

**The 36th General Chapter
Brothers of the Sacred Heart
From an American, first-timer's perspective
(continued)**



Wednesday, May 9, 2018



Today began like every other day during the Chapter. We, as an Anglophone group, gathered in our small chapel on the 4th floor of the Generalate at 7:00 AM for morning prayer and then went to the larger chapel on the main floor of the house for Mass. This Mass was in English organized by Brother Paul Montero.



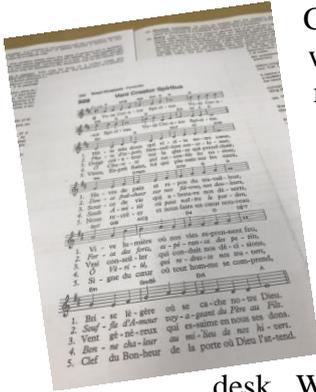
A couple of times, but we worked through it.

After breakfast, we had our normal two sessions continuing the topic of “An Appropriate Initial and Ongoing Formation” where we hammered out more specific wording on proposals for both areas. Happily, the process went much more smoothly than yesterday’s, and there was more consensus on the re-worked draft proposals than initially experienced. It continues to amaze me how words have different connotations in different languages, and this stumped us a

We broke for lunch a little early, and you could tell something was in the air. It had been there since the first moments of the day. Today was the day we elected our new Superior General, and everyone was abuzz with anticipation. A short list of 8 candidates had been determined by a process of the entire assembly two days ago, and the names of three Americans were on it. Brothers throughout the morning kept teasing us that, in all probability, the next General would come from the states. We’d see soon. Today was the day we voted “for real.”



When we reassembled at 3:30 PM, Brother Albert Faye, General Secretary and Election Committee Chair, explained the procedures to the Assembly. He even went into detail regarding how we determine the new Superior should we require a 5th ballot. That would certainly NOT be necessary. After what seemed like pages of directions, we began the election with a prayer in song to the Holy Spirit, Veni Sancte Spiritu.



We sang three verses; we each wrote one name on a slip of paper; and we slipped our vote into the sealed box as the teller passed by our

desk. When the tellers counted the ballots to guarantee they had the correct number, two of the ballots were stuck together, so they had to recount them. There was a HUGE sigh as the assembly was frustrated that we had to wait still longer to find out the results of the election.



On the first ballot, five of the eight brothers on the “short list” received votes. Though no one received the required 26 votes to be elected, one person got very close.



On the second ballot, **Brother Mark Hilton** overwhelmingly received the most votes and was elected our next Superior General.

Brother Jose Ignacio spoke in English and asked Brother Mark Hilton if would accept to be Superior for the next six years, i.e. from 2018 until 2024. Once Mark said simply, “I have no great

words of wisdom to share. But in faith and trust, I’ll say ‘Yes!’” Immediately everyone stood and spontaneous applause arose in the Chapter room. Jose Ignacio embraced Mark, and all the brothers assembled, Chapter delegates, translators, brothers in residence, all stood in line to greet

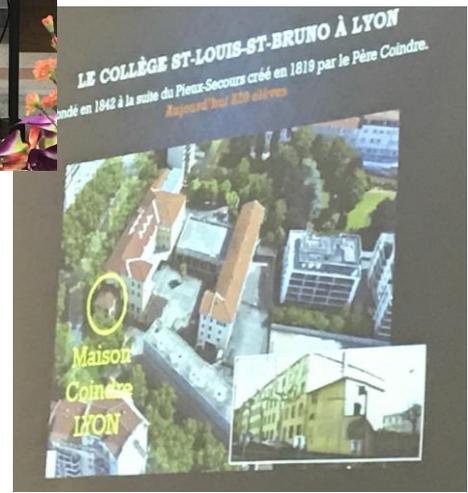
our new Reverend Brother, our own “former” provincial, Brother Mark Hilton. As soon as the welcome line ended, Jose Ignacio asked Mark if he would take his place at the head table as the new president of the Chapter, and Jose Ignacio took Mark’s place at a desk with the rest of us.



What an experience! I was both proud and emotional! Congratulations, Mark! Our prayers are with you as you accept this awesome responsibility.

They say there is no rest for the weary. Once all the hoopla died down, we continued to each nominate two names of potential brothers to be elected first and second councilors. This election will be held on Thursday. While the election committee tabulated the results of this nomination process, two brothers from France presented their province to the group.

Brother Bernard Beudin, provincial, and Brother Joseph Court, delegate, shared a little about the mother province of France to us. Some of what they shared is that France currently has 37 brothers. The youngest is Brother Joseph at the age of 69, and the eldest is 95. The median age is 80. These brothers live in 8 communities throughout France; and our retirement home is in Paradis, where the graves of Brother Polycarp, Brother Xavier, and our first brothers are located. It was quite touching to hear Bernard speak of his confreres and their efforts to keep the charism alive, even in their retirement. Though their bodies are frail, their spirits are alive with the zeal of Father Coindre, and many are still involved in ministry in any number of ways.



Paul Montero led the group of English speakers in a shared evening prayer where everyone shared their feelings of the day. Rather than being a short prayer, we actually went overtime!

At dinner, Jose Ignacio offered a champagne toast to Mark and everyone chimed it. There was a definite festive attitude in the air. Can't wait to see what tomorrow brings and the election of two councilors!



**The latest "Hilton Hotel"
Under New Management
– there's an Australian American in the house!**