

SSS INTERNATIONAL

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SSS Generalate
Via G. B. de Rossi, 46 - 00161 Rome – Italy



www.curiasss.net

The 35th SSS General Chapter

The 35th SSS General Chapter took place at the Conference Centre of the Seminary of the archdiocese of Chicago, Illinois in the University of Saint Mary of the Lake (USA) on **June 4-24, 2017**.

The General Chapter, which is held every six years, is the highest deliberative authority in the Congregation. As stipulated in our Rule of Life number 68, "its purpose is to promote the unity of the Congregation, to renew it in fidelity to its mission and to formulate a project in response to the demands of the Church and the world". Number 71 of our Rule of Life states that the General Chapter has the responsibility to:

- evaluate the state of the Congregation and provide norms and guidelines for the promotion of the religious and apostolic life in keeping with the spirit of Founder and the needs of the Church;
- elect the Superior general, the general Consultors, and the Treasurer general;
- establish, modify, unite and suppress Provinces;
- make modification to the Rule of Life and the General Statutes;
- review the Congregation's mission priorities, finances, formation policies, etc.

The General Chapter, which was held for the first time in the United States, began with a creative prayer where capitulars invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit. Fr Eugênio Barbosa Martins in his opening address invited all the members of the Assembly to exercise "the authority in listening to the word of God, which is revealed in all the brothers present and in the reality with its challenges, its contradictions and its potentialities". Subsequently, Fr Anthony Schueller, the superior of the Province of *Saint Ann* formally welcomed in his country all the participants of the Chapter.



Recognizing that USA is a land of immigrants that have defined its society and the local Catholic Church, it is a delight for him to see the true internationality of the Congregation, through the faces of all those who are present. Then a creative way of presenting each other was made, followed by a more formal presentation of all the capitulars, each expressing his hopes and expectations for the Chapter.

There were 41 capitulars, all in all: 30 of which represent 13 Provinces and 2 Regions; 6 members of the General Council; 4 supplementary Delegates; 1 former Superior general. The complexity of bringing together such a diverse group from different countries was earnestly taken care of by the General Team in Rome and the Province of *Saint Ann* in the United States. Five SSS priests were also present in the service of the secretariat, the liturgy and the accommodations. It is interesting to note that majority of the capitulars were participating in a General Chapter for the first time.

The General Council oversaw every aspect of the Chapter's inner workings: daily schedules of liturgy, agenda, sessions, and meetings. French and English were the official languages used in the Chapter. Three moderators with the skills in both languages were chosen to bridge the linguistic and cultural groupings and to facilitate the deliberations in the sessions: Father Norman Pelletier (United States), Father Martin Tine (Senegal), and Father Camille Gagnon (Columbia-Peru-Puerto Rico), who is also fluent in Spanish.

The days of the Chapter usually begun with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament or the divine office, and then breakfast, morning sessions, lunch, afternoon sessions, group works and Celebration of the Eucharist in the evening. The deliberations went smooth as planned. The initial days were generally spent on the presentations and reports by the members of the General Administration, the different Provinces and Regions, and the different Commissions. The later part of the Chapter was spent on the proposals and decision makings.

The **19th of June**, the 15th day of the General Chapter, was scheduled for the election of the Superior General who will serve the Congregation for the next six years. It was an important and joyful moment, **Fr Eugênio Barbosa Martins** (*at the center of the photo*) was re-elected Superior General of the Congregation. And adding significance to that remarkable day were the recognition of the canonical erection of the Province of *St Pierre-Julien Eymard* of Northern Europe and Mozambique and the declaration of the newly canonically erected Province of *Notre Dame d'Afrique* (Senegal).

On the following day, the 20th of June, at the moment of choice for the election of the general Consultors and Treasurer general, the following religious were elected and have accepted their election:

Fr Martin Tine (Senegal) as the First Consultor General (*2nd left*)

Fr Benzy Philip Romician (India) as the Second Consultor General and as Treasurer General (*1st right*)

Fr Joseph Vu Quoc Binh (Vietnam) as the Third Consultor General (*2nd right*)

Fr Jose Antonio Rivera Ruiz (Spain) as the Fourth Consultor General (*1st left*)



On the final day, the Commission on *Memory and Discernment* presented their final report. The report has caught the admiration of many capitulars for its well-reflected contents and was unanimously approved by the Chapter. A capitular even said that it is a document “that would make Fr Eymard happy for his sons”.

Fr Eugênio, in his final message gave a detailed and touching thanksgiving message to all who were involved in the General Chapter, and together with the assembly praised God by singing the *Magnificat*. He also announced his choice of Fr Martin Tine as Vicar General. Subsequently, the 35th General Chapter of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament was declared officially closed. The evening Mass presided by Fr Eugênio Barbosa Martins with his Consultors became an occasion for the capitulars to bless and pray for the General Council, and in return, allowed themselves to be blessed by the Superior General.

Thanks to the all-out support of the host Province and the staff, the experience went smooth and congenial to the end. Notably, the Province of *Saint Ann* also hosted two different outings on the free Sundays. The first was a trip on the 11th of June to the Parish of Saint Eulalia in Maywood, Chicago for a concelebrated Mass and a luncheon. After which the capitulars spent the rest of the afternoon visiting the city of Chicago, particularly the banks of Lake Michigan, the Millenium Park, the Cathedral of the Holy Name of Jesus and the adoration chapel of Marytown Retreat Center.

The second was on the 18th of June, an outing to the Catholic Theological Union (CTU) on Chicago's South Side for a Eucharistic Celebration, a luncheon, and an overview of all that this school of theology, of which the Province of *Saint Ann* is a corporate member, has to offer. The participants were treated as well with a leisurely guided boat tour along the Chicago River and into Lake Michigan to enjoy the city's skyline.

The Chapter has been for all the capitulars an occasion to take part in the internationality of the Congregation, the eucharistic fraternity that breaks linguistic and cultural barriers, and an edifying patience, openness, joy and trust expressed in the simplest and humblest of things. The Chapter has made the participants, both the first timers and the veterans, proud and thankful of their history, confident and at peace with the present and hopeful in the future.



Paying tribute to a forgotten pioneer: Patrick Bonaventure Geoghegan OSF

On Pentecost Sunday afternoon, **June 4th 2017**, a new sculpture of pioneer Melbourne priest, the Irish Franciscan Patrick Bonaventure Geoghegan (1805-1864), was jointly unveiled at St Francis' by the Franciscan Provincial, Philip Miscamble, and Fr Graeme Duro SSS. The statue was duly blessed by Bishop Peter Elliott before prayers were led by the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, Philip Freier.

About a hundred people – including several Franciscans and a contingent from the Williamstown parish where Geoghegan served as parish priest (1853-1860) – gathered for the event. Ken Boland SSS welcomed everyone on the Provincial's behalf, while lamenting the untimely death of the project's instigator, Pat Negri SSS.

In his occasional address, Matthew Beckmann OFM traced Fr Geoghegan's journey through life until his ministry in Melbourne. Remarkably he left behind the bitter sectarianism and anti-Irish bigotry of the United Kingdom and brought to Melbourne a free spirit of inclusion and respect for all. This was reflected not only in his building a "plain commodious" church suited to the early Melbourne community, but in pioneering efforts in education and health care.

Once the statue was unveiled, sculptor Darien Pullen spoke. He paid tribute to Pat Negri SSS for his wise guidance and to Damien Cash for his forensic research into Geoghegan's life. His sculpture sought to capture his subject's character as an active, open, warm and generous man, with arms stretched out in welcome and his face showing a hint of a smile.

The blessing rite followed, with some short scripture texts, the blessing proper, a set of intercessions, the Lord's Prayer and a final blessing. Bishop Peter Elliott

introduced all this by speaking of the significant role played by St Francis' Church in his Anglican family and in his own life of faith.

The Anglican Archbishop Philip Freier made the already historic event all the more memorable. He said how glad and grateful he was to be present at "a very reconciling moment" because the first Anglican bishop of Melbourne, Dr Charles Perry (1807-1891), had displayed a lack of charity and grace in refusing to receive the welcome of the friendly and open-minded Fr Geoghegan in January 1848. Archbishop Freier's warmth and ease certainly righted that wrong.

Fr Geoghegan's prayer at the end of his homily at the laying of the foundation stone in 1841 was that Haggai's prophecy – "in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts" – would begin to be fulfilled. It certainly was on Pentecost Sunday 2017.





“Friends of the morning” in the Parish of St Ottavio in Modugno (Bari)

The visit of Fr Eugênio Barbosa Martins, the Superior General, and Fr Giulio Maccali, General Consultor, to our community of Modugno filled our hearts with joy and gratitude for the simplicity and fraternity they showed us. But it also aroused in their hearts a certain curiosity about our Eucharistic lifestyle that they experienced on the mornings they spend with us.



In our Church, every morning, there is a delightful stream of mothers, fathers, grandparents ... who accompany their children in coming to greet Jesus in the Tabernacle with a short prayer, which is prompted by a large photo album and religious texts always being updated, to receive small messages, which recall a phrase from the Gospel or a message about living, dedicated to parents and to children, so they can all start their day in serenity.

During the important seasons of the liturgical year we give them every day a holy picture related to various topics (*Bible, Life of Jesus, Life of the saints, the Parables or Sunday Gospels*). They keep these in an album with bright pages which help them to interiorize the contents, involving the parents who become the first catechists for their children, with joy and generosity.

The recipients of this project, which has kept on going now for 10 years, we call “Friends of the morning”. These are children starting from kindergarten until the 5th elementary class, together with their parents. They find something good while they remain in church, before going to the nearby “Don Milani” school.

It seems worthwhile to mention that it is moving to see mothers kneeling while embracing their children as they point to the tabernacle and speak of Jesus or read to the smallest the prayer of the day from the large album or teach the little ones how to genuflect or make the sign of the cross.

Our hope is that a permanent impression will be made on these children by the example of their parents and also by that of the priests and lay people present in the Church at that time reciting Morning Prayer. “It is witnessing that generates faith – the most important form of religious education for children is to see his parents praying”. Pope Luciani used to say: “My first catechism teacher was my mother”.

“The seed sown today will give its fruits tomorrow”. This is seen already from the presence of many of them in the youth group and afterwards – the confirmation group of our community. And we hope that we are not mistaken in thinking this initiative undertaken for children and youth may become a “privileged garden” where the Lord’s call may take root for their future. For this reason we will like to begin, with some of them, a vocational path, as suggested by our Father General during his visit.



The Lord has given our Parish a great gift. Thank you so much “Friends of the Morning”! Keep on going!

20 June 2017

FR GIANCARLO DONZELLI, SSS
VICE-PARISH PRIEST



Eucharistic Day The Eucharist – Joy and Love of Family

Inspired by the love of God manifested in the Eucharist (cf. RL 102), on Saturday **June 17, 2017**, the Eymardian Family in Vietnam gathered together at the Khiet Tam Provincialate to celebrate the Eucharistic day. Participating in this beautiful event out of our Vietnamese confreres, the sisters of the Servant of the Blessed Sacrament and some members of the Servitium Christi were around 1000 aggregates which those who are from the Central Highlands, West coast and River in the South of Vietnam.



Fr. Dominic Tam SSS animated this meeting with his presentation: “The Eucharist – Joy and Love of Family”. Based on the Word of God, the teaching of Founder, St. Peter Julian Eymard and the daily life experience, he led the assembly to concrete application for the life of aggregates as following:

- Eucharist is the center of life: only center which can give consolation for those who are weary and burdened; center for those who are sad and disappointed; center of joy and hope. Therefore, come to Jesus in the Eucharist to be able to be guided and formed by him.
- Eucharistic celebration: willingly to remain in his love, to be touched by his words, so as to become adorers in Spirit and Truth. Having him in our life all problems, difficulties and preoccupations will be resolved.

The heart of the gathering is the Eucharistic celebration. In his homily, Fr. Paul Thanh Quang SSS, responsible for the SSS mission of the Province, shared with the assembly the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist in the family life. From his sacrifice offered to the Father for human salvation, Jesus invites

the members of the Aggregation to “do the same in memory of him” which is the realization of this sacrificial aspect in the family, whether it be father, mother, husband and wife. To be able to realize this goal, the assembly is invited to live truly and effectively the Communion. With this crucial element of the Eucharistic Spirituality which is concretized by broken bread of oneself to serve, surely quality of family life will be improved and sanctified.



PROVINCIAL COMMUNICATION SSS



Session about the “gift of self”

This session took place **from 27 June to 6 July 2017** at the family house of our holy Founder in La Mure under the guidance of Fr Manuel Barbiero. The following Sister Servants and SSS religious took part: Theresa Pham Thi Kim Hong and Maria Nguyen Thi Phuong, both from Vietnam, Patrick Costello from Ireland, Flavio Fumagalli from Italy, Martin de Porres Ochola from Uganda, Chally Gombessa from Congo-Brazzaville and Thaddée Mupapa from Congo-Kinshasa.

The objective of this session was to help participants to understand and deepen appreciation of the path that led Father Eymard to make the vow of personality and consequently to envisage the step that each one has to take to become transformed by the Spirit into a disciple-apostle of the Eucharist in following Christ. The daily activities programmed were as follows: the celebration of the Eucharist, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the Liturgy of Hours, time for reflection and sharing. This was structured by: a communal reading of the Great Retreat of Rome, periods of pilgrimage and desert, reflections on the vow of personality, the Virgin Mary and the gift of self.

1. COMMUNAL READING OF THE GREAT RETREAT OF ROME (1865)

Our Rule of Life sets out the starting point of this retreat: “his whole life witnesses to the gift of himself to Christ” (RL 2), and “Sharing in this gift of himself to us, we place ourselves at the service of the Kingdom, fulfilling the words of the Apostle: ‘It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.’” (RL 4). Thus our entire life is focused by the gift of self lived by Father Eymard.



Moreover, two remarks are important for a sound understanding of the retreat of Rome. Firstly, this retreat took place without a plan or timetable; and then the notes jotted down by Father Eymard have a personal character; according to his own sensitivity and graces certain notes apply only to him.

Also, Father Eymard was daily nourished in preparing himself for this vow by: a disposition of allowing himself to be led by the Holy Spirit, the Eucharistic celebration (particularly the Word of God and Communion), Eucharistic Adoration, the Liturgy of Hours and reading the *Imitation of Christ*. In this way he became disposed to realize in his life what Christ carries out in the Eucharistic consecration: taking, giving thanks, breaking and giving.

Based on the conversion of St Paul, Father Eymard raised the following question at the beginning and end of his retreat: “Lord, what do you want me to do?” So this retreat was like an ongoing search for God’s will, to which he abandoned himself. And Father Eymard stated that “God loves the gift of self more than the apostolate of the whole universe.” In effect, Christ’s central action in the Eucharist is giving. This is linked to love, exemplified by the love between two spouses. God is the Spouse and a soul is the bride.

Moreover, the vow of personality is not only linked to the grace of baptism, but also it is a new incarnation of Christ realized through the Eucharist. This brings about a transformation in such a way that Christ

becomes in a person: the centre, life, wellbeing, love. Thus, Christ’s actions and thoughts become those of a person.

On the other hand, the vow of personality is a gift of the Holy Spirit. For during the Eucharist the Holy Spirit transforms both the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ as well a person by forming Christ’s life in us. It follows that in allowing ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit that we will come to make the gift of our personality (cf. Lk 1:35).

Father Eymard discovered the love of God through creation: God loves human beings and gives them everything that they have and are. The Eucharist is summit of this love. For God wants to remain with us. Also the secret of prayer consists in being nourished by God, discovering his grandeur, goodness, tenderness through creation. So in order to realize this, we must work hard to forget ourselves, not to seek ourselves in any way when praying. This love is both the true formative element as well as the means of practicing this vow of personality (cf. Mt 11:29; Gal 2:20; Jn 14:6; Acts 9:6; Phil 2:5-11; Jn 13:1-17). So Father Eymard concludes: God’s love, this is my law, my way, my virtue, my joy, my wellbeing.



Father Eymard recommends that everyone should live from an interior life, a life of union with the Lord Jesus Christ. He says that it is easy to give one’s heart, but to give one’s mind is hard. This sacrifice is not given to everyone, he admits. For this, the grace of God is needed. For the gift of one’s mind is the deepest part of ourselves and it is difficult to renounce our thoughts, our judgments. This is why we have to make an act of faith, then our intelligence is opened to see God’s will even in the small events of our life. Furthermore, prayer is indispensable in order to enable us to listen to God.

2. THE VIRGIN MARY AND THE GIFT OF SELF; MARY MAKES US ANOTHER “JESUS CHRIST”

Father Eymard was attached to the Virgin Mary since his childhood. He saw in Mary a model of compassion for the poor. This is why, entrusting to her all his sufferings and projects, he thanked her for the graces of vocation, priesthood and the foundation of

the Congregation. The mission of Mary consists in forming us and accompanying us so that the Eucharistic celebration may bring about the incarnation in us, making us another Jesus Christ.

Even more, we can speak of the Mass of Mary and our Mass. Just as the Virgin Mary at the moment of the Annunciation was listening to the Word of God, in the same way at the Eucharist we become available to receive this Word. Just as this Word became flesh in Mary, so too God's Word is said to become flesh in us.

CONCLUSION

We see that the vow of personality is above all a gift, a grace. It implies a dimension of faith in God's ever greater love for us. It must be lived in faithfulness to God's will in spite of the difficulties we may meet.

So we are invited to ask ourselves often: "Lord, what do you want me to do?" This question invites us to give our availability, our will and our interiority for the realization of God's plan in us. And the Virgin Mary accompanies us so that the Eucharistic celebration may bring about the incarnation of Christ in us.

FR THADDÉE MUPAPA, SSS



The death of a brother will be celebrated as a Paschal event filled with hope. We shall faithfully carry out the prescribed prayers for our deceased (RL 13).

N. 1516 - Father Louis SCHAFFNER

Province: St Peter Julian Eymard
 Community: Colombier, France
 Death: 3 July 2017
 Age: 91
 Profession: 69
 Priesthood: 64

N. 1517 - Brother Gerard DEVELIN

Province: Holy Spirit
 Community: Melbourne, Australia
 Death: 9 July 2017
 Age: 76
 Profession: 57



The website of the General Curia SSS

We inform you that work is in progress for the creation of the new site managed by the General Curia SSS. The websites you already know:

www.curiasss.net
www.sssinternational.net

do not exist anymore and they became a single website:

<http://www.ssscongregatio.org>

At the moment this website is available only in English, but the reserved area is still available in the other languages:

RESERVED AREA

The reserved area is available only for the sss religious. If you do not have the access codes, you can ask for them at the SSS Secretariat:

segretariato@curiasss.net

We are currently working on the pages of the website in French, Italian and Spanish. They will be available soon.



N. 1518 - Father Adriano PEDRON

Province: Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament
 Community: S. Benedetto del Tronto, Italy
 Death: 11 July 2017
 Age: 86
 Profession: 64
 Priesthood: 41

N. 1519 - Father Peter Nguyen The TRINH

Province: Vietnamese Martyrs
 Community: An Phu, Vietnam
 Death: 25 July 2017
 Age: 54
 Profession: 24
 Priesthood: 14

N. 1520 - Father Martín NAVARRO

Province: Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament
 Community: Madrid-Cor. de Maria, Spain
 Death: 1 August 2017
 Age: 74
 Profession: 54
 Priesthood: 49