



# Glimpses from the General Chapter



November 6-24, 2023  
Thú Duc, Vietnam

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## Glimpse 5 – The SSS Mission Across the Globe – Sunday, November 12, 2023



We meet in the heart of the SSS world - in Vietnam - according to Father General

One of the highlights of the General Chapter is hearing the great SSS ministry occurring across the globe. We began with the Asian Conference and province in this region sharing their highlights on **Thursday afternoon, November 9**. First, our **Australian Province (Holy Spirit)** and **Father Philip Watkins SSS** shared about their internationality. Twenty men



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are in Sydney and Melbourne, with city center/shrine parishes. They have four international priests, three from Vietnam and one from India, to support their ministry.

Secondly, our **Indian Province** (*Christ our Light*) and **Father Peter Jayakanthan Dorairaj** highlighted the vibrant life of their province. The key mission currently is **Prayer – Fraternity – Service!** The richness of the Eucharist is focused in all our programs, events, and animations. Parish communities highlight a day during the parochial feast day with a prepared Eucharistic day. It includes first communion, Eucharistic procession in the streets, and



Members of the Indian province including the General Treasurer, Father Benzy (*in gray shirt*)

adoration. SCCs (*Small Christian Communities*) are initiated and guide living as Eucharistic communities. We are blessed with **Father Paul Raj Gnanasekar** in our community of Houston, Texas, to serve the good people of Corpus Christi Parish.

**Father Roel de la Cruz SSS**, reported for our **Philippine Province** (*Our Lady of the Assumption*). It was great to see pictures of the new provincial center near Manila and hear that initiatives that were part of a partnership with our Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing (CEE) so that the Life in the Eucharist seminars for adults and youth

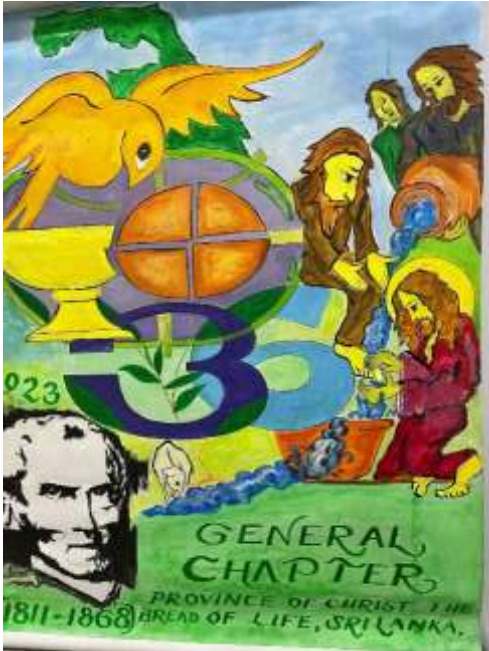
continue to grow strongly, leading many members becoming part of the Aggregation



Father Peter Dorairaj, from the Indian Province, shares his report in English



of the Blessed Sacrament. The province has many ministries with the poor and actions to build justice and peace. Besides many parish/shrine centers in the Philippines, the province has expanded to support and administer ministries in Canberra, Australia, Madrid, Spain, Pueblo, Colorado, and two islands in Hawai'i. As we have highlighted before, we have three religious generously serving us in the mainland USA. Still, it is worth mentioning again that we are so grateful to **Father Juancho Ramos** at Saint Paschal Baylon, Highland Heights, Ohio, **Father Mark de Rosario** at San Antonio, Texas, and **Father Joselito Hitois** at Holiday, Florida. The province continues to have strong vocation and formation efforts, too.



Painting by Sri Lankan SSS sent to capture our mission

**Father Justin Chawkan SSS** from Sri Lanka (*Bread of Life Province*), gave this report with an impressive number of 10 men in teaching ministries. One of our SSS bishops, who has served in Sri Lanka and recently retired, lives at our one retreat center and supports a parish on the weekends. We have a presence in 7 of the 12 dioceses of Sri Lanka. It is impressive to hear all the men they have hosted in formation to educate and support them for future ministry. Sadly, due to the country's economic collapse, many young people have left for other countries for a better life, which is their vocation ministry. We are grateful to priests supporting our USA mission in Houston,

**Father Christian Christopher** as a hospital chaplain, and Father Aruna

Laksiri serving the Archdiocese's cathedral as a parochial vicar.



With Mary Nguyễn (*mother of our priest Fr JK - Joseph Kiet*) 90 miles from the SSS

**Father Joseph Ai SSS**, provincial of Vietnam (*Martyrs in Vietnam*), gave a detailed report Vietnamese are trying to learn different languages to share with their





The entire Nguyen family meets the tall priest from America



Vu Family of our seminarian Bro Joseph Thuan Vu SSS



Marian Shrine near the Nguyễn home

members across the globe. In our province, we have two currently: **Father Joseph Kiet (JK) Nguyen SSS** as a hospital chaplain at Hillcrest Hospital, a Cleveland Clinic Hospital a few miles from our house in Highland Heights, as well as a student learning English on his way begin seminary studies, **Brother Joseph Thuan Vu SSS**. During my visit here in Vietnam, their families invited me to their homes for lunch and tea to thank me and the Province of Saint Ann for welcoming these fine men into our home in Ohio. It was a lovely gathering with so much food and family to enjoy. I was grateful to have an interpreter a family friend, who assisted me in talking with the families. Separately, we highlighted two SSS priests in advanced studies in Connecticut, **Father Martin Hien Tran SSS** and **Anthony Trang Pham SSS**. Also,



ministering in Houston at Corpus and preparing for post-graduate studies, Father Joseph Doan SSS lives with this community. Lastly, we are blessed with a Vietnamese province member, **Father Dominic Long**, pastoring in Holiday, Florida.

**Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** and **Uganda's** Provincial, **Father Oliver Nondo** (*Blessed Isidore Bakanja*), shared their ministry, including a Eucharistic week each year around the Solemnity of the Body and



Special lunch after a visit to the statue



Many of the SSS African Conference with Father Norman Pelletier and myself teach religion, run an orphanage, and work in the health and carpentry workshops. It is part of the focus on justice and peace. A tragic number is the fact that 12 million people, primarily children and women, were killed in DRC, victims of natural wealth that folks fight over in both of the countries where we serve. "Out of the blood of the martyrs," our faith grows stronger, especially with the SSS witness.

Blood of Christ, and a member is in charge of the diocesan office of liturgy in Kinshasa, DRC. Not only in liturgy do we add to the mission of the local church, but also in our school, we





Ending Morning Prayer and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

**Father Yves Sagna**, Province of **Senegal**, and now in **Guinea Bissau** (*Our Lady of Africa*), reported on the growth of our presence in Senegal for over 60 years. This region only became a province at our last General Chapter in 2017 and had its first chapter in 2018. The second chapter was last year. In 2018, we had a special surprise with the naming of an SSS bishop, **Martin Tine**, of a central city in Senegal, the Diocese of Kaolack. With an expansion into Guinea, members have had to

learn not only their second language, French (*their first being their native tongue*), but now Portuguese and Creole for the parish of Saint Mary in Guinea. There are young there who have become members of the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament in our two parishes in the city of Dakar. Multinational organizations are coming into the country, giving hope to economic issues that have stressed the country. This province is hoping to expand into France as well near Normandy.

In a very creative presentation of their province, **Father Marcelo de Silva** wrote a "Letter to Father Eymard" to share the ministry of **Our Lady of Guadalupe** province (*Brazil, Argentina, Chile*) and say that he would be proud that they still do the similar ministry of his times, where they have parishes that actively reach out to the poor, houseless, undocumented, pregnant women and provide psychological counseling.



Due to language issues, **Father Carlos José Sierra Rodriguez**, provincial of Columbia-Peru, can only speak Spanish. Through the help of the delegate, **Father Elibien Joseph** (*Haitian by birth*), they were able to add to the incredible social justice ministry that our parishes provide in the major cities of Lima, Bogota, and Medellin. *(We also had two more reports from Africa and two more reports from Europe, but due to the lack of space – and this is just a “glimpse,” I will end here.)*



Originally from Haiti, Father Elibien Joseph serves in Lima, Peru

After hearing the province reports, we were asked to share an impression of our SSS life across the globe. Our **Father Norman Pelletier** provided an observation and theological construct to improve our language that has shaped our mission statements: we need to move from using the word “Fraternity” to “Disciples.” First, it is not inclusive, especially with women in our Eymardian family. This word change is more Biblical, for it is who we are called at baptism to be disciples of Christ. We follow Jesus Christ, who has called us into discipleship. Hearing so many times how we Christians and Sacramentinos are the minority in countries and cultures, we need to study ecumenism (*and interfaith dialogue*) and promote this in our studies to bring Christ to others and be in dialog for betting our society through our Christian vision. **Father Darren Maslen** from



Breakfast pho, while mastering chopsticks





Current General Secretary Joseph Binh inspecting breakfast on his birthday

Liverpool said he was struck by the extraordinary ladies, men, and young people who got to the “Eymard Seminary” in Brazil to learn about him, our charism and be formed as a “Sacramentino” (*Blessed Sacrament*) religious or member of the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament.

Improving upon Father Norman’s intervention about a “Community of Disciples,” **Father Sagara** from Sri Lanka wanted to build upon how we refer to ourselves and our mission using the word “Cenacle.” From the Cenacle, Christ instituted the Eucharist, the community gathered in prayer with Mary at the Cenacle, and the Holy Spirit sent them up to become apostles from the Cenacle. Eymard wanted the Cenacle to be our special place in Jerusalem. So, **Father Sagara** felt it would be a great phrase



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to share with our members that we are a “Cenacle of Disciples.” Perhaps an improved motto for us is emerging as “Cenacle disciples of Service and Prayer.”

We reflected on our “internationality” and its positives and challenges. We also hope the next General Administration offers more intense communication, synodality, diversity, and growth in our liturgical life, especially implementing Pope Francis’ latest encyclical on the liturgy mentioned earlier in *Glimpses*.

Our current General Treasurer, **Father Philip Benzy Romician** (*India*), led Friday afternoon, November 10, and Saturday morning, November 11, with a complete financial report for 2017-2022. We had up-and-down years with the economy affecting our investments and income due to changes in the market, COVID-19, and the war in Ukraine. We discussed our General House in Rome and how the property’s exterior was renovated, just as it was completed in 1994, to bring it up to building codes. A piece of the façade fell in 2018, making this a massive project, taking over a year to complete by September 2023. We met in small groups to react to the lengthy 90-minute financial report, the 60-minute Finance Commission report, and the new Guidelines for Treasurers and Management of Funds. We had many excellent suggestions to improve our financial structure globally, for it is a challenge for us, especially funding formation, including the ordained priesthood.

Saturday afternoon became devoted to completing reports, having small group discussions on Canon Law changes (*we’ll share more about that when we vote on them*), and resting after 6-long work days. Sunday is the Lord’s Day and a day of rest in our Christian tradition. Most of the group is going on a bus tour to see a special part of Vietnam’s nature and take a boat trip along a historic river. This delegate will stay in the AC of his room and catch up on some reading, writing, and a movie to relax. We appreciate your prayers helping us have quite a successful week and an enjoyable time getting to know one another. Until next time, a bientôt!

