



Main church, Nossa Senhora da Guia (Our Lady of Guidance), Cerro Azul, Paraná

At its December 2017 meeting the Superior general, Fr. Benoit Griere with the agreement of the Plenary General Council approved the opening of the first new foundation in Brazil in 35 years and the first outside of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Minas Gerais, where all other five communities are located. The commune of Cerro Azul in the state of Paraná counts some 17,000 inhabitants, and there exists but one parish, Nossa Senhora da Guia (Our Lady of Guidance). The largest part of the commune's population is concentrated outside of the town proper where only 6,000 live. This reality is due mainly to the fact that the main source of employment is citrus farming, together with some cattle-raising and mining. Catholics make up 58% of the population, Protestants the other 42%.

The parish has been under the leadership of the same pastor for the last 40 years and his advanced age makes it impossible for him to continue. As a matter of fact, for any number of years he has been unable to provide the kind of leadership needed for a community seeking greater involvement and lay formation. The arrival of an Assumptionist community of three religious is seen by parishioners as a godsend.

