



Intercapitular session: Time Flies!

I imagine that many of you read on our Francophone Canada website, the daily reflection that General Councilor Brother Tim Coldwell writes about the Intercapitular Assembly that our faithful communication person, Denis de Villers, kindly translates (for which I thank him sincerely) for the greater benefit of the colleagues in the District and those who are close to us. I will address the topic from a different angle.

So we're already at halftime, as we say in the sports world, and absolutely everything planned in the program went as expected. It was very busy, and the week to come promises to be just as intense. Without going into the details, I'll give you in the following lines an overview of the topics that will be addressed. To do this, I will use a few items presented in on our agenda.

Monday, address from the Superior General, exchange on projects and horizon; Tuesday, identification of priorities and challenges in "similar" groups; Wednesday, itineraries and plans of formation: legacy and Lasallian values, and discussions on aspects that concern Visitors and Districts; Thursday, vitality and mission subsidiarity, presentation of different experiences of association, report by Brother Jorge on "beyond borders"; Friday, what one needs and what one can offer; Organization of the Institute: changes made and more to come in the face of the future (by Brother Superior General); Saturday, suggestions of topics for the 46th General Chapter, evaluation of the session, closing ceremony at 12:00.

Last Friday, I met for 90 minutes with the new visitor of Central Africa District (former District of Douala, with a slightly different territory), Brother Anatole Diretenadji. We agreed to meet in late afternoon in a small lounge near the main entrance for an exchange of information. From the start, he asked me for some news about Brothers of our District, which he knew well. The work we did, as a District (the former Districts in particular), continues to bear fruit. The Brothers are very committed to the development of works, and they see the future in a positive way. Like all other Districts of RELAF (Lasallian Region of Africa), one of the main objectives remains self-sufficiency. It's a major challenge, in this Region, and by far, the poorest of the five Lasallian Regions. Despite this, the District novices and the Brothers continue the mission with all their heart.

Statistically, the District of Central Africa currently has 39 Brothers, including nine in formation or studies, the latter using a very large percentage of the budget. The Brothers work sometimes with very poor populations, such as the Pygmies in the forest; they take care of several small primary schools (four or five, if I remember correctly), offering education for at least two or three years to some 750 children, and it's

completely free: absolutely nothing is asked. While taking care of their schools elsewhere in the country, the Brothers teach computer skills in three classes that they have opened in the New Bell prison in Douala (designed for 800 jobs, but who's counting 5,000 inmates); each year, about 65 of them receive a competence diploma during an event to which the population, especially the families, is invited (because most of inmates are young people). So, that's it for the African chronicle!

The Mediterranean cuisine served here at the Generalate seems to please all the participants. Thanks to the olive oil and the generous assortment of fruits and vegetables, it helps to maintain a healthy weight or something like it ... On Wednesday and Sunday lunch, nobody can really resist the appealing gelato. It is an exquisite, apparently unique Italian product!

I do not think that this will disrupt anyone's life, but as the time has just been advanced one hour in North America, which will be done in Europe on the last weekend of the March, the difference in hours between the two continents will be five hours instead of six for the next two weeks.

That's it for today. I'll try to get back to you later in the week for a final word. Thanks to Denis for making this item available on the web, and Brother Gaston for sending it to the communities! Fraternal greetings to all!

Brother Florent Gaudreault, FSC
Visitor, District of Francophone Canada
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