



PROVINCIAL CHAPTER 2017

By Pat Haggerty

Heraclitus is credited with the quote: "If you do not expect the unexpected you will not find it, for it is not to be reached by search or trail." Well, I did find it this year, and I wasn't searching for it, either!

In my wildest dreams, I never thought that I would be invited to participate in the Assumptionist's Provincial Chapter, the General Chapter and the Chapter of Application. It started in January in Putnam, Connecticut. Then, after receiving an invitation from the Superior General, I went on to Lyon, France. Finally, the adventure took me to Cuernavaca, Mexico, for

the Chapter of Application for the North American Province. What a blessing! All three experiences were rich in meaning, intense in involvement and grace-filled beyond belief.

I now have a deeper understanding of the charism of Emmanuel d'Alzon and a much deeper appreciation for my Assumptionist brothers and sisters. Having spent numerous weeks in Chapter, I know more about the Assumptionists---how hard-working they are; how diverse they are; and how amicable they are. Spending time working with them, and my Alliance cohorts, was a truly remarkable and humbling experience. I tried to use my skills to enhance the on-going efforts of the Chapters. I hope I was successful.

We were able to bond over meals, whether it was at the Immaculate Conception Retreat House in Connecticut, Valpré in Lyon, or the retreat house in Cuernavaca. The cuisine was certainly different in each locale: from typical American fare, to French croissants and frommage, or to Mexican beans and salsa. I still can't get used to the idea of chicken and tortillas for breakfast!

Aside from the obvious cultural differences, all the liturgies were amazing. The morning and evening prayers were always moving. The spirit of connectedness and conviviality was unsurpassed. I got to really experience diversity at its best! It is one thing to eat food from another culture, but it is yet another to have an intense discussion about the strife in a foreign country and how it is perceived by those living in that country.

I have come away from these "unexpected" experiences feeling re-charged and very grateful. My global views have been challenged and altered. My spiritual foundations have been reinforced. My social perspectives have been broadened. My commitment to the Lay Alliance has been reinforced. I hope to take these new insights to a different level---all of them contributing to "the coming of the Kingdom."