

seated: Fr. Oswaldo at his installation as pastor together with the bishop of Orizaba

Part I

*(In the summer of 2017 the Assumptionists were entrusted with a parish on the outskirts of the city of Orizaba in the eastern state of Veracruz, Mexico. See http://www.assumption.us/news/1572-new-assumptionist-community-in-orizaba-mexico
. Fr. Oswaldo Garcia Sanchez, A.A., was appointed pastor; it is his first assignment as such. Formerly he served as a formator and professor in Mexico and the Philippines. Here presents some of the challenges he is facing in Orizaba.)*

In general I am very happy working here in Orizaba. There are many challenges and I am learning to be a pastor for the first time. I have to listen to everyone and at same time try to resolve many differences, even conflicts, that exist between various groups in the parish. In my opinion creating unity in the parish is definitely the biggest challenge as well as forming a parish

council composed of representatives of the major groups. This is an arduous and time-consuming task; but we have already begun and with some good results. I have spent time with the major groups both here at the main church and with those attached to the many outstations, discussing with them the needs of the parish in view of drafting an overall pastoral plan. To parishioners' great satisfaction, we have already been able to assign a religious to each of the most active groups and to assure celebration of Sunday Mass in each of the largest outstations.

We have been well received by the parishioners and they seem very happy with us. Some have even begun to attend Morning Prayer with us every day at 8 AM in the main church in Tlilapan. They like it because they say it makes them feel "more spiritual." At their request we have begun a small prayer group that will meet regularly. We have also begun to bring some groups together for training sessions, but in order both to foster unity and to avoid overwork we have decided to bring similar groups together from the main church and all the outstations: youth groups, choirs, Eucharistic ministers, lectors, evangelizers, religion teachers, etc. I have not hesitated to mention divisions that have existed and our desire, with their help, to resolve them for the smooth running of the entire parish. We also been able to offer some retreats, courses, and workshops with the aid of various Lay Assumptionists from Mexico City. So little by little we're making progress…..



Fr. Oswaldo Garcia Sanchez, A.A.: A New Pastor's Reflections on the Challenges He