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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

A review by our Facilitator, Father Alberto Toutin, SSCC (Extracts)

In the new condition of interdependence of which we have become aware in this Chapter, the Assumption is called to grow as a missionary body and to deepen its prophetic contribution to the Church. On the one hand, this means embracing where you are the three poles which, according to Bruno Chenu, define prophetic existence: solidarity with the people, taking risks in history and witnessing to the God of Jesus Christ (L'Église au Cœur, p. 114) And, on the other hand, by welcoming God's action as proclaimed in the Beatitudes, lived «attested in spite of all the burdens of current events» and «incarnated in the face of the world and the Church» (L'Église au cœur 113). So every member of the Assumption and the whole body take part in the tension in which the Reign comes about, the tension between our commitments in the midst of our contradictions and what remains irreducibly God's action. This way of bringing about the Reign makes its scouts, subjects torn apart, who place us «at the vertical of the present time» (L'Église au Cœur 114).

End of Chapter, New Beginning

«You are the living 'first version' of the Acts of this General Chapter!»

Sending remarks of Fr. Ngoa Ya
Tshihemba, AA General Superior



Brothers,

[...] You are the first living «version» of the Acts of this General Chapter. You are the first «authorized publication» for their reading and publication in your communities.

The first mission I entrust to you is to go and share this joy and your discoveries, so that the brothers and laypeople who walk with you in covenant can realize this, even before they receive the Acts. How can we ensure that the Chapter we have just lived through is known, applied and lived by brothers who were not at the Chapter, if we - who have shared our dreams, our convictions and our hopes for the Kingdom - are not capable of assuming them? If we can't, others won't believe in a text, however beautiful it may be.

[...] After this General Chapter, how do we start afresh?

1. As you already know, you won't be able to work miracles. But a good start would be what some call «small fidelities» to the fundamentals of religious life: regularity in prayer and meditation, fidelity to the vows, the sharing of goods, small fidelities to the

quality of our community life and work, etc.

2. A good start is to live and bear witness to the hope of the Gospel through a renewed reading of the charism that the Lord has entrusted to our little religious family for the good of the Church and the world.

3. A good start is also to take the second part of the Provincial Chapters seriously. It's very important now to imagine initiatives at local level throughout the body, so that the decisions and orientations taken in this Chapter are really lived out.

[...] With you and for you, I take up the words of the song we have sung in recent days:

«We will be blessed if the joy of our brothers makes our hearts sing (...)
We will be blessed if our hearts are open to the forgiveness of our brothers (...)

We will be blessed if our hands are stretched out for the peace of our brothers»...

And then, as it says in this same song, we will be able to sing:

«Praise be to you, Lord, for giving us the joy of serving you!
Praise be to you, Lord, for giving us brothers to love!

The Kingdom of God is already here!

With these words, which express my desire and my hope, I declare the 34th General Chapter closed. I thank you all.

(Extracts from the concluding speech of the General Chapter)

Palaver tree: What do I take away from this General Chapter?

Our life and mission are a great adventure; we are pilgrims who travel this road with joy and hope. - Richard Lamoureux, Worcester (USA)

«Diversity is the greatest richness that we live as Assumptionists, it is how we proclaim the Kingdom of God with hope and unity» - Fr. Louis Kivuya Muke, Mexico.

«To be missionary disciples is our Assumptionist ambition for the Kingdom. God gives us his Spirit to move forward.» - Fr. Benoît Grière

«Chapter is an exercise in renewal. «Behold, I make all things new,» says the Lord. The Assumption shows a new face. Fraternity and mission, two key words, acquire the strength to animate our journey. The Chapter is a way of updating our charism. Let us give thanks to God.» - Father Miguel Diaz

«Very happy to note the maturity of our chapter assembly and everyone's commitment to the debates: an excellent sign of the new Assumptionist social body that is ours today!» - Fr. Benoît Bigard, Rome

«Alhamdulillah! This humanly divine and divinely human adventure that is our 34th General Chapter calls us back to the fidelity and dynamism of our specific charisma, so that we can set off again with courage to meet the expectations of the men and women of our time.» - P. Georges Houssou, Sokodé (Togo)

«I discovered during this Chapter that our motto «ART» and our Assumptionist charism are rich and still relevant. They spur me on to take one more step in living and proclaiming the hope of the Gospel.» - P. Raymond Tongamana, Tsimijaly (Madagascar)

«Taking care of universal fraternity for apostolic fruitfulness in service to the Kingdom.» P. Jean-Paul Musangania, Kinshasa (DR Congo)

«This General Chapter helps and encourages me to further promote the spirit of communion, closeness and passion in relation to our mission to extend the Kingdom of God in society and in the Church. P. Parfait Elysé Andry Nirina, Fianarantsoa (Madagascar)

«A drive to open up a future and carry joys and hopes, without ignoring our weaknesses.» P. Vincent Cabanac, Paris (France)

«I find myself enriched by a new vision, much broader than when I arrived. It allows me to give thanks for God's action for the men and women of this time, for the Assumption, for the Church.» Fabien Lejeusne, Paris (France)

The renewed hope of walking together to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Fr. Juan Carlos Marzolla, Santiago (Chile)

«One step further... A step forward means a lot to me. One step is always the beginning of a long journey, of great things... I think this will help us to make the Assumption a great institution.» Fr. Dominic Kamau Muturi, Nairobi (Kenya)

«What a lesson... It was with great anxiety but full of enthusiasm that I discovered all that had happened throughout this Chapter. I came, I saw and I learned what it means to be an Assumptionist. Fraternity in faith and charity. Thy kingdom come, long live the Assumptionists.» Father Joachim Ssentongo, Kyabakadde (Uganda)

«I felt that we were linked by a common fiber: the desire to deepen our charism together, for a fraternal and missionary life of greater solidarity and hope.» P. Faustin Watevirwe, Butembo (DR Congo)

«I return from this Chapter encouraged to live and proclaim the joy of the Gospel, aware that interdependence is a reality that will make us more and more committed to the Congregation as a whole.» Fr. Luiz Gonzaga da Silva, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)

«It is by serving hope that we will be witnesses to the nearness of God's Reign!» P. Dominique Greiner, Paris (France)

«I retain the word «Proximity» which comes like a breath of the Spirit to renew this closeness to God that comes alive in us and around us.» Fr. Marcelo Marciel.

«Our Assumptionist mission is taking on a new impetus to go further. Staying in Rome is a radical departure for me.» Fr. João Gomes.

«The Chapter helped us to tell the story of our charism in a new language. It also enabled us to draw out the narrative framework of our Assumptionist life with a view to forming apostolic projects for the whole of our family.» P. Chi Ai Nguyen, Worcester (USA)

«This Chapter was an opportunity for the capitulants to meet and share about the Assumptionist missionary presence in different contexts within different commissions, and to agree on a strategic plan for the next six years. It was a friendly, enlightening and realistic moment, albeit provocative in a certain sense. Fr. Jacob Welikha Barasa, Mwalate Taita (Kenya)

«Cardinal Aveline, June 21, 2023. It says it all: the closeness of God in our lives and our vocation to unite with Him to better guide God's people towards holiness.» P. Vincent Leclercq, Paris (France)

«I must not wait for others to improve our living together, but rather I must be the one to bring about the change expected by the Congregation.» Fr. François Tshiamala Katalayi, Kinshasa (DR Congo)

«This Chapter was like a time of creativity. I could sum it up with this extraordinary phrase by R. Guardini: 'Life does not execute an already available pattern, but brings us into the presence of that which did not yet exist'.» P. Mihai-Iulian Danca, Bucharest (Romania)

«The Assumption, as it becomes more international, must also respond to the challenge of its mission: to live and proclaim the hope of the Gospel in a fragmented and polarized world as a witness to universal brotherhood.» - Father Salvador Musande, Butembo (DR Congo)

«This Chapter is truly a pilgrimage leading to holiness, through fraternity; liturgical celebration in different languages, internationality and interculturality as expressed by the capitulants. Long live the Assumption! P. Lucien Razafimanantsoa, Tuléar (Madagascar)

«This 34ème Chapter has been a spiritual exercise for me: a time of prayer, fraternity, dialogue and openness to others to walk together and collaborate in bringing about the Reign of God!» P. Bolivar Lukenzano, Riobamba (Ecuador)

«The Chapter was for me a happy moment that rekindled in me the hope of being able to live within the Assumption, in interculturality, experiences of joyful and relaxed fraternal life.» - Brother Didier Remiot

«I'm happy to have participated in the General Chapter for the first time. I appreciated the spirit of fraternity and internationality.» - Fr. Joséphat Kawa Muswahili, Valparaiso (Chile)

«I return to my Province with «in my bag the closeness of the Kingdom, the hope of the Gospel and the fraternity towards holiness». Father Roger Kasereka Syayipuma, Goma (DR Congo)

«Our Chapter did well to draw deep inspiration from its theme of animation: the nearness of God's reign. It gave a real point of orientation to our words and proposals.» Bro. Dennis Gallagher, Brighton (USA)

«The Assumption is a path to holiness inspired by Alzonian and Augustinian fraternity.» Fr. Thierry Kahongya, Rome

«It's a Chapter of fraternity!» Fr. Pierre Tran Van Khue, Saigon (Vietnam)

«A rich experience of listening, sharing and discernment, which enabled me to hear the call to step outside myself to welcome the Kingdom of God that is near.» P. Yves Nzuvu Kaghoma, Butembo (DR Congo)

«A pathetic call to live and proclaim the nearness of the Reign of God, through the strength of interdependence, solidarity, fraternity, transversality and subsidiarity in this period of change in religious life. And union is our strength of witness! Fr. Ephrem Kapitula, Butembo (DR Congo)

«I'm happy to leave this Chapter, which opens up horizons we might never have imagined: the Spirit is pushing us out to sea, we've been set a course, and we've been given an amply renewed team to guide and support us. Let's not be afraid! Fr. Michel Kubler, Rome

«I return to my Vice Province with the conviction that the Kingdom of God is here, and that it is I who must go out to meet it.» Fr. Kizito Vyambwera, Arusha (Tanzania)

«This chapter leaves me with a heart full of hope for the future of the Assumption, as committed religious and lay people strive to keep alive in the Church the charism and spirituality inherited from Fr. d'Alzon.» Victoria Prada, Colombia

«Cordial and fraternal welcome, awakening of the Lay-Religious Alliance, internationality and interculturality: these are values to be capitalized on by the Congregation.» Emile Mahamba Kahindo, Butembo (DR Congo)

«Hope is life. Despite the ups and downs of the congregation's move south, let's not be afraid to dare. Let's believe in Providence and the Spirit, let's work in synodality.» - Stella Kahambu, Kinshasa (DR Congo)

«This General Chapter has been characterized by pragmatism in the apprehension of baptismal co-responsibility in Alliance Religious and Laity, especially in the way of wanting to recover the prophetic vision of the Venerable Emmanuel d'Alzon and respond to the challenges of our time.» Eric Kihundo, Goma (DR Congo)

«The 34e General Chapter was an opportunity for me to become aware that the Kingdom to be brought about in me and around me, during these six years, is that of justice and peace, in fraternal communion.» Wilfrid Kibanda.

«Wonderful general chapter where the participants are mostly young people from several provinces, where we talk about mission, internationality, interculturality, sanctification in fidelity to our spiritual heritage and our family spirit.» Floribert Ngwese Kombi

How I Received My Call

ALEX CASTRO, GENERAL TREASURER



The timing of the General Treasurer's election somewhat caught us by surprise. Our community was even discussing over breakfast about the Superior General's election not knowing that I will receive the call that same morning! The experience was just so surreal at the beginning knowing that I was not in the General Chapter upon my election and I was unaware of what went on during the whole process. What calmed me down was a shot of a nice warm sake during lunch with a Filipino couple. I accepted the responsibility relying on God's grace, with utmost humility, and heartfelt gratitude for the confidence of this Chapter that entrusted me with this great responsibility. I will be leaving St. Anne-St. Patrick Parish with mixed feelings: both gratitude and attachment, a commitment to our mission and a concern on what the future holds for our presence in the parish. But in all of these, I entrust everything in God's loving care.

ETIENNE RATALALA RAFANAMBINANTSOA, GENERAL ASSISTANT



The Lord surprised me! On the evening of Friday June 16, in Jerusalem, where I was on sabbatical, I received a call from the number of Father Lucien, my Provincial Superior in Madagascar, but it was our new Superior General on the other end of the line! He announces my election and asks for my response. Faced with my embarrassment, he gives me the opportunity to speak to Father Lucien. I don't retain much from this exchange. I return to Father Superior General. I tell him: «With my limitations and weaknesses, with what the Lord has given me to be and to be able to do, I abandon myself to Him and I count on the support of my religious family. I accept my election.» The time to say «yes» went by very quickly. But I still find it hard to imagine what my mission as Assistant General will be like. It was a long night, and sleep was short that Friday.

EDITION AND PROMULGATION OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER PROCEEDINGS

The Acts of the General Chapter will be promulgated by the Superior General once the texts have been harmonized, translated and corrected by an ad hoc Commission.

Before the final version of the Acts is published, communities will be able to consult the adopted texts for their own use and to enable Provincial Chapters to integrate the decisions taken by the 34th General Chapter.

TO FOLLOW THE GENERAL CHAPTER

- Congregation website www.assumptio.org updated by Father Marcelo Marciel: <marcelomarcie1@gmail.com>
- «AA - News

PHOTOS OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER are on the website.



«Journal of the Chapter»

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