Beginning a new year

New Year ’s Day was no holiday for the Chapter members, who worked from 9am until 6pm, but then celebrated the beginning of the year with a festive meal lovingly prepared by the sisters who have been receiving us in their Spiritual Life Center here in Putnam, CT.

The day was mostly dedicated to elaborating reports that will be sent to the Chapter Preparatory Committee. Long debates on community organization led to strong recommendations in favor of a Plenary General Council, with specific ideas regarding the responsibilities of this new governing body. The capitulants also reflected on a new organization of “territorial units”, favoring the creation of no more than five or six units, including Asia as one of these. Time and again in the discussion it was said that a new organization should reflect a new way of thinking about governance in the Congregation. It would no longer simply be a matter of responsibility distributed between the territorial units and a central authority (with the inevitable danger of interests in conflict with each other), but a matter of responsibility exercised by Major Superiors at the territorial level and then by the same Major Superiors together and collegially with the General and his Assistants at the international level.

The latter part of the afternoon was dedicated to a review of the way in which the religious in the Province have implemented the three major orientations given by the Chapter of 2005: men of community, proclaiming the faith and living in solidarity with the poor.

The last working session (regarding recommendations from the laity, the Provincial Treasurer and others) and the election of delegates to the General Chapter are scheduled for the morning of Epiphany, with the celebration of the Eucharist to mark the end of the week’s work. The capitulants will undoubtedly be glad to return home, like the Magi, to share their experiences with their local communities.

Fr Richard Lamoureux, a.a.
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