



JUNE 1, 2023

n°0

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

Editorial

This is the issue no. 0 of the «Journal of the Chapter», which will be published daily. It will give you news of the Chapter, its participants, its progress and its major decisions.

The «Assumption General Chapter» Facebook page will also provide daily news: photos, interviews, live celebrations...

This issue 0 recounts the final days of preparation and the arrival of the Chapter members. All arrived on schedule, with journeys of varying length.

Father Benoît Grière, Superior General, will solemnly open the General Chapter on Thursday June 1 at 3pm. The leadership team will soon be elected. The Chapter will be in full working order.

Here we are in the «upper room», all together, waiting for the Holy Spirit to breathe on this mini-Synod to «live and proclaim the hope of the Gospel».

Thank you for your prayers, your interest, your reactions, your suggestions for information that answer your questions and inspires your collaboration.

The communications team:
Father Bernard Holzer, Brother Clément Löbel, Loredana Giannetti

Final preparations under the sign of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary



Photo
front row: from left to right: Marie-Agnès (Madagascar), Mariesella (Kenya), Eric (Goma), Stella (Congo), Emile (DR Congo) ;
2nd row: François Smalah (Madagascar), Maricarmen (Mexico), Patricia (USA), Victoria (Colombia);
3rd row: Maria Paula (Argentina) Geneviève (France), Thierry Kahongya AA (general assistant), Bénédicte (France);
4th row: Georges Sannerot (France); Bolivar AA (interpreter) Gervais AA (interpreter) and Paulo Alexandre (Brazil)

The laity gets to know each other and gets ready

On May 30 and 31, they came from all over the world before the opening of the General Chapter to prepare for their participation, while the religious delegates gradually arrived.

«Fourteen lay people from all over the Congregation, accompanied by Father Thierry Kahongya, have been at the Generalate for 48 hours, getting to know each other and to better understand the challenges and workings of this essential body in the life of our religious family. Our Superior General, Father Benoît Grière, came to give us an overview of the Chapter and put us at ease telling us how important our place in this body is and how much it means to him. Didier Rémiot then took the time to

explain the challenges and difficulties of his position as bursar, as well as the financial situation of the Congregation. With Michel Kubler, General Secretary, we reviewed the different phases of a Chapter in order to understand that it was «sovereign»: we'll never forget that! Thanks to our two interpreters, Gervais and Bolivar, we were able to share the realities of our Provinces, the Alliance's fine achievements, its difficulties, and the issues and challenges we need to tackle to help it grow.

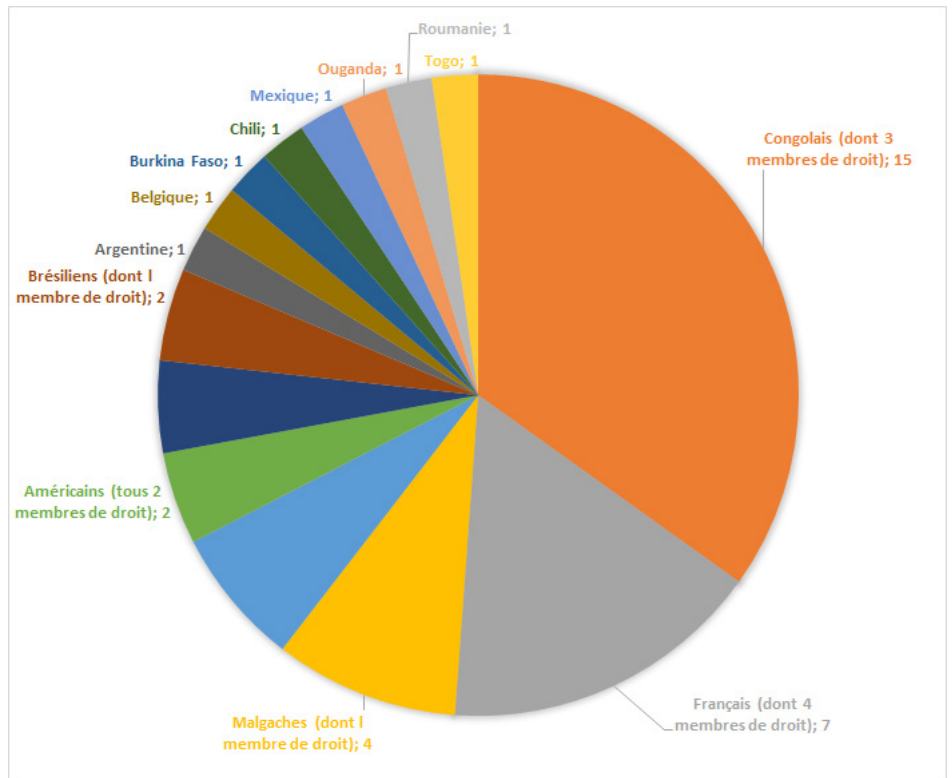
We have already seen that, despite our differences we are united by a very solid common base, and that the family spirit is very much in evidence. This bodes well for the future! - Geneviève Couturier

A Young And Truly International Chapter

Capitulants

Out of a total of 43 capitulants, the Chapter will include :

- 15 Congolese (including 3 ex-officio members)
- 7 French (including 4 ex officio members)
- 4 Malagasy (including 1 ex officio member)
- 3 Vietnamese
- 2 Americans (all 2 ex officio members)
- 2 Kenyan
- 2 Brazilians (1 ex officio)
- 1 Argentinean
- 1 Belgium
- 1 Burkina Faso
- 1 Chile
- 1 Mexico
- 1 Uganda
- 1 Romania
- 1 Togo
- ...for a total of 15 nationalities represented (in 33 countries)

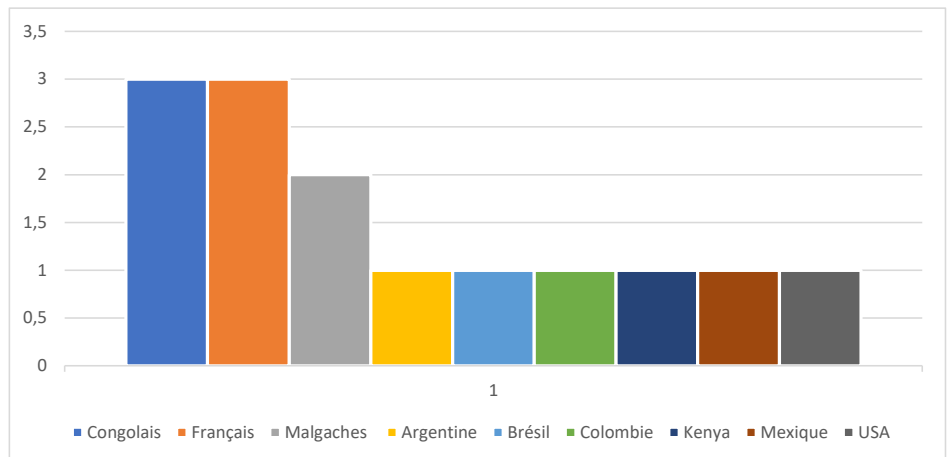


Lay guests

(June 1 to 7)

Out of a total of 14 lay people, the Chapter will see the participation of :

- 3 Congolese
- 3 from France
- 2 Malagasy
- + 1 member from each of the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Kenya, Mexico, USA.



Capitulants' ages

The average age of the 43 capitulants is 51.5.

The 2 youngest are PP. Joachim Mpozembizi Ssentongo (35) and François Nguyen Dinh Hanh (38). The 2 doyens are PP. Richard Lamoureux (80) and Dennis Gallagher (75).

N.B. PP. Nicolas Potteau (June 12), Joséphat Kawa Muswahili (June 19) and Ephrem Kasereka Kapitula (June 24).



Richard Lamoureux (80)



Dennis Gallagher (75)



François Nguyen Dinh Hanh (38)



Joachim Mpozembizi Ssentongo (35)

Arrival of General Chapter delegates



Since May 29, delegates to the General Chapter have been arriving at the Generalate. The joy of the meeting was palpable. People were getting to know each other and exchanging news.

On the afternoon of May 31, everyone took the metro with their luggage to the Chapter site, the Passionist retreat house just behind the Coliseum.

Perfect logistics

The Rome community, the Oblate Sisters and lay collaborators are feverishly busy with final preparations and in welcoming General Chapter participants. The General House and Villino Dufault Centre are full. Two sittings at the table are needed for everyone's meal.



Although the General Chapter is intended to be a paperless one... many documents have been published...

The Cause of Father Etienne Pernet: a new step towards beatification

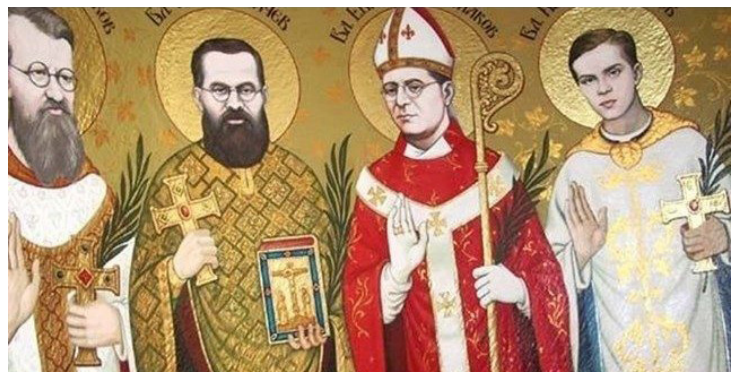
On the eve of the opening of the General Chapter, a new step towards the beatification of Father Etienne Pernet was taken.



«On Wednesday May 31, on the feast of the Visitation of Mary and during the morning Eucharistic celebration in our Due Pini community, Father Louis Martin RAKOTOARILALA handed over to the Postulator General Father Vincent LECLERCQ the acts of the diocesan process concerning the healing of Sidonie RASOANANDRASANA in 2015 in Fianarantsoa. Appointed «courier» by the Bishop, Louis-Martin accomplished his mission in front of some fifty Assumption brothers and sisters, religious and lay, preparing to take part in the 34th General Chapter. It is now a matter of forwarding the whole dossier to the dicastery for the Causes of Saints, which will refer the matter to a medical commission to examine the cure.» Vincent Leclercq.

Our links with the Passionists

Our three Bulgarian martyrs were shot at the same time as Passionist Bishop Eugenio Bossilkov. The cause for their canonization is now common.



Opening address by the Superior General



1st June, 2023

We are gathered here to celebrate the 34th General Chapter of the Augustinians of the Assumption. We are in Rome, accommodated by the Passionist religious, near the Colosseum in the heart of this city of the Pope. [...]

An assembly of nearly 70 people. We are going to live a spiritual adventure devoted to rediscovering the prophetic drive of the congregation founded by Emmanuel d'Alzon.

We are at the heart of the Church as our founder wished. A Church now in the midst of a profound crisis and a Church living in a world that is also troubled by traumatic events: war, massive migrations, population displacements due to poverty or global warming, pollution, etc. It is in this world that we are called to «live and witness to the hope of the Gospel» - our Chapter's theme - because we believe that the Kingdom of God is at hand.

Before us, 25 days to listen, pray, discern, decide and commit ourselves to the mission in concrete ways. Twenty five days for an extraordinary exercise of government of the congregation : that's a truly synodal process. It is in the name of the baptismal co-responsibility of everyone that we will commit ourselves to work so as to enable our religious family to better respond to the calls

of the Holy Spirit: we're not an assembly of NGOs, but of consecrated people. It is also in the name of our religious consecration and our commitment to the Assumption that we are called to debate, discern and decide together.

It is my hope that we will work in a spirit of freedom. This liberty comes from Jesus Christ and from him alone: true freedom is Christ's gift. It is He who enables us to live as children of God. For this to happen, we must be guided by one conviction: Is Jesus the heart of my thoughts, of my actions and of my life? It's a question we need to keep in mind at all times. [...]

Quote of the day From Father Emmanuel d'Alzon

“As a religious, I am the servant of Jesus Christ in a very special way. All the affections of my heart, all the powers of my being must be directed toward him. That is my life: “Mihi vivere Christus”; For me, ‘life’ means Christ”.
Is Jesus Christ everything to me...? ...
Is he the single object of my desires...?
Am I prepared to sacrifice everything to him...? Is he the only one for whom I long?...Is my heart completely free, attached to nothing else... ? ...Or do my affections embrace some person or thing which could stifle the love I have for Jesus...?

Unless and until my heart is completely free, I cannot be a true Assumptionist”.

The Church is everyone's business and the future of the Assumption depends on all of us gathered here. We must discern what the Spirit is saying to the Church in this place, in this Chapter assembly, in order to seek and find the will of God, so that his Kingdom may come into the heart of our history. Now, the Spirit «speaks» through different mediations, such as listening to the Scriptures, the silence of prayer, rereading our life and all events in the light of the faith, the confrontation of points of view, the sense of the faithful (sensus fidelium), theological reflection, etc. When we say 'discernment' we are saying 'listening'. This is essential since the Spirit is given to the whole Church and no one authority or mediation can misappropriate it. A synodal Church is a Church that listens because it wants to discern how best to witness.

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Lauds on June 1
Opening celebration of the Chapter, June 1