



PRESENZA




AGOSTINIANA

Special and digital edition



80th GENERAL CHAPTER

Order of the Discalced Augustinians



June 7-20, 2023
Cebu City - Philippines

EDITORIAL PAGE

NEWS IN CONTINUITY

In the past few months, there has been much conversations in our Communities, among friends and collaborators, about the General Chapter. This is an important meeting that takes place every six years and aims to plan the future years of our Order, as well as elect the new General Curia.

The 80th General Chapter has reaffirmed the importance of "returning to the sources of our spirituality". In fact, Saint Augustine stated that "no good can be known perfectly unless it is loved perfectly". For this reason, in the coming years, great emphasis will be placed on the knowledge of these sources: Rule, Constitutions, Directory, Ritual, Ratio, and Calendar.

Another significant decision is to invest more time and energy in communication, especially digital media. The creation of the General Direction for Communications has been approved, and the digitalization process of our magazine, *Presenza Agostiniana*, will be concluded.

This special issue that you have in your hands is part of this proposal... it is the first fully digital issue of our magazine! It is a special edition that summarizes the General Chapter and has been published for the first time in three languages!

Enjoy reading it and let us know what you think!

SUMMARY

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IMPORTANCE

OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

From 7 to 20 June, 2023, we, the Discalced Augustinians, celebrated the 80th General Chapter, an important assembly that takes place every six years. For the first time, it was held in the Philippines, where the Order arrived almost thirty years ago and has since expanded to Indonesia, Vietnam, and India.



Opening Mass

The General Chapter is the most important event of a religious family.

The canon 631, §1 says: "The General Chapter, which holds supreme authority in the Institute according to the norm of the Constitutions, is to be composed in such a way that, representing the entire Institute, it becomes a true sign of its unity in charity.

It is for the General Chapter principally: to protect the patrimony of the Institute [...], elect the Supreme Moderator, treat affairs of greater importance, and issue norms which all are bound to obey".

PARTICIPANTS

CAPITULAR FATHERS

Some numbers



25 participants:

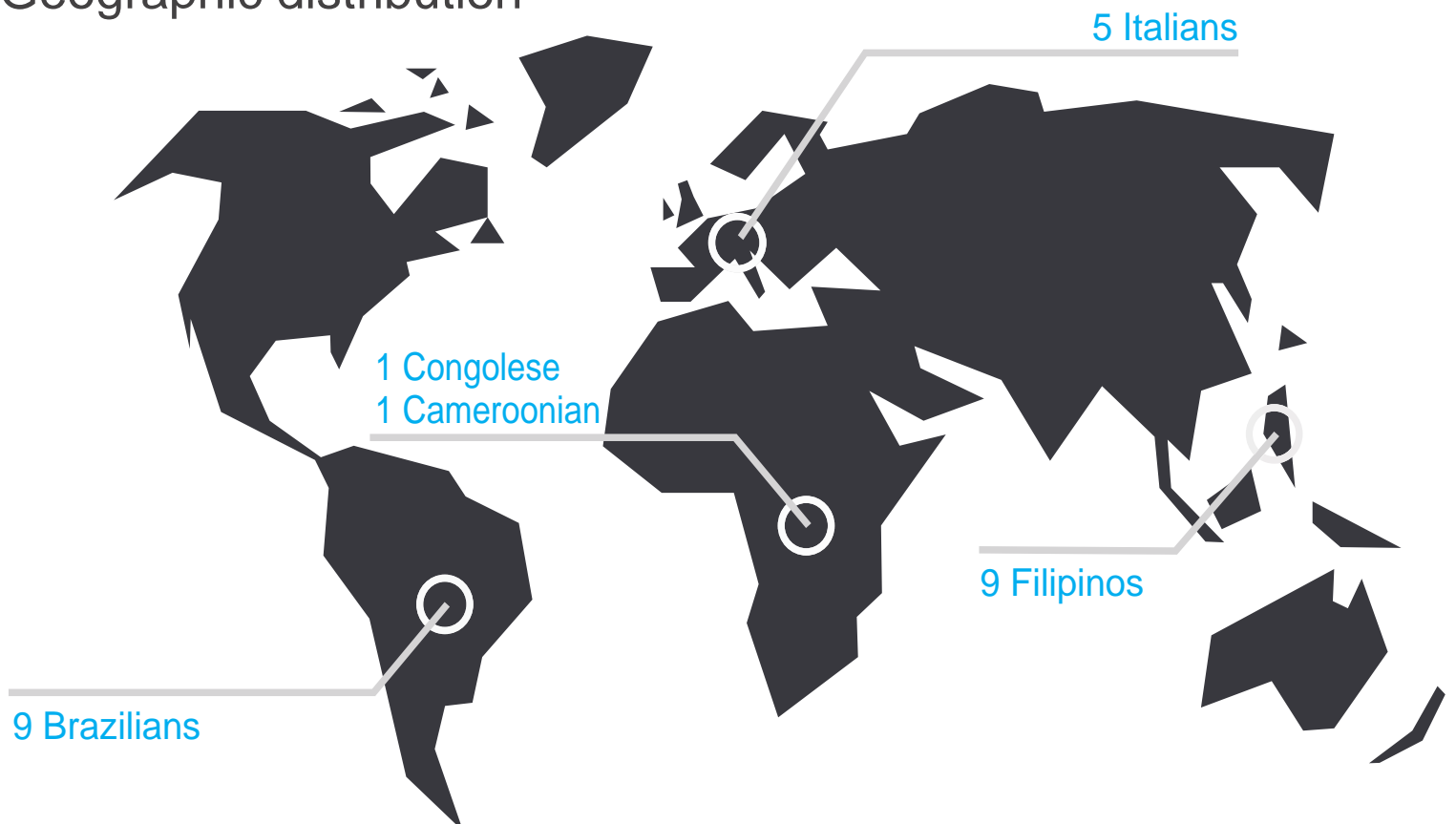
- 7 - General Curia
- 6 - Province of Italy
- 6 - Province of Brazil
- 6 - Province of the Philippines

Each Capitular Father (by right or elected by the confreres) participates in the General Chapter as a representative of the various realities of the Order.

Italian was the language used in the meetings and each participant was always able to express his opinion, in the assembly or in the groups, about the most important topics for the life of the Order.

The average age of the Fathers was 50.7 years, the youngest confrere was Fr. Diones Rafael Paganotto, at 38 years old, while the oldest was Fr. Luigi Kerschbamer, at 75.

Geographic distribution



PLACE OF CELEBRATION

OAD TABOR HILL COLLEGE - CEBU CITY (PHILIPPINES)

The first General Chapter held in the Philippines took place at OAD Tabor Hill College.

The building was inaugurated in 2019, when the Order celebrated the 25th anniversary of our return to Asia.

Currently, Tabor Hill welcomes a School managed by our confreres, as well as offers groups the opportunity to hold retreats and spiritual gatherings.

The spacious building provided everything necessary for the General Chapter: individual rooms, a large dining hall, a big chapter room, a chapel for prayer moments, and a common area.

Tabor Hill College is located on top of a hill, offering a beautiful panoramic view of the neighborhood and a large green space.



CHAPTER WORKS

PRESIDENCY COUNCIL, TOPICS, WORK SCHEDULE



Fr. Getulio Freire Pereira
President



Fr. Nei Márcio Simon
1st Vice-President



Fr. Crisologo Suan
2nd Vice-President



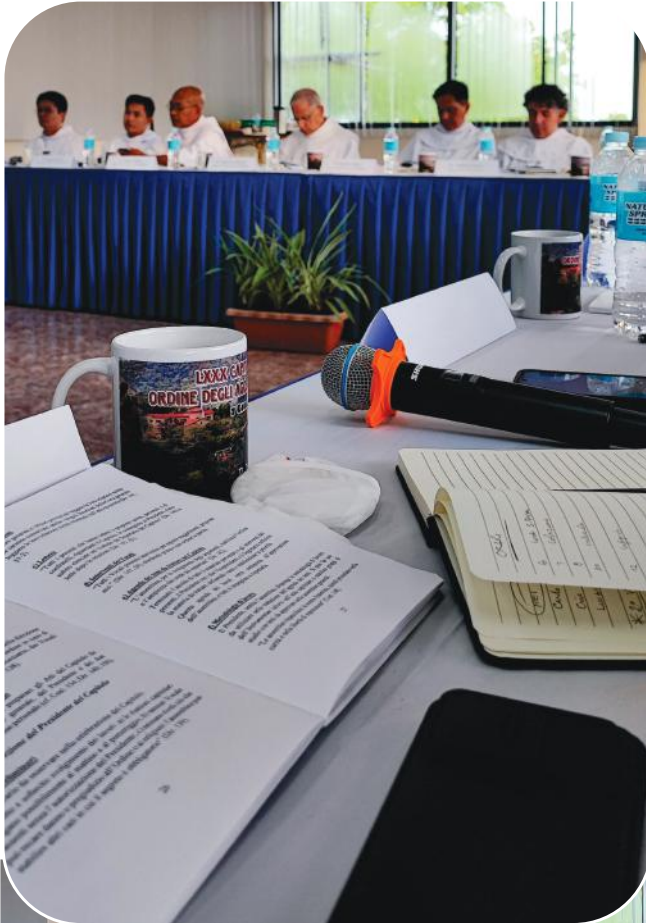
Fr. Carlo Moro
Secretary

One of the first activities of the General Chapter is the election of the Presidency Council, which is responsible for leading the Capitular works.

Our Statutes determine that it is the President's responsibility to declare the opening and closing of the assembly and meetings; to conduct the proceedings; to grant the floor for discussions; to convoke elections, proclaim the results, and confirm the positions; as well as to resolve, together with the Vice-Presidents, any controversies that arise during the Chapter.



Based on the reports presented by the Major Superiors and the In-charge of the General Curia, as well as the contributions of each participant, the Presidency Council has prepared a summary of the topics for discussion.



Four major topics were identified for discussion in the General Chapter, following our Constitutions:

Liturgical Life,
Common Life,
Consecrated Life
 and **Apostolic Life.**

Fr. Getulio Freire Pereira



The life of each Religious Community is marked by the common schedule...

and every General Chapter also requires a schedule for the smooth running of activities: prayers, meals, meetings, free time.

Morning

6:00 a.m. Lauds and Mass

7:00 Breakfast

8:00 Start of the work (morning)

10:00 Break

10:30 Resumption of the work

12:00 Conclusion of the work with

Office of Readings and Midday Prayer



Afternoon

12:30 Lunch

3:00 pm. Start of the work (afternoon)

4:30 Break

5:00 Vespers and Resumption of work

6:30 Conclusion of the work

Evening

7:00 Dinner

Free time

A great innovation of this General Chapter was the use of electronic voting. The main decisions were made quickly, ensuring confidentiality and the secrecy of each vote.

Fr. Diones Rafael Paganotto

PROGRAMMATIC DOCUMENT

GUIDELINES FOR THE NEXT SIX YEARS OF OUR ORDER

INTRODUCTION

1. We, the Vocals of the 80th General Chapter, thank the Lord for gathering us at Tabor Hill in Cebu City, Philippines, in view of the 30th anniversary of our return to Asia.
2. We are deeply grateful to God for all the gifts received and rejoice in the work done over the last six years, which has offered the Order a complete revision of the Sources of our spirituality (Dir. 1-3): the Rule, the Constitutions, the Directory, the Ratio Generalis Institutionis, and the Ritual.
3. Reflecting on chapter 6 of the Gospel according to John, we realize that despite our limitations, the Lord has multiplied the fruits of our work. Now we have the task of assimilating and making known what we have at our disposal today, “so that nothing may be lost” (Jn 6:12).
4. After identifying some main themes that emerged from the Reports, individual interventions of the Vocals, the study of the Instrumentum laboris, and the Programmatic Document of the 79th General Chapter (Extraordinary), we proposed to work around four areas already identified in the Constitutions: Liturgical Life, Consecrated Life, Common Life, and Apostolic Life.
5. For each area, we deemed it appropriate to propose three levels around which to guide the work in the Order: exhortations, determinations, and propositions. The **exhortations** aim to recall all those aspects that are already contained in the Sources of our spirituality, they have been recalled at the General Chapter and express real needs that should not be overlooked; the **determinations** are instead operational choices towards which the efforts of the Order should be directed in the next six years; the **propositions** will be adopted for specific decisions.

LITURGICAL LIFE

EXHORTATIONS

6. Use the Ritual in all Communities, especially in Formation Houses.
7. Promote events of ongoing formation on the Sources of our spirituality starting from the fundamental texts such as the works of Saint Augustine and our Proper law.
8. Increase the practice of Community retreats, meditation, and spiritual reading.
9. Turn to the figures of our Venerables as models whose knowledge needs to be promoted so that they may be prayed to, in the hope of obtaining miracles through their intercession.

DETERMINATIONS

10. Implement the translation of the Ritual into the official language of the Provinces and possibly into other languages used in the same.
11. Entrust the General Curia with the drafting of the particular Rites of the Ritual.
12. Enrich the Liturgical Calendar with a table that synthetically indicates the annual celebrations and pious exercises.
13. Choose a representative in each Province to collaborate with the General Curia in preparing the Liturgical Calendar specific to the Order.
14. Promote ongoing formation by celebrating a year dedicated to the Sources of our spirituality with the possibility of a conference at the Order level.
15. Support the work of the General Postulation by enriching and updating the website page dedicated to the Postulation (useful material, status of causes, approved prayers, names and contacts of vice-postulators), and send at least one religious from each Province to participate in the training course for Postulators organized by the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints.

CONSECRATED LIFE

EXHORTATIONS

16. Promote actively ongoing formation starting from the knowledge of the Sources of our spirituality to foster a sense of identity and consecrated life according to the charism.
17. Encourage the religious to take care of personal updating in the different areas of interest of the Order: courses for Formators, spirituality, Theology, pastoral work, Philosophy, psychology, economics, etc. (including online courses).

DETERMINATIONS

18. Organize an annual meeting between the Prior Provincials, preferably in person (taking advantage of the opportunity of the annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the International College in Rome).
19. Encourage meetings between the Prior Provincial and the religious who hold the same office: Priors, Masters, Economos, and Parish Priests.
20. Train competent individuals in legal matters who can prepare an administrative process and offer support and advice.
21. Promote the formation of religious within the Provinces on the protection of minors and vulnerable persons.

PROPOSITION

22. Draft PART V of the Directory on the Protection of Laws.



COMMON LIFE

EXHORTATIONS

23. Practice fraternal correction more frequently, in the spirit of charity of the Rule, the Constitutions, and the Ritual (Chapter of Peace and Renewal).
24. Live what is prescribed in nos. 63-65 of the Directory, remembering that Parishes have been entrusted to the Order and that an individualistic interpretation of the role of Parish Priest does not reflect the spirit of pastoral service of a religious in a Parish.
25. Organize the schedule of the House considering all the activities entrusted to the religious Community.
26. Take care, in matters concerning the internal dynamics of the Communities, to maintain confidentiality and prudence in dialogue, avoiding gossip or slander.
27. Follow what is prescribed in our Proper Law on the administration of goods and prepare the Provincial Ratio Oeconomica.
28. Promote the spirit of subsidiarity and sharing of projects among the Provinces in order to better utilize human and economic resources.

DETERMINATIONS

29. Take care of the preparation of the brothers on the administration of goods (Register of the Administration, legal regulations, fundamental obligations) from the initial formation.
30. Prepare a general Vademecum for the compilation of Registers: Local Chapter, Register of Masses, Register of the Administration, reports sent to Ordinary Provincial Councils and Ordinary General Definitories.
31. Prepare a second general Vademecum for the archiving of documents and the keeping of protocols.

PROPOSITION

32. Revise Section 4 of PART III of the Constitutions and Directory on the Commissariat, in order to configure it as an intermediate entity of government between the Province and the Delegation, both as an ascending and descending path.

APOSTOLIC LIFE

EXHORTATIONS

33. Take care of the groups that share our spirituality and their sense of belonging to the Order (JAD Group, Little Friends of Saint Augustine, Mothers Monica, family groups, etc.).
34. Bear witness to our charism to young people and families, considering the multiplicity of the youth world.
35. Promote vocational pastoral care for the Discalced Augustinian Religious Life involving families and groups that share our spirituality.
36. Encourage affiliation with the Order by deepening its moral and spiritual significance, particularly that of Solemn Professed's parents.
37. Promote the formation of religious in youth pastoral care through courses.
38. Remember that Parishes are not the only form of apostolate to dedicate ourselves.
39. Encourage sharing within the Order of the missionary initiatives undertaken by the Provinces.
40. Stimulate Local Communities to remain open to social needs by undertaking appropriate initiatives and considering the possibility of starting social projects.

DETERMINATIONS

41. Spread the Secular Fraternities of the Order at the provincial level, conforming to the directives of the central authority.
42. Engage Communities in promoting their pastoral action and our spirituality through communication media.
43. Clarify and enhance the General Direction for Missions.

PROPOSITION

44. Create at the general and provincial level the Direction for Communications (new number in the Directory) to promote and coordinate communication at the Order level through the most suitable tools (press, digital media, and others).

CONCLUSION

45. We, the Vocals of the 80th General Chapter, aware that the Lord invites us to return to our homes to testify to the joy of encountering the Risen One, who blessed our loaves of bread and fishes, recognize that our Order has much to offer to the Church and the world.

46. We hope that all the brothers grow in the sense of belonging to our religious family, to give a renewed testimony of the beauty of the Discalced Augustinian Religious Life.

47. We entrust ourselves to the intercession of the Mother of Consolation, Saint Joseph, Saint Augustine, and our Venerable brothers.

Amen. Deo gratias.



PRIOR GENERAL

ELECTIONS

The final act of the General Chapter is the election of the new General Curia. The Prior General is the Supreme Moderator and he governs the entire Order with the assistance of the General Definitors.

On Friday, June 16, 2023, the President of the Chapter declared vacant all the General Offices and invited the Capitular Fathers to a moment of prayer, invoking the light of the Holy Spirit upon this crucial moment for the Order...

After that, Fr. Nei Márcio Simon was elected Prior General, the first of Brazilian origin.

FR. NEI MÁRCIO SIMON

of Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe

born in Palotina (PR), Brazil
on September 26, 1977

received the religious habit
on January 15, 1995

made Solemn Profession
on February 5, 2000

until the General Chapter
Prior and Parish Priest of the
Sanctuary Madonna of Valverde, Italy.



GENERAL CURIA

ELECTIONS

After the election of the Prior General, the participants of the Chapter continued with the elections of the members of the new General Curia.

On Monday, June 19, 2023, the four General Definitors were elected to assist the Prior General in the governance of the Order.

Two Filipinos and two Brazilians were elected...



Fr. Renan Ilustrisimo
Vicar and 1st Definitor General



Fr. Dennis Ruiz
2nd Definitor General



Fr. Airton Mainardi
3rd Definitor General



Fr. Diones Rafael Paganotto
4th Definitor General



General Curia 2023-2029

CLOSING

HOMILY OF THE PRIOR GENERAL AT THE CLOSING MASS

Cebu City, Chapel of Holy Relics, June 20, 2023.

Dear confreres, lays, and friends of the Augustinian family,

We have just heard the Word of God, which strongly exhorts us to intensify our love, not only for those who love us but also for our enemies.

St. Augustine, in Rule number 3, specifies: "the essential reason for your gathering is to live in unity in the house, having one soul and one heart turned towards God."

Does this mean that those who are part of the Augustinian family have no enemies? How wonderful it would be if that were the case! The enemy is not only someone who lives far away from us, a leader who declares war on another nation, but they can also live under the same roof and be part of the same Community.

The enemy can be a confrere who thinks differently from us and conflicts arise whenever we need to dialogue. Thinking this way, it is not the end of the world to have "enemies" because they give us the opportunity to put the Word of God into practice.

Jesus invites us to go beyond, to see the "enemy" as He sees them: a child of God worthy of love. Let us remember that sometimes we are the enemies of others... that we are the ones who need to be forgiven and loved.

St. Augustine does not say that we are perfect, but he invites us to understand the motivation for living together, and here I add: the motivation of belonging to the Order is to build harmony within the Community, overcoming "enemies" to form, throughout life, one soul and one heart walking together towards God.

To achieve this objective, determination is necessary, as we read in the Second Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians: that our YES to God be accompanied by a coherent life; and that our NO to the enemy and sin be confirmed every day, with the grace of God, the intercession of Our Lady, and the protection of the Saints of the Augustinian family and the Venerables of the Order.

I would like to thank every one, young confreres and those of all ages, coming from the different nations where our charism is present or where we still need to bring it and make it flourish: Italy, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Brazil, Paraguay, Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Nigeria, Myanmar, and India, for your YES to God's call.

I would like to thank the confreres of the Province Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, the lays of the associations affiliated with the Order, the benefactors, and the staff, for the excellent welcome they have given to the Capitular Fathers.

I wish for you what you will read in no. 46 of the Programmatic Document of the 80th General Chapter: "that all the brothers grow in the sense of belonging to our religious family, to give a renewed testimony of the beauty of the Discalced Augustinian Religious Life."

Therefore, I warmly exhort you to read many times the Programmatic Document and to implement it in each Community.

We, members of the General Curia, commit ourselves to faithfully follow this rich program, fruit of the most important synodal event of the Order.

And let us not forget to move forward with happiness, together, joyfully serving the Most High in spirit of humility.



SOME PICTURES

GENERAL CHAPTER MOMENTS



Greetings to the new Prior General



Mass at the Basilica of Santo Niño



Meeting with the Archbishop of Cebu



Visit to the Novitiate Community - Merida



Getting to know Cebu City



Meals and meetings with local benefactors