



Monday, June 5, 2023

n° 3

# JOURNAL OF THE CHAPTER

The Kingdom of God is at hand.

Living and proclaiming the hope of the Gospel.

34TH GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE ASSUMPTIONISTS - JUNE 01-25, 2023

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 3

## Listening to the Signs of the Times

### Presentation of the African Province

BY FATHER YVES KAGHOMA, PROVINCIAL  
AND ERIC PALUKU KIHUNDU, LAY ASSUMPTIONIST FROM GOMA (DR CONGO)



#### THE PROVINCE IN BRIEF

The Province of Africa is vast. It spans 4 countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. It is culturally and linguistically diverse. It is young, dynamic and full of projects and dreams for the future. The Province is subdivided into two large territories:

- The Vice-Province of East Africa: Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda
- The Democratic Republic of Congo, which includes Eastern DR Congo (North Kivu, South Kivu and Tanganyika) and the Vicariate of Kinshasa.

It is also involved in the foundation in Angola (more on this later).

The Province of Africa has 322 religious living in 28 communities  
55 live outside the Province  
195 are under 50.  
244 are Congolese  
120 are in formation with 20 formators.  
There are currently 12 novices and 17 postulants.

The Province runs 15 parishes (60 full-time religious), 10 schools (69 religious with over 6,000 young people), 3 radio stations. It is committed to promoting human rights and protecting the environment.

## ITS CONCERNS

- Political instability and insecurity in eastern DR Congo
- The vitality of the charism and of religious life: «The quest for the Kingdom of God that characterizes the Assumption is sometimes undermined by failure to meet the requirements of the Rule of Life: prayer in common, sharing of resources and teamwork».
- Formation: how to form Assumptionists who are available for the mission and enable the acquisition of Assumptionist fundamentals.
- Economic autonomy.



## THE REMARKABLE COMMITMENT OF LAY PEOPLE

Lay Assumptionists participate in religious, apostolic and vocational missions according to their skills. Their contribution to the development of Assumptionist works in DR Congo is substantial. They contribute to the spiritual formation (monthly recollections) and intellectual formation (teaching, financial support) of religious. The groups and fraternities are dynamic, as in Beni and Mbau. Elsewhere, they are also taking bold apostolic initiatives, as in Goma where, in addition to a large number of lay people, they are building a Centre Emmanuel d'Alzon. This is also the case in Kinshasa and Kisangani.

## A look of amazement

FROM FATHER IULIAN DANCA, SUPERIOR OF THE BUCHAREST COMMUNITY AND DIRECTOR OF THE SAINT PETER AND SAINT ANDREW CENTER



When we think of the «Province of Africa», our reflex is to associate, or even oppose, the image of a young Church with a promising future, with the image of the old continent (Europe) that has reached the end of its tether. However, this Province will be 100 years old in 2029... so it's not as young as it used to be, which means that its youthfulness is on another level: it comes from its spiritual vigour, its exuberance in faith, its faithfulness in trials... youth is not just a question of age, it's also a state of mind, a freshness of faith. In this sense, these «young people» can also become our «teachers»...

A second astonishing fact is that the armed conflicts in the Congo do not discourage young people from committing themselves to religious life, a life for which some have literally «given» their lives. From this point of view, these young brothers are living proof that Hölderlin was right when he wrote, two centuries ago, that magnificent phrase: «Where peril grows, that which saves also grows.»

## A look of amazement

BY FATHER FABIEN LEJEUSNE, ASSISTANT PROVINCIAL OF EUROPE



Listening to the reports of the Provincial and the Laity of the Province of Africa, one can only feel dizzy. It's not the figures in terms of numbers or youth, and the challenges inherent in this reality, that impress me the most. They testify to the Assumption's vitality. Ultimately, it's the will to live and proclaim the Kingdom despite the headwinds that is impressive. Just imagine the people of God reached through the 15 parishes, the 6,000 young people welcomed in the 10 schools, the 1,000 students at the UAC, not to mention the virtual parish constituted by radio and television and the internal refugees who settle on the outskirts of the places where the Assumption lives. Lay-religious collaboration is impressive in terms of co-responsibility in the mission. I'm reminded of this spine-chilling figure: in the east of the country, life expectancy is tenuous among the 350,000 displaced people.

## A look of amazement

FROM FATHER PIERRE KHUË, VICAR OF ASIA-OCEANIA



With its first foundation in 1929, the Province of Africa is almost 100 years old! But it's a centenarian in good health.

What youth and vitality: numerous religious, some fifteen parishes, schools, pastoral works, laypeople full of initiatives such as with refugees, a foundation in Angola with Brazil, missionary brothers at the service of other Provinces...

However, with these strengths, Assumption in the Congo must live up to its responsibility to develop any Assumption in the context of the demographic shift we are talking about today at Assumption. And the challenges are many, as religious share with the population the difficulties of daily life in a context of social and political instability. As elsewhere, religious life in the Congo must rise to the challenges of economic and community fragility. Undoubtedly, the Congo will need strong solidarity to ensure its future progress.



# Presentation of the Vice-Province of East Africa

THE PRESENTATION BY FATHER KIZITO VYAMBWERA, VICE-PROVINCIAL, AND MARISELLA NYAGA, ASSUMPTIONIST LAY LEADER IN NAIROBI, IS SUMMARIZED BY PATRICIA HAGGERTY, LAY PERSON FROM NORTH AMERICA.

The East Africa Region became a Vice-Province in January 2019. It includes the countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. It's a young Vice-Province with fragilities but also a lot of dynamism.

Here are some interesting figures about the religious:

- There are 96 religious from 8 different countries.
- The youngest religious is 22 and the oldest 63.
- 41 young religious are in formation.

In East Africa, the emphasis is on parish work with 11 communities and 2 experimental communities involving work with shrines. Its commitment to education focuses on Assumption Secondary School in Kenya, founded in 2017. Currently, the school is going through a difficult period financially, depending mainly on tuition fees and donations by donors for subsistence. There is great hope that the school will be able to renew and expand in the coming years.

A lot of work is being done in the houses of formation. A priority is to make religious aware of their mission in the community.

In the midst of its challenges, the Vice-Province finds hope in the charism and in each other. Their hope is to become a Province.

The Lay-Religious Alliance in East Africa began as a group of «friends of the Assumption». They have grown into a solid group of lay members with an impressive structure and organization. The first group made promises/ commitments in 2015 in Kenya. Over the past three years, there has been a real revival of vitality within the groups.



Assumption High School (Kenya)



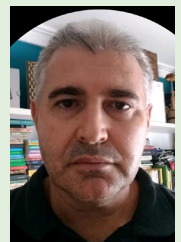
Murutunguru (Tanzania)

Lay people work hand in hand with their religious counterparts for the Assumption mission and are involved in numerous apostolates within the communities: visiting the sick, water projects, educational aid, family ministry...


They are always striving to deepen their commitments and increase their membership. They move forward with hope towards the coming of the Kingdom with their brothers and sisters.

## A look of amazement

FROM PAULO DE PAUDA, A LAY ASSUMPTIONIST FROM BRAZIL



In my opinion, the reality of the young Vice-Province of East Africa has enabled me to understand that it is made up of an immense territory that includes Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya, and that the region is rich in nature and people. However, as far as the development of the Vice-Province is concerned, the brothers are encountering difficulties in terms of education and training. But Assumptionists and lay people are not backing down from their mission. With missionary zeal, they send their members to other provinces. They work and use their gifts and creativity to welcome, celebrate, help, modify, build and educate... I am reminded that this spirit finds its source in Emmanuel d'Alzon himself: «An Assumptionist must be dissatisfied with himself until he has done a hundred times more than he can.... And then his rest consists in doing a thousand times more.» (ES, p. 182)



**During the discussion following this presentation, one participant noted that a rereading of the East African experience of a Region accompanied by the North American Province and now a Vice-Province, could enlighten future discussions on the organization of the Congregation.**

## Reflections from capitulants

WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS TELLING US...

BY NGOA YA TSHIHEMBA,  
NOVICE MASTER, MANILA  
(PHILIPPINES), CHAPTER  
MODERATOR



Right from the start of the General Chapter, in which I'm taking part for the first time, we've been asked to listen to the Holy Spirit. How does this Spirit speak to us throughout the Chapter? Personally, I realized that he is speaking to us through the presence of the lay members of the Alliance. I was impressed by what our lay brothers and sisters are achieving. Yes, we must be humble and let ourselves be challenged by their witness of fidelity, courage, passion and above all by their initiatives. It's as if the Spirit were saying to us: «Be humble, be ready to learn. Our Founder had already said it well: «Of all the virtues, the most indispensable for religious of the Assumption is certainly humility» (E.S p. 48).

## The Chapter on Retreat



Trinity Sunday was a day of retreat for participants in the General Chapter. It was led by Father Iulian Danca, superior of the Bucharest community and director of the Centre Saint Pierre et Saint André? on the Chapter theme: «The Kingdom of God is at hand».

Here is a first extract. The «Journal of the Chapter» will be distilling it throughout the week.

«Is our vocation as Assumptionists to establish a Kingdom on earth stretching from Canada to New Zealand, or to work for the coming of God's Reign in our existence, during our lives, wherever we are?

Are we to conquer new territories for the Kingdom, or are we to try to ensure that God's reign becomes a

concrete reality in the lives of today's men and women?

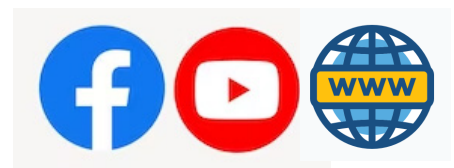
Is it a question, dear brothers and sisters, of «widening» ourselves or, if I may say so in improbable French, of «deepening» ourselves, of digging deeper, of intensifying where God has planted us, the reality of his reign and his coming into our existence? In either case, it's very different, because behind this spatial or temporal understanding, what's at stake is a way of envisioning mission, a style of evangelization, a way of living and proclaiming the hope of the Gospel. Consequently, what category best suits us Assumptionists to speak of the expansion of the Gospel?»

### TO FOLLOW THE WORK OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

- Congregation website [www.assumptio.org](http://www.assumptio.org) updated by Father Marcelo Marciel: <marcelomarcie1@gmail.com>
- Facebook pages: Assumption General Chapter Eucharist on Sunday June 4
- Youtube: Augustiniani ab Assumptione Short summary of Day 3 Interview with Victoria Prada, lay Assumptionist from Colombia

### TO TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN THE GENERAL CHAPTER

- Please send your requests, motions, wishes, suggestions, wishes to the General Chapter before June 11th. Please address them to the Chapter Promoter, Father Jean-Paul Sagadou: <sagadoujeanpaul@gmail.com>
- Participate in the «Readers' Mail» in this «Chapter Journal» by governing at the work of the capitulants ([bernardholzeraa@gmail.com](mailto:bernardholzeraa@gmail.com)) or on Facebook.



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