

RELIGIEUSES DE L'ASSOMPTION
 MAISON GENERALICE
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ONE OF THE GREATEST OF OUR NEW SAINTS
 MARIE EUGENIE,
 HAS GIVEN TO THE CHURCH
 A VISION OF INFORMED AND INTELLIGENT
 THAT SEEKS TO DIALOGUE
 WITH THE WORD AND THE CULTURE, RATHER THAN
 HIDE FROM IT

(Sermon by Fr. Robert Gibbons, Monk and priest of the
 Greek Catholic Melkite Church in Londres)



Paris, 21 April 2008

Dearest Sisters and Friends,

Foundation Day is a time to celebrate the many gifts that Marie Eugenie has given to the Church. The gift evoked by Fr. Gibbons at the Thanksgiving Mass for the canonization in London is one of my favorites and so relevant for today when a new global world is being born. She did not retreat or hide when confronted by the major questions of her times and hers was a century of deep and tumultuous social upheaval. Nor did she lack patience or planning. Founding a religious order whose aim was the extension of God's Kingdom through education was not a piecemeal or punctual response to her times. She knew God's works proceed slowly. She knew that she needed to lay the foundations and build carefully according to the norms of St. Paul.

9For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. 10By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. 11For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. (I Cor. 3:9-11)

Marie Eugenie did not stop at wishful thinking and dreaming. She took action. New social theories are to my mind describing Marie Eugenie's approach to transformation with amazing accuracy! Many people have observed how modern she actually is. Brian Arthur¹ in talking about a social change theory mentions three movements: observation, going to an inner space of stillness, and acting in an instant. *This (acting in an instant) means to prototype the new in order to explore the future by doing. To create a little landing strip of the future that allows for hands-on testing and experimentation.* Marie Eugenie expressed these same ideas for the Assumption when she encourages focused action in a little sphere, action flowing out of contemplation. You can see in this image of a landing strip for airplanes, that I've made progress since my greeting card for the 10th of March when I used the image of a boat for the Assumption!!!!

During these weeks after Easter, we often sing at Auteuil,
 Chant et marche, alleluia! Sing and advance, alleluia!
 Allez à la rencontre de ta joie! Go towards an encounter with joy!

We can picture ourselves creating in our lives that *little landing strip* where the joy of a world, as place of glory for God, can touch down!

Some news of the Congregation

Since the end of the CGP work has been on-going for us because we have the responsibility of finalizing certain documents that the Provincials and the Regional Superiors entrusted to us. Thank you for sharing with us the reactions of the sisters to the CGP documents.

A month after the end of the CGP we had the joy of welcoming the Junior Sisters preparing for their Final Vows. It is an enrichment for our community to welcome the sisters to the Motherhouse. The chapel is full once more and the liturgy better sustained. The Sisters come from 4 continents: 8 Provinces and the Region of Central

¹ W. Brian Arthur quoted in *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges* (Cambridge MA: Society for Organizational Learning, 2007), Otto Schärmer)

Africa are represented.

They are 9 from Africa, 4 for the Americas, 4 from Asia and 1 from Europe. Aside from what they receive from the Council, they have sessions with outside resource persons some of whom are our own Sisters. They have already had the Old Testament with Sr. Sophie Ramond who analyzed the book of Ruth with them. These days it is Sr. Marie Sophie who speaks to them of St. Paul and who, with them, meditates on the Epistles. In May, Sr. Cecile Renouard will speak to them on Solidarity and Sustainable Development; Sr. Therese Agnes on Transformative Education; Fr. Hervé Stéphan on Holiness: a path of freedom; Sr. Cristina Maria on the Way of Holiness of MEugenie of Jesus; Fr. Marcel Neusch on St. Augustine and the Interior Master and Sr. Therese Maylis on the history of the Congregation. We will have the opportunity of making a pilgrimage in the footsteps of Marie Eugenie in Paris and then in the land of Mother Marie Eugenie. For this pilgrimage to Preisch we have invited this time the other families of the Assumption who will send one member to represent them. In June we will have the joy of welcoming Sr. Miriam Moscow who will develop the theme of the Alliance and Sr. Catherine Sesboué on technology and communication.

Since Sr. Clare Teresa came for a meeting of the International Finance Team, we profited to have her speak of the Congregation and of Marie Eugenie. The session will last until 22 June 2008. During the session, Srs. Diana and Brigitte will go for the visit of the new Province of the South Atlantic “born” during the CGP from the union of Argentina and Brazil.

We entrust to you the juniorists’ retreat with Fr. John Franck an Assumptionist from the USA which begins on Sunday 20 April and which will end on Tuesday the 29th.

The GPC gave new momentum to Assumption Together. We saw the importance of strengthening the CPAA (Permanent Council of the Friends of the Assumption). It is now composed of Olivier Le Gendre who is the General Coordinator, then Marc Bourgois responsible for communication and Stella ‘Chinit’ Rufino, responsible for formation plus two new members who have accepted to reinforce it – Giancarlo Ricci and Teresa Ortuño. Both were present at the Chapter of 2006 and have continued to participate and coordinate the activities of Assumption Together in their respective provinces (Italy and Spain).

The new CPAA is therefore almost completely European. We reflected a lot before taking this decision because it does not correspond to our desire for internationality. However, we are not yet in a financial situation that will allow us to create such a team, because of the high cost of air travel. To remedy this situation we will invite those responsible for Assumption Together in the other continents to the next CGP.

However, as you already know, we will have the joy of organizing an ‘Assumption Together Congress’ in August 2010 in Spain, probably in Leon. There too finances have constrained us. In fact, the trips to Latin America – the continent which offered to host the Congress – are really too expensive especially if we think that those in Africa must first pass by Europe and the trips from Asia to the Americas are also very expensive.

A team is being composed in view of this Congress. We are waiting for the results of the consultation to communicate the names to you. For the moment we are happy to tell you that Emilia Argüello (Ecuador) has accepted to form part of the team.

Another team is also being set up for finances. We have seen the importance of finances to support the international structures. Soon you will know the results of our consultation regarding this team.

Before ending, we’d like to share with you our concern for Olivier. He has had some health problems lately and will need to slow down a little his work schedule. He and his wife Anne have also been very affected by the tragic death of one of their nephews who was only 22 years old. Let us pray for them and their whole family.

As you can see, Assumption Together continues on its way and progresses in line with all that the Church is living regarding the laity. April 30 will surely be a new opportunity in your provinces and in your communities to rejoice for the gift of Marie Eugenie to the Church and to continue deepening her charism together.

United in the joy of our mission, affection and prayer,

Diana ra
Superior General