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Assembly of the Vice-Province of Canada

MONTREAL, Canada - On January 11, 2023, the Vice-Province of Canada met in Montreal in view of the next General Chapter. The motive was to elect a delegate to accompany the Provincial to the General Chapter. Father Louis-Paul St-Laurent was unanimously elected.

It was also an opportunity to present our responses to the Generalate questionnaire and to clarify the current image of the Vice-Province.

Two documents were presented for this purpose, the “Pastoral section” and the “Administrative section”.

The presentation of the Province can be summed up to a small number of confreres (14), most of them considerably advanced in age, engaged in three main works: the Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes, in Ottawa, with a long history, founded in 1887, the Marie Reine des Coeurs Sanctuary, founded in Montreal in 1960, and finally, a rural parish composed of multiple churches, run by a single confrere.

Everywhere, pastoral activities are very lively and includes many lay people.

But the future is uncertain, because of the small number of confreres, and their age.

Above all, the secularized world around us poses serious questions of new evangelization.

The conclusion by the superior was expressed as follows: *Let us ask ourselves not what we can accomplish, but rather what we "want" to accomplish, and make the appropriate decisions to answer this question today.*

A new, original element was added to the program: since our Vice-Provincial is from Madagascar, another new confrere recently arrived (Father Freda) from there to help us and we have the hope two other will be coming soon. Therefore, we have invited three representatives of Madagascar, to present the Malagasy culture to us. Their presentation was masterful, including specific elements such as: *kabary*, the importance of discourse, and *fihavanana*, solidarity; let's add the importance given to the elders and their "blessing", the unity of the local language among ethnic groups, mutual aid, openness to foreigners, love of nature as model etc., Yves, Sylvie and Hervé talked a lot about the problems of inculturation for the Malagasy present in Canada, experienced differently by the children and by the parents and affecting all aspects of life. This led us to reflect on our own inculturation in a new world.

This shows how much the theme of the General Chapter resonates with us: "Dare to take risks for God and for humanity". Yes, our "creative fidelity" is really challenged.

Gilles Dallaire SMM