AUGUSTINIANS OF THE ASSUMPTION
Province of North America & Philippines
Provincial Chapter Application
25 July–1 August 2017





For the last few days the participants of the 2017 Provincial Chapter of Implementation of North America and the Philippines have been arriving in Mexico City in order to transfer to the city of Cuernavaca, where the meeting begins on July 25th.



Twenty Seven Religious and Lay participants in the session are of eight different ethnic origins: Congolese, Canadian, Filipino, American, French, Mexican, Russian and Polish.



Some members arrived early, and on Monday, July 24th , had a short tour of the City of Mexico visiting: the National Shrine of our Lady of Guadalupe, the Center of the City called Zocalo, Mexico City Cathedral, a historic Postal Office, saw the Museum of Fine Arts and experienced a real Mexican lunch on the street. The day was concluded with a fine dinner at the Assumptionist Parish, Emperatriz, where the group was joined by Parish Staff and Oblates of the Assumption.



On the next morning, all members visited the House of Formation, Casa Manuel, and traveled by bus to Casa Tepeyac, the Jesuits retreat house in Cuernavaca, now under the supervision of lay people, where the Chapter is being held for the next seven days.

Tomasz Jaster

OPENING DAY: PROVINCIAL CHAPTER OF APPLICATION



On Tuesday, July 25, 2017, a group of 25 participants arrived at Casa Tepayac located on 19 Cielito Lindo Avenue in Cuernavaca, 180 kilometers from Mexico City. We were ready to continue the task that had begun in Putnam, Connecticut in January for the Provincial Chapter. In January, we met in a small New England town amid Christmas decorations and a snowstorm. This time we were meeting in a different place with a very different climate. We are now experiencing fresh air and beautiful vegetation. In the midst of a former Jesuit edifice, we are being assisted by a genial building manager accompanied by a large, white rabbit; an old, slow-moving turtle and two charming cats.



After warm greetings and moments of reconnecting among the capitulants, we proceeded to the chapel for the opening Mass celebrated by Father Flavio Bustos Castillo, responsible for the Mexican territory. He invited us to continue praying for the repose of the soul of Fr Claude Grenache. The homily was given by Father Dennis Gallagher, Provincial Superior.

At 2:00 p.m. we went to the dining room for dinner. After a short break we assembled in the conference room. We received directives from the building manager on some specifics pertaining to the house. The emphasis, however, was on Father Dennis Gallagher, our Provincial Superior. He opened the Chapter with some thoughtful remarks. He shared with us his sentiments upon his nomination as Provincial. He began by citing the biblical figure with whom he identified after receiving word of his nomination. It was Sarah laughing at the message of her improbable pregnancy at her advanced age. He played on that metaphor a bit, saying that nothing should deter us from bringing to birth a new vigor in our apostolic religious life. Despite our weakness and fragility, we should be committed to moving forward with renewed energy. He also invited us to continue praying for the repose of the soul of Fr Claude Grenache.





Father Dennis went on to delineate the eight mandates given to him by the Superior General. They include the following: the two mobilizing works (Assumption College and Bayard); vocation ministry; transitions in the Province particularly as they relate to the Philippines; communication within the Province and among communities; clearer information for new brothers and better means of welcome; the establishment of a good Council; looking at the best interests of the entire congregation; and, finally, ways to establish an English-speaking presence in the communities. Father Dennis noted that, although these are his mandates, they are our mandates too.

Patty Haggerty, Lay Alliance member

DAY 2 OF CHAPTER OF IMPLEMENTATION



The second day of the Chapter began at 7:30 with the celebration of the Eucharist, presided by Father Ngoa, master of novices in the Philippines. It was animated by the religious of the territory of the Philippines. After breakfast, the capitulants gathered in the conference room for their work.

The moderator of the day, Father Alex Castro, gave some practical information to the group and presented the various commissions along with the members of the secretariat. Also, Fr. Alex referenced the first reading of the day, Exodus 3:13-20. This reading exhorted us to become new pilgrims, much like the children of Israel who marched toward the promised land.

The capitulants were asked to consider two major questions, on this day, regarding the report of the General Chapter: 1.) what are the signs of hope and 2.) what are our questions and our anxieties?

1. Signs of hope : the joy of understanding and furthering the charism of the Assumption and of participating with others who actively share this charism; the solidarity among the territories of the Province; the re-foundation, already in progress in Mexico, with the creation of the new parish of Tliplapan; the call to live the spirit of unity; the formation of the young with its challenges and the participation of the lay in this endeavor; the call to center our lives in the person of Christ; the importance of focusing on education; the dynamism of the lay who wish to share in the Assumption charism.



2. Questions and anxieties : How can we continue our collaboration with the Philippines? How can we effectively live a spirit of interationality, unity, solidarity among the different territories? How can we welcome and assist the young who are "knocking on our doors?" How can the Lay Alliance members assist in the accompaniament of the young? How can we live our vow of poverty in our different situations?

Despite our difficulties, we remain a congregation that is vibrant, dynamic and happy to renew its charism. We are filled with hope in the world and in the hearts of the men and women we meet on our journey.

3. Participants of the General Chapter : The second part of the day was dedicated to reflections from those who participated in the General Chapter. Most of the participants spoke to the warmth of their interactions with the capitulants at the Chapter, the internationality and interculturality and the spirit of fraternity and family that permeated the gathering. Naturally, there were some challenges: the difficulty of languages, the complexity of themes and their understanding, the inexperience of first-time participants, and the lack of understanding of the "big picture" of the Chapter.



Some questions were posed to the participants regarding further details. Finally, other impressions were shared by delegates from the various territories.

4. Status of territories : Mexico is looking at renewing and revitalizing its spiritual life. It is undertaking a serious evaluation, but this is in its initial stages. The process of formation also requires some collaboration. It is necessary to work with the Alliance members in this regard. Mexico is also considering working with other territories to address migrant issues. Regarding the new foundation, a collaboration with the Oblate sisters is in the works.

Father Marcel Fortier, responsible for Canada/Quebec, gave a summary on the status of his territory. He underlined the departure of two young priests that created a great deal of imbalance and disequilibrium in his community and with the Center of Culture and Faith.

Fr Sébastien Bangoura, a.a.

The three first days of the Provincial Chapter - PDF