



Orden de San Agustín
PROVINCIA DE SAN JUAN DE SAHAGÚN

II Capítulo Provincial Ordinario

Guadarrama, 9 de July ,2024

The 2nd day of the Chapter has been arduous and intense due to the topics discussed. Today the much-awaited elections of the Provincial Secretary and Provincial Treasurer took place and after only 24 hours since the nomination of candidates by the Prior Provincial. But let us keep this topic in suspense, keeping the uncertainty and curiosity of the readers as long as possible.

Invoking the Lord's Guidance

We start the day in the chapel with the common prayer of the lauds, well prepared in chants and monitions by the liturgical team. Today, the Eucharist will take place in the afternoon, taking advantage of the presence of the laity in the afternoon session.

The Delegations speak

The morning meetings are presided over by Fr. Javier Pérez Barba (Assistant General), in the absence of the Prior General. The Provincial Secretary reads the messages to the Chapter of Sr. Angelita Velasco, Priory General of the Augustinian Missionaries, and Fr. Enrique Gómez, Augustinian Recollect and secretary of FAE (Federation of Augustinians in Spain).

The moderator, Fr. Jesús Torres, gives the floor to Fr. Francisco Robles, first, and later to Fr. Lucian Borg, who present the economic reality of the two Delegations dependent on the Province, Central America and Cuba.

With heartfelt gratitude for the constant support they receive, both representatives present the reality of two small circumscriptions, with an austere and simple economic status and that is based above all on the good work of the religious and on the commitment of the



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Province to them especially in complicated social realities and that deserve gratitude to the brothers who make up our communities. After this session, the complex reality of the two existing currencies in Cuba, the CUP (Cuban Peso) and the CUC (Cuban Peso Convertible), and the changes that have occurred in recent times, has become clearer to all those present, thanks to Fr. Lucian and his clarifying explanations.

At the end of this part, the chapter delegates are asked if they have doubts or questions to present about the economic reports of the communities they had received in advance. The lack of questions is a sign that the accounts are clear and transparent.

Professorium and theological centers

We now venture into a highlight issue, because the Chapter will have to decide about the future of our professoriums and theological centers.

First, Fr. Manuel Sánchez Tapia takes the floor with the report on the San Agustín Theological Center of El Escorial. Highlighting the strengths and possibilities of the said center and presenting the activities that take place in it. He then attends to the questions and comments of the participants, trying to value the permanence of the theological center of the Escorial Monastery for the value of the place and for the possibilities it offers as a promoter of studies.

Although the intervention of Br. David Álvarez Cineira takes place in the afternoon session, due to his absence in the morning session, we put it here for editorial logic. In the presentation of the Estudio Teológico Agustiniiano of Valladolid, its director focuses the intervention on showing the 3 dimensions of the center: study, teaching and spreading of Christian theology and thought. Considering the projected image of the center in the Diocese of Valladolid and in the universal Church, emphasizing on its value as a source of cultural promotion and evangelization.



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Soon after, Fr. Rafael Alonso reports on the Profesorio in El Escorial followed by the report of Fr. Nolasco Msemwa for the Profesorio in Valladolid. Fr. Rafael notes an evolution in the profile of the candidates, with a more conservative team than in the past and with a greater sense of belonging to the Order. Fr. Nolasco asserts on following the lines and guideposts of the newly approved Ratio Institutionis. In both cases it is insisted that, regardless of where the Profesorio will be in the future, the important thing is to put people at the center, not structures nor institutions, and in this case professed brothers and their integral formation, with the 3 pillars of the Augustinian religious life: prayer, community life and mission. If we standby this criterion, let us be assured that the Holy Spirit will guide us to where it suits us best.

Pre-novitiate and vocations

If the above topic is controversial, no less is the one that follows below, with the intervention of those who represent the previous stages of vocational discernment.

The intervention of Fr. Tomás Marcos, in charge of the Pre-novitiate, presents the process followed in the last quadrennium. It is verified that 2 of the pre-novices we had are in our Professorium today, while the last 4 have not persevered. The experience on the path traveled leaves some teachings that will help us in the future. This includes the suitability of carrying out this formation stage in a place close to the region of origin of the pre-novice as well as the duration of this period of discernment. In any case, the experience can be described as positive.

Next, the floor is given to Fr. Pablo Rojas, head of the Provincial Vocation Team, who begins with a message of gratitude for the commitment and support of religious and communities. His mission has been to coordinate vocational promotion in Spain and Portugal, something that is in the soul of Evangelization. Knowing that the primary vocational promotion is the very testimony of life of the religious and the communities, the team, which has developed a work plan based on the search, the encounter, discernment and the



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decision, has accompanied the communities in what they have requested and have been present on social networks. This is not an easy task, since sowing and planting does not guarantee fruits and the temptation to fall into frustration is inevitable. But, in any case, discernment must continue with hope.

With the prayer of the intermediate hour, the morning sessions ended, waiting for new issues to face.

School Accrediting Team

Once the Prior General came to preside the Chapter, on this occasion, Fr. Isaac Estévez served as Moderator. For this session, D^a Ana Bello, member of the Accrediting Team, is invited to speak. Fr. Valeriano Aldonza, president of the School Accrediting Team (Equipo de Titularidad de los Colegios), also presented the *raison d'être* (purpose of existence) of it and the work done during these years. The four fundamental accents have been the Management of a Personnel Selection Plan, the promotion of the Pastoral Plan, the convenience of incorporating an Educational Marketing Plan and the attention to sport as an educational tool. Responding to questions asked by attendees, D^a Ana Bello considers that we have made a risky and courageous bet, which requires taking the formation of the laity seriously so that they can lead the management of our centers with the greatest possible success. Fr. Isaac Estévez emphasizes the need to advance the Pastoral Pedagogical Plans as a means for our educational centers to be sources of evangelization.

The Prior General ends by thanking the Province for all the effort it makes in the evangelizing project of the schools.

The elections are coming

Just before the mid-afternoon break, we proceed to the election of the brothers who will perform the tasks of Treasurer and Provincial Secretary. The nominated brethren were, respectively, Fr. Víctor Fernández Santos and Fr. Alfonso Turienzo Martínez. Following the established protocols, the secret vote is carried out. For Provincial



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Treasure the result is clear: 54 votes in favor and 6 votes otherwise, therefore Fr. Victor is elected Treasurer. As for the election of the Provincial Secretary, Fr. Alfonso with an even more overwhelming result of 57 votes in favor and 4 votes against.

Lay session

The last session of the day begins with the intervention of the representatives of the Augustinian Lay Fraternities. Of the 10 lay Augustinians present, four representatives of fraternities of Madrid spoke to us: D^a Elena García, from the Augustinian Lay Fraternity in Colegio San Agustín - Madrid, D^a María Cristina, from the Parish of San Manuel and San Benito, D^a Carmen Villanueva, from the monastery of El Escorial, and D^a Ana, from the parish of Sta. Ana y la Esperanza. From the gratitude for the accompanying work, they requested for material to give a better structure and formation to the fraternities.

Marisa Puente speaks for the Secretariat of Laity and Family, who appreciates the trust placed in the laity to be part of said Secretariat. She explains the activities organized by it and offers its availability for what is requested.

For the Secretariat of Children and Youth, Mr. Maxi García speaks, who asks the Augustinians for accompaniment and support, commitment to the activities they organize and especially care for the Parishes.

For the Secretariat of Missions and Justice and Peace, D^a Marga Sánchez speaks to us, informing us of the actions developed in these years, which have to do with awareness, the dissemination of projects and missionary volunteering. Next, she presents two proposals to the Chapter so that, if they are considered appropriate, the chapter members assume them in the Provincial Program.

After the comments of some religious, both the Prior General and Prior Provincial expressed their gratitude.



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Confirmation of elected positions

Soon after, Fr. Alejandro Moral solemnly confirms the appointment of the elected Provincial Treasurer and Provincial Secretary, upon the arrival of Fr. Alfonso Turienzo, both being acclaimed with prolonged applause. Congratulations, brothers, and may the Spirit assist you in your work.

Shared Eucharist

The day ends with the celebration of the Eucharist. It has been presided over by the Most Rev. Julián García Centeno, OSA, bishop emeritus of Iquitos, with the participation of the laity attending this chapter session. In the homily, the celebrant has reminded us of the common mission that the Augustinians developed, in communion with the laity, called to go out like Jesus, exploring the cities and villages. We know, He has told us, that we are in the world but we are not of this world, so we must seek a strong root in God through a deep life of prayer and an authentic Augustinian community experience, pillars that will allow us to be faithful to our mission. Undoubtedly some vivid words for this Chapter moment. Thank you very much, Msgr. Julian.

In this way, an intense but at the same time fruitful second day is put to an end.

P.S.: The day is over, but the chapter members still had the opportunity to peek at the future of the Spanish National Team to see it triumph against our French neighbors, thus sneaking into the European final. Congratulations, you are the best!

P. Ángel Andújar, OSA
Chronicler