

For the first time since its creation on July 10, 1953, the Andean province (formerly known as the South American Province and the Chile-Argentina Province) has an Argentinian at its helm, yes, the same nationality as Pope Francis! Fr. Juan Carlos MARZOLLA LAIUS was named provincial of the Andean Province for a three-year term that begins on June 1, 2016. The first Assumptionists arrived on the South American continent in 1890 at Mendoza, Chile, in view of propagating Marian devotion in country.

Fr. Juan Carlos was born on February 12, 1973 in Junin (Argentina) to Jorge and d'Ana Maria Marzolla. He was baptized on November 24 of the same year in the Orthodox cathedral of St. George in Buenos Aires. After studies in education (1992-1995) and philosophy at the diocesan seminary of Mendoza (1997-1999), he began his novitiate in Pomaire (Chile) where he pronounced his first vows on January 14, 2001. Residing at the Emmanuel d'Alzon community, he undertook his theology studies at the Pontifical University of Santiago (2001-2003). After making his final vows at Our Lady of Lourdes Basilica in Santiago on March 27, 2004, he was ordained a deacon the following year at the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes near Buenos Aires, Argentina, and a priest on May 13, 2006, in Mendoza, Argentina by the city's archbishop, Most Rev. José María Arancibia. His first assignment took place in the Assumptionist parish and schools in Lota, Chile until 2008, at which time he returned to his native Argentina to become local treasurer and director of the two Assumptionist schools in Buenos Aires, Our Lady of Lourdes in Santo Lugares and San Román in Belgrano. He was appointed assistant provincial in 2011.

As of January 1, 2016 the Andean Province counted 56 religious with 12 communities in four countries (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador). The Province is responsible for 6 parishes, 2 shrines, and 5 schools.

Fr. Juan Carlos' appointment takes place the very year that the Assumptionists have opened an international house of studies in Buenos Aires and, as well, on the 40th anniversary of the disappearance of two young Assumptionist brothers abducted during the military dictatorship in Argentina, Carlos Antonio Di Pietro and Raul Eduardo Rodríguez.

Here is the list of provincials that have served this province since 1953: Fr. Régis ESCOUBAS (1901-1985), provincial of Bordeaux from 1946 to 1952 and of South America from 1953 to 1959; Fr. Joachim DURET (1921-2005), provincial from 1959 to 1964); Fr. Dionisio SOLANO (1917-2000) provincial from 1964 to 1969; Fr. Pedro VARGAS (1922-2004) provincial from 1969 to 1974; Fr. Julio NAVARRO (1942- ) from 1974 to 1984, then again from 1989 to 1995; Fr. Miguel FUENTEALBA (1943 - ) from 1984 to 1989 and from 1995 to 2004; Fr. Edgardo MUNOZ (1956 - ) from 2004 to 2011; and Fr. Juan Carlos CISTERNA (1967 - ) from 2011 to 2016.

Fr. Bernard Le Léannec, AA, general secretary
(Source: AA Info #21 p. 2)