



ECHOES OF THE MEETING OF FIVE GENERAL COUNCILS OF THE ASSUMPTION FAMILY

Our meeting was held in Auteuil, at the Mother House of our RA sisters, on June 25 and 26, 2025, on the eve of the summer break and vacations. We thought it would be wise to wait until the start of the new pastoral year (in most countries) to share some news about this assembly with you.

There were 23 of us participating in this meeting, that is, all the members of the general councils of the Religious, Oblates, Little Sisters, Orantes, and Augustinians of the Assumption, with the exception of Sister Pilar Trillo (PSA), who had to suspend her service as general councilor in order to take care of her health. Our prayers accompany her and her sisters during this difficult time.

Our very convivial, prayerful, and fraternal meeting was organized in three parts. First, there was an **updated presentation** of each of our congregations, as well as the **fruits and projects related to our last general chapters**. Then there was a time of spiritual conversation focusing on **the contributions of the Assumption family to the world and to the Church** (already present and/or to be enriched). Finally, we discussed **common projects**, experiences to share, and possible ways to help one another.

In spiritual conversation

The first period of spiritual conversation brought out very convergent convictions. Fundamentally, it is a matter of **nurturing our roots in Jesus Christ** and in the **Word of God**, as well as the **contemplative dimension of our charisms**, in order to be witnesses of joy, hope, and peace. Furthermore, our religious family must be **an ever greater sign of dialogue and complementarity** (men, women, lay people) in the face of a divided and inward-looking world. In this way, our fraternity (international, intercultural, intergenerational...) can happily contribute to the building of a universal fraternity. We are also convinced that **our charisms** are **highly relevant** to the challenges of our time (cf. the trilogy "Unity, Truth, Charity"). We must therefore reappropriate them, but also embody them in an updated and inventive way, with our lay friends, with our riches and our fragilities, in response to the new realities of our time. Finally, we wish **to become more aware of our interdependence in the Assumption and to develop our collaborations**. Some of these simply need to be continued (lay people, formation, JPIC, etc.), but other "areas" remain to be invented (with a view to greater missionary dynamism, for example).

Developing our collaboration and mutual support

Based on these initial exchanges, we have focused our reflections and proposals on five themes:

1-INTERCULTURALITY: Take advantage of the **MOOC platform** of the European Assumptionist University for training in interculturality (MOOC to be reactivated); **Identify resource persons** in the Assumption family to organize meetings on interculturality, especially former missionaries; but also **call on other international congregations** to enrich us with their experiences...

2 - ADAPTING AND TRANSFORMING OUR GOVERNANCE in response to demographic and geographic changes: **Training and empowering all brothers and sisters** to gradually build a pool of potential leaders; **Providing better support to brothers and sisters in positions of responsibility** and better planning for the preparation of future leaders; **Strengthening spontaneous collaboration** in our responsibilities; Rely more on **the expertise and help of lay people**; change mindsets by **integrating synodality and interculturality more fully** into our governance.

3-DEEPEN OUR CHARISMS AND REREAD OUR HISTORIES, with a view to passing them on to younger generations who are geographically and historically distant from the foundation. **Several of our congregations are currently reworking their rules of life:** "for greater synodality; to become a congregation of pontifical right; to introduce more texts from the recent magisterium of the Church; for more inclusive language; to make room for protocols for the protection of vulnerable persons," etc. **It would be useful to draw up a list of canon lawyers and theologians available** to help us work on our texts. Where possible, **we should pool** our charism formation and pilgrimages in the footsteps of our founders. **We should compile a list of our library treasures** (e.g., refer to what already exists via a list of hyperlinks).

4-NEW SPACES FOR COLLABORATION: In youth ministry, communicate better about what already exists; open up our projects; present our different congregations in our vocational ministry settings and share tools, even joint activities. Organize training sessions for all **lay people connected to our different congregations** and enrich ourselves with their shared experiences (in person and/or via video conference, etc.). **Training in dialogue:** Several of our congregations have emphasized the **need to commit resolutely to dialogue**, with new means to be invented (e.g., MOOC, or *La Croix's* "Faut qu'on parle" initiative), and with the help of a **new formula for RIAD** (Rencontre Inter-Assomption pour le Dialogue), which is less burdensome than in the past in terms of human and financial resources. Think **about communities, sessions, and resources for preparing for the Mission** in inter-Assumption. Finally, for brothers/sisters who request a **sabbatical year**, offer places to stay in inter-Assumption or with a family of lay friends, in exchange for services.

5 - WHAT RESOURCES CAN WE POOL TO SUPPORT US IN OUR AREAS OF WEAKNESS? IN THE AREAS OF TRAINING, COMMISSARY, ARCHIVES, SECRETARIAL WORK, etc. Many ideas emerged: **Sharing our session calendars**, in particular to see if there are opportunities for members of other congregations in the family to participate (whether at the provincial or general level). **Documents to be shared, coordinated by one of the members of our general councils:** 1-A list with links to available digital documents: such as Ratio; relating to the Rule of Life; relating to leadership; relating to archives; relating to charism; relating to the bursar's office... 2-Paper documents that we may need or paper documents (brochures, books) available for our families (e.g., conference proceedings, etc.). **Sessions that would be useful for inter-Assumption:** Sessions in the field of education; Sessions for general treasurers (to be relaunched); Session for new leaders – Leadership; Sessions for general secretaries to be continued; Session for assistants who accompany formation issues; Formation session for people (religious, lay people, etc.) who accompany our elders... **For times of preparation for perpetual vows** (or similar times of formation in the charism for new generations), communicate on our agendas, trying to see if times within Inter-Assumption would be possible. **Establish a list of resource persons for:** Interpretation, canon law, retreats, session facilitators, accompaniment of elderly persons (religious, lay people). **Remember to communicate within Assumption when a new foundation project is planned** (knowledge of the country, knowledge of the environment, possible support, etc.). **Share our experiences of our relationships with bishops** (e.g., real estate issues and points of attention that should not be overlooked).

Our meeting was therefore very fruitful in terms of mutual understanding and avenues for possible collaboration. The double challenge we now face is, on the one hand, to better share this desire for collaboration and mutual aid with all our brothers, sisters, and lay people in the Assumption family and, on the other hand, to make it effective by encouraging and promoting all possible initiatives to

give substance to the avenues discussed during this meeting. We have set a date for January 13 and 14, 2027, hoping to reap the fruits of this year's exchanges... and more!

For the coordination team,

Fr. Benoît Bigard, A.A.