Before the provincial chapter turned its attention in the afternoon to one of the major topics on the agenda of the General Chapter in May, namely community organization (or congregational restructuring), in the morning members listened to the remaining reports from various regions and provincial concerns: finances, formation, the Region of the United States, the Region of Canada, and the Lay/Religious Alliance.

In his report, Fr. Donald Espinosa, the provincial treasurer, submitted two proposals to enhance the financial life of the entire province: 1) the establishment of a financial working group that would assure accountability and transparency throughout the province and would advise the Council of the Province regarding annual budgets, the ownership, management, and distribution of financial resources, and the balancing of regional needs; 2) the training of selected young religious in each country of the province with regard to accounting procedures and budgeting/reporting systems.

Fr. Dennis Gallagher, the Regional Superior of the United States, focused on the implementation of two regional initiatives intended to expand outreach to young people: 1) the residency project in Brighton for graduate students living in the Boston area; 2) Augustine House, a house of discernment on the Assumption College campus. He also underlined how much more international the region has become and how much he favored such inter-provincial collaboration.

In his report, Fr. Marcel Poirier spurred substantial discussion when he described the major project of the Region of Canada, i.e. addressing the question of the new or re-evangelization of a very secular society in Quebec. The efforts begun by Fr. Gilles Blouin and pursued by Frs. Christian Blanc and Benoit Bigard are meant to find concrete ways to develop a Christian community in the midst of such a society with the hope that their experience can help the Assumption elsewhere and the Church in general which is being faced with this reality more and more each day.

Having had an opportunity to participate in the first three days of the chapter, the six lay delegates submitted their list of proposals to the chapter:
1) that vowed Assumptionists embrace more fully the existence of a lay-religious alliance and that lay people interested in the Assumptionist charism be helped to establish their place, role, and formation within the Assumption;
2) greater communication both from the province and among other lay associates/collaborators;

3) that the lay-religious tandems (pairs) in the province elaborate specific, year-long plans of action.

After describing some of major challenges facing the province in the area of formation (the vast diversity of languages, cultures, and experiences of the congregation and of Church; the age and health of formators, their often part-time status and lack of training; the need to instill a congregational awareness and desire to serve; financial resources; long-range planning), Fr. Miguel led a very lively discussion on the advisability of an international center for theological studies, a proposal which the chapter presented. It was the almost universal sentiment that such a center is critical for the future of the congregation, its mission and identity.

The final and longest segment of the day dealt with the issue of community organization: Why is this issue of the restructuring of the congregation so urgent at this time? Not only are there internal factors calling for change, as Fr. Richard Lamoureux, the Superior General, pointed out (the dramatic shift in the demographic face of the congregation and the unequal possibilities with regard to leadership, formation, financial resources, and the capacity to launch new missions), but external factors as well such as globalization. If the congregation wants to maintain and improve its apostolic vitality, it must find ways to focus on the question of a common mission and to streamline its structures. Members agreed that the current structures no longer work and do not reflect either the world in which we live or the reality of Assumption today. Although the general chapter in May will not be able to provide the definitive answers to all of the complex questions which face the congregation, it would be irresponsible not to take a certain number of clear and hard decisions that would move the congregation along the path to a definitive re-organization in the future.

After supper, members gathered for an end-of-the-year prayer service of thanksgiving for blessings received during the past year and a social to ring in the new year (even if not everyone quite made it to see the ball fall at Times Square at midnight!!!!!).