Well, there weren't any real fireworks at the Chapter meeting today, but it was nonetheless a lively full day of discussion that covered a variety of topics. The final reports were presented, by the US and Quebec Regions and by the Provincial Formator. And proposals were made by the Provincial Treasurer and by the lay people present since the beginning of the Chapter. The lively discussions focused on these proposals, but on broader questions like how to insure that the work being done in the various Regions is truly part of a Provincial project, on how to coordinate and promote development efforts in the entire Province (in particular, in relation with the Congregation's development office), etc.

The lay participants departed after lunch but not before challenging the capitulants to continue working with them to define the place, role and future of the lay Alliance within the Province, making proposals to enhance communication among lay members of the Alliance (they mentioned that "Covenant" would be a better translation of the French "Alliance"), and asking the tandems of each Region to draft a year-long plan of action that would include a formation program, a schedule of meetings, and possible activities and projects in line with the decisions of the Provincial and General Chapters.

A good part of the afternoon was given over to preparing the General Chapter and in particular to a discussion of the proposal on community organization. A clear consensus emerged that we must find ways to strengthen our common spirit and a common program of apostolic action. Geographical reorganization appears necessary, but it will be even more important to create a governing body at the General level ("Plenary General Council"?) that will be able to provide real direction to the entire Congregation on a permanent ongoing basis.

Fireworks produce a great deal of noise, but light and warmth as well. The light and warmth were abundant during the day, and the noise was minimal!

Fr Richard Lamoureux, a.a.
Friday, December 31, 2010