



2017 GENERAL CHAPTER -Newsletter 12-20 May 2017



◆ 12-13 May

Those days were mostly consecrated to discussions on the selected challenges. Every document produced in the workshops has three elements:

- convictions concerning the challenges to be met,
- proposals for action and projects,
- means to realize those projects.

The Alert Points

As you already know, only six challenges have been kept. Among the numerous other challenges that were seen during our first discussions in workshops, some of them seemed very important to us. We have kept six of them which will be submitted to the Generalate as priorities deserving immediate attention.

Those “Alert Points” are:

- Communication (among us, and with the world through, among other things, modern means of communication)
- Elderly confreres: the importance of integrating them in the life of the community and the ability to collect their experience
- Integral ecology according to the Encyclical Laudato Si of Pope Francis
- International formation: international Noviciates and Scholasticates
- Lay people: their presence and their role in our missionary projects and their journey in Montfortian spirituality
- The transmission of our spirituality: accompanying the groups who live that same spirituality, whether they are created by us or by others

Certain modifications were also proposed to the Capitulars concerning the term of office of the Superior General and of his Council. After discussion, it was decided to keep the present-day term of office of 6 years, renewable. We simplified the process for the appointment of an Assistant General in case of resignation.

Seed-Communities

Father Santino made a new presentation of the project for “Seed-Communities”. It would consist in establishing young Montfortian communities in some countries of the Northern hemisphere in order to relaunch the Montfortian charism in those same places. That project will be implemented in places where it seems possible to do so.



Visit to Sant Egidio Community

On the 13th, at the end of the day, we went to visit the Sant Egidio community near Santa Maria in Trastevere. The director met with the capitulars to present their charism and their work around the world. Sant Egidio is a lay society working with the poor and promoting peace, through “Schools of Peace”, among other means.



Their charism can be summed up in three words: Prayer, the Poor, Peace. They promote dialogue and reconciliation among different groups and they live with the poor and pray with them.

◆ Sunday 14 May

Sunday 14 August was a free day, allowing everyone to rest or to visit Rome.

◆ Monday 15 May

That day was mostly consecrated to a process of discernment in view of the election of the four General Councillors. Fr. Luizinho met the Capitulars continent-wise, describing the qualities that he wished to find in those Assistants. He reminded everyone that the team of the Generalate is meant to represent the whole Congregation and to work for all the Entities.



◆ Tuesday 16 May

In the morning, the Capitulars elected the Assistants General. The four following confrere were elected by two-third majority:

- Fr. Marco Pasinato
- Fr. Arnold Suhardi
- Fr. Jean-Charles Wismick
- Fr. Rosario Menezes

In the afternoon, teams were formed to reflect on the alert points that were kept. Each team produced a brief text to enlighten the General Council on those 6 points. Those texts will be shown in an Annex of the Acts of the Chapter.

◆ Wednesday 17 May

That day was consecrated to the Montfortian Family. The General Councils of the Daughters of Wisdom and of the Brothers of St. Gabriel joined us for the activities of the day. So did some lay people who are associated to the Montfortians. The day began very early with the trip to St. Peter's Basilica to take part in the general audience. The Capitulars had the privilege to be seated on the porch from which the Holy Father addresses the crowd. The Pope came to meet them. Fr. Luiz Augusto Stefani, Superior General, mentioned that he told the Pope of our desire to journey with him and with the Church as Montfort did. Photos were taken and we gave him some souvenirs.



After the meal, there was a meeting in which the Congregations presented different experiences of collaboration within the Montfortian Family. And then, some lay people shared with us how they lived and contributed to diffuse the Montfortian spirituality. First, there was Joël Rabin, deacon, and his wife, involved in the pilgrimage to Lourdes. Then, we listened to the testimony of the Missionari di Maria Regina dei



Cuore, a secular institute present in Italy, Peru and Colombia, which announces the Montfortian spirituality in parishes. Two other groups were called to speak about their apostolate: The Association Mary, Queen of All Hearts from Southern Italy, and the group Palabra Viva, from Brazil.



At 6 p.m., we celebrated the Mass, which was presided over by Bishop Raja Rao. In his homily, our Montfortian Bishop presented Montfort as a “down to earth mystic”. After the homily, there was a ritual of “transmission of leadership”. Fr. Santino gave the statue of Our Lady of the road that Montfort carried with him, and the former Assistants gave a lighted candle to the new Assistants. Everyone said that they were deeply moved by the sincerity and depth of that celebration.

◆ Thursday 18 May

The morning session was consecrated to a last discussion on the “alert points”. The Capitulars spoke, among other things, of the importance of being proactive in the diffusion of the spirituality. Several groups which are not in relation with the Montfortians diffuse that spirituality in their own manner. It is important that we should take initiatives to enlighten those various groups.



We presented the letter of Fr. Luizinho which will be placed as an introduction to the Acts of the Chapter. We underlined the fact that it is an expression of vibrant enthusiasm.

And then, Professors Jan de Maeyer, Godfried Kwanten and Mrs Noortje Lambrichts, who works full time in our Archives, explained the project of classification and digitalization of our Archives. That project will last for some two years and it is paid for by the Northern Entities.

◆ Friday 19 May

We first read the letter which will be sent to the confreres on behalf of the Capitulars. It was prepared by Fr. Bill Considine, with the help of Fr. Pierre Bonhommeau and Fr. Doris Sullivan. It was appreciated for its Montfortian inspiration and for the fact that it gave a proper description of the atmosphere in which we lived the Chapter. Then, the Capitulars who, on the preceding day, had received a printed copy of the Acts of the Chapter, were invited to see Fr. Lavigne and the Secretaries in order to point out any correction to be



brought before the official publication.

In the afternoon, the Capitulars went to the General House of the Dominicans. Their Archivist presented the Letter (23) that Montfort wrote to the General of the Dominicans in 1710, asking him the authorization to enroll those who took part in his missions in the Holy Rosary Confraternity. Then, we could speak with the Superior General and we visited the rooms of St. Dominic and of St. Pius V.

◆ Saturday 20 May

During the last session, Father Luizinho gave a short talk to the capitulars which was followed by words of appreciation from the assembly. Father Luizinho proposed the closure of the 37th General Chapter, which was approved by a round of applause. Then, the Capitulars were invited to sign four documents: the first one indicating the approval of the Acts of the Chapter, the second, the official closing of the Chapter, the third the approval of the daily minutes of the Chapter and finally the letter addressed to all the confreres by the capitulars. The concluding Mass was presided by Cardinal Joao Braz de Aviz, prefect of the Religious Congregations. During his short but well felt homily, he pointed out the three important elements of our religious life:

1. to follow Jesus Christ,
2. to be faithful to our charism,
3. to go to the people, not first to teach them a doctrine, but to be with them, listening to their suffering. Thus is the invitation of pope Francis to us.

Finally, a group photo was taken of the capitulars, the last meal was shared with joy and fraternity. There still was for each capitular to pack their suitcase again to return home to their confreres. But as some emphasized:

**“The Chapter is not ended,
it’s just beginning!”**

Georges Madore s.m.m.
secretary of the Chapter

