



# Glimpses from the General Chapter



November 6-24, 2023  
Thú Duc, Vietnam

## Glimpse 11 – From the Cenacle to the World Friday, November 24 – Sunday, November 26, 2023

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We came from our various communities to come **“Together as Sacramentinos.”** **The Spirit was moving**, working, and being with us during this unforgettable time of communion in the Cenacle, “the Upper Room” of the headquarters of the Martyrs in Vietnam Province. **“We were here for the whole Congregation and the Eymardian Family.”** These were comments all summarized into one by our capitular, who gave their **evaluation on Friday morning**. We were blessed by a well-run chapter, an amazing host province, and great brothers from across the globe who came with a spirit of love for God, the Congregation, and for service to the world. We spent 90 minutes sharing our gratitude and pride in being Sacramentinos – together for one another and evaluated that experience of the Chapter. We expressed our heartfelt appreciation to the previous General Administration for their hard work in bringing the Chapter to birth, for the capitulars who worked hard for three weeks to make it come alive, and now we pray we will live the chapter experience and implement the decisions previously summarized in *Glimpse 10*.



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Our next order of business was hearing the Memory and Discernment Commission proposal presenting the final draft of our chapter message. We approved our “Final Message” unanimously, with one abstention. It is a message for the entire Eymardian Family to meditate upon and guide our implementation of the proposals. It will be sent separately.

Later, we took time to review the “minutes” or notes of the previous days for the record of the Chapter or the “ACTS” of the Chapter, our official record. After a short break, we voted to close the Chapter and did the customary signature page. Lastly, **Father General Benzy** gave his closing remarks, quoting *Rule of Life* 6:

The Word of God calls us and gathers us together; it accompanies us as a lamp for our steps (Cf. Psalm 119:105). The *Rule of Life* traces out for us a particular way of living the Gospel in the Church. It unites us in a single project of life and mission.

In his remarks, he summarized “our wonderful Cenacle experience.” Father Benzy recalled the opening chapter remarks of our 15<sup>th</sup> General Superior Eugenio Barbosa Martins and his story of the native Vietnamese trees growing together: out of diversity, they grow in unity and become one, the Chapter’s goal. And so, we did! We became a *Rule of Life* community for our time together to bring this energy back home to our provinces and communities.

Fr Benzy expressed his gratitude to a long list of folks who made this Chapter successful: the moderators, council chapter members, and secretary **Louis Demba Dione SSS** (*Senegal*), the translators, **Father Joseph Ai, SSS** Provincial of the host province, the novices, postulants, giving us hope, joy along with all of the Province of Vietnam. He praised and thanked the previous members of the General Council, **Agostinho Maho** (*Mozambique*) and **Joseph Binh** (*Vietnam*), for their hard work, but especially the hard work of our 15<sup>th</sup> General Superior **Eugenio Barbosa Martins**. Father Benzy gave Father Eugenio a token of our appreciation with a traditional Indian shawl as a gift, wrapping him in our love and gratitude for his 12



years of service. Father General then announced who he chose as **Vicar General, Anaclet Bambala SSS** (Democratic Republic of the Congo), with warm applause from the capitulars. Finally, he remarked, *“Capitulars, you have given us so much to do to keep us faithful and focused on our SSS mission. We pray that the Holy Spirit will help us accomplish it.”* We were given a new flag for the Congregation, with red and white symbols symbolizing the Body and Blood of Christ and our logo in the middle.

**In an evening closing Mass**, we celebrated our gratitude on the Solemnity of the Martyrs in Vietnam (*November 24 official day*). We gave a special blessing to the General Council, asking the Holy Spirit to guide their ministry. Following the Mass, we had a special feast and social time with one another, like what we enjoyed on our Sunday “day off,” truly enjoying one another’s company and genuine fellowship.

**Saturday morning, the parish church** celebrated a special solemnity for the martyrs in Vietnam with the Capitulars. A beautiful Mass, choir, and other festivities accompanied the Mass. As if we were starving, we had another large meal, with all the Mass participants joining us in the large province center dining hall. After this event, I went to the Scholasticate to spend time with our students and the director who studied with us in Chicago and Catholic Theological Union. Other students may come to the United States for study, service, and more. I wished to meet and get to know some.

After this brief visit, I went to bed and was up early Sunday for my flight back home! (*I will briefly visit family in Seattle and then return to my community on Wednesday.*) It has been a joyful, memorable experience – not to be forgotten, and I appreciate you sharing it with me during these weeks and glimpses from our 36<sup>th</sup> General Chapter! A bientôt!

PS Thanks for your prayers for our safe returns to our countries.





Capitulars in the official photo



New General Council team



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Our new Superior General, Philip Benzy Romician SSS,  
thanks and honors the outgoing Superior General,  
Eugenio Barbosa Martins SSS



Our translators



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Africa Conference with our flag and Superior General



American Provincials with the new Superior General and new flag



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The bell to bring us back to sessions with Brother Ignatius (India)



Martyrs in Vietnam shrine for the patronal solemnity of the Vietnamese Province





We sing our Chapter theme song one last time before concluding



Our new Vicar General, Anaclet Bambala SSS  
(Democratic Republic of the Congo)







Father Maurits Gijbrechts SSS (*Belgium*) and I were glad to work with the Chapter Council as representatives of the capitulars



Outgoing General Secretary Joseph Binh (*Vietnam*) worked tirelessly, day and night, so the Chapter ran smoothly



Friends gather





Fathers Ai (*Host Provincial from Vietnam*), Benzy (*Superior General*) and Anaclet (*Vicar General*)



Procession to Mass for the Feast of the Martyrs of Vietnam



Nice to relax



Former and current Superior Generals enjoying a moment







“English-speaking conference” - Fathers Ben Ho and Philip Watkins (*Australia*) and Darren Maslen (*England*)



Three Superior Generals



SSS Postulants to the left







SSS student choir



Behind SSS postulants are the SSS novices





New Superior General delivering a message of service



Former provincial of Vietnam, Father Peter Cung, preaches in English



Father Superior General, Philip Benzy Romician, offers greetings and gratitude







Members of the Eymard Family offer the Universal Prayers



Parish's shrine for the Martyrs in Vietnam







Superior General and General Consultors blessing Capitulars at the end of the Mass

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The Capitulars bless the new General Team



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All SSS religious



SSS religious with the Eymardian Family



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