



Tuesday, June 6, 2023

n° 4

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

MONDAY JUNE 5TH

Meeting with Andrea Riccardi



The first part of the morning of Monday June 5 was devoted to a meeting with Andrea Riccardi, one of the great secular figures of Christianity today, both religiously and politically. He is best known as the founder, in 1968, of the Sant'Egidio community, with its 60,000 members in over 70 countries. They are committed to the homeless, the elderly, migrants, etc.), inter-religious dialogue and the service of peace, with a strong spirituality and community prayer for the great causes of man and God. His latest publication: «L'Église brûle: Crise et avenir du christianisme» (Cerf, 2022).

Andrea Riccardi was accompanied by Gianni La Bella, historian (teaching at the University of Modena), responsible for the Latin America sector (notably diplomatic negotiations in Colombia with Farc).

Le Père Dominique Greiner, rédaction en chef de « La Croix », nous partage les grandes lignes de ce moment de rencontre.

Faire l'histoire avec la force des faibles !
Ne pas céder à la résignation, discerner les signes des temps, faire souffler le vent de la fraternité : c'est le triple appel qu'Andrea Riccardi a adressé à l'assemblée capitulaire.

« On se résigne au déclin comme un destin. Y compris dans l'Église », relève André Riccardi dans son adresse au Chapitre, ce lundi matin 5 juin. Il ne s'agit pas de nier les diverses crises que nous endurons, mais d'y répondre, de les vivre de l'intérieur avec passion et audace, précise le fondateur de la communauté San Egidio. Sans se tromper dans nos manières d'y faire face. Deux tentations en effet nous guettent : la première est celle de la démission, de la résignation, de la sortie de l'histoire par le repli sur soi, d'un enfermement dans sa bulle religieuse, par peur d'une histoire trop grande, trop envahissante... la deuxième est celle de l'engagement dans un combat frontal qui donne certes le sentiment d'être des vivants, mais qui en réalité nous laisse prisonniers de l'esprit du monde en ajoutant du conflit aux conflits.

Une autre voie est possible. « Il faut vivre la réalité de notre monde de manière agonique », suggère Andrea Riccardi. L'agonie n'est pas la mort, elle est lutte, même si la mort est proche, précise-t-il. Encore faut-il avoir une confiance dans l'avenir que Dieu ouvre et être présents aux rendez-vous de l'histoire ! Pour cela il nous faut renouer avec l'appel de *Gaudium et Spes* qui invite « à scruter les signes des temps et les interpréter à la lumière de l'Évangile ». Pour ne pas céder aux prophètes de malheur de notre temps, il y a urgence à interpréter théologiquement l'histoire contemporaine dans toute sa complexité !

Un des grands appels de notre temps est celui de la paix, alors que notre époque se montre très complaisante à l'égard de la guerre. Pour y faire face, Andrea Riccardi nous invite à nous mettre à l'écoute de l'encyclique *Fratelli tutti* du pape François. Ce défi de la paix, il nous faut l'aborder de manière agonique, à mains nues... Nos communautés sont ainsi appelées à être des semences de fraternité, de communication, d'échanges dans les grands espaces froids d'une humanité mondialisée et divisée. C'est avec la force des faibles que nous pourrons écrire l'histoire et devenir des artisans de paix.

A look of amazement



BY FATHER CHI AI NGUYEN, LECTURER AT ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY (WORCESTER), CHAPTER MODERATOR

«Save the whole of humanity by fraternity and prayer.

Andrea Riccardi, founder of the Community of Sant'Egidio, surprised us by his knowledge of the political situation in the Congo and by his enthusiasm. Following the teaching of Pope Francis, Riccardi invites us to save the whole humanity by way of fraternity and of prayer. According to our Italian historian, globalization leads human beings to a vulnerable situation. Faced with this fragility, we need to take care of one man as if we take care of the whole of humanity. When we pray, personally or in community, we pray for the world in its entirety. Our prayer is a revolt against war which is the mother of misery. In no way, war can improve the life of the world. Therefore, peace is our duty and the Gospel is our weapon. In this regard, Christianity is only at its beginning.

Word of the Day

When the European Province presents itself at inter-Congregation sessions: "What kind of Province is this?"

A look of amazement



FROM FATHER WILFRID KIBANDA, RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITÉ DE L'ASSOMPTION AU CONGO (UAC), BUTEMBO

« NEVER SAY DIE. »

Andréa Riccardi expressed his sympathy for the Assumption's charism of taking a global view of the world. For him, an international Congregation is a small globalization. Consequently, its Chapter cannot be riveted on the needs of government alone. It must extend its vision to the world and read the signs of the times. Is this not a call to be passionate about the great causes of God and man, to be signs of the Kingdom in a world globalized for better or for worse, to be signs of the Hope of the Gospel? Interculturality, manifest at this 34th General Chapter, is a representation of a humanity united in its rich diversity, of the fraternity dreamt of in «Fratelli tutti». According to Riccardi, such signs indicate that the history of the Church has only just begun. So the Church, dying of abuse and money, must not resign itself to a gentle death; it must continue to fight for the life of every individual. The tragic situation in Kivu, where Assumption lost 4 brothers, is a laboratory for Assumption's fidelity to its passion for defending the causes of the voiceless. «Tears give birth to dreams for the future...». Father Iulian Danca told us yesterday: «It is from the midst of the furnace that the great praise of the three children rises.»

Father Alberto's «Listening Points»



1. I've heard the growing desire for greater autonomy on the part of various groups: autonomy in economic resources, in apostolic works and in governance. Moreover, while some communities still have major apostolic works, they have fewer staff to ensure their continuity. In the current context of the Congregation, I wonder whether the way forward might not be to move towards greater interdependence between the various parts. So, for example, in the decision to open or close a community or a work, or in the destination of goods at the service of mission and solidarity, or in the formation of brothers with the skills required to live this interdependence, like the financing of works with the help of projects presented to external funding agencies. At this level, it seems to me that we have a lot to learn from the way Alliance laypeople implement their projects and make them financially viable.
2. You have often mentioned the reality of interculturality. It will no doubt be a question of measuring the impact of this reality (both for communities that send brothers elsewhere and for communities that receive them) on our lives and our way of understanding formation and accompanying our works, of allowing ourselves to be impacted by the encounter with another culture. This is at the very level of understanding the charism. How is the inspirational force of the charism impacted - or even transformed - when the charism is welcomed by brothers and laypeople in Togo, Vietnam, Madagascar, Colombia...? What new potentialities emerge? If he were present at this Chapter, Father d'Alzon would no doubt be astonished to see that his intuitions and convictions are inspiring such diverse initiatives. To deploy the unprecedented possibilities of its charism, the Assumption needs spiritual fathers and mothers, firmly rooted in the reality in which they live and open to being enriched by the culture of others. They are called to pass on to others the life and treasure they have received, and to care for the children they beget. They must be willing to sacrifice their lives for them. Without these spiritual fathers and mothers, it will be difficult to imagine the transmission of the charism and the emergence of new vocations to the Assumption (brothers and laypeople) for the service of the Church.

Presentation of the European Province

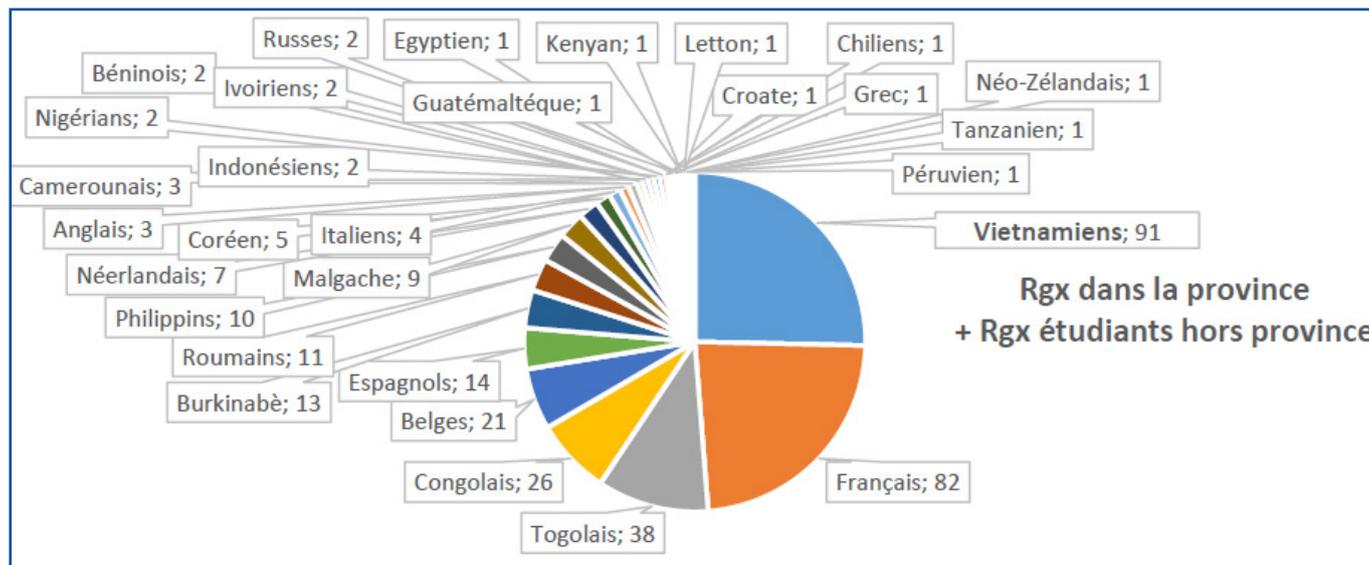
BY FATHER BENOÎT BIGARD AND GENEVIÈVE COUTURIER, ALLIANCE

The European Province has 346 religious, i.e. 50% of the workforce.

Vietnamese religious (91) are more numerous and much younger than French religious (82).

190 young people are in formation.

Spread over 19 countries on 4 continents, the religious live in 51 communities.



We see a double shift in the Province: North/South (42% Europeans, 30% Asians, 28% Africans) and generational (50% of the Province's brothers are in formation, and these are 97% non-Europeans).

With this in mind, does it make sense to have a European Province disconnected from Asia and Africa? Wouldn't it be more judicious to move towards a redrawing of the Congregation, where the old Provinces would be linked to younger realities?»

MAIN MISSIONS IN THE PROVINCE

26 parishes, 16 youth centers, 11 educational communities, 11 training centers, 8 homes for the elderly, 4 welcome centers, social commitments (welcome, migrants, health, orphans, NGOs, etc.), communications (Bayard in particular), ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue.

The Province has 4 mobilizing works: Auberge Adveniat (Paris), Bayard, Accompagner (Brussels) and Centre Saint Pierre et Saint Paul (Bucharest).

SOME CONCERNS

- Accompanying communities, with the difficulty of finding leaders.
- The animation of such a vast Province and the difficulties of communication and information exchange.
- Formation (especially in mission and apostolate) and specialized studies.
- Governance training.
- Training, prevention and support in cases of sexual assault and spiritual abuse.
- Support for a wide variety of works.

«Interculturality» is a major challenge for the coming years: transition, metamorphosis of the Province as well as the proclamation of the Kingdom as hope for the world.

THE LAY-RELIGIOUS ALLIANCE

The Province of Europe is huge, and the realities of the Alliance very diverse.

For the African part (Burkina Faso, Togo and Côte d'Ivoire), history is in the making, with groups in Ouagadougou and Sokodé.

In Asia, in Vietnam, it's mainly a public group of benefactors who support the apostolic activities of religious. In the Philippines, there is still a great deal of dependence on religious.

In Europe, groups are organized in Italy, Spain, Belgium and France. It should be noted that this is an aging generation Several groups exist in France around certain communities, while others find themselves isolated, far from a community.

In France, an association called the «Assumptionist Alliance» has been in existence for 11 years, with 95 members. Its mission is to bring together lay people and animate the Alliance. We realize that a structure is needed to organize training or to animate.

A look of amazement



In Africa, we tend to reduce the Province of Europe to the West, forgetting the Vicariates of West Africa and Asia-Oceania. I admire the European missionary enthusiasm and pride in the transmission of the Alzonian charism. This admiration sometimes conceals the challenges facing this Province:

FROM ERIC KIHUNDU, A LAY ASSUMPTIONIST FROM GOMA.

1° Interculturality: Europe gives us the impression of focusing more on the conservation of European heritage. The Province of Europe is proud of itself, but interculturality remains a major challenge.

2° The vocations crisis and the challenges of globalization: Faced with the vocations crisis, the Province of Europe is also confronted with the challenge of the sacred (manifested notably in religious consecration), often scorned in society. The

mission of religious and lay people is confronted by conceptions out of step with Church teaching.

3° The majority of mobilizing works are in Europe, which also supports other provinces. The focus there is on institutional stability and governance. Africa, on the other hand, as a source of vocations, wants more action and more support for its works and projects.

A look of amazement



FROM FATHER EPHREM KAPITULA, FIRST ASSISTANT TO THE PROVINCE OF AFRICA

In 2014, a new outreach was born, the Province of Europe! The continentalization of Europe was effective! The Province of France has spread across four continents in nineteen countries. A veritable baobab with 347 religious, not counting the lay members of the Alliance, it has the lion's share of the Congregation. With its new satellite entities, the Vicariates of West Africa and Asia-Oceania, it is the first to experience the changeover to the Assumption, without forgetting the multiple challenges: internationality and interculturality, conflict of generations and mentalities! Its diversified apostolic project in parishes, youth and formation centers, places for the elderly, welcome, communication, social reality, ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue, mobilizing works, gives real areopagi of the proclamation of the kingdom where the spiritual heritage of the Assumption is transmitted. It's doing just fine, but it's an anomalous religious entity in the organization of the Congregation. Its population continues to grow - thanks to the Master of the Harvest for reawakening a few French vocations! This growth should already prompt us to think about accompanying the Vicariates towards Vice-Provinces, to encourage the Province to breathe more easily and govern more effectively. We must congratulate her on her unparalleled generosity both inside and outside the Assumption family! Go further!

Program

MONDAY JUNE 5 - AFTERNOON

Presentation of the Vicariate of West Africa
Presentation of the Vicariate of Asia - Oceania
Presentation of the Andean Province

TUESDAY JUNE 6TH

Morning :

Presentation of the North American Province
Presentation of the pre-capitular text on the Lay-Religious Alliance

Afternoon

Report from the General Secretary for Formation
Sharing of group work on priorities



TO FOLLOW THE WORK OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

- Congregation website www.assumptio.org updated by Father Marcelo Marciel: <marcelomarcie1@gmail.com >
- Facebook pages: General Chapter of the Assumption
- Youtube : Augustiniani ab Assumptione

TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN THE GENERAL CHAPTER

- Send your requests, motions, wishes and suggestions 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.



«Journal of the Chapter»
Editorial team: Bernard Holzer, Clément Löbel, Loredana Giannetti.
Photos: Dominique Tho and Clément Löbel