



Tuesday, June 13, 2023

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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

## The work continues

Having elected and celebrated with the new Superior General, the capitulants are now continuing their work to define the apostolic priorities of his government for the next six years, and to give him a team by electing the members of the General Curia.

Already yesterday afternoon, they had a first exchange on the composition of his team, Assistants and General Officers. A consultative vote was taken on the General Treasurer.

In the evening, the Superior General, together with most of the capitulants, went to the "Centre culturel Saint-Louis des Français" near Piazza Navona and the Pantheon for a celebration in honor of the 150th anniversary of the founding of Bayard.

## Election of Father Ngoa as Superior General

### Reactions from the last two Superiors General

"Our brother Ngoa has been elected the 11th Superior General of the Augustinians of the Assumption. I love that a man from Africa with international experience has been placed at the head of the congregation. We talked a lot about the changes that have marked the face of our religious family in recent years: strong developments in Africa and Asia, aging in the West, new foundations and a strong commitment to formation. Ngoa is a man who has spent his life in the service of the Assumption, whether in Africa, North America (Mexico) or Asia (Philippines). To lead the Assumption over the next six years, we need a big, broad vision. Thinking big and wide to meet the challenges of announcing the Kingdom means living in the spirit of the Beatitudes. I warmly wish Ngoa a great deal of support. The synodal path inaugurated by the Plenary General Council 12 years ago is a necessity. Pope Francis invites us to deepen our synodality. Our Superior General is a man who walks with others, which is how he bears witness to the Kingdom that is near.» Father Benoît Grière, AA, Superior General (2011-2023)



"Assumption continues its journey. It is encouraging to see a new generation of leaders emerge in the Congregation. The 34th General Chapter has now elected a "young brother," Fr. Ngoa, as our eleventh Superior General. He comes to the mission with a broad experience of the Assumption, having been formed in the D.R. of Congo and in Mexico and having served in Mexico and in the Philippines, in both direct pastoral work and formation. He speaks a number of languages, including all three official languages of the Congregation. In my first conversations with Ngoa many years ago when he was a student in philosophy in Kinshasa, I was struck by his capacity to look at the important social and political questions his country was facing with an open mind, with different questions, and with a real desire to learn. It is good to know that he will bring this same kind of openness and sensitivity to his brothers and to the mission to advance God's reign that is the Assumption's. May God bless him with peace and wisdom." Father Richard Lamoureux, AA, Superior General (1999-2011)

## Program

JUNE 13

### Morning

- Counting of the consultative vote on the Economy General
- Presentation of the texts of the «Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation» Commission and the «Youth and Vocation» Commission.
- Meeting with the Bayard Board of Directors

## Program

JUNE 13

### Afternoon

- Election of General Officers
- Work in Commissions

# Reactions from members of the General

Today, we publish the reactions of several capitulants.  
Tomorrow, we will share the reactions of the Assumption family.



«This Monday, June 12, 2023 will remain marked in the history of our little Family of the Augustinians of the Assumption because of the election of the 11th Superior General, R.P. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, successor to Venerable Father Emmanuel d'Alzon. Fr. Ngoa is an outstanding capitulant. He participates in the Chapter as a delegate of the Province of Europe / Vicariate of Asia-Oceania, where he is formator and novice master in the English-speaking Philippines. He was not trained in Europe and has never lived there. Isn't that a challenge? His belonging to Europe is the result of a restructuring of the Provinces. So he moves from the North American Province to the European one. He did his theological and university studies in Mexico, a Spanish-speaking country, where he is in contact with our brothers in the Andean Province. He is a missionary, originally from the D.R. Congo. His various missions are an illustration of the transversal collaboration within the Assumption. His election is a sign of a renewed Pentecost, where most of the members of our family will be able to hear him and speak to him in their own language (English, Spanish, French, Swahili); a sign of missionary availability out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Assumption; a great asset to watch over the Congregation's patrimony, pass it on and make it the life of our lives, thanks to his experience of interculturality. A great challenge: this man from the South, in the heart of equatorial Africa, is called to preside over the destiny of a Congregation born in the Northern hemisphere, in Nîmes in the South of France.»  
Father Floribert Ngwese Kombi, AA, Goma (DR Congo)



«The election of Father Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, of African origin, as the 10th successor to our Founder, the Venerable Father Emmanuel d'Alzon, not only testifies to the fact that our Congregation has taken on its North/South shift with maturity. It gives the image of a religious family that wants to adapt to the many challenges of an ever-changing humanity, while preserving its identity and memory through fidelity to its initial intuition. Father Ngoa's personal journey bears witness to a real understanding of the reality of our Congregation. A religious originally from the Province of Africa, he has been on mission mainly in the Provinces of North America and Europe». Father Georges Houssou, AA, Vicar of West Africa, Sokodé (Togo)

«The Holy Spirit always blows where He wills and how He wills. For the first time, we have a Superior General from the African continent. A new window is opening in the history of our Congregation, and from it we must contemplate God's plans without losing sight of what's essential. I'm moved by the newness that presents itself and aware that everyone must continue to work for the coming of the Kingdom of God in us and around us.»  
Father Luiz Gonzaga da Silva, AA, Provincial of Brazil.



Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God», Gospel words that announce the Good News that comes from God for our beloved congregation. Our brother Ngoa is

Congolese by origin, and a citizen of the world by virtue of being a Christian. He reminds us that God weaves the history of this world with delicate devotion, and gives us those who, from the periphery of this world, want to put Christ at the center of our lives. Thank you, Ngoa, for your generosity. You can count on the support of your brothers, sisters and laity in the Assumption.»  
Father Marcelo Marciel, AA, Vicar General, Rome



«Father Ngoa's election is in itself a parable of Saint Paul's words to the Galatians:

**There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free (...) for you are all one in Christ Jesus». I have never felt the truth of these words as much as I do today. The new Father General helps us to grow in the awareness that each of us belongs to this unique family that is the Assumption. Father Iulian Danca, AA, Director of the Saint Peter and Saint Andrew Center in Bucharest (Romania)**

«The Chapter has entrusted the leadership of the Congregation to a religious who for the last twelve years has been confiding to novices his knowledge and love of our charism. According to every other metric - interculturality, fluency in three languages, a fresh perspective on our religious apostolic life - Ngoa fits the bill. But it is in helping our novices to see the beauty and the spiritual force of Fr. d'Alzon's gift to the Church that inspires in me hope and confidence in our new Superior General. May he teach us well.»  
Father Dennis Gallagher, AA, Provincial of North America





«Our new Superior General also becomes Grand Chancellor of the UAC, since he is responsible for

ensuring the fidelity of this educational work to the orientations of the Church and the Charism of the Assumption. As ISEAB's first administrative secretary (2001-2003), UAC is delighted to welcome Father Ngoa as its new Grand Chancellor. Karibu tena.

Father Wilfrid Kibanda, AA, Rector of the Université de l'Assomption au Congo (UAC), Butembo (DR Congo)

«A new page has turned for us, Augustinians of the Assumption.



It is «God who leads all things» says Saint Marie Eugénie de Jésus. God is leading us by sending Father Ngoa Ya Tshihemba as the new Superior General of our Congregation. He is a religious who loves the Assumption, according to the first speech he gave after his election, and he invites us all to love the Assumption. For me, this election is a prophetic sign that shows the universality and diversity of our Congregation. As the first Congolese, elected to head an international Congregation and founded in France, I am convinced that we are all heirs of Father Emmanuel d'Alzon. It's true that people speak of a «tipping point», but I believe that this election is also a time of grace and renewal. In other words, we are invited to renew our religious commitment. So, during this General Chapter of 2023 we must contribute to this renewal because we are all called to collaborate with the new Superior General to «live and proclaim the hope of the Gospel» wherever we are.» Father Louis Martin Rakotoarilala, AA, teacher at the major seminary in Fianarantsoa (Madagascar)

«When the election results came in, I had a feeling of joy coupled with fear.



Joy to see the confidence of the capitulants placed in a son of my people, an African, to raise him to the supreme moderation of the Assumption.

At the same time, great fear! This fear came to me from the sheer size of the Congregation's current challenges: priorities, the pooling of resources, economic affairs, the demands of synodality, the pooling of resources, and so on. However, glancing through the trombinoscope, I found in Ngoa a brother equipped by his extensive missionary experience on four continents, his mastery of the languages of the congregation. I was also encouraged by his expectations of this chapter: a true expression of internationality and interculturality, a real willingness to walk together as one body, an opportunity for exchanges in Faith, Hope and Love.

That's the whole point of this Chapter! This has no doubt answered my prayer this morning when I asked that the Spirit of the Lord show us without delay the person on whom He has set His finger. Thanks to the Capitulants for their confidence in this brother! Thanks to Fr. Ngoa for his YES! He can count on the brothers and sisters of the Assumption. It is the Chapter that elected him that will give him the roadmap that he will have, in his Council, to set to music for the next six years. I have great faith and hope that the whole Congregation is behind him and will make his task easy. Father Ngoa, have confidence in the «Someone» to whom you have entrusted your questions! You must always look to Him. Don't be afraid! Father Ephrem Kasereka Kapitula, First Assistant to the Provincial of Africa, Butembo (DR Congo)



«Thy Kingdom come. Congratulations to our new Superior General, Fr. Ngoa. May our good Lord

surround him as he extends His Kingdom. Regards. Marisella Nyaga, lay Assumptionist, Kenya. Marisella Nyaga, Lay Assumptionist, Kenya

new page, marked by change and interculturality. Under the leadership of the new General, we hope that the «Assumptionist» ship sails and holds firm amid the storms of our times to proclaim the hope of the Kingdom.» Father François Nguyen Hanh, AA, Superior of Vinh (Vietnam)

«Unexpectedly, God led us to the Philippines to look for a Congolese brother to be our Superior General. This is the first time in the history of the Assumption that an African brother has been chosen to lead this noble mission. Surprising! But also full of hope: the Assumption is opening a



«At a time when our Congregation is seeing its numbers increase in the southern hemisphere and decrease significantly in the north, the capitulants elected Father Ngoa-Ya-Tshihemba to accompany this demographic shift. This election is, so to speak, «historic» because Father Ngoa is the first black Superior General of the Augustinians of the Assumption. I believe this is a sign of the times for all members of the Assumptionist body. His election is thus both a continuity and a rupture. The challenges he will face are many, including working towards greater interculturality and interdependence within the Congregation, not to mention universal fraternity in a broken world. We assure him of our prayerful support. Father Salvator Kasereka Musande, AA, Bursar of the Province of Africa



### From the Assumptionist World

«We were happy to hear the news this morning of the election of a new Superior general and prayed for him at Mass. It appears to be a truly Spirit-filled decision. Not only has Ngoa been a missionary most of his Assumptionist life (having lived and worked in Africa, North America, and Asia); but, having been involved in formation most of his life, he has a deep appreciation of the charism and a love of Fr. d'Alzon. Besides, he is fluent in the three major languages of the Congregation. He has first-hand knowledge of internationality and interculturality. Our best wishes to him!» John Franck, AA (Sturbridge, USA)





## Ngoa Ya Tshiemba becomes the new superior of the Assumptionists

### Portrait

On Monday June 12, the Augustinians of the Assumption elected Father Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, a Congolese religious from the southern half of the world, as their new superior. A first for this congregation.

By Loup Besmond de Senneville (in Rome)

From North Kivu to Rome. On Monday June 12 in Rome, the congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption (owners of the Bayard group, publisher of La Croix) elected a new Superior General for a six-year term. Father Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, 52, from Kivu in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, will succeed Frenchman Benoît Grière, who spent 12 years at the head of the congregation.

He joined the congregation at the age of 25, taking his first vows in 1996, before being appointed to Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where he studied philosophy. He then continued his studies in Mexico City, at the Institut de formation inter-congrégations, where, after his ordination in 2008, he specialized in pedagogy, defending a dissertation entitled «L'évaluation avec compétence comme un outil d'amélioration de la qualité en primaire». In the Mexican capital, he also spent a year as a parish priest.

### Novice master in the Philippines

It was because of his skills in education that, in 2013, he was appointed novice master in the Philippines, and superior of a house of formation. A position he held for ten years, until his election as Superior General. With his move to Rome, Father Ngoa Ya Tshihemba continues his world tour, having served in Africa, Central America and Asia. His election marks a move south for this congregation of 915 religious and 45 novices. They are spread across 128 communities in 33 countries.

Never before has a Superior General - he is the congregation's 11th - come from the far south of the world. This changeover «is an important sign, but it does not mean a change for the congregation», commented Father Ya Tshihemba a few hours after his election. This polyglot (he speaks Swahili, Lingala, French, Spanish and English, in addition to his mother tongue, Kinande) believes it's too early to detail his priorities, but mentions the importance of taking into account «the cry of the earth». It's the earth that suffers,» he explains, «our relationship with the earth that was given to us. It's a gift that we must take care of.»

Having elected their Superior General, the Assumptionists must now continue their work within the General Chapter, which will culminate in the election of the congregation's other leaders.

## LETTERS

*"Thank you for the information you have sent to the farthest zones of the Orient. I greet you with 750++ prayers from the Vietnamese (im) migrants of Gwangju. I wish you well in your work and good luck to you all!"* Father André Tuan, AA (Gwangju, South Korea)

*"I'm astonished by the use of the word 'tipping' in connection with the election of our brother Superior General. We tip over into the void. We sit in a rocking chair! etc... Which is not the case. Communication will have to take a closer look at this use of one word rather than another that is more precise and, above all, more mobilizing. [Fraternally]"*. Brother Robert Migliorini, AA (Paris - Denfert-Rochereau).

### TO FOLLOW THE WORK OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

- Congregation website [www.assumptio.org](http://www.assumptio.org) updated by Father Marcelo Marciel: <marcelomarciel1@gmail.com>
- Facebook pages: General Chapter of the Assumption
- Youtube : Augustiniani ab Assumptione
- Take part in the «Readers' Mail» in this «Chapter Diary» by asking questions, reacting to the work of the capitulants (bernardholzeraa@gmail.com) or on Facebook.

### Vatican News dispatch:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/fr/eglise/news/2023-06/le-pere-ngoa-ya-tshihemba-nouveau-superieur-des-assomptionnistes.html>

### Cathobel, website of the Belgian Bishops' Conference

<https://www.cathobel.be/.../les-assomptionnistes-ont-elu.../>



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