



Monday, June 12, 2023

n° 8

# JOURNAL OF THE CHAPTER

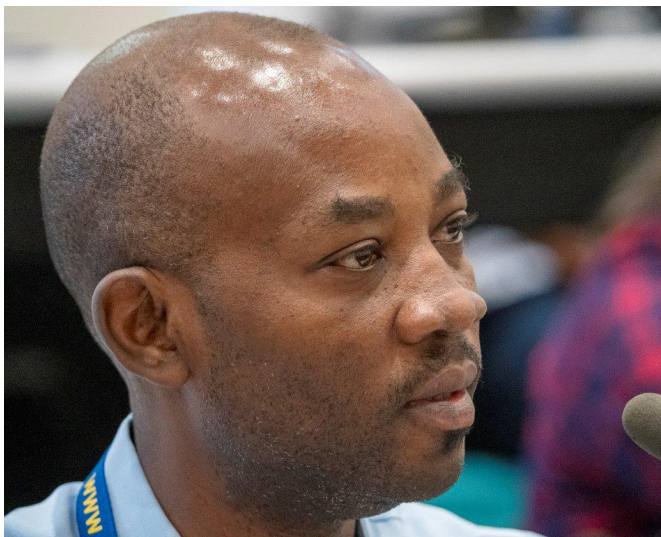
The Kingdom of God is at hand.

Living and proclaiming the hope of the Gospel.

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

SPECIAL ELECTION OF SUPERIOR GENERAL

## Father Ngoa Ya Tshihemba was elected, on June 12, 2023, 11th Superior General of the Augustinians of the Assumption.



The new elected religious (DR Congo), aged 52, succeeds Father Benoît Grière (France), who has just completed two six-year terms at the head of this Congregation.

The Assumptionists today number 915 religious and 45 novices, spread across 128 communities in 33 countries across all continents.

Father Ngoa Ya Tshihemba was born on October 16, 1970 in Mbau (North Kivu), DR Congo. Born into a family of farmers and the eldest of 8 children, he attended primary and secondary school in Mbau.

He did his postulancy at Collège Kambali and his novitiate (1995-1996) at Maison Charles Lwanga in Butembo (North Kivu). He made his first vows on August 28, 1996. He was then appointed to Kinshasa (1996-2001), where he obtained a degree in philosophy. From 2003 to 2007, he studied theology at the Institut de Formation Inter-Congrégations in Mexico City, where he obtained a canonical bachelor's degree in theology.

He was ordained a priest in Butembo (North Kivu) on January 24, 2008. He returned to Mexico for four years

of pedagogical studies (2009-2013), graduating with a degree in Pedagogy. He took on the responsibility of formator, replacing the parish priest of the «Maria, Maria, Emperatriz de América» parish for a year.

In 2013, he was appointed to Manila (Philippines), where he was until now novice master as well as responsible for formation in the Philippines and superior of a formation house.

A polyglot (in addition to Kinande, his mother tongue, he speaks Swahili, Lingala, French, Spanish and English), he is well acquainted with Africa, Central America and Asia.

He enjoys reading, listening to music and walking in nature.

# The fraternal embrace at the chapel

## Webcast on our Facebook page

Father Benoît Grière, former Superior General, welcomes Father Ngoa, the new Superior General, with these words: «We welcome the 11th Superior General, and the 10th successor to Father Emmanuel d'Alzon. We pray that he will be accompanied in his task of announcing that the Kingdom of God is at hand...

The brothers have high hopes that you will help them to announce the joy and hope of the Kingdom.»

All the brothers present came forward to embrace their new Superior General, who then addressed them.



Fr. Ngoa with two former Superiors General, Fathers Richard Lamoureux and Benoît Grière.

*"After my election, I was troubled. When I went back up to my room, I got lost. I went to the wrong door. I looked for Father Benoît Grière, but couldn't find him. I went to the chapel. I sat down in front of the painting of Father Emmanuel d'Alzon. I looked at him: he was looking at me and I wondered what he thought of what had just happened. At the same time, I wondered: "But what should I tell my brothers? It's too early for a keynote speech, because we're only halfway through our Chapter, our discernment....*

*Discernment continues. At the start of the Chapter, we asked for the grace of the Holy Spirit. He continues to speak to us, and we must continue to listen. Especially when the Chapter gives me a team. It's important to have a team," said Father Richard and Father Benoît, my predecessors, "brothers who love Christ and the Assumption and who are ready to work together. Vincent Cabanac said to me: "When you feel the weight of the burden, remember also the weight of the trust of your brothers". That comforted me. The strength that drove you to come here and suspend your responsibilities will sustain us. The challenge is great, it's right in front of us.*

*I insist on the importance of a team that completes itself. You know my limits, so let's think about this complementarity we need, since we all love the Assumption: knowledge of administration, of accompanying the brothers, perhaps also thinking about continuity and traditions. We've talked about interculturality, let's think about a team that is a witness to this interculturality.*

*Let's continue with the Spirit to formulate orientations for the next six years. The team will be responsible for accompanying and implementing these concrete directions. Let's continue to listen to the Spirit who makes us love Christ and accept to go here and there.*

*This same Spirit will lead us to discover where we should be and how we should be; these are the questions that Father Benoît Grière has entrusted to us for this Chapter. Unity is our strength. The challenge is great, and it's right in front of us. If we are united, anything is possible.*

*I'd like to join those on the line who are praying for us. Please continue to pray that the Spirit may accompany us.*

*Thank you for your trust. May God bless us all.*

The celebration ended with the singing of "Adevniat Regnum Tuum".

## Chapter Commissions and Working Groups

\* 14 Chapter Commissions have so far been set up by the General Chapter.

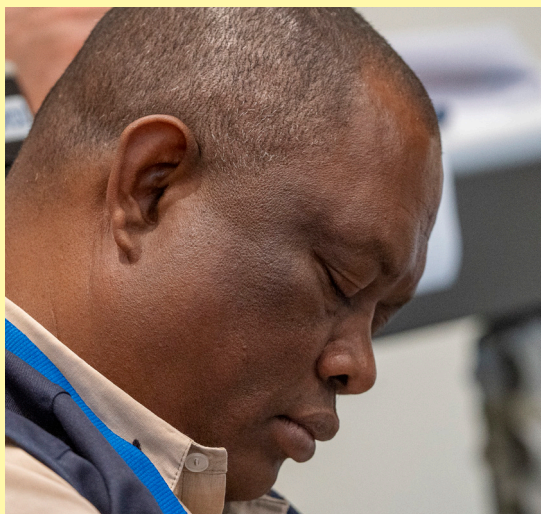
- ▶ Lay-Religious Alliance
- ▶ Structures and organization of the Congregation
- ▶ Communication and the Digital Continent
- ▶ Justice and Peace
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Formation
- ▶ Youth and Vocations
- ▶ Mission d'Orient
- ▶ Economic Affairs
- ▶ Commission of Proposals
- ▶ Charisma: postulation, archives
- ▶ Mobilizing works
- ▶ Disciples-missionaries (the missionary character of the Congregation)
- ▶ Accompanying the People of God (parishes, pilgrimages, etc.)

\* 2 working groups have also been set up on «Statutes» and «Prevention of abuse».



## Atmosphere

Prior to Friday afternoon's «blank vote» on the religious likely to become Superior General, the Chapter delegates had a moment of exchange and discernment on the profile of the next Superior General and his priorities. One of the elements of reflection was the demographic «tipping point» of the Congregation. This can be summed up by the interventions of two capitulants: Fathers Dominique Greiner (Province of Europe) and Louis Martin Rakotoarilala (Province of Madagascar).



*«Before this Chapter, the word changeover was not in the Congregation's dictionary. The word comes up every day. Let's be careful about rushing and tipping. Let's be careful because we come from different Provinces.» - Louis Martin Rakotoarilala*



*«We've talked a lot about a tipping point (I prefer to speak of a shift in the center of gravity). Perhaps we should draw the consequences while there's still time. We can't wait to make the transitions. We need to look ahead 6 and 12 years. The brothers in the South will no longer be able to benefit from the heritage of the North, and if we wait, we run the risk of an alter-congregation. I have the intuition that responsibility must begin now. We need to take advantage of the living forces. I've seen too many Congregations suffer from waiting until the last moment. From the very first days of our chapter, this sign is visible in the setting up of the coordination team.*

*Let's go and find the little David's who are hiding behind their brothers. The sign has already been given, it's up to us to welcome it. It will be to entrust the congregation to the brothers of the South. We can't wait. - Dominique Greiner*

## Questions for an evaluation of the 7 mobilizing works

Bayard, Centre Saints Pierre et André in Bucharest, "Auberge de Jeunesse Adveniat" in Paris, the «Accompagner» association in Brussels, "Université Assomptionniste du Congo" (UAC) in Butembo (DR Congo), Assumption University in Worcester (USA) and the network of rural schools in Tuléar (Madagascar).

Are they relevant?

- Are we maintaining the «mobilizing works» label?
- What impact do they have on the life of the whole body?

• What is the missionary dimension of these works?  
Do they mobilize all the Provinces and the body of the Assumption?

### Program

SATURDAY, JUNE 10

#### Morning

- Report from the Economic Affairs Commission
- Discussion of the General Treasurer's Report
- Report from the Communication and Digital Continent Commission

#### Afternoon

- Evaluation of Mobilizing Works
- Commission work

### Program

MONDAY JUNE 12

#### Morning

- Election of Superior General

#### Afternoon

- Exchanges on the composition of the General Curia.

#### Evening

- At St Louis des Français: celebration of Bayard's 150th anniversary.

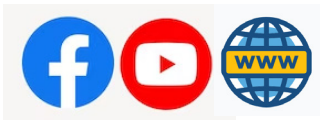
SUNDAY JUNE 4, 2023

## Sunday of convivial relaxation in Subiaco

On Sunday, the members of the General Chapter took a day out to recharge their batteries and relax in Subiaco, an hour's bus ride East of Rome.

This is the place where the Benedictine revolution began: in the midst of political chaos, a 14-year-old from a wealthy family with his career all mapped out, withdrew for three years to a cave to live as a hermit and discern

the Lord's call. Illiterate shepherds used to join him, founded a community and spread throughout Italy and Europe, building a new civilization... Brother Clément Löbel's photo view.



«Journal of the Chapter»

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Photos: Dominique Tho, Clément Löbel and Didier Remiot.