



# Plenary General Council

Pinhal (Brazil), June 2016

Number 10

## Paradoxes and Convergences

It is a paradox that the Assumption in Brazil is the smallest of its six provinces in the heart of the biggest Catholic country in the world. From June 7 to 17, 2016, the 10th PGC was held in Pinhal in the State of Sao Paulo a place where the Assumption was implanted on February 6, 1957 and opened its minor seminary on January 27, 1961. Let us recall that the foundation of the Congregation in Brazil took place on November 21, 1935, day of the celebration of the first Mass by Fr. Chérubin Artigues, envoy of the Provincial of Bordeaux, Fr. Michel Pruvost, to Rio de Janeiro, the Capital at that time. Independent since 1825, Brazil has about 205 million inhabitants and covers half of the territory of South America (47.3%).

We also know that in parallel, the Province of Holland founded at Alim Paraiba (Diocese of Juiz de Fora – State of Minas Gerais) in 1936. In 1947, the Dutch communities formed a region dependent on the Dutch Province. It became in 1957 the Vicariate of Brazil and then Vice Province on October 21, 1958 with Fr. Arthur Horsthuis, named first Bishop of Jales on February 2, 1960. In 1969, the communities that depended on the Province of Bordeaux were organized in turn as a region. This Parallel ended in 1982 with the united foundation of Campinas. But it was only on April 21, 1999 that the Province of Brazil was founded with Fr. José Geraldo Da Cruz named on June 16, 1999 and who became the Bishop of Juazeiro, near Bahia, on June 4, 2003.

We will remember that Brazil, like the Congo, will have been – certainly in different proportions, during the second half of the 20th century, two major areas of the missionary expansion of the Congregation. Why should they not be together the ambitious promoters of a new missionary era? Today, the Assumption in Brazil, with its five communities and its 23 religious, is looking towards the Portuguese-speaking world in Africa. Since February 2016, has been opened a novitiate for the whole of South America with three novices. Even in all modesty, the future is on the march. The holding of this Council in Brazil had been proposed by Father Luiz Carlos de Oliveira then Provincial. But it was Father Luiz Gonzaga who had the charge of welcoming the participants. The country organized the World Youth Days in 2013, the World Cup of soccer in 2014. In 2016, it holds the Olympic Games and... the PGC.

## “Alone we go faster, with others we go farther.”

This African proverb quoted by the Superior General illustrates the conclusion of the work of the 10th PGC. Slowness is sometimes the “price to pay to have a true conscience of Congregation.” After a five year period of functioning, the PGC realizes that its “reflection had gained in depth in the past year, especially in the delicate file ... of community re-organization,” thanks to the important decisions taken by consensus, an exercise “that requires humility for those in charge and a true spirit of collaboration for all.”

The PGC had begun with the participation of the Economic Council of the Congregation, the C.E.C., a positive and interesting initiative that showed the perspectives of the development of our Congregation, imposing foresight and a spirit of co-responsibility. “The Assumption, to pursue its mission, must have the economic and human means,” underlined Fr. General.

After having thanked Father Luiz Gonzaga for his welcome, he saluted the first participation of Father Juan Carlos Marzolla, the new Provincial charged with taking up “an immense challenge to allow the Andean Province to find the vigor and dynamism necessary to carry the Gospel to the 4 countries where it is present.” As we face rapid changes taking place in the Congregation, Fr. Benoît called for confidence: “our capacity to adapt will be determining to face the challenges of evangelization today.” Faced with secularism and individualism, it is a question of remaining “men of faith... We are not to fear the world but learn to love it,” he also underscored. “It is at that price that we will be able to contribute to change it.” The PGC was a time of meetings and discussions among Provincials, but also a time of evaluation together. That was the case for some mobilizing works into which are to be infused the spirit and the ambition of Father Emmanuel d’Alzon. The first nominations demonstrated that there exists from now on a greater solidarity in the mission, The Provincial Chapters are being prepared and we hope that they will produce ideal and new reflections on the General Chapter. ■

## The Assumption, my Parish

In November 2009 was published a brochure entitled “Assomptionnistes en paroisse. Points de repère”. At the time it was estimated that 80% of the religious were implicated in a parish apostolate. The Plenary General Council wanted to see if 7 years later progress had been made and encouraged the Provincial Chapters to re-read and evaluate the commitment of the Assumption in pastoral ministry. A commitment of the Assumption to parish work had been desired by the General Chapter of 1906 as one of the strategies to put flesh on the vision of Fr. Emmanuel d’Alzon. Let us recall that the brochure, without a doubt insufficiently exploited, examines the *raison d’être* of the Assumption in parishes and its manner of being in them before giving orientations and recommendations to the Congregation in this domain. The document concludes with a bibliographical orientation and an annex that presented the texts of Fr. d’Alzon on taking over a parish and the formation of the young priests engaged in them.

The PGC believes that a parish can be a mobilizing work and wishes also that on the occasion of Chapters a particular attention be focused on the following points:

- Youth ministry, the awakening and accompaniment of vocations.
- The identity, the visibility and the charism of the Assumption in parish life.
- The articulation of the organization of the parish life to preserve the specificity of our religious life, of our community life, and live the requirements of the Rule of Life and of our vocation and our life of prayer,
- The formation, the preparation and the accompaniment of the Assumptionists engaged in parish ministry.
- The budget of the parish must foresee taking charge of the community itself called to be in solidarity with the congregation.



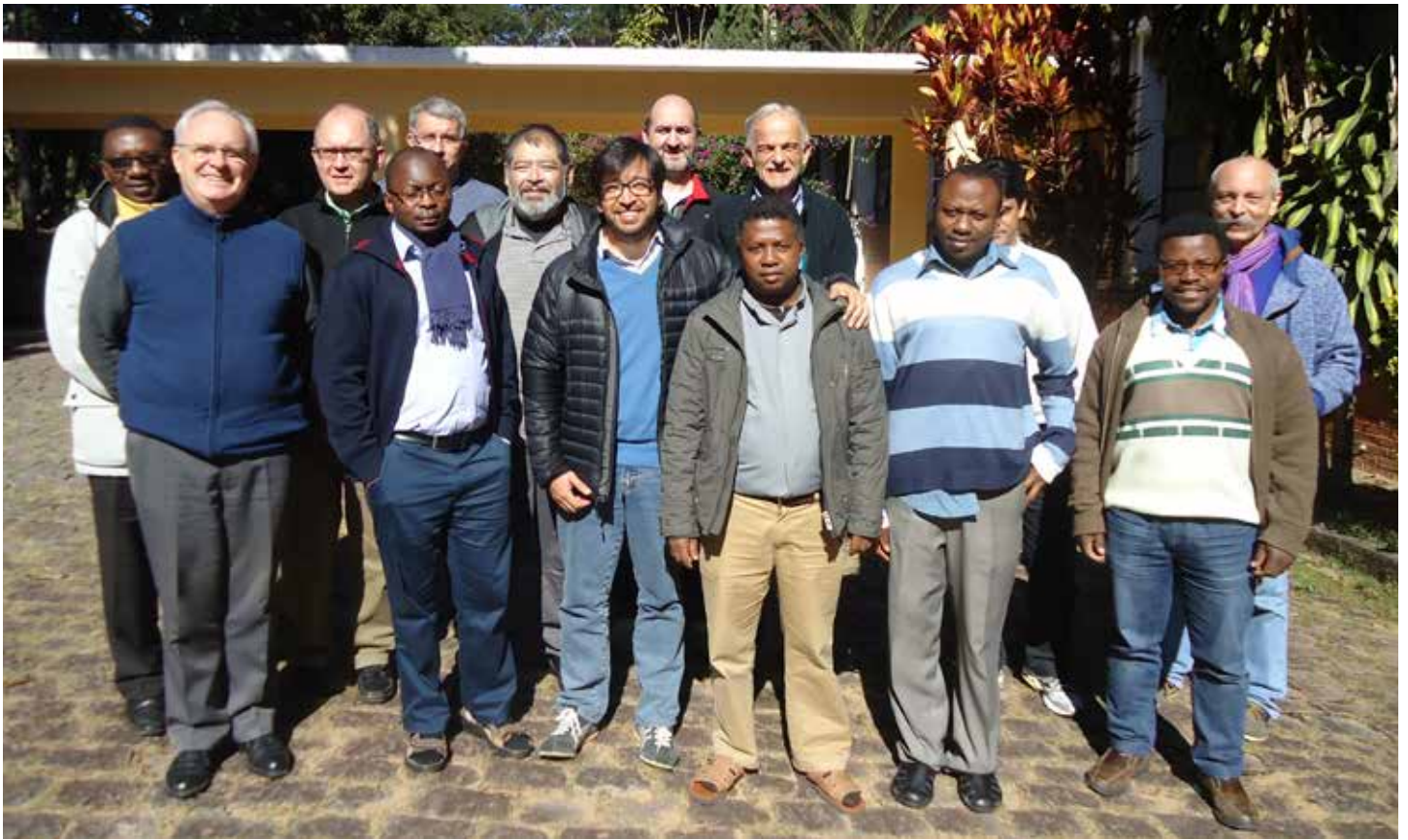
## Those forgotten translators!

Who said that the least polyglots were the most difficult to translate? The two translators of the PGC, Frs. Bolivar Paluku (Argentina) and Joseph Mumbere Mahamba (Mexico) have had the experience. In our more and more international meetings, there are those first of all who prefer simple words to express a clear thought and those who close themselves in a tribal jargon and speak in a language understood only by the initiated. Then there is the flow of words and the attention of the speaker. To make oneself well understood, one must know how to make short phrases composed of simple words and silences to give time to the translator. They will avoid going from one language to another during one and the same intervention or use a language that is not foreseen by the translation service. There is also the volume of the voice and the tone. To dialogue in a multi-lingual meeting, nothing must be left to chance and to improvisation. It is preferable to announce the language to be used and avoid shouting in the microphone: the earbuds are stuck to the eardrums that risk getting tired if the volume is too high. It is also useless also to want to speak if the coordinator has not given you the floor, if you do not have the mike, or if the mike is off. Make sure to shut off your mike when you have finished your intervention. That can cause some technical problems. The international Assumption is on the march, but its translators are rare even if we often insist on learning languages. That supposes, as the apostle says, joining science to charity and to the attention of the other, if not, our Provincial or General assemblies to come risk losing much of their quality or their brotherliness..

## First apostolic nominations

Father Benoît Grière, Superior General with the assent of his Plenary General Council has proceeded to make the first apostolic nominations of:

- Bro. DOAN HIEU Minh Thuan (André) (Province of Europe)
- Bro. TLECUILE MIXTECO Jesus (Pro. NA-Philippines)
- Bro. KAMBERE MUSUNGIRA Roger (Andean Prov.)
- Bro. KASAREKA KIRIMUMBO Omer (Prov. of Africa)
- Bor. KIVUYA MUKE Louis (Prov. NA-Philippines)
- Bro. LITUANAS, Jay Hector (Prov. NA-Philippines)
- Bro. MABOKO, Nakudianga Hervé (Prov. of Africa)
- Bro. MUSANGANIA Kombi Jean-Paul (Prov. of Africa)
- Bro. MUTURI KAMAU Dominic (Prov. of Africa)
- Bro. NGUYEN QUANG Minh (Pierre) (Prov. of Europe)
- Bro. RAKOTONDRABE Jean Ignace (Prov. of Madagascar)



## The Transfers: a circulation that has its code

The international dimension of the Congregation favors the circulation of the religious from one Province to another. That has seen its rules confirmed by the PGC. The transfer of a religious will be obligatorily written in an official document between the two Provinces of which the religious concerned will have a copy and even the General Secretariat of the Congregation. Its prolongation will require a new document which will also be placed in the archives. As the PGC underscored, the transfers evoke other aspects to be taken in consideration. Would there not be the need for a religious charged with accompanying them? Should not the transfer respond to a missionary concern and done in a dialogue always deeper and in a spirit of frankness and transparency ?

*On the photo from left to right*

*Fr. Protais KABILA,  
Fr. Bernard LE LEANNEC,  
Fr. Benoît GRIÈRE,  
Fr. Emmanuel KAHINDO KIHUGHU,  
Fr. Benoît GSCHWIND,  
Fr. Miguel DIAZ ALLON,  
Fr. Marcelo MARCIEL,  
Fr. Juan Carlos MARZOLLA,  
Fr. John FRANCK,  
Fr. Étienne RATALATA,  
Fr. Joseph MUMBERE MAHAMBA,  
Fr. Bolivar PALUKU,  
Fr. Luiz Gonzaga DA SILVA,  
Bro. Didier REMIOT.*

## The formation of the heart

As at all the Plenary General Councils, Fr. Emmanuel Kahindo was the echo of the work realized by the International Commission on Formation (CIF) by evoking the report on its work that will be submitted to the next General Chapter. An evaluation of each of the international houses was also presented: Kinshasa, Ouagadougou and Nairobi. The accompaniment of the young religious in formation (about one third of the membership of the Congregation) should play more the card of mutuality. As in other Congregations, should we not envision a Secretary General in charge of formation? How can we better federate our economic and human resources? That would be in a concern for a greater coherence in the formation teams and a better oversight of the path of formation of each young religious.



# The Chapter a time for the great maneuvers

The coming General Chapter is quickly approaching. It will be preceded by the Provincial Chapters in the six Provinces by a work of sensitizing and mobilizing that is being put in place. From this bubbling of the Provincial Chapters will depend the success of the General Chapter of Lyons.

The PGC of Pinhal will have been in that sense an important rendezvous to stimulate this invitation to take up together the challenges of today. They are financial challenges by the imbalance that exists between Provinces, but also cultural and spiritual. They are not limited to questions of structures but also translated the caring for each other to live always more co-responsibility.

How can we establish a better mutuality of our means in our various fields of endeavor? Our efficiency will be measured to the new means we deploy to answer our

needs in the area of formation and of our missionary ambitions, in the manifestation of our own charism. The desired reform must be inventive to favor a animation of proximity, inspire the mission and seek ever more coherence between our ideal and our behavior. Nothing must be removed or forgotten to make of us ever more apostles of the coming of the Kingdom. We spoke of audacious prudence! That is what we want to live as fraternity and sharing; what we desire to have as missionary dynamism must be reflected in our capitular discussions and be at the heart of the debates. And Father General quoted the poem of John Donne (1572-1631) among the most celebrated of English literature and discovered in all its force while he was still in Madagascar: "No man is an island, Entire in itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, A part of the main.

If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is no less. As well as if a promontory were, As well as if a manor of thy friend's, or of thine own were; Any man's death diminishes me Because I am involved in mankind, And therefore send not to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee." And to underscore again that is not for us on the occasion of future chapters to build a bronze wall that defies time, as Horace wrote, but to slip us into a dynamic, that of the provisional so dear to Brother Roger Schutz, founder of the Taizé Community. For each religious, the Chapter is the time of the great manoeuvres during which this dynamism is expressed. Does not this thought come from the principles expressed by Fr. d'Alzon himself: "It is true to say that it is the acts that are the clearest manifestations of the dispositions of the will.

Thus these acts must me made; thus they must be commanded as of a soldier who, on the battlefield, has been formed to all the exercises so that he can find that he is capable of executing all the movements.

Even more importantly, the religious needs this discipline, for the soldier in many circumstances if but a machine, while the religious must at every instant, remember that he is formed for the most admirable actions because it is by obedience that he resembles most closely the Man-God." (Ecrits Spirituels, p. 533)

As for a night watch, the order of the PGC could have been: all on manoeuvres and get up sleepy-heads for the bark of the Church tossed by the waves.

