In late September, Fr. John Franck, the provincial of the North American Province, traveled to Chile to give a series of talks to the novices and to renew bonds with Assumptionists that he met there in 1994 while he was learning Spanish.

During his trip Fr. John was able to participate in Chilean national independence day celebrations in the company of the novitiate community and the community of the Religious Sisters of the Assumption (called also RA) in Santiago. Shortly thereafter, he was present at the opening events of the canonical visitation of Fr. Richard Lamoureux, Superior General of the Assumptionists (a canonical visitation is an official visit made every six years by the superior general to a province in order to encourage, evaluate, and plan).

In Pomaire, Chile, about an hour's drive southwest of the capital city of Santiago lies the Latin American novitiate for the Assumptionists. Every year young men from throughout Latin America (Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Ecuador) begin their formal, one-year introduction to religious life together. This year, for the first time, a Filipino candidate has joined their ranks, Ricky Montanez, speaking Spanish well enough to profit from this international experience.

Assumption in Chile: an Overview

On November 5, 1890 ten Assumptionists arrived in Chile after a five-week voyage by boat from Bordeaux in southwestern France. The bishop of Valparaiso, Mariano Casanova, had made a trip to Europe the previous year and had met the Assumptionists while on a pilgrimage to

Lourdes. Impressed by their dedication and solid doctrinal preparation, he invited them to found a house in his diocese, in the town of Rengo. Later, in 1892, he entrusted to them the small chapel of Lourdes in Santiago. From these humble beginnings the Assumptionist presence has expanded to ten communities in 2003, five parishes (including the “small chapel of Lourdes” which has now become a national basilica attracting thousands of pilgrims each year) and three houses of formation in Chile and two houses in Argentina (another shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes and a house of formation).