



At the beginning of the month of December, after a nine-hour journey, the novices, along with Fr. Richard and Fr. Alex, arrived in Quebec and were warmly welcomed by the local Assumptionist community. Though the novices were far away from home, the novitiate program continued in only slightly altered form for the week in Canada: two classes on the Sermons of Saint Augustine regarding poverty, with reference to the recent letter of our Superior General on the same theme, and one class to review novitiate practices as outlined in the handbook called “Guidelines for the Novice”.

The goal of the week-long stay was to help the novices discover another Assumptionist community beyond the borders of the USA. Each day the brothers were able to talk with the members of the community and to learn about their mission and various apostolic activities. The big surprise for the novices was to discover the community of sisters of Joanne of Arc, working with the Assumptionists at the Montmartre. Their devotion to the Assumptionists and to the Church, as well as their good humor were a touching testimony of their deep religious spirit. The novices also discovered the various cultural and intellectual offerings of the Center, sponsored by the religious, working with a group of lay associates. They worshiped with the broader community on Sunday and shared a pot-luck lunch afterwards with many lay friends of the Assumptionists.

The week was not without its moments of relaxation: visits in the city of Quebec, a “pilgrimage” to Saint Anne de Beaupré, a driving tour of the Ile d’Orleans in the middle of the Saint Lawrence river, a guided tour of the Parliament building, and even a walk-by-night through the old quarter of Quebec and an enjoyable pizza and beer in one of the quaint corners of the city. (The pizza was delicious even if it wasn’t typical Quebec food!)

The week ended with a day of retreat, with the local Superior, Fr. Marcel Poirier, who helped the community reflect on the beatitudes, especially the first regarding the “poor in spirit”. That spiritual “refueling” prepared the group for a long return journey on the following day, through arctic cold and over wet, snowy highways. Nothing dampened the spirits of the group, as they recalled with affection this spirited and committed community of brothers and sisters north of the border.

- Brother Jonathan Adams, novice