



Plenary General Council

Rome, December, 2015

Insert 9

The jubilee rosary

Fortuitous coincidence, circumstances or providential sign?

As the Year of Consecrated Life ended and the Jubilee of Mercy opened on December 8, the Assumptionists and with them the Oblates of Rome were invited by the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization to animate the rosary directly transmitted from Saint Peter's Square on Vatican Radio. This December 11 will remain as a luminous sign of Advent. To invite the people publicly to salute Mary as Mother of Mercy in such a solemn way is not useless. At the beginning of this jubilee, it is the entire Congregation that is invited to turn towards our Mother of Mercy as the one who presents to her Son all our aspirations, our needs and our fears. The one who gave birth to the One who made visible the mercy of the invisible God will know how to help us "to follow her in all her endeavors" as Father d'Alzon said, to keep the direction, to receive her as Jesus invites us to on the cross as the Mother of Mercy. Our discussions have often been the reflections of a precarious world, stuck in its vicissitudes, in the race for money and success, in the midst of unspeakable violence, before which our certitudes crumble and leave us in distress. What remains for us, if not the power of the heart that Mary shows us? Faced with a world marked by the love of power, let us invent a world where the power of love reigns. In the manner of Saint Lawrence turning towards the poor to designate them as the only riches of the Church, the PGC often repeated that the only riches of the Congregation are the brothers that compose it. In this pitiless world that places us under the power of numbers, of profit, of success, and of appearances, let us pick up the rosary, the prayer of the simple, the torch of the merciful turned towards Mary. The one who ignores Mary is an orphan, repeats Pope Francis. In the great fresco of the last judgment of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel, there is a detail that can catch our attention. A personage among the elect uses his rosary as a rope to save two poor damned souls. All through this Jubilee, may the rosary help us grasp the hand of Mary and pull up, by our prayer, all those who, in our world, are threatened with the abyss of damnation.

Study and Work

The governance of a Congregation is a work that requires constancy in the effort and care of a co-responsibility ever more developed. As we have gone through the series of meetings, the way of proceeding was somewhat smoothed out. Its 9th session did not fail to mark some progress in that area. A more lively consciousness of sharing deeply on the life of the provinces and of their communities revealed itself in the discussions. It is a question of sharing what is going well and what constitutes difficulties with the basic preoccupation of the coming of the Kingdom. This meeting will have given to Fr. Etienne, provincial of Madagascar the occasion to present the apostolic ambitions of his province for the next ten years. His document elicited a great interest and should inspire the other provinces to a similar reflection for the coming Provincial Chapters and the General Chapter of 2017.

In the examination of the various dossiers, in the discussion with the invited guests from the outside, the brothers of the Congregation were revealed to be the primary riches of our religious family. This treasure should be the object of the attention of the leadership. Nothing and no one should be forgotten or neglected to fill the positions, support the works, to strengthen the formation of the young brothers so as to prepare in the best way possible their mission for tomorrow. Also nothing must be neglected to watch over the economic life of the Congregation so as to make it always more conformed to our vow of poverty, to the needs of our apostolic life and an ever more palpable solidarity. That is an effort for which Brother Didier, General Treasurer, shows a great stubbornness to have the Bureau of Development and Solidarity move at a higher speed. The examples of fraternity among the provinces are not lacking and those steps lead the Congregation to an always greater dynamism and make it more operational.



In the midst of the body which they form, the youth manifest themselves in the Congregation by their missionary availability, the guarantee of its life expectancy. More and more new foundations are under discussion both in Africa and Asia, the two continents of growth, without forgetting the reflection on that which, in our old implantations, is called to be pruned like a vine to be renewed. During those ten study and working days, the members of the PGC desired to restate the fundamental axes of apostolic life and the missionary life. To sit down in order to better put into motion the apostolates to develop, rethink also the efforts to deploy notably in the area of formation or for the common services of the Congregation, without neglecting the aid of the laity where that is possible, such were the preoccupations at the center of the discussions. In the perspectives of the coming Chapter, the PGC what should be the new wine to offer the world and in what new wineskins should it be carried to answer the urgencies of our times and of the Church in order to be attentive to the call of the Spirit. ■

Insecurity

Our world lives in a time of blind violence. Three years after the kidnapping of our three brothers of the parish of Our Lady of the Poor of Mbau, the PGC could not avoid considering, the day after the Paris criminal assaults, that violence but especially in reference to the places where a great number of Assumptionists live: the North-Kivu. The insecurity of the inhabitants grows each day. In the region of Beni and of Luofu assassinations are increasing. The lack of basic food supplies is making itself felt. The communities want to be in solidarity with their people in their trials. An international inquiry should determine the motivation for what has become a humanitarian disaster and a crime against humanity.

First apostolic assignments

Father Benoît Grière, Superior General with the assent of his Plenary General Council, made the first apostolic assignments of :

- MUMBERE BUNDUKI, Patrice Emery (Province of Africa)
- PHAM VAN HUAN, François Xavier (Province of Europe)
- RANDRANJATOVO, Rémy Elysé (Province of Madagascar)
- KAMBALE MAPENDO, Waleyirwe (Province of Africa)
- ANDRY NIRINA, Parfait Elysé (Province of Madagascar)
- NGUYEN VAN HÂ, Pierre (Province of Europe)
- TSHIAMALA KATALAYI, François (Province of Africa)
- BWAMBALE KALIPI, Dominique (Province of Africa)
- KAMBALE WATEVIRWE, Faustin (Province of Africa)

A New Face: The Provincial of Brazil

It was the first trip to Rome for Father Luiz Gonzaga Da Silva! At 44 years-old, the man who was at the head of the Rio de Janeiro community succeeded Father Luiz Carlos de Oliveira at the head of the small Province of Brazil four months ago. He arrives at the moment, when, a sign of the times, Father Lambert went to heaven at the age of 101 and with him the last Dutch religious in Brazil. But the seed that dies is already a sign of new growth. A new cooperation between Brazil and Africa has seen the day with the arrival of Father Jules Mumbere Paluku in Euge-nopolis and of Father Roger Wasukundi at Campinas, both having become perfectly Portuguese-speaking. We dream of an Afro-Brazilian foundation in Portuguese Africa in the near future. The seed fallen in the earth only asks to germinate when at this beginning of 2016 we are putting the last touches on the opening of the novitiate in Espirito Santo do Pinhal. Fr. Luiz Gonzaga did not hide his joy at being in Rome for his first PGC that concludes the Year of Consecrated Life and inaugurates the great Jubilee of Mercy. He felt quite at ease in the new responsibility given him, not only of Provincial, but as a member of the Plenary General Council, and as such, to share the care to preside over the destinies of our little family with Father General. It is he who will host the next meeting of the PGC which will take place in Brazil next year, on the eve of the Olympic Games. That is quite a program... Some arrive and some go. That is the way in all the services that are asked of us for the good of the brothers. Father Juan Carlos Cisterna attended his last PGC. The PGC offered him for his departure the traditional gold fish. Let us recall, the goldfish in the Orient is the symbol of “joie de vivre” and of creative force.





*Bro. Didier REMIOT,
Fr. Benoît GSCHWIND,
Fr. Victor BLANCO,
Fr. Bernard LE LÉANNEC,
Fr. Benoît GRIÈRE,
Fr. John FRANCK,
Fr. Protais KABILA,
Fr. Etienne RATALATA,
Fr. Miguel DIAZ AYLON,
Fr. Juan Carlos CISTERNA,
Fr. Marcelo MARCIEL,
Fr. Luiz Gonzaga DA SILVA,
Fr. Emmanuel KAHINDO
KIHUGHO.*

Preparations for the next General Chapter

During this PGC the preparations for the next General Chapter of 2017 were continued. The fundamental reflection on the life and the organization of the Congregation was prolonged so as to better discern the calls of the Spirit, determine the calendar for the next stages to invite the communities and to stimulate them to enter into the pre-capitular work. The work will enter into the operational phase.

The work of the preparatory commission

The preparatory commission is composed of 5 members: two are Assistants, two are African, one is Latin-American, one is Asian, and another is European. They are: Fr. Emmanuel Kanhindo, Fr. Marcelo Marciel, Fr. André Antoni, Fr. Thierry Kambale Kahongya, and Bro. Vianney Kim. Its first meeting took place in Rome, November 25-28 and addressed a letter to the

PGC and another to the religious, to the communities and to the laity. In the name of the commission, Father Emmanuel also, during the PGC, two annexes: one presented as a document dedicated to a Lectio Divina on Mt. 9th17, and another as an aide to read the apostolic letter of Pope Francis to all consecrated people on the occasion the Year of Consecrated Life. The next meeting of the commission is fixed for Wednesday, March 30 to Saturday April 2, 2016 in Rome.

The participation of the laity

Another point that was debated during the 9th PGC: the participation of the laity in the 2017 General Chapter. We recall that this participation was inaugurated at the 2005 General Chapter. For the next Chapter, this participation will be marked by the presence of some 15 lay people during the first week of the capitular assembly, that is,

equal to that of 2011. There is an effort to consider the contrasted diversity of the various provinces. Progressively the Lay-Religious Alliance is taking form and is integrated in our religious community atmosphere, with the commitment according the manner of using the “Way of Life”. As in the case of the two previous General Chapters, this participation will bring to the Congregation increased riches.

The electoral law

In order to put into practice the prerogatives of the Rule of Life ({110}) and of the Capitular Rules ({188}) with a view of allowing a balanced representation of the whole Congregation, the Superior General with the assent of the PGC, has decided that the basic number for the election of the delegates in the provinces will be one delegate for thirty religious, with the list of religious established on January 1, 2016.

The discussion with the White Fathers

The PGC took time for a discussion with the Superior General of the Missionaries of Africa, Fr. Richard BAAWOHR and his assistant Fr. Emmanuel NGONA'

Fr. Richard, 57 years-old, Ghanaian with an international formation was a member of the recent Synod on the Family. Fr. Emmanuel, his Congolese Assistant, was for a long time Provincial of Central Africa. The Society of the White Fathers, that has today 1300 members, is undergoing a profound transformation, recruiting principally in the southern hemisphere. It has a very centralized structure, divided into eight provinces. The Province of Europe is the largest. Africa has a few provinces. North and South America constitute one and the same province. There are two formation communities in Asia, one in India and the other in the Philippines. For the White Fathers there is a positive discrimination in favor of Africa, notably for the capitulants of the next general chapter. There is a total solidarity on the level of the finances and of the personnel. All properties belong to the Society and are placed at the disposition of the provinces. The General Council approves the budgets and provides the money for the mission and the formation. The provinces of the North must provide for their own needs and remit all their surpluses.

The solidarity and the distribution of the personnel signify that each member belongs to the Society. He is retained in this

province of origin for his vacations but for the mission he depends on this province of insertion. For the consultation for a provincial, there can be a second turn for a short list of three names. Inside the provinces, there are sectors directed by counselors of the provincial. Certain nominations are to be approved by the general government.

In reference to the nominations, Fr. Emmanuel declares: "Our brothers are our greatest good and their management is our first responsibility. The first assignment is given by the General Counsel after the missionary oath. We ask the provinces to present to us their needs according to criteria determined by the Chapter. The young brothers are placed at the disposal of the General Council that names them to the place where they can give the best of themselves. The Council is attentive to have them live in community with a precise project where they can be well followed."

Specialized studies are considered after a positive missionary experience in conjunction with the needs and the accompaniment of the provincial. The formed brothers are resource persons for the good of the whole of the Society. They receive an



academic formation but also a spiritual formation with companionship. Also, for a missionary assignment, there can be an accord between two provincials and the local church.

The first assignments seek to answer the aspirations of the Society, the requests of the provinces and the commitments taken in the provinces. These assignments are prepared and matured during the formation in the 18 houses of formation of the Society. The meetings of the General Council with the provincials are of utmost importance to answer the global needs of the Society.

A stimulating discovery, this discussion has permitted the PGC to nourish itself with another experience that will perhaps result in new propositions to live more intensely as one body.