



EDITOR'S DESK

Greetings and welcome to this issue of *the assumptionist*...

Since the last General Chapter of the Congregation that took place in Rome in 2005, many new lay initiatives took place. It was during that meeting in Rome that many lay people actively participated for the first time. Religious Assumptionists have considered this event to be the beginning of a new chapter of their religious order - and also as the realization of Father d'Alzon's dream.

In response to the requests of many lay Assumptionists in the United States, a call to action has been recently formed by the Associates of the Assumptionists. This issue of the newsletter brings you the inspiring stories that touch upon this new phase of existence in the Assumptionist family. Our mission is just beginning. However, so much more needs to be accomplished...we need your support and faith to make it happen. We hope you'll consider becoming a part of this wonderful family of lay Assumptionists.

Also in this issue of the assumptionist...Father Bernard Holzer, A.A., provides his eagerly-awaited report from the Assumptionists' mission in the Philippines. Meanwhile, Father Vincent Leclercq, A.A., writes an emotional farewell after finishing his doctoral studies at Weston Jesuit School of Theology. Now he is back in France working with his fellow Assumptionists.

And finally, it is with deepest regret to inform you that Father Joseph Richard, A.A. passed away on January 13, 2008. He was a treasured member of the Assumptionist family and we will miss him dearly.

Once again, thank you for your continued support and encouragement of our newsletter. If there is anything that you would like to share with our team, please do not hesitate to contact us. You can contact our team by e-mail at: newsletter@assumptio.us
For more stories and information on the Augustinians of the Assumption, and for more pictures, please visit our website at www.assumption.us

THE ASSUMPTIONISTS ARE NOT ONLY WHO THEY WERE

by Roger Corriveau, A.A.

Did you know that already fourteen years ago, the General Chapter of 1993 reminded us Assumptionists of a driving hope our founder had? "Emmanuel d'Alzon dreamed of an Assumption consisting of lay people and of religious who would carry together a passion for the Kingdom of God in the world of his own day." Two years ago, the General Chapter of 2005 took another step to realize his dream by inviting fourteen lay men and women to participate in the first session of the Chapter. From those meetings there emerged a seminal idea that has begun to grow in the hearts of all. That idea defines the Assumptionists now as an association of vowed religious and lay persons!

All of you came to know the Assumptionists through a relationship with one of their communities. Some of you came to know them at the same time as I did. We were together in a school founded and staffed by Assumptionists. Through everyday contact with them we came to value friendships built on frankness and intimacy, we developed a witty sense of humor, we stretched ourselves beyond who we were through intellectual rigor, we got to accomplish much through self-imposed discipline, and we developed a deep love for the Church's worship. Through the common life and the mission of the Assumptionists, our lives took a turn they may not have taken otherwise.



How can we continue to grow from and nurture that experience? If you did not become an Assumptionist, you can still be one now. If you did, nurture the friendships you have already formed. The foundations have already been sunk for establishing an association of lay and religious Assumptionists. We do not have to begin from scratch. We religious already live in formed communities that can open their door to a genuine alliance with those of you who have come to love us and who may even be concerned about our future. You can give us a future different from the one predicted by declining numbers, by becoming part of that future.

So what are concrete ways for us to fulfill Fr. d'Alzon's dream and to implement the last General Chapter's hope and decision? A helpful analogy emerges from our common Assumptionist experience of the friendships we have cherished over many years. Each of us came to be fond of another through something we first held in common. As we then grew in intimacy with the other, we grew in intimacy with ourselves, by which we grew in self-knowledge, by which we had more to give the other. And we discovered that God was actually the

continued from page 1 binding force of our friendships. The common life between us continues to grow from our fondness, from our love, for each other.

Now is the time for the Assumptionist community and its lay friends to grow in the same fondness that we grew in for one another. For starters we need to find times for meeting, for catching up with one another and for getting ourselves organized. We can together take advantage of those opportunities that present themselves in the course of any year to celebrate and pray together. From there we can find times for study and for deepening our understanding of the Assumptionist charism, a sharing which cannot but enrich the religious as well. In the Assumptionist association of vowed religious and lay persons, we will all be striving and working for the Kingdom of God and we will share in a mission that sends each of us out to where God takes delight, in human life.

The Associates of the Assumptionists are a special group of people who are attached to the religious congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption, and share in their spiritual and social endeavors. Associates are invited to meet quarterly for Eucharist and a gathering with our spiritual director, Rev. Roger Corriveau, A.A. We have speakers to talk about the Assumptionists in their worldwide activities, and we share with them and each other a support system of caring and sharing. We keep in contact with each other by email and by regular mail, and support each other with prayers and caring. The Assumptionists remember the Associates on the 21st of each month at Mass – the 21st of November is the feast day of Father d’Alzon, the founder of the order. *by Roland Malboeuf*

LAY ASSUMPTIONISTS by Joe Pagano

Whenever I reflect upon significant formative moments of my life, the Assumptionists are right- smack-dab in the middle of my thoughts. As mentors during student days at Assumption College, as peers when I lived in community, as hosts when visiting communities in other parts of the world, as consolers at my father’s funeral, as celebrants at my wedding, and most important, as counselors and friends who have accompanied me on a spiritual journey for twenty-five years.

continued on page 4

DEVELOPMENT OFFICE CORNER

Thank you very much for all your gifts of time, talent and treasure that you have shared with the Assumptionists in the past year. Your generosity gives us the freedom to expand our good works within our community and around the world. Your contributions have also made a lasting impact on the lives of our fellow Assumptionist brothers in the United States and abroad.

Every year the Assumptionists in the United States Region rely on annual gifts from our Friends. These gifts sustain our mission of extending the Kingdom of God through a number of various ministries. Each and every gift has an immediate impact on the daily lives of the Assumptionists and all those who are being reached through our ministry.

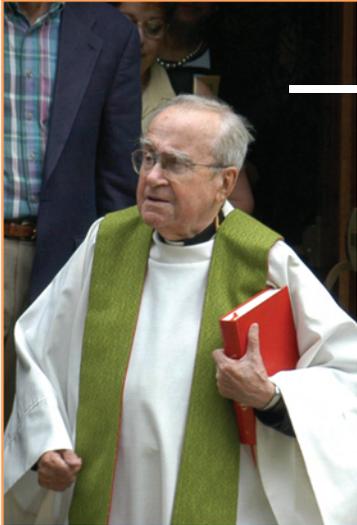
We hope you will consider making further contributions to our ministry in 2008. Any amount you can send will go a long way toward supporting the good works of the Assumptionists. Our mission is far from over; in fact, it’s only just begun.

Once again, thank you for your dedicated support and trust of our ministry. May God bless you and your loved ones – you are always in our prayers.

For more information on these and other giving options please contact Tomasz Kierul at



617-783-0400 by email at tkierul@assumptio.org, or by mail at: The Assumptionists Development Office, 330 Market Street, Brighton, MA 02135.



Reverend Joseph Richard, A.A.

Born: November 30, 1913
Professed: September 30, 1941
Ordained: June 15, 1946
Reborn: January 13, 2008

Our hearts are restless until they rest in you.

St. Augustine

the assumptionist...

a quarterly newsletter of the US Region of the Augustinians of the Assumption

Director of Development: Tomasz Kierul
Editors: Donald Espinosa, A.A., Beth Fleming, Patricia Haggerty, Mary Ann McCue, Joe Pagano
Design: Natalia Kierul

330 Market Street Brighton, MA 02135
Tel 617-783-0400 Fax 617-783-8030
newsletter@assumptio.org
www.assumptionist.us

FAREWELL by Vincent Leclercq, A.A.

Ten weeks after my priestly ordination, it was a real challenge to arrive in America for a doctoral program in theological ethics. Brighton's community made it easier.

As a French Assumptionist, I am grateful to have found a community to live in. Many aspects can be different in religious life on this side of the Atlantic Ocean. But at least, I was in my family and among brothers.

I have learned to understand better the universality of the mission of the Church. I have learned to be hospitable to the differences of age, health, cultural backgrounds, and nationalities and to be a guest despite my own estrangement far away from my country. It is a human and spiritual experience as well. You cannot change the language that you speak with God overnight. Today, I have celebrated more masses in English than I have ever done in French. It will remain true for two years!



Rev. Richard Clifford, S.J., President of Weston Jesuit School of Theology and Vincent Leclercq, A.A.

Doing theological studies and writings in America is more and more attractive for Europeans. The English language is a large part of this interest. Indeed, English is becoming the common language of our global world. The younger generation of Assumptionists knows that more than their elders. It is also the experience of interactive classes and of being asked to read an unbelievable amount of materials.

Our communities wish to share the joys and the hopes, the sorrows and the anxieties of the men of our time, especially of the poor and of all those who hunger and thirst for justice. (Matt. 5:6)
In solidarity with their aspirations and their struggles, we participate in the building of a world which is more just and more fraternal.

Rule of Life #14

I was trained as a physician. As I worked in African hospitals a few years ago, I was upset by the ravages of the AIDS pandemic. Here, I spent two years and a half reflecting theologically about this disease with the best of French and English speaking Christian ethicists and with the best of our Assumptionist spirituality. My dissertation is entitled "Vulnerability and Kingdom of God: an Ethics in a Time of AIDS." It represents two hundred and fifty pages to be involved ethically and engaged in this plague of modern times. At least with my writings, I can forget my French accent, which my brothers find [...let us say] still heavy. Despite this teasing, the bottom line is that Brighton's community made it all possible.

I have not had the opportunity to perfect my English among you. I am returning to France. I will teach at the Catholic Institute of Paris. I will also be involved in the formation of the seventy young religious of the Province of France. Definitely, this experience in Boston will shape the way I will respond to my new missions.

Thanks! And thy kingdom come...

NEWS FROM THE PHILIPPINES by Bernard Holzer, A.A.

As you know, the Assumptionist foundation in the Philippines started on January 24, 2006. In only two years, so many adventures and discoveries! We first had to build this community, to discover the country and its culture, even for our Filipino Brothers who had lived four years in Massachusetts. There was a time to adjust. The five founding members soon welcomed the first candidates who were waiting for us to arrive.

Today, the community lives in two houses: the house of the theologians and postulancy (Adveniat House) and that of the candidates (Pavel House). In the light of the first year's experience, it seemed wiser to separate the different levels of formation; young religious in formation and candidates now live in separate houses.

continued on page 4



Members of the Assumptionist Community in the Philippines

LAY ASSUMPTIONISTS by Joe Pagano *continued*

Even though their numbers are dwindling and younger Assumptionists are increasingly from other parts of the world, what they offer remains critical to our well being. When's the last time you said; "I'm spending too much time praying." "I'm spending too much time meditating." "I'm spending too much time reading and thinking great thoughts." "I'm spending too much time sharing my gifts as I live my life's purpose according to God's Plan." When's the last time you let Jesus, Mary, Saint Augustine, Father d'Alzon, or any Assumptionist confidant (dead or alive) whisper their thoughts to your heart? Maybe today. Maybe yesterday. Maybe not for a long time.

How do I feel about their future, particularly with respect to a lay alliance? That depends upon us. You and I who know there's more in front of us than we're taking advantage of. Maybe some of us pray with Assumptionists daily or celebrate the liturgy weekly. Some may never do. Some of us may work by their side or have at one time. Some may have sat in a class taught by an Assumptionist or maybe still do. Some may often sit across from Assumptionists at a dinner table, a conference table, or in a confessional. Some may never do or may do so infrequently.

Whatever degree of connection; past, present, limited, generous, we can each align ourselves more fully with the Assumptionists through their heritage, witness, friendships, needs, and aspirations. As you and I live out our particular journey, more fully participating in the life of the Assumptionists unites us on a path destined for the kingdom. And that, I believe, can only lead to good things.



From left to right: Julio Navarro, A.A. , Joe Pagano, Noel LeBousse, A.A., Marie-Pierre Girard (France), Jimena Garcia (Chile)

NEWS FROM THE PHILIPPINES by Bernard Holzer, A.A. *continued*

Our purpose is to build an international, inter-Asian and Christ-centered Assumptionist community, sharing our charism with the Filipino people, attentive to their needs, especially those of the poor.



Ed Molina, A.A., Gilles Blouin, A.A.

With the support and participation of the other members of the community, Gilles and Ricky took charge of the Vocation Ministry, keeping regular contacts with young men wishing to dedicate their life to God and the service of others. Regularly, they organize visits and search-in retreats; they go to vocation campaigns organized by various dioceses and meetings of vocation promoters.

Young people of the Manila area have monthly gatherings at



Ricky Martinez, A.A.

Adveniat House. These overnight gatherings consist of sessions, mutual discovery, spiritual formation, talks on initiation to prayer and to the charism of the Assumption, one-on-one dialogue with the formators as well as very fraternal meals. Gilles and Ricky are also foreseeing the production of promotional materials and booklets to foster the knowledge of the Congregation and its founder, Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon. From time to time, a longer discovery visit will be planned for some candidates. They try to collaborate in their ministry with the sister Congregations of the Assumption family.