apostles (3:6) “Then Peter said, ‘Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.’ ” We touched our poverty in very concrete ways, but we recognized that the greatest treasure we have to share is the one who brings us together, Jesus Christ.

Fr. Richard LAMOUREUX

>> The Provincial Chapters



Africa

On Thursday, August 3, 2017, all the members of the Provincial Chapter of Africa assembled in the village of Butembo on the hill of Kambali. They came from all the corners of the Province (the Region of Kinshasa, East Africa and East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo) for the second session of the Provincial Chapter, the Chapter of Application. We gathered in the hall of the professors of Kambali College where we worked for three days to determine the outcomes of the first session of the Provincial Chapter at Namungongo (Kampala)--near the holy martyrs of Uganda. The Lay Alliance was equally represented by four members.

The session opened with a Mass of the Holy Spirit celebrated in the chapel of the Provincial House and presided by the first assistant to the Provincial, Fr. Yves Kaghoma. In his homily, Fr. Kaghoma

called our attention to the spirit of the Provincial Chapter with the line from the General Chapter that focused on three words: the “newness” and “harmony” in our “mission” toward the Assumption and the Church.

In his opening remarks, the Provincial, Fr. Protais Kabila, welcomed all the participants. He reminded us of the spirit and the essence of the Provincial Chapter of late December 2016 and early January 2017, in Namugongo. He also reminded us of the General Chapter at Valpré, which took place at the end of April and beginning of May 2017. He encouraged us to combine the two chapters for their essential meaning: “New wine in fresh wineskins. So that Jesus Christ speaks to the men and women of today” and “Craftsmen of the Kingdom of God in an Africa in crisis.” The new wine that we have been invited to carry to this Africa, overtak-

en by multiple crises, is the Christ who asks us to be artisans and vessels of unity, peace and reconciliation. For this purpose, Fr. Protais invited the brothers and sisters present to dig deeply into the development of the charism described at the General Chapter and to combine it with the apostolic ambition proposed at the Provincial Chapter. These two chapters, according to the aspirations of the Provincial, constitute a time of renewal for the life of the Congregation and its mission on all continents.

The bulk of the work consisted of a review of the directives of the first session of the Provincial Chapter enlightened by the General Chapter. The work began with a return to the General Chapter by Fr. Wilfrid Kibanda, who was the promoter of that chapter. This presentation was well received by the participants who found that the two chapters

connected in their global view. The Holy Spirit enlightened both chapters in the same manner. In effect, centering the life of the charism along with a concern for unity aligns well with the goal that was given to the Assumption in Africa---that of working for the peace and reconciliation of the people in an Africa that, more than ever, exists in a period of much crisis.

The Chapter, once again, deepened its reflection on the theme of unity. It hoped to better understand how the Assumption in Africa could successfully become known as an artisan of unity, of peace and of reconciliation for people and for a nation. It also wanted to grasp how its structures could be signs of unity in the interior of the province and within the entire congregation.



The Provincial Chapter also looked at the question of strengthening the Lay-Religious Alliance as a sign to bridge communication between Church and society.

In what aspect of the Assumption can one address another word to this continent that is prey to so much evil? The brothers and sisters present at the Chapter remained convinced that the Assumption has not said its last words in Africa. Therefore, we must live out communion within our communities and within the entire Province. In that sense, the two chapters have already decided upon the appropriate structures for an animation of proximity that promotes the viability and unity of the body. We are happy to have established the creation of the Vice-Province of East Africa

and also the Vicariate of Kinshasa. The commissions responsible for the elaboration of the statutory texts of the two entities were assigned by the Chapter in the hope that they would begin without delay. The unity of the body, the Assumption as a whole, has not yet been realized. The major concern is to be able to respond to the needs being presented to the Assumption throughout the world.

We must always strive, however, for balance among the appeals of other provinces and the actual needs of the moment, so that we avoid depleting Africa of all its human resources. Collaboration remains the rule, since the mission is unique.

It makes sense to adhere to a fraternal climate of openness in the

manner in which the debates were conducted during the meetings. The brothers dispersed with the conviction that the Assumption, and particularly the Province of Africa, will breathe with a new spirit.\

In his closing remarks, the Provincial continued to thank all the participants, and he invited them to be the first to live the communion desired by Christ---so that, in a contagious way, the Assumption can become a means of peace and of unity. In this manner, the Assumption bears witness to the gospel of love in an Africa profoundly wounded by the virus of division and exclusion of others, which is the greatest enemy of peace and development.

Fr. Thierry KAMBALE KAHONGYA

The general chapter of the Oblates of the Assumption

Our Oblate Sisters have held their sixteenth general Chapter from July 8 to 30th at Florence (Italy), with Father Benoit Grière as their spiritual director.

An interview with Sr. Felicia Ghiorghies, reelected a Superior General of the Oblates.

What has been the main concern of the General Chapter you have just held?

First, thank you for the fraternal initiative to share about the Fam-

ily of the Assumption and some of the life aspects of our General Chapters.

Given the religious missionary character of the Oblates of the Assumption spread in 25 countries and yet living in an ever-changing world, the main concerns of their General Chapter

were several. The major one is strongly connected to the theme of our Chapter: “Oblate of the Assumption, extend the hope of Jesus Christ to your brothers”. From the evaluation report of the Congregation for the last six years, we have tried to discover new calls of both the Church and the society in order to find how to “bring Jesus Christ’s hope to our brothers and sisters”.

The Chapter has been a moment of grace and challenges for the present and the future of our Congregation. It has been a historical moment for the continuity and creative faithfulness to our origins, to our founders, and above all to our charism!

According to you, what has been the major achievement of your Chapter?

During the three weeks of meeting, sharing, and discernment, we have touched the heart of the life of the Oblate of the Assumption. We have discussed about our identity, our spirituality as disciple-missionary, and our charism. At this level, the Chapter has been a moment for us to re define our identity basing on the experience of foundation. The capitulary texts are spotlights on our way to the next General Chapter. They are enlightened by hope from Jesus Christ.

Three priorities were selected to describe the charter that will guide us in the next six years:

1. To deepen the missionary identity (Mission is a constituting fac-





tor of our identity)

2. To revive our spiritual heritage (interiority-unity in intercultural diversity, international and inter-generational)
3. To make progress in sharing and in solidarity (co responsibility).

What are your expectations from the Chapter as a contribution to the livelihood of your congregation, and if possible, to the healthy relationships within the Assumption Family?

Perhaps, it sounds as a paradox, my expectations are great and realistic, as well. What is most expected from the chapter is to enable us to enter deeper in the thought of God, to be directed to the most necessary of our life; life in God for the Kingdom. This life, centered on Jesus Christ, grows through conversion and the renewal of our daily choices. The Lord creates a new heaven and a new earth. Life in God requires us to put on the suit of service of our brothers and sisters in

their most humble realities and uncertainties, in the peripheries of their existence. Particularly, to involve in the life of the most underprivileged, both women and children who are victims of social injustice, violence, war, and the like. These are areas where the reconstruction of the dignity of the children of God and the call to become prophets of hope are required. This commits our whole life as “disciple-missionaries”. The mission reveals first the being. It does not limit itself to the acting. In this sense, our testimony is a means to proclaim hope. This implies, it is of personal and community responsibility that our fraternal life lived through the culture of the gospel and of the Oblate of Assumption be a sign of hope. Despite our small number and our means still limited, the mission vitality is real and tangible in our congregation. The missionary audacity and hope compels to close some communities and to open others.

Another expected factor from the

chapter is to help us become more and more aware of the reality of the frailty and poverty of our religious family, to help us open our heart in order to experience new and better ways of putting in common, sharing human and financial resources. Coming back to the community organization by Provinces and Vice-provinces, I hope that new entities will continue to cultivate the potentials of the continental experience of the last six years in a more expanded discernment, missionary solidarity, and communion.

Related to the Assumption family, our General Chapter has often stressed on the reinforcement of our relationships. Despite our human weaknesses, the family spirit and the inter-Assumption collaboration represent the strength and the support to our mission of serving the Kingdom. The Assumption safeguards its position and has a remarkable contribution to the mission of the Church and to the world today. ■

The Orants of the Assumption

The Orants of the Assumption have held their 15th General Chapter from July 18th to August 12th at Saint-Doulchard (France) with the spiritual director, Fr. Emmanuel Rospide, aa.

An interview with Sr. Anne Huygherbaert, reelected a Superior General of the Orants



What has been the main concern of the General Chapter you have just held?

During the pre-capitulars works, number of challenges had been underlined. These include the importance of the individual sharing in community life; the alarming financial situation; the importance of individual responsibility; the necessity to re appropriate our spiritual heritage, and so on. The overall report had a warning character addressing the same issues. It also addressed issues of formation and mission in our specific context. One of the characteristics is that today the statistics indicate that 84% of our sisters are from Africa. In addition, more than one third is in either an international or an intercontinental mission. These challenges excite us to find ways of promoting enduring growth in the realities of life we find ourselves in. Here I find a human and spiritual ecological concern; how to water, to strengthen and extend our roots to contribute to the harmonious development of our “tree” in the midst of “climate” changes and shifts from continent to the other, ages, cultures, means of subsistence, and so on?

According to you, what is the major achievement of your Chapter?

The chapter reminds us about the right and strong call to live daily

in a more unified manner seeking our union with God and persisting in permanent prayer in all circumstances. That is what has unified and brought life to various generations of the Orants sisters since the foundation. Today, the questions addressed to us about our identity in terms such as “what do you do?” mislead us very easily. We cannot narrow down our life to various moments or forms of prayer—they are indispensable but do not define our life in full. Similarly, the “presence in the world” which has made part of our life since the origins is not to conceive in term of participation in the “apostolate”. It is better to understand it simply in the sense of openness and presence to God and others—especially the weakest—in the diversity of our locations and works. For both sisters and lay people, it is all about being continually agent of a contemplative look, of empathy, and of the recognition of God’s presence and work. In time, that is the efficient testimony that bears fruit.

What are your expectations from the Chapter as a contribution to the livelihood of your congregation, and if possible, to the relationships within the Assumption Family?

The question is wide! One of the

expectations could be change in our way of thinking and living our work. Financial difficulties do not allow us to put limit regarding the half-day set for professional work. However, what is necessary is to renew the spirit of all our works. We wish to live them in line with the three following dimensions: the place of contemplative life, which allows to work under the watchful care of God; present to his presence; the place and way of presence in the world because our mission is to become both prayer in the midst of our brothers and means for our subsistence. It draws from the example of Christ of Nazareth to earn our livelihood. We are fully aware that we were born by and for the Assumption. We continue to live by that conviction through seeking communion, mutual help, recognition of fraternal support, and the choice we make to prefer our mission as Assumption countries. Our life of consecration to God in prayer grows wider to the whole Church and humankind. Nevertheless, it remains above all offered for the Assumption and its works. We wish that meetings and common activities contribute to our family spirit and allow us to know and understand ourselves better. ■

The Little Sisters of the Assumption

the Little Sisters of the Assumption held their 19th General Chapter from July 1st to 22nd, 2017 in Paris (France). The opening of this Chapter was presided over par Father Benoît Grière.



An interview with Sr. Marie-Francoise Philippeau, re-elected General Superior of the Little Sisters of the Assumption

What was the main issue of this Chapter?

I would say that it was addressed from two axes:

We wanted first of all this Chapter to allow the re-examination of our religious vocation during the 6 past years. A re-examination spiritually rooted. That is why throughout the preparatory year, step by step, we were going through the biblical text of the visitation just as the title of our Chapter suggests in order to illuminate our reflection and our meditation. One year before the date for the celebration of our Chapter, we said: “We are in Chapter. Each community is in Chapter”. The Sisters were happy of this expression, not only because of the expression but because of what it signified as an approach.

The second axe was the evaluation of the initiation of the new governance and animation structures. Even if the experience is still recent because the suppression of Provinces has been effective only since 2013, it has not been questioned. We sought to better understand what the role of animation is and what the role of governance is. The challenge is to see the whole system at work with the precision of roles and importance of communication. Some numbers of the Rule of Life were adjusted in this sense.

What is the essential result of the Chapter?

Should we speak of the essential result? What is coming to my mind nowadays, is the density of the impetus that came across it. And maybe, more than the density, it would be better to speak of the lightness of the impetus! In fact, the climate was peaceful, confident. The fluid dialogue be-

tween different generations. We were lucky to have some sisters of recent foundations, and 1/3 of the participants came for the first time. By taking into account our reality of congregation and of our societies as well as the contemplation of the encounter of Mary with Elizabeth made us to choose naturally “going out for the encounter” through 4 orientations: To live and to take care of “the common house”....

- By extending our community life, and by making ourselves be visited,
- By setting out in haste in order to cross the borders
- By creating a new relational dynamic with the lay....bearers of the same promise,
- By trying to receive and give life....a formation that transforms us.

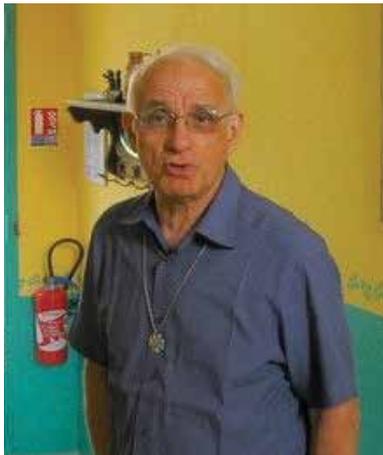
These 4 challenges comprise each one out specific action lines.

The consequences of this Chapter?

I hope that we shall carry in our heart this “good news” of offering and sharing the life in order to take care of the treasure that we have in our hands through the gift of God, the grace’s richness of our inter-generation and of our interculturality, and thus taking part in God’s work of creation and its great goodness. We cannot do it alone. Here, should be manifested our solidarities and undoubtedly our appeal to co-operate and become in solidarity in inter-Assumption. ■

Novitiates of the Augustinians of the Assumption (First part)

We begin here the publication of an overall view of the novitiates in our Congregation throughout history. It is a study made by Fr. Patrick Zago, former Provincial of France and now the archivist of the Province of Europe.



More than a history, this work is a journey into the complex history of places and dates of our many novitiates. Our history is not that long but it is a little complex. Assumption suffered from two expulsions from France where it was born. It went through two wars and had to face many evolutions and revolutions. The sources (1) are numerous but not always credible. Between two documents one consults, for example, dates do not match. Similarly, the number of novices each year is not always the same between the one given at the General Chapter and the one published in the Directory of Religious. Moreover, I did not make a thoroughly research in the files of the communities in the archives of the General House in Rome or in the Provinces who have their own archives. This would require still a long work of investigation based

on official documents of opening and closure of novitiates. But we sure can have a clearer look into the reality of this history: it is a first step.

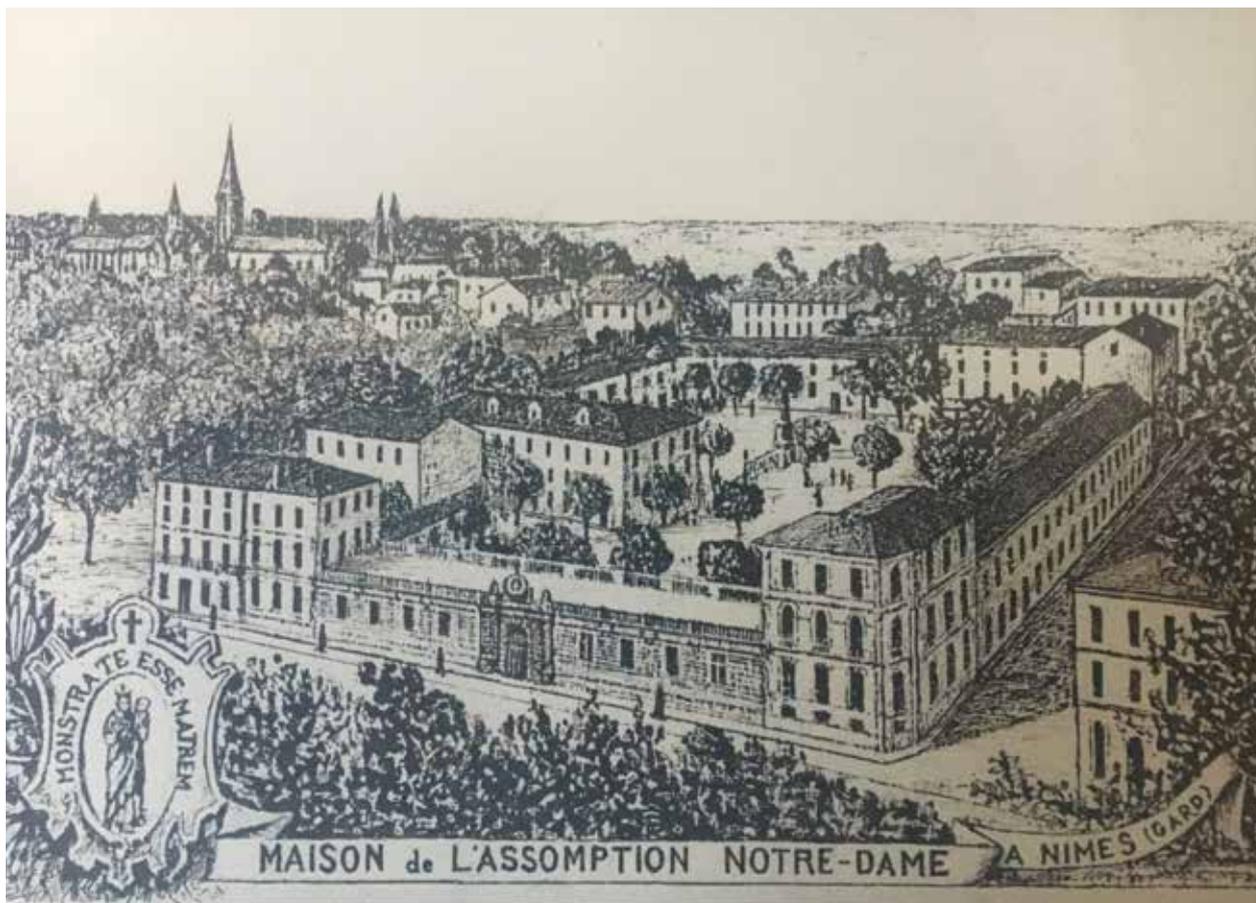
Let me add that this study of our novitiates is very fragmented since it is focused on spotting the successive places where formation was given to the novices and the ultimate person in charge of this formation, which is the Master of novices. But it would be interesting to know the content of this formation along the years, to pinpoint the changes, to note the insistences, to discover the hallmark of the Assumption, of its charisma from the beginning up to this day. So, not only to learn about the content of what was taught, what was the daily schedule, of the feast days, of the holidays, of the year long, but also in which spirit, in which atmosphere was the formation given. In other words, it would be good to understand from inside this life, this spirit, this formation 'as if one was there', more or less as our brother Goulven Madec (2) was putting it for Saint Augustine: 'I am a contemporary of Augustine', so much he knew his life, works, letters, sermons, the time he was living.

At the time of the united Assumption (1845-1923)

It is fair to say that from 1845 to 1850, Father d'Alzon was at

the same time a novice and the Master of novices of his first disciples. As a founder, he experienced firsthand to create the charisma of the Assumption for himself and his first disciples. It took time. It was painful. It is little by little, through prayer and being available to the grace and the call of God, analysing the successes and the failures, that he was able to implement in a concrete way the charisma on the Assumption in the Church. Later, he was able to write notes, give orientations to form his disciples to the charisma as early as the novitiate. It is above all in the first Constitutions of 1855 to 1865 (3) that he tries to answer this call of the Spirit. Later, it is in the instructions given to the novices in the form of four letters, in 1868 (4), and finally in the Circular Letter that he writes about the novitiate, on 8 November 1874 (5).

To complete our study, it is useful also to dig into the decisions of the successive General Chapters which give precise rules for the novitiate, to see how this charisma is lived and takes shape along the years, how the first disciples understand it and root it in their lives. These decisions of the General Chapters of 1850 through 1876 have been summarized by Father Charles Laurent (6). 'The novitiate lasts two years at least and three years at the most



Nîmes, cradle of the novitiates of the Assumption, from 1845 to 1884

for the Choir Brothers, and three years for the Lay Brothers. The novitiate for the Choir Brothers is done in a particular house and under the direction of a Master of novices. The novitiate of the Lay Brothers can take place in the various houses and under the direction of the Local Superior. Once the time of probation is over, the Lay novice is admitted successively twice to pronounce his vows for three years, after which he makes his final vows. If, for serious reasons, the General Superior discerns that he could dispense a novice of the second year of probation (in the case of a Choir novice), it would be wise, after examining him, to get the agreement of the Council and of the Holy See. The two years of novitiate for the Choir Brothers are thus used: the first year is dedicated to the spir-

itual life, the second to the active life. This double test allows to discover from all sides the character of a novice and gives to the highest degree of proof an accurate judgment. Studies for Choir novices are split in three categories: some are forbidden, like studies in literature, sciences and theology; others are tolerated, like the first studies in philosophy during the second year; the others are necessary: they have to do with liturgy, the ceremonies, sacred music, the history of the Church, ascetical writings, the Scriptures, particularly under the mystical point of view; the Catechism of the Council of Trent, readings into the writings of the Fathers of the Church. Novices are never admitted to Holy Orders before their profession.

- (1) Sources and bibliography are found in annexe
- (2) Goulven Madec (1930-2008) a famous scholar of the Institute for Studies in Saint Augustine and for all those who have known him or lived with him in community, a brother and a friend.
- (3) Father Emmanuel d'Alzon, **First Constitutions of the Augustinians of the Assumption 1855-1865**, General House, Rome, 1966. This edition is presented and annotated by Father Athanase Sage and Father Pierre Touveneraud. In particular, the chapters concerning the novitiate, from the second to the fifth, p. 45-52.
- (4) *Ecrits spirituels*, p. 157-172
- (5) *Idem*, p. 254-256
- (6) Father Charles Laurent **Summary of the General Chapters 1850-1876**. Print House P. Féron-Vrau, Paris, p. 13, no. 77



Assumption suffered two expulsions from France where it was born. It went through two wars and had to face many evolutions and revolutions.

(7) Father d'Alzon was granted from Rome, upon his request, on 11 December 1857, an authorisation from the Congregation for the Regular clergy, extremely compelling concerning the novitiate: two continuous years in the house of the novitiate, with a duly assigned Master of novices, under the threat of the annulment of the professed vows! Obviously, this rule had become unworkable because the novices of second year were often working in the apostolate areas, and the roman indult was not always asked in order to sort out the situation. The General Chapter of 1866 took the matter seriously. Father Picard publishes the authorisation given on 29 January 1887 by the Roman Congregation for Bishops and Regular clergy, to change this way of proceeding inherited from Father d'Alzon. From now on, the novitiate lasts one year, *juxta jus commune*, after which the novice pronounces annual vows once, twice or three times, before pronouncing his perpetual vows. *Souvenirs*, no. 54, 1887, p. 353

(8) E. Lacoste, **Le Père François Picard**, Maison de la Bonne Presse, Paris, 1932, p. 22. (E. Lacoste is the pen name of Father Ernest Baudouy)

(9) Lacoste, Letter of 8 August 1860, p. 78

(10) Jean Monval **Les Assomptionnistes**, Collection Les grands ordres, Grasset, 1939, p. 38-39

(11) Father Jean-Paul Perrier-Musset in **Lettres du Père Emmanuel d'Alzon**, XV11, p. 503, 225

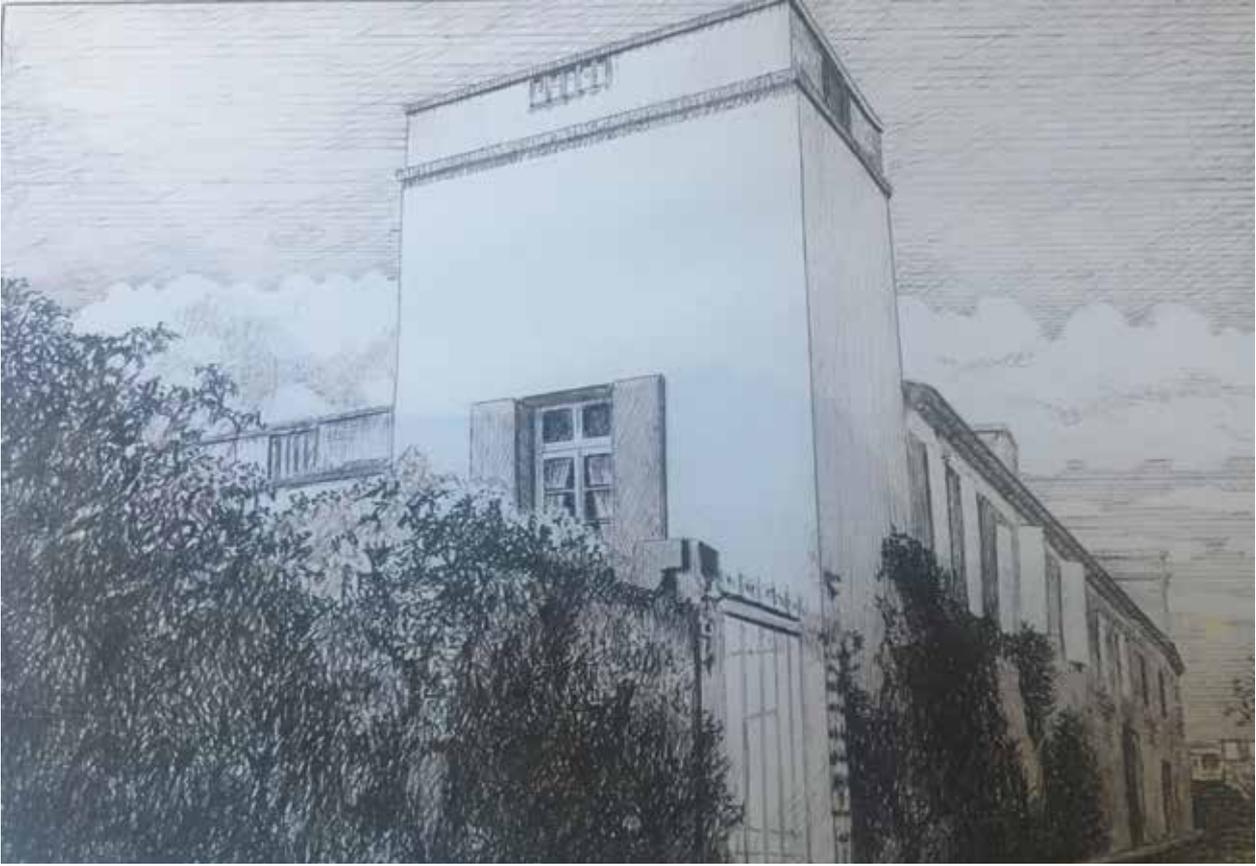
(12) It is interesting to note what Father d'Alzon writes to Father Picard : 'I am here in the midst of a novitiate of which I am much more happy with than what I was told to hope for. Of course, what is

The Master of novices is constantly busy with the formation of the novices, assists to every single exercise, even to the recreations and outings. During the rare moments that he must be absent, he entrusts the direction of the novitiate to a professed priest who was given to him as a socius. The admission to the vesting of the habit and to the first profession is done according to the prescriptions of the decree *Regulari disciplinae*, except for the number of examiners, which has been fixed to four by an exempt of the Holy See granted to the Congregation on 11 November 1857. The General Superior is always allowed to refuse a candidate but he cannot admit him against the advice of the examiners (1862, 1873).' When one reads the biography of the novices of that period, the first profession was done after the second year of novitiate, and the final profession a year later (7).

Nîmes

Assumption College will be the place of the first novitiate of the Congregation. This is the place where Father d'Alzon and his first disciples made their novitiate from 1845 to 1850. It will continue to be the place of the novitiate until 1864. We know that Father d'Alzon was given an exempt from Rome, on 11 December 1857, about the constitution of a novitiate (*Collectanea*, p. 6). Father Ernest Baudouy (8), in a beautiful page that I reproduce almost word for word, describes this novitiate of the beginning. The novitiate was not

yet organized as it will be later. It is quite normal since the rules were elaborated little by little at the contact of the reality. He was explaining also this state of affair because the canonical prescriptions did not exist yet and moreover because the founders were left freer in those days that they are now. 'In Nîmes, novices and professed religious were living together, mixed with the life of the college and were collaborating at this work of education which has been, in the strict sense of the term, the maternal womb where the new Congregation flourished and the cradle where it was to grow.' And he concludes that 'the goal was precise in the mind of Father d'Alzon, but the practical means to reach it were not established a priori. Born from particular circumstances and a broad view of the needs of modern times, the Congregation was expecting from the events themselves and from experience to determine the rules that would open a successful way forward..' Of course Father d'Alzon was following closely the life of the novitiate, even if he has appointed officially a Master of novices. We learn from a letter of Father Picard to Father Galabert that, in 1860, the Master of novices was Father Galabert. The young Congregation will grow rather slowly. From 1850 to 1864, there were fifty clerics or laymen who took the assumptionist habit either at the novitiate in Nîmes or at the one in Paris. From these people, only twenty four will pronounce their final vows (10). After a



Mireman, Gard (near Nîmes). Agricultural colony and novitiate for a.a. brothers (1851-1857)

long break, the novitiate comes back to Nîmes in 1879-1880. For the short story, it was carefully noted that 'on 21 October 1879, started the roman pronunciation of Latin at the novitiate of Nîmes' (Ephémérides de l'Assomption, Gustave Ranson, Paris, 1945, p. 53). Seven General Chapters will be held in Nîmes between 1850 and 1880, all of them under the leadership of Father d'Alzon, except the last one after his death.

Mireman

Mireman is in the near outskirts of Nîmes. An agricultural colony and a novitiate for the Lay Brothers, was under the direction of Father Henri Brun (1851-1857). Brother François Picard ran his double chore of warden at the college of Nîmes and director of the house. Father d'Alzon rented the area which presented farming possibilities and housing in order to establish an agricultural colony that could be used also for living quarters for the novitiate of the Lay Brothers. This project has not brought the success hoped for. (11)

Auteuil (1857-1859)

This is the first novitiate in Paris, opened on 8 October 1857, with Father Picard who comes from the college in Clichy to establish the novitiate in a place close to the convent of the Religious of the Assumption. But soon after, the novitiate will return to Nîmes until 1864.

Le Vigan (1864-1874)

At La Condamine, the birth home of Father d'Alzon, which was the stronghold of the De Faventine and of the d'Alzon. It came into the personal patrimony of Father d'Alzon after 1860. So, he used it for the benefit of the Congregation, first as the novitiate from 1864 to 1874, with Father Hippolyte Saugrain as Master of novices. In a letter of 14 July 1872, we learn from Father d'Alzon that the community was made of three religious priests, two profess brothers, seven novices out of whom two were priests, three postulants and three 'young boys'. This is the place where the first Bulgarian religious, Father Francisco Schisikov, made his novitiate.

Paris 8, François 1er St.

This community has been very important in the history of the Congregation. This is the place where were created the great apostolic works of the origins: the Pilgrimages, the Bonne Presse with Le Pèlerin and the newspaper La Croix, not forgetting the influence of the local community and of the chapel where so many initiatives took root. It is really from that house and from its numerous apostolic works that the name of the Assumptionists was made known in France, as much in the Church circles as in the society at large. We must remember that three of the first disciples of Father d'Alzon, three rich personalities were at the heart of this community: Father Picard, Father Vincent de Paul Bailly and Father Pernet. While reading the news in the Souvenirs, it becomes clear that the leadership has moved from Nîmes to Paris. This house is often referred to as 'the mother house'. As Superior General, Father Picard has lived there. From 1875 to 1878, it became the second novitiate in Paris, under the

direction of Father Joseph Germer-Durand, but under the ultimate responsibility of Father Picard. Nevertheless, they were many difficulties to form novices in a quiet environment, given the tornado of activities that was risking to engulf them. Ultimately, the novitiate moves to Sèvres with Father Germer-Durand. Yet, following the decisions of the General Chapter of 1876 regarding the division of the Congregation into three Provinces, Paris, Nîmes and Andrapolis, Father d'Alzon opens a novitiate in Nîmes which will last only for the years 1879 and 1880. In Paris, the novices were publishing a small magazine, 'Le Bon Apôtre' with the under title 'temperamental novice', published irregularly (13). It started under the apricot tree, this famous and only tree in the courtyard of the community at the François 1er street where the religious would take their recreation whenever the weather was fair. Written with humor but printed cheaply, the magazine had a short life. .. Two General Chapters took place in that house, that of 1886 and that of 1946.

Sèvres (1879-1880)

In Sèvres also, the novitiate will not last long. Like at the community of François 1er, on 5 November 1880, the order of eviction is signified. The novice who wrote the note in the archives of the local community relates it with great pleasure: 'The police superintendent reads the order of expulsion and orders us to leave the house. Upon reading this iniquitous order, one cannot but witness his spite; but the strength is there and we need to give in. We go to the chapel. Each brother takes a candle and we sing Parce Domine.. In closing, we read the Miserere... After the prayer, we took with us



Sèvres (1878-1880)

what was absolutely necessary and we went out. At the door, we were welcomed by 'Long live the Fathers!' All around people were at their windows and would greet us waving their hats; some even came and knelt in front of us requesting a last blessing. We crossed Sèvres from one end to the other on foot, shaking the dust of this un-hospitable place. In Paris, we were expected. Mr. Février (who had requested the honor to receive those who had been expelled from their home) transformed immediately his house into a convent; we are then settled at his place as if at home. His house is an historic house of king François 1er, at the corner of Bayard Street and la Reine road. The hookers where hoping to see us terribly suffer in taking away our poor refuge and here we are living in a pretty palace'. The novices spent a few weeks in that hospitable house that they were calling their 'catacombe' and received the visit of Father Bailly and of the other dispersed brothers of François 1er Street. The classes of the novitiate were organized and the basement was transformed into a chapel and, in this improvised sanctuary, the novices pronounced

their first vows and, on 10 December 1880, Brother Antoine Silbermann, his final vows. Father Joseph Germer-Durand was the Master of novices.

(to be followed)

missing is an initiator like what you could have been, or Father Alexis, or Father Emmanuel; but it is possible to do away with this inconvenient, in doing what I intend to do, two parts to the novitiate, what I call the material novitiate and the novitiate for the intelligence. I find that the house in Le Vigan is very useful for trimming and roughing out, but never the real religious of the Assumption will be completely formed there.' Lettres 1X, no. 46-47, 4 July 1872 (13) Only five issues, from 1st August 1877 to 15 October 1877 (14) Quoted by Father Aubin Collette, 95 years of history. Our Lady of Salvation community, in Pages d'Archives, October 1956 New series no. 4, p. 74-75. (15) This historical house supposedly own by François 1er had been built in Moret (Seine-et-Marne) in 1527 and then, due to various transactions, moved to Paris, in 1826. And again dismantled stone by stone, in 1956, to be rebuilt in Moret, in the courtyard of the city hall.

The community of “Due Pini” greets you!

Almost every year, the Community of Rome is transformed by the departures and the arrivals of several members. It is particularly the case of this re-entry 2017, which follows the General Chapter and therefore the General Curia election in a renewed party, but in the fact of an increasing number of religious sent in Rome for specialized studies. For this current year, this leads to 17 the number of the inhabitants of “Due Pini”, according to the traditional name of our house, with 15 Assumptionist religious.

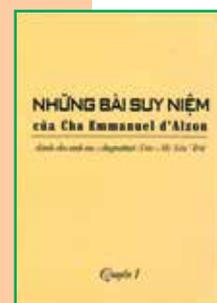
The below photo, taken in our gardens on the occasion of the Local Chapter, unite all of them, without any order of superiority. There, you will recognize then, from left to right: Father Michel KUBLER (Secretary and general prosecutor, French), Brother Cristian SANTANA VARGAS (Student in Patrology, Ecuadorian), Very Reverend Father Benoît GRIÈRE (General Superior, French); Father Marcelo Marciel (General vicar and Local Superior, Chilean), Father Gilles ALLARD (House service, Canadian), Father Bienvenu KAMSELE (Student in Islamology, Congolese), Matthew- Mary OKEREKE (Aspirant, Nigerian), father José Miguel DIAZ AYLLON (General assistant, Mexican), Brother Didier REMIOT (General and local treasurer, French), father Georges HOUSSOU (student in Islamology, Togolese), father Jorge Eduardo ROJAS GARCES (in formation of formator, Chilean), brother Adélard KASEREKA SAHUKIRA (Fère de l'Assomption, Congolais), father Thierry KAMBALE KAHONGYA (General Assistant, Congolese), father Jerome KASEREKA MASUMBUKO KOMBI (student in Liturgy, Congolese), father Pierre-Emmanuel ROSPIDE (intendant, French), father Alexis KASEREKA VALYAMUGHENI (student in Fundamental Theology, Congolese), and father Luc MARTEL (Development and Solidarity Bureau, American).

We will be pleased to welcome you fraternally, while you will be on your way to Rome, under our “two pines”!

Last August, I have reported on my stay in Vietnam a booklet entitled “*Nhung bai suy niem cua Cha Emmanuel d'Alzon*”. This book was printed by the Assumption in Vietnam and is destined to to the Oblate sisters and the brothers of the Assumption. It contains the traduction in Vietnam of the 10 meditations of Father D'Alzon which are contained in the well-known volume of the “*Ecrits Spirituels*”.

If I have got well the message, it is by the impetus of the sister Marie-Paulette, O.A, that the work of translation has been has been started there are some years ago already in collaboration with our Vietnamese brothers. A work which will Surely have to be continued.

Br. Didier Remiot



Editor

Michel KUBLER, General Secretary

So that AA News
can "talk" about you,
please send information about the life
of the Assumption in your countries
to the General Secretariat
michel.kubler@gmail.com
before the end of each
General Council.
Thanks especially
for sending photos and
illustrations.

Assunzione@mclink.it

Translator

Patricia Haggerty and
Gilles Blouin, English
José Antonio Echaniz ;
Spanish

Model and laid out

Loredana Giannetti

Composed in October
30, 2017

This no 02 of AA- info
is printed in 220
copies:

160 in French

30 in English

30 in Spanish

And 350 electronic
shipments.

Agostiniani dell'Assunzione - Via San Pio V, 55 - I - 00165 Roma
Tel. : 06 66013727 - Fax : 06 6635924 - E-mail : Assunzione@mclink.it

2 OFFICIAL

- ◆ Agenda and nomination

3 EDITORIAL

- ◆ Always further
- ◆ Calling, Nominations, Approvals

5 THE GENERAL CHAPTER

- ◆ under the watchful eye of the promoter
- ◆ under the angle of the charism
- ◆ in view of the community organization
- ◆ lived by lay

10 PROVINCIAL CHAPTERS

- ◆ Europe
- ◆ Bresil
- ◆ Madagascar
- ◆ Andean Province
- ◆ North America- Philippines
- ◆ Africa

18 ON THE SIDE OF SISTERS

- ◆ The general chapter of the Oblates of the Assumption
- ◆ The general chapter of the Orantes of the Assumption
- ◆ The general chapter of the Little Sisters of the Assumption

22 PAGES OF HISTORY

- ◆ The novitiates of the Augustine of the Assumption (1st Part)

27 ROME

- ◆ The community of "Due Pini" greets you!

27 PUBLICATIONS

28 OUR DEPARTED BROTHERS

OUR DEPARTED BROTHERS



† Father Jean- Yves LE GUEN, member of the community of Lyon (Province of Europe), has died in September 7, 2017 at Lyon (France). His funerals were celebrated in September 11, 2017 in Saint Irene parochial Church, right before the burial in the municipal cemetery of Loyasse. He was 81 years old.

† Father Kees KRIJNSEN, member of Boxtel Community (Province of Europe), died in September 16, 2017 in Boxtel (Netherlands). His funerals were celebrated in September 21, 2017 in the Wereldhuis chapel in Boxtel, before the burial in the community cemetery. He was 93 years old.

† Father Gabriel BOUZILLÉ, member of the Community of Santiago- ND de Lourdes (Andean Province), died in September 18, 2017 in Santiago (Chili). His funerals were celebrated in September 19, 2017 in the Basilica Notre-Dame de Lourdes, before the burial in the crypt of the sanctuary. He was 84 years old.

† Father Pierre GALAY, member of the Layrac Community (Province of Europe), died in October 4, 2017 in Layrac (France). His funerals were celebrated in October 9, 2017 in the Prioire, right before the burial in Layrac. He was 89 years old.

† Father Emmanuel KIRANDEL, member of the Layrac Community (Province of Europe), died in October 17, 2017 in Layrac (France). His funerals were celebrated in October 19, 2017 in the Prioire, right before the burial in Layrac. He was 93 years old.