



Saturday 3 - Sunday 4 June 2023

n° 2

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

Discovering the Signs of the Kingdom

The afternoon of Friday June 2 was devoted to active listening to reports from the provincials of Madagascar and Brazil, and from lay people in these two countries.

Presentation of the Madagascar Province

BY FATHER LUCIEN RAZAFIMANANTOSA, PROVINCIAL

The Province's identity card

The Assumption in Madagascar will soon be celebrating its 70th anniversary. It became a Province in 2013. 89 religious, including 5 on apostolic mission and 9 studying. 83 Malagasy, 2 Congolese, 2 French and 2 Togolese. 24 under 30
23 aged 31 to 51
14 aged 51 to 60
2 over 70
70 religious in formation



Challenges facing the Province

- Formation

From pre-postulancy to the diaconate, the Province has a total of 70 religious in formation, with a team of 12 formators. But the Province lacks qualified trainers and elders to pass on their experience.

- Passionate missionaries In harsh pastoral

conditions, the Assumption needs bold, generous and selfless apostles, religious who are persevering

and imaginative in their pedagogy adapted to different environments.

The Provincial shared his concern at the departure of many religious after profession and even after ordination. «Out of 40 novices who entered the novitiate from 2017 to 2022 (6 classes), 25 remain (that's about 2.5 departures per year, or 37.5%).»

Priorities of the Province

- Vocation ministry
- Training of formators and leaders
- Specialized training to better respond to the needs of the Province and the Congregation, in particular the mobilizing work of the «bush school network» and the social work AMIKA to support orphans and destitute children.



Apostolates: pastoral animation in parishes, chaplaincies and six bush districts, the catechetical center of the diocese of Toliara.

The contribution of lay people

BY FRANÇOIS ZAFIMAKASON AND AGNÈS VOLOLONIAINA



Between 1988 and 2007, 8 communities formed the Lay Religious Alliance. Each lay group works in tandem with a religious. This local model is replicated at national level in the form of an association with a president and a general assembly every three years. The lay association follows "The Way of Life" that has been translated into Malagasy along with a hymn. Lay people often gravitate around local communities and are happy to get involved in the work of the brothers.

The Alliance is very active in a wide range of charitable and spiritual activities: prison visits, surgical endeavours, bush visits, liturgical events, spiritual retreats... Solidarity with the poorest and the fight against social injustice (due in particular to corruption, natural disasters and political and social instability) are the driving force of the association, which is expanding in several regions of the island. Lay people note the reticence of some religious to this type of Alliance...

A look of amazement

FROM FATHER BOLIVAR PALUKU LUKENZANO (CHILEAN OF CONGOLESE ORIGIN (DRC), MISSIONARY IN ECUADOR)

«As I listened to the presentation of the report by Father Lucien, Provincial of Madagascar, and the laity, I was touched by two things. First, the gradual growth in the number of Assumptionist religious on the island. This is a sign of hope for our Congregation. It also presents for us with the challenge of making our Malagasy brothers, who are economically dependent on solidarity, and self-financing. On the other hand, the dynamism of the Assumptionist Alliance in Madagascar opens up apostolic prospects for the Congregation. Lay people accompany the sick poor in their efforts to access cheaper or even free care. This represents a concrete way of being present to the "least of these," thus broadening the horizon of the extension of the Kingdom of God in a world in disarray».



Presentation of the Province of Brazil

BY FATHER LUIZ GONZAGA DA SILVA, PROVINCIAL

In 1993, French and Dutch missionaries formed the Vice Province of Brazil, which became a Province in 1999. Today, the Province has 10 young people in formation and one deacon.

Apostolates

Religious are mainly involved in parishes and basic ecclesial communities in Rio de Janeiro, Eugenopolis, Sao Paulo, Campinas and Pinhal.

Together with the Province of Africa, the Province has founded a religious community in Luhongo-Catumbela, Angola: a parish with 15 catechetical centers.

The Lusophone novitiate is in Pinhal, and theology studies are in Buenos Aires with the brothers of the Andean Province in the CIFA.

Concerns

- How can we awaken and accompany the vocational formation of young people from diverse backgrounds, especially social networks?
- How can we prepare formators to continue to guarantee a



- solid, integral and missionary formation?
- In the economic sphere, how can we diversify sources of income?
- How can we realize the dream of new foundations with a small number of religious?

A look of amazement

FROM FATHER ANDRY NIRINA (MALAGASY, FORMATOR AT THE MANIRISOA SCHOLASTICATE - FIANARANTSOA)

In the report by Father Luiz Gonzaga Da Silva, Provincial of Brazil, I note that the Assumptionists in Brazil are truly committed to parish ministry. They lovingly serve the people of God through the preaching of the Word and catechesis. Through their spiritual animation, the image of the Church committed to the poor is lived out. Moreover, they value their pastoral outreach to the poor, inspired by the Spirit and the charism of the Assumption. They have tried to live and manifest their passions for the extension of the Kingdom of God in their Province. They truly feel God's great causes and they work for this in their mission. We should also point out that the diocesan process for the beatification of Father Matheus van Herkhuizen, a former Assumptionist missionary, is underway. We hope and pray that this cause will make good progress.

The laity work closely with Assumptionist religious. They participate in the parish activities



of their diocese. They live the spirit of dialogue, conviviality and communion according to the charism of the Assumption. These lay people are committed to the collection campaign to help the poor. The spirit of solidarity, concern for the poor and Christian charity are manifested and lived out in concrete ways.

«Father Alberto's «Listening Points



June 2, 2023

* In the presentation by the President of Assumption University and in the initiatives undertaken by the Malagasy laity, by way of the religious men and women of the Assumption, the question of the charism of the Assumption came up often. Looking to the future: where and how is the Assumption charism alive? The dynamic of the charism is not like that of a pill to be swallowed, but like a gift that transforms us. This is a gift itself enriched insofar as it is always received anew by religious and lay people.

2. The Congregation is undergoing a demographic shift. This is reflected in the composition of this Chapter Assembly. This brings with it new ways of thinking about solidarity and interdependence within the Congregation in terms of human and financial resources at the service of the mission. This is a point that the Chapter cannot ignore in its reflection.

3. The question of Mission: there has been talk of certain structural changes or even improvements to certain structures already in place (such as the Plenary General Council, the General Secretariat for Formation or the international Assumptionist formation communities).

Whatever the structural changes, they must always be at the service of the mission. So, the Assumption Congregation gathered in Chapter: what is your mission for the good of the body of the Church and the Congregation?

4. Benoît Grière, in his Report to the General Chapter, urged us to return to Christ. Given the perspective of the Chapter: «The Kingdom of God is within us and around us», the step to take is to go out and meet the Christ who is coming. He is our future. We must be on the lookout for him and welcome him. We need the listening skills, the heart's intelligence and the attentive gaze of all our brothers, sisters, and laypeople (sympathizers and members of the Alliance).

The contribution of lay people

BY PAULO ALEXANDRE DE PAUDA



In Brazil, the reality of lay people is relatively new. Three groups have been set up in the three parishes of Sao Paulo, Campinas and Rio de Janeiro. There is no formal Alliance, but rather a friendly fellowship with commitments to pastoral and social activities (notably Caritas campaigns) and training in Alzonian and Augustinian spirituality. A lay group of «Friends of the Assumption» was born in 2017.

Word of the day

«The dynamic of the Charism is not like that of a pill to be swallowed, but like a gift that transforms us, and this gift itself is enriched, insofar as it is received, always anew, by religious men and women and lay people.» - Alberto Toutin Cataldo

Saturday June 3rd

The General Chapter's Priority Projects



After mass and breakfast, the General Chapter participants gathered for an «open» dialogue with the Superior General.

Afterwards, they met in 7 working groups (4 French, 2 Spanish, 1 English) to discuss the three questions posed by the Superior General at the end of his Report:

- Are we where we need to be?
- Why aren't we where we need to be?
- Are we as we should be?

Each group was asked to identify two priorities for the Congregation over the next 6 years.

This exchange of views enabled us to identify the priorities that the Chapter members wish to discuss

together in the coming days. They will undoubtedly shape the Chapter's future program:

- Addressing the issue of abuse on an ongoing basis
- Accompanying the Congregation's transition on all fronts
- The question of finances, with a view to an effective mission outside the parish (revenues)
- Being peacemakers: peace outside and inside the Congregation
- Formation for mission
- Training the trainers
- Pastoral care of the periphery
- Our charismatic and prophetic identity
- Secularization, which also affects our personal and community lives.

Program for the afternoon of Saturday June 3

Report from the Province of Africa
Report from the Vice-Province of East Africa
Launch of commissions

Program for Sunday June 4, 2023

Retreat led by Iulian Danca (AA - Bucharest) on the theme of the General Chapter: «The Kingdom of God is at hand. Living and proclaiming the hope of the Gospel».

First impressions

BY FATHER JOACHIM SSENTONGO

It was fascinating to attend the 34th General Chapter of the Augustinians of the Assumption as the youngest capitulant, at 35. This Assumptionist moment allows us to live a meaningful time at the heart of the Assumption, to better discover the reality of the Assumption.



I feel very humble that as a young priest ordained only 2 years ago (2021) at a time when I am celebrating 10 years of religious life (2013), God is offering me this great opportunity to live this experience, to discern with the whole governing body of the Congregation the next 6 years for the Congregation.

I cannot ignore the Assumptionist simplicity that gives all religious equal freedom to express themselves on the life of the Congregation, regardless of their religious experience and age.

My message to my precious religious family is that the work of this 34th General Chapter is the work of the Holy Spirit through men of faith focused on the pursuit of our Father, the Venerable Emmanuel d'Alzon, for the coming of the Reign of God. These first days of the Chapter have shown me that it is a time of prayer to listen to the Holy Spirit as he keeps our attention on Christ to guide the Congregation for the next six years. I therefore invite everyone to pray unceasingly that, throughout this Chapter, all our work will be done for the proclamation of the Kingdom and the glory of God.

TO FOLLOW THE WORK OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

- Congregation website www.assumptio.org updated by Father Marcelo Marciel: <marcelomarcie1@gmail.com>
- Facebook pages: Assumption General Chapter : Interview with Agnès Vololoniaina

TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN THE GENERAL CHAPTER

- Send your requests, motions, wishes, suggestions, wishes to the General Chapter before June 11. 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) or on Facebook.