AUGUSTIANS OF THE ASSUMPTION
North American Province & Philippines
Provincial Chapter of Implementation

DAY 5, JULY 29TH



From left to right: Frs Roberto, Sébastien and Flavio

The fifth day of the Chapter was a blessed day! It began, as usual, with Morning Prayer and Mass, which was celebrated by Father Sebastien Binganda. After our breakfast of Mexican cuisine (with the opportunity of eating cereal for the less daring of us), we began our session for the day. It was moderated by Father Bernard Holzer.

The focus of the morning sessions dealt with governance and structure. We were asked: What are our priorities for governance? On day four, Father Dennis had proposed that we look at "lightening the structure and animation." We set about the task of discussing what governance would like in the next three years. Robust and thoughtful conversation ensued. Themes of communication, fraternity, collaboration and support followed. The importance of Lay Alliance and religious working together was also discussed.



Inside Xochicalco museum

During our second morning session, we continued with final thoughts about governance. We were reminded to keep our mission constantly in view; to be "vision-casters"(Fr. Richard); and to "stand our ground against the forgetfulness of the past" (Fr. Dennis). Our session concluded with discussions on the make-up of the Provincial Council, Council of the Province and the leadership in Mexico.

In the afternoon we enjoyed a delightful outing outside of Cuernavaca. The group embarked in two large vans that transported us to Xochicalco, where we toured the museum and the amazing pyramids. The structures were unbelievable and the richness of Mexican history was clearly evident. The views were spectacular and the flowers and vegetation were breath-taking. Some of us climbed the steps of the pyramids, while others took a more circuitous route. Entering the underground observatory was like penetrating a hidden treasure with an amazing aperture open to the skies. We left feeling like we should plunge in a cool pool of water or take a good shower! It was a hot afternoon but well worth our perspiration.



After leaving this historical gem, we visited the Cathedral in Cuernavaca. Again, this was a historical treasure! It was also an unbelievable example of architecture going back to the mid -1500's. The Cathedral was able to maintain its historical character, while preserving the beauty of its religious history. Its refurbishment showed a very sensitive inclusion of more modern liturgical characteristics. Of particular note was the beautiful, new altar and the large, gorgeous baptismal font.

Our day out concluded with a visit to the city of Cuernavaca, where we were able to see its shops and the exterior of the Palace of Cortez. We walked through the amazing center plaza of the city, and some even made purchases in the varied and numerous shops. The artisan booths were plentiful with local wares and hand-made products. The whole experience was like a visual cascade of color, music and sensory images. We concluded our day back at Casa Tepoyac with dinner---and, yes, showers!

Patty Haggerty, Lay Alliance member

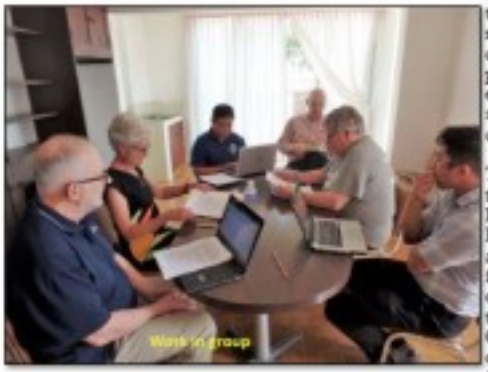
DAY 6: 30th JULY



The sixth day of the Chapter began with Sunday Mass at 7:30, celebrated by Father Jay Limamas and animated by the religious and lay from the Philippines. In his homily, Father Bernard Holzer drew our attention to the importance of discerning where we find our treasure; what is our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ who is the most precious pearl in our lives; and of our mission to the Assumption. After breakfast the capitulants returned to the conference room.

The moderator for the day, Father Bernard Holzer, gave us some practical information and the agenda for our morning work. This began with an overview of the financial resources of the Province. Father Alex Castro, Provincial Treasurer, presented his thoughts on the finances.

He underlined our responsibility as it relates to the community. Alex's presentation was outlined in four parts: the formation of religious toward the common good; aid to the mission cooperative plan; a budget cycle that relates to community life; and budgets for new community projects and new foundations. After this presentation we discussed the issues of finance from each of the four points of Alex's presentation. We did so in an Augustinian spirit of simplicity, honesty and openness.



The second session of our morning work was devoted to a discussion of the statutes and the structures of the Province for the next three years. Father Marcel Poirier presented several options for reorganization in a manner that would be simpler and more efficacious for animation and proximity. After a rich and constructive exchange of ideas, Fr. Marcel presented the clarifications on the legislation of the Province. Our morning concluded with a review of the documents on spirituality and charism, and internationality, prior to their final approval.

After a delicious Mexican meal, the members of the Chapter broke into territorial groups to define and prioritize the apostolic works in each Territory and to address issues dealing with a new foundation in the United States. Upon returning to our large group, facilitated by Fr. Alex, the capitulants voted on the changes in several statutes. Specifically, the Provincial will be assisted by only two Assistants. The Chapter also decided to create the Region of Mexico.



The group assembled after our evening meal for the purpose of voting. The Provincial presented the two religious he wished to have as his Assistants on his Council: men of experience, knowledgeable in the three languages of the Province, allowing for positive animation while being in close proximity to the Provincial.

The Chapter ratified the selection of Peter Precourt and Richard Lamoureux. The Chapter also voted on the first members of the Council of the Province for each Territory: Father Alex Castro, United States; Father Marcel Poirier, Canada; and Father Flavio Bustos, Mexico. After a long day of work, everyone looked forward to a well-deserved rest!

Edouard Shatov, a.a.

Provincial Chapter - Days 5th and 6th - PDF file