

Rev. Jean-Paul PERIER-MUZET, A.A.

**A BRIEF HISTORY
OF THE
ASSUMPTIONISTS**

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OF THE
ASSUMPTIONISTS**

Translated by

Rev. Robert J. Fortin, A.A.

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Augustinians of the Assumption

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The novitiate is a privileged time of prayer and study, encounters and dialogue, which allows the candidate, in the Assumptionist spirit,... to know the Founder, the Congregation, its spirit, its spirituality, its past and its present, its Rules and its Constitutions...

(Rule of Life, 1984, # 143)

Assumptionist formation: *Challenges:*

1. To deepen and better understand the history of the Congregation and its spirituality. To deepen one's knowledge of Father d'Alzon and his century, and to imagine what he would do today in our place.

2. To better organize the content of each stage of formation. Each stage has its values and its subject-matter. We should not count only on the novitiate...

General Principles:

Continuing formation is not a luxury but an obligation stemming from the fidelity to the mission accepted by the religious...

Continuing formation shall concern itself with spirituality, the life of the Church, doctrinal and professional studies, the charism of the Congregation...

International Session of Assumptionist Formators

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INITIALS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.	Augustinians of the Assumption
L.S.A.	Little Sisters of the Assumption
M.S. A.	Missionary Sisters of the Assumption
O.A.	Oblates of the Assumption
Or.A.	Orants of the Assumption
R.A.	Religious [Sisters] of the Assumption
S.J.A.	Sisters of Saint Joan of Arc
B.O.A.	<i>Bulletin Officiel de l'Assomption</i>
E.S	<i>Écrits Spirituels</i> (Spiritual Writings of Fr. d'Alzon)
R.L.	<i>Rule of Life of the Augustinians of the Assumption</i> , Rome 1984
ACR	Assumptionist Archives in Rome
C.A.F.I	Assumptionist Community for International Formation (International meetings) (<i>Communauté Assomptionniste de Formation à l'Internationalité</i>)
C.A.F.	Assumptionist Council of France (Provincials + Delegates) (<i>Conseil Assomptionniste de France</i>)
C.I.F.	French Interprovincial Council (<i>Conseil Interprovincial Français</i>)
O.C.F.	Common French Works (<i>OEuvres Communes Françaises</i>)
O.C.G.	Common General Works (<i>CEuvres Communes Générales</i>)
O.G.F.P.	General French Works of Paris (<i>OEuvres Généralices Françaises de Paris</i>)

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In translating Father Jean-Paul Périer-Muzet's textbook written in modern idiomatic French, I have tried to remain as faithful as possible to his original text, all the while attempting to put it in idiomatic American English. For that reason, I have allowed myself a certain leeway in translating a number of typically French expressions.

Also, because much of the Congregation's early and not-so-early history took place in a French context, I felt the need to add a number of footnotes to explain some of the references, terms, and situations to an English-speaking audience which might not be aware of the background in question. I have also added, sometimes in the text itself, sometimes in footnotes, a certain amount of information about the North American Province, the Moscow Mission which depended on this Province from 1934 to 1999, and Jerusalem with which I am particularly familiar for having lived there some 15 years.

Moreover, since Father Jean-Paul's original French edition is dated March 2003 and the present English edition is dated February 2008, I felt free to add, without trying to be exhaustive, a few facts and dates about events that have taken place between these two dates. Father Julio Navarro, Assistant General, has been very helpful in this regard and in pointing out a certain number of typographical errors found in the original text. I am most grateful to him and to Sister Clare Theresa Tjader, R.A. who edited the biographies of Father Théodore Combalot and Mother Marie Eugénie, and who provided the text on Adoration by Mother Marie Eugénie and the English translation of Father Combalot's introduction to the first Constitutions of the Religious of the Assumption.

Robert J. Fortin. A.A
Worcester, February 2008

Preface

Not long ago, a friend and I visited Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, a famous battlefield during the American Civil War (1860-65). It is the very place where President Abraham Lincoln (1809-65) delivered one of his most famous speeches. It was the shortest of his career, but a moving tribute to the victims of the conflict. As we traveled over the hills and paths of this enormous battlefield, I was struck by the ability of my friend to envisage himself back in that month of July 1863, reliving in his imagination the anguish and suffering of the soldiers on both sides in the conflict, the strategic planning of the military officers, and the suspense involved as events unfolded. Throughout our visit, my friend was more aware of the past events than he was of what was happening on that hot day in the summer of 1990. As I visited with him several historical sites, I admired the gift he had to relive deeply and in great, concrete detail the human and historical events of the past.

For more than three years now, I have had the occasion to listen almost daily to Father Jean-Paul Périer-Muzet recount the events in the life of Father Emmanuel d'Alzon and of the Congregation. He has this ability I have just spoken of. For him also, history is not simply a question of the past, a puzzle to be put together, though this too is part of it. It is much more than this. For Father Jean-Paul, each detail opens a door into the life of a man and of the Congregation. Everything is drama. And Father Jean-Paul is convinced that we are all actors in this drama.

The title of the small book you have in hand, *A Brief History of the Assumptionists*, could theoretically recall no more than a list of facts, but for its author it is much more than that. Father Jean-Paul provides here much of the information he gives to the novices when he introduces them to the religious family they are about to enter. He wanted to help his formator-confreres who, like himself, shoulder the particular responsibility of accompanying the young religious. No, it is not a question of passing on insignificant information picked

up in old history books, but of transmitting a life and of accompanying his brothers.

A great pedagogue once said that the major challenge for students is to put flesh on the ideas they find in books, which is not always easy to do. When we study philosophy, theories follow one upon the other and we ask ourselves what difference they all make. When we read historical narratives, the people involved can seem like nothing more than pawns on a chess board, and the events like no more than a long string of dates to be memorized without much consequence for our personal lives. In fact, the challenge is to put flesh on historical data. That precisely is the challenge taken up by this textbook which you have in hand. Its readers are called upon to discover throughout its pages all that has meaning for us today: the series of questions that follow each chapter serve no other purpose. If we take up this challenge, we will have been faithful to the intention of the author.

Father Richard E. Lamoureux, A.A.

Superior General

Rome, March 2003

Introduction

For a long time, many of those involved in guiding the first steps of the young religious in formation have felt the need for *A Brief History of the Assumptionists* in order to help these young religious discover little by little the group they want to join. To be sure, a good number of facts are more or less known or found here and there, but they are often dispersed in various publications or bulletins that appeared throughout the 150-year history of the Congregation.

Since the libraries of our various local communities do not always contain the collections that appeared over the years, formators have had to resort on the spot, particularly in the novitiates, to written bits and pieces that are more or less in harmony with each other and that often give their teaching and their audience the impression of patchwork. Consequently, the present work will follow an especially institutional and historical approach, leaving the master of novices the opportunity to develop elsewhere an Assumptionist mystical or spiritual theology.

To solve this problem, the General House Community in Rome, following up on requests made by various Councils of the Congregation, saw fit to ask the present Archivist to develop a more structured and coherent account of the essential elements that determined the principal characteristics of the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption.

Without pretense or false modesty, he took up this task, using notes he had accumulated during his years at the novitiate in Sceaux, between 1989 and 1997, notes that had often been photocopied by the masters of novices at that time. One should not look for nor expect to find all the characteristics of a university or scientific publication according to the rules established by institutions of higher learning.

Here, the overriding concern is to provide a rather internal history of the Congregation, through persons, events, written documents, or situations which really have meaning only for the intended reading public. Without insisting on a

limited confidential distribution, the author desires first of all to offer a well-defined and structured program of this particular reality which makes up his religious family, from its origins until today. He invites formators to feel free to deepen and update, as they see fit, this living knowledge of both the past and the present of the Congregation so as to elicit from the younger religious a sense of belonging that unites generations together without nostalgia or unconscious imitation, but also without amnesia or denial.

No piece of clothing, even tailored, can fit perfectly all sizes and all shapes. The Assumptionists, an international reality, are like a palette of colors and forms that reflect today the diversity of the planet and will undoubtedly do so even more in the future. Also, it would be appropriate to add for each continent or country its own specific information which cannot be included in these pages.

Likewise, it is highly recommended that this Manual be freely translated into the various languages spoken throughout the Assumptionist world. It behooves the masters of novices to see to this significant and particular aspect in order to present the Assumptionists as a single yet multifaceted reality that reflects its common origin as well as its local specificity. In this way, it would be appropriate to foresee a chapter on the history of each province and region of our religious family. Such an initiative would be welcome.

A questionnaire at the end of each chapter is meant to help the reader personalize his work. We know from experience that asking students to participate personally in any research, even limited, allows them to involve themselves actively in the assimilation of what they hear and write down. Without transforming the learning process at the novitiate into an academic endeavor, we find it useful to offer a few concrete areas of research in order to allow this teaching to retain its living and forward-looking characteristic.

Jean-Paul Périer-Muzet, A.A.

Rome, March 2003

**The Assumptionists
throughout the World**

As of December 31, 2007

Country	Province
Argentina	Chile-Argentina
Belgium	Northern Europe
Brazil	Brazil
Bulgaria	France
Canada	North America
Chile	Chile-Argentina
Colombia	Chile-Argentina
Congo, D. R.	Africa
Ecuador	Chile-Argentina and Brazil
England	France
France	France
Germany	Northern Europe
Greece	France
Israel	France
Italy	France
Kenya	Africa
Madagascar	Madagascar (Vice Province)
Mexico	North America

Netherlands	Northern Europe
New Zealand	Northern Europe
Philippines	North America
Romania	France
Russia	France
South Korea	France
Spain	Spain
Tanzania	Africa
Togo	France
Turkey	France
U.S.A.	North America
Vietnam	France

30 countries **7 provinces & 1 Vice-Province**

Countries from which the Assumptionists have withdrawn:

Algeria (1963)
Australia (1875)
China-Manchuria (1954)
Costa Rica (1964)
Ivory Coast (1991)
Lebanon (1958)
Luxembourg (1919)
Switzerland (c. 1930)
Tunisia (1964)
Uruguay (1954)
Jordan (East Jerusalem) (1972)
Yugoslavia (1982)

Total: **12**

The Assumption Family Today

SEVERAL BRANCHES ON THE SAME TRUNK

The Assumptionist Congregation is a religious and spiritual reality that has almost two centuries of rich history. Today, it is implanted in the four corners of the world, propelled by the broad breadth of the Spirit. It deployed itself progressively like a tree with multiple branches sprouting from the same trunk or, according to the image used by Father d'Alzon, like the various tributaries of a river which all originate from the same source, divine Love, that love of the triune God which it has traditionally described as a love of Christ, of Mary and of the Church.

Another sure sign of this profound unity: when on November 1, 1950 Pope Pius XII proclaimed in Rome the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Father Gervais Quénard linked in that same month of November the proclamation of the Marian dogma to both the recent celebration of the centennial of the Congregation and to the annual celebration of the death of the founder. In so doing, he brought together in the same place the religious families residing in Rome so that their voices could be blended together in joyful harmony.¹ It was a timely celebration and a symbol of unity which testified to the faith shared by the families of the Assumption² as well as to the recognition that they all had common roots.

¹ Gervais Quénard, *Circulars*, New series, no. 5 (August 22, 1950) and no. 6 (November 21, 1950)

² Statistics as of November 2002 of a few of the Assumption families according to the *Annuario Pontificio* 2002 (they must be updated annually):

From physical geography to spiritual geography

The Assumption Family comprises 12 religious congregations:

Founded in the 19th century:

- **Religious of the Assumption (R.A.)**, founded in Paris in 1839. In 1857, the motherhouse, built next to the “Château de la Tuilerie” in Auteuil, moved to Val Notre-Dame (Belgium) in 1907 and returned to Auteuil in 1953. The present General House is located in Paris, 16th district, Auteuil, 17 rue de l’Assomption.
- **Augustinians of the Assumption (A.A.)**, founded in Nîmes in 1845; former motherhouse in Nîmes (presently Collège Feuchères); moved to Paris, rue François I^{er} in 1880, then to Rome; present general house in Rome (55 Via San Pio V), after two previous moves, one from the Palazzo Filippini near the church of Ara Caeli, and another from Ara Caeli to Tor di Nona.
- **Missionary Sisters of the Assumption (M.S.A.)**, founded as the result of a schism from the R. A.s in South Africa in 1852; former motherhouse in Grahamstown; present general house in Johannesburg, Maryvale (South Africa).

R.A.: 1,356 religious of 44 nationalities, in 181 communities and 33 countries.

A.A.: 946 religious, in 26 countries and 124 communities. Since 1989, the Congregation has sought a revival and re-foundation in Eastern Europe, and it has established itself in Asia (Vietnam and the Philippines) as well as in French-speaking West Africa.

M.S.A.: 82 religious in 13 communities.

O.A.: 516 religious in 78 communities and 14 countries.

L.S.A.: 1,247 religious of 22 nationalities, in 26 countries and 182 communities.

Or.A.: approx. 160 religious in 6 countries and 21 communities.

S.J.A.: (Sisters of St. Joan of Arc): 153 religious in 19 communities.

Brothers of the Assumption: c. 50 members (DR. of the Congo)

Little Sisters of the Presentation of Our Lady: more than 250 religious in the D.R. of the Congo.

- **Oblate Missionaries of the Assumption (O.A.)**, founded in Rochebelle (Gard), France, in 1865; former motherhouse in Nîmes, rue Séguier, starting in 1873; present general house in Paris 15th district (203 rue Lecourbe) since 1926.
- **Little Sisters of the Assumption (L.S.A.)**, founded in Paris in 1865; motherhouse and present general house: 57 rue Violet, Paris, since 1869.
- **Orants of the Assumption (Or.A)**, founded in Paris in 1896; former motherhouse in Paris (rue Berton), then Sceaux, rue des Imbergères; present general house in Cachan (suburb of Paris).

Founded in the 20th century:

- **Sisters of Saint Joan of Arc (S.J.A.)**, founded in 1914 in the U.S.A. at the former location of Assumption College in Worcester; present general house in Sillery, Quebec, rue de l'Assomption (Canada).
- **Sisters of the Cross**, founded in 1939 in Athens (Greece); motherhouse and present general house in Athens, Ipirou Street, Agia Paraskevi (Greece).
- **Brothers of the Assumption**, founded in 1951 in Béni, D.R. of the Congo; general house in Butembo, c/o Procure, B.P. 63, Congo (DRC).
- **Little Sisters of the Presentation**, founded in 1952 in Beni, D.R. of the Congo; general house in Butembo, B.P. 27, Congo, DRC.
- **Little Missionaries of the Cross**, founded in 1955 in Colombia; they have become a secular institute.
- **Sisters of Charity of the Assumption**, founded as the result of a split from the LSA in Italy in June 1993; inspired by *Comunione e Liberazione (Communion and Liberation)* (Milan, 84 religious, 7 communities).

These twelve religious families stem, in one way or another, from the original inspiration of the three historical figures who guided or founded the Assumption: Father Théodore Combalot (1797-1873). Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus (1817-

1898), and Father Emmanuel d'Alzon (1810-1880). Today, these religious families are active in some 80 countries.³ This might be a modest reality when compared with the 209 or so countries or entities recorded by the United Nations in 1991,⁴ but it is also a ray of hope on the road toward a more visible internationality in the first decade of the third millennium of Christianity. Begun in the 20th century, this worldwide “dispersion” of the Assumption families is completely in line with the spiritual and apostolic ambitions of Father d'Alzon who said:

We must broaden intelligences and hearts regarding the big question of the cause of God. We must open the horizons of the near-sighted and light hot stoves for the people who want no more than foot-warmers and who fear catching a cold if we give them too much heat. Blessed be the superiors whose ambition encompasses the entire world because their ambition is to have Jesus Christ reigning everywhere⁵

Six foundations in the 19th century within a family having the same spirit and heart

The first six Assumption congregations - five of them founded in France, only one of which is a male branch - quite clearly have strong family, character, and apostolic traits in common. Moreover, all of them carry in their name and their genes the official common denominator “Assumption.” That is not a simple historical coincidence but the original mark of their spiritual birth.

In a short booklet,⁶ Father Pierre Touveneraud synthesized very well this “common heritage of the Assumption” which, while respecting the particular

³ Map of the Assumption in *L'Assomption et ses CEuvres*, no. 643, Fall of 1990

⁴ This date does not take into account the geopolitical changes that took place in Eastern Europe after the fall of communism and the reorganizations that followed.

⁵ Quoted in *Ecrits Spirituels*, p. 693, from a retreat of Father d'Alzon to the R.A.s in August 1876.

⁶ Pierre Touveneraud, *Origines des familles religieuses de L'Assomption*, Rome, 1972, 23 pages.

vocation and autonomy⁷ of each family, testifies to a history interwoven with spiritual friendship and fraternal collaboration. His analysis covers rapidly, one after the other, various topics, such as their names, their spiritual Augustinian patronage, their family ties, the times and places of their foundation, and their relations, without hiding the difficulties and the trials that sometimes arose as a result of interference on the part of the priests in authority.⁸ Our respective congregations responded in their own way as their members listened to the renewed calls of society and of the Church, subject nevertheless to the ups and downs found in the lives of all families.⁹

In turn, it is tempting for us to try to enumerate the “characteristic family traits” of the Assumption Family, but it is no less difficult because trying to deal with what remains the indefinable spirit of the Assumption does not necessarily create a uniform consensus among all the members in terms of definitions, understandings, and interpretations of this spirit.

⁷ The question of regular ties between the Assumption families of women and the Assumptionists was treated in a canonical Directory drawn up by the 8th General Chapter in 1876, and taken up again by the 11th General Chapter in 1886. This question did not appear in this form in the *Constitutions* of 1923, but reappeared in the *Capitular Rules* of 1964 (articles 276-278). However, it disappeared again in the Rules of 1969 and 1983. This silence is understandable in light of the sometimes stormy historical relations, but its omission today seems outdated.

⁸ The history of the Oblates saw a division in 1882 between the historic branch in Nîmes and the branch in Paris, the latter under the aegis of Father Picard who undoubtedly interpreted too extensively the authority he inherited in 1880 from the founder. Father Gervais Quénard, in a paternal and fraternal way, presided over a reconciliation of the two branches, once again reunited under the direction of Mother Berthe-Marie Pare (1860-1946).

⁹ We recall here some of the unions, mergers, and separations that marked the history of these congregations:

RA: merger in 1968 with the *Gardiennes Adoratrices de l'Eucharistie*, called *Soeurs de Saint-Aignan*. **AA:** absorption in 1925 of the English branch of the Fathers of St. Edmund or Oblates of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of the Holy Immaculate Heart of Mary founded in 1843 by Father Muard. **OA:** separation in 1882 between the Oblates in Nîmes and the Oblates in Paris, reunited in 1926; separation in 1912 from the Oblates of Our Lady of Consolation, said of Bordeaux, decree of union in June 1991; absorption in 1963 of the Norbertines of Mesnil-Saint Denis founded in 1889 by Mane de Husson-Carcenac (1865-1897).

L.S.A. union with the *Servas des Pobres* (Portugal) in 1949 and with the *Petites Soeurs des champs de Malause* (Tarn-et-Garonne) in 1962. Separation in June 1993 in Italy of the L.S.A.s from the Sisters of Charity of the Assumption

Or A: merger with the *Sacramentines de Marseille* In 1941, founded in 1639 by Father Antoine Le Quien, O.P.

Signs of Inter-Assumption unity

Anyone attempting to make a brief inventory of the various interpretations of the spirit of Assumption naturally discovers at least three that have been accredited and authored by the best of writers:

According to Father Fulbert Cayré¹⁰ in his patristic studies, the principal characteristic comes from the explicit or implicit use of the name *Augustinians*. The Assumption was born in the Augustinian tradition. Names, rules, studies, institutes, spirituality, all or almost all carry the earmarks of his authority and spirit. On the old Augustinian tree, the Assumption of the 19th century grafted a new and original shoot in view of a “modern” apostolate. Hence, the Religious [Sisters], formerly the Augustinian [Sisters] of the Assumption, hence the Augustinians of the Assumption and their lineage.

According to Father Athanase Sage,¹¹ a learned analyst of the texts of the Founder, Father d’Alzon went further than Augustine in order to mark his foundations with his favorite themes which combined the notions of “Kingdom” and “Triple Love,” and which he developed little by little under the influence of Marie Eugénie. The doctrine that resulted became clearly “Christocentric” with, at its center, the mystery of the Incarnation, the prayer of adoration, and a passion for the Kingdom.

According to Father Georges Tavard,¹² who does not deny the value of the preceding analyses, priority is given to the mystery of the Trinity from which flow the apostolic commitments and the meaningful reflections of the founders on the “rights of God.”

¹⁰ See especially Fulbert Cayré, *Vers faction avec Saint-Augustin, la spiritualité du P. Emmanuel d’Alzon*, Paris, Lethielleux, 1950, 229 pages, and F. J. Thonnard, *Traité de vie spirituelle à l’école de Saint Augustin*, Paris, Bonne Presse, 1959, 821 pages.

¹¹ Essential but needs to be re-written: Fr. Athanase Sage, *Un Maître spirituel du XIXe siècle, les étapes de la pensée du P. d’Alzon*, Rome, 1958, 228 pages.

¹² Georges Tavard, *The Weight of God. The Spiritual Doctrine of Emmanuel d’Alzon*, Rome, 1980, Centennial Series, no. 5, 115 pages.

Regardless of the comparative value of what is not a conflict but a convergence of interpretations, there are a number of concrete inter-Assumption signs of unity:

- The kinship among the Rules of Life
- The central place given to Christ, the Incarnate Word
- The love of the Church at the service of evangelization and of human advancement
- The two causes, that of God and that of man
- The missionary activity of the congregations
- The Marian aspect
- The declared Augustinian spirit (common life, co-responsibility, fraternity)
- The insistence on human values (frankness, simplicity, cordiality)
- The inter-penetration of 3 fundamental elements: prayer, community, mission
- The collaboration with laypeople

Especially since the 1970s, these different religious families have visibly re-emphasized the very strong ties that existed at the beginning through inter-novitiate encounters, inter-Assumption meetings of young people, common sessions of the General Councils every two years since 1974, common celebrations of family anniversaries, etc. In particular, the year 1975 witnessed this recaptured spirit under the banner of Blessed Marie Eugénie. Each issue of *L'Assomption et ses oeuvres* features the multi-faceted witness of the life of the contemporary Assumption, which is both one and diverse.

Sons and daughters of the same Father, the Assumptionists and the Oblates

The earmarks of this unity of spirit, which stems from their common origins and from the close bonds that existed among and between the founders and

foundresses,¹³ do not detract in any way, however, from each one's originality or from the diversity of their apostolates which remain one of the well-known characteristics of religious life throughout its rich history.

The Religious [Sisters] of the Assumption continue to pursue faithfully the two dimensions of their unique mission, "adore and educate." The Little Sisters of the Assumption courageously pursue the *aggiornamento* of their very special social apostolate among the underprivileged. The Orants of the Assumption, who do not observe enclosure, give strong meaning to their original contemplative vocation of apostolic and missionary prayer. The Sisters of Saint Joan of Arc do not deviate from their generous apostolate at the service of priests and of parishes. The diocesan congregations in Greece and the Congo, which must often face very difficult living and social conditions, serve the life of the Church on a day-to-day basis. All of them, after the period of their original foundation and consolidation, have sought to carry out the broader service of the universal mission.

What is particular about the Augustinians of the Assumption and the Oblates of the Assumption is that they both have the same founder and have a similar apostolic missionary vocation. Both came into existence in Nîmes in southern France, in what some have called the French Rome of the 19th century, and have supported and helped each other in an exemplary and faithful way in the crucible of the Near Eastern Mission. Both have energized each other apostolically as they worked together in education (alumnates), the press (Bonne Presse), social activities (orphanages, social centers), and parish apostolates (catechesis, groups).

As two hands joined in prayer and open to the mission, they live the creative and re-creative unity of a history personified in its head and often exemplified by

¹³ Father Théodore Combalot (1797-1873), Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus, born Anne-Eugénie Milleret de Brou (1817-1898), Father Emmanuel Daudé d'Alzon (1810-1880), Mother Marie-Gertrude de Henningsen (1822-1904), Mother Emmanuel-Marie of the Compassion, born Marie Correnson (1842-1900), Mother Marie of Jesus, born Antoinette Fage (1823-1883) and Father Etienne Pernet (1824-1899), Mother Isabelle-Marie of Gethsemane, born Isabelle de Clermont-Tonnerre, widow of Count d'Ursel (1849-1921) and Father François Picard (1831-1903), Father Marie-Clément Staub (1876-1936), Bishop Henri Piérard (1893-1975), Father Elpide Stephanou (1896-1978), and Father Niklaas Nicolas (1913-1992). See short biographies of each founder.

family relationships among their members. On occasion, such closeness has had its limitations and pains, but never to the detriment of the missionary imperative.

These Assumptionist roots, which today are spreading out in new directions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Korea, Chile, or Romania, are continuing this common life, which was built up in Turkey and in the Eastern European countries, in order to give new life to the Kingdom through a spiritual and apostolic fruitfulness derived from a family atmosphere focused on the mission.

The mortal remains of the founders of the Assumptionists and the Oblates were transferred the same year (1942) to the same place in Nîmes in order to symbolize this common service to the Church on the part of these two families which continue uninterruptedly to send their members to the missions. It is as if, one day, from this mortal center, a strong spirit took root which, thanks to a faith passionately shared, is no longer limited by time and space.

Conclusion

The *Adveniat Regnum Tuum*, shared by all of the Assumption families, quickly crossed the national, linguistic and cultural barriers of the early foundations. We prayerfully hope that these common roots, created over time despite legitimate differences, will never in the future diminish the bonds of brotherhood that can stimulate an ever greater common passion for the Kingdom.

HISTORICAL DATA

Other religious families carrying the name “Assumption” (with no particular ties)

- Daughters of Mary of the Assumption / Filles de Marie de L’Assomption, F.M.A., Canada (175 religious, 30 communities).
- Monastic Family of Bethlehem, of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of St. Bruno: Sisters and Brothers. Founded in 1950; canonical recognition in 1986 (426 women religious, 26 communities; 36 men religious, 3 communities).
- Sisters of the Assumption of Our Lady, A.S.N., Nairobi, Kenya (156 religious, 34 communities).
- Sisters of the Assumption, S.A.S.V., Nicolet, Canada (771 religious, 80 communities).
- Sisters of Saint Mary of the Assumption, S.M. (Chamalières, France), founded in 1825 in Privas by Father Chiron. Nursing sisters serving the mentally handicapped (117 religious, 7 communities).

Throughout history, there have also been:

- Haudriettes: Daughters of the Assumption (Middle Ages). Founded in 1306; approved in 1414.
- Sisters of Mercy (Hospitalers). Disappeared during the French Revolution. At the origin of the Church of the Assumption in Paris (1870).
- Religious of the Assumption of Our Lady, founded in 1863 in Nancy, France, by Bishop Lavigerie, merged with the Sisters of Our Lady of Africa, incorporated into the Order of Mercy in 1887.

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QUESTIONNAIRE - PRACTICAL EXERCISES

1. Draw a *world map* of the Assumption, both in general and by religious family (country, communities). Request updated data from the General Secretariats, or consult the various *Directories of Religious/Repartitions des religieux/religieuses* or their updated websites. This exercise can be done in various ways: by country, continent, or any other way.
2. Compare the various *Rules of Life*, chapter by chapter, noting with different colors the resemblances and the particularities.
3. Develop personal relationships with the communities of the Assumption family in your country, profiting by feast days, anniversary celebrations, and various inter-novitiate and other meetings.
4. What concrete knowledge do you have of a religious family of the Assumption in a given country in terms of persons, activities, publications?
5. Establish your own file of the Congregation with the maximum number of precise up-to-date facts: foundation, addresses, statistics, documentation, spirituality, apostolic activities, in such a way as to be able to make an interesting presentation to a group. Invite a member of one of the congregations to present her religious family.
6. In the last ten years, what were the main events that happened in the life of one of these congregations: new foundations or closings, celebrations, appointments and elections, publications, etc.?

II

Founders of the Assumption Family

The Assumption family owes its beginnings to three individuals: Father Théodore Combalot, Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus, and Father Emmanuel d'Alzon. All of the subsequent founders inspired themselves more or less directly from their thoughts, intuitions, and actions. We present here, in chronological order, a short introductory biography of each founder.

Father Combalot was, in truth, put aside by his foundation. On the other hand, the friendship and exemplary mutual support between Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus and Father d'Alzon were the human and spiritual basis upon which two new religious families were founded in the 19th century. It would be illusory to think, however, that such a lasting and intense relationship did not have its occasional difficulties in terms of misunderstandings or different points-of-view, but these did not shake a true and tried fidelity that was rooted in a shared common faith and apostolic fervor.

The first disciples of Father d'Alzon, Fathers Pernet and Picard, knew how to draw from the strength of the Assumptionist spirit the spiritual energy that was absolutely essential to their new foundations (the Little Sisters of the Assumption and the Orants). Among their acquaintances, they discovered elite souls, like Mother Antoinette Fage and the Countess of Ursel, to support their undertakings and even to organize them directly. Father d'Alzon had already asked Marie Correnson to become the foundress of a missionary congregation, the Oblates of the Assumption.

The 20th century was not less productive of new foundations at the service of diocesan or missionary life within the context of the Assumptionists' overall spiritual apostolate. New foundations testified to its creative religious vitality.

Presented in chronological order in this chapter are short biographies of the principal founders of congregations belonging to the Assumption family.

The first series includes Father Combalot, Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus and, of course, Father d'Alzon.

The second series includes the biographies of Mother Marie Correnson for the Oblates, Father Etienne Pernet and Mother Marie of Jesus Fage for the Little Sisters of the Assumption, and finally Father François Picard and Mother Isabelle for the Orants of the Assumption.

We regret not being able to offer sufficient information about Mother Marie Gertrude of Henningsen (1822-1904). Her foundation in Cape Town, South Africa, called the Missionary Sisters of the Assumption, took place in 1852-1853 as the result of a split from the Religious of Auteuil.

Finally, the third series includes founders of the 20th century: Father Marie-Clément Staub (Sisters of Saint Joan of Arc), Bishop Henri Piérard (Brothers of the Assumption and Little Sisters of the Presentation), and Father Elpide Stéphanou (Sisters of the Cross). These last biographies are taken from the volumes of *Notices Biographiques*, some of which are reproduced in translation in *Windows on Assumptionist History*. Since Father Niklaas Nicolas left the Assumptionist Congregation, we do not have access to the documents needed to write his biography.

Théodore COMBALOT (1797-1873)

Diocesan priest, apostolic missionary

A priest on the front lines

Théodore Combalot was born on August 21, 1797 near Chatenay, a small city in Isère, next to Côte-Saint-André. He was the second of 14 children. He received his secondary education at the minor diocesan seminary of Côte-Saint-André and at Providence Seminary in Grenoble from which he was expelled. He completed his ecclesiastical studies at the Major Seminary of Grenoble. Ordained a priest in the cathedral of Grenoble on March 27, 1820, he was first appointed pastor of Charavines but, after only a few months, he was appointed dean of studies at the Minor Seminary, then in 1823, professor of philosophy at the Major Seminary.

Having run into problems very quickly with his Ordinary, Bishop Simon, because of his ultramontane views, he began a period of initiation to religious life with the Jesuits at Montrouge (1824) but did not continue. He preferred to follow what he thought was his vocation and began preaching throughout France. He preached Advent and Lenten series as well as pastoral retreats, among them a Lenten series at Les Tuileries in 1830 for which he was almost arrested at Auxerre during the July Revolution. A report even called him an itinerant priest and a suspect.

From 1825 to 1832, he showed himself to be an ardent follower of the new ideas of Father Félicité de Lamennais. However, when Lamennais was condemned in 1832 and 1834, Combalot submitted himself without reserve and wrote two letters that created a considerable stir. Very distinguished and cultured, he had the backing of the upper clergy at the time of the monarchy of Louis-Philippe.

After a pilgrimage to Sainte-Anne d'Auray (Morbihan, Brittany) in 1825, he tried to found in Bonnétable, with his two sisters, a religious congregation

dedicated to the Assumption of Mary (Order of the Incarnate Word and of the Blessed Sacrament), an experiment that led to no more than his meeting Anne-Eugénie Milleret in 1837, in Paris, at the church of Saint-Eustache. He chose her as the cornerstone of his Congregation, introducing her to religious life first at the Benedictines in Paris, then at the Visitation Nuns in Côte-Saint-André.

Influential at court, he pushed for the appointment of Bishop Affre as Archbishop of Paris at the death of Archbishop de Quélen. He was often consulted about episcopal appointments because of his influence and acquaintances.

Until 1841, he was the mentor of the young foundress of the Religious [Sisters] of the Assumption, but his absences and his whimsical and ever-changing ideas led, in May 1841, to his being put aside by his foundation, which he never again claimed as his own. A friend of the d'Alzon family, he was the one who introduced the young Marie Eugénie of Jesus in 1838 to Father d'Alzon, who, even before the break, had become her spiritual director.

Father Combalot continued his life as an itinerant preacher. Because of the relationships he had with various bishops, he was often chosen to preach pastoral retreats to the clergy. A friend of Bishop Gerbet¹⁴ and of Bishop de Salinis,¹⁵ Father Combalot did not hesitate to engage in the public polemics of his time. In 1843, he published a violent *Mémoire sur la guerre faite à l'Eglise et a la société par le monopole universitaire (Report on the War against the Church and Society by the Monopoly of the University)*. He was fined 4,000 francs and condemned to 15 days in prison at Sainte Pelagie. A zealous supporter of *l'Univers*, he broke with Bishop Sibour in 1851-1852 over the bishop's pastoral letter on the

¹⁴ Olympe Philippe Gerbet (1798-1864). A disciple of Lamennais, he founded *La Revue catholique* based upon Lamennais' philosophy of religion. A precursor of Catholic socialism in France, he later became the bishop of Perpignan.

¹⁵ Father Louis Antoine de Salinis (1798-1861). Founded the *Association pour la défense de la religion catholique (Association for the Defense of the Catholic Religion)* and the *Mémorial catholique (Catholic Memorial)*. A close friend of Lamennais, he parted with him when Rome condemned the latter's philosophy. He became Vicar General of Bordeaux (1840), bishop of Amiens (1849), and archbishop of Auch (1856). He published a *Précis* of the history of philosophy (1847) and a book entitled *La Divinité de l'Eglise (The Divinity of the Church)* (1855).

neutrality priests should have in public affairs. Under interdict for a while, he reconciled himself with the bishop. Anything that seemed in one way or another to smack of Gallicanism prompted him to engage in polemics, sometimes violently.

His strongest actions were those in which he committed himself to the promotion of the Roman liturgy and to the choice of classical Christian authors in the classroom. A very successful preacher, he was an eloquent orator who spoke with extraordinary facility. It is said that the erection of the statue of Our Lady of France at Puy-en-Velay was due in great part to his enthusiasm.

Father Combalot died in Paris on March 18, 1873. His mortal remains were transferred to the church in his native Chatenay to whose construction he had greatly contributed.



Father Theodore Combalot
(Reproduction taken from the book of Alice Lady Lovat,
The Life of Mother Marie Eugénie Milleret de Brou
London, 1925, p. 25)

“Dear Daughters in Christ, you asked me for a plan of constitutions which could help you achieve your aim of coming together under the standard that the Queen of Virgins established in the world. I see two difficulties as I consider how to answer your oft-repeated request, from the time the love of our sweet Savior brought you under my direction and you gave me the care of your perfection. As a simple priest, I have neither the competence nor the mission to plan constitutions or to establish rules for the congregation you wish to found under Our Lady’s protection. I am aware that a bishop, after careful examination, could approve the rule based on love and humility that you ask of me. I realize that the Head of the Church himself may one day bless the counsel I shall try to give you. But I am well aware how incapable I am of carrying out the task. Can I hope that the affection that binds us together will make up for the holiness and inspiration I lack? “

(Introduction to the Constitutions of the Religious of the Assumption)

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Anne-Eugénie MILLERET de BROU (1817-1898)

In religion, Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus

Foundress of the Religious [Sisters] of the Assumption

Anne-Eugénie Milleret de Brou was born in Metz on August 26, 1817 where her father, Jacques Milleret was concurrently a banker, the district collector of taxes, and a parliamentarian. The fourth of five children, she was baptized on October 5 of that year in the chapel of Preisch en Moselle where her family owned a large property. On Christmas 1829, she made her first communion in the church of Sainte Ségolène in Metz. Very shortly thereafter, she underwent difficult family trials: the bankruptcy of her father, the separation of her parents in 1830 and the death of her mother, Eléonore-Eugénie, who died of cholera in Paris in 1832.

The Lenten sermons of Father Lacordaire at Notre-Dame in Paris in 1836 provoked in the young girl a true conversion, which she subsequently deepened through her readings, encounters, and visits. Anne-Eugénie met Father Théodore Combalot on the occasion of his preaching at the church of Saint-Eustache in Paris in 1837. Father Combalot chose his penitent as the cornerstone of his new congregation called Our Lady of the Assumption.

Through him, Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus came in contact in 1838 with Father d'Alzon who, in 1841, became her lifetime friend and spiritual director. Marie Eugénie and Father d'Alzon shared a friendship that greatly helped the birth and development of their respective congregations. In April 1839, after a period of formation with the Visitation Nuns at Côte-Saint-André (Isère), Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus, a foundress at age 22, began living with a companion in a small rented apartment on rue Férou in Paris. Two others joined them a few months later, one in August and the other in October 1839. This was the beginning of a new congregation that was about to develop rather rapidly and that already had its distinctive characteristic which is well summed up in two verbs,

“adore and educate,” a modern blending of the monastic and apostolic traditions of religious life, as well as in the motto “Jesus, Mary, and the Church,” a phrase that overlaps with what the Assumptionists call the “triple love.” Her purpose was to educate young girls in order to Christianize their intelligence and to help their families develop a Christian sense in social matters.

Very soon after the foundation, the community broke off with the co-founder who constantly changed his directives. When the sisters refused to follow his decision to move from Paris to Brittany, he left never to return. The center of the Congregation remained in Paris, despite several changes in location: first, on rue de Vaugirard (1839-1842) where Marie Eugénie was elected superior in March 1841 and where the first embryonic boarding school was organized, then on Impasse des Vignes (1842-1844) where the first perpetual religious professions were made, on rue de Chaillot (1845-1857), and finally in Auteuil.

Born in France, the Congregation did not limit itself to that country. From a diocesan congregation, it quickly received pontifical status in 1867. Very soon, it became international, even during the lifetime of Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus who personally coordinated 31 foundations. In 1849, a community was established in Cape Town, South Africa, more than 8000 km away from the motherhouse, and in 1850 another was established in Richmond, Yorkshire, England. After going its own way in 1852, the former community established its own roots, giving birth to the Missionary Sisters of the Assumption. The missionary interest of the Congregation only increased in the following years. During the lifetime of the Foundress, it established itself in Spain (1865), New Caledonia (1873), Italy (1888), Nicaragua and the Philippines (1892), and finally in El Salvador (1895), in other words, on five continents.

In September 1894, four years before her death, Marie Eugénie resigned from her function and requested a vicar. She had written sometime between 1841 and 1844: “I look only to Jesus Christ and to the extension of his Reign.” She died in Paris on March 10, 1898. On February 9, 1975, Pope Paul VI beatified the one who, after coming from unbelief, discovered the faith in a passionate love for Christ and became a foundress within the Church. Her feast is celebrated

liturgically on March 10. Pope Benedict XVI canonized her in St. Peter's Square on Sunday, June 3, 2007.



Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus Milleret

Adoration

“Adoration is love as great and as ardent as it can possibly be in the heart of a human being, love accompanied by a profound respect and a supreme homage. In human parlance, when someone says: “I adore you,” it means “I love you above all things. “ It is idolatry to dare to say that to a creature, but it is no less true that love is the principle of adoration, and I ask you to remember that in all that I will tell you on this subject. In loving God above all things and in all things, in loving the Church, in loving souls, we really recognize the rights of God, of which we must be, it seems to me, the worshipers and the apostles. When our Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman, he said to her: “An hour is coming, and is already here, when authentic worshipers will worship in Spirit and truth. Indeed, it is just such worshipers the Father seeks” (Jn 4: 23). And so, dear Sisters, in this regard, it was you he was seeking, you who, having been faithful to your vocation, are now part of a Congregation whose love must go, in all things, as far as adoration (worship), so that everything you do, all the interior and exterior actions of your life can rise to God, and so that by a

feeling of adoration and of respect for the rights of God, you can forget yourselves in order to adore, love, and always give to God his rightful place, by doing away more and more with that of the creature.”

(Chapter Instruction, February 24, 1878)

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Father Emmanuel d'Alzon
Oil painting by N. Vollier
(Provincial archives, Santiago, Chile)

Emmanuel d'ALZON (1810-1880)

**Founder of the Augustinians of the Assumption in 1845
and of the Oblates of the Assumption in 1865**

An ultramontane meridional

Emmanuel d'Alzon was born in Le Vigan (Gard), France, August 30, 1810, to an aristocratic family from the Cévennes Mountains but which had moved to the Château of Lavagnac (Hérault) in 1816. He was given an excellent education at the Parisian colleges of Saint Louis and Saint Stanislas (1823-1828). In 1832, Emmanuel decided to enter the seminary in Montpellier, but eventually went to Rome (1833-1835) where he pursued his clerical training and where he was ordained a priest December 26, 1834.

Upon returning to France, he opted for the diocese of Nîmes where, after having been rapidly appointed Vicar General (1839), he devoted his priestly life to the animation and direction of numerous apostolic endeavors. Some of them already existed, others he founded, but all carried the stamp of his ultramontanism. In 1843, he took over the direction of a secondary school called *Collège de l'Assomption*. It was within this academic institution that he became a religious and, on Christmas 1845, founded his Congregation, the Augustinians of the Assumption, known as the Assumptionists.

Religious life in the spirit of St. Augustine but with a modern twist

Father d'Alzon placed his Congregation under the guidance of St. Augustine, the Patriarch of the West. He gave it his name, his rule, and his intellectual tradition. Endowed with an apostolic heart, he also transmitted to his

Congregation the enthusiasm that characterized his own active life, filled as it was with a passion for God and for the coming of the Kingdom. He began new apostolates using modern methods: the press, the Near Eastern Mission, the molding of public opinion, pilgrimages, etc., all of which he understood to be “education in its various forms.” Involved in so many undertakings as to impair his health (1854), he granted his first collaborators all the freedom and trust they needed to become constructive and creative.

From the point-of-view of numbers, his Congregation made little headway: at his death in 1880, it had just over 70 members. However, earlier in 1871, basing himself on the model of the apostolic schools, he devised the intuitive formula of the *alumnate* that subsequently became a fruitful recruiting ground for priests and religious. In 1870, he welcomed the conciliar decrees of Vatican I that put the Church of his time on the road to renewal. In 1865, he founded the sister-congregation of the Oblates of the Assumption in order to answer the needs of the apostolate in the Near East.

A life spent in the service of God

The Assumptionists draw their spirit from the dynamic life of their founder: a passion for God, a sense of the Church, and esteem for Mary. As in Father d’Alzon’s own life, the history of the Assumptionists has had its turbulences, some already during his lifetime, still more after his death.¹⁶ But like his, the life of the Congregation is deeply rooted in a theology which involves this earthly life on the road to heaven, albeit at the price of the inevitable struggles involved in trying to incarnate itself.

Born in a traditionalist milieu, Father d’Alzon discovered the disturbing aspects of democracy. One of his first sons, Father Pernet, helped the Congregation take its first steps in the social apostolate. Father Vincent de Paul Bailly used a printing press to spread the gospel message. By making use of

¹⁶ Lucien Guissard, *The Assumptionists From Past to Present*, Bayard Publications, 2002

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ASSUMPTIONISTS

everyone's shared experience, Father d'Alzon won the battle for a generous, optimistic and largely disinterested apostolic venture that many, in a country of realists, rather pessimistically thought impossible.

When he died on November 21, 1880 in his besieged college, Father d'Alzon, like Augustine of Hippo, knew that God's paths do not end with the tormented present. Pope John Paul II declared him venerable on December 21, 1991.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE LIFE OF FATHER D'ALZON

	POLITICAL REGIMES FRANCE	POPES	BISHOPS OF NÎMES
1800	CONSULATE 1799 1804	1800	
1810	FIRST EMPIRE <i>Napoleon I</i> 1815	PIUS VII <i>Barnaby Chiaramonti</i> 1742-1823	<i>Nîmes was attached to the diocese of Avignon from 1801 to 1817</i>
1820	1 st RESTAURATION <i>Louis XVIII</i> ONE HUNDRED DAYS <i>Napoleon I</i> 2 nd RESTAURATION <i>Louis XVIII - Charles X</i> 1830	1823 LEO XII <i>H.S. della Genga</i> 1760-1829	1817 Bishop Petit-Benoît de CHAFFOY 1752-1837
1830		1829 PIUS VIII <i>F.X. Castiglioni</i> 1761-1830	1837
1840	JULY MONARCHY <i>Louis Philippe I</i> 1948	1830 GREGORY XVI <i>B.A. Cappellari</i> 1765-1846	1837 Bishop Jean-François CART 1799-1855
1850	2 nd REPUBLIC <i>Louis Napoleon Bonaparte</i> 1851	1846	1855
1860	2 nd EMPIRE <i>Napoleon III</i> 1870	PIUS IX <i>J.M. Mastai Ferretti</i> 1792-1878	1813-1875 Bishop Claude-Henri PLANTIER
1870		1878	1875
1880		1878	1821-1888 Bishop Louis BESSON
1890		1888	1888
1900	3 rd REPUBLIC <i>Thiers/Mac Mahon/Grévy/ Carnot/Périer/Faure/ Loubet...</i>	1810-1903 LEO XIII <i>Vincent Joachim Pecci</i>	1833-1896 Bishop Alfred GILLY
1910		1903	1896
1920			
1930			
1940	1940		

Portrait

“Father d’Alzon is the living image of a man of action, by his temperament as well as by his behavior as a priest and as a religious. And yet, in reading his writings and in following his life day by day thanks to his abundant correspondence, who can question that he had a deep and ongoing mystical life? It is the paradox of an authentically evangelical life that tries to bring together things that are contrary. Indeed, this child from Southern France, who never ceased to be who he was, became a “great human being” in the land of the Gospel. He breathed the air of Rome in order to build his religious foundations on the fully “Catholic “ground of truth. He sent Fr. Galabert to win over that other lung of the Christian world, the East, in order to work for Unity. He welcomed into the Assumptionists a son from the North, Fr. Halluin, and through him the world of underprivileged and abandoned children, he who by training and taste was especially interested in the social elite. In the life of the founder, isn’t that, for the Assumptionists, an introduction to the vast subject of the theological virtues he wanted to bequeath to his sons and daughters? “

(Fr. Jean-Paul Périer-Muzet, A.A., Rome, 2003)

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All of the writings of the founder are available on a CD. Most of them also exist in printed form.

Marie CORRENSON (1842-1900)

**In religion, Mother Emmanuel Marie of the Compassion
Co-foundress of the Oblates of the Assumption**

Marie was born in Paris on July 20, 1842 at 10 rue Cuvier where her parents, Charles C. and Théoline Pleindoux, were living temporarily, both of them originally from the bourgeois medical milieu of Nîmes where they soon re-established themselves on a permanent basis. Marie was the eldest of ten children, the majority of whom died in infancy, a sign that child mortality was still very high at the time. She was baptized at Saint Nicolas du Chardonnet in Paris on July 28, 1842. Born prematurely as the result of a terrible train accident in Saint-Cloud, she suffered all her life from fragile health, compounded by diabetes. According to church custom at that time, it was not until April 1855 that she made her first communion.

Her first meeting with Father d'Alzon, founder of the Augustinians of the Assumption in Nîmes in 1845, took place on March 21, 1859. He discerned in her a religious vocation to be nurtured, which determined in part the fate of Marie when, after numerous difficulties, she obtained from her family the freedom to adhere to that vocation if that was what she really wanted (1865).

Sensitive and easily influenced, she took the time to be trained in the ways of religious life even though Father d'Alzon had already created in Rochebelle, on the outskirts of Le Vigan (Gard), with the help of Father Hippolyte Saugrain, the first nucleus of a new apostolic community geared to missionary work, viz., the Oblates of the Assumption (May 1865). What he needed was someone to organize a religious family affiliated with the Augustinians of the Assumption for a specific apostolate in Bulgaria that had been started by Father Galabert. Chosen by Father d'Alzon as the future Superior General, Marie officially became Mother Emmanuel Marie of the Compassion when she made perpetual profession in Nîmes on April 18, 1868. The ceremony took place just before the first five

Oblates left for the missions in Bulgaria on April 25, 1868. From that moment on, the life of the foundress was intermingled with that of her Congregation.

In 1873, she managed to establish in Nîmes on rue Séguier the autonomous cradle of the motherhouse. This installation preceded by little the establishment there of a boarding school and a novitiate. These decisions seemed to have been called into question in 1882 by the successor of Father d'Alzon (+ 1880), Father François Picard, who caused her a great number of difficulties and sufferings, to the point where the Congregation separated into two branches, one in Nîmes and one in Paris. The more numerous communities in the Near East came under the jurisdiction of Father Picard who organized from Paris a similar but rival congregation.

Having become anew a diocesan congregation under Bishop Besson, the Oblates in Nîmes had to face a diocesan trial, which they lost, then another trial in Rome (1893). Mother Correnson, solidly backed by the one who would succeed her, Mother Marguërite Marie Chamska, at least had the joy of seeing her foundation canonically recognized. She obtained help from the Jesuits to develop the Near Eastern dimension of her Institute in Armenia (1889), in line with the thrust it had had at the outset. This was undoubtedly one of her last joys because the Congregation hardly developed and internal dissensions arose. Physically diminished and morally shaken, Mother Correnson was deposed from her function during the General Chapter of 1897, following a diocesan investigation. At least, she was able to count on the esteem and support of her partner of the early days, Mother Chamska, who succeeded her as Superior General.

It was in Nîmes, in the company of her elderly and sick mother, who was admitted to share convent life with her, that Mother Correnson spent her last years between treatments, memories, and renunciations. She received the Sacrament of the Sick on July 22, 1900, and died two days later on July 24. Buried in the family tomb in Saint-Baudile cemetery, her body was transferred to the chapel on rue Séguier in November 1942 where she lies next to Father d'Alzon, as a posthumous symbol of unity. In 1926, Father Gervais Quénard, Assumptionist

Superior General, had presided over a reconciliation and reunification of the two branches of Oblates.



Mother Marie Correnson, at age 25

Toward independence

“I know very well how much you want to be helpful to us, so I first want to thank you for this. When you returned from the Holy Land, I had planned to speak to you about your work, to discuss this question seriously, and to establish our relationship. The novitiate must remain in Nîmes, at the motherhouse where Father d’Alzon set it up and where he had a chapel built for that purpose. If to take care of the novices, Reverend Father, it is difficult for you to follow them at such a great distance, would I not have the same problem? How could I accept this or that candidate if I do not know her, for, according to our rule, the authority to accept candidates rests with the Superior General who must govern the house with the help of her Council, as foreseen in the book on Government? It was for that

reason that Father d'Alzon constantly said to me: I look after you so that you can form the others. 'Spiritual direction remains with the Superior. Rest assured, Reverend Father, that I regret not being able to help you in this work, but we would do well to focus our attention on our purpose and on our apostolates... "

(Letter to Fr. Picard, Nfmes, June 19, 1882)

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The writings of the Founders can all be found in a database: 203 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris.

Etienne (Claude Etienne) PERNET (1824-1899)

Founder of the Little Sisters of the Assumption

A son of Father d'Alzon

Claude Etienne Pernet was born on July 23, 1824 in Velleuxon (Haute-Saône), the son of Claude Louis, a blacksmith, and Madeleine Cordelet. The village priest, Father Guillaume, took charge of his education, sending him after the death of Mr. Pernet in 1838 to the school in Membrey. On November 3, 1840, Claude entered the seminary of Luxeuil, in 1842 the seminary of Vesoul where he studied philosophy, and in 1843 the seminary of Besançon (Doubs) for theology. Mild, timid, modest, and frightened by the responsibilities of the priesthood, he withdrew from the seminary, accepting to become a private tutor in Dôle (Jura) in the home of Madame de Fontenelle and in a church-related educational institution.

In the hope of finding a more definitive situation, he went to Paris in 1849, establishing contact with Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus. She introduced him to Father d'Alzon who was looking for teachers. Claude went to Nîmes (Gard) where he became a proctor at *Collège de l'Assomption*. After receiving his bachelor's degree in 1850, he firmed up his religious vocation at the shrine of Rochefort-du-Gard and decided to give himself to Father d'Alzon's new congregation. On December 25, 1850, in the founder's footsteps, he made his first vows with four other companions, and on December 25, 1851, his final vows.

In 1852, he was dean of discipline at the college. In October Father d'Alzon sent him to the new college in Paris on rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré, which moved to Clichy in 1853. While carrying out his duties as a teacher, he prepared himself for ordination to the priesthood, which he received on April 3, 1858, from Bishop Nanquette of Le Mans. From 1858 to 1863, he performed the same duties in Assumption's various but ephemeral establishments: Rethel in the Ardennes (1858), Clichy, Auteuil, and Paris. In Nîmes he trained the children of the youth

center to become interested in the social problems of Enclos-Rey, a very poor area in the city.

Uncomfortable in educational circles, he was happy to be sent to help Father Picard in the capital with the ministry he was doing at the chapel on rue François I^{er} (October 1863). It was there that, in May 1864, he met Miss Marie Maire and Miss Antoinette Fage with whom he decided to found a religious congregation of nurses that would serve the poor in their homes. He provided them with temporary quarters on rue Saint Dominique, rue Vanneau, impasse Gaillard, and in Monceau, until he came upon 57 rue Violet (April 1870), which became the headquarters of the Congregation whose purpose was clear: to care for the sick, free of charge and in their homes. The first sisters took their vows September 22, 1866.

Father Pernet found in Antoinette Fage the privileged associate he needed to give his work its foundation, its cornerstone, and its spirit. He admitted a few years later that “like Jacob, I had to wait 14 years for my Rachel,” thereby signifying the time it had taken him to find his own way in religious life, in the priesthood, and in the Assumptionists.

Encouraged by Father d’Alzon who admired this foundation based on faith and charity, Father Pernet was in Rome for Vatican Council I as a theologian. In August 1870, he volunteered his services as a military chaplain in Metz (Moselle), while the sisters in Grenelle set up a wartime medical unit within their walls. He was arrested in Metz as a spy. Freed, he followed to Mainz the French soldiers who had been taken prisoners. In March 1871, he went to Paris at the time of the insurrection carried out by the Commune. Arrested once again, he came close to being shot. His life was spared thanks only to the recommendation of a friend who managed to get him out of the police station. To protect him, Father Picard sent him to the orphanage in Arras with Father Halluin.

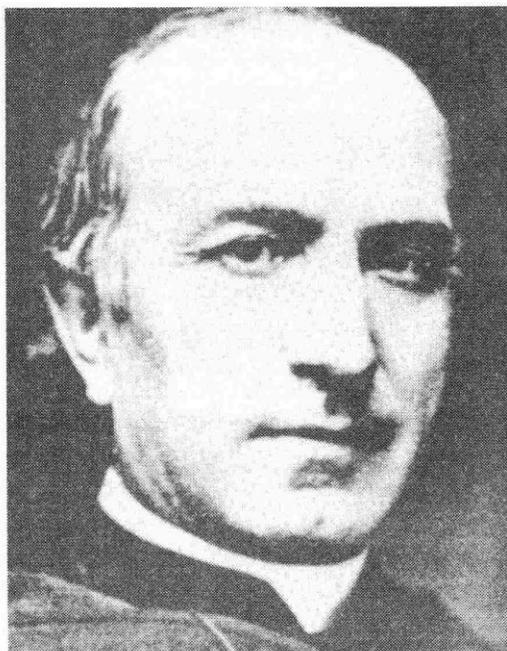
When the situation calmed down, he returned to Paris. From that time on, his life was identified with that of his religious congregation. During the lifetime of the co-foundress, 14 communities were founded: Monceau (1870), Saint Louis d’Antin (1871) later transferred to Batignolles, Saint Roch (1874), Levallois-

Perret (1875), Belleville (1875), Creil (1877), Sèvres (1877) where Mother Fage took her final vows on October 5, 1878, Choisy-le-Roi (1879), Puteaux (1879), and Perpignan (1879). In June 1880, he left for England to install the Little Sisters at Bow, east of London, the first foundation outside of France. And the momentum continued: Issy-les-Moulineaux (1880), Montmartre (1882) later transferred to Clignancourt, and Lyons (1883). Father Pernet also created a Fraternity that tried to re-instill Christian values in the families served by the sisters.

In 1875, the Ordinary of Paris, Archbishop Guibert, approved the first Constitutions of the Congregation. On September 18, 1883, the co-foundress, Mother Fage, died and was succeeded by Mother Marie of the Blessed Sacrament, also known as Eugénie Jacobs (1853-1922).

In 1884, Father Pernet founded the Daughters of Saint Monica, former patients of the sisters who were now mothers with their own families. From 1885 to 1899, he did all he could throughout France and Europe to found new communities of sisters and additional fraternities. In 1891, he crossed the Atlantic for his first foundation in the United States, served by Father Henri Brun, one of Father d'Alzon's first companions. In 1896, at the request of Archbishop Vannutelli, protector of the Institute, he had the pleasure of establishing a community in Rome and, on March 9, of meeting in private audience Pope Leo XIII. On April 2, 1897, he received the first Roman approbation of his institute. He died in Grenelle on rue Violet, April 3, 1899, on the anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. He was buried in the crypt on rue Violet.

At the time of his death, there were 319 Little Sisters living in 30 communities. The Constitutions as well as the Congregation itself were approved August 3, 1901. The first issue of the magazine *Le pain de chez nous* appeared in January 1903. From 1903 to 1911, the Little Sisters faced in France a series of lawsuits, trials, and convictions. In 1931, the cause of Father Pernet was introduced in Rome following the diocesan investigation. In 1947, the Little Sisters decentralized the Congregation by creating provinces. A pontifical decree dated May 14, 1983, proclaimed Father Pernet Venerable.



Father Etienne Pernet

A characteristic trait

“In 1870, during the siege of Metz, on the day of the battle of Ladonchamps, General Halna du Fretay, to whom I was attached, sent me out on reconnaissance in the direction of the castle. I came to the place where the infantrymen of the Imperial Guard were very hotly engaged in battle. Enemy fire, very violent in this spot, was making great ravages in their midst, which didn’t stop them from attacking the castle that they took at the point of their bayonets. I was about to continue on my way when I saw in the midst of many wounded infantrymen a priest in a squatting position holding a soldier in his arms. The place was so dangerous. I saw that he was so exposed that I couldn’t refrain from stopping for a moment: I had recognized the little hood of the Assumptionists, having been brought up in their college in Clichy. Raising my head, I recognized Fr. Pernet, my former teacher. He said to me: “I’m giving a passport to these poor

children who are about to appear before God. Don't stay there, otherwise I'll be giving you yours very shortly." "Well, Father, do you think that you are shielded from the bullets and the shells?" "Oh, for me! May God's will be done. I must be close to those who are suffering..." "

(Xavier Feuillant, *Le Gaulois*, March 28, 1903)

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- There are also a number of brochures and booklets on Father Pernet and the Congregation of the Little Sisters which have been translated into several languages, including Chinese (1944).
- The writings of Father Pernet (instructions, lectures, sermons, Rule books, and correspondence) are included in the database of the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Assumption, 57 rue Violet, Paris.

His cause of beatification, completely reopened in 1959, has given rise to the usual documents: *positio*, summary, typing of his writings, etc.

Antoinette FAGE (1824-1883)

Co-foundress of the Little Sisters of the Assumption

Born in Paris on November 7, 1824 in the neighborhood of the *Invalides*, and baptized on November 8 in the chapel of the Priests of the Foreign Missions on rue du Bac, Antoinette experienced suffering when she was very young. Her father, Jean, left the family before she was born, and her mother, Suzanne Jeanne Mutinot, a linen maid, entrusted her to her grandmother who was killed by a stray bullet during the Revolution of July 1830. An accident that was not well-treated left her with a twisted spinal column and stunted her growth (1836). When her mother died in 1837, she was taken in by charitable neighbors, the Buguet family. At age 17, she joined a sewing shop so as not to be a burden to the family and to support herself.

As a spiritual director, she chose a Dominican, Father Faucillon, and participated in a number of religious and charitable works. A member of the Dominican Third Order in 1861, she met Countess de Mesnard and her daughter who put her in charge of an orphanage.

Her meeting with Father Pernet (1823-1899), one of the first spiritual sons of Father d'Alzon who administered the chapel on rue François I^{er} in Paris, was the deciding factor in Antoinette's vocation. Both of them were very concerned about the realities of life of the people living in the poor districts that were rapidly being urbanized. He suggested that she team up with two nurses, one of them Marie Maire, in caring free-of-charge for the sick in their own homes. This idea was what inspired the foundation of the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Assumption which, with the help of Father Pernet, Antoinette finally accepted to lead.

In May 1865, she left the orphanage run by the Mesnards and, on July 17, settled into a rented apartment at 233 rue Saint-Dominique, in the neighborhood

of *le Gros-Caillou*. She chose this neighborhood because of the countless number of poor who lived there. Introduced to the customs of religious life in Auteuil with the Religious (Sisters) of the Assumption (June 1865), she formed a small community of four members, among whom were Marie Maire, Denise Cayrac, and Marie of the Assumption. Antoinette became Mother Marie of Jesus. She took private vows on September 22, 1866 in the Assumptionist chapel on rue François I^{er}, renewing them forever on August 15, 1867.

The community adopted as its rule of life the *Little Rule Book (Petit Règlement)*, which was co-authored by the two founders and which stated very clearly the purpose of the Congregation, which was to share the very poor - even precarious - living conditions of their milieu of adoption, to protest against the de-Christianization and disintegration of the morals of the time, and to care free-of-charge for the bodies and souls of the poor in order to extend the evangelical Reign of love.

In April 1870, the number of sisters having increased, she bought the former Turkish property (*turquerie*) at 57 rue Violet where, during the war and the Commune, the Sisters, who lived in the attic, developed a hospital ambulance which was available, without distinction, to the wounded of both sides who were in distress. Mother Marie of Jesus lived there a thoroughly humble and hidden life, which she shared quite intimately with the sisters through a very faithful correspondence.

During her lifetime, 14 communities were founded in working milieus, including one in London in 1880. The first Rule was approved in 1875 by Archbishop Guibert of Paris. After granting an initial Laudatory Decree in 1897, Rome approved the Institute and the Constitutions in 1901. The spirit of the Congregation is transmitted to lay groups through associations and networks of Fraternities that recruit themselves from among former recipients of the services they have rendered.

Mother Marie of Jesus died in Paris on September 18, 1883. Her cause of beatification was introduced on March 27, 1935. Father Pernet, who survived her by 16 years, chose Mother Marie of the Blessed Sacrament (1853-1922), one of

the first religious, to succeed her as head of the Congregation. Mother Marie of Jesus was declared Venerable by Pope John Paul II in 1983.



Mother Marie Antoinette Fage

“In itself, the purpose of the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Assumption, nurses of the poor, is to obtain the sanctification of its members by extending the Reign of Our Lord in souls through the care of the poor who are sick, in their homes, day and night, and without receiving any remuneration. They must do everything because of their great love for their divine Spouse... Their motto shall be: Adveniat regnum tuum. And since they will be contributing to the extension of this reign by devoting themselves charitably to the working class and the poor, they must constantly remember these words of the Divine Master: Quod uni ex minimis meis fecistis, mihi fecistis. Whatever you did for one of my least

brothers, you did it for me. *They must therefore work constantly to obtain their sanctification and that of their neighbor: their own by practicing all of the religious virtues in conformity with the purpose they have set for themselves, namely: the imitation of Our Lord, a greater devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Virgin Mary, zeal for the triumph of the faith and of the Church, and filial obedience to the Holy See...*"

(Extract from the Rule of the
Little Sisters of the Assumption, 1875)

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The writings of the founders are included in the database at the Motherhouse, 57 rue Violet, Paris.

François PICARD (1831-1903)

Successor to Fr. d'Alzon as head of the Congregation (1880-1903)

An heir, but also a founder

François Picard was born on October 1, 1831 in Saint-Gervasy (Gard), next to Nîmes (France). He began his studies in a boarding school in Nîmes, but in October 1844 he transferred to *Collège de l'Assomption* directed by Father d'Alzon. After obtaining his bachelor's degree in 1850, he entered the novitiate, concurrently remaining a college proctor. Annually professed on Christmas 1851, he made his final vows in the hands of Father d'Alzon on Christmas 1852. He was sent to Rome for theology (1855-1857) where he was ordained a priest May 25, 1856.

Starting in 1857, he experienced the itinerant life of the nascent congregation as it tried to organize itself. He was first appointed master of novices in Auteuil (Paris) and chaplain to the Religious Sisters of the Assumption, then, in 1858, director and superior of the small group of Assumptionists in Rethel (Ardennes). In May 1862, with a few other religious, he settled into the new community on rue François Ier in Paris. Under his direction, the small chapel became an active spiritual center for retreats, preaching, and prayer groups (beginning in 1871). A volunteer chaplain on the battlefields around the capital, he figured on the list of those outlawed by the Commune.

First Assistant General after Father Henri Brun, from 1861 to 1880, he became one of Assumption's public figures starting in 1871 when he began to lead pilgrimages (La Salette 1872, Lourdes 1873), to launch crusades of public prayer (Our Lady of Salvation / *Notre Dame de Salut*), and to found on January 24, 1872, the Association bearing that same name. Vicar General at the death of Father d'Alzon, he was elected Superior General on November 25, 1880 in Nîmes.

He was the man who, in fact, developed the Congregation, as he reaped the harvest coming from the recruiting program of the alummates. He reached out to

the masses, worked on public opinion through large-scale events (the National Pilgrimage to Lourdes, pilgrimages to Rome and to Jerusalem in 1882), and participated in Eucharistic congresses. He launched the daily newspaper *La Croix* (June 16, 1883) with the help of Father Vincent de Paul Bailly, turning *La Bonne Presse* into a real journalistic arsenal that targeted all milieus by offering a wide range of periodicals (30 in 25 years). His avowed purpose was to bring Catholics together by remaining politically neutral, yet, at the same time, by adhering strictly to religious principles in order to defend the interests of the Church from the Roman point-of-view.

Though he had a delicate constitution, he was strong in mind and character, very active, an excellent organizer and leader, and most affable in his contacts and relations with others. Father Picard was the right man for the situation when the first warning was sounded regarding the dispersion of religious teachers in 1880. The novitiate went to Spain, religious were sent to Chile (1890), the Near Eastern Mission was strengthened, and the directives of Leo XIII concerning Eastern matters were strongly supported. He made his own the pope's ideas on Christian unity, encouraging the religious to learn the Eastern languages as well as to study their liturgy, theology and history. In October 1897, Louis Petit launched his review *Échos d'Orient*.

Little by little, the small family of Assumptionists became a social body. Within 20 years, the number of religious increased sixfold: 151 in 1886, 181 in 1892, and 380 in 1898. Each year, there were several new communities and works, especially in the Near East (Bulgaria, European and Asiatic Turkey). Father Henri Brun was sent to New York in 1891 as chaplain to the Little Sisters of the Assumption, and a few years later a mission was opened in Louisiana. After the dissolution of the Congregation by the French government in 1900, the move to foreign countries was encouraged: Belgium where the Assumptionists were present since 1891, Holland, and England. Slowly, the Congregation passed from a purely French institute to the beginnings of an international one. After the expulsions, Father Picard went often to Belgium, visited the Near Eastern Missions, and sometimes stopped off in Paris.

In France, Father Picard favored a fictional secularization of the religious in order to hold on to certain works. The industrialist from Lille, Mr. Féron-Vrau, took charge of *La Bonne Presse*, and Father Vincent de Paul Bailly was replaced. However, other secularized religious assumed responsibility for the doctrinal content of the principal publications. For a long time, the Assumptionists were marked by certain types of apostolic activities, but they were also victims of their successes and sometimes of their excesses, such as the offensive attitude of these religious “monks and apostles,” as well as the anti-republican and conservative positions of *La Croix*, especially during the Dreyfus Affair.

The hostility of radical and anti-clerical political authorities, egged on by the freemasons, led to a public trial (the Trial of the Twelve), which ended with a guilty verdict, the dissolution of the Congregation, and the expulsion of the religious from the country. Regardless of how difficult it is to believe that 300 religious were endangering the existence of the Republic, Leo XIII, in this climate of politico-religious passion, sacrificed the religious congregations of France in order to protect the surviving advantages of the Napoleonic Concordat, which were nevertheless swept away in 1905.

As a religious superior, Father Picard insisted on the formation of religious through prayer, poverty, and studies. On December 8, 1896, with Isabelle de Clermont-Tonnerre, Countess of Ursel, he founded the Orants of the Assumption. He encouraged the publication of *La Revue Augustinienne* (Louvain 1902). Less pleased with the Oblates of the Assumption, he instigated in 1882 a division in the life and history of this sister-congregation by creating an autonomous branch in Paris with the help of the Franck Mothers and of Mother Marie of Christ de Mauvise.

Authoritarian, supernatural without hesitation or weakness, he courageously and energetically shouldered his responsibilities amid the hazards of the day, determined never to compromise the principles he had received or developed in his youth, yet very open to new needs and to new institutions which he strongly encouraged. Exhausted, he died in Rome April 16, 1903, at age 72. His remains

were first buried in Campo Verano, Rome, and then transferred to Sceaux in 1956 and to Bonnelles in 1971. The cause of Father Picard was introduced in 1959.



Father François Picard
(Drawing by Bro. Michel Bellanger,
Juvisy novitiate)

“It’s been a long time since I wrote to you. Rest assured, however, that I haven’t forgotten you, that I pray for you and for all our dear children, and that I count on them in the painful trials we are undergoing. The searches of our houses and the court trials have strongly shaken our dear Congregation, but other trials still await it. At this time, we are preparing to disperse our religious from Paris and Livry. Some claim that the dispersion will be short-lived, but it is not less necessary to foresee everything and to shelter our dear novices. La Croix is undergoing a painful crisis. The pope is asking me to remove all our religious from the newspaper. Obedience is the answer to this request because, in all things, we are children who love their father and who will bless him. He knows better than we what is the right thing to do, and his will represents for us the will of God. One of our friends, Mr. Paul Feron-Vrau, is willing to take charge of the Bonne Presse and has become its support. Let us thank

God for having afforded us such precious dedication. Because of these unforeseen measures, the 4 editors of La. Croix will have some time on their hands...”

(Letter to Fr. Vanhove, Paris, April 4, 1900)

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Isabelle de CLERMONT-TONNERRE, Countess of Ursel (1849-1921)

**In religion, Mother Isabelle Marie of Gethsemane
Co-foundress of the Orants of the Assumption**

Isabelle de Clermont-Tonnerre was born at the Château de Glisolles on March 6, 1849, in an upper-class family with a long history. Having lost her father when she was three years old, she was educated by her grandparents in Normandy, while her mother, born Sophie de Saint-Priest, remarried with the Count de Charpin in 1862 and established herself in Feugerolles (Loire).

In 1872, Isabelle met the Assumptionist Father François Picard (1831-1903) and placed herself under his spiritual direction. In 1873, she married Count Henry d' Ursel by whom she had a daughter, Caroline, who was born on Christmas Eve 1874.

Widowed at age 26, the young mother dedicated herself to the education of her daughter, residing a few years at the boarding school of the Religious [Sisters] of the Assumption in Cannes, all the while experiencing a strong desire for contemplative religious life. Freed from all family responsibilities when Caroline married Henri de Virieu in May 1896, she spoke to Father Picard about realizing her dream to lead a religious life.

It was now December 8, 1896, the date usually given for the foundation of the Orants of the Assumption who joined the other Assumption families with their own contemplative-apostolic characteristic.

Isabelle, having become Mother Isabelle Marie of Gethsemane, adopted the Assumptionist motto, *Adveniat Regnum Tuum* (Thy Kingdom Come), the Augustinian spirit, and a life of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. With two other persons, Thérèse-Emmanuel Dienne and Anna de Servigny, she undertook to lead a community life under the precarious living situations that prevailed in

France during the difficult years when relations were strained between the State and religious congregations.

An Oblate of the Assumption, Sister Marie of the Compassion, took charge of initiating them to the ways of religious life. When Father Picard died in Italy on April 16, 1903, the modest foundation was entrusted to the care of the spiritual son of Father Picard, Father André Jaujou, who became their ecclesiastical superior. Mother Isabelle experienced the anguish of the religious persecution, finding refuge with the Augustinian Sisters on rue de la Santé (1901-02), then at Passy on rue Desbordes-Valmore.

On June 29, 1906, the Orants received diocesan approbation from the archbishop of Paris and were able to make their perpetual vows. Archbishop Ricard approved their Constitutions on November 21, 1906.¹⁷

Because the health of individuals was imperiled during World War I, the community moved temporarily to Lourdes. In 1919, the Congregation acquired a large property in Sceaux (Hauts-de-Seine), on rue des Imbergères, which became the community's motherhouse from 1920 to 1971. Shortly before her death on July 3, 1921, Mother Isabelle had the pleasure of inaugurating Saint Joseph's Monastery where her remains as well as those of Father Picard, which were transferred from Rome in 1952, were buried. In 1971, the remains of both were re-interred side by side in the crypt of the monastery in Bonnelles (Yvelines). The two causes of Father François Picard and of Mother Isabelle have been opened.

¹⁷ The Congregation of the Orants of the Assumption has remained to this day of diocesan right. However, after World War II, it began to internationalize itself by founding a community in Belgium (1953). Subsequently, it established foundations in Argentina (1960), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1970), Ivory Coast (1988), and Madagascar (Tulear) in 1991, and more recently in Togo, Tanzania, Kenya, and Chad. There are also sisters living temporarily in Rome (Italy) where they are studying religious, social or medical sciences. The Congregation is presently organized into regions. It defines its charism or its mission as a promoter of contemplative and apostolic life within the Church, living a community way-of-life in solidarity with the poor.



Mother Isabelle Marie of Gethsemane

Retreat notes

“To acquire the science of prayer; to consent to God making everything die in me so that I can acquire this sacred science; to lend him my efforts, my good will so that I can attain this goal; but before all else, to become aware of the goal. Prayer is not a joy, a satisfaction, a consolation. Prayer, the life of prayer is like ascending to Calvary, and finally like dying on the cross on Calvary. The effort, the fatigue, the grief. Jesus fell under the weight of the cross, Jesus fell under the sacred weight and his blood mingled with the dust in the road. He was abandoned by his apostles and turned to derision by the crowd. There was no consolation for him, either from heaven or from earth. That is my model and I should not expect anything else if I want to be a real prayerful soul. I must climb the same hill as my Master. I must thirst as he did for the salvation of souls. With him, I must utter the same cry of supreme suffering: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Yes, Master, with your grace, that is the

road I wish to follow. Give me both the means and the grace I need to do it. Without them I can do nothing. “

(July 28, 1897)

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Marie-Clément (Joseph) STAUB (1876-1936)

Religious of the Province of Paris

Founder of the Sisters of Saint Joan of Arc

An heir, but also a founder

Born on July 2, 1876 in Kaysersberg (Haut Rhin), the birthplace of well-known Dr. Schweitzer, Joseph Staub learned as a young boy in his poor, Alsatian, and thoroughly Catholic family the demands of renunciation and asceticism that make for strong individuals. He studied in the Assumptionist alumnates of Mauville (Pas-de-Calais) and Taintegnies, Belgium, from 1890 to 1894, and of Clairmarais (1894-1896). He received the Assumptionist habit from Father Vincent de Paul Bailly on September 8, 1896, under the name of Brother Marie-Clément, at the novitiate in Livry (Seine-Saint-Denis) where he made his annual profession September 8, 1897, and his final profession September 8, 1898, in the hands of Father Emmanuel Bailly. His studies in philosophy took place in Rome (1898-1900). He began his theological studies in Louvain (1901-02), but finished them in Rome (1902-04) where he was ordained a priest March 19, 1904, after receiving doctorates in both disciplines.

He served as sub-prior at the novitiate in Louvain (1904-06), then became master of novices of the coadjutor brothers in Gempe, Belgium (1906-09). After one year on a preaching assignment in London (1909), he was sent to Assumption College in Worcester, USA (1910-17). A meeting he had in Europe with Mrs. Edith Royer, who told him of the vision she had received from the Sacred Heart, was a decisive experience that oriented his life toward the propagation of this devotion. In 1912, he established the American Center of the Archconfraternity of Prayer and Penance at the Church of Our Lady of Esperanza in New York City. In 1915, at Assumption College in Worcester, he began the Saint John's Guild, which became an important source of religious and priestly vocations. In 1917, he

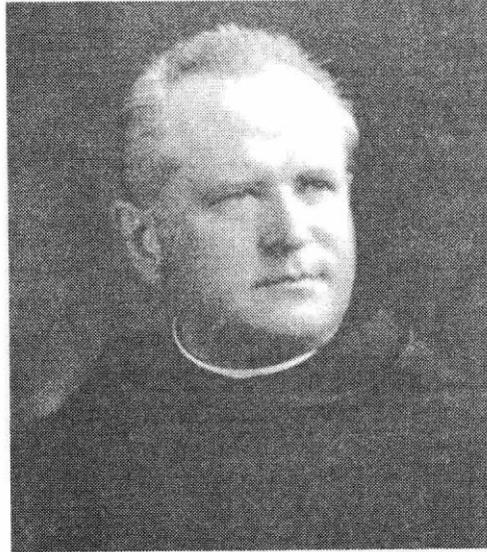
founded the national Canadian center for the devotion to the Sacred Heart whose shrine, commonly called the Canadian Montmartre, was blessed January 6, 1927.

While he was still a student in Rome in 1904, Father Marie-Clément had been impressed by the proclamation of the heroic virtues of Joan of Arc, to whom he made this promise: *“Joan, my sister, I will do something for you when I become a priest.”* He kept his word by founding on Christmas Eve 1914 the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joan of Arc. He wanted to respond directly to one of the needs of the time by offering the assistance of devoted sisters to priests and religious in the apostolate. While on his preaching tours, Father Marie-Clément had noticed the difficulties priests were having in finding housekeepers and helpers who were both competent and reliable. From the beginning, the Sisters of Saint Joan of Arc have been dedicated to the service of priests, rectories, bishoprics, and seminaries. Following the example of Mary, the Mother of Christ, whom Father Marie-Clément liked to call *“Queen of the Clergy,”* the sisters were to lead a life of intense prayer, humble and efficient work, and unfailing presence, as they performed their duties as housekeepers, receptionists, secretaries, sacristans, and catechists. The Sisters of St. Joan of Arc are principally located in the United States and Canada, though they have also had throughout their history a certain number of communities, for varying lengths of time, in Europe and elsewhere: Beaulieu-les-Fontaine (Oise, France)¹⁸ before World War II, Rome from 1987 to 2007, and Congo-Zaire in 1989.

Blessed with a strong and balanced nature, as well as with a contemplative spirit, this man of God was completely dedicated to the care of souls. He died at age 60 in Quebec City, Canada, May 16, 1936, on the anniversary of the canonization of Joan of Arc (1920). At his funeral,¹⁹ Cardinal Villeneuve, archbishop of Quebec, addressing himself to Father Marie-Clément’s spiritual daughters, bore him this eloquent testimony: *“Your founder was a true priest, a holy priest, and an ardent soul.”* The Cause of Father Marie-Clément Staub was introduced in Rome in 1981.

¹⁸ Historical and symbolic place where Joan of Arc was held prisoner.

¹⁹ The tomb of Father Marie-Clément is located at the motherhouse of the Sisters of Saint Joan of



Father Marie-Clément Staub

Meditation²⁰

“My dear daughters,

In the head and heart that God has given me, I dream about a lot of things for our dear family of Joan of Arc.

One of those things would be to infuse our institute with a sense of the liturgy, to make of your life a life essentially liturgical: liturgical in its sources, in its nourishment, in its piety, in its prayer, and in its inspiration.

I would like to knead your souls with sacred leaven in order to enlarge them, to raise them up, to broaden them with this sacred strength, and to make them into souls that are profoundly liturgical.

The liturgy, what a beautiful river where we can quench our thirst! May you enjoy living it, until it leads us to the liturgy of heaven.”

(Fr. Marie-Clément Staub, *Our Meditations*, vol. I, p. 1)

Arc in Sillery, Quebec.

²⁰ From the Constitutions of the Sisters of Saint Joan of Arc published by the Motherhouse. Sillery-Quebec, 1982, chap IV on the Life of Prayer, p 12.

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Bishop Henri Joseph Marius PIÉRARD (1893-1975)

Belgian religious; Bishop of Beni, Congo (1938-1975)

Founder of the Brothers of the Assumption and of the Little Sisters of the Presentation

Early years

Henri Joseph Marius Piérard was born in Felenne, in the Belgian Ardennes, on June 26, 1893. Because his father was a customs officer, the family had several successive residences. At age 13, he began his humanities in Bure (1906-09), then went to Taintegnies (1909-11). He received the religious habit on August 14, 1911, at the novitiate of Limpertsberg in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Annually professed August 15, 1912, he taught on a temporary basis at Bure (1913) and Le Bizet (1913-14). In 1914, Brother Henri was drafted into the military service as a stretcher-bearer, spending the entire period of World War I at the front on the Yser River in Northern France. He made perpetual profession on August 15, 1921 in Louvain where he studied theology (1921-25) after having done two years of philosophy in Taintegnies (1919-21). He was ordained a priest on July 26, 1925, at age 32. As a young priest, he taught poetry at Sart-les-Moines (1925-29), longing eagerly to work in the foreign missions. He arrived in Beni, in the Belgian Congo, on September 12, 1929, where the Sacred Heart Fathers had just ceded to the Assumptionists a portion of their huge diocese of Stanleyville.

Missionary in the Congo, bishop

With a few confreres, Father Henri was a member of the first team of Assumptionist religious missionaries in the Congo. Changing twice his place of residence because sleeping sickness had become rampant in the Semliki Plains, he finally settled in the recently founded Beni Mission, succeeding Father Doche, a hero of the bush. In 1934, he was appointed superior of the *sui juris* mission and.

on June 14, 1938, he became the first apostolic vicar of this jurisdiction. He was ordained bishop of Beni on November 21, 1938, in Mulo. Almost 30 years later, he was pleased to ordain his successor, Bishop Kalaliko, who transferred the episcopal see to Butembo because this city had become more important and more central than Beni.

When the Assumptionists first arrived, things were still embryonic. Life was rough and everything had to be created from scratch: mission posts, churches, hospitals and dispensaries, seminaries and schools. And the first evangelization had yet to be undertaken. Convinced of the importance of being close to the people, he increased the number of outposts in the bush. In particular, the diocese owes Bishop Piérard the foundation of the seminary in Musienene in 1942 and the creation of two religious congregations: the Brothers of the Assumption in 1951 and the Sisters of the Presentation in 1952. In developing the Congo, King Leopold II personally recognized that he had first called upon business corporations in order to attract capital. Then, as a second step, he called upon missionaries because they did not cost the crown any money! The diocese owes its creation to the faith and sweat of these first religious who often had nothing more than their faith and their apostolic generosity.

School inspector and procurator until 1950, Bishop Henri knew how to promote the local Church before all else, hence his desire to create diocesan congregations. He profited by the presence of the Assumptionists and the Oblate Sisters to help with the formation of their first recruits. It was not until 1965 that he agreed to a contract with the Congregation to which he belonged. Impulsive, direct, and easy-going, he knew how to listen to his advisors and to have confidence in his collaborators. A simple man, he kept direct contact with his evangelizers in the field: the missionaries, catechists, and Christian leaders of the local communities.

Given his deep Marian devotion, as underlined in his episcopal motto, "*Trahe nos, Virgo Assumpta,*" he had hoped to build a basilica to Mary in the Ruwenzori Mountains in order to create a pilgrimage center. Not being able to do so, he developed the Legion of Mary. New centers were placed under the patronage of

Mary: Mary Mediatrix in Muhangi, Our Lady of the Angels in Bunyuka, Our Lady of Lourdes in Mbingi and Kyondo, and Mary Immaculate in Kitatumba. He worked diligently to obtain help from European religious congregations: the Oblates of the Assumption in 1935, and the Daughters of Mary Our Lady, founded by Jeanne de l'Estonnac.

During the events of 1964, he remained at his post and was taken prisoner by Mulelists, along with 5 priests. Only a last-minute coincidence fortunately spared them the fate of 4 Brothers of Charles de Foucauld who were murdered. His energetic and optimistic character fit in well with the country, scenery, and flora. A lover of nature, he collected rare flowers and plants. In 1965, Bishop Piérard submitted his resignation and was succeeded that same year by Bishop Kataliko to whom he suggested the motto for his coat of arms: "Mary, Mother of the Church." He retired in Musienene (1966-73).

Having become an octogenarian, he resigned himself to returning to Belgium, but not before welcoming to the territory of his former diocese the Orants of the Assumption so that, by their prayer, they might support the apostolic work of the missionaries. He resided for a while at the Emmaus Center in Saint-Vaast, then in Korbeek-Lo next to Louvain. Tormented by scruples, his final years were very trying. Bishop Piérard died March 5, 1975, in Sacred Heart Hospital in Louvain. He was buried three days later in Park Abbey (Heverlee) cemetery in Louvain.

"Yes, I was waiting for a letter from the monastery of the Poor Clares in Ensiva! It was a ray of hope in these decisive hours for our diocese. Do you listen to the radio? If so, you have heard of the catastrophe in Beni, as a result of the earthquakes which haven't stopped since the night of March 19-20. One of our missions in the North-East, where we are no longer present since the rebellion of 1964, has suffered a lot: 23 dead among the people. This evening the radio is giving some good news: it is announcing the appointment of the new bishop-elect of Beni, Bishop Emmanuel Kataliko who will succeed me. I resigned at Easter 1965 and Rome has wisely put my patience to the test At age 73, one no longer has a

sufficiently firm hand to be at the helm of a young Church full of life and of holy impatience My successor, a son of the country, is only 34 years old I ordained him a priest in Saint Peter's in Rome in December 1958. He acquired in the city of Rome, along with a love for the Church and the pope, a doctorate in theology and a license in social sciences. He came back to the Congo in August 1963. He is a holy priest, kind to everyone. Start praying for him because the task will be difficult."

(Letter to a religious sister, Butembo, June 28, 1966)



Bishop Henri Piérard

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Elpide (Iannis) STEPHANOU (1896-1978)

Greek religious of the Province of France

Founder of the Sisters of the Cross

A pillar of the Greek Assumption

Iannis Stephanou was born in Greece at Anachora, Syros, in the Cyclades Islands, on January 8, 1896. He was baptized a few days later in the church of Saint Sebastian. He attended elementary school in Hermoupolis, the principal town of Syros. In September 1908, he went to Constantinople. In the Old Quarter of Stamboul, near Hagia Sophia, the Assumptionists had founded a few years earlier a minor seminary where young men could pursue their secondary education in Greek and French. Iannis studied there until 1914.

World War I obliged the religious to leave Turkey and to seek refuge in Greece. Archbishop Louis Petit, the Latin Archbishop of Athens and an Assumptionist, temporarily ceded to the religious a property of the archdiocese in Heraklion, some 12 km from Athens, where the young students were able to continue their studies. Despite the difficulties and the atmosphere of war, five among them managed to finish their studies.

On November 23, 1916 at the novitiate in Lumières (Vaucluse), Father Emmanuel Bailly gave the religious habit to Iannis who became Brother Elpide. He made perpetual profession on November 29, 1917, also in Lumières (France). In July 1918, he was called to Greece to fulfill his military obligations which he carried out in the northern part of Greece, in Athens, then in Asia Minor for 4 years. During his stay in Athens, he occasionally visited the seminary in Heraklion where he met Georges Sommaripa, the future Father Theoctiste.

In 1922, Brother Elpide and Brother Nicephore Dounavis made their way to the abbey of Saint Gérard in Belgium. In 1923, they moved to the community in Taintegnies for their first year of philosophy, doing their second year in Louvain.

It was there in Louvain that Brother Elpide did all of his theology. Perpetually professed since September 13, 1924, he was ordained a priest on July 29, 1928.

After his ordination, he was sent to Kadikeui (Constantinople, Asiatic side) where he remained until 1935, working in the Byzantine library founded by Father Louis Petit and collaborating with the review *Échos d'Orient*.

In 1934, four Greek religious, Fathers Athanase Raymoundos, Basile Roussos, Nicephore Dounavis, and Theoctiste Sommaripa established themselves in Athens on Heptanissou Street, serving as chaplains to the Brothers of Christian Schools, the Sisters of Saint Joseph (Piraeus), and the Marist Brothers in Patissia and Heraklion.

On October 3, 1935, Father Elpide arrived in Athens as superior. He founded an aluminate/minor seminary, one of whose first students was the young Antoine Varthalitis who eventually became an Assumptionist and the archbishop of Corfu.

In 1938, Father Elpide got the idea to found a congregation of women which he called the Sisters of the Cross. During all of his stay on Heptanissou Street, he was in charge of the construction of the chapel of Saint Theresa and of the spiritual animation of his religious foundation. Beginning in 1965, after a short period as regional superior of the Near Eastern Mission, he resided with the sisters on a permanent basis.

Father Elpide's apostolic activity included not only the diocese of Athens but also all of the Catholic communities of Greece. Because of his profound theological knowledge, he rendered great services to the Catholic Greek hierarchy, giving numerous retreats to the religious communities and to the diocesan clergy. He participated in the preparation of the Second Vatican Council, maintaining excellent relations with several Orthodox metropolitans and theologians who had great admiration for his spirit of dialogue and his spiritual outlook.

Father Elpide died on January 4, 1978 in the Athenian community of the Sisters of the Cross on Hagia Paraskevi Street after a long illness that had kept him bedridden for more than three months. He went out like a burnt candle. One

hour before his death, Father Jean Gad celebrated the Eucharist in his room, uniting all of his friends in prayer for their spiritual director.

“I have just been told about the next plenary session of our preparatory commission of the Oriental Churches on June 22. It will last until July 1. If the Congregation accepts to pay the expenses of the trip, I will go, but I didn't budge for the meetings in February and April, contenting myself with written responses to the questions posed. I don't want to impose the expenses of the trip on the community in Athens. The construction of the church is absorbing all the money we have. At the present time, we are solving the problem of waterproofing the crypt, which took in a lot of water last October and was transformed into a water basin. The municipality of Athens has permitted us to channel the water into the nearby sewer system. These last days, the workers dug a deep trench the whole length of Heptanissou Street. The work will soon be over and we are thrilled about becoming anew the masters of our crypt. The only problem is to know who - Saint Theresa or Saint Rita - is the one who performed the miracle. If the Imitation [the Imitation of Christ by Thomas à Kempis] didn't expressly forbid comparing the saints in heaven, I would be tempted to lean in favor of Saint Rita, the saint of impossible cases. “

(Letter to Fr. Wilfrid Dufault, Athens, May 31, 1961)

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- In the Assumptionist Archives in Rome, there is an abundance of Fr. Elpide Stephanou's correspondence (1918-1968) as well as his reports on Athens (1962-63), the Assumptionists in Greece (1952, 1957, 1962-63), important events taking place in the Greek Orthodox Church, ecumenical meetings, the Pan-Orthodox Conference held in Rhodes in 1964, the 11th centennial of Sts. Cyril and Methodius (1967), the aluminate in Athens (1937, 1960), and the publications in Greek of Assumptionist religious (1946).
- In the Archives there are also numerous informative articles by Fr. Elpide Stephanou, particularly in two periodicals: *Missions des Augustins de L'Assomption* and *L'Assomption et ses oeuvres*.
- On the Assumptionists in Greece, see *Missions des Augustins de L'Assomption*, 18 (1952), pp. 52-56, and 34 (1955), pp. 76-77.

QUESTIONNAIRE - PRACTICAL EXERCISES

1. How does a new form of religious life usually come into existence in the Church? How does a new foundation assure its future?
2. What are the progressive steps by which a new religious congregation is recognized by the Catholic Church?
3. What distinguishes a congregation of Diocesan Right from a congregation of Pontifical Right? A congregation from an order? Did this pose a problem for the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption (name, church law, organization, vows, constitutions)?
4. The history of the establishment and development of a religious congregation in a country at a given time partially conditions the direction it takes. What advantages does a religious institute have, what trials can it encounter, and what means must it take to reach out beyond its culture, language, and native traditions? What can be said about this in terms of the history of the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption?

5. What is the present status of the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption in the various countries where it is present, from the legal point-of-view?

6. Why is it necessary for each congregation to redefine the charism of its foundation in order to remain creatively faithful? How is this concretized from the point-of-view of persons, events, and texts? How important is the animation and organization of the congregation?

7. How can a congregation throughout its history discern between certain features of its life that have become outdated and other permanent ones that are part of its spirit? Does it necessarily experience times of tension, crisis or death?

8. The foundation of a congregation in the Church is a gift from God. What are the signs of this gift in the life, thought and action of Father d'Alzon?

9. When the Church formally recognizes the holiness of certain religious lives, what does this give to an institute?

Superiors General

The Assumptionists have existed as a matter of fact since Christmas 1845, the day on which plans for a foundation and a novitiate comprising five members including the founder, Father d'Alzon, were effectively launched at the College of Nîmes. From a canonical point-of-view, the bishop of Nîmes, Bishop Cart, did not grant permission for the first annual vows of these members until Christmas 1850. The following year, on that same day, four of them made final profession, Fathers d'Alzon and Henri Brun, and Brothers Etienne Pernet and Hippolyte Saugrain, Brother Victor Cardenne having died during the interim.

The question of the nomination of the first Superior General was submitted to a vote at the Chapter of 1852. Father d'Alzon was in fact elected for life by unanimous acclamation. This provision was maintained until the time of Father Emmanuel Bailly, the last Superior General to be elected for life. The list of the 10 religious who have served as Superior General, or who have functioned as such, are given below, the case of Father Maubon being a notable exception:

1. Father Emmanuel d'Alzon (1810-1880)

Founder and first Superior General, elected for life, 1852 to 1880.

2. Father François Picard (1831-1903)

2nd Superior General, elected for life, from 1880 to 1903; 1st successor to Father d'Alzon.

3. Father Emmanuel Bailly (1842-1917)

3rd and last Superior General elected for life, from 1903 to 1917; 2nd successor to Father d'Alzon.

-Father Joseph Maubon (1849-1932)

Vicar General during the interim, from 1918 to 1923.

4. Father Gervais Quénard (1875-1961)

4th Superior General and 3rd successor to Father d'Alzon, appointed by the Holy See in 1923, elected for 12 years in 1929 by the General Chapter, prolonged from 1941 to 1946 because of World War II, reelected in 1946 for 12 years, resigned at the end of 1951.

5. Father Wilfrid Dufault (1907-2004)

5th Superior General and 4th successor to Father d'Alzon, elected in 1952 for 12 years, reelected in 1964 for 12 years, resigned in 1969.

6. Father Paul Charpentier (1914-2007)

6th Superior General and 5th successor to Father d'Alzon, elected in 1969 for 6 years.

7. Father Hervé Stéphan (1925 -)

7th Superior General and 6th successor to Father d'Alzon, elected in 1975 for 6 years, reelected in 1981 for 6 years.

8. Father Claude Maréchal (1935 -)

8th Superior General and 7th successor to Father d'Alzon, elected in 1987 for 6 years, reelected in 1993 for 6 years.

9. Father Richard Lamoureux (1942 -)

9th Superior General and 8th successor to Father d'Alzon, elected in 1999 for 6 years, reelected in 2005 for 6 years.

Several comparisons or distinctions are in order regarding chronologies as they apply to persons and functions. The age at which each Superior General came into office is quite variable, as is the length of their various mandates:

Father d'Alzon, a founder at age 35, was 42 years old in 1852 when he first assumed responsibility. He then continued uninterruptedly for nearly 30 years.

Father Picard assumed responsibility in 1880 at age 49. At his death in 1903, he had been general for 23 years.

Father Emmanuel Bailly was elected in 1903 at age 61, an indication that, as a consequence of the system of cooption, those in charge of the Congregation were generally elderly at a time when the vast majority of the religious was progressively getting younger. His mandate lasted only 14 years because he began his mandate at an advanced age.

Father Maubon was appointed Vicar General in 1918 when he was 69 years old, the oldest person ever given a top position within the Congregation under the seniority system that prevailed at the time. His total tenure was 5 years.

Father Gervais Quénard was appointed in 1923 at age 48, and was elected six years later (1929) at age 54. When he was reelected a second time in 1946 at age 71, benefiting from the prolonged mandates he had received because of the war, it was not only a sign of his stature as a beloved Father but also a vote of non-confidence in the future on the part of the capitulants of 1946. His total tenure was almost 29 years.

Father Wilfrid Dufault was the first American and non-French Superior General. Provincial at the young age of 39, he was, after Father d'Alzon, the youngest to assume the succession in 1952, at a time when he was not yet 45 years old. His two successive mandates covered a period of 17 years.

Father Paul Charpentier, elected at age 55, exercised his function for only 6 years.

Father Hervé Stéphan was 50 years old when he began his mandate; reelected in 1981, he was Superior General for 12 years, the normal maximum years allowed by the Congregation's new Rules.

Father Claude Maréchal, also Superior General for 12 years, was elected in 1987 at the age of 52.

Father Richard Lamoureux is the second American Superior General; he began his mandate in 1999 at age 57 and was reelected in 2005.

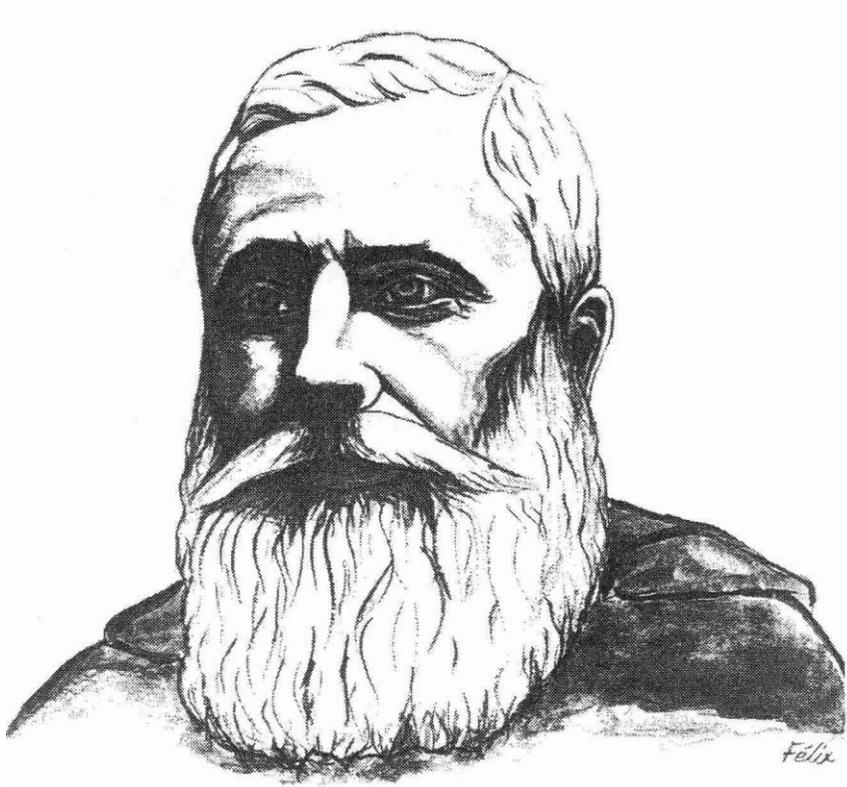
Consequently, the comparative ages of the Superiors General as they began their mandates may be summarized as follows:

Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon	age 42 (1852)
Fr. Wilfrid Dufault	age 45 (1952)
Fr. Gervais Quénard	age 48 (1923)
Fr. François Picard	age 49 (1880)
Fr. Hervé Stéphan	age 50 (1975)
Fr. Claude Maréchal	age 52 (1987)
Fr. Paul Charpentier	age 55 (1969)
Fr. Richard Lamoureux	age 57 (1999)
Fr. Emmanuel Bailly	age 61 (1903)
[Fr. Joseph Maubon]	age 69 (1918)

The comparative length of their respective mandates is as follows:

[Fr. Joseph Maubon]	5 years	1918-1923
Fr. Paul Charpentier	6 years	1969-1975
Fr. Hervé Stéphan	12 years	1975-1987
Fr. Claude Maréchal	12 years	1987-1999
Fr. Richard Lamoureux	12 years	1999-2011
Fr. Emmanuel Bailly	14 years	1903-1917
Fr. Wilfrid Dufault	17 years	1952-1969
Fr. François Picard	23 years	1880-1903
Fr. Gervais Quénard	29 years	1923-1952
Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon	30 years	1850-1880

The differences in the length of their respective mandates can be partially explained by the practices and customs of the time. The policy of lifelong mandates, practiced until 1918, indefinitely perpetuated a man in office. An exception can be easily understood for the founder, but it rapidly posed a problem when it was extended beyond the period of the foundation. In 1923, the Constitutions determined that the mandate of the Superior General would be for 12 years, which explains the longevity of Father Gervais in his function. Beginning in 1969, legislation shortened the term to 6 years, renewable once.



Father Emmanuel Bailly
(Drawing by Bro. Félix Aquilly,
Juvisy novitiate)

Emmanuel Joseph (Benjamin) BAILLY (1842-1917)

French religious

Third Superior General of the Assumptionists (1903-1917)

A “child of Assumption”

Born in Paris, France, on August 4, 1842, the last child of the Bailly family pursued his studies at the college of Clichy-La-Garenne (Hauts-de-Seine) thanks to a favor Father d’Alzon granted his Parisian friends who were in financial difficulty (1853-1860). Like his elder brother Vincent de Paul, Benjamin chose to enter the Assumptionist novitiate. He received the religious habit in Auteuil May 30, 1861, and pronounced his final vows October 15, 1863 in Nîmes in the hands of Father d’Alzon who gave him the familiar nickname “culot,” a word used in French to designate the youngest child in a family. Benjamin, who later became Father Emmanuel, studied theology in Rome (1862-1865) but returned to Nîmes for his ordination to the priesthood on October 28, 1865 by Bishop Plantier.

Father d’Alzon took him as his personal secretary. During the next fifteen years, his life and that of the *Collège de l’Assomption* in Nîmes were intertwined, as he became successively a teacher, deputy director, and director in 1867. He was also responsible for the founding of the first alummates from 1871 to 1880. In 1876, when the first three provinces were created, Father d’Alzon chose him as the provincial of Nîmes. He cared for Father d’Alzon in his last moments and shortly thereafter drew up an account of them.

Master of novices and procurator

In December 1880, he became master of novices and accompanied his neophytes “into exile” to Osma in Spain. When the novitiate was able to return to France (1886), he kept the same position from 1886 to 1892 in Livry (Seine-Saint-Denis). During his stay there, he continued to collect the documents that

eventually allowed him to write the first, though incomplete, biography of the Founder: *Notes et Documents pour servir à l'histoire du P. d'Alzon et de ses oeuvres* (1810-1850). For many years, that collection was the only documentation available on the life of Father d'Alzon.

Appointed Procurator of the Congregation, Assistant General to Father Picard, and Superior of the house of studies in Rome, he chose to live in the Eternal City where his ability for making contacts and creating privileged relations with the ecclesiastical world allowed the young Congregation to be better known and appreciated in Roman circles. During the last decade of the 19th century, he also served as Father Picard's main informant. At the time of the second expulsion of the Congregation from France, Father Emmanuel founded the house of studies in Louvain (1900), where, after the death of Father Picard, the General Chapter was held that elected him the Congregation's third Superior General on June 19, 1903.

Third Superior General

Commuting at that time between Louvain and Rome, Father Emmanuel governed the Assumptionists at a particularly difficult moment in their history. In addition to external difficulties arising from the dispersion of the religious and from the reorganization of the Congregation that proved necessary after 1901, he had to contend with the fact that the religious were being conscripted into military service from 1914 to 1918, thereby placing great burdens on all of the Assumptionist communities in the East as well as in the West.

Internally, he also had to contend with innovators who began questioning his centralizing, conservative and fastidious authority at the critical moment when controversial trends, suspected of modernism, were penetrating the ecclesiastical disciplines. In that context, he abruptly suppressed the *Revue Augustinienne* of Louvain (1910) and dispersed the faculty of the house of studies in Louvain where the principal ringleaders of an unmistakable rebellion were uncovered in 1909. He also petitioned the Holy See asking that the Congregation be governed by a legal system that provided for real elections. In 1910, the Charlton Affair

erupted in England, which led to the removal of the *Franck Mothers* who had been Oblate Sisters since 1882.

Emmanuel Bailly died at age 75 on September 23, 1917 in Paris where he happened to be in transit. He is buried in Montparnasse Cemetery in Paris, in a grave bought under his own name for the Assumptionists.

Portrait

“No Assumptionist has ever dared to write a true detailed biography of Fr. Emmanuel. That means that his reputation suffers, either rightly or wrongly, from a conspiracy of neglect. He nevertheless left memories of recognized qualities: a knowledgeable and well-trained intelligence, a true oratorical talent, an experienced writer, and a spirit of faith amid all the uncertainties of his turbulent times. The Assumptionists must recognize that, in the troubled hours of its history, he assured the Congregation a continued existence that was more than mere survival. But a black legend continues to charge Fr. Emmanuel with difficulties that were also those of a growing social body.

To be sure, Fr. Emmanuel symbolizes the attachment of the first generations of Assumptionists, contemporaries of the founder, to the very French traditions, if not the too Nîmes-centered, too elitist, or too co-optative traditions, which made it hard for them to understand the validity of new desires, of real needs, and of new methods that would allow the structures of a small family to adapt to the needs of a larger one. It was thus that he was the last Superior General to be co-opted for life. “

(Fr. Jean-Paul Périer-Muzet, Rome 2003)

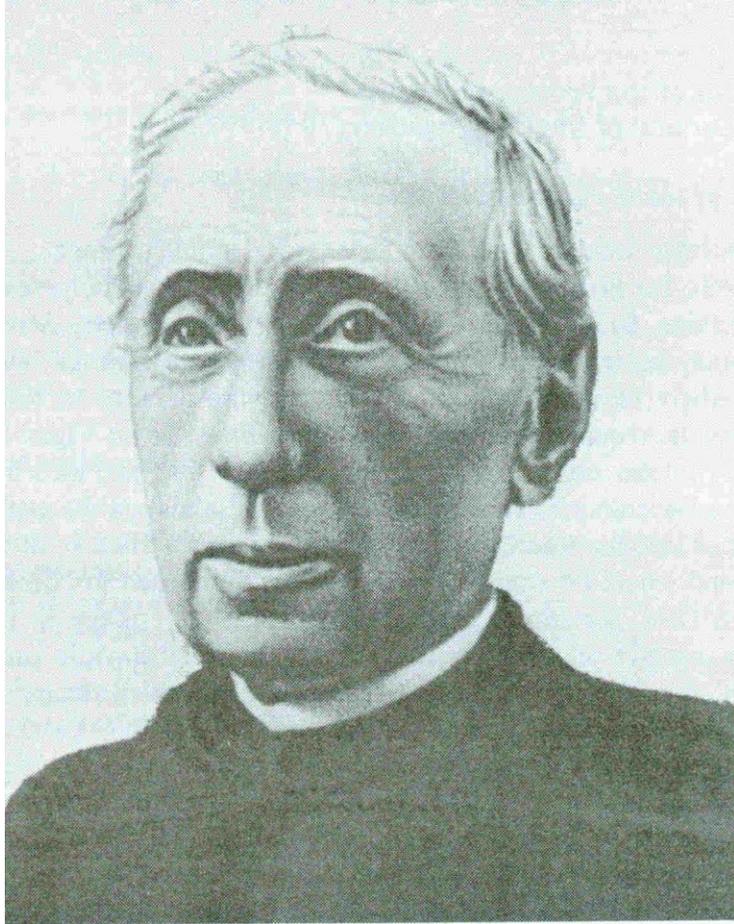
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- The Roman archives contain an enormous passive and active correspondence of Fr. Emmanuel Bailly who has never had an official biographer.

Published writings of Father Bailly:

- *Testament d'un Père, Instructions sur l'esprit de L'Assomption prononcées à Rome au cours de L'Année 1913-1914*, Paris, 1955, 95 p.
- *Circulaires*, 3 vols.
- *Retraite du Pèlerinage national a Lourdes: Instructions et conférences données à Lourdes du 19 au 22 aout 1915*, Paris, 1915, 213 p.
- *Deuxième retraite du Pèlerinage national à Lourdes: Instructions et conférences données à Lourdes du 20 au 24 août 1916*, Paris, 1916, 382 p.
- *Instructions et Conférences*.



Father Joseph Maubon
(1849-1932)

Joseph MAUBON (1849-1932)

Religious of the Province of Paris

Vicar General of the Congregation (1918-1922)

A man of many responsibilities

Joseph Maubon was born in Lunel (Hérault), France, January 21, 1849. He first attended *Collège Saint Jean* in his hometown, but after having been singled out by one of his teachers, Mr. Louis Allemand, he transferred to *Collège de l'Assomption* in Nîmes in 1863, where he remained until 1867. Having decided to become a religious, he requested admission to the novitiate in Le Vigan (Gard). He received the religious habit on October 31, 1867, and took his final vows on December 8, 1869 in Arras (Pas-de-Calais), at the orphanage of Father Halluin where he lived from November 1868 until August 1870, and where he studied philosophy. He returned to Nîmes from 1870 to 1874, serving in several positions at the college as proctor, teacher, prefect of discipline, and treasurer, all the while preparing himself for priestly ordination, which he received from Bishop Plantier in Nîmes on February 11, 1872.

In November 1874, Father d'Alzon appointed him superior of the aluminate in Arras, an offshoot of the first aluminate at *Notre Dame des Châteaux*. This new aluminate was first established in the orphanage, then moved out on its own (November 1874 - April 1876). Father Joseph founded the aluminate in Clairmarais (Pas-de-Calais) and was its superior from April 1876 until October 1882. Father d'Alzon asked him to separate the *alumnat de grammaire*²¹ from the *alumnat d'humanités*,²² which led in 1879 to a new foundation in Mauville (Pas-de-Calais).

²¹ High school in the US

²² First 2 years of college in the US.

In 1882, Father Picard sent him to found a community for student religious—the young professed from Osma, Spain—in Kum-Kapu, a completely Muslim quarter of Istanbul. Father Joseph was the superior of this “exposed community” from 1882 to 1885. The trust that Father Picard had in this young religious prompted him to appoint Father Joseph as the superior of the entire Near Eastern Mission (1885-1892).

He was recalled to France from 1892 to 1894 to organize the formation program of the religious (Paris, Toulouse). At the death of Father Alexis Dumazer, he accepted the direction of the College of Nîmes (1894-1900). After the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the College—on which occasion the remains of Father d’Alzon were transferred from Saint-Baudile Cemetery to the college chapel, and a statue of the founder was erected in the courtyard (June 1893) ---Father Joseph gave the building a new façade on Avenue Feuchères and completely decorated its chapel.

Having become Assistant General upon the death of Father Pernet (April 1899), Father Joseph learned Spanish at age 51 and volunteered for Chile where he assumed overall responsibility from 1901 to 1918. It was in Chile that he learned of the death of Father Emmanuel Bailly (November 1917).

A difficult interim

After returning to France, Father Joseph Maubon found himself at the head of the Congregation as Assistant and Vicar General, the two other Assistants having passed away (Father Vincent de Paul Bailly in 1912 and Father Joseph Germer-Durand in 1917). At age 69, he proceeded to reorganize the Curia, appointing Fathers André Jaujou, Ernest Baudouy, Stéphane Chaboud, and Marie-Bernard Horgues.

Since the promulgation of the new Code of Canon Law in 1917, religious congregations were required to align their Constitutions on the general norms of the Code. At the General Chapter of 1918 at Notre-Dame de Lumières (Vaucluse), to which delegates were convoked amid the prevailing difficult

conditions of a war-torn Europe, of numerous communities in disarray, and in a climate of rebellion within, compromises were sought between the requirements of the Code and Assumptionist traditions.

But at the subsequent Chapter held in Rome, the Congregation for Religious imposed its canonical regulations. The Chapter was invalidated. A realist, Father Joseph Maubon pleaded for a sincere acceptance of the requirements of the new Canon Law, despite his attachment and personal preference for Assumption's old system of government: co-option of delegates to the General Chapter, a Superior General for life, and a centralized government.

In 1923, Rome made its choice known, eliminating both the defenders of the "old system" as well as the rebellious protestors (Father Merklen). A new man was appointed to lead the Congregation, Father Gervais Quénard. All of the Assistants and Officers who were appointed in 1923 were men who had had no responsibilities in the previous administration of the Congregation: Thomas Darbois, Alype Pétrement, Matthieu Lombard, Possidius Dauby, Assistants; Ambroise Jacquot, General Treasurer; and Romuald Souarn, General Procurator. All who had had some former responsibility were put aside, among them, Father Joseph Maubon. He requested to be sent to Jerusalem where he placed himself at the service of the pilgrimage apostolate and chose voluntarily to live discreetly on the sidelines until his death February 13, 1932, at the age of 82. He is buried at Saint Peter in Gallicantu.

"Here is my answer to Fr. Joannès [Thibault] and you can send it to his family. Give me your opinion in plain language about this religious, the good side as well as the imperfect one, his intellectual capacities, his special aptitudes, the dangers that would await him in this or that ministry to which he could be sent, his likings for this or that, so that I can answer the diocesan authority in Lyons which will be consulting me. It seems as though he wants to leave us to enter the secular clergy. Will he stay? Karagatch is very worrisome at the present time, as long as the political question is not resolved. Is it wise to incur expenses to repair a

ramshackle old building? I am in favor of demolishing it if the demolition is not more expensive than its consolidation. The other buildings are enough. But the opinion of a good architect is what should prevail. I approve what you are planning with Fr. Saturnin [Aube]. What do you think about the hospital in Adrianople: a ruined building and unproductive land? The case of Father Fidèle Laurent is sad; he's a fugitive and an apostate. Could the college in Philippopolis [Plovdiv] take in a dozen young possible alumni? Everywhere the question of personnel is agonizing... ”

(Letter to Fr. Gervais Quénard, Rome, May 9, 1922)

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Father Gervais Quenard
(Drawing by Rémi-Marie Cherrier
Juvisy novitiate)

Gervais (Jean-Claude) QUÉNARD (1875-1961)

French religious, Superior General (1923-1952)

First assignments in the Near East

Born in Chignin, next to Montmélian (Savoie), France, on January 11, 1875, Jean-Claude Quénard, after grammar school, already became somewhat of a founder by participating in the foundation of the aluminate in Miribel-les-Echelles (Isère) in 1887. After finishing his secondary education in Brian (Drôme) from 1890 to 1892, he received the Assumptionist habit on August 7, 1892 at the novitiate in Livry (Seine-Saint-Denis) with the name of Brother Gervais. Annually professed August 7, 1893, he finished his novitiate in Phanaraki, Turkey, where he made final profession August 15, 1894, and where he studied philosophy (1894-1896). He studied theology in Jerusalem (1896-1900) where he was ordained a priest August 20, 1899 by Latin Patriarch Luigi Piavi.

Appointed professor of Holy Scripture in Jerusalem (1900-04), he collaborated with *Le Guide de la Palestine / Guide to Palestine* before being assigned to the publications of *La Bonne Presse* (1904-05) where he felt uncomfortable. Father Emmanuel Bailly appointed him to Russia along with four confreres. Father Gervais began his activity in Vilnius (1905-08). In 1908, he was appointed teacher at Saint Augustine College in Philippopolis, Bulgaria, where he quickly became its superior. However, in 1915, the leaders responsible for the politico-military alliances in Bulgaria invoked the king's friendship with the religious as grounds for their expulsion. Father Gervais found refuge in Romania (1915-19). After the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919, he pleaded without ill-feelings the cause of Bulgaria and returned to Philippopolis (1919-20) where he was appointed Superior of the Near Eastern Mission (1920-23).

Assumptionist Superior General 1923-52

In 1923, the Holy See took it upon itself to appoint Father Gervais Superior General, thereby bringing to an end the transitional years of Father Joseph

Maubon as Vicar General and the provisional character of the Assumptionist Constitutions. Appointed at age 48, renewed twice by election, in 1929 and 1946 for two terms of 12 years, Father Gervais was able to transmit to the Congregation, reunited after the 1918-1922 crisis, the enthusiasm of his own youth. He, as well as the members of the Curia, needed all the energy and moral strength they could muster to recreate unity, to regroup in France the elderly religious who had been living alone, and to impose new directions and new leaders: Father Merklen at *La Croix* and Father Protin in Bordeaux.

The Congregation was reorganized according to the Roman directives into 4 provinces: 3 in France and 1 in Belgium-Holland. In 1924, Father Gervais had *La Bonne Presse* recognized as a civil corporation in order to reassume the work that Paul Féron-Vrau had administered since 1900. In 1932, he did not hesitate to support *La Croix's* new orientation whereby it broke with its former positions and adopted those proposed by Pius XI: condemnation of nationalism and encouragement of movements known as *Catholic Action*. He reunited the two branches of the Oblate Sisters in Paris and Nîmes (1926); he dressed the wounds inflicted by World War I; and he adapted the structures of the Institute to accommodate its rapid expansion. In 1935, the 4 provinces, numbering 1,036 religious living in 102 communities, made room for 3 vice-provinces that became autonomous provinces in 1946: Holland, England, and North America. That same year, the Congregation counted 1,596 religious living in 125 communities in 23 countries.

Father Gervais led the Near Eastern Mission through a difficult transition, redirecting the Congregation toward new countries: the Congo in Africa (1929), and Manchuria in Asia (1935). The Near Eastern Mission redeployed around the Mediterranean basin and in Central Europe. In 1923-24, the Assumptionists accepted to found communities serving the Greek-Catholic Church in Transylvania (Romania); in 1925, Father Bélard went to Belgrade, Yugoslavia; in 1934, the Congregation went to Greece and Tunisia. Father Gervais undertook long and tiring trips to visit all the Assumptionist communities wherever they were, exhibiting toward the women's congregations great respect for their autonomy and support for their development. In 1931, he repurchased the house

where Father d'Alzon was born in Le Vigan (Gard), entrusting it to the Orants in 1937.

This new map of the Congregation had barely been drawn up when World War II put in question and weakened these new foundations: the East came under Communist political domination in 1945; the communities in Manchuria, Romania, and Bulgaria were subsequently dispersed; and 3 religious were executed following a sham trial in Sofia (1952). During the war years, the members of the Curia, having had to flee from Rome, took up residence in France, some in the North (Chaville), others in the South (Lyons). The average age of the religious rose. However, as death took its toll, the old-timers progressively lost most of their influence.

A General Chapter could not be called until 1946. Though Father Gervais clearly merited the renewed confidence he was given, the Congregation did not have the wherewithal to imagine a new strategy. In 1950, Father Gervais was delighted to witness the proclamation of Mary's Assumption. That same year, the Dutch province found a way to serve the Near Eastern Mission in Lebanon. In Rome, Father Gervais, who was well-known among the members of the hierarchy, spearheaded the review *Unitas* with Father C. Boyer, S.J., and was the inspiration behind what later became the Union of Major Superiors in Rome.

At the end of 1951, Father Gervais, now elderly and tired, announced his intention to resign from his post. Having become a venerable patriarch, he continued to reside in Rome. He who, in 1929, had proceeded to transfer the residence of the Curia from the ancient Filippini palace at Ara Caeli - razed because of Mussolini's city planning - to the new building at Tor di Nona on the banks of the Tiber, now adapted himself to a new residence on Via Madonna del Riposo (today Via San Pio V), in the Aurelio quarter, built by his successor, Father Wilfrid Dufault (1958). Father Gervais died in Rome on February 6, 1961, age 86, shortly before the opening of Vatican Council II, which he had fully endorsed by participating as a councilor and auditor in its preparatory commissions. He is buried in Rome at Campo Verano.

What is an Assumptionist? 1941

“The Assumptionists have been called Leaguer-Monks and, as such, they had the honor of being condemned before the others at the time of the anticlerical dictatorship. Monks. Fr. d’Alzon, the founder of the Assumptionists, held to being just that in order to break more clearly with the world, to give his own religious the framework of the common life, and to give them a sense of high liturgy which had become so anemic in his time. But these modern monks are not vowed to stability. Though they hold to remaining linked to the great institutions of the past, they intend to use freely, for the reign of Jesus Christ, the technical means of our mechanized world. Unfortunately, this poor world no longer has a sense of the divine and will not be able to find its soul again unless it submits unreservedly to God’s empire. This beautiful dream of sacred imperialism, which appeals to the heart of all apostles, represents the sole ambition of these so-called leaguers and is contained in the Assumptionist motto: Adveniat Regnum tuum. In the beginning, this was the object of a special vow for them. ‘Our raison d’etre as Assumptionists is found in this motto. Quite simply, we are Catholic.’”

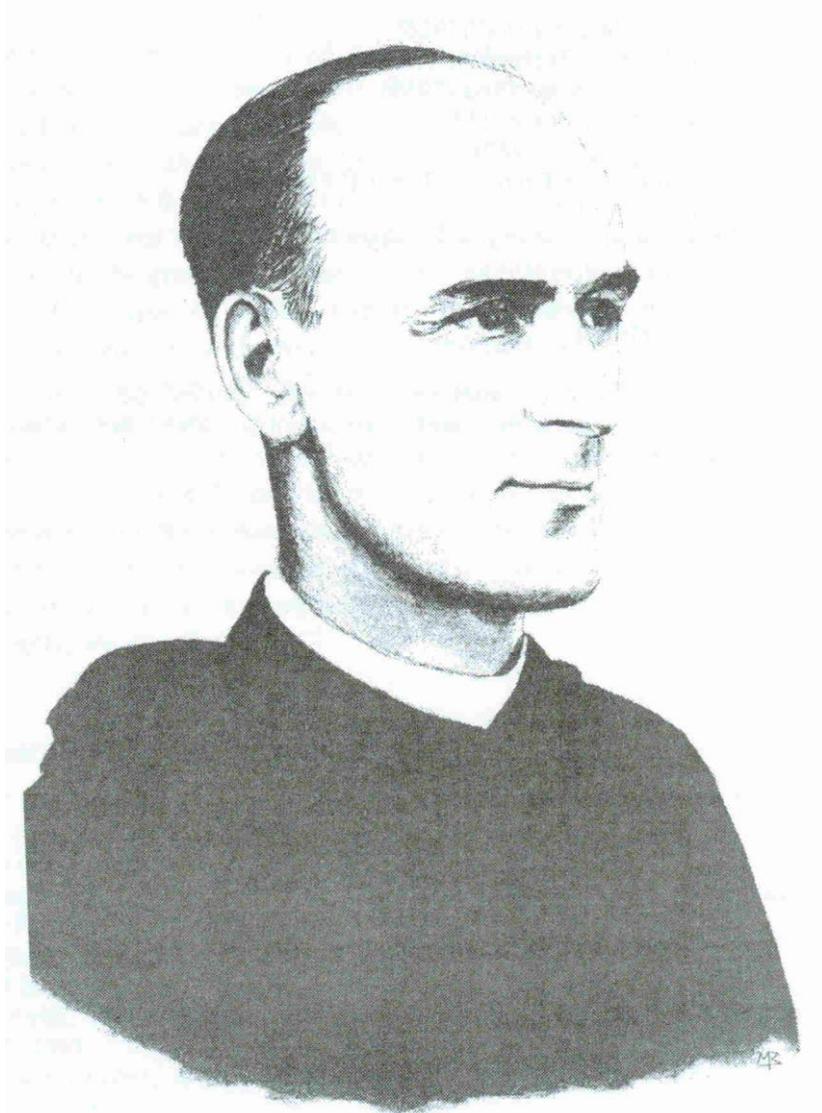
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In addition to the circulars he sent to the Assumptionists (3 vol.), he also wrote several books:

- *Les Augustins de L'Assomption* (1928).
- *Memento du Nouveau Testament* (1932)
- *L'Evangile du Royaume de Dieu* (1935)
- *Le Miracle des Eglises noires* (1936)
- *Le Message des Apôtres* (1940)
- *Le tour du monde par l'Extrême-Orient* (1937)
- *Le Christ est venu* (1946)
- *Les deux Amériques à vol d'oiseau* (1950)
- *Le Rosaire de la Passion* (1951)
- *Hier* (1955)
- *Tout l'Evangile* (1959)
- Father Gervais also left numerous notebooks, diaries, personal notes, historical notes, articles and documents, and an abundant correspondence.



Father Wilfrid Dufault
(Drawing by Bro. Michel Bellanger
Juvisy novitiate)

Wilfrid Joseph DUFAULT (1907-2004)

**Religious of the Province of North America Provincial of North America
(1946-1952)**

Superior General (1952-1969)

A different type of leader

Wilfrid Dufault, a Franco-American, was born in Spencer, Massachusetts, U.S.A., on December 11, 1907. After his initial studies at Assumption College in Worcester and his novitiate in Quebec City (Canada), he pursued his theological studies at the Assumptionist International College in Rome where he made his perpetual profession on September 30, 1933, and where he was ordained a priest on January 24, 1934 by the Vicar of Rome, Cardinal Marchetti-Selvaggiani. After receiving a licentiate in theology from the Pontifical Angelicum in Rome, and a doctorate in philosophy from Laval University in Quebec, he taught philosophy from 1936 to 1946 at Assumption College in Worcester. He was the one to whom the Roman Curia turned for leadership in 1946 when it created the new North American Province, detaching the Vicariate from the Province of Paris. At the young age of 36, he became the Province's first Provincial. For services rendered to French culture, he was decorated with the Legion of Honor.

At age 45, he was elected Superior General on May 26, 1952 for a mandate of 12 years by the 22nd General Chapter held in Rome May 2-29, replacing Father Gervais Quénard who had resigned for health reasons. In addition to Father Wilfrid's personal qualifications, other considerations were also at play in the election of this first non-French Superior General. The French delegates could not agree among themselves on a candidate, and the non-French delegates wanted to end the French dominance of the Congregation that had characterized its governance from the beginning. The Chapter also elected a very disparate Curia which was soon shaken by two successive resignations (Father Germain Filliol in 1952 and Father Florentin Kerno in 1954) and by their temporary replacements.

At any rate, Father Wilfrid rapidly realized the dimensions of this new position, undertaking numerous travels and supporting many Assumptionist foundations in new countries: New Zealand (1952), Madagascar and Uruguay (1953), Ivory Coast (1957), and Costa Rica (1962). In 1956, he was able to offer the Assumptionists the most important work of Father Athanase Sage's life, "*Les Ecrits Spirituels*," a compendium of all the major writings of Father d'Alzon.

To be sure, difficulties and dark moments were not absent from those pre-conciliar years: in November 1952, three Bulgarian religious were shot to death in Sofia; communism in Eastern Europe did great harm to all of the communities, reducing them to silence and dispersal. Father Judicaël Nicolas in the USSR served a long sentence in detention until the spring of 1954. The political convulsions occasioned by the decolonization of Tunisia and Algeria led to the departure of religious from these two countries (1963 and 1964). At times, the future was also grim in Colombia and the Congo (1964) which were undermined by nationalist and separatist unrest, or by ideologies and political violence. Nevertheless, Father Wilfrid undertook with great hope the *aggiornamento* mandated by Vatican II. In 1959, he renewed relations with the Missionary Sisters of the Assumption in Cape Town, South Africa.

Reelected for a second term of twelve years on April 15, 1964, he had the joy of participating in the conciliar renewal as an "expert" and as the superior of a Congregation that had more than one thousand priests. The entire Congregation answered the call of the Council, working to revise its Constitutions. The liturgy took on new aspects, and the animation of the local and regional communities was given a new impetus.

In 1953, Father Wilfrid oversaw the creation of the Province of South America. In 1963-64, Brazil (a Dutch foundation), Spain, and the Congo-Zaire Region ventured out as vice-provinces on their way to progressively becoming autonomous provinces in their own right. Belgium could not avoid a latent crisis which led to its being separated into two linguistic provinces, one for the Flemish in the north, the other for the Walloons in the south.

The 24th General Chapter of 1964 gave the Congregation a new Curia with Fathers Paul Charpentier, Leander De Leeuw, and Floridor Vargas. Out-going Father Rémi Munsch was replaced by Father Romain/Camille Durand, while new officers were either confirmed or promoted: Father Alfred Fame as Procurator, Father Henry Moquin as Treasurer, replacing Father Eudes Hanhart, and Father Domitien Meuwissen who was reappointed Secretary (since 1955).

In the 1960s, Father Dufault realized that the Congregation was facing in Europe as well as in America a deep crisis of secularization, the devastating effects of which were a decline in the number of vocations, difficulties in recruiting, the closing of houses, and departures of religious. The former increase in numbers, which had already slowed down after the war, rapidly reversed itself for the Assumptionists, as it did for many other comparable apostolic congregations. While the curve of the Assumptionists resembled that of other congregations, the initial decrease turned out to be irreversible. In 1968, the number of religious went from almost 2,000 to 1,846. In order to foster an effort by a new team, the entire Curia submitted its resignation to the General Chapter of 1969. Father Wilfrid retired to his province of origin.

In 1983, he went back to Rome to help with the postulation of the causes of beatification of Father d'Alzon and of Father Marie-Clément Staub. Thanks to the preparatory work done by Father Pierre Touveneraud, he was able to bring to a happy conclusion, with the collaboration of Father Désiré Deraedt, the assembling and editing in 1986 of the voluminous dossier *Vie et Vertus du P. d'Alzon* which concluded more than 50 years of research and historical analysis.

On May 31, 1986, he returned once again to the United States, this time permanently, with the feeling that he had accomplished a worthwhile task, a feeling that was recognized and shared by others. Despite his age and sickness, he remained very interested in all that concerned the life of his religious family and the Church. At a session on Father d'Alzon held in Rome April 23-26, 1988, Father Wilfrid outlined the spiritual history of Father d'Alzon, positioning his interior itinerary between the two mottos of *Adveniat Regnum Tuum* and the love of Christ. In March 2000, at age 92, he participated in the meeting of former

Superiors General. He died at age 96 in Worcester, Massachusetts on February 24, 2004 and was buried in the cemetery in Fiskdale (Sturbridge), Massachusetts.

Act of consecration of the Assumptionists to the Sacred Heart

“Sacred Heart of Jesus, adorable Heart, your Assumption, the Assumption of your Mother, comes today before your altar, first of all to thank you. Blessed are you, Heart very meek, very merciful, and infinitely loving. Blessed are you for your past kindnesses, for your thoughtfulness, and for your tenderness. Blessed are you for the Fathers you have given us, and first of all for the one whom you gave us as Father and Founder, and whose ardent heart transmitted to us all of the holy flames of zeal and of the apostolate. Blessed are you, also, for having given us Fr. Picard, Fr. Emmanuel, Fr. Joseph, and Fr. Gervais, who drew from the original source the spirit of the founder and transmitted it to us in all of its purity. Blessed are you for all those who sanctified themselves under the mantel of your very gentle Mother assumed into heaven and who now surround her glorifying the mystery of her Assumption. Blessed are you for having given us the joy of glorifying her recently already on this earth, with the hope that she will draw us along behind her in the Assumption of heaven...”

(L’Assomption, 1952, No. 494, p. 3)

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Father Paul Charpentier
(Drawing by Bro. Michel Bellanger
Juvisy novitiate)

Paul (Pierre Louis) CHARPENTIER (1914-2007)

**Religious of the Province of France; Provincial of Paris (1957-1964);
Assistant General (1964-1969); Superior General (1969-1975)**

Apostolate among the workers

Pierre Louis Charpentier was born in Bury (Oise), France, on January 23, 1914. He lived in Levallois from 1920 to 1938 and attended the elementary school of the Brothers of Christian Schools. Having become an industrial designer in 1929, he joined the movement of Young Christian Workers (*Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne - J.O.C*) in the Levallois district and worked as an activist. At the time, Father Stourm - the future bishop of Amiens (1951) and archbishop of Sens (1962) - was chaplain of the group. After becoming the permanent secretary of Father Cornillie, chaplain of the Federation in the North-Paris district, he actively participated in the launching of the Federation. At the outset, it included some 40 districts which covered a large area in the northern suburb and in a few districts (*arrondissements*) of Paris itself.

Having expressed the desire to become a priest, he completed his formation and studies as a “late vocation” at *Saint-Denis* and entered the Assumptionist novitiate at Les Essarts in 1936, taking the name of Brother Paul. Professed on October 3, 1937, he pursued his studies of philosophy and theology at Lormoy (Essonne). Ordained a priest on March 24, 1946 by Bishop Pie Neveu along with 19 confreres, he was immediately assigned to the Mission of *Saint-Etienne de Sèvres*, better known as “*La Cloche*,” which had been founded by Fathers Cornillie and Santu. In this context, Father Paul was successively appointed national chaplain of the J.O.C. and of the J.O.C.F., its feminine branch in Juvisy-sur-Orge and Villeneuve-Saint-Georges (Essonne). He then assumed the same responsibilities in Versailles (Yvelines) and became the regional chaplain for the Departments of Seine-et-Oise and Seine-et-Marne. Father Frossard, the future auxiliary bishop of Paris, once called him the “workers’ missionary.”

Assumptionist responsibilities

Suddenly appointed Provincial of Paris following the unexpected death of Father Louis-Henri B elard in February 1957, Father Paul promoted both within the Province and the Congregation what had been the main thrust and driving force of his life until then. He encouraged a stronger presence in popular milieus and among the working class (mission at Saint-Etienne in the Loire), a greater collaboration with the world of laypeople, and a change in the type of formation given in the educational institutions and scholasticates of his province. His pastoral experience also prompted him to accept broader responsibilities: he became a member of the Permanent Committee of the *International Union of Congregations Engaged in Hospital and Social Work (Union nationale des congr gations d' action hospitali re et sociale - U.N.C.A.H.S.)*.²³

In 1964, the Congregation called him to Rome to become Assistant General. On May 29, 1969, he was elected Superior General to succeed Father Wilfrid Dufault during an "Extraordinary Chapter" held to implement the new vision proposed by the Second Vatican Council: a broad decentralization of the Institute, the creation of two provinces, Spain and the Congo, the drawing up of a new *Rule of Life*, a broadening of the international character of the Congregation, given its diverse cultures and languages, the development of new means to assure unity within diversity, and the creation of the Council of the Congregation.

The Chapter of 1969 changed almost completely the composition of the Curia. It elected Fathers Dionisio Solano, Leander De Leeuw (replaced in 1971 by Father Serafinus Tillemans), Noel Bugnard, and Augustine Danby. Father Alessandro Bombieri replaced Father Domitien Meuwissen as Secretary General, and Father Felicien Sleutjes replaced Father Fame as Procurator. The Congregation owes Father Paul the creation of the *AA News Bulletin (ART Informations)*, which replaced *La Lettre   la Famille (Letter to the Family)* in 1964. Father Pierre Touveneraud took over the archives and the postulation.

²³ Today, the association is known as R.E.P.S.A., *Religieuses dans les Professions de Sant  (Religious in the Health Care Professions)*.

Difficulties were not lacking in this post-conciliar period of adaptation and effervescence. In Brazil, a serious crisis began with the arrest of religious who were serving the working classes (1969). In all of the provinces, as a consequence of the changing times and mentalities, the aluminate formula became outdated. Many of the structures that had marked the history of the Congregation were no longer valid. It was the hour of adaptations and closings, which were often painful. The most outstanding, if not the most heartrending, was *Notre Dame de France* in Jerusalem, which was sold without the permission of the Holy See and which later became the object of a diplomatic-political imbroglio between the Holy See and the State of Israel. In 1971-1972, the property and building were turned over to the Holy See which transformed it into an international pilgrim and cultural center, known today as the *Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center*.

The change in mentalities which provoked the breakup of the Congregation's large communities was accompanied by a questioning of values and identities, as well as by a hemorrhaging among the younger generations of Assumptionists. Though his was the shortest mandate of all the Superiors General of the Congregation, Father Paul bore the brunt of the crisis that shook the churches of Europe. No new foundations were made during this period, the Congregation presumably in a state of withdrawal or recession. In 1972, the Institute, which had 12 provinces, saw its numbers reduced considerably: from 1,672 religious in 1971, down to 1,392 in 1976, with little hope of having more vocations in the immediate future.

Naturally very discrete, Father Paul Charpentier finished his six-year term in 1975, expressing the desire that he not be given a new mandate. In February 1975, he had the pleasure of accompanying to Saint Peter's in Rome a large delegation of Religious Sisters of the Assumption who had come for the ceremony of beatification of Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus.

After the General Chapter held at Les Essarts in April 1975, he was assigned to the provincial house in Paris on avenue Denfert-Rochereau where, in his capacity as an Assumptionist priest and as Assistant Director-General, he followed the creation of Bayard Presse and the affairs of the publishing house. Retired in 1985,

he nevertheless continued to follow two periodicals very closely, *La Foi Aujourd'hui* and *Vermeil*. On March 24, 1996, he celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his ordination in the intimacy of the community at Denfert-Rochereau. As he aged and began experiencing difficulties in moving about, he nevertheless wished to remain in the region of Paris because of the friends he had there. When he reached his 80s, he was given and accepted the option of moving to the Marie-Thérèse Center, a home for the retired priests of the archdiocese of Paris, located across the street from the provincial house.

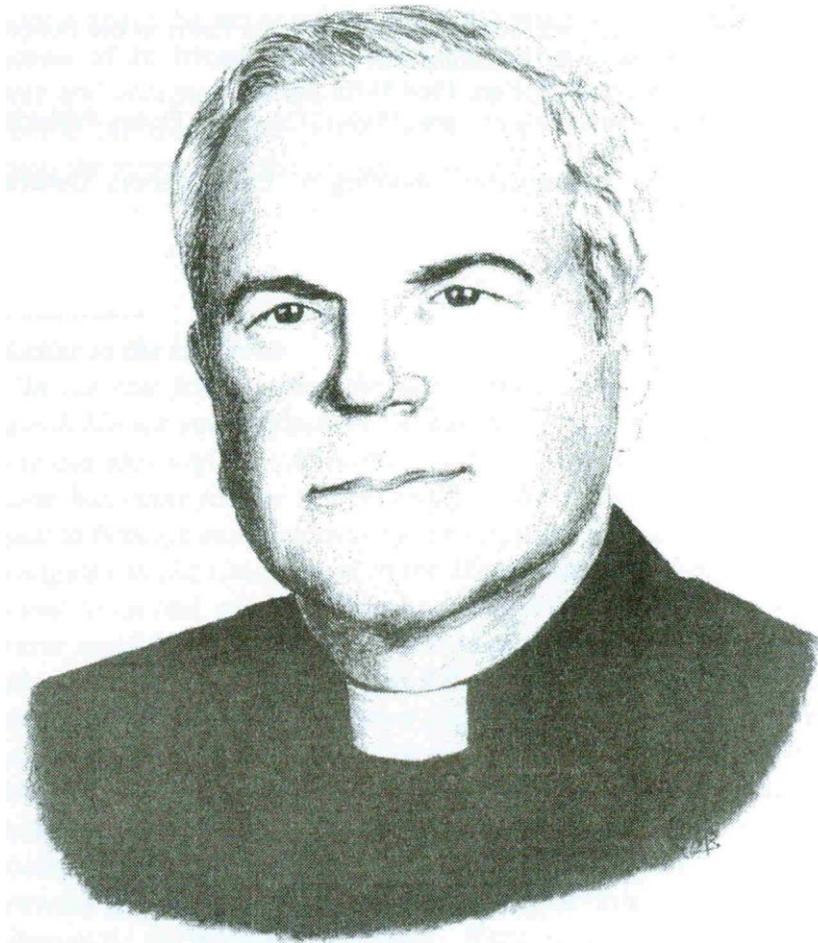
Letter to the religious

“In the last few months, the new Constitutions have been made available for your reflection. Recently, Chapters have determined the Statutes and the Orientations of the Provinces. I believe the time has come for me to personally address each of you, to invite you to become more aware of your responsibility as Assumptionist religious in the Church and in the world today. A decade has just come to an end, one in which the sciences and technical know-how have soared enormously. We have seen a man walk on the moon... However, though it has improved the needed welfare of millions of men and women, our consumer society has intoxicated them with needs artificially created. The gap is widening terribly between the rich nations and the Third-World: literacy is not keeping pace with the increases in population; hundreds of thousands of human beings suffer or die from hunger; and while the planets are revealing their secret to us, we ignore the fate of a quarter of humanity, particularly in China. Wars have not ceased. Local wars but atrocious; internal in appearance, but in reality what is at stake is the strategy and economy of the ‘Major Powers’...”

(Letter to the religious, no. 1, January 22, 1970)

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Father Hervé Stéphan
(Drawing by Bro. Michel Bellanger,
Juvisy novitiate)

Hervé STÉPHAN (1925-)

Religious of the Province of France; Superior General (1975-1987)

From the coast of Brittany

Hervé Stéphan was born in Henvic (Finistère), France, on October 3, 1925, in a family and region whose outlook deeply influenced his poetic nature. His early studies were entirely classical: his secondary education took place in the alumnates of the Western Province, at Saint Maur and at Blou in the Anjou region (Maine-et-Loire). It was during World War II that young Hervé began his novitiate in 1943 at Pont-l'Abbé-d'Arnoult (Charente-Maritime), followed by studies in philosophy and theology in Layrac (Lot-et-Garonne). He made first profession on October 22, 1944 and was ordained a priest in Layrac on February 17, 1951. He undertook studies leading to a licentiate in science at the Faculty of Bordeaux (Gironde) and began teaching at *Collège Sainte-Barbe* in Toulouse (Haute-Garonne).

But his life then took a different direction when he became the diocesan chaplain for the movement of Young Catholic Students (*Jeunesse Etudiante Catholique - J.E.C*), then its regional chaplain. He was called to Paris in 1968 to become, in his capacity as an Assumptionist priest, a member of the Board of Directors of Bayard-Press, succeeding Father Paul Charpentier in that function. He was also appointed superior of the religious community. A smiling Breton artistically inclined, Father Hervé knew how to use his engaging personality in the positions he held as a result of his various ministries. On Friday April 18, 1975, the General Chapter held at Les Essarts (Seine-Maritime) elected him Superior General of the Congregation. In going to Rome, he would be called upon to assume broader and more international responsibilities.

To the heart of the Catholic world

As he took up these new responsibilities. Father Hervé was able to count on assistants who were well-suited for the task: Father Dionisio Solano, a Chilean, was Spanish-speaking, Fathers François Péjac and Noel Bugnard were French, Father Thomas De Leeuw was Dutch, and Father Joseph Loïselle was American. This combination made possible a quadrilingual edition of the Roman Bulletin, *ART-Information*s. His first order of business was to provide new leaders in the provinces: Father Edgar Bourque in the U.S., Father Louis Augustijns in Belgium-North, Father Felix Mallet in Belgium-South, Father Enrique Goiburu in Spain, Father Stephan Smulders in Zaïre, Father Jan Van Der Meer in Holland, and Father Alcuino Derks in the Vice-Province of Brazil.

In France, the time had come to restructure the provinces. In 1978, after consultation and discussion, a desire progressively arose to unify the former provinces of Bordeaux, Lyons, Paris, and the Common French Works (*Oeuvres Communes Françaises - O.C.F.*). Father Emmanuel Brajon, as provincial of the O.C.F. from 1969 to 1978, had been the first to hold the title of Provincial of France. When the provinces were united in 1978, the title was given to Father Emmanuel Rospide, the first provincial of the unified province. Thus were the Vice-Provinces of the East, North, and West brought under the central authority of a single Provincial of France.

Very rapidly also, the Roman Curia began preparing the Centennial celebration of the death of the Founder in 1980 by organizing a series of local, national and international events, prepared by a special commission, the International d'Alzon Committee (*Commission Internationale Alzonienne - CIA.*), chaired by Father Robert Fortin (U.S.). The archivist, Father Pierre Touveneraud, was asked to undertake the task of publishing Father d'Alzon's correspondence, which had been suspended since the death of Father Siméon Vailhé. Thanks to Father Touveneraud, two volumes were published covering the years 1851-1858. His premature death in December 1979 deprived the Congregation of the man to whom the centennial celebrations owed a great deal.

To a Congregation that was aging, Father Hervé - elected at age 50 and reelected in 1981 for a second mandate - restored the pride of its original name

(Augustinians of the Assumption), which was finally recognized by a decree of the Holy See. He also promoted the importance of the Congregation's foundational documents, using them as the basis for the new *Rule of Life* which was laboriously drawn up chapter by chapter. This *Rule* was definitively approved, along with a few amendments, in 1983 and was promulgated in the four official languages of the Institute, not counting other translations into the languages of the countries in which the Assumptionists were active.

But even more significantly, Father Hervé, encouraged by a reawakening of a sense of identity within the Congregation, believed in its future and, accordingly, encouraged a more sustained vocational policy throughout the Institute. Borrowing an image from his native Brittany, he urged the Assumptionists to “venture out on the high seas,” by which he meant to symbolize St. Paul's *Call to the Macedonians*. In line with that policy, Zaïre finally began to recruit native candidates whose numbers seemed promising. He asked the provincials during a meeting of the Council of the Congregation to provide the staff needed to train this new youth and to finance on-site structures of formation: a novitiate in Butembo as well as a scholasticate in Bulengera and Kinshasa. Volunteers responded to this call to go abroad and to this renewed enthusiasm on the part of the Congregation. Madagascar opened its own novitiate on the Belemboka property in Tulear; Chile reorganized its novitiate to serve other parts of the South American continent; Mexico found new recruits.

In order to develop a more international outlook among the young religious, the General Curia organized in 1986 the first meeting of what is known as C.A.F.I. (*Communauté assomptionniste de formation à l'internationalité / Assumptionist Community for International Formation*). The Institute also drew up a new *Ratio Institutionis*, leaving the door open to possible adaptations according to continents and regions.

Even Europe awoke from its lethargy: novitiates were opened in Cachan, Montpellier, and Lille; formation communities were attempted in Belgium, Holland, England, and the United States. Riding the new wave, the Canadian Region tried for a while to fend for itself as a Vice-Province. In short, almost

everywhere, the old tree, which many thought had seen its day, was now receiving new life. Even if the results did not always match the hopes expressed and the energies deployed, it is no less true that many courageous initiatives were undertaken during this decade.

To be sure, significant problems remained. Proportionately, during Father Hervé's two mandates, the number of deaths, the highest in the history the Congregation, was not offset by a corresponding number of new members. Also, many questions remained regarding the solidity and permanence of certain commitments.

A man of great hope, Father Hervé placed Elijah's mantle on the shoulders of his successor, Father Claude Maréchal. After a sabbatical year in Jerusalem (1987-88), he was assigned to the French novitiate in Paris (Denfert), and then in Sceaux from 1988 to 1991, after which he courageously volunteered for the distant mission of Romania, which he had constantly promoted. After serving there from October 1991 to 1999, he joined the rue Morere formation community in Paris, sharing with the young candidates his rich and broad personal experience.

Letter to the religious

"My dear Brothers,

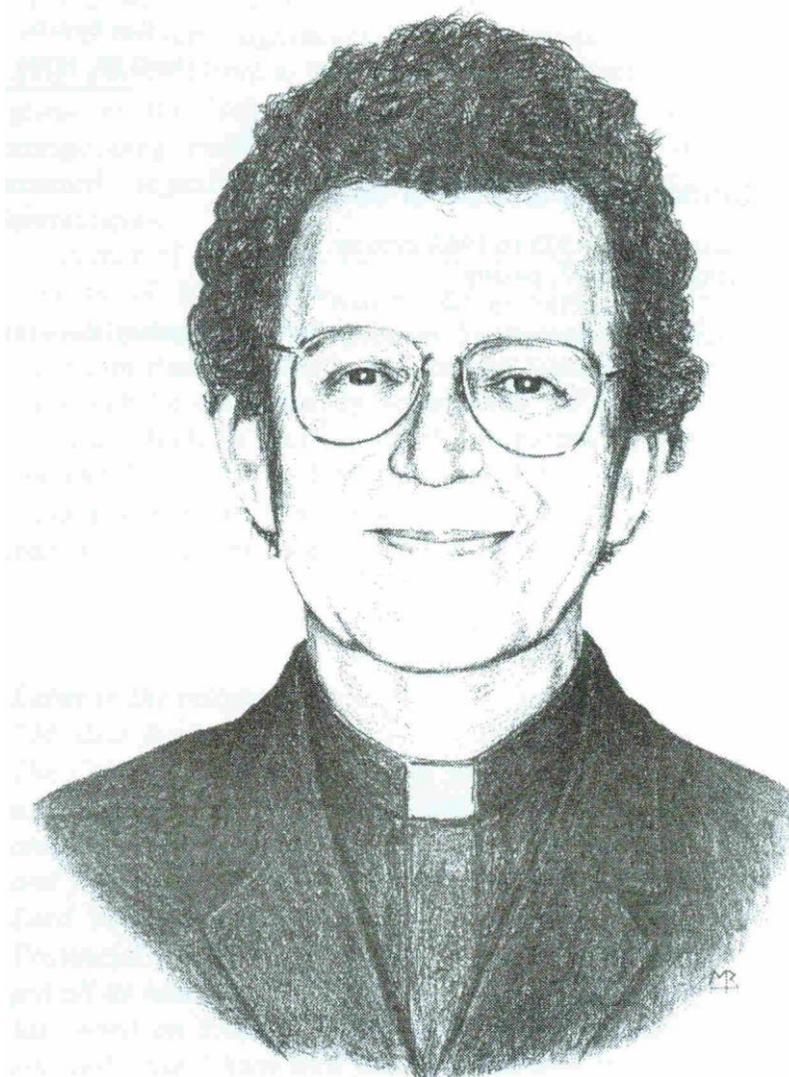
The General Chapter is coming to an end. It has asked me to assure, for the entire Institute, the fraternal service of unity and animation. I did not think that I should refuse... By your friendship and your prayers, you can help me respond to this new call of the Lord in my life. With this message, your delegates and your Provincial will bring you a text on the Apostolate. The Assembly put all its heart and soul into it. Do not look for a synthesis or the last word on Evangelization, or for infallible means to make it succeed. But I hope that you will find in it a certain passion for Man and for God. A passion for Jesus Christ, whose Name we must proclaim, in and out of season, to the people who live next to us. That was Father

d'Alzon's passion... Brothers and Friends in the 25 countries in which the Assumptionists are working, it is to this same purpose that with you I want to dedicate these 6 years of my mandate. Helped and supported by the councilors the Chapter has given me, I want to assure you, my dear Brothers, of my friendship and devotion."

(Les Essarts, April 25, 1975)

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Father Claude Maréchal
(Drawing by Bro. Michel Bellanger
Juvisy novitiate)

Claude MARÉCHAL (1935-)

**Religious of the Province of France; Provincial of France (1984-1987);
Superior General (1987-1999)**

Reputation of an intellectual and an animator

Claude Maréchal was born in Cramans (Jura), France, on May 3, 1935. He pursued his secondary education in the alummates of Velleuxon (Haute-Saône) and Miribel-les-Echelles (Isère). Having chosen to become an Assumptionist, he entered the novitiate of Nozeroy (Jura) in 1953 and was admitted to first profession, pronouncing his first vows on October 7, 1954. After spending a long period of time doing his military service in Algeria, he made perpetual profession in 1960. He studied theology in Lyons (Rhône) and began preparing in Strasbourg (Bas-Rhin) a dissertation on *De Sacramentis* of Hugh of Saint Victor, which never saw the day. He at least had the satisfaction of having been the student of a specialist on the subject, Professor Chavasse.

At the end of his period of formation, he was ordained a priest at Lyons-Valpré on March 30, 1963. Given his abilities as a teacher, he was immediately asked to teach dogmatic theology at the Valpré scholasticate which, at that time, was in full operation. Very cordial, never at a loss for ideas, always eager in his work, he brought to the teaching staff a touch of originality and a freshness of approach. Some years later, after the scholasticate had ceased to exist, he became a professor at the Lyons Consortium, which regrouped the available personnel of the various religious institutes. From being a professor, he became its director until the day when it, too, had no more students, at which time he was asked to address a different type of audience.

In the 1970s, Father Claude accepted to become at Bayard Presse the editor of the periodical *Vivante Eglise*, which replaced *Chrétiens ensemble*. His experience as a journalist gave him the occasion to become familiar with the world-at-large and to enrich himself with another type of human knowledge, that of human

relations, something that did not run contrary to his intellectual nature. During these years of turmoil which rocked the scholasticate of Valpré, he chose to live in a small community on avenue Thiers in the heart of the city of Lyons, dividing his time between Paris and Lyons (1973). For practical reasons, he moved to Paris in the fall of 1979, residing with the community on rue Charcot in the 13th district (*arrondissement*).

There were practically no community chapters held from 1970 to 1980 that did not call upon Father Claude to play a remarkable role as their principal animator. Along with Fathers Bruno Chenu and Marcel Neusch, he was the indispensable organizer of the summer sessions at Les Essarts which offered refresher courses and/or special sessions to religious, updating them on current issues and topics.

In September 1984, he was chosen to replace Father Emmanuel Rospide as Provincial of France. He had hardly settled into his new position when he was elected on May 30, 1987 to succeed Father Hervé Stéphan as head of the Institute. At age 52, this intellectual religious, who felt comfortable in the world of ideas, would mark the Congregation with the imprint of his warm and dynamic nature.

7th Successor of Father d'Alzon (1987-1999)

A new Curia was elected to assist Father Claude: Father Dominique Bouverot, Vicar General, a quasi compatriot; Father José-Geraldo Da Cruz, a newcomer from Brazil; and Father Louis Augustijns, a Flemish Belgian. Father Luc Martel, an American, provided continuity with the previous team and served as Treasurer. Father Pierre Charon, temporarily replaced by Father François Bernard, accepted to be Secretary General. In 1993, when Father Claude was reelected, two new persons joined the general staff: Fathers Bernard Holzer from France, and Marcel Poirier from Quebec, Canada.

Father Claude immediately addressed the international dimension of the Congregation by encouraging the study of languages among its members and by preaching by example, learning both English and Italian. Results, though, were another question, because intellectual ability does not automatically make one a

linguist. Regardless, Father Claude liked to share his strong convictions, which he expounded in his very substantive circular letters. An indefatigable traveler, he quickly sized up the changes that were taking place on the planet with the fall of the Berlin Wall in Eastern Europe in 1989 and with the chain reaction it had on all the continents.

He encouraged a renewal of the Assumptionist ecumenical apostolate, supporting the pioneers and the adventurers who followed in the footsteps of their predecessors: in Moscow (Father Bernard Le Léanec in 1988); in Bacau, Romania (Fathers Maurice Laurent, Hervé Stéphan, and Cornie Nelissen in 1990); and in Plovdiv, Bulgaria (Father Daniel Gillier in 1994). He did not hesitate to follow up on a suggestion made by the Council of the Congregation which encouraged a foundation in Asia. South Korea was selected and three volunteers came forward: Fathers Frans Desmet, Leo Brassard, and Thierry Cocquerez. The foundation took place at the end of 1991 in Kwangju.

Also, Father Claude granted the Region of Colombia the status of a vicariate directly attached to the general administration of the Congregation because, after a long period of gestation, there was new hope of obtaining vocations. Other significant foundations took place as well: in Riobamba, Ecuador (1996), and in East Africa: Nairobi, Kenya (1988), and Arusha, Tanzania (1995).

What interested him most for the life of the Congregation was the question of formation, particularly the intellectual formation of candidates. After seeking the help of several collaborators, he put together in 1993 a short treatise entitled *L'esprit de l'Assomption d'après le P. d'Alzon (The Assumptionist Spirit according to Father d'Alzon)*. He encouraged the formation of formators by calling for international sessions, especially in Africa (Goma), and by keeping up the already well-established practice in South America. In the same vein, he spared no effort in promoting international initiatives and meetings of vocation directors.

At the beginning of 1997, he called a meeting in Rome to discuss a theme close to his heart, "Specialized Studies at Assumption." His purpose was to underline the importance of this essential dimension of a congregation that calls

itself “doctrinal.” Finally, it must be noted that the letters he sent to the religious reflected his broad but basic concerns: ecumenism, religious indifference, lay-religious collaboration, insertion into the local Church, preparation of the Congregation’s 150 anniversary, and the mission without borders, all of which were treated in the General Chapters of 1993 and 1999 and in the annual meetings of the Council of the Congregation.

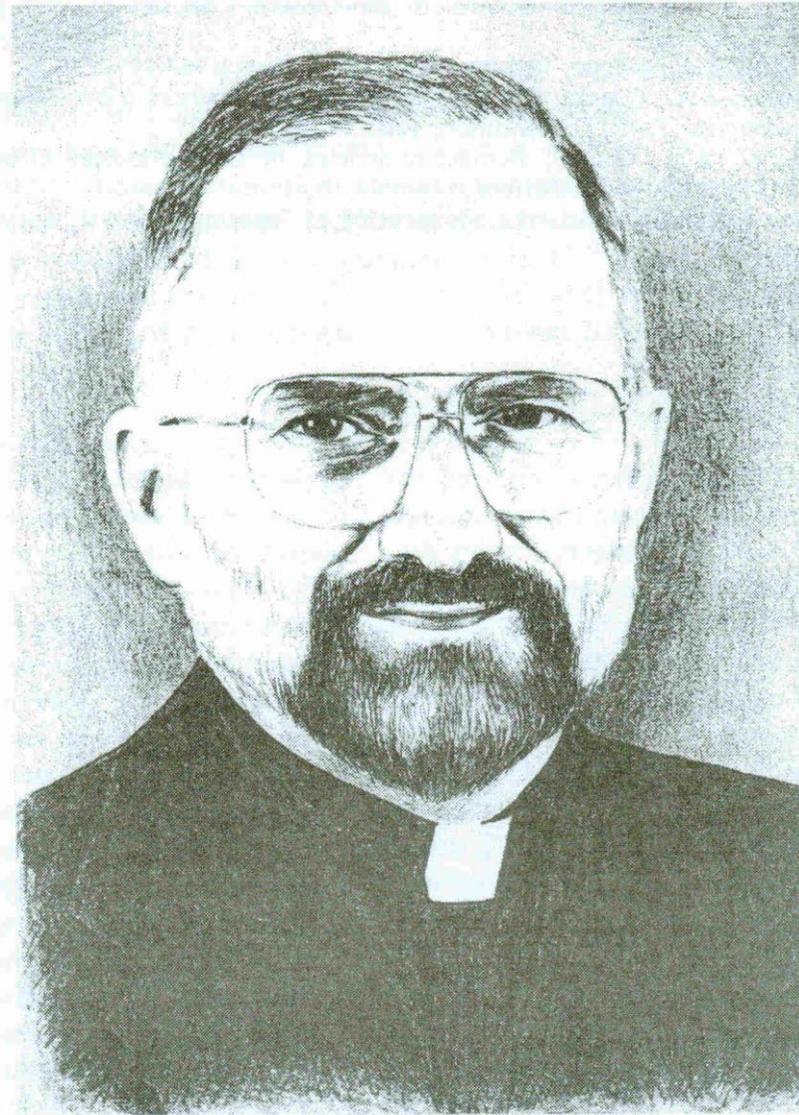
In July 1999, Father Claude left Rome. He went first to the community in Limas (Rhône), but was later assigned to the one in Lyons-Valpré where his fraternal warmth and genuine openness toward the broad Assumptionist family prompted his being appointed superior of the community in 2001 after he had participated fervently in the festivities and celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of the Congregation: a televised Mass on April 30, 2000, and a Colloquium on the History of the Congregation in November 2000.

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe; we are convinced that you are God’s holy one.’ You are familiar with Peter’s response. It was the Gospel of May 12th of this year. It took on a particular significance for me. I was leaving the office of Father General. Given the results of the consultation, he had just told me about the intentions of the General Council. The next day, the Gospel of the Good Shepherd came just at the right time. On returning to Paris, I contacted several persons and accepted the proposal that had been made to me. Your confidence, that of those responsible for the Congregation, the exchanges that I had had beforehand with my community weighed heavily on my decision. Reading these signs, I realized that, for me, serving the Kingdom at this time meant accepting this responsibility. This obedience represents a turning point in my life. Teacher and formator, then journalist hunting down the hundred faces of the Church, here I am the animator of persons and of communities on a larger scale. Under different circumstances wherein faith sees the hand of God, it’s really the same mission... “

(Claude Maréchal, 1984 in A.T.L.P., no. 35, p. 1)

Selected bibliography and other sources:

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Father Richard Lamoureux
(Drawing by Bro. Wenceslas Gorokhov,
Juvisy novitiate)

Richard Edward LAMOUREUX (1942-)

Religious of the North American Province; Provincial of North America (1984-1990); Superior General (1999-2011)

An art lover

The grandson of immigrants from Quebec, Richard Edward Lamoureux was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, USA, (which he likes to describe as “that other city with seven hills”) on September 3, 1942. His father Normand (+ March 30, 2001) was a machine operator in a factory. His mother dedicated her life to raising her two children, Richard and his sister Sylvia. After attending St. Joseph’s Grammar School in Worcester, he went to Assumption Preparatory School from 1956 to 1960, and then to Assumption College for two years (1960-62). It was at these two institutions, both located in Worcester, that he came in contact with the Assumptionists.

At age 20, he entered the novitiate in Saugerties, New York (1962-63), making first profession on August 28, 1963. He studied philosophy at Saint-Gérard in Belgium (1963-65) and theology at the Gregorian University in Rome (1965-67), pursuing his theological formation in the United States at Weston School of Theology (1967-68), from which he received a Master’s degree. Between 1968 and 1976, Brother Richard specialized in art history at Boston University and at New York University from which he received a doctoral degree, writing his dissertation on Leon-Battista Alberti. He was ordained a priest on March 27, 1971.

He taught Art History at Assumption College in Worcester until 1984 and was superior-formation director at Austin House, a vocation-oriented residence in Worcester for students thinking of the Assumptionists. From 1984 to 1990, he was provincial of the North American Province, which had communities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, as well as new foundations in English-speaking Africa (Kenya and Tanzania). He was also Provost and Dean of Faculty

at Assumption College (1990-96), master of novices, and co-director of the d'Alzon-Milleret Center for Spirituality (1996-99).

On May 11, 1999, he was elected Superior General of the Assumptionists during the 30th General Chapter held in Rome, becoming the 8th successor of Father d'Alzon as head of the Congregation, in the footsteps of Fathers Picard, Bailly, Quénard, Dufault, Charpentier, Stephan, and Maréchal. After Father Wilfrid Dufault, he is the second American to occupy that position. At the time of his election, the Congregation numbered some 930 religious and was present in 25 countries.

A new man for a new millennium

In his new position, Father Richard was assisted by a partially renewed Curia made up of two holdovers from the previous administration, Fathers Bernard Holzer and Marcel Poirier, and two newly elected members, Father Julio Navarro Román from Chile, Vicar General, and Father René Mihigo Marhegane, the first Congolese to be chosen as Assistant General.

Father Richard immediately began to work on the priorities established by the General Chapter. A polyglot, he was able to address the religious in the official languages of the Congregation, after having spent a few weeks perfecting his Dutch. He paid special attention to the international dimension of the Institute. The traditional *Répartition des Religieux / Directory of Religious* began to appear in four languages in 2000, the year of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation. Experienced in the use of modern technology, he generally corresponds by internet and email with all parts of the Assumptionist world.

He personally visits the communities, logging record air-miles each year. His first task involved respecting the calendar of activities for the 150th centennial celebrations which had been established by the previous administration: a meeting of the former Superiors General in Auteuil in March 2000, a televised Mass in Valpré on April 30, 2000, and participation in a Colloquium on the 150th anniversary, also held in Valpré that same year. The meetings of the Council of

the Congregation, held in various locations, helped him to rediscover some of the issues facing the Assumptionists in the new millennium: Jerusalem in June 2000, Arusha on the African continent in April-May 2001, and Istanbul-Rome in 2002.

He gladly accepted to write the Preface to the 5-volume series of *Notices Biographiques* (ed. 2000-2001), a compilation of short biographies of 1,677 Assumptionists who, from 1850 to December 31, 1999, served the cause of the Church. Like his predecessors, but using a more intimate tone, Father Richard addressed circular letters to the religious about *Re-expressing the Charism* (no. 3) and about the deep motivations underpinning the choice one makes of religious life, *Falling in Love Again* (no. 2), and *Faith in Jesus Christ* (no. 4). In order to encourage the religious to become better acquainted with the Founder, he asked the current Archivist to prepare a selection of the 50 letters that not only best reflect the problems of Father d'Alzon's day but also illustrate the major Assumptionist commitments of the past and prefigure those of the future (*Anthologie Alzonienne /d'Alzonian Anthology*, ed. 2002).

The prospect of the beatification by Pope John Paul II of 3 Bulgarian Assumptionists martyred in Sofia in 1952, Fathers Pavel Djidjov, Josaphat Schiskov, and Kamen Vitchev, also shed important light on the involvement of the religious in the life of the Church. Father Richard had the joy and honor of leading an Assumptionist delegation which went to Bulgaria on pilgrimage on this occasion in May 2002. He opened the evening of prayer, which took place the night before the beatifications, on Saturday May 25, in the ancient Greco-Roman stadium of Plovdiv where, among other events, the movie *The Balkans Crucified* was shown in the Bulgarian language.

The following day, Sunday May 26, 2002, he concelebrated the Mass presided by Pope John Paul II in the presence of the local bishops of both rites on a podium erected in the main city square. Capping this historic visit was a Mass celebrated in the Slavonic-Byzantine rite on Monday May 27 by Bishop Proykov on the grounds of the new convent of the Sisters of the Eucharist. It was celebrated in the open-air because the construction of the parish church, dedicated to the memory

of another blessed dear to the heart of the inhabitants of the country, the former nuncio Angelo Roncalli who later became Pope John XXIII, was not yet finished.

The memory of these events will surely remain engraved in Father Richard's prayer as an illustration of the Church's gratitude toward the Congregation. The call to sanctity, which is part and parcel of all religious life, was exemplified in the lives of these three Blesseds and resonated anew throughout the Congregation.

During the month of June 2002, Father Richard offered the Congregation some rich thoughts about the Assumptionist apostolic community in his 5th circular entitled *Witnesses to Love*. Present and discreet, community-minded yet solitary, Father Richard knows how to encourage all the members of his religious family by giving the example of a shared faith, assiduous work, and faithful companionship.

The Efficacy of Kingdom

“Ever hear Aesop’s fable about the goose that laid the golden egg? The farmer was at first incredulous that the goose could produce such a thing, but day after day the beast kept producing the genuine product. The farmer became more and more wealthy, and more and more greedy. He wanted more, more than one egg a day. And in a fit of passionate greed, he grabbed the goose, shook its neck, and split it open to get at all the eggs that lay hidden inside. He found none. The goose was gone, and never again laid an egg, golden or otherwise.... And the golden egg in all this? It’s very simple. As religious living in apostolic community, we are passionate about the mission, ready to give ourselves fully to the service of others and of the Kingdom. We want to produce many eggs, to bear fruit, and to be successful in the efforts we make for the Lord. All of that is very good. God did not call us to twiddle our thumbs or to fail in our mission. He wants us to bear fruit, and to bear it in abundance. But what will allow us to bear fruit, to produce golden eggs, day after day? You also are on your way. You have a road to travel, but never alone. He is the one who cares for us...”

(*AA Info*, no. 1, October 1999, pp. 1-3)

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- *AA Informations*, no. 1, 1999, p. 3 (yellow insert).
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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ASSUMPTIONISTS

1930					
1940					
1950					
1960					
1970					
1980					
1990					
2000					
1921	Marie-Joanna de l'Incarnation <i>Jeanne Saleur</i> *1874/+1966				1921 Anne-M. de Jésus <i>A.M. Lopez</i> *1860/+1929
1953	Marie Denyse du Saint Sacrement <i>Denise Blachère</i> *1905/+1985				1929 Marie Madeleine de la Croix <i>Oudot de Dalmille</i> *1890/+1983
1970	Hélène M. du St. Sacrement <i>H. Bories</i> *1929				1964 Marie Dominique du Christ <i>M. Louise Croyon</i> *1927
1982	Claire Teresa Tjader de l'Annonciation *1937				1975 Yolande de Getsésmani <i>Y. de Nompère de Champagny</i> *1933
1994	Cristina González *1848				1993 Jeanine Gindrey *1946
1923	Gervais Quenard *1875/+1961				1922 Marie Germaine de Jésus <i>Catherine Friedel</i> *1867/+1950
1952	Wilfrid Dufault *1907/+2004				1946 Marie Sainte Elisabeth <i>Elisabeth Barbe</i> *1890-1979
1969	Paul Charpentier *1914/+2007				1968 M. Mad. Goddélève <i>M. Mad. Termont</i> *1920
1975	Hervé Stéphan *1925				1981 M. Th. of the Eucharist <i>S. Dick</i> *1869
1987	Claude Maréchal *1935				1987 Céline Héon *1935
1999	Richard Lamoureux *1942				1999 Mercedes M. Martínez
1936					1936 Berthe Marie Paré *1860/+1945
1943					1943 M. Michael Rainfray *1870/+1943
1946					1946 Marie Augustine Vigne *1896/+1990
1969					1969 Christiane M. Mellero *1908
1975					1975 Georgette Marie Fayolle *1928
1993					1993 Claire de la Croix Rabitz *1940
1936					1936 M. Michael Rainfray *1870/+1943
1943					1943 <i>Marthe Wourms (1943-1946)</i>
1946					1946 Marie Augustine Vigne *1896/+1990
1969					1969 Christiane M. Mellero *1908
1975					1975 Georgette Marie Fayolle *1928
1993					1993 Claire de la Croix Rabitz *1940
1936					1936 M. Michael Rainfray *1870/+1943
1943					1943 <i>Marthe Wourms (1943-1946)</i>
1946					1946 Marie Augustine Vigne *1896/+1990
1969					1969 Christiane M. Mellero *1908
1975					1975 Georgette Marie Fayolle *1928
1993					1993 Claire de la Croix Rabitz *1940
1936					1936 M. Michael Rainfray *1870/+1943
1943					1943 <i>Marthe Wourms (1943-1946)</i>
1946					1946 Marie Augustine Vigne *1896/+1990
1969					1969 Christiane M. Mellero *1908
1975					1975 Georgette Marie Fayolle *1928
1993					1993 Claire de la Croix Rabitz *1940

QUESTIONNAIRE - PRACTICAL EXERCISES

1. In the life of a religious congregation, what are the advantages and disadvantages of the two possible forms of government the Assumptionists have had over the years: centralization and decentralization? How were these forms put into practice?

2. How have the office and role of the Assumptionist Superior General evolved over the years? By what concrete signs are these changes discernible? Do the Congregation's various Constitutions carry any recognizable traces of them?

3. What should we think of the different mandates of Father Quénard, all of them having been atypical because of the way he was appointed and because of their duration? Does this teach us anything about the Assumptionists' sense of the Church?

4. What are the important changes that have taken place in the Assumptionists' particular Rules concerning the Congregation's government and animation?

5. What led the General Government of the Congregation to progressively take into account the ethnic and linguistic diversity of its members? When was this evolution felt most strongly? What were the signs?

6. Have the letters of the Assumptionist Superiors General always been inspired by the original intuitions of Father d'Alzon? Give a few concrete examples.

7. Were the changes that have taken place in the government of the Congregation due especially to a desire on the part of the Superiors General, ratified by the Chapters, to reform the Institute, or were they due to a change in the mentalities within society which had to be taken into account? Is the idea of reform compatible with that of tradition?

8. Did the Canon Law of 1917 or the Code of 1983 lead the Superiors General to make important changes in the Constitutions or the *Rule of Life* of the Assumptionists? Give some concrete examples.

9. What lasting impressions regarding the person and policies of each Superior General continue to inspire the Institute?

10. How is authority shared in a Congregation between the hierarchical level (Superior General and his Council) and the democratic level (General Chapter)? How can conflicts of interpretation or dissensions be settled?

General Chapters

What is a General Chapter?

Successor to the general assemblies which the monks of the first centuries held with their superiors, the General Chapter is an assembly in which elected and appointed religious transact their business and deal with issues of concern to them in a particular place and at a given time (Larousse Dictionary). The word *Chapter* is derived from the chapter of the Rule which was customarily read to the monks gathered together in general assembly. Little by little, the place of the meeting was called the chapter house/hall, and eventually the meeting itself was called the Chapter. Today we distinguish three different types of Chapters according to their importance: General Chapters, Provincial Chapters, and Local Chapters.

A General Chapter according to Canon Law

Today two texts govern the manner in which Chapters are held: the Code of Canon Law promulgated in 1983, c. 631-633, and the Assumptionist *Rule of Life* promulgated on November 21, 1984, art. 104-119. These two texts must always be directly and properly applied and interpreted.

List of Assumptionist General Chapters: 1850-2005

In order to properly understand the more than 150 years of Assumptionist history (1845-2005), it is essential first to draw up a detailed list of the **31** gatherings that have taken place over the years, then to divide them according to the **8** generalates that preceded the present one, including, in chronological order, the interim period of Father Joseph Maubon from 1918 to 1923.

The first 9 Chapters under Father d'Alzon (1850/1852/1880):

1. 1850 in Nîmes, September 23-25
2. 1852* in Nîmes, August 24-28
3. 1855 in Clichy-la-Garenne, September 12
4. 1858 in Clichy-la-Garenne, July 6
5. 1862 in Nîmes, September 3-9
6. 1868 in Nîmes, September 7-17
7. 1873 in Nîmes, September 10-18
8. 1876 in Nîmes, September 11-16
9. 1879 in Paris, September 1 -4

The next 4 under Father Picard (1880-1903):

10. 1880* in Nîmes, November 24-25
11. 1886 in Paris, August 6-11
12. 1892 in Livry, August 30-September 7
13. 1898 in Livry, August 1 -6

The next 3 under Father Bailly (1903-1917):

14. 1903* in Louvain, June 18-19
15. 1906 in Louvain, July 31 - August 7

16. 1912 in Limpertsberg, November 6-14

The next 2 during the interim period of Father Maubon (1917-1923):

17. 1918* in Notre-Dame de Lumières, April 21-28
18. 1921-1922* in Rome, December 8, 1921-January 10, 1922. This Chapter was invalidated by the Holy See and transformed into a consultative assembly.

The next 4 under Father Quénard (1923-1952):

19. 1929* in Rome, January 20-February 13
20. 1935 in Rome, January 20-February 1
21. 1946* in Paris, April 25-May 13
22. 1952* in Rome, May 19-June 7

The next 3 under Father Dufault (1952-1969):

23. 1958 in Rome, May 2-29
24. 1964* in Rome, April 8-May 27
25. 1969* in Rome, April 10-June 4

The next under Father Charpentier (1969-1975):

26. 1975* at Les Essarts, April 6-26

The next 2 under Father Stephan (1975-1987):

27. 1981* in Rome, April 30-May 28
28. 1987* in Rome, May 19-June 10

The next 2 under Father Maréchal (1987-1999):

- 29. 1993 * in Rome, March 4-25
- 30. 1999* in Rome, May 2-21

The Chapter under Father Lamoureux (1999-)

- 31. 2005* in Rome, May 2-21

The Chapters marked with an asterisk (*) are said to be Chapters of Elections, while the others are said to be Business Chapters. But, as a matter of fact, some Chapters were both Chapters of Elections and Business Chapters: 1946, 1952, 1964, and 1969 (a special Chapter). Today, this old distinction is no longer valid because all General Chapters are held every six years and include the election or reelection of the Superior General whose mandate is for 6 years. According to normal procedures, the next General Chapter will take place in 2011.

Particular aspects of the General Chapters

This chronological listing of the 31 Assumptionist General Chapters that have taken place calls for additional details about some of their features: dates and frequency, length and number of sessions, location, number of participants, subject matter and important decisions, application, etc.

Locations where the Chapters were held

Seven (7) Chapters were held in **Nîmes**, the cradle of the Congregation, in the very buildings of Assumption College located on Boulevard Feuchères: the 1st in 1850, the 2nd in 1852, the 5th in 1862, the 6th in 1868, the 7th in 1873, the 8th in 1876, and the 10th in 1880, all of them during the lifetime of the founder except the last one, which took place immediately after his death and funeral. The reason

is simple: it was the natural thing to do. Father d'Alzon resided in Nîmes, and it was there that the Congregation felt that it was at the source of its spirit. The break with this location was imposed by history: 1880 was the period of the first dispersion imposed by political circumstances. The historical Assumption College was definitively expropriated in 1909.

Twelve (12) others were held in locations that were as diverse as they were meaningful both from the point-of-view of the ephemeral nature of the presence of the community or of the apostolate in question, and from that of the more or less adequate facilities that were needed to house an increasing number of Chapter members. By themselves, these locations illustrate the itinerant history, sometimes strange, other times quite tragic, of the Assumptionists who made do with the unexpected circumstances of life:

- **Two (2)** were held in **Clichy-la-Garenne** (1855 and 1858), in what was then a village on the outskirts of Paris where the Assumptionists had bought a “promising college” in 1853, the former hunting lodge and headquarters of the Chaplaincy of the monarchy, to replace the ephemeral college at 234 Faubourg Saint Honoré in Paris (1851-53). In fact, the college in Clichy was just as ephemeral (purchased in 1853, closed in 1860, sold one parcel at a time over a period of 20 years).
- **Three (3)** were held in **Paris** at 8 rue François I^{er} (1879, 1886, and 1946), the Assumptionists’ historic residence, which was their “Parisian antenna” and the center of their development in the capital. Poorly built in 1861 at the edge of the street on land acquired in 1860 thanks to Father Vincent de Paul Bailly, then rebuilt further away from the street and enlarged in 1874 (Picard building), this house exemplified the broader influence of the Assumptionists as a result of the apostolic initiatives of Father d’Alzon’s first disciples: spiritual direction, chapel activities, vocation work, Our Lady of Salvation, publications starting in 1873, the novitiate, the house of studies, institutes, and the foundation of the Little Sisters of the Assumption in 1865 and of the Orants in 1896. It became the symbol of the good times and the bad times in the history of the Assumptionists in France: the

expulsions in 1880, the raids in 1899, the trial of the Twelve and the dispersion of the religious in 1900, and the return to the family home in 1945-46.

- **Six (6)** were held in the novitiates and successive houses of study, according to whatever houses were open or closed: 1892 and 1898 in **Livry** in the French novitiate that had been repatriated from Spain (Osma 1880-1886). The building was an ancient abbey that preserved the memory of Madame de Sévigné,²⁴ an abbey that was despoiled in 1901 and completely destroyed in 1926, its property eventually divided up and sold by lots. In 1903 and 1906, the first Chapters to be held outside of France took place in **Louvain**, the city to which the Congregation withdrew and where it set up its houses of formation before the turmoil and destruction caused by the two World Wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45. In 1912, the Chapter met in **Limpertsberg** (Luxembourg) where the novitiate had precariously taken refuge. In 1918, the Chapter met at **Notre Dame de Lumières**, in the Vaucluse (southeastern France), where the Assumptionists, disorganized as a result of the vicissitudes of the War of 1914-18, set up an improvised and temporary novitiate.
- **One (1)** was held at **Les Essarts** (Seine-Maritime) which, for a long time, was the novitiate of the province of Paris, then the novitiate for the lay brothers, then the place where they received professional training, and finally a guesthouse and the fundraising office for the Madagascar mission. The Congregation relinquished the property in 1999.

Finally, as a sign of the times, the other **12** Chapters were held in or not far from the General House which moved to **Rome** after the trials and tribulations of almost a century and before the legal recognition of Vatican State by the Lateran Treaty of 1929. In this regard, the Assumptionists followed the general trend of

²⁴ Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, **Marquise de Sévigné** (1629-1696), was a French aristocrat, remembered for her letter-writing. Very cultured, gifted, and vivacious, she was very much part of Paris' high society in the 17th century whose lifestyle is mirrored in the great number of letters she addressed to her daughter and to numerous friends. Their style is marked by naturalness, spontaneity, and wit, characteristics which were rare exceptions during France's

the religious congregations at that time by acquiring property and establishing their headquarters there, often for reasons of practicality and of centralization:

- The 18th (1921-22) Chapter took place in Rome, in the former palace of cardinals known as the Ara Caeli, during a freezing cold spell and amid the dramatic circumstances surrounding the discussion of the all-important issue of a Chapter that had been downgraded to a Consultative Commission.
- The 19th (1929) Chapter took place in Rome at the same place.
- The 20th (1935) and the 22nd Chapters (1952) were also held in Rome, but at Tor di Nona (Lungotevere) which, in 1929, became the general house and the house of studies for Assumptionist students in Rome after the destruction of the Ara Caeli neighborhood to make room for Mussolini's urban development of that part of the city.
- The 23rd (1958) and 24th (1964) Chapters took place in Rome in the new quarters of the Curia, Via della Madonna del Riposo, which became 55 Via San Pio V.
- Except for the 26th Chapter which took place at Les Essarts (see above), all the following Chapters also took place in Rome: the 25th (1969) at the Clerics of Saint Viator, the 27th (1981) at the Spanish Sisters at 130 Via di Val Cannuta, and the 28th (1987), 29th (1993), 30th (1999), and the 31st (2005) at the Brothers of Christian Schools at 476 Via Aurelia. The Assumptionist general house, having had to absorb the Roman students after the closing of the international college (Tor di Nona), could no longer accommodate the numerous members of the Chapter.

The Catholic and international character of the Congregation, therefore, does not need to be demonstrated. The locations where the General Chapters took place were chosen because of their symbolism, their historical significance, or because of prevailing circumstances.

Dates and frequency of the General Chapters

From **1850** to **2005**, a total of **155** years, **31** General Chapters were held. This corresponds to an average of 1 Chapter every 5 years, which does not follow the canonical norm. Several reasons explain this abnormality:

- From **1850** to **1858**, the Institute had not yet been officially recognized. The religious could meet freely and frequently, all the more so that the Congregation was in its formative phase and that many things had to be put in place, tried, amended, and adopted.
- In **1858**, as the Chapter came to a close, the Institute received a Brief from Pope Pius IX authorizing the holding of a General Chapter every six years, according to the norms of the then-current religious law.
- -The irregularities from **1862** to **1880**, namely in 1862, 1873, 1876, and 1879, stem from the fact that, because of the urgency of certain decisions that needed to be taken, requests were made to advance the date of the General Chapters: negotiations regarding a union, updating of the Constitutions, proposals regarding pastoral and apostolic initiatives after the war of 1870.
- -The Chapters of **1880**, **1903**, **1918**, and **1921/22** were *extraordinary* due to the death of the superior general then in office and to the intervention of the Holy See.
- From **1922** to **2005**, the rule was strictly followed, with only two exceptions: a Chapter was held in 1946 instead of 1941 because of World War II, and a Chapter was held in 1969 instead of 1970 because of the post-conciliar desire to bring about the appropriate *aggiornamento* requested by Vatican II. Future Chapters will surely be held with greater regularity, given the provisions contained in articles 107 and 108 of the present *Rule of Life*.

Length and number of sessions of each General Chapter/ Distribution of documents, history

This question is not as simple as it may seem. In church law, the Chapter itself determines its length and agenda, though it must also provide time for the various reports and other business required by law. To be sure, its length necessarily influences the character and nature of its decisions. Summarized below in chronological order is the information that can be gleaned about the various Chapters from available and published sources: Father Ernest Baudouy, *Souvenirs*, 1898, p. 283, and following years; Father Aubain Colette, *Pages d'Archives*, vol. II, no. 7 (April 1958), pp. 149-204. After 1929, see *Actes des chapitres*, *Bulletin Officiel de l'Assomption*, and *Documents Assomption*.

Under Father d'Alzon (1850-1880)

1. **1850**, September 23-25, **5** sessions of 2 hours each (Nîmes). See brief commentary by Father d'Alzon, *Letters*, vol. C, page 622.

2. **1852**, August 24-28, **7** sessions (Nîmes). See summary in a letter of Father d'Alzon to Marie Eugénie of Jesus (*Lettres d'Alzon*, vol. I, 1851-1855, pp. 193-195 and notes).

3. **1855**, September 12, **1** session (Clichy). There is no letter on this subject, only a note by Father Pierre Touveneraud (*Lettres d'Alzon*, vol. I, 1851-1855, p. 592, no. 1). The first draft of the Assumptionist Rule (general idea and Constitutions) dates from 1855. See document published by Fathers Touveneraud and Sage based on Father Galabert's novitiate notebook.

4. **1858**, July 6 or 9, **1** session (Clichy). See long and well-documented note by Father Pierre Touveneraud in *Lettres d'Alzon*, vol. II, 1856-1858, p. 475, no. 2. This Chapter replaced the one foreseen for 1857 which did not take place but which had been prepared by pre-capitular meetings held in Clichy September 1-10, 1857.

5. **1862**, September 3-9, **13** sessions (Nîmes). The only reference to this Chapter in the Letters of Father d'Alzon concerns the case of Father Cusse

(*Lettres* 1862-1863, pp. 107-109). The Chapter discussed the future Constitutions said to be of 1865, including the Rule of St. Augustine, the text of the Constitutions themselves, and the adoption of the Directory.

6. **1868**, September 7-17, **18** sessions (Nîmes). See Closing Address (*Ecrits Spirituels*, pp. 128-146) and Letters to the Master of Novices (*ibid*, pp. 147-172). An excerpt from the deliberations was published in *L'Assomption et ses oeuvres* (1st edition, p. 631) and read to the Congress sponsored by *La Croix* on November 30, 1897.

7. **1873**, September 10-18, **14** sessions (Nîmes). See Father d'Alzon's Closing Address in *Ecrits Spirituels*, pp. 173-190. Father Charles Laurent, secretary, was asked to compose retrospectively an "autographed summary" of the preceding Chapters and of the decisions taken by this Chapter of 1873.

8. **1876**, September 11-16, **6** sessions (Nîmes). This Chapter was prepared by 11 circulars of Father d'Alzon: *Ecrits Spirituels*, pp. 193-287. In 1877, Father Charles Laurent wrote a 25-page booklet published by Féron-Vrau in 1906: *Résumé des chapitres généraux 1850-1876*.

9. **1879**, September 1-4, **5** sessions (Paris, rue François I^{er}). The secretary of the Chapter was Father Emmanuel Bailly.

The length of these nine Chapters was obviously very uneven, and the experimental nature of this initial period quite noticeable, marked as it was by the health problems of the Founder. At times, the issues seemed to have been poorly prepared and were hard to solve. The choice of Clichy did not encourage long discussions. The months chosen corresponded to the summer recess of the academic year when space was available for the meetings. At the outset, the Assumptionists remained an especially teaching congregation.

Under Father Picard (1880-1903)

10. **1880**, November 24-25, **3** sessions (Nîmes). The purpose was to confirm the choice of Father Picard, Vicar General, as the successor to Father

d'Alzon. The time had come to urgently organize the first forced dispersion from France.

11. **1886**, August 6-11, **11** sessions (Paris, rue François I^{er}). Father Picard wrote about this Chapter in circulars published by Father E. Bailly in 1912, *Circulars*, vol. I, nos. 27-32.

12. **1892**, August 30 - September 7, **15** sessions (Livry). See *Circulars* of Father Picard, vol. I, nos. 54-56; his opening report to the Chapter is Circular no. 57 (vol. I); see also Circular no. 67 (vol. II).

13. **1898**, August 1-6, **14** sessions (Livry). See the published *Circulars of Father Picard*, vol. II, nos. 116-117, 119-120, 122.

Except for the Chapter of 1880, which was a Chapter of Elections held the day after the burial of Father d'Alzon and under the imminent threat of expulsion and expropriation of the religious, the Chapters held under the generalate of Father Picard were long and gave rise to abundant written material. They respected the prescribed frequency, they took place at the end of the summer, and they energetically dealt with the central organization of the Congregation which was in a phase of rapid development. The secretary was Father Charles Laurent, except for the last Chapter in 1898. Deceased in 1895, Father Laurent was replaced by Father André Jaujou, the private secretary of Father Picard.

Under Father Bailly (1903-1917)

14. **1903**, June 18-19, **4** sessions (Louvain). See *Circular Letters* of Father Emmanuel Bailly, vol. I, nos. 9-11.

15. **1906**, July 31-August 7, **13** sessions (Louvain). See *Circular Letters* of Father Emmanuel Bailly, vol. I, nos. 24-26, 28-31. The text of the *Constitutions*, prepared by Father Picard in 1898 and declared to be “the sole authentic text to have force of law,” was distributed at this Chapter. But the Roman approbation that the Congregation had hoped to receive before the codification of the future Canon Law—which did not take place until 1917—was not received, which provoked indignation on the part of some religious. The closing address was

printed by the *Bonne Presse* in a 40-page booklet. The decisions of the Chapters of 1880, 1892 and 1898 were also published together (Ed. Féron-Vrau, 1906, 39 pages).

16. 1912, November 6-14, **16** sessions (Limpertsberg). See *Circular Letters* of Father Emmanuel Bailly, vol. II, nos. 61-64, 68-70. The closing address was published in booklet form, Bonne Presse (?), 40 pages.

The frequency of the Chapters was disrupted by events that were taking place (the death of Father Picard in 1903). The Chapter was scheduled to take place in 1904. A rescript in 1904, renewed in 1906, authorized this change. The dispersion of the religious and the war seriously disrupted the organization and government of the Congregation, already internally weakened by a revolt on the part of a group of religious who contested the authority of the General and his methods of government, and who opposed especially the resistance of an old-guard mentality that did not understand the need to reform a body that was no longer the small closed group it had been at the beginning. To be noted: the long tradition of holding Chapters during the summer months or during school vacations was broken.

[During the interim of Father Maubon (1917-1923)]

17. 1918, April 21-28, **15** sessions (Notre Dame de Lumières). Rome obliged the Congregation to bring its Constitutions in line with the requirements of the new Code of Canon Law of 1917 before the elections took place to the highest positions. Father Joseph Maubon, first Assistant General, was appointed by the Holy See as Vicar General. A commission drew up the text of the *Constitutions* which was submitted to the Holy See on December 16, 1918, accompanied by a long report written by Father Ernest Baudouy, Procurator General and Secretary of the Chapter, justifying the particularities of the old Assumption.

The year **1921** is essential to an understanding of the sequence of events that followed:

- On **January 14**, the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for Religious communicated the decisions that had been taken in its plenary session of January 7: the name of the Congregation shall be *Pia congregatio Presbyterorum sub titulo B.V.M. in coelum assumptae* (*Pious Congregation of the Priests of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary*); the habit, the breviary, the missal, and the ritual must be different from those of the Hermits of Saint Augustine; the government of the Institute cannot provide for life-long mandates for the General, for the non-division of the territory, or for a system of cooption to the Chapters.
- On **March 19**, 2 documents were submitted as a response: the first concerning the name and the habit tried to justify the practice at Assumption; the second, entitled "*Quelques observations...*" *A few observations*, "was a confidential 12-page memo on the government of the Congregation. The memo sought to preserve what many believed to be the true spirit of the Congregation.
- On **June 27**, a Decree from the Sacred Congregation for Religious issued 10 directives that had to be implemented in the next four months: Chapters of Elections had to be held in six specified regions in order to provide elected delegates to the next General Chapter to be held in Rome under the presidency of a delegate from the Apostolic See. The other questions were simply dismissed. Father Joseph Maubon abided by the decision: see *Circular* no. 16, August 6, 1921.

18. 1921-1922, December 8 - January 10, **2** sessions + **36** sessions (Rome, General House at the Ara Caeli). This first truly elected General Chapter opened in Rome under the presidency of Benedictine Abbot Etcheverry who noted irregularities in the elections of the delegates. He referred the matter to the Sacred Congregation for Religious.

The answer came on December 10: the Chapter was invalidated. The assembled religious were recognized as a Consultative Commission whose task

was to revise the text of the *Constitutions*, the Sacred Congregation reserving to itself the right to appoint the general officers of the Institute. Struck with amazement, Father Joseph Maubon submitted himself along with the entire assembly of 25 religious who began their work immediately. A printed copy of the *Constitutions* was transmitted for corrections to the Sacred Congregation for Religious in March 1922, with a detailed report on the meeting of this assembly. The Holy See imposed 35 amendments on the text that had been submitted. On January 2, 1922, it transmitted directives for a consultative vote of all of the religious of the Institute in view of the appointment by the Holy See of the future General Curia. The decision did not come until January 30, 1923.

A second decree, dated **January 30, 1923**, approved the amended *Constitutions*, and a third, dated **March 25, 1923**, specifically imposed the creation of 4 provinces (Paris, Lyons, Bordeaux with vicariates, and Belgium-Holland). The only available accounts describing all of these unfortunate events are the two circulars of Father Joseph Maubon, no. 18 (August 6, 1921) and no. 19 (November 20, 1921). Later, Father Quénard drew up a 10-page account, “*Une page d’histoire assumptionniste: le Chapitre de 1921-1922*”/“*A Page of Assumptionist History: the Chapter of 1921-1922*”. This account was tucked away in the Archives upon the peremptory request of Father Siméon Vailhé, the author of the unpublished notes. Silence was imposed on this entire period. The curtain was partially raised in the biography of Father Gervais Quénard by his nephew, Father Girard-Reydet (Bonne Presse 1967), and more fully in a booklet by Father Pierre Touveneraud, *Le régime des Provinces à L’Assomption (1923-1975)/The System of Provinces of the Assumptionists 1923-1973*, Rome, March 1973, 103 pages.

Under Father Quénard (1923-1952)

19. **1929**, January 20 - February 13, **29** sessions (Rome, Ara Caeli). This was the last Chapter bearing traces of the “dispute.” Since the outgoing Curia was still under tutelage, the ballots were submitted to the Holy See in sealed envelopes on January 27 during the 8th session conducted in the presence of Msgr. La Puma,

Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for Religious, who announced the results the following day. The Assumptionists had passed the test allowing them henceforth to proceed normally. The *Acts* of the Chapter were published in a brochure of 118 pages and sent to all of the communities. They included a summary of the daily proceedings, the decrees, decisions and recommendations, and excerpts from the reports of the Superior General and the Provincials.

20. **1935**, January 20 - February 1, **15** sessions (Rome). This was a short Chapter, an “ordinary” Business Chapter, because the term of the Superior General was for 12 years at that time (1929 + 12 = 1941). The *Acts* of this Chapter were also published in the form of two booklets of 26 and 18 pages, respectively. A few changes were made to the *Constitutions* of 1923 and approved by a Rescript of May 10, 1935.

21. **1946**, April 25 - May 13, **28** sessions (Paris, rue François I^{er}). Having provoked a new dispersion, the War did not allow the Congregation to hold the Chapter of Elections that had been foreseen for 1941. The mandates of the superiors were prolonged by 2 rescripts of the Sacred Congregation for Religious (the first on October 3, 1941 for *three years*, and the second on January 3, 1945 for *another three years*). The *Acts* were published in a *Bonne Presse* brochure of 66 pages. A favorable judgment was obtained for the creation of 3 provinces: Holland, North America, and England. It was decided to publish the *Bulletin officiel de L'Assomption (B.O.A.) (Official Assumptionist Bulletin)*: no. 1, December 1946.

22. **1952**, May 19 - June 7, **30** sessions (Rome, Tor di Nona). At the end of 1951, Father Quénard made known his intention to resign his position because of his age. His request was accepted by the Holy See. Until the next elections, he remained Vicar General. This Chapter was, therefore, both a Chapter of Elections and a Business Chapter. The *Acts* of the Chapter were published (80 pages). A brief account can be found in the *B.O.A.* (vol. II, no. 1, April 1953). Father Wilfrid Dufault and a new Curia were elected.

Under Father Dufault (1952-1969)

23. 1958, May 2-29, **41** sessions (Rome, Via della Madonna del Riposo). This long Business Chapter reviewed the Constitutions and the appropriate government for the vicariates in the provinces and vice-provinces. It also clarified a number of issues where wisdom prevailed over change. The *Acts* were published in the usual manner by the Bonne Presse (88 pages + 22). A summary was published in *B.O.A.* (no. 1, vol. 3, October 1958, pp. 11-12). This Chapter was pleased to learn of the official introduction of the Cause of Father d'Alzon.

24. 1964, April 7 - May 27, **54** sessions (Rome, Via Madonna del Riposo which became 55 Via San Pio V). This Chapter of Elections and Business Chapter, which was exceptionally long (2 months), reelected Father Wilfrid Dufault for a mandate of 12 years (1964-1976), and took into consideration Vatican II's first requests of *aggiornamento*. It produced a remarkable text, *The Capitular Rules*, which replaced the former *Customary*, now out-of-date. The "laborious and conscientious" work of the 8 working commissions looked ahead to the needed revision of the *Constitutions* which, until then, had been rejected but which was now scheduled to take place in stages. The *Acts* were published in *B.O.A.* (special issue no. 4, vol. IV, April 1966).

25. 1969, April 10 - June 4, ? sessions (Rome, at the Clerics of St. Viator, 60 Via della Sierra Nevada). Another very long (2 months) special Chapter which set about drawing up new *Constitutions* according to the directives of the conciliar decree *Perfectae Caritatis*, #3. The work was divided among various commissions following a general consultation of all the religious. It held new elections, the Superior General and his Curia having submitted their resignations to the Chapter which accepted them on May 28, 1969. Father Paul Charpentier was elected for a six-year term. The *Acts* of this Chapter were not published; only a short summary was presented in *B.O.A.* no. 1, vol. V, November 1970, pp. 4-12. The *Rule Books* (*Rule of Life, Statutes, Rules of Community Organization*, May-June 1969) were promulgated *ad experimentum* for twelve years (1969-81), to be presented, after having been put into practice, for the approbation of the Holy See in 1981, according to the precise directives of the Motu Proprio *Ecclesiae sanctae* II, (see *Documentation Catholique* 1966, col. 1459-1461).

Under Father Charpentier (1969-1975)

26. 1975, April 6-26, ? sessions (Les Essarts). Unanimously, the Chapter voted in favor of prolonging the *Constitutions* of 1969 (*Rule of Life* and *Statutes*) until 1981, nevertheless making a few amendments. The Decrees were updated. The Chapter elected a new Superior General, Father Hervé Stéphan, on April 18. The *Acts* of the Chapter were published in *B.O.A.*, October 1975, vol. VI, no. 1. This was the last issue of this publication.

Under Father Stéphan (1981-1987)

27. 1981, April 30 - May 28, ? sessions (Rome, 130 Via di Val Cannuta). This Chapter elected Father Hervé Stéphan for a second 6-year term on May 14, and the officers of the Curia between May 18 and 20. Basing itself on the work of its commissions, it drew up a new *Rule of Life* (*Rule of Life, Statutes, and Capitular Rules*), published as a green-colored insert, which was presented for approbation to the Sacred Congregation for Religious, in view of eventual adjustments that might be required by the then-imminent publication of the new Code of Canon Law. It published 2 decrees, 3 orientations, and 3 appeals. The *Acts* were published in *Documents Assomption* (the successor of *B.O.A.* since 1975), no. 6, 1981, pp. 389-407. The report of the Superior General was published separately in two booklets (Part I, 40 pages; Part II, 47 pages). For the definitive approbation, the Sacred Congregation for Religious did, in fact, request a few corrections to the *Rule Books*. The Decree of Approbation came on December 8, 1983 (text in *Documents Assomption* 1983, pp. 526-527). The printed edition of the *Rule of Life* was dated November 21, 1984 (preface by Father Hervé Stéphan). Translations were made into several languages.

28. 1987, May 19 - June 10, ? sessions (Rome, at the Brothers of Christian Schools, 476 Via Aurelia). This Chapter elected Father Claude Maréchal as the 8th Superior General on May 30. It outlined 3 urgencies and 3 appeals. The *Acts* were published in *Documents Assomption*, 1987, pp. 891-932. The report of the

outgoing Superior General was published in two booklets: Part I, 53 pages; Part II, 66 pages.

Under Father Maréchal (1987-1999)

29. 1993, March 5-25, ? sessions (Rome, at the Brothers of Christian Schools, 476 Via Aurelia). This Chapter reelected Father Claude Maréchal for a second term of 6 years. The report of the General was entitled *Notre Mission 150 ans* and printed in a booklet of 52 pages. Two documents were published in booklet form: *Passion for the Reign of God in the World of Today*, 35 pages, and *Our Mission 150 Years Later*, 83 pages, *Documents Assomption*, 1993, no. 18.

30. 1999, May 2-21, ? sessions (Rome, at the Brothers of Christian Schools, 476 Via Aurelia). This Chapter elected Father Richard Lamoureux as Superior General. He published his report in 5 languages: *Facing a New Century with a Passion for God*, 111 p.

Under Father Lamoureux (1999-)

31. 2005, May 1-22, ? sessions (Rome, at the Brothers of Christian Schools, 476 Via Aurelia). This Chapter re-elected Father Richard Lamoureux as Superior General. Fifteen laypersons were invited to participate during the first week. The theme of the Chapter: *Many Gifts in one Body ...so that the World May Believe*. The Chapter approved the new *Ratio Institutions: Formation for Life and Mission*. The implementation of the Chapter was spelled out in Father Richard's 8th Circular, *Encountering God...and Humankind*.

**Official responsibilities under the leadership of the present
Superior General**

Father Richard Lamoureux (1942-)

- Fr. Richard Lamoureux was elected Superior General in May 1999.

- Elected Assistants General, with other official responsibilities:
 - Fr. Julio Navarro, Vicar General and Procurator General
 - Fr. Bernard Holzer, Secretary General and Postulator
 - Fr. Marcel Poirier, Treasurer General
 - Fr. Rene Mihigo, Assistant General
- The Vice-Provinces in France remained suppressed (1999).
- Provincial of France: Fr. Andre Antoni (1999, reappointed in 2002).
- Provincial of Belgium-North: Fr. Arnold Castro (1999, prolonged for one year in 2002).
- Provincial of Belgium-South: Fr. Jean-Marie Denis (1999, 2nd term), replaced in 2002 by Fr. Guy Leroy.
- Provincial of Brazil: Fr. José Geraldo da Cruz (1999, reappointed in 2002).
- Provincial of North America: Fr. John Franck (1999, 2nd term, reappointed in 2002).
- Provincial of Spain: Fr. Manuel Martinez Alaminos (1999, 2nd term, reappointed in 2002).
- Provincial of Holland: Fr. Mart Lemmens (2000, 4th term).
- Province of Africa: Fr. Jean-Marie Meso Paluku (June 2000).
- Province of England: suppressed in 2000 and became a Region of the Province of France.
- Vice-Provincial of Madagascar: Fr. Daniel Carton (2001)
- Fr. Richard Lamoureux was reelected Superior General in May 2005:
- Elected Assistants General, with other official responsibilities:
 - Fr. Julio Navarro, Assistant and Vicar General
 - Fr. André Brombart, Assistant and Procurator General
 - Fr. Emmanuel Kahindo Kihugho, Assistant General

Fr. Jean-Daniel Gullung, Treasurer General

Fr. Lucas Chuffart, Secretary General

Appointed Provincials in 2005 and 2006:

- Fr. José Alberto Dominguez (June 2005), Provincial of Spain
- Fr. Benoit Grière (September 2005), Provincial of France
- Fr. Marcel Poirier (September 2005), Provincial of North America
- Fr. Arnold Castro (September 2005), Provincial of Northern Europe
- Fr. Vincent Kambere Kaghaniryoy (June 2006), Provincial of Africa

Sources

Printed sources:

- *Premières Constitutions des Augustins de L'Assomption, 1855-1865*, edit. Rome, 1966.
- *Constitutions de la Congrégation des Prêtres de L'Assomption, dits Augustins de l'Assomption*, edit. Paris, 1923-1948.
- *Pages d'Archives*, no. 7, April 1958.
- *Bulletin Officiel de l'Assomption (B.O.A.)*, 1948-1975.
- *Documents Assomption*, 1976-2007.
- *Résumé des chapitres généraux 1850-1876*.
- Gervais Quénard, *Une page d'histoire assomptionniste, le chapitre de 1921-1922*.
- *Les Régies Capitulaires (Capitular Rules)*, Chapter of 1964.
- *Rule Books of the Assumptionists (Rule of Life, Statutes, Rules of Community Organization)*, May-June 1969.
- *Rule of Life of the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption*, Rome, 1984.

Successive legislative texts:

- Manuscript of the Constitutions of 1855.
- Manuscript of the Constitutions of 1863-1865.
- Latin manuscript of the Constitutions, 1879.
- Printed text [Germer-Durand] of the Constitutions, 1883.
- Printed text [Picard] of the Constitutions, 1892.
- Fragmentary and provisional text of the Constitutions, 1902.

- Printed text [Bailly] of the Constitutions, 1906.
- Printed text of the Constitutions, 1918.
- Printed and approved text of the Constitutions, 1923, with revised editions in 1935, 1948, 1950, and 1952.
- Capitular Rules, 1964.
- Printed text of the Rule Books, 1969 (*ad experimentum*).
- Printed text of 1975.
- Mimeographed text of the Constitutions, 1981.
- Printed and approved text of the *Rule of Life of the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption*, 1984.

QUESTIONNAIRE - PRACTICAL EXERCISES

1. The general rules concerning the convocation, organization, composition, and unfolding of an Assumptionist General Chapter are determined by proper law: the *Rule of Life*, nos. 106-119. Concretely, what are its main guidelines and its purpose?
2. The General Chapter is a congregation's supreme legislative authority. How is it prepared? What can an ordinary religious expect from it? How can he participate in it? What are the powers of a General Chapter?
3. What is the work of the members of the Chapter regarding elections? How are elections prepared? What offices must be filled? What talents must the members of the Chapter look for in voting for the general assistants and the general officers?
4. What are the services required during a General Chapter of the General Secretary and the Assistant Secretaries, the Promoter, the Moderators, the Tellers, the Judges, the consultants, the translators, and others?
5. What types of commissions are generally created during a General Chapter? What is their role? What are the different phases through which a text must pass before it receives final approval by the Chapter?
6. May a Chapter invite outside members? What is the place of prayer during the course of a Chapter?
7. Have you ever questioned a member of a Chapter about his experience at the Chapter? Must any part of a Chapter remain secret or confidential?
8. On whom depends the concrete implementation of the decisions of a General Chapter? What type of evaluation can be made of the results of this implementation at the level of the provinces and of the local communities? Do you have any concrete examples?

Councils of the Congregation

1969 - 2007

Origin

The body known as the Council of the Congregation (C.C.), which brings together the General Council (G.C.) and the Major Superiors, is a structure of the ordinary general government of the Congregation created by the General Chapter of 1969.²⁵ It grew out of post-conciliar thinking which favored a more decentralized exercise of authority and a new form of collegiality within the Institute, an ecclesial term that corresponds to the lay or secular notion of co-responsibility. The two main articles in the *Rule of Life* speak of this Council in the following way:

The General Chapter exercises the extraordinary authority over the Institute. Ordinary authority is exercised by the Superior General with the help of the General Council and the Council of the Congregation (no. 104).

Once a year, the Major Superiors with the General Curia come together as the Council of the Congregation. It shall study the problems of adaptation of the Congregation to the changing situation of the world and of the Church. It prepares, in good time, for the General Chapter. It makes

²⁵ See *Rule of Life of the Augustinians of the Assumption*, 1984 edition, nos. 80,104,105,107,109,114, 119,124,125, and 126

decisions on matters reserved to its competence by the Constitutions or proposed by the Superior General (no. 124).

The Council of the Congregation meets annually. The years in which a General Chapter is held which elects or re-elects a new Superior General (in fact, all the General Chapters since 1969), the Council of the Congregation meets in two short sessions, one with the outgoing Superior, the other with the newly elected Superior General. Before the creation of the Council of the Congregation in 1969, there existed a somewhat similar body, the meeting of superiors called to Rome by the Superior General. In 1969, it was institutionalized in order to promote a spirit of collegiality.

List of Councils of the Congregation: 1969-2007

Number	Location & date	Documents & information
CC no. 1	Rome, June 3,1969	<i>Bulletin officiel de L'Assomption</i> , November 1970, p. 121 <i>ART</i> <i>Informations</i> , 1969, no. 1, p. 2
CC no. 2	Madrid, April 7-12,1970	<i>Bulletin officiel de L'Assomption</i> , November 1970, pp. 121-126. <i>ART</i> <i>Informations</i> , 1969, no. 2, p. 2; 1970, no. 8, p. 1; no. 9, pp. 1-4
CC no. 3	London, April 22-30,1971	<i>Bulletin officiel de L'Assomption</i> , March 1972, pp. 153-164. <i>ART</i> <i>Informations</i> , 1970, no. 12, p. 1; 1971, no. 20, pp. 1-5
CC no. 4	New York, April 20-28,1972	<i>Bulletin officiel de L'Assomption</i> , March 1974, pp. 192-195. <i>ART</i> <i>Informations</i> , 1971, no. 20, p.4; 1972, no. 30, p. 1; no. 31, pp. 1-6
CC no.5	Jerusalem, May 4-11,1973	<i>Bulletin officiel de L'Assomption</i> , March 1974, pp. 197-203. <i>ART</i> <i>Informations</i> , 1973, no. 38, p. 1; no. 40, p. 1-5
CC no.6	Breda, April 25-May3,1974	<i>Bulletin officiel de L'Assomption</i> ,

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		March 1975, pp. 246-252. <i>ART Informations</i> , 1974, no. 47, p. 1; no. 48, p. 1; no. 49, pp.1-4
CC no. 7	Les Essarts, April 10,1975, 1 st session; April 24-25,1975, 2 nd session	This Council of the Congregation took place during the General Chapter of 1975. Its Acts were apparently not distributed.
CCno.8	Rome, April 26-May 5,1976	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1975-1976, no. 1, pp. 5-8. <i>ART Informations</i> , 1976, no. 61, p. 2; no. 62, pp. 1-4
CC no. 9	Rome, April 18-27,1977	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1977, no. 2, pp. 70-74. <i>ART Informations</i> , 1977, no. 67, pp. 1-4
CC no. 10	St. Gérard, April 23-May 2, 1978	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1978, no. 3, pp. 136-139. <i>ART Informations</i> , 1978, no. 72, pp. 1-6
CC no.11	Santiago, Chile, April 18-27, 1979	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1979, no. 4, pp. 225-230. <i>ART Informations</i> , 1978, no. 72, pp. 6-7; 1979, no. 78, pp. 2-5
CC no. 12	Nîmes, April 16-25,1980	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1980, no. 5, pp. 319-327. <i>ART Informations</i> , 1979, no. 81, p. 4; 1980, no. 83, p. 1; no. 84, pp. 1-6
CC no. 13	Rome, May 8,1981,1 st session; May 27,1981, 2 nd session	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1981, no. 6, pp. 411-414
CC no. 14	Jerusalem, April 19-May 2, 1982	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1982, no. 7. pp. 463-472. <i>ART Informations</i> , 1982, no. 91, p. 1;no. 92, pp. 1-6
CCno. 15	Rome, April 11-19,1983	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1983. no. 8. pp. 529-548. <i>ART Informations</i> . 1983. no. 96, p 2; no. 97, pp. 3-6
CC no. 16	Madrid, April 30-May 8,1984	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1984, no. 9, pp. 617-632. <i>ART Informations</i> , 1984, no. 101, p. 3; no. 102, pp. 1-6
CC no. 17	Paris, April 15-23,1985	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1985, no. 10, pp. 695-710. <i>ART Informations</i> , 1985, no. 107, pp. 1-6
CC no. 18	Boston-Quebec, April 20-29,	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1986, no. 11,

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	1986	pp. 791-806. <i>ART Informations</i> , 1986, no. 111, p. 2; no. 112, pp. 1-7
CC no. 19	Rome, May 25,1987, 1 st session; June 6,1987, 2 nd session	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1987, no. 12, pp. 933-938
CC no. 20	Rome, April 12-21,1988	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1988, no. 13, pp. 5-23. <i>ART Informations</i> , 1987, no. 118, p. 2; 1988, no. 119, pp. 11-12; no. 120, pp. 1-10
CC no. 21	Hoepertingen, April 3-13, 1989	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1989, no. 14, pp. 5-19. <i>ART Informations</i> , 1989, no. 125, pp. 1-8
CC no. 22	Santiago, Chile, April 22-May 3,1990	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1990, no. 15, pp. 5-24. <i>AA Info</i> , 1990, no. 130, pp. 1-8
CC no. 23	Rome, April 8-18,1991	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1991, no. 16, pp. 5-11. <i>AA Info</i> , 1991, no. 135, pp. 6-8
CC no. 24	London, April 27-May 7,1992	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1992, no. 17, pp. 5-12. <i>AA Info</i> , 1992, no. 139, special report A-D
CC no. 25	Rome, March 20,1993	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1993, no. 18, pp. 43-45
CC no. 26	Duizel (Netherlands), April 11-21,1994	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1994, no. 19, pp. 3-6. <i>AA Info</i> , 1994, no. 145, pp. 2-3; no. 146, pp. 4-7
CC no. 27	Duxbury (USA), April 24-May 4,1995	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1995, no. 20, pp. 3-8. <i>AA Info</i> , 1995, no. 150, special report I-IV
CC no. 28	Rome, April 15-25,1996	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1996, no. 21, pp. 1-4. <i>AA Info</i> , no. 154,1996, pp. 4-7
CC no. 29	Campinas, April 7-18,1997	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1997, no. 22, pp. 1-8. <i>AA Info</i> , 1997, no. 158, special report I-IV
CC no. 30	Lyons-Valpré, April 20-30, 1998	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1998, no. 23, pp. 1-10. <i>AA Info</i> , 1998, no. 162, pp. 7-8, special report, I-IV
CC no. 31	Rome, May 7,1999,1 st session: May 19-20,1999, 2 nd session	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 1999, no. 24, pp. 1-4
CC no. 32	Jerusalem, June 1-10,2000	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 2000, no. 25, pp. 5-60. <i>AA Info</i> , June 2000, no. 4,

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		special report I-IV
CC no. 33	Arusha, April 25-May 5,2001	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 2001, no. 26, pp. 5-18. <i>AA Info</i> , June 2001, no. 7, p 2; no. 8 pp. 1-2; special report, pp. 1-8
CC no. 34	Istanbul and Rome, April 3-8, 2002	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 2002, no. 27, pp. 27-45. <i>AA Info</i> , July 2002, no. 11, p. 3; no. 12, pp. 2-3,6-7
CC no. 35	Rome, May 2-10,2003	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 2003, no. 28, pp. 5-39. <i>AA Info</i> , 2003, no. 16, pp. 1-8
CC no. 36	Cuernavaca (Mexico) and Wareham (US), April 20-May 4,2004	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 2004, no.29, pp. 5-33. <i>AA Info</i> 2003, no. 17, p. 4; 2004, no. 20, special report, pp. 1-16
CC no. 37	Rome, May 13,2005, 1 st session; May 20,2005, 2 nd session	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 2005, no. 30, pp. 5-17.
CC no. 38	Helvoirt (Netherlands), April 24-May3,2006	<i>Documents Assomption</i> , 2006, no. 31, pp. 5-38. <i>AA Info</i> , 2005, no. 1, p. 3; 2006, no. 4, special report, pp. 1-8
CC no. 39	Rome, April 16-25,2007	<i>AA Info</i> , 2007, no. 8, pp. 7-15

On average, the Council of the Congregation lasts from one to one and a half weeks. It has met from 1969 to 2006, 13 times in Rome, 4 times in France (1975, Les Essarts; 1980, Nîmes; 1985, Paris; 1998, Lyons-Valpré), 3 times in Jerusalem (1973, 1982, 2000); 4 times in the USA-Canada-Mexico (1972, 1986, 1995, 2004); 3 times in the Netherlands (1974, 1994, 2006); twice in Spain (1970, 1984); twice in Chile (1979, 1990); twice in England (1971, 1992); twice in Belgium (1978, 1989); once in Brazil (1997); once in Tanzania (2001); and once in Turkey (2002). The years when there is a General Chapter, the Council of the Congregation has two sessions, one before and one following the Chapter, as mentioned earlier.

A presentation and a reflection on the role of the Council of the Congregation written by Father Claude Maréchal can be found in *ART Informations*, 1988, no. 119, pp. 11-12. Also, the functioning of the Council of the Congregation, now almost forty years old, is evaluated regularly by its participants and the authorities

of the Congregation. Hopefully, a student religious will one day become interested in studying and analyzing from several points-of-view, especially historically, thematically and canonically, this regulatory body of animation and government in the life of the Institute.

References to the Councils of the Congregation

in ART Informations and AA Info/News

Rome: 1969, no. 1, p. 2

Madrid: 1969, no. 2, p. 2; 1970, no. 8, p. 1; no. 9, pp. 1-4

Wimbledon-London: 1970, no. 12, p. 1; 1971, no. 20, pp. 1-5

New York: 1971, no. 20, p. 4; 1972, no. 30, p. 1; no. 31, pp. 1-6

Jerusalem: 1973, no. 38, p. 1; no. 40, pp. 1-5

Breda: 1974, no. 47, p. 1; no. 48, p. 1; no. 49, pp. 1-4

Rome: 1976, no. 61, p. 2; 1976, no. 62, pp. 1-4

Rome: 1977, no. 67, pp. 1-4

Saint Gérard: 1978, no. 72, pp. 1-7

Santiago, Chile: 1978, no. 72, pp. 6-7; 1979, no. 78, pp. 2-5

Nîmes: 1979, no. 81, p. 4; 1980, no. 83, p. 1; no. 84, pp. 1-6

Jerusalem: 1981, no. 91, p. 1; no. 92, pp. 1-6

Rome: 1982, no. 96, p. 2; 1983, no. 97, pp. 3-6

Madrid: 1984, no. 101, p. 3; 1984, no. 102, pp. 1-6

Paris: 1985, no. 107, pp. 1-6

Boston-Quebec: 1986, no. 111, p. 2; 1987, no. 112, pp. 1-7

Rome: 1987, no. 118, p.2; 1988, no. 119, pp.11-12; no. 120, pp.1-10

Hoepertingen: 1989, no. 125, pp. 1-8

Santiago, Chile: 1990, no. 130, pp. 1-8

Rome: 1991, no. 135, pp. 6-8

London: 1992, no. 139, special report: pp. A-D

Duizel: 1994, no. 145, pp. 2-3; no. 146, pp. 4-7

Duxbury: 1995, no. 150, special report, pp. I-IV

Rome: 1996, no. 154, pp. 4-7

Campinas: 1997, no. 158, special report, pp. I-IV

Lyons-Valpré: 1998, no. 162, pp. 7-8; special report, pp. I-IV

Jerusalem: 2000, no. 4, special report, pp. I-IV

Arusha: 2001, no. 7, p. 2; no. 8, pp. 1-2; report, pp. 1-8

Istanbul-Rome: 2002, no. 11, p. 3; no. 12, pp. 2-3, 6-7

Rome: 2003, no. 16, report, pp. 1-8

Cuernavaca (Mexico) and Wareham (USA): 2003, no. 17, p. 4; 2004, no. 20, report, pp. 1-16

Helvoirt (Holland): 2005, no. 1, p. 3; 2006, no. 4, report, pp. 1-8

Rome: 2007, no. 8, pp. 7-15

QUESTIONNAIRE - PRACTICAL EXERCISES

1. How did the year 1969, with the creation of the Council of the Congregation, underline a reality that was both new and old in terms of the way in which the Congregation is governed and animated?

2. Does alternating the place where the Council meets, one year in Rome and the following year in some other country, suggest something other than a geographical reality?

3. Is the Council of the Congregation empowered to take decisions? Give a few examples.

4. Who provides the secretarial service for the Council of the Congregation? Is there any follow-up regarding the implementation of the decisions taken? Give a few examples. How is the Congregation informed about what was discussed during the meetings of the Council of the Congregation?

5. In what way can the provincial and local realities of the life of the Congregation be presented to the members of the Councils of the Congregation when the meetings are held outside of Rome?

6. Has the proper law of the Congregation confirmed any amendments regarding the functioning of the Council of the Congregation and amended the relevant texts in the *Rule of Life*? What can be inferred from this?

7. Without having been a member, have you ever been privy to what took place at a meeting of the Council of the Congregation? Has it ever happened that a provincial, a vice-provincial or a regional superior shared with a local community his experience as a member of this Council?

8. Among the topics discussed by the Council of the Congregation, has there been one that has particularly and regularly re-appeared on the agenda? Why?

9. In what way does the work of the Council of the Congregation complement that of a Chapter?

Overview of Assumptionist History

Assumptionist history can be divided into 10 main periods:

- 1. The Founder and the Foundation**
- 2. The interval between two expulsions: Father Picard**
- 3. The Dispersal: Father Emmanuel Bailly**
- 4. The period of uncertainty during a time of trial**
- 5. The expansion and missionary adventure**
- 6. The pre-conciliar and conciliar period: 1952-1969**
- 7. The post-conciliar period: 1969-1975**
- 8. The period of courageous initiatives: 1975-1987**
- 9. The end of the 2nd Millennium**
- 10. The beginning of the 3rd Millennium**

For each of these ten periods, we shall try to present: the overall context of the Church during that period, including the pontificate at the time, the person holding overall responsibility in the Congregation and the main events that took place during his tenure, the then-current statistics and structures of the Congregation, and the names of a few religious at that time. It may be said that the 160 years of Assumptionist history correspond more or less perfectly to two separate chronologies:

- The chronology of the Generalates in the Congregation:

1850-1880: Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon

1. 1880-1903: Fr. François Picard
2. 1903-1917: Fr. Emmanuel Bailly
3. 1918-1923: Fr. Joseph Maubon
4. 1923-1952: Fr. Gervais Quénard
5. 1952-1969: Fr. Wilfrid Dufault
6. 1969-1975: Fr. Paul Charpentier
7. 1975-1987: Fr. Hervé Stéphan
8. 1987-1999: Fr. Claude Maréchal
9. 1999- : Fr. Richard Lamoureux

- The chronology of the Pontificates in the Catholic Church:

1. 1846-1878: Pius IX
2. 1878-1903: Leo XIII
3. 1903-1914: Pius X
4. 1914-1922: Benedict XV
5. 1922-1939: Pius XI
6. 1939-1958: Pius XII
7. 1958-1963: John XXIII
8. 1963-1978: Paul VI
9. 1978-2005: John Paul I and John Paul II
10. 2005- : Benedict XVI

All religious life is strongly marked by the life of the church and by the great moments of its history which we will examine from the all-important point-of-view of the unity of the Church, with a focus on the papacy.

1. The Founder and the Foundation

Church context during the life of Father d'Alzon, the pontificate of Pius IX

Elected in 1846 and hailed as a liberal-minded pope, Pius IX, previously known as Giovanni Maria Mastai Ferretti (1792-1878), quickly evolved toward intransigence regarding modern ideas as a result of the political events that were taking place in Italy. Father d'Alzon can be considered an intimate friend of both his person and his ideas. Father d'Alzon met him several times in private audience: May 18, 1855 at Castelgandolfo, then in Rome on May 29, 1855, May 27, 1862, June 3, 1862 (public audience), June 6, 1862 (private audience), April 30, 1863, November 10, 1869, January 28, 1877, and February 1, 1877.

The end of the Papal States in 1870, already heavily reduced in size in 1860, signaled a general loss of the Church's political influence in traditionally Catholic countries: Italy (1831-1832; 1870); France (1879, the Third Republic which was strongly anticlerical); Spain (after the fall of Isabella II in 1868 and during the anticlerical wave from 1873 to 1875); but also in certain Protestant countries: Switzerland (the Sonderbund²⁶ in 1848 and the exile of Bishop Mermillod 1873-1883), Prussia (Bismarck's Kulturkampf²⁷ 1871-1878). However, the Catholic Church also found a new audience in several countries: Ireland 1829; Denmark 1849, Austria-Hungary 1849, England with the Oxford Movement in 1850; and the United States. In Belgium and the Netherlands, the school question was resolved in a manner that favored the interests of the Church. Also, the moral influence of the Church increased with the strengthening of papal authority at

²⁶ The Sonderbund (German = Separation League) was a defensive league formed on December 11, 1845 by 7 Swiss cantons to oppose anti-Catholic measures by Protestant liberal cantons. The adoption in 1848 of a federal constitution ended the virtual sovereignty of the individual cantons. The Society of Jesus was banned from Switzerland, and the establishment of new religious houses was outlawed.

²⁷ The term Kulturkampf refers to German policies enacted from 1871 to 1878 by the Chancellor of the German Empire, Otto von Bismarck, which targeted the Catholic Church under Pope Pius IX with discriminatory sanctions.

Vatican Council I (1870) and with the extraordinary development of the foreign missions and the rise of religious congregations of pontifical right.

There were several important religious events that took place during this period: 1854, the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception; 1858, the apparitions in Lourdes; 1859, the death of Jean-Marie Vianney (the Curé of Ars) and the foundation of the Salesians; 1864, the Syllabus; and 1870, Vatican Council I. In general, the attitude of the Church during this pontificate was felt to be negative due to condemnations of the major trends of the day (liberalism, socialism, modern ideas, rationalism), and its positions were considered to be defensive regarding the world. Pius IX died largely misunderstood on February 7, 1878. But already, under the pen of Father d'Alzon, there were calls for his beatification which finally occurred in the year 2000.

The Congregation and the person of its founder

There is no need to recall here the various events of Father d'Alzon's life which are described elsewhere in his biography. Suffice it to list the major events and the initial spirit of the foundation of the Assumptionists:

A founder at age 35, *Viganais* by birth (Gard), *Nîmois* by adoption and choice, Father d'Alzon was Vicar General under 4 successive bishops (de Chaffoy, Cart, Plantier, Besson) and at the service of the diocesan church without ever flinching. By himself, he provided continuity within the diocese of Nîmes between 1835 and 1878. With the generous help of his first disciples, he inspired the major pastoral direction of *his* congregations: the struggle for freedom of education, the development of religious foundations and apostolates with an ultramontane point-of-view, the apostolic desire to Christianize all social classes of society, and a strongly missionary spirit.

The Congregation: important facts regarding the foundation and the first apostolates

Suffice it to recall briefly the major events:

- 1845-1850: birth of the Congregation, and acceptance of responsibility for a college.
- 1855: First Constitutions and general principles.
- 1857: Laudatory Decree.
- 1863: Second draft of the Constitutions.
- 1864: Approval of the Constitutions.
- 1865: Foundation of the Oblates of the Assumption.
- 1869-1870: Participation in the First Vatican Council.
- 1869: Deposition of the Constitutions in Rome (December 21).
- 1873: Chapter on the major apostolic thrusts: education, press, pilgrimages, social action, alummates.
- 1876: First division into provinces: Paris with Picard, Nîmes with Emmanuel Bailly, Adrianople with Galabert.
- 1880: Death of the founder.
- The Assumptionist apostolates were numerous, especially when compared to the small number of religious. They were courageous foundations but sometimes ephemeral:
 - Nîmes: 1838, 1843, 1845: *Collège de l'Assomption*, birthplace of the Congregation.
 - Paris: 1851-1853: attempt to found a college in Paris on Faubourg St. Honoré.
 - Mireman: 1852-1855: agricultural orphanage, also novitiate for the lay brothers.
 - Clichy: 1853-1860: second attempt to found a college in Paris.
 - Rethel: 1858: acceptance of responsibility for a college in the Ardennes, unsuccessful after 3 months!

- Auteuil: 1858-1860: provisional residence at the novitiate of the Religious of the Assumption.
- Australia: 1860-1875: the first distant mission of the Assumptionists.
- Paris, rue François I^{er}: 1860: acquisition of a strip of land, future center of important activities.
- Bulgaria: 1862: laying of the cornerstone of the foundation known as the Near Eastern Mission; 2 centers: Philippopolis in 1863 and Adrianople in 1867. In 1868, the Mission was strengthened by the arrival of the first Oblate Sisters.
- Le Vigan: 1864-1874: first duly constituted novitiate.
- Alès: 1866-1881: first parish; in 1869, St. Joseph parish; in 1876 aluminate.
- Arras: 1868-1972: acceptance of responsibility for the orphanage of Father Halluin.
- Notre-Dame des Châteaux in Savoy: 1871-1900: birthplace of the first aluminate which subsequently gave rise to others in Nice, Nîmes-L'Espérou, Alès, and Arras in 1874.
- Montmau: 1871: attempt to found an agricultural orphanage.
- Clairmarais: 1875: permanent foundation of an aluminate which became the springboard for others in the north of France: Mauville in 1879.
- In 1880, death of the founder and first threat of expulsion.

Statistics and structures of the Congregation

Vigorous in terms of spirit and apostolates, the Congregation stagnated statistically: it had approximately 73 members in 1880, including the novices, (43 professed religious, 15 novices, and a few lay brothers), scattered in 12 communities in France and the Near East. The Congregation was French, with only a few “foreigners” (Bulgarians and Near Easterners).

Despite this numerical weakness, the Congregation gave itself the means to govern and animate itself with strong institutions: a Superior General for life, regular chapters, a system of cooption, a council, assistants and treasurers, and provinces in 1876. On the economic level, the lifestyle remained poor, but there was real financial stability, due not so much to Father d'Alzon's family inheritance in 1860 but to the creation of a network of generous "benefactors" who, in particular, supported the expansion of the alummates.

First Assumptionists

Father d'Alzon's first companions in life and adversity merit sharing with him the title of co-founders of the Congregation. While the details of their respective biographies are given elsewhere, their names must at least be mentioned here:

Henri Brun (1821-1895)

Born in Langogne (Lozère), priest in 1845, professed in 1850, first Assistant of the Congregation, head of the educational institution in Nîmes in 1850, and volunteer for Australia (1861) and for the foundation in New York (1891).

Victor Cardenne (1821-1851)

Born in Fontainebleau, presented to Father d'Alzon by Marie Eugénie of Jesus, religious in 1850, excellent teacher, died prematurely on December 14, 1851. His companion and friend, J. Monnier, published in 1854 a book entitled *Un maître chrétien /A Christian Teacher* to honor his memory. His was the first death in the Congregation.

Etienne Pernet (1824-1899)

Originally from Velleuxon, presented to the Assumptionists by Marie Eugénie of Jesus, religious in 1850, professor for 14 years in the colleges of Nîmes and Clichy. He came into his own especially in Paris where he founded with

Antoinette Fage the Little Sisters of the Assumption in 1865. He was declared Venerable in 1983.

Hippolyte Saugrain (1822-1905)

Born at Ecquetot in Normandy, presented to Father d'Alzon by Marie Eugénie of Jesus, professed in 1850, professor in Nîmes, master of novices at Le Vigan (1864), Assistant General, real co-founder of the Oblate Sisters, and first General Treasurer of the Congregation These four religious along with Father d'Alzon were the "historic first five" to make profession on Christmas Eve 1850.

Other early religious:

François Picard (1831-1903)

His biography is found in the section on the Superiors General.

Charles Laurent (1821-1895)

Born in Uzès (Gard), priest of Nîmes in 1845, professed on March 25, 1852, founder of the college in Paris and later in Clichy, very refined and literate, a born teacher, very devoted to the College in Nîmes. Died in Paris.

Paul-Elphège Tissot (1801-1895)

Born in Lyons, priest in 1825, teacher at the boarding school in Vermot in 1842, chaplain of the Religious [Sisters] of the Assumption in Paris in 1850, professed on March 25, 1852, volunteer for the foreign mission in Australia, died at the novitiate in Livry in 1895.

Victorin Galabert (1830-1885)

Born in Montbazin (Hérault), received 3 doctorates, polyglot, professed in 1856, the real founder of the Near Eastern Mission on December 20, 1862,

opened a school in Philippopolis on January 3, 1864, Vicar General of Bishop Popoff, translator at Vatican Council I for several Eastern bishops, died prematurely in Nîmes.

Edmond O'Donnell (1796-1869)

Irish by birth, American by naturalization, ordained a priest in Charleston, South Carolina (USA) in 1824, worked among the Irish immigrants first in Charleston, then in New York City, professed in 1854, pioneer of the Thomist revival in the English-speaking countries, English teacher at Clichy, died in Paris, buried in Passy.

Vincent de Paul Bailly (1832-1912)

A person well-known among Assumptionists; the real founder of the *Bonne Presse*.

Emmanuel Bailly (1842-1917)

3rd Superior General of the Assumptionists.

Eugène Germer-Durand (1845-1917)

Born in Nîmes, 5th child of parents who were teachers at the College in Nîmes, religious in 1865, eminent archaeologist in Palestine and teacher at Notre Dame de France in Jerusalem.

Other religious who entered the Assumptionists a little later:

Alexis Dumazer (1844-1894)

Born in Nîmes, professed in 1863, director of alummates and of the College in Nîmes, died and buried in Nîmes.

Vincent Chainé (1836-1910)

Born in Nîmes, professed in 1855, founder of the aluminate of Miribel-les-Echelles (Isère) (1887-1889), missionary in Turkey, Bulgaria and Chile. Died on June 23, 1910 in Los Andes (Chile) where he is buried.

Jules Boulet (1818-1879)

French, professed in 1852, died and buried in Clairmarais.

Louis Prouvèze (1814-1884)

French, professed in 1854, died and buried in Alès.

Victor Bourrely (1814-1881)

Born in Saint Laurent de Carnois (Gard), perpetually professed in Mireman in 1855, died in Paris, buried in Montparnasse Cemetery.

Benjamin Bonnefoy (1832-1868)

Born in St. Jean de Belleville, professed in Mireman in 1856, died and buried in Adrianople. The first religious to die in the Near East.

Jacques Chillier (1839-1896)

Born in Nîmes, professed in Clichy, ordained a priest according to the Slavonic Rite in 1883; sent to Constantinople on October 29, 1863 with **Augustin Gallois**, died in Paris in 1896.

More detailed biographies can be found in the 5 volumes of *Notices Biographiques*, Rome 1999-2001.

The above-mentioned religious were the first Assumptionists at the time of the foundation.

QUESTIONNAIRE - PRACTICAL EXERCISES

1. How can we explain Father d'Alzon's veneration for Pope Pius IX? Has the Congregation always been consistent in its declared ultramontanism, from the beginning until today?

2. What could have predisposed Father d'Alzon to become the founder of religious congregations? What virtues and talents are essential in order to become a founder?

3. What characteristics did Father d'Alzon want to give and bequeath to his congregations?

4. Among Father d'Alzon's apostolic endeavors, which do you think had positive and lasting results? Which others, on the contrary, were limited in time and had not-so-happy results?

5. What were the greatest difficulties encountered by Father d'Alzon in his life as a founder? How did he seek to overcome them?

6. How can the founding charism of the Assumptionists be defined?

7. What allows the foundation of a congregation to entertain some hope of surviving? Did Father d'Alzon ever think that he might fail?

8. Did the Assumptionists, during this first period of its existence, give any concrete signs of its sense of the Church? In what particular circumstances did it do so?

9. How can we explain the slow development of the Congregation and, in particular, the slow growth in its numbers during Father d'Alzon's lifetime? Is this also true of the other congregations founded during the same period?

10. Did Father d'Alzon already have an "international sense" of the Congregation?

2. The interval between two expulsions: Father Picard

Church context during the life of Father Picard, the pontificate of Leo XIII²⁸

Elected on February 20, 1878, after two days of conclave, Vincenzo Gioacchino Pecci (1810-1903) took the name of Leo XIII after serving 32 years in the small diocese of Perugia (1846-1878). A humanist by nature, endowed with a penetrating intelligence, and master of himself, he tried, contrary to his predecessor, to reach out to the modern world which was organizing itself independently of the Church. We owe him the renewal of the study of exegesis and history, and especially the clear encouragement he gave to social Catholicism with *Rerum Novarum* (1891). He settled all the then-current conflicts with Bismarck's Germany, Spain, Great Britain, and the republics of Latin America. But he failed in his policies of reconciliation with France and remained uncompromising over the Roman question with Italy. Under his pontificate, diplomatic relations increased, attesting to the moral prestige of his pontificate.

He wrote numerous encyclicals: *Æternæ Patris* (1879) on Rationalism; *Immortale Dei* (1885) on the Christian Constitution of States; *Libertas prostantissimum* (1888) on civil and personal liberty; *Rerum Novarum* (1891) on social justice; *Providentissimus Deus* (1893) on Holy Scripture; *Orientalium dignitas* (1894) on rapprochement with the separated Churches; *Testem benevolentia:* (1899) on the condemnation of Americanism; and *Graves de communi* (1901) on democracy. A change in climate was perceptible, even though there was a hardening at the end with Cardinal Camillo Mazella, Prefect at various times of the Congregations of the Index, of Studies, and of Rites.

²⁸ It is certain that Leo XIII encouraged the Assumptionists to moderate their tone in the columns of *La Croix* It is also true that he thought best to ask them to sacrifice their position at the *Bonne Presse* in 1900.

Father Picard had the full confidence of Leo XIII whom he met on several occasions, particularly when he went to Rome on pilgrimage. Leo XIII asked Father Picard and Dom Wyart²⁹ to approach the French bishops and entreat them to put an end to the divisions among Catholics (1897). Also, Father Picard was often consulted about Eastern matters.

Papal audiences under Pius IX: May 2, 1873; May 12, 1874; May 3, 1875 with Mr. de Damas; and May 9, 1876. Papal audiences under Leo XIII: May 2, 1879; April 24, 1880 (private audience); May 5, 1881; May 10, 1881; October 18, 1882; April 15, 1893; April 30, 1895; May 5, 1895 (commission of cardinals presided by the pope on the topic of the East); March 9, 1896; March 16, 1896; beginning of August 1897 (mission to the bishops); August 9, 1897; and December 29, 1902.

It is true that Leo XIII was deceived regarding the confidence he had placed in the French government, but it is unclear whether or not his directives were properly understood, interpreted and publicized by the Assumptionists, despite their trumpeted ultramontanism.

The Congregation in the hands of the first disciple

The biography of Father François Picard is given elsewhere. The question here is more about his government of the Institute than about his personality. Three main points can be made:

- The reunification of the government of the Congregation, due in part to the difficulties created by the French government against religious teachers and, undoubtedly, to the personal views of Father Picard. The Congregation returned to a central government after attempting to divide itself into provinces, a topic on which Father Picard disagreed with Father d'Alzon. The transfer of the general headquarters from Nîmes to rue François I^{er} in Paris was not without significance.

²⁹ Dom Théophile-Louis-Henri Wyart (1839-1904) was the Abbot of Cîteaux and Abbot General of

- The normal functioning of the governing bodies, such as regular Chapters (1886, 1892, and 1898) and better-defined mandates for the officers (Hippolyte Saugrain, Charles Laurent, Etienne Pernet, and the two Bailly brothers). Father Picard confirmed Father André Jaujou as his personal secretary and appointed him Adjunct Assistant General in 1898. In 1892, he created the position of General Archivist. Emmanuel Bailly was an efficient Procurator in Rome, obtaining papal audiences and having recourse to the Roman Congregations and to Cardinal Vannutelli, the Cardinal Protector of the Congregation.

The strong thrust given to the works of the Congregation: popular pilgrimages (Lourdes, Rome, Jerusalem³⁰), the alumnae, a Catholic publishing house that created more than 30 publications in 25 years, the foreign missions which profited from the exile imposed by circumstances (Chile in 1890, New York in 1891,³¹ Belgium in 1892, Holland and England in 1901-1902), and especially the extraordinary increase in the number of mission posts in the Near East, particularly in Turkey and Bulgaria, the preparation of a foundation in Russia, and the emergence of an intellectual apostolate with the creation of *Échos d'Orient* in 1897 and the *Revue Augustinienne* in 1902. This dynamism was made possible thanks to an increase in the number of religious: at the end of 1884, the 73 religious had become 147 (of which 60 were novices) distributed throughout 15 communities: 8 in France, 1 in Spain, 1 in Rome, and 5 in the Near East. At the

the Order of Reformed Cistercians.

³⁰ Organized by *Notre Dame de Salut/Our Lady of Salvation*, the first large popular pilgrimage from France to the Holy Land since the Middle Ages arrived in Jerusalem on May 9, 1882 with 1,013 pilgrims, under the direction of Father François Picard. The absence of adequate lodging for large groups of pilgrims led in 1884 to the decision to build proper facilities. In 1885, Count Amédée de Piellat purchased the properties on which Notre Dame de France and Saint Peter in Gallicantu would be built. He turned ownership over to the Congregation and oversaw the initial construction of Notre Dame de France, where Father Germer-Durand established the first community on May 20, 1887. The large chapel was blessed on November 21, 1894.

³¹ Father Henri Brun and six Little Sisters of the Assumption arrived in New York City on April 19, 1891 where he served as their chaplain. He was the first Assumptionist to be accepted by a bishop in the United States, and the first to die in the United States. He died January 15, 1895, at age 74, and was buried in the plot of the Little Sisters in Woodside, New York. His remains were transferred to Fiskdale, Massachusetts, in May 1987.

end of 1893, there were 30 communities comprising 288 religious, of whom 76 were novices. At the end of 1898, there were 286 religious, 139 of them novices.

No year passed without the creation of new communities and apostolates:

1881: Karagatch (Turkey)

1882: Kum Kapu (Turkey)

1882: Rome, House of studies

1884: *Collège Saint Augustin*, Philippopolis (Bulgaria)

1885: Aluminate of Roussas (Drôme), France

1886: Creation of the novitiate in Livry in the diocese of Versailles

1886: Aluminate in Phanaraki (Turkey)

1887: Alummates of Villecomtesse (Yvonne) and Miribel (Isère), France

1888: Aluminate of Breuil in the *Deux-Sèvres* (France)

1889: Novitiate in Phanaraki (Turkey)

1890: Foundations in Chile (Mendoza) and Taintegnies (Belgium)

1891: Foundation in Izmit and Eskisehir (Turkey)

1892: Foundation in Konia (Turkey)

1892: Foundation in Santiago, Chile (Lourdes)

1893: Foundation in Los Andes (Chile) and Toulouse (France)

1893: Louisiana (USA)³²

³² Father Marcellin Guyot arrived in New Orleans at the beginning of February 1893 at the invitation of Archbishop Francis Janssens who was requesting that the Assumptionists open a mission in Louisiana to take up the work of Father François Renaudier, a French missionary who had been in Louisiana since 1878 and who was looking for someone who would continue and develop his missionary effort among the poor black population, whose civil rights were severely restricted even by their Catholic leaders. He was pastor of the church in Paincourtville where the religious set up a temporary residence. Other Assumptionists eventually joined Father Marcellin. Father Renaudier deeded the camp he had in Chinchuba to the Assumptionists who set up a mission post there. They also had another mission in Klotzville. They were allowed to minister only to the blacks. Difficulties with the local clergy and white lay Catholics, difficulties with white neighbors involving racial issues, financial problems, and a change in bishop led to the withdrawal of the community at the end of February 1900.

1894: Menton and Montfort (Yonne, France)

1895: Aluminate of Sainghin in Northern France (district of Lille)

1897: Foundation in Varna (Bulgaria)

1897: Aluminate in New York (USA)³³

1898: Aluminate of Laubat and Saujon (Charente Maritime, France)

1900: Louvain and the aluminate in Bure (Belgium)

1902: Bethnal Green in London (England) and Courtrai in Belgium

1902: Guadalupe parish in New York³⁴

Severe afflictions and two exiles

Two expulsions marked the generalate of Father Picard. The first came in 1880 following the “anti-congreganist”³⁵ (anti-religious) school decisions taken by Jules Ferry. Short-lived, it affected only the more “conspicuous” works (the College of Nîmes and the *Bonne Presse* on rue François I^{er}), but it also provoked a first redeployment outside of France of the houses of formation: the novitiate was transferred to Burgos de Osma (Soria) in Spain in 1887-1889, with the hope of finding local recruits. A second novitiate in Phanaraki (Turkey) was founded

³³ On September 14, 1897, Father Venance Besset opened an aluminate in New York City. First located at 109 East 83rd Street in Manhattan, it began with 7 students and was called St. Henry's Clerical School. The following year, it needed larger quarters to accommodate additional students: 4 new freshmen registered and 5 students from the previous year returned for their sophomore year. That second year, the school became St. Augustine's Clerical School. Recruiting was difficult because of the opposition of the clergy to “foreign religious.” The third year of the aluminate had only one freshman, at which time the total enrollment was only 5, distributed over 3 years. In September 1900, when no new students applied and only 2 former students returned, Father Venance closed the school.

³⁴ In 1897, the Assumptionists proposed to Archbishop Michael Corrigan the idea of devoting themselves to an Hispanic apostolate. He immediately encouraged them to do so. However, it was not until January 1902 that the dream was realized when the religious bought a brownstone on West 14th Street, in what was the heart of the Hispanic population at that time. Modifications were made on the first floor, and a modest chapel opened on February 23, 1902 and named Our Lady of Guadalupe. It was renovated and enlarged in 1921.

³⁵ Under the French Restoration, the term ‘Congreganist’ was used to designate schools belonging to a religious congregation.

after passage of the law “*le curé sac à dos*” (“*priests, put on your backpack*”) which obliged seminarians and priests to do their military service. However, the foundation of a house of studies in Rome at *Palazzo Filippini* had already taken place in 1882 when temporary quarters were rented from the Trappists on St. John Lateran Street. This foundation took place at the same time as two others, one at Notre Dame de France in Jerusalem, the other in Constantinople.

However, the second expulsion in 1900 was more violent and generalized. It began on November 11, 1899 with a systematic raid on all the communities of France and was followed by the condemnation and dissolution of the Congregation in France. Wherever possible, a fictitious secularization of the religious took place. This allowed the Congregation to keep some of its works. By means of this subterfuge, the College of Nîmes was “saved” by Bishop Besson before its forced expropriation in 1909; the aluminate of Miribel was secularized thanks to the procedural know-how of Father Alype Pétrement who knew how to get around the trap that had been set by a public prosecutor who was too much in a hurry; the *Bonne Presse* was purchased by industrialist Féron-Vrau, which spared it from an already-scheduled liquidation; the house at Le Vigan was bought at market value by Isabelle de Clermont-Tonnerre in order to avoid the seizure of the property. Everywhere else, the Congregation’s properties were seized and put up for judicial liquidation, which caused it immense financial losses.

This exile signaled the beginning of a “timid” internationalization of the Congregation. At the outset, it remained French outside the country, but progressively admitted members of other nationalities. During these twenty years, it became a real social body. By 1898, the heavenly Assumption had increased to 62 members. During the Dreyfus Affair, the name of the Congregation found its way not only into the national press but also into public opinion, albeit in a blustering fashion. *La Croix* took anti-Semitic positions in line with the ideological confusion of the day. The French government used its procedures against the Assumptionists as trial balloons for what it was planning to do against the other congregations. The law of 1901 became, in its application, an anti-congreganist law that discriminated against religious associations. At any rate, it

is difficult to believe that a handful of religious could have put in question or shaken the foundations of the Republic! Under such circumstances, it is easily understandable why, during the 1930s, it was so difficult for French Catholicism to change mentality, to accept the republican regime, and to sever its obsessive ties to the various political ideologies of the extreme-right. As for the so-called unconditional obedience of the Assumptionists to the desires of the pope, it nevertheless remains subject to interpretation during this troubled period.

Assumptionists of the period

A number of remarkable Assumptionists were an integral part of this page of the history of their congregation. They carried the burden of responsibility at a time when the Congregation was simultaneously itinerant, glorious, epic, and suffering:

- **Fr. André Jaujou (1859-1929):** close and faithful companion of Father Picard, superior of the religious communities of sisters, untiring secretary.
- **Fr. Paul-François Doumet (1857-1905):** born in Cète (Hérault) of a family that was very close to the Assumptionists; he was the right-hand man of Father Halluin at the orphanage in Arras, then a member of the editorial staff of *La Croix* and of the periodical *Questions Actuelles*.
- **Fr. Jean-Emmanuel Drochon (1838-1900):** former secular priest from Poitiers (pseudonym “le Poitevin”), editor of *Contemporains*; publicity agent for that periodical’s books and for Marian pilgrimages.
- **Fr. Alfred Manage (1859-1903):** born in Pas-de-Calais, master of novices one year in Phanaraki (1889), 3rd superior of the Near Eastern Mission starting in 1892.
- **Fr. Pierre Descamps (1848-1915):** an educator, said to be born to direct the alummates; very strict.

- **Fr. Alexis Dumazer (1844-1894):** superior of the aluminate in Nîmes-l'Espérrou in 1874, then of the college in 1882-1891, director of the alummates.
- **Fr. Vincent de Paul Bailly (1832-1912):** the legendary figure known as the *Moine* (Monk) who had the knack of transforming, at the price of unremitting daily work, the information contained on little sheets of paper into striking headlines that had popular and national appeal, thanks to the help of fervent collaborators who shared his views.
- **Fr. Emmanuel Bailly (1842-1917):** during this period, he was master of novices in Osma (1880-1886), then in Livry (1886-1892); he was General Procurator in Rome from 1892 to 1903; he was the first author of an unfinished biography of Father d'Alzon.
- **Fr. Joseph Maubon (1849-1932):** superior of the alummates in Arras (1874-1876) and Clairmarais (1876-1883); 2nd superior of the Near Eastern Mission (1883-1892), then superior in Chile (1901-1917).
- **Fr. Henry Couillaux (1858-1911):** itinerant superior of the alummates founded in Mauville (1882-1886), Osma (1887-1888), le Breuil (1888-1889), Brian (1891-1903), and Rome (1906-1911); editor of *Correspondent des alummates* (*The Correspondent of the Alummates*).
- **Fr. Stéphane Chaboud (1857-1921):** born in Lyons, superior of Roussas and Brian (1886-1889), then of the college in Osma (1889-1890) before becoming superior of the mission in Chile (1890-1897), then director of the College in Nîmes from 1898 to 1909.
- **Fr. Ernest Baudouy (1862-1942):** superior in Mauville (1886-1888), sub-prior in Livry (1888-1890), master of novices in Phanaraki (1890-1895), then in Livry (1895-1900), superior of the students in Jerusalem (1900-1904).

Sacrificing their French origin, the religious of this period found themselves in the position of having to re-found the Assumptionists in the places where they took refuge after the Congregation had been expelled from its birthplace.

QUESTIONNAIRE - PRACTICAL EXERCISES

1. What allows us to affirm or to call into question the thesis that the Assumptionists practiced absolute obedience to the papacy during the pontificate of Leo XIII? Give some concrete examples.

2. How was Father Picard's government of the Congregation almost providential during this troubled period? What essential qualities did he exhibit in order to allow the Congregation to survive?

3. How is it that the Congregation has never been as morally strong from the point-of-view of its internal unity as it was under Father Picard during these times of great adversity when it suffered from the political and public-opinion points-of-view? Isn't such a contrast both striking and ongoing in the history of the Church as it interacts with civil and political society?

4. What were the criticisms or grievances leveled at the Congregation to justify the decisions taken by the French government against it, particularly during the years 1899 to 1905?

5. Was the Congregation able to take advantage of the vicissitudes of its history? What advantages did it gain?

6. Can a system of secularism and separation of church-and-state offer equal guarantees or opportunities to all religious organizations when, during a period of great ideological tension, a law granting freedom of religion determines the conditions in which it will be exercised?

7. Does a civil government have a legitimate right to intervene in the internal government of a religious congregation, in its development, and in determining its choices and its apostolic activity?

8. What are the best reasons for which a State can expect gratitude from a religious congregation, and vice versa?

9. Do the rights and duties of a religious, as a citizen or as a patriot, give him any advantages or disadvantages? Do they limit or impose any restrictions on his conscience?

3. The Dispersal:

Father Emmanuel Bailly

Overall context of the Church during the life of Father E. Bailly/ Pontificates of Pius X and Benedict XV (1st part)

Elected pope on August 4, 1903, Giuseppe Melchior Sarto (1835-1914) took the name of Pius X after having been a parish priest in the diocese of Salzano, the bishop of Mantua (1884-1893), and the patriarch of Venice (1893-1903). He had been a teacher and was known to be intransigent. He was pastoral in his approach and not very interested in politics. More practical than speculative, he acted to “defend” the Church against the overtures and modernities of his predecessor. Coming from a popular milieu, he remained faithful to sociological and ecclesiastical models that were now outdated. But in certain areas like the liturgy, the Eucharist, Canon Law, and the Curia, this traditionalist became a precursor who surrounded himself with associates who were efficient and virtuous, though often narrow: Merry del Val,³⁶ Segna,³⁷ Oreglia,³⁸ and de Lai.³⁹ Beatified in 1951, canonized in 1954, his feast day is celebrated on September 3rd.

He wrote many severe encyclicals condemning: *Le Sillon* (the Christian democracy of Marc Sangnier⁴⁰), the separation of Church and State that had taken

³⁶ Cardinal Rafael Merry del Val (1865-1930) was Secretary of State under Pius X and the faithful executor of the pope's decisions.

³⁷ Cardinal Francesco Segna was Prefect of the Index.

³⁸ Cardinal Luigi Oreglia was Prefect of the Congregation for Ceremonies.

³⁹ Cardinal Gaetano de Lai was Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Consistorial, president of one of the two subcommissions for the codification of canon law, and president of the commission for the reorganization of the Roman Curia.

⁴⁰ Marc Sangnier tried to regroup Catholics in order to counter the anticlerical policies of the Third Republic, orienting them toward democracy. It was this democratization that was condemned by the pope as well as a certain independence from the Church's hierarchy.

place in France in 1905 and in Portugal in 1910 (*Gravissimo officii; Vehementer nos*: 1906), and Modernism. He also issued several solemn warnings, e.g., the decree *Lamentabili* (1907) and the encyclical *Pascendi* (1907), and he authorized numerous measures by the Biblical Commission which, backed up by certain spying procedures, discouraged intellectual research. In 1914, 7 books by Mauras, the theoretician of *l'Action Française*, were condemned, though the judgment was not published.⁴¹

Relations between Father Emmanuel Bailly and Pius X lacked neither warmth nor frequency. The state of mind of both men was similar: they both shared the same values and reached the same conclusions. Father Bailly waged the same anti-modernist war in the Assumptionist houses of studies. His concept of authority and of the hierarchy followed the same analyses and was based on the same models as those of the pope. More time and distance would have been needed to assimilate modern demands and to find acceptable compromises regarding such controversial, difficult, and involved issues.

On September 4, 1914, Giacomo della Chiesa (1854-1922) was elected pope and took the name of Benedict XV. The first part of his pontificate coincided with the terrible years of World War I. In vain, he exhorted the Christian nations to peace, offering his good services as a mediator, but no one took him up on his offer. French opinion considered him to be a “German pope” (*un pape boche*), while German opinion saw him as a Francophile pope. He renewed the condemnation of modernism, without becoming an archconservative. He also promulgated the Code of Canon Law (May 27, 1917), encouraged foreign missions to free themselves from all nationalistic subservience (*Maximum illud*, 1919), and became very interested in nascent ecumenism (Malines Conferences, 1921; encyclical *Catholicae Ecclesiae*, 1916). He created a Congregation for the Oriental Churches in 1917 and a Pontifical Oriental Institute. His pontificate was characterized by major upheavals: the Russian Revolution (1917), virulent nationalistic movements, the Fatima apparitions, and the conclusion of numerous

⁴¹ *L'Action Française* was a movement that promoted “Integral Nationalism” and a hereditary, anti-parliamentary and decentralized monarchy of which the Catholic Church would be the

concordats by Cardinal Gasparri, the Secretary of State. Because Italy had sided with the opposing forces when it entered the war in 1915, the pope could not participate in the post-war negotiations. Given the events and the direction of this pontificate, relations between Benedict XV and Father Bailly cannot be said to have been privileged, as they had been previously, despite certain annotations in the *Collectanea*.

One item to be underlined during this period is the role and support of the Congregation's "Cardinal Protector," Cardinal Vincenzo Vannutelli, a cardinal of the Curia who protected the Assumptionists at the end of the 19th century, from 1893 to his death in 1930. At the time, the role of the "Cardinal Protector" consisted in promoting the good of a designated congregation through his advice and patronage - support of petitions and requests for favors - and in executing the rescripts addressed to the Institute.⁴²

Internal dissension

From 1903 to 1917, the Congregation was headed by another of Father d'Alzon's first sons, Father Emmanuel Bailly whose human and spiritual personality is described elsewhere. If, at the outset, he had the unanimous vote of the members of the Chapter in Louvain (1903), it cannot be said that the same unanimity continued after 1906. Why?

In 1906, the Assumptionists were a "new body" in the sense that they were no longer the small family they had been at the outset. They had grown, thanks to the presence of numerous young members who had been educated in the alumnates and who did not completely identify with the "traditions" that went back to the founder. There was now a generation gap. Mentalities had changed and methods

guarantor.

⁴² It should be noted that this first Cardinal Protector of the Assumptionists played a major role in the recognition of the Congregation's Near Eastern Mission Born on December 5, 1836, in Genazzano, Cardinal Vannutelli was appointed Apostolic Delegate in Constantinople on January 20.1880, and then Nuncio in Lisbon in 1889. Created a cardinal in 1889, he was Prefect of various Roman Congregations, Dean of the Sacred College in 1915, and Prefect of the Consistorial He died on July 9, 1930.

of operation were put in question: centralization and authoritarianism on the part of those in charge, chapter membership by cooption, etc. The base was asking for decentralization, for an easing of the rules, for a certain freedom to undertake and evaluate the needs of the apostolate, and for time-limits on mandates.

The team in charge had aged: if Father d'Alzon assumed direction of his foundation at age 35 and Father Picard at age 49, Father Emmanuel Bailly took over as head of the Institute at age 61. His assistants did not lower the age of those in authority: Father Saugrain in 1903 was 81 and infirm; Father Vincent de Paul Bailly was 78; Father Joseph Maubon was 54. The average age of the Curia at the outset was 62 1/2. Only Father André Jaujou was in his 40s (age 44). To be sure, death periodically helped ease the situation: Father Hippolyte Saugrain died in 1905 and was replaced by Father Ernest Baudouy (age 43); Father Vincent de Paul Bailly died in 1912; and Father Germer-Durand (age 66) replaced Father Henri Couillaux who died in 1911 at age 53. Nevertheless, the feeling remained that it was only with age that one could accede to the upper echelons. At the death of Father Bailly in 1917, the Curia was renewed very little: Joseph Maubon (age 68), Stéphane Chaboud (age 60), Ernest Baudouy (age 55), André Jaujou (age 58), and Marie Bernard Horgues (age 49). Average age: 58. The Congregation as a whole was getting younger, while the Curia was growing old.

Statistically, the Congregation was nevertheless doing well, despite all of the scars left by the war: deaths, wounded and disabled religious, sickness and deaths caused by hunger, emaciated and weakened bodies stricken with Spanish Flu and tuberculosis, forced closures, buildings destroyed, withdrawal from almost all of the Near East, and diplomatic/political setbacks. In 1912, the Congregation numbered 665 professed and 86 novices; in 1918, following all of the disturbances, there were 594 professed and 52 novices. The number of deceased Assumptionists bears witness to the overall number of deaths that took place among the civilian population, which also suffered from this worldwide cataclysm. The number of deaths in the Congregation went from 153 in 1912 to 210 in 1918. These realities left an indelible mark on an entire generation.

The exile of 1900 and the disturbances caused by the war provoked a painful restructuring of the Congregation's apostolates and communities. The massive despoliations and expropriations carried out in France had devastating consequences on all the affected communities: Belgium, Holland, and Bulgaria had been affected by expulsions; Turkey had been affected by both expulsions and destructions. The Russian Mission, begun in 1905, was doubly affected, first by the Bolshevik Revolution and, secondly, by the finicky attitude of Father Bailly which prompted defections, depressions, and abandonments. Chile, visited by Father Bailly in 1905, was shaken by deadly earthquakes in 1906. The novitiate in Limpertsberg went hungry in 1914 behind the German lines. The religious in Turkey were forced into an epic exodus as the result of politico-military alliances.

In fact, it is almost impossible to draw up a list of our establishments during this period because the provisional only added to the precariousness and the mobility of the situation. The general title of "*l'Assomption de la dispersion*" (the Assumptionist diaspora) was most descriptive. It is easier to draw up the list of the closures than of the openings: the aluminate in Mongreno, near Turin, was closed in 1906; the aluminate in Calahorra (Spain) was closed in 1907; the aluminate in Le Bizet (Belgium) was bombed in 1914; Taintegnies was occupied from 1914 to 1918; Our Lady of France in Jerusalem was occupied during the entire war by the Turkish high-command; the college in Locarno, Switzerland, was closed after 1918; the novitiate in Luxemburg was abandoned after 1917. Everywhere, the equipment was stolen, damaged, or destroyed.

Nevertheless, there were glimmers of hope and signs of a better future: the New World escaped the ruins of the Old:

1903: Foundation in Granby, Massachusetts.⁴³

1904: Foundation of Assumption College in Worcester, USA.⁴⁴

⁴³ On April 3, 1903, Father Picard signed a contract for the foundation of an agricultural school in Granby, Massachusetts, on a farm owned by Father Charles Crévier, pastor of Precious Blood parish in Holyoke. The first religious arrived on May 1. Father Crévier was a rather volatile man who constantly changed the terms of their presence and interfered with the running of the farm. They left Granby barely two months later on July 4, 1903.

1910: Foundation of the parishes of St. John of Matha in Concepción (Chile), and of Bethnal Green in London.

1910: Foundation of Santos Lugares (Argentina).

1911: Foundation of a parish in Valparaíso (Chile).

1912: Episcopal ordination of Archbishop Louis Petit as Latin archbishop of Athens (April 26).

1912: Foundation of Esperanza Church in New York (July 21).⁴⁵

1912: Foundation of a community in Talcahuano (Chile).

1914: Foundation of Boxtel in Holland (December 25).

1914: Foundation of the Sisters of Saint Joan of Arc in Worcester, USA.

1916: Foundation of an aluminate in Mendoza, Chile.

1917: Authorization to found in Quebec as an offshoot of Worcester, USA.

Finally, starting in 1916, by virtue of the *droit de guerre*, the religious began to return secretly to France, defying the law of dissolution. The authorities closed their eyes. But for how long? The internationalization of the Congregation was no longer an empty word, but a reality made up of several nationalities.

⁴⁴ On November 5, 1903, Father Thomas Darbois bought a ten-room farmhouse on Fales Street, in the Greendale section of Worcester, to begin an aluminate. Shortly thereafter, he bought a second house next to the first one, then joined the two with an enclosed corridor. At first, the school was called "Our Lady of Consolation, Apostolic School." It was the birthplace of what later became Assumption College and Assumption Preparatory School. Classes began on October 1, 1904. When the buildings became too small, a larger plot of land was purchased on nearby Baltimore Avenue (later known as Assumption Avenue) on February 26, 1906. Plans were drawn up to build the first wing of the projected building, which was completed in 1908. As the school grew, several wings were added over the years. On February 6, 1917, the superior, Father Omer Rochain, obtained from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts a charter of incorporation for Assumption College, granting it power to confer the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

⁴⁵ When it became clear that Our Lady of Guadalupe Church on West 14th Street could not adequately serve the needs of all of the Hispanic population, Father Adrien Buisson, who had been pastor there, built a second church, Our Lady of Esperanza, on West 156th Street. It was opened to public worship and blessed by the Chancellor of the Archdiocese on July 21, 1912, and it was consecrated nine months later on April 19, 1913.

The future?

In 1918, shortly after the death of Father Bailly, many crucial questions were nagging the religious. From some points-of-view, the Assumptionists needed to be re-founded, internally and externally, legally and existentially. From the depths of the crucible came a cry of faith-in-the-future, with new men, new perspectives, new methods, and renewed dynamism and fidelity. It was towards the Chapter held at Notre Dame de Lumières (Vaucluse) in April 1918 that the eyes, faith and hope of the religious were turned to take up the challenge of the new century and of a world that had changed.

List of the religious called to the Chapter of 1918

It is not possible to enumerate all of the religious in the Congregation at the time of the death of Father Bailly. However, it behooves us to recall the names of those who were called to this quasi-refoundation of the Assumptionists in 1918, as witnesses of and participants in this turning point: 16 religious, 15 of whom had active voice. The age of the religious given below is the one they had in 1918. The average age of the participants: 56. It would be interesting to compare that age with the median age of all the religious in the Congregation at that time.

- Fr. Joseph Maubon, Vicar General: 1849-1932 (age 69)
- Fr. André Jaujou, Assistant General: 1859-1929 (age 59)
- Fr. Stéphane Chaboud, Assistant General: 1857-1921 (age 61)
- Fr. Marie Bernard Horgues, Assistant General: 1868-1935 (age 50); unable to attend.
- Fr. Ambroise Jacquot, Treasurer General: 1861-1934 (age 57)
- Fr. Pierre Baptiste Morel: 1836-1925 (age 82), dean of the Chapter.
- Fr. Edouard Bachelier: 1857-1929 (age 61), superior-professor of an aluminate
- Fr. Edmond Bouvy: 1847-1940 (age 71), professor of a house of studies

- Fr. Thomas Darbois: 1863-1939 (age 55), missionary
- Fr. Jules Boutry: 1863-1942 (age 55), teacher
- Fr. Félicien Vandenkoornhuysse: 1864-1943 (age 54), future provincial
- Fr. Athanase Vanhove: 1865-1919 (age 53), master of novices
- Fr. Matthieu Lombard: 1858-1951 (age 60), professor in Nîmes
- Fr. Maximin Vion: 1857-1936 (age 61), in charge of vocations
- Fr. Gélase Uginet: 1873-1939 (age 45), the youngest member of the Chapter
- Fr. Antonin Coggia: 1869-1944 (age 49), private secretary of Father Joseph Maubon, Treasurer General, authorized to participate

Two other religious were sick and unable to attend: Fathers François Mathis (1860-1934), age 58, and Marie Joseph Novier (1858-1940), age 60, both of whom were superiors of alumnales. It should be noted that there was not a single non-French member at the Chapter or a single lay brother. The composition of the Chapter was according to apostolates.

QUESTIONNAIRE - PRACTICAL EXERCISES

1. Did the Assumptionist Congregation really experience any threats of modernism in its houses of study? Did the perception of this threat have any consequences?

2. What recollection does the Congregation have in its collective memory of the activity and thinking of Father Emmanuel Bailly as Superior General? What should we think of this?

3. The majority of Assumptionists insisted on performing their military duty between 1914 and 1919. The Congregation, for its part, paid a heavy price in deaths on all fronts during this first world conflict. What other solutions could the religious have chosen during this armed conflict? Do you know of any examples?

4. What were the claims presented by a hundred or so religious in 1906 to the Roman Congregation for Religious regarding their right to organize and live their Assumptionist life?

5. Why did the Church seem to be more willing to compromise or to be more lenient with movements or ideas of the extreme right and, conversely, to be more willing to condemn and to act more severely with movements or ideas of the extreme left? Do these two attitudes indicate a double standard?

6. In addition to the difficulties of the time, there were “internal difficulties” during the generalate of Father Bailly, among them the seeds of serious internal dissension. At the time, why did the Congregation not manage to make peace and to engage in dialogue with its own?

7. Is an authoritarian regime bearable? Under what conditions?

8. With Father Emmanuel Bailly, it was somewhat like a world that was disappearing and dying. What did he lack in order to understand the aspirations of the new generations of Assumptionists? Should it be attributed to his personality or to the spirit of the times?

9. Basing yourself on what happened during this period, what qualities do you think are essential for a superior to “guide” a religious congregation along the path of unity?

4. The period of uncertainty during a time of trial

Church context during the Vicariate of Father Maubon/Pontificate of Benedict XV (2nd part)

There is not much to add to what has already been said about this pope in the previous chapter, except to underline the importance, at this crucial time for the Assumptionists, of the publication of the *Code of Canon Law* in 1917.

Commissioned by Pius X by a decree (*Arduum*) dated March 19, 1904, this work was carried out by Cardinal Gasparri who surrounded himself with many specialists. Promulgated on May 27, 1917 by a decree (*Providentissima*) of Benedict XV, it came into effect on Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 1918.

The Code contained 5 books (General Norms, Persons, Things, Procedures, and Penalties) and comprised 2,414 canons numbered sequentially. A *Motu Proprio*, dated September 15, 1917, created a Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code. Promulgated for the Latin Church, it was abundantly commented and studied, particularly in France by Cimetier, Jombart, and Naz, the author of the famous dictionary. The main characteristics of the Code were flexibility, sobriety, and reform with regard to individual rights.

Greatly affected by the consequences of World War I, this pontificate paid great attention to the missions. Confronted with increasing nationalism on the part of the colonial powers, the pope understood that he had to guarantee the ecclesiastical independence of the colonies in their relations with their respective capitals. He warned against the danger of presenting the work of missionaries as a means of expanding the national interests of their countries of origin. He decided in favor of establishing indigenous clergies and ordered the Propaganda to create regional seminaries to begin training this clergy immediately (Encyclical *Maximum Illud*, November 30, 1919).

The docility and willingness of the religious, particularly of Father Maubon, to obey the authorities of the Church were admirable, all the more so that the Holy

See was enacting strong measures at a time when the Congregation considered itself to be in disfavor with the Roman authorities.

List of the uncertainties and of the problems with Rome

February 7, 1918:

Cardinal Tonti, Prefect of the Congregation for Religious, wrote to the Procurator of the Congregation, Father Baudouy, telling him of the desire of the Holy See that the Congregation call a General Chapter to revise its *Constitutions* and put them in conformity with the new Canon Law. He also asked that it postpone the elections: “*Things are not going well with you. You must put your house in order.*” On February 17, the Holy Father granted an audience to Father Maubon, telling him of the *complaints that had come from the religious.*

April 21-28, 1918:

The 17th General Chapter gathered at Notre-Dame de Lumières and divided the work among 10 commissions.

December 16, 1918:

Father Baudouy submitted to the Holy See a printed copy of the *Constitutions*, together with a long report. A summary was also given to the Cardinal Protector, Cardinal Vannutelli. He appended 7 letters of recommendation from various cardinals, 29 letters from French bishops, and 20 from non-French bishops. Two days before, on December 14, the pope, during an audience granted to Father Maubon, alluded to 3 points which were posing problems: the life-long terms of the members of the generalate, the division of the Institute into regions rather than provinces, and the non-elected composition of the Chapter. According to the report, the Congregation at this time had 543 professed religious, 51 lay brothers, and 52 novices.

March 31, 1919:

A new audience was granted to Father Maubon. During the conversation, reference was made to the various Assumptionist apostolates and to negotiations with France.

November 11, 1919:

A new papal audience was granted to Father Maubon and to Father Ernest Baudouy.

January 19, 1920:

Upon his return from a trip to the Near East, Father Maubon was once again received by Benedict XV. The following day, a letter from Cardinal Gasparri praised the “*good Assumptionist missionaries.*” The religious interpreted this gesture as a sign that relations were improving and that the Holy See was softening its requirements.

January 14, 1921:

The Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for Religious, Archbishop La Puma, transmitted to the Procurator, Father Baudouy, the decisions it had taken: the official name of the Congregation would be: *Prêtres de l'Assomption* (Priests of the Assumption); the habit must be different from that of the Hermits of Saint Augustine; Assumptionist provinces must be created; the term of office of the general assistants must be 6 years, and that of the provincials and superiors 3 years; a new Chapter must meet within the next 4 months, during which time the pertinent articles of the *Constitutions* must be revised. In fact, the Holy See was not softening its requirements, quite to the contrary. The decisions were intended to apply completely the policy of the Holy See, viz., to impose on the

Congregation the common law applicable to all religious, regardless of particular traditions.

June 27, 1921:

A decree was issued in Latin by the Sacred Congregation detailing all of Rome's definitive regulations for holding an extraordinary Chapter.

August 6, 1921:

In a very carefully worded circular, Father Maubon drew up the initial rules governing the first Chapter of Elections to be held in the Congregation's history: 2 elected delegates for each of the 6 regions, each region also being represented by its superior as an ex-officio member: Lumières, San Remo, Louvain, Kadikeuï, Worcester, and Santiago (Chile). The 6 regional superiors were:

- Fr. Claude Allez + 2 elected delegates: Frs. Alype Pétremont and Arthur Deprez.
- Fr. Romuald Souarn + 2 elected delegates: Frs. Siméon Vailhé and Eloi Genoux.
- Fr. Gervais Quénard + 2 elected delegates: Frs. Sévérien Salaville and Privat Bélard.
- Fr. François Mathis + 2 elected delegates: Frs. Possidius Dauby and Leonide Guyo.
- Fr. Félicien Vandenkoomhuysse + 2 elected delegates: Frs. Casimir Romanet and Jean de Dieu Danset.
- Fr. Tranquille Pesse + 2 elected delegates: Frs. Marie Clément Staub and Paul de la Croix Journet.⁴⁶

The General Chapter was convoked to a meeting in Rome on December 8, 1921.

⁴⁶ A large property was purchased in Sillery, Quebec, on August 13, 1921.

November 18, 1921:

During an audience characterized as *long and serious*, Benedict XV expressed to Father Maubon his wishes and desires concerning the future organization of the Congregation. Three major criticisms were made of the present system: *troppo francese, troppo concentrato, governato troppo stile camarilla* (too French, too centralized, government too cliquish).

December 8, 1921:

The 18th General Chapter, comprising 25 religious, opened under the presidency of a delegate from the Holy See, Father Mauro Etcheverry, a Benedictine abbot, who discovered several irregularities in the election of delegates that contravened Canon Law.

December 10, 1921:

Since the problems were serious, the Chapter was invalidated and transformed into a consultative commission that worked under supervision until January 10, 1922.

January 2, 1922:

The Sacred Congregation for Religious released a decree enumerating the procedures to be followed for the consultative vote concerning the appointment of the General Assistants which it was planning to make. All the elections of the previous Chapter were voided. The initial reaction was one of surprise and amazement, but it was quickly followed by a genuine desire to obey the decisions of the Holy See.

February 18, 1922:

Father Maubon addressed a strongly-worded letter to all the communities denouncing, proof in hand, the secret and virulent correspondence of a cabal headed by none other than Father Pierre-Fourrier Merklen, former professor of Louvain in exile, along with other professors and former student-sympathizers.

March 1922:

A new draft of the *Constitutions* was drawn up according to the required norms and submitted to Rome, along with a report on holding the “Chapter.” The Sacred Congregation for Religious took upon itself to make 35 amendments (suppressions, additions, modifications) to the text that was submitted.

January 30, 1923:

Issuance of the first in a series of decrees that changed the specific character of the Congregation.

The trial was, therefore, as great as everyone’s expectations. Two reports drawn up at the time help to understand better the situation of the Congregation during this period of turbulence. In December 1918, the Assumptionists were said to be present in 38 dioceses and living in 67 houses and communities throughout Europe, Asia, and the Americas. In December 1922, the statistics were made more precise: 609 professed religious and 39 novices. The difficulties endured might have slowed down the Congregation’s growth, but they did not stop it.

After the war, the expulsions and the forced withdrawals, all of the apostolates needed to be reorganized, including the alummates, colleges, houses of formation, pilgrimages, and the press, all of which was carried out very courageously. However, the list of foundations was still very imprecise. For reasons of “caution,” or as a carry-over from the days of the forced dispersion, the addresses of the “missionaries” were doctored and given fanciful names, sometimes with historical or geographical references. Temporary or delayed installations remained the rule on the old continent, contrary to those established in America where the worldwide conflict did not have the same consequences.

QUESTIONNAIRE - PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. Though the Assumptionists had already experienced difficulties in 1922-1923, how were those they faced during this period particularly dangerous for the entire Congregation?

2. How can fidelity to the rule be in contradiction with fidelity to the spirit? How did the intervention of the Holy See permit the Congregation to go beyond this apparent contradiction?

3. In final analysis, what basic criticism did Rome level against the Congregation concerning its organization? How did the Congregation solve the problem without renouncing its own traditions?

4. If it is true that trials are a source of purification, at the end of this crisis, did the Congregation learn how to avoid in the future the trap of being too French and of having a government structure that is too centralized and too closed? What concrete measures or decisions were taken?

5. The juridical aspect of the *Constitutions* does not always make for easy and natural reading, but what are the advantages of having a written law in the Church?

6. What happened to the religious who participated in the Chapter that was invalidated? In 1923, what became of the members of the previous General Curia?

7. How and under what conditions can a crisis be beneficial in the history of a congregation? How did these religious learn to obey the Church in all confidence?

8. What concrete sacrifices did the Church ask of the Congregation at that time?

9. In 1923, there were still many religious who had known Father d'Alzon who died only 43 years before, a fact that might well explain their reticence to substantially change the organization of the Congregation as he had decided it. Who were the last religious to have known Father d'Alzon?

10. Is it not a good thing that the Church, an institution which is nevertheless hierarchical, should in final analysis defend within the religious institutes not only the rights of individuals but also the type of democratic rules which are present in the organization of these institutes, like elections and mandates of limited duration?

5. The expansion and missionary adventure

Church context during the mandates of Father Gervais/Pontificate of Pius XI (1922-1939) and Pius XII (1st part: 1939-1952)

Under the pontificate of Pius XI

Father Gervais Quénard was given three successive mandates (1923-1929; 1929-1941; and indults of prorogation: 1946-1952) under the pontificate of Pius XI and of part of Pius XII's. Linked to the history of the 20th century, these two pontificates were confronted with numerous and difficult issues: the rise of nationalisms between the two wars, World War II, and the tensions that followed the war.

Pius XI, elected on February 6, 1922, born Achille Ratti at Desio in Lombardi on May 31, 1857, was a cultured man who had spent 22 years in the Ambrosian Library and who had been nuncio in Warsaw in 1919, then archbishop-cardinal of Milan in 1921. An erudite, a man of character, and a hard worker, he gave a strong doctrinal, diplomatic and missionary orientation to his pontificate: institution of the liturgical feast of Christ the King (encyclical *Quas primas*, December 11, 1925), education of youth (encyclical *Divini illius magistri*, December 31, 1929), classical doctrine on marriage (encyclical *Casti connubii*, December 31, 1930), and social questions (encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*, May 15, 1931). He also showed himself to be the pope of Catholic Action by the encouragement he gave to the project of Father (later Cardinal) Joseph Cardijn, the founder of the J.O.C. (*Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique/Young Catholic Workers*). His rather negative attitude toward ecumenism with the Eastern Churches contrasted with his progressive thinking regarding the missions, as outlined in his encyclical *Rerum ecclesiae* of February 28, 1926. On the other hand, the ordination of 6 Chinese bishops on October 28, 1926, gave a seal of approval to the ideas of Father Vincent Lebbe, a missionary to China. In 1939, 48 mission territories were headed by indigenous bishops.

The pontificate of Pius XI was especially known for its strong positions on contemporary trends:

- Pius XI put an end to the complicated situation of the relations between Italy and the Holy See by encouraging Cardinal Gasparri, the Secretary of State, to conduct negotiations with the Mussolini government. These negotiations concluded with the signing of the Lateran Treaty on February 11, 1929, which settled the Roman question that had been on hold since 1870, and which included political, financial and religious issues. Also, the Holy See concluded numerous concordats with the new European countries: in all, 11 concordats and 3 accords with Bavaria in 1924, Poland in 1925, Portugal and Czechoslovakia in 1928, Prussia in 1929, Baden in 1932, and the Reich in 1933. However, discussions with the Soviet Union went nowhere. A jurist by training, the pope believed in the effectiveness of such negotiations, even though the rights of the Holy See were not always respected in fact.
- On matters of principle, Pius XI was unyielding. He condemned the nationalism of *L'Action Française* (1927), the powerful influence of Mussolini's government on Italian youth (encyclical *Non Abbiamo Bisogno*, June 1931), the Nazi dogmas (*Mit brennender Sorge*, March 1937), and atheistic communism (encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*, March 1937). He also dealt with the persecution that was taking place in Mexico (starting in 1930), then with the war in Spain (1931-1938) waged by extremely anti-clerical Republicans (encyclical *Dilectissima nobis*, June 3, 1933). The rise of the Popular Front in France also worried him. He knew how to put up a strong fight against all of the ideologies of both the right and the left. His death on February 10, 1939 did not augur happier days for Old Europe, which was fighting its old demons.

What type of contacts did this pope have with the Assumptionists? They were excellent, given the fact that Father Gervais Quénard and the new Curia of 1923, renewed in 1929, entered perfectly into the views of the Sacred Congregation for Religious. Several events testify to these good relations: the episcopal ordination of an Assumptionist, Bishop Pie Neveu, for Moscow in April 1926; 2 audiences

in 1929 on the occasion of the General Chapter; the letter of Pius XI for the 50th anniversary of the Assumptionists in 1930; Father Gervais Quénard's recommendation to adhere to the policies of the Holy See; the audience granted to the members of the Chapter of 1935; the episcopal ordination of Bishop Vuccino in July 1937 for the diocese of Syros in Greece;⁴⁷ and the episcopal ordination of Bishop Piérard in Africa in 1938.

Under the pontificate of Pius XII

Pius XII, elected on March 2, 1939 after 3 ballots on the same day, reigned until October 9, 1958. He was born in Rome on March 2, 1876 and was ordained a priest in 1899. He entered very quickly into the diplomatic service of the Holy See (1901), negotiated the concordat with Serbia in 1914, was the substitute of the Secretary of State until 1917, nuncio in Munich and Berlin until 1929, cardinal in 1929, secretary of state from 1929 to 1939, and papal legate to the Eucharistic Congresses in Buenos Aires (1934), Lisieux (1937), and Budapest (1938).

An extraordinary man, highly intelligent, polyglot, both prudent and realistic, endowed with a great capacity for work, affable and authoritarian, he tried at first to be a mediator when war broke out, then contented himself with recalling the indispensable principles needed to establish a just society, principles based on natural law enlightened by faith. Some critics, though not without their own detractors, have reproached him his "silence" regarding Hitler's aggressions, the concentration camps, and the extermination of Jews. However, the numerous gestures of the Holy See and of its nunciatures to save innocent lives should not be forgotten. His Christmas speeches and messages in favor of peace testify to his thinking and solicitude. He also lived the agonizing times of the Cold War and of the installation of Marxist regimes in Eastern Europe and Asia.

His doctrinal teaching from 1939 to 1952 was important, particularly his encyclicals on the Church (*Mystici Corporis*) in 1943 and on Holy Scripture (*Divino qfflante Spiritu*) in 1943; also his declaration of the dogma of the

⁴⁷ In 1947, Bishop Vuccino became the Archbishop of Corfu (Greece) until his retirement in 1952.

Assumption on November 1, 1950. Was he more of a maintainer than an initiator? Regardless, he showed himself to be a reformer with his encyclical *Mediator Dei* (November 30, 1947) on the liturgy and with the constitution *Provida Mater* (February 2, 1947) on Secular Institutes. Certainly, after 1949, especially after the departure of Bishop Montini, the pontificate tightened up, e.g. the decree of the Holy Office of December 20, 1949 forbidding all practical collaboration with Communism; his encyclical *Humani generis* of August 12, 1950 which put the brakes on new tendencies in theology; restrictions imposed on relations with the separated brothers, etc. It seemed as though there was now more prudence than daring, more warnings than invitations to adapt.

On the political level, the Catholic Church, persecuted in all of the Communist countries of Eastern Europe, lost influence in that part of the world, as illustrated by several infamous trials: Cardinal Stepinac in Zagreb, Cardinal Slipyj in the Ukraine (1946), Cardinal Beran in Prague (1951), Cardinal Wyszynski in Warsaw (1953), and Cardinal Mindszenty in Budapest (1949). In Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania, the Church was almost completely wiped out: by 1948, the episcopacy had already been decimated, removed, or imprisoned. In Communist China (1949), the Triple-Autonomy movement quickly became anti-Catholic, producing expulsions, purges, and the creation of a Patriotic Church, which prompted, in October 1954, the encyclical *Ad Sinarum Gentes*. Vietnam was again shaken by war in 1946, but Christians and anti-Communists in the pro-Communist north emigrated *en masse* (c. 3 million) to the south, leaving the Church in the north almost completely destroyed. To Pius XII's credit, a favorable concordat was signed with Franco's Spain in 1953.

Pius XII and the Assumptionists

What type of relations existed between the Holy See and the Assumptionists from 1939 to 1952?

Pius XII knew the Assumptionists very well because Pius XI, in 1931, had

He died in Athens in 1968 during a visit.

appointed Eugene Pacelli as Cardinal Protector of the Assumptionist religious families. There is precious little information in the archives about the difficult trips the Superior General made to Rome during the war. Father Gervais seems to have resided most often in Chaville (France), which was located in the occupied zone, and he was in possession of a very restrictive laissez-passer. Nevertheless, contact with the Roman Congregations was kept up by the Procurator, Father Romuald Souarn, who was appointed in 1929 and died on April 6, 1948. Father Souarn was replaced by Father Rémi Kokel. According to tradition, one of their functions was to present a candle to the pope during the Mass celebrated on the feast of the Presentation of the Lord (February 2).

A few specific documents were requested and received during this period, e.g., the rescripts of August 31, 1940 to postpone the General Chapter, and of September 14, 1940 to prolong the authority of the Curia. In October 1945, Pius XII sent a letter on the occasion of the Assumptionist centennial. There was also: an audience in March 1946, the choice of Bishop Beck in England in 1949, another audience in June 1949, an autographed letter of Pius XII to Father Quénard on the occasion of his jubilee in June 1949, and a telegram on the occasion of the definition of the dogma of the Assumption in 1950.

Thirty years of expansion and missionary adventure

Let us first meet the men who, between 1923 and 1952, guided and animated the Congregation at its highest level:

During Father Gervais Quénard's first term

- Fr. Gervais Quénard, Superior General (age 48)
- Fr. Thomas Darbois (1863-1939), 1st Assistant and Vicar General (age 60)
- Fr. Alype Pétrement, (1862-1927), 2nd Assistant (age 61), replaced at his death by Father Siméon Vailhé on January 18, 1928(1873-1960) (age 55)
- Fr. Matthieu Lombard (1858-1951), 3rd Assistant (age 65)

- Fr. Possidius Dauby (1883-1975), 4th Assistant (age 40)
- Fr. Ambroise Jacquot (1861-1934), Treasurer General (age 62)
- Fr. Romuald Souarn (1872-1948), Procurator (age 51)

The average age of the Curia when it took office was 55.

In 1923, the Institute was divided into 4 provinces and several vicariates: Bordeaux, Lyons, Paris, and Belgium-Holland, with provincial houses in Lyons (avenue Debrousse), Bordeaux, Montpellier-Paris, and Brussels.

There were numerous foundations and restructurings of communities, given the new situation in France, the increase in personnel, and the consequent apostolic vitality:

1924: Foundation of the house of the *Bonne Presse*, repurchased from Féron-Vrau; regrouping in community of the religious living on avenue Albert I^{er}.

1924: Foundation of the parish of Saint Christophe de Javel in Paris XV (Father Aymard Faugère); construction of the church.

1924: Foundation of Saint Peter in Gallicantu in Jerusalem (excavations by Father Germer-Durand; construction by Father Etienne Boubet).

1924: Transfer of the common novitiate in Saint Gérard (Belgium) to Taintegnies (Belgium): temporary arrangement from 1924 to 1927 while waiting for the establishment of novitiates in each of the provinces.

1925: First foundation in Romania, and in Transylvania, with an aluminate in Blaj.

1925: Re-opening of the aluminate-college in Bure (Belgium).

1925: First foundation in Greece, independent of Archbishop Louis Petit, the Latin archbishop of Athens.

1926: Clandestine episcopal ordination (April 21) of Bishop Pie Neveu by Bishop d'Herbigny at Saint Louis des Français Church in Moscow.

- 1926: Foundation of the community in Florence (Italy), via Borgo Pinti, to which the temporary aluminate of Castelgandolfo moved in 1932.
- 1926: Foundation of a 2nd aluminate in Romania, in Beius.
- 1926: Opening of Saint Joseph aluminate in Melle (Deux Sèvres, France), where the bishop entrusted to the Assumptionists a dozen parishes in an area called “*la Chine du Poitou*” (“the China of Poitou”).
- 1926: Foundation in Saint Denis (near Paris) of a center for late vocations transferred from the house of Lorgues (Var): Father Didier Nègre.
- 1926: Foundation of a novitiate in Argentina (Santo Lugares).
- 1927: Foundation of an aluminate at Davézieux in the Ardèche, next to Annonay.
- 1927: Re-foundation of the aluminate in Clairmarais which had been raised by the occupation forces during the war of 1914-1918.
- 1928: Transfer of the novitiate from Santiago (Chile) to Mendoza; foundation of Scheidegg in Bavaria, Germany.
- 1929: Foundation of the aluminate at Kapelle-op-den-Bos (Capelle aux bois) in Flanders (Belgium).
- 1929: Foundation of the novitiate at Les Essarts (Normandy, France), Province of Paris.
- 1929: Foundation of the novitiate of Scy-Chazelles (Lorraine), common to Lyons and Bordeaux.
- 1929: Establishment of a mission in the Belgian Congo.

The statistics for the period 1923 to 1929 give proof of this vitality: on December 31, 1929, the Congregation had 810 professed religious and 60 novices, instead of the previous figure of 609 and 39, respectively.

During Father Gervais Quénard's second term (1929-1941), prolonged until 1946 because of the war

There was even more progress during this period. The religious in charge at this time were:

- Fr. Gervais Quénard, elected for the first time, and for 12 years (age 54)
- Fr. Félicien Vandenkoornhuysse (1864-1943), 1st Assistant (age 65)
- Fr. Elie Bicquemard (1863-1950), 2nd Assistant (age 66)
- Fr. Rémi Kokel (1886-1973), 3rd Assistant and Secretary (age 43)
- Fr. Rumold Spinnaël (1880-1967), 4th Assistant (age 49)
- Fr. Romuald Souarn (1872-1948), Procurator (age 57)
- Fr. Ambroise Jacquot (1861-1934), Treasurer General (age 68)

The average age of the Curia in 1929 was 57.4, therefore only slightly higher than in 1923, and largely renewed with men of experience.

Deaths during this same period (1929-1941) gave rise to changes imposed by circumstances: Father Ambroise Jacquot was replaced in 1935 by Father Antonin Coggia (1869-1944), age 66.

Since it was impossible to meet in Chapter because of the war, the terms of the members of the General Curia were prolonged and vacancies were filled:

- Fr. Félicien died in 1943; replaced as 4th Assistant by Father Michel Pruvost (1881-1967), age 62.
- Fr. Coggia, himself a replacement, was replaced in turn by Father Eudes Hanhart in 1944.

After the war

Though the apostolic impetus continued, it was weaker after 1945 than it had been between the two wars because many ruined buildings had to be re-built for the second time in 25 years: Louvain had been leveled in 1940; all the Belgian zone and the section of France north of the Loire had been bombed and disorganized; some religious had been killed and others taken prisoners; 4 English

foundations had been obliterated or seriously damaged: Newhaven, Brockley, Bethnal Green, and Charlton.

The annual statistics published in the *Répartition des missionnaires / Directory of Religious* recorded an increase in the number of religious: on December 1, 1935, there were 1,106 professed religious and 106 novices. The annual increase was about 60 religious. On December 1, 1938, the numbers increased again: 1,292 professed religious and 93 novices. However, the annual increase slowed down a bit, stabilizing itself around 50: on January 1, 1940, there were 1,313 professed religious and 89 novices.

The Congregation also showed its vigor by going into new countries and developing new apostolates. In 1945-1946, it was present in 20 countries and had some 133 communities:

France	55	Argentina	3
Belgium	15	Turkey	3
England	8	Italy	2
Belgian Congo	8	Tunisia	2
Chile	7	Spain	2
Holland	6	Palestine-Lebanon	2
Brazil	6	Canada	1
Romania	4	Yugoslavia	1
Bulgaria	3	Greece	1
USA	3	China-Manchuria	1

The novitiates and houses of studies were forming contingents that were preparing themselves for still more foundations.

It would be fastidious to enumerate all of the foundations in existence between 1929 and 1941. Suffice it to mention only the more significant ones:

- **England** grew thanks to a partial merger of the Fathers of St. Edmund/Edmundites in 1927, which added 3 new posts (Newhaven, Nottingham, and Langford Budville) to the traditional 5 already in existence: Hitchin, Bethnal Green, Brockley, Rickmansworth, and Charlton.
- The **Congolese mission** was in full expansion, which prompted Father Quénard to write his book of memoirs *Miracle des églises noires / Miracle of the Black Churches*. The Belgian, Flemish and Dutch religious radiated around 11 posts: Beni, Butembo, M'Bingi, Bunyuka, Kyondo, Manguredjipa, Muhangi, Mulo, Musienene parish and Musienene seminary, and Mutwanga. In 1935, the Assumptionists invited the Oblate Sisters to join and assist them. And in 1938, the Holy See chose an Assumptionist bishop (Bishop Piérard) to head the new diocese of Beni-Butembo.
- The Balkan redeployment veered from Turkey toward the southern Balkans: to **Bulgaria** (traditional area), **Romania** (1924-1925), **Greece, Yugoslavia,** as well as to **Tunisia,** (1934) on the southern side of the Mediterranean.
- The Province of Lyons, stripped of the Near East, courageously took charge in 1935 of an interregional seminary at Kirin, **Manchuria,** with all of the difficulties involved in such a distant and deprived area.
- **Chile** expanded: Santiago, Concepción, Los Andes, Lota, Rengo parish, Mendoza, and Valparaíso.
- **Argentina** began to expand: Buenos Aires (Saint Martin), Belgrano, and Santos Lugares.
- **Brazil** in 1935 was divided between the French (Rio de Janeiro) and Dutch Assumptionists (Alem Paraiba in the Minas Gerais region, Rio Preto near São Paolo, São Paolo, and Fernandopolis).
- The provinces of Belgium and North America were not yet present in South America.
- Nazi Germany forced the promising foundation in Scheidegg, Bavaria, to close in 1939.

- The Turkish and Russian foundations were no more than a shadow of their former selves.
- Arrival in **Moscow** of Father Leopold Braun in 1934; Bishop Neveu remained there until 1936.⁴⁸
- **Turkey** retained 3 posts: Ankara, Istanbul and Zonguldak. All the other houses disappeared after 1914: Hai'dar-Pasha, Karagatch, Gallipoli, Kum Kapu, Konya, Eskisehir, Uskudar, Izmit, Adrianople, Bithynia, Brousse, Phanaraki, Moda, and Boulais.
- In **Bulgaria**, the Congregation lost Sofia and Mostratli.
- In **France**, each province equipped itself autonomously: novitiates in Scy-Chazelles (1927), Les Essarts (1929), Nozeroy (1931), and Pont l'Abbé d'Arnoult (1934). The houses of study were about to be separated: the theologate of Lormoy (1934) split from Louvain, which then served the Belgian-Dutch Province, and a scholasticate was established in Layrac (1934). A network of alummates at the primary and secondary levels assured the vocation apostolate of each province: for Paris: Chanac (1932), Vérargues (1933), Montéchor (1936), and Soisy-sur-Seine (1937). The other provinces had similar arrangements.

⁴⁸ Arrival in Moscow on March 1, 1934 of Father Leopold Braun, the first American chaplain at the US Embassy by virtue of the Roosevelt-Litvinov Accords signed on November 16, 1933. He served concurrently as assistant pastor of Saint Louis des Français Church until Bishop Neveu returned to France in 1936, after which he also became pastor of the church and Apostolic Administrator of Moscow, with very *special jurisdiction (specialissima)* over the entire territory of the Soviet Union at the time. His remarkable memoirs have been edited by G.M. Hamburg and published in 2006 by the University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana: Leopold L. S. Braun, A.A., *In Lubianka's Shadow, The Memoirs of an American Priest in Stalin's Moscow, 1934-1945*.

All the chaplains who followed Father Braun until the arrival of Bishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz in 1998 enjoyed the same jurisdiction. However, beginning in 1964, Latvia was detached from their responsibility with the appointment of Bishop Julijans Vaivods as Apostolic Administrator of Riga (Latvia) and, beginning in 1979, out of deference for Bishop Vaivods and in the spirit of the Helsinki Accords of 1975, they ceased to have the title of Apostolic Administrator but kept the same same *very special jurisdiction* as before. The chaplaincy served not only the Catholic American community but also all of the Catholic foreign community in Moscow.

A shortened last term, Exhaustion: 1946-1952

For the third time, Father Gervais Quénard was elected Superior General in 1946 for another 12 years, at age 71. It was a sure sign of the almost unanimous fidelity and esteem the religious had for him, though it was also a chilling and unimaginative approach to the future that still needed to be built. His assistants hardly shored up this basic weakness:

- Fr. Jude Verstaen (1893-1960), 1st Assistant and Vicar (age 53)
- Fr. Bernardin Balfontaine (1887-1978), 2nd Assistant (age 59)
- Fr. Dieudonné Dautrebande (1890-1970), 3rd Assistant (age 56)
- -Fr. Zéphyrin Sollier (1883-1954), 4th Assistant and Secretary General (age 63)
- Fr. Romuald Souarn (1872-1948), Procurator (age 74)
- Fr. Eudes Hanhart (1899-1992), Treasurer General (age 47)

The average age of the Curia rose slightly to 60.4, but its members changed too often to allow it to engage in long-term reforms.

The numerous reshufflings of the General Curia, often imposed by circumstances, suggested a *fin de règne*: on September 26, 1946, Father Dautrebande resigned and was replaced by Father Aubain Colette (1888-1970), age 58; Father Souarn died on April 6, 1948 and was replaced by Father Rémi Kokel (1886-1973), age 62; and Father Zéphyrin Sollier resigned in June 1949 and was replaced by Father Alphonse Picot (1894-1979), age 55. For all practical purposes, the elections made by the Chapter seemed to have been invalidated. Father General, age 76, announced on September 15, 1951 that he intended to resign because the work had become too burdensome. The Holy See accepted his wise decision and appointed him Vicar General until the next Chapter to be held in 1952.

Regardless, the General Chapter of 1946 had adjusted the structures of the Institute by increasing the number of provinces to 7: Holland (July 18, 1946), England (August 21, 1946), and North America (December 16, 1946). Though the rate of growth had tapered off, the number of religious augured well for the future: in 1946, the Institute had 1,448 professed religious and 76 novices; in 1952, it had 1,680 professed and 98 novices.⁴⁹ It was with great confidence that Father Gervais passed Elijah's mantle to his successor, even though the end of his term was saddened by the Communist stranglehold on the traditional Assumptionist countries. In Bulgaria, three religious were put on trial, imprisoned, and eventually shot in November 1952; in Romania, all the religious were dispersed; in Yugoslavia, the schools were all closed; in Manchuria, the last missionary left in 1952. In Israel, the newly created State in 1948 illegally occupied a section of Notre Dame de France located on the dividing line between East and West Jerusalem.

At his death on February 6, 1961, after 9 years of well-earned rest in Rome, Father Gervais was able to say peacefully his *Nunc dimittis*. His friends at his side recalled how he had signed more than 1,000 calls to the priesthood, a first-class admission-ticket to heaven!

⁴⁹ In the meantime, in the United States, a novitiate was founded in Hyattsville. Maryland, on March 29, 1951. It was later moved to Saugerties, New York on April 30, 1954.

QUESTIONNAIRE - PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. Following a consultation that remained secret, the choice of Father Gervais Quénard by the Holy See in 1923 as head of the Congregation proved to be a good one. What were the exceptional qualities of this outstanding Assumptionist?
2. How can all of Father Gervais' mandates in 1923, 1929, and 1946 be said to be atypical and, at the same time, "normal within the context of a certain abnormality"? With him, didn't the Congregation almost have a General elected for life, despite the electoral process?
3. What comments can be made about the composition of the various General Curias under Father Gervais? Did the provinces readily accept to sacrifice capable personnel for the good of the entire institute? Doesn't a reticence to do so risk encouraging the Superior General to work by himself?
4. By asking the Congregation in 1923 to work in peace, unity, and voluntary silence about the recent past, did Father Gervais not change its outlook which, until then, was turned toward its beginnings?
5. How did Father Gervais give the Congregation a more international dimension? In what way did he show himself to be more a founder than an heir?
6. Did Father Gervais Quénard's work leave a mark on the other religious families of the Assumption?
7. How did Father Gervais retain the Congregation's traditional centralized government, all the while favoring the system of provinces requested by the Holy See in 1923?
8. Although the General Curia resided in Rome during the academic year, it spent the summer vacation in France. This dual residence, in Rome and in Paris, prompted a particular thinking among French Assumptionists until 1970. Can you be more precise?
9. Father Gervais was the first Superior General to have traveled around most of the world. What long trips did he make? What traces do we have of them?

10. During Father Gervais' lifetime, the Assumptionists became acquainted with the African continent. Where and in what circumstances?

6. The pre-conciliar and conciliar period:

1952- 1969

During the 28-year span between 1952 and 1969, the Congregation experienced the same type of concerns, difficulties and joys as did the universal Church in the final years of the pontificate of Pius XII (1952-1958). There was a desire for profound changes, prompted by extraordinary socio-economic and cultural changes that were taking place around the world, by a Christian and priestly identity crisis, and by cultural revolutions that were occurring at historic speeds. It was time for an indispensable but difficult *aggiornamento* that the Council would eventually address.

Church context at the end of the pontificate of Pius XII (1952-1958)

As mentioned earlier, in the post-war years the Catholic Church suffered a loss of influence in public opinion due to geo-political events and to the socio-economic evolution that was taking place: the Cold War, the installation of Communist regimes, moral discredit because of the accusations of “silence” on the part of Pius XII, an aging papacy, the materialism of Western societies, and the emergence of the Third World in conflict with the colonial structure, etc. It would be useless here to insist more lengthily on these facts.

The Church also yearned for profound changes. Morals had changed and many structures were out-of-date. The warnings against the overtures Christians were making to the left, the leniency of the Church with Franco’s Spain, with Salazar’s Portugal, or with certain dictatorships in Latin America gave a rather harsh tone to the end of the pontificate of Pius XII. Father Dufault and the religious who attended the General Chapters of 1952 and 1958 received audiences with Pius

XII: a special audience in May 1952, and a general audience on May 28, 1958, during which they were treated very cordially (Circular no. 22, July 1958).

A breath of fresh air: the pontificate of John XXIII (1958-1963)

Born on November 25, 1881 in Sotto il Monte near Bergamo, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, the third of 13 children of a peasant family, entered the seminary in 1893, was ordained a priest in 1904, became secretary to the bishop of Bergamo, Bishop Radini-Tedeschi (1905-1914), then military chaplain during the war and spiritual director of the seminary of Bergamo where he founded a student center. The second part of his life was diplomatic in nature: Apostolic Delegate in Sofia (1925-1934), episcopal ordination, apostolic delegate in Turkey and Greece (1935-1944), nuncio in Paris (end of 1944-beginning of 1953), cardinal (1953), and patriarch of Venice (1953-1958). He was elected pope, to the surprise of many, on October 28, 1958 after 10 ballots. He was greeted as a “pope of transition.”

But very quickly, Pope John XXIII gave a personal and innovative touch to his pontificate by opening a synod for the diocese of Rome and by deciding to open an Ecumenical Council and to update Canon Law. He created 55 cardinals, exceeding the symbolic number of 70, and appointed a Japanese, a Tanzanian and a Filipino for the first time in the history of the Sacred College. He received at the Vatican many non-Catholic religious leaders: Dr. Fisher (1960), Dr. Jackson (1961), Dr. Morris (1962), and Metropolitan Damaskinos of Greece (1962). He even gave an audience to Alexei Adjupei, the son-in-law of Nikita Khrushchev who was head of the Kremlin at the time. He received the International Balzan Prize⁵⁰ (May 1963) and created an International Peace Prize. He published 8 encyclicals, among them *Mater et Magistra* in 1961 on social issues, and especially *Pacem in terris* (April 1962) on peace. He canonized 10 Blesseds. He

⁵⁰ An award given to persons who have made outstanding contributions in the fields of humanities, natural sciences, culture, as well as for endeavors for peace and the brotherhood of man.

died on June 3, 1963. All things considered, his was a short but an outstanding pontificate.

A good, simple, and humble man, John XXIII had taken as his motto: *Obedientia et pax*. An open man, he marvelously revealed himself in a new light during his pontificate, manifesting confidence in progress, showing esteem for all true human values, and exhibiting a desire for renewal and ecumenical dialogue. The great turning point of his pontificate was the opening of the Council in October 1962, a Council that would be continued and brought to its conclusion by Pope Paul VI in 1965. This event set a number of benchmarks for the changes - sometimes contradictory and often painful - that took place.

John XXIII and the Assumptionists

Giuseppe Roncalli was not unknown to the Assumptionist religious family. In Sofia as well as in Istanbul, he had had numerous and very friendly contacts with the Assumptionists, both at the College of Plovdiv and at the Apostolic Delegation. He had appreciated the research done by the Byzantine Institute, which had moved from Istanbul to Bucharest in 1937, then to Paris in 1948. He had personally known the second pioneers of the Near Eastern Mission, particularly Fathers Flavien Sénaux, Ausone Dampérat, Maximilien Malvy, Privat Bélard, Methodius Oustichkov (his professor of Bulgarian and French), Ludovic Marseille, and the heads of the Byzantine Institute: Fathers Petit, Salaville, Janin, Grumel, Laurent, Pargoire, Martin Jugie, and Alype Barrat of whom he was particularly fond.

In Paris, he had many occasions to meet the religious of the *Bonne Presse* and, on a daily basis at the Nunciature, Father Vincent Delouf or Father Rémi Kokel.

On the occasion of certain events, John XXIII knew how to show the Assumptionists how much he appreciated them, e.g., the cordial reception he gave Bishop Piérard on January 6, 1959; the choice of Bishop Canonne as the first bishop of Tuléar (April 25, 1959); and the audience he granted the General Curia on January 19, 1959. The Secretary of State, Cardinal Tardini, became the third

and last Cardinal Protector of the Congregation (November 9, 1959); he died shortly thereafter (1961). There were also other meetings with the pope, e.g., the offering of a candle on February 2, 1961 by Fathers Alfred Fame and Rémi Kokel; the choice of Bishop Arthur Horsthuis as bishop of Jales in Brazil (February 21, 1960); the choice of Bishop Vasile Cristea, a Romanian, as the bishop of the Catholic Romanians in the West; the choice of Archbishop Antoine Varthalitis as archbishop of Corfu (July 20, 1962); the appointment of Father Wilfrid Dufault as a member of the Vatican Council (October 3, 1962); and a letter on the occasion of the centennial of the Near Eastern Mission (1963). The Circular Letter of Father Dufault - no. 35, June 6, 1963 - recalled all of these living memories that tied the Congregation to the pope who had just died. In John XXIII, the Assumptionists lost a great friend and rejoiced heartily when he was beatified in the year 2000.

The Council and its implementation/

First part of the pontificate of Paul VI (1963-1969)

Giovanni Battista Montini was born on September 26, 1897 in Concesio near Brescia into a family of lawyers and journalists. Ordained a priest in 1920, he entered the Vatican's school of diplomacy in 1921 and worked at the Secretariat of State from 1924 to 1954. He was archbishop of Milan from 1954 to 1963, created cardinal in 1958 by John XXIII, and elected pope on June 21, 1963, taking the name of Paul VI.

Very intelligent, cultured, a polyglot, concerned about beauty and good taste, prudent and hesitant, a hard worker, and a great traveler, he first took upon himself to implement the Council by renewing the Church and bringing it in line with the aspirations of the modern world. He often had to fight in order to implement the conciliar decisions, as he reformed and decentralized the Curia, stressed collegiality, established episcopal conferences, created synods, renewed relations with numerous states, made several important ecumenical gestures, developed audacious diplomatic policies with the help of Cardinal Casaroli, and

asserted the papacy's missionary dimension by his travels abroad. He wanted to harmonize fidelity to Tradition with the needs of the modern world, even to the point of seeming to be torn between the two.

Evolution of the Congregation between 1952 and 1969

This period of contrasts, which runs from 1952 to 1969 - a total of 18 years - was already marked by a certain number of elements that pre-dated the Council, elements that are difficult to analyze and synthesize. There was a very slow increase in the number of religious from 1952 to 1963, then a quasi-stagnation of sorts until 1968, if the successive statistics of the Congregation are any indication. We will first note the annual statistics at the beginning and at the end of the period (1952 and 1969), then proceed to establish the figures year by year.

On December 31, 1952, according to the *Répartition des missionnaires/ Directory of Religious*, the Congregation totaled 1,778 religious, 1,191 of whom were priests, plus 98 novices. They were distributed in 24 countries and approx. 169 communities:

France	64	Italy	3
Belgium	19	Colombia	3
Belgian	13	Israel / Jordan	2
Congo			
Holland	10	Algeria	2
Brazil	10	Turkey	2
England	9	Canada	2
Chile	8	Lebanon	1
Tunisia	5	New Zealand	1
Spain	4	Mexico	1

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Argentina	4	Greece (in 4 places)	1
USA	4	Yugoslavia	1

There were also a few exceptional situations: Moscow, attached religious, religious who were dispersed for pastoral reasons but who came together from time to time, 9 Bulgarian religious, 14 Romanians in the diaspora, etc.

For April 1969, such details are not available because the *Répartition/Directory* was not published that year. However, crosschecks allow us to state that there were 1,717 religious (61 fewer than in 1952) living in some 171 communities. The tendency was to increase the number of small fraternities and to reduce the number of “apostolates” by progressively closing or transforming them, particularly the colleges and alumnates.

The turning point in the number of religious took place around 1963, following what was called the “vocation crisis” which provoked a rarefaction of the number of candidates and smaller classes of young religious, accompanied by a lower perseverance rate and a higher average age:

1952:	1,778 religious + 98 novices
1953:	1,788 religious + 86 novices
1954:	1,812 religious + 91 novices
1955:	1,819 religious + 83 novices
1956:	1,842 religious + 76 novices
1957:	1,839 religious + 84 novices
1958:	1,887 religious + 82 novices
1959:	1,895 religious + 62 novices
1960:	1,896 religious + 68 novices
1961:	1,892 religious + 69 novices
1962:	1,887 religious + 89 novices

1963:	1,902 religious + 69 novices
1964:	1,896 religious + 67 novices
1965:	1,888 religious + 78 novices
1966:	1,896 religious + 64 novices
1967:	1,883 religious + 65 novices
1968:	1,846 religious + 28 novices
1969:	1,717 religious + 1 novice?

This phenomenon affected the majority of all the religious congregations, both of men and of women, whose roots were in the Western European democracies. The indigenous members of the various branches of these congregations that were outside Europe found themselves in the minority and incapable of compensating for the lack of vocations.

Foundations and other significant events

Despite the progressive reduction in the number of young religious, the Assumptionists during this period courageously continued their apostolic work by trying to respond to the new calls of the Church and its mission. Some of the more significant events of the period were the following:

In May 1952, at the 22nd General Chapter, the Curia was reshuffled in order to form from the very outset a more harmonious team, though changes did take place shortly thereafter. Assisting Father Wilfrid Dufault were:

- Fr. Marie-Germain Filliol, ex-provincial of Lyons, 1st Assistant (age 50). He resigned very soon and was replaced by Fr. Lefèbre Bomand (age 63)
- Fr. Aubain Colette, Belgian, 2nd Assistant, Vicar General, Secretary and Postulator (age 64)

- Fr. Florentin Kerno, 3rd Assistant (age 54), resigned in 1954 and replaced by Fr. Saint-Martin (age 71)
- Fr. Domitien Meuwissen, 4th Assistant, Secretary in 1955 (age 52)
- Fr. Rémi Kokel, Procurator (age 66)
- Fr. Eudes Hanhart, Treasurer General (age 53), the youngest of the group

These changes in the general government triggered others at the provincial level:

- Fr. Bruno Linder in Lyons
- Fr. Stéphane Lowet in Belgium
- Fr. Henry Moquin in North America
- Fr. Louis-Henri Bélard in Paris
- Fr. Austin Tremer in England
- Fr. Denis Geoffroy in Bordeaux
- Fr. Wiro Van den Dungen in Holland

Activities were not lacking in these pre-conciliar years. The development of the more recent foundations in distant countries needed attention: Cali, Colombia (Father Muermans, end of 1946), Mexico (Father Cassien Dubost, 1947), Charfe, Lebanon (patriarchal Syrian-Catholic seminary entrusted to the Dutch religious in 1950), and New Zealand (Dutch religious, 1952). There was even an attempt to found in Agua Caliente, Costa Rica, in 1962, but the effort was short-lived. In Paris-Sèvres, the new experience of the Saint Etienne Mission, dubbed “La Cloche,” was established amid the working class. Begun in 1946 and approved by Cardinal Suhard, *La Cloche* escaped the anathemas leveled against the priest-worker movement beginning in 1953 and was able to maintain itself in the same location until 1964 when it moved to rue Bouret in Paris.

Elsewhere in Europe, new hope emerged with the opening of an Italian aluminate in Cannero, northern Italy (1952), a college in Mongré near Villefranches/Saône (1951), a residence in Strasburg (1952), a residence in

Untergröningen, Federal Republic of Germany (1952), a parish in Barcelona, Spain (1952), an aluminate in Olivos, Argentina (1952), an aluminate in Eugenopolis, Brazil (1952), and a residence in Montevideo, Uruguay (1952).

North Africa, a French colony, also held promise: in Tunisia, under consideration since 1934, the Congregation accepted a parish and a center in Tunis, a college in La Marsa, and two other parishes in Gabès and Mégrine. In Algeria, where the 16th centennial of the birth of Saint Augustine was celebrated in 1954, the religious ran *Collège d'Alzon* (opened in 1949 and located at first in Bugeaud, then transferred in 1951 to Bône) as well as a parish in Bône. At the end of 1953, the Province of Paris accepted to found and operate a mission in Madagascar (Region of Tuléar: 6,600 km²).

During the period 1953 to 1968, several important events took place in the North American Province:

1953: On June 9, a tornado almost completely destroyed Assumption College in Worcester, leading to the separation of the College from the High School. The High School was rebuilt; it changed its name to Assumption Preparatory School in July 1956; it closed in June 1970.

The College first moved into temporary quarters at 1010 Main Street (1953-1956); in 1955, it purchased new property on Salisbury Street and occupied its new buildings in November 1956.

1955: Authorization was received to open an aluminate in Bury, Canada (July 3).

1955: The Province took charge of the parish and shrine in Fiskdale, MA (Dec. 4).

1960: Opening of Our Lady of Lourdes Seminary in Cassadaga, New York (1960-1968). The building became a retreat center from 1968 to 1977.

1965: A new provincial house was opened at 329 West 108th Street, New York City.

1967: The novitiate moved from Saugerties, New York, to Dedham, Massachusetts.

1968: Foundation on Leeds Street, Worcester, of a residence for minor seminarians from Cassadaga (Leeds Street closed in 1971).

In 1954, after *Eleven Years in [the] Paradise of the Soviets*, Father Judicaël Nicolas was finally liberated from the Gulag and allowed to return to France on June 22. The Assumptionist chaplains at the American Embassy in Moscow held on, as best they could, during the difficult years of the Cold War, exercising their three functions as chaplains, apostolic administrators, and pastors of Saint Louis Church until the arrival on May 23, 1947 of a French Assumptionist, Father Jean de Matha Thomas who became pastor of the parish until 1949 when the church was expropriated. He was expelled from the country on September 1, 1950. Nevertheless, the American chaplains carried on with their two other functions almost uninterruptedly until 1999, except for two hiatuses: the first, between January 28, 1949, the date of Father Laberge's departure,⁵¹ and January 20, 1950, the arrival of his successor, Father Louis-Robert Brassard. The second hiatus was for almost 4 years between the expulsion of Father Georges Bissonnette⁵² on March 4, 1955 and the arrival of his successor, Father Louis Dion, on January 25, 1959.

In 1957, the construction of a large building was begun on the property of the little *château* in Valpré (Lyons) which had been acquired in 1947. The new building was to serve as a scholasticate of theology for the French provinces. In the fall of that year, as a result of the exodus of the European population from Tunisia, the Province of Lyons accepted the pressing invitation from Bishop Boivin to build and take charge of a college in Abidjan, "Notre Dame d'Afrique" (Ivory Coast), followed by the take-over of a mission in Aboisso. This was also a difficult period in the Belgian Congo which, after gaining its independence in

⁵¹ Father Laberge's return-visa was canceled while he was on visit to the United States.

⁵² Father Bissonnette was expelled by the Soviet authorities in retaliation for the refusal of the American government to grant a US visa to Archbishop Boris who had been appointed Exarch of the Russian Orthodox Church in the United States, in other words, as the Patriarch's personal deputy in charge of the Church's overall administration in the country. Since this implied residence there, the appointment was opposed by those members of the Russian Orthodox faithful who had immigrated to the US and who had renounced their allegiance to the

1960, was shaken up during the Mulelist Peasant Rebellion in 1964. At that time, the situation became dangerous for the Assumptionist community (Circular no. 42, October 4, 1964).

1958 was the year of the General Chapter that took place, for the first time, in the new general house, via San Pio V, inaugurated on April 30. That year the Congregation gathered new momentum as a result of the change from Pius XII to John XXIII and from the official introduction of the Cause of Father d'Alzon. Before the voting began at the Chapter of 1964, the General Curia also underwent a change: Father Bornand resigned in March 1961 and was replaced by Father Alfred Farne (age 50).

In treating the years during which the Council took place (1958-1964), we will focus our attention not so much on the events that took place within the Congregation as on the effects the Council had on all the religious families within the Church.

Vatican II and Assumptionist religious life

From 1962 to 1965, Vatican Council II opened a new period in the life of the Congregation.

Announced by John XXIII on January 25, 1959, and prepared by a Pre-Preparatory Commission (May 17, 1959), the Council consulted 2,594 bishops, ordinaries and prelates, 62 universities, and 156 superiors general, among them, Assumption's Father Wilfrid Dufault, principally about three major areas of concern: doctrine, discipline, and current issues. The Assumptionists directly participated in this first stage in the persons of Fathers **Daniel Stiernon** and **Adriaan Gruyters**.

A Preparatory Commission was established at the end of June 1960. Nine Assumptionists were involved as consultants: **Father Dufault** (Commission for Bishops); **Father Quénard** (Commission for Religious); **Bishop Cristea** and

Patriarch since 1917 on the grounds that he was collaborating with the Soviet regime.

Fathers Jerome Cornelis, Daniel Stiernon, Elpide Stephanou (Commission for the Oriental Churches); **Archbishop Beck** and **Father Emile Gabel** (Secretariat for the Press and Communications); and **Father Georges Tavard** (Secretariat for Christian Unity). It should be noted in passing that the Holy See recognized and appreciated the missionary and ecumenical contribution of the Assumptionists.

On October 3, 1962, eight days before the official opening of the Council, Pope John XXIII appointed **Father Dufault** a “Council Father” along with 97 other superiors general of congregations having more than 1,000 priests. The 2,427 participating bishops and prelates (on a total of 3,070 invited) included the 7 Assumptionist bishops at that time: **Bishops Varthalitis** (Corfu), **Vuccino** (Apro), **Piérard** (Beni), **Beck** (Salford, then Liverpool), **Canonne** (Tulear), **Horsthuis** (Jalès, Brazil), **Cristea** (Lebedo), all of whom reflected the missionary involvement of the Assumptionists during those years. Joining them toward the end of the Council was **Bishop Methodius Stratiev** (Bulgaria), a witness to what was called the Assumptionists of the Church of Silence.

Also present in Rome and representing the *Bonne-Press* were **Fathers François Bernard** (Press Secretariat for the French-speaking) and **Antoine Wenger**, Editor-in-chief of *La Croix* and daily reporter who subsequently published 4 volumes recounting the sessions of the Council (published by *Le Centurion*). These men symbolized and reflected a love for the Church, one of the hallmarks of the Assumptionist spirit, rendering the Church a specific apostolic service.

The influence of the Council on the life of the Congregation

The Chapter of 1964

The ordinary General Chapter of 1964 was obviously marked by the atmosphere of the Council and the renewal it called for on the part of all religious families. The Congregation drew up its famous *Capitular Rules*, a remarkable text, but unfortunately stillborn because it preceded by little the decree *Perfectae Caritatis* (October 28, 1965) which set forth the principal renewal guidelines that

congregations were expected to follow. Comprising simple ordinances that replaced the old Customaries, the *Capitular Rules* bridged the gap between the old official text of the *Constitutions* of 1923 and the work that was requested of everyone for the future. The Roman guidelines were principally concerned about assuring a spirit of authenticity and avoiding a stifling legalism.

Regardless, the 41 members of the Chapter, divided into 8 commissions and helped by 5 consultants, succeeded in writing the 433 articles of the *Capitular Rules*, organizing them into 9 chapters. Today, in hindsight, their lines bear witness to a real desire to involve the Congregation in the work of the Council, to renew our religious language and theological perspectives, and to insist on essentials: religious life as a sign, the notion of consecration, the baptismal basis of religious life, the community dimension of this choice in life, a more human tone, an acceptance of the new liturgical norms, an invitation to a life of sharing, the participation of each member in the life of the group, a greater openness to the future, and an acceptance of the Church's teaching. All these considerations and values about religious life were included in the work of Father Claude Maréchal fifteen years after the closing of the Council. The Congregation as a social body was invited to dust off the texts of its foundation, *Constitutions*, and Customaries, in order to re-experience a heart-felt enthusiasm leading to a deeper faith and a new spiritual youth.

During the elections of the Chapter of 1964, Father Wilfrid Dufault was re-elected Superior General for 12 years (age 57). His Assistants were elected for 6 years:

- Fr. Paul Charpentier (age 50)
- Fr. Leander de Leeuw (age 41)
- Fr. Rémi Munsch (age 49)
- Fr. Floridor Vargas (age 42)
- Fr. Alfred Farne, Procurator (age 53)
- Fr. Henri Moquin, Treasurer (age 59)
- Fr. Domitien Meuwissen, Secretary (age 64)

The composition of the Curia changed very little from 1964 to 1969, though Father Camille Durand (age 54) replaced Father Rémi Muncsh who resigned on April 23, 1965.

Application of the Council

We will not examine here the various individual reactions of the religious (enthusiasm, resistance, acceptance, evolution...), but rather a few aspects of Assumption's "interior work" of conciliar *aggiornamento* as lived on a daily basis at the grassroots level, and as attested to, at a higher level, by the direction of institute itself and by a few spiritual expectations which might suggest a perspective of the Spirit.

There were numerous signs of change. On the everyday level, efforts were made to live the conciliar liturgy through the introduction of the vernacular languages, the practice of concelebration, the renewal of translations, new hymns, places of prayer, and times for Assumptionist prayer. Everyone was asked to improve the quality of his animation and participation. External forms were also affected.

There were four tendencies which can be summarized in four words: simplification, suppression, personalization, and responsibility. Baptismal names returned in force; secular clothing was generally adopted in daily life, with the clergyman worn as needed; the structures of community life were toned down; the number of religious in each community was reduced; regulations were less collective; relationships were more direct and less formal; and an opening to the outside world was encouraged. There was a desire to live and act as a community in a more authentic way. The practice of meetings, the decision to hold an annual Local Chapter, the practice of consultation before making appointments, and a concern for direct information were all topics that required more personal responsibility on the part of each member.

On the institutional level, the grace of the Council encouraged real dynamism, which the leadership of the Congregation transmitted to its members on several

occasions. The General Council, after having been renewed in 1952, as explained above, experienced only one other change in March 1961, following the resignation of Father Bornand who was replaced by Father Alfred Farne (age 50). However, in 1964, younger religious assisted Father Dufault (age 57) after his reelection. The average age of the Curia went down to 51.

The entire Congregation, from top to bottom, was asked to work on the revision of the *Constitutions*. This work began in earnest in August 1966, following the Motu Proprio of Paul VI, *Ecclesiae Sanctae*. A long questionnaire guided the work of the communities and committees at all levels, from analysis to synthesis: personal work, community meetings, task forces and provincial committees, provincial chapters, an international commission, and the extraordinary General Chapter of 1969.

New Rule books were drawn up (*Rule of Life*, Statutes, and Rules of Community Organization) and given two very clear orientations: a pressing concern to decentralize the Institute, and an insistence on community, a notion underlined by everyone. Two studies had preceded these texts: the publication of *Les Premières Constitutions de l'Assomption 1855-1865 (The First Assumptionist Constitutions 1855-1865)* by Fathers Sage and Touveneraud, and an essay more in keeping with the times, *Approches et Recherches/Study and Research* by Fathers Barthez, Le Bras, Olivier, A. Sage, and Touveneraud.

The spiritual expectations that existed at the time are more difficult to evaluate: only individual religious can testify to the interior work of the Spirit that took place in each and everyone and that, as a result of the Council's directives for legislative, psychological and institutional *aggiornamento*, influenced their minds and hearts. The conciliar directives necessarily implied for the Church and the Congregation inevitable changes and adaptations, called either necessities or evolutions, but involving concrete transformations, closures, and openings. Many traditional "works" had aged, and there were new expectations that were heightened by the young generations imbued with the *spirit of '68*, making it difficult to distinguish between the role of the Spirit and that of current circumstances.

These were times of uncertainty, though it remains unclear whether they were desired or feared. They were certainly a period of trial for the Congregation which was weakened and diminished as it faced an unknown future which already had its dark clouds. But it was surely also a time of hope for those who believed and who were determined to persevere in all confidence.

In the circular of indiction of the extraordinary Chapter of 1969 (Circular of May 1968), the members of the outgoing Curia made known their decision to offer their resignation because of the urgency of this completely new task to be carried out. It seemed as though the time of deconstruction was over and the time of reconstruction was at hand.

Paul VI and the Assumptionists

Before concluding this eventful period, one last item must be mentioned: the relations between Pope Paul VI and the Assumptionists between 1963 and 1969. Contrary to the situation that prevailed under Pope John XXIII, it cannot be said that the pope who was elected in 1963 really knew or had had a working relationship with the religious family of the Assumption.

Between 1963 and 1969, nothing special took place, except the traditional signs of friendship and esteem expressed on the occasion of elections, chapters, or centennial celebrations. Be that as it may, it should be noted that the amount of work and the number of visitors during the Council restricted the close contacts the pope could have with individual religious families. However, when he traveled abroad, Paul VI undoubtedly met on several occasions the religious involved with the press as journalists, columnists, or reporters.

There were also many marks of esteem: the address given to the members of several General Chapters, including the Assumptionists, who met together with the pope; a letter to Father Antoine Wenger on February 13, 1965 on the occasion of the 25,000th issue of *La Croix*; the choice of a Bulgarian Assumptionist, Methodius Stratiev, as apostolic exarch of the Catholics of the Byzantine rite in Sofia (September 1965); and the inclusion of Father Dufault on the list of

superiors general who concelebrated a Mass with the pope on November 18, 1965. During a general audience in Rome on January 10, 1968, Paul VI publicly underlined the apostolic contribution of the Assumptionists, particularly in the field of the press, recalling a pleasant encounter he had had with the Augustinians of the Assumption in Istanbul during his trip there in July 1967. He paid great homage to the memory of Father Emile Gabel, who died in a plane crash in 1968, in a message sent to U.C.I.P. (*Union catholique internationale de la presse/International Catholic Union of the Press*), and he sent a letter to Father Claude Musnier on the 50th anniversary of *La Documentation catholique* (January 13, 1969). Also, the very friendly relations established by Father Wenger with Cardinal Villot of Lyons, appointed Secretary of State in 1969, helped strengthen the ties between the pope and the Congregation. Moreover, Paul VI was a fervent reader and supporter of the newspaper *La Croix*.

QUESTIONNAIRE - PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. What led the Assumptionist Chapter of 1952 to elect its first non-French Superior General?
2. What can be said about the composition of the General Curias under Father Wilfrid Dufault?
3. Did Father Dufault's personality prompt him to broaden the influence of the Congregation and to reestablish contact with certain religious families of the Assumption?
4. In what way was the holding of an Ecumenical Council a period of grace for the Congregation and for its needed *aggiornamento*? What support and what response did the conciliar decisions receive in the Congregation?
5. Did the secularization of the Western world which followed the Second World War begin to have negative effects on the life of the Congregation? What are the discernible signs of its influence?
6. Has the division of Belgium into two provinces produced favorable results?
7. During the mandate of Father Dufault, which province do you think was the most active and imaginative in terms of apostolic activity? To what was this due?
8. In the 1960s, Africa and Madagascar began acquiring their political independence. Did this evolution have positive or negative effects on the Assumptionist presence in the various countries of the African continent?
9. The period of the Cold War after the Second World War had long-term effects on East-West relations in Europe. What were the consequences for the Congregation of the spread of Communism?
10. As a result of its withdrawal from the world of education in certain European countries, the Congregation invested a good number of its personnel in parish and other apostolates. Though this evolution brought about a greater openness to the Church, did it not also inhibit a certain apostolic creativity of the

Congregation, damage its image as a doctrinal congregation, and weaken its identity for not having works of its own?

7. The post-conciliar period:

1969- 1975

Church context during the mandate of Father Paul Charpentier (1969-1975)

Second part of the pontificate of Paul VI (1969-1978)

The short mandate of Father Paul Charpentier corresponds only imperfectly to the second part of the pontificate of Paul VI, though it bears traces of it, viz.: the problems that followed the Council, the drying up of vocations, the numerous departures of persons involved in Church ministry, the questioning of the link between the priesthood and religious life, the identity crisis of priests, and the questioning of disciplinary and moral issues, such as priestly celibacy and sexual and marital morality.

However, this second part of the pontificate of Paul VI also corresponds to the positive and courageous implementation of the Council: the creation of episcopal conferences, liturgical reforms, reforms of the Curia, the development of collegiality (1st Synod in 1967, 2nd in 1971, 3rd in 1974), numerous pastoral journeys abroad, significant ecumenical gestures, the creation of pontifical commissions and councils, etc. Historically, Paul VI remains the pope of the Council, of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (1968), and of the gospel-like “no” to violence as a solution to injustice (speech in Bogota 1968).

Nevertheless, in public opinion, this 2nd part of the pontificate of Paul VI (1969-1978), except for the comforting period of the Jubilee of 1975, a holy year, was negatively impacted by the difficulties of the institutional Church as it wrestled painfully with the problems it was facing: *“We would have thought that the day after the Council would have been a sunny day, but instead of sun, all we have are clouds, storms, and darkness.”*

The ties between Paul VI and the Assumptionists were described at the end of the previous section of this presentation. There were also gestures on the occasion of various celebrations or particular events, such as the telegram from Paul VI at the time of the accidental death of Father Adriaan Gruyters on July 26, 1970. Between February 1971 and February 1972, difficult negotiations took place following the sale of Notre Dame de France in Jerusalem.⁵³ An agreement was eventually concluded between the State of Israel and the Holy See according to which the Holy See became the owner of the property and the Congregation was obliged to give up all its rights.

In 1973, Paul VI expressed warm good wishes on the occasion of the centennial of *Notre Dame de Salut* and sent a papal letter to the *Pèlerin*. Particularly noteworthy was the ceremony of beatification of Marie Eugénie of Jesus in February 1975 in Rome where all of the Assumption families were represented. It must be said, however, that the circular letters of Father Charpentier and the Information Bulletin *ART* for the period 1969-1975 make no mention of any particular audiences.

A mandate characterized by profound changes

The General Curia, elected for 6 years on May 29, 1969, gave Father Charpentier (age 55) an almost completely new and international team of Assistants:

- Fr. Dionisio Solano (age 52)

⁵³ After World War II, the building was heavily damaged during the Israeli-Arab conflict of 1948. The south wing, facing the Old City, became uninhabitable as a result of the explosion of two bombs and became the Israeli guard post on the border of the no-man's land. The north wing and the small houses in the garden were occupied by numerous refugees. Even after the borders were opened, the situation did not improve. Maintenance costs became prohibitive. The situation having become untenable, the Assumptionists sold the property in 1970 to the *Hamenuta*, a branch of the Jewish National Fund, which turned it over to the Hebrew University for use as a student residence. However, according to Canon Law, the Congregation had no right to sell the property without first obtaining permission from the Holy See which, in all probability, would not have been granted even if it had been requested because of the outstanding problems in the Holy Land regarding Church property. The transaction was contested by the Holy See.

- Fr. Leander de Leeuw (age 46)
- Fr. Noël Bugnard (age 50)
- Fr. Augustine-Patrick Danby (age 51)
- Fr. Alexandre Bombieri (age 47), Secretary (May 31)
- Fr. Félicien Sleutjes (age 43), Procurator (May 31)

The Curia then appointed Father Danby as Treasurer. In May 1970, Father Touveneraud was elected Postulator and Archivist, replacing Father Adrien Pépin who had held the second of these two positions since 1959. In May 1971, Father Sleutjes, Procurator General, resigned from his post, which was taken over by Father Solano. Following a heart attack in June 1971, Father de Leeuw submitted his resignation in November 1971 and was replaced in September 1972 by Father Seraphinus Tillemans (age 65).

Given the desire for decentralization which had been expressed as the new rules were being drawn up, new provinces were created: the Province of Spain (June 1969), the non-territorial Province of France (the former *OCF, Oeuvres Communes Françaises/Common French Works*, June 1969), and the Province of the Congo (June 1969).

The new text of the *Constitutions* was promulgated *ad experimentum* (June 1969) and a series of provincial chapters-of-implementation were held locally: the Province of Bordeaux (Christmas 1969) organized Brazil as a region; the Province of Lyons (Christmas 1969); the Province of Paris (Christmas 1969) gave a special status to Madagascar; the Province of France (January 1970) set up an interprovincial structure for the three territorial provinces (C.I.F., C.A.F.); the Province of Holland (end of 1969) created a vice-province in Brazil; the Province of England met in Chapter at the end of 1969; the Province of North America⁵⁴

⁵⁴ During the period 1969 to 1975, the North American Province underwent major changes as a result of the closing and sale of Assumption Prep School in Worcester:

1969 Novitiate and scholasticate moved from Dedham to Pine Road, Brookline

1970 Closing of Assumption Prep School in June 1970.

1971 Foundation of retirement home for senior religious at 246 Salisbury St, Worcester

held 2 sessions, one at the end of 1969 and the other in June 1970 and established the Canadian Region; the Province of South America (October 1969); the Province of North Belgium (end of 1969); the Province of South Belgium (October set up the Region of Colombia; the Province of the Congo (end of 1969); finally, the Province of Spain (end of 1969 and beginning of 1970).

Everywhere, Councils of the Province were created as instruments of animation to help the Provincial Councils, the ordinary instruments of government. The province became the ordinary center of authority within the Congregation, the Institute now having become just as strongly decentralized as it had been centralized in former times.

There was also another innovation at the general level: annual meetings of the Council of the Congregation (CC.) composed of all the Major Superiors acting in a collegial fashion. Between 1969 and 1975, the following meetings were held:

1969: Rome (June 3): the new team began to function.

1970: Madrid (April 7-12): exceptions were brought to the RCO (*Rules of Community Organization*), status of regions, permanent diaconate, isolated religious, spirit and future of the AAs, financial report, and formation.

1971: London (April 22-30): local community, apostolic life, isolated religious, modification of the statutes, temporalities.

1972: New York (April 20-28): prayer life, formation, temporalities.

1973: Jerusalem (May 4-11): AA community, role of the superior, preparation of the General Chapter, surplus, spirit of Assumption,

(closed in 1985).

1972 Foundation in Weirton, West Virginia: parish ministry and teaching at Madonna High School (closed in 1975).

1973 Foundation in Tampa, Florida: residence for religious teaching at Tampa Catholic High School (closed in 1985).

1974 Novitiate and scholasticate moved from Pine Road to Buckminster Road, Brookline.

1975 New religious residence at 50 Old English Road, Worcester.

1976 Foundation of Austin House, Worcester: a vocation-oriented residence for students

missions, international dimension, justice in the world, financial report, formation.

1974: Breda (April 25-May 3): apostolic orientations, revision of Canon Law, poverty, charism, R.O.C., preparation of the Chapters.

1975: Les Essarts (April 10-1 st session): financial report of 1974.

Statistics

Statistically, between 1969 and 1975, the Congregation experienced a marked decrease in its numbers and an overall aging of its personnel, which would have been disturbing had they not raised the further question of the Congregation's overall vocation policy in a period of general recession, of numerous resignations from the priesthood, and of withdrawals from religious life. The following figures for the period 1969 to 1975 were culled from the annual *Répartitions/Directories*, which no longer provided the annual variations in the number of religious, as they had done in the past:

January 1, 1971	1,672 religious (<i>ART Informations</i> , no. 17, p.4).
December 1, 1971	1,625: 1,303 priests, 309 brothers, and 13 novices (<i>ART Informations</i> , no. 27, p. 2).
January 12, 1973	1,540 religious: 1,246 priests, 283 brothers, and 11 novices (<i>ART Informations</i> , 1973. no. 37, p.1).
December 8, 1973	1,503 religious: 1,232 priests, 260 brothers, and 11 novices (<i>ART Informations</i> . 1973. no. 44, p. 1).
January 1, 1975	1,450 religious: 1,206 priests, 244 brothers, and 5 novices (<i>ART Informations</i> , 1975, no. 54, p.2).

Therefore, within 6 years, the Congregation lost more than 200 members due to deaths, departures and, especially, a lack of new candidates. The age pyramid was resting on a base that was becoming smaller and smaller, a phenomenon that was affecting the Church worldwide, especially in the Western countries.

Since Father Paul Charpentier let it be known that he was not interested in a second mandate, the General Chapter of 1975 convened with the prospect of having to elect a new head of the Institute.

QUESTIONNAIRE - PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. In what way did the atmosphere during the generalate of Father Paul Charpentier reflect the one that prevailed during second part of the pontificate of Paul VI in the midst of the turbulence of the post-conciliar years?

2. The 1970s were undoubtedly difficult years in the history of the Assumptionists as a result of the changes in mentality that occurred, the numerous departures and requests for laicization on the part of the religious, and the closings of works and communities a little everywhere. Do you know of any striking examples?

3. During the mandate of Father Paul Charpentier, the Congregation tried to sell the property of Our Lady of France in Jerusalem (*Notre-Dame de France in Jerusalem*). What do you know about the reaction of the Holy See to this sale? What eventually happened to this property?

4. There was great family rejoicing in Rome during the mandate of Father Paul Charpentier on the occasion of the beatification of Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus in February 1975. How did the entire Assumption family share in this great moment?

5. How did all the religious families of the Assumption give themselves the concrete means to manifest their same spirit and mission during the decade of the 1970s?

6. Because of the instability of religious commitments and the inadequacy of the previous formation, the Assumptionists undertook a number of experiments: alumnates were replaced by student residences, and vows by promises. Why did these changes not last, and why were they not successful?

7. Consulting the religious for the appointment of provincials and local superiors slowly became standard practice in the Congregation. What can be deduced from this renewed concept of obedience?

8. The terms *responsibility* and *community* reappear constantly in the texts proposed for reflection on religious life during this period. What type of

dynamism were these terms trying to stir up in the hearts of the religious by recalling this twofold dimension of their lives? What were the contrary tendencies these reminders were trying to counteract? What words did Father d'Alzon use to speak of responsibility and community?

8. The period of courageous initiatives:

1975- 1987

Church context

The twelve years between 1975 and 1987 represent a rich and eventful period in the life of the Church, due especially to the change in popes. 1978, said to be the year of the three popes (Paul VI, John Paul I, and John Paul II), was special because it saw the convocation of two conclaves presided by Cardinal Villot, who himself died on March 9, 1979.

The pontificate of John Paul I, one of the shortest in history (33 days), lasted only the time of a smile: born on October 17, 1912 in Canale d'Agordo, Albino Luciani was ordained a priest in 1935, became a professor at the seminary, then Vicar General of the diocese of Belluno. Ordained a bishop for the diocese of Vittorio Veneto by John XXIII on December 27, 1958, he became the archbishop-patriarch of Venice in 1969 and was created a cardinal on March 5, 1973. Elected pope on August 26, 1978, and sympathetically accepted throughout the world, he was found dead on the morning of September 29, 1978, which gave rise to all types of rumors and fanciful accounts.⁵⁵

The second conclave in 1978 elected on October 16 a Polish cardinal, Karol Wojtyla, age 58, a first in the history of the Catholic Church. Born on May 18, 1920 in Wadowice (Krakow), he was ordained a priest on November 1, 1946, ordained titular bishop of Osubi on July 4, 1958, and appointed archbishop of Krakow on January 13, 1964. Created cardinal on June 26, 1967, he took the name of John Paul II.⁵⁶ Since 1522, i.e. to say, since the election of the Dutch-born Adrian Florensz of Utrecht, it had always been an Italian who was elected pope.

⁵⁵ E.g., David Yallop, *In the Name of God; An Investigation into the Murder of John Paul I*, 1984.

An athlete, a polyglot, an intellectual, and a man of great spiritual and Marian sensitivity, he brought Poland to the Vatican and heavily internationalized the Curia and the Sacred College. His pontificate also showed him to be a man of faith and doctrine (witness his numerous encyclicals), very cordial in his relations, comfortable in his role, innovative in his style (private secretaries, participation of invited guests at his private Masses, long public audiences and homilies, collegiality in working with the cardinals and during the synods), and a great communicator (numerous travels abroad).

He first visited Central America (December 1979-January 1980), then went to Poland for the first time in June 1980, and subsequently to Ireland, the USA, Turkey in 1979, and Africa in May 1980. He made his first trip to France in May-June 1980, something that had not been done by a pope since 1802, after which he visited the Far East in February 1981 and Spain at the end of October-beginning of November 1982. In July 2002, on one of his many trips outside Italy, he attended the 17th World Youth Days in Toronto. He also attended a spectacular inter-faith meeting in Assisi in October 1987.

Atypical and unclassifiable, he was sometimes suspected in the West of re-centering the Church by his choice of bishops and by a very traditional reaffirmation of Catholic doctrine, though he did condemn the schism of Bishop Lefebvre in July 1988. The victim of an assassination attempt in Saint Peter's Square on May 13, 1981, he visited in prison his would-be Turkish assassin, Ali Agca, on December 27, 1983, in order to forgive him in person. On April 13, 1986, for the first time in history, the pope paid a visit to the Jewish synagogue in Rome, and on December 1, 1989, he received at the Vatican Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, the author of perestroika and glasnost. It may be said that, thanks to his untiring efforts in favor of human rights, Pope John Paul II helped bring down the Berlin Wall (1989-1990), which ended the era of state-sponsored Communism. Preoccupied about ecumenism with the Orthodox world, John Paul nevertheless worked to protect the rights of Catholic minorities in Central and

⁵⁶ See George Weigel, *Witness to Hope, the Biography of John Paul II*, Harper Collins Publishers, 1999.

Eastern Europe by reestablishing their hierarchies, resuming diplomatic relations with the ex-Communist countries, and traveling to Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Greece and Bulgaria.

Another important aspect of the ten years of his pontificate (1978-1988): John Paul, as of the date of this writing, had already canonized 254 Blesseds and beatified 300 Servants of God.

The leadership of the Congregation during the first term of Father Stéphan

The General Chapter of 1975 gave the Assumptionists a new and younger look only six years after their structures had been modified in 1969 in keeping with the *aggiornamento* called for by the Council. Since Father Charpentier did not want a second term, the Chapter, on April 21, 1975, elected Father Hervé Stéphan (age 50) and decided on his 5 Assistants:

- Fr. Dionisio Solano, Vicar General and Procurator (age 58)
- Fr. François Pejac (age 45)
- Fr. Noël Bugnard, Assistant and Secretary General (age 56)
- Fr. Thomas de Leeuw (age 56)
- Fr. Joseph Loïselle, Assistant and Treasurer General (age 46)

Less numerous due to the fact that its members held more than one position or office, this team saw itself as a community of animation whose task was to carry out the goals set by the Chapter. It was aided in Rome by 6 other religious: Fathers Pierre Touveneraud, archivist and postulator; Daniel Stiernon, professor at the Lateran Pontifical University; François Bernard, Roman correspondent for *La Croix*; Antonio-Maria Corpacci; Brothers Jean L'Heureux, local treasurer (replaced by Brother Richard Mandeville in September 1977), and Emmanuel Abarnou, technical secretary.

From 1975 to 1981, 7 Councils of the Congregation were held in different locations and discussed the following topics:

- 1975: Les Essarts (April 24-25): appointment of officers, resources and furnishings for the general house, ecumenism, distribution of documents, financial matters.
- 1976: Rome (April 26-May 5): evangelizing community, vocations, preparation of the centennial, departures, appointment of provincials, temporalities, relations with sister congregations.
- 1977: Rome (April 18-27): provincial community and evangelization, awakening of vocations, financial report, d'Alzon centennial, and the inter-province in France.
- 1978: St. Gérard (April 23-May 2): decentralization and unity/identity, religious living on their own or isolated (20%), youth, vocations and formation, unification in France, preparation of the centennial.
- 1979: Santiago, Chile (April 18-24): poverty and evangelization, preparation of the General Chapter, miscellaneous questions.
- 1980: Nîmes (April 16-25): preparation of the General Chapter in the context of the centennial celebrations.
- 1981: Rome (May 8-1st session): financial report, list of the religious who have left, gratitude expressed to Father General and the members of the Curia for the work they accomplished.

Statistics

The statistics of the Congregation for 1975 to 1981 were published regularly in *Documents Assomption* and were as follows:

January 1, 1976	1,392 religious (1,169 priests)
January 1, 1977	1,357 religious (1,139 priests)

January 1, 1978	1,328 religious (1,125 priests)
January 1, 1979	1,295 religious (1,097 priests)
January 1, 1980	1,266 religious (1,071 priests)
January 1, 1981	1,232 religious (1,035 priests)

Though slow erosion reduced the number of religious by 160, there was nevertheless renewed hope regarding vocations as a result of the many initiatives taken in all of the provinces.

Main events in the life of the Congregation between 1975 and 1981

We can only briefly and broadly summarize the events that deeply affected the Congregation as a whole during this period:

Crises in Zaïre and Madagascar caused major convulsions. In Zaïre, on December 30, 1974, the regime of General Mobutu, under the pretext of authenticity, confiscated all of the schools belonging to the dioceses and religious congregations, and threatened to nationalize education, which was a prelude to the political-religious conflicts that followed. Archbishop Malula, the cardinal-archbishop of Kinshasa, went into exile for a while in order to protect himself. The government finally had to compromise and returned the schools to the Church in 1976. The Oblate Sisters, for their part, continued their mission.

In Madagascar, the ideological change within the regime, symbolized by the departure of President Philibert Tsiranana, who had been in power since 1960, and by the arrival in May 1972 of President General Gabriel Ramanantsoa, a Marxist, plunged the country into economic chaos. The Church stressed the importance of having Malagasy personnel in charge. Accordingly, the mission in Tuléar, served by the Assumptionists since 1953 and plagued by serious problems of under-development, adopted a policy of greater enculturation. Father Bernard Sourdois, treasurer of the diocese, reportedly died accidentally on February 17, 1980, as he was taking a swim all by himself.

Throughout Latin America, it was the period of dictatorships in several countries. Since 1964, Brazil was in turmoil. President Goulart was overthrown by a military coup, and torture became a political reality. As far back as November 28, 1968, Assumptionist religious who were helping the people in the favelas (shantytowns), viz., Fathers Michel Le Ven, Hervé Croguennec, Xavier Berthou, and José Geraldo da Cruz, were arrested and accused of subversive activity, then subsequently released in February 1969 and placed under surveillance. The decade from 1970 to 1980, under the Geisel government, was a destructive period of repression, violence and torture.

Argentina sadly followed the same pattern, especially after the coup led by General Jorge Videla on March 24, 1976 which banished the widow of General Peron. Two Argentinian Assumptionist brothers, *Carlos Antonio di Pietro* and *Raúl Rodriguez*, disappeared during a police raid on June 4, 1976 and were never found, despite the many efforts that were made. *Father Jorge Adur*, involved in the liberation movement, suffered the same fate in 1980, thereby lengthening the list of churchmen to be hunted down and tortured. The same fate awaited two French Sisters, Alice Domon and Renée Duquet, in December 1977.

Chile also saw a social democracy taken over by a military coup. On September 11, 1973, Salvador Allende was overthrown by Pinochet. Courageously, Cardinal Henriquez and the religious personnel of the country organized a Vicariate of Solidarity in which various Assumptionists participated, among them, Father Olivier d'Argouges who, in 1982, was appointed Episcopal Vicar of West Santiago.

In France, the Congregation made great strides toward unification by foreseeing specific stages of inter-provincial cooperation. Since 1923, the Assumptionists in France were divided into 3, then 4 provinces: Bordeaux, Lyons, Paris, and the O.C.F. With time, starting around 1964, there was a general feeling of wanting to create, with the help of those in authority and in light of the realities on the ground, a number of structures that would bring the religious together, take decisions, and become responsible, if not for common works, at least for joint

ventures: C.I.F., C.A.F. September 1, 1978 is the date usually given as the effective date of the unification.

1980 was the year of the d'Alzon Centennial for the entire Congregation. November 21, the 100th anniversary of the death of Father d'Alzon, had been chosen several years before, was prepared well in advance, and finally was celebrated at all levels of the Congregation (communities, regional gatherings, provinces, congregation), along with all the friends of the family. To this end, Father Touveneraud had prepared in 1978 and 1979 the two-volume edition of the Letters of Father d'Alzon (years 1851-1858) just before he died prematurely of cancer in December 1979. The program of the celebration, prepared by Father Emmanuel Brajon, included events that took place in Nîmes in April (a lecture, the Eucharist, and a pilgrimage to Le Vigan and Lavagnac) as well as in Paris in December 1980 (a colloquium of historians). These events clearly revealed a desire on the part of the Congregation to begin a new period in its history, one that would redefine the Assumptionist identity, reawaken pride in our origins and in the work being done today with a view to the future, and give the family once again a desire to read and study the founder.

The ties of the Assumptionists with the different popes, Paul VI and John Paul II, were varied: visits and frequent meetings with Cardinal Pironio, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Religious; a message from Cardinal Willebrands on the occasion of the death of Father Nowack (May 1977); an exchange of telegrams with the Secretariat of State for the 80th birthday of Paul VI (October 1977). and on the occasion of the pope's death (August 1978) and of the elections of John Paul I and John Paul II; the audience given by John Paul II on November 24, 1978 to the Superiors General, among whom figured Father Stéphan; the choice of Father Samuel Djoundrine as bishop of Nicopolis and an audience granted by John Paul II to the Bulgarian religious on the occasion of Bishop Djoundrine's episcopal ordination in Saint Peter's in Rome on May 27, 1979; a message received from Cardinal Casaroli, the Secretary of State, on November 21, 1980; a telegram received from Cardinal Casaroli upon the reelection of Father Stéphan in 1981; and a scheduled audience with the members of the General Chapter in April-May 1981 but canceled because of the attempted assassination.

Mass was concelebrated by Father Eugene La Plante, the American Chaplain in Moscow, with John Paul II in his private chapel (February 3, 1982), followed first by a private audience with the pope, then by a long private conversation with the pope's private English-speaking secretary about the situation of the Church and of the Assumptionist mission in the Soviet Union.

A private audience was granted by Pope John Paul II (March 24, 1984) to a group of 25 international parishioners (diplomats, businessmen and their respective families) who were in Rome on pilgrimage from Moscow with their chaplain, Father Robert Fortin.

Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, prefect of the Council for Public Affairs of the Church, sent Father Robert Fortin a letter on June 24, 1986, thanking him very cordially for the report he had sent him on his pastoral activity in Moscow from 1983 to 1986.

All of the above were marks of esteem and of good relations, which were faithfully maintained on a day-to-day basis by Father Solano, the Procurator. It is no less true that, during the pontificate of John Paul II, the influence of the ancient Orders and Congregations waned to the advantage of new movements or recently founded religious groups often composed of young people who have fewer reservations about some of the documents emanating from Rome.

Impetus of the second mandate: mission and internationality (1981-1987)

It was almost obvious that the team elected in 1975 would be reelected in 1981. Between 1975 and 1981, no changes took place among the General Assistants. At the General Chapter of 1981, some members of the team were renewed:

- Fr. Hervé Stéphan was reelected General (age 56)
- Fr. François Pejac, Vicar General (age 51)
- Fr. Thomas de Leeuw (age 62).

Three new members were elected:

- Fr. Miguel Iriarte (age 42)
- Fr. Luc Martel, Assistant and Treasurer General (age 37)
- Fr. Emmanuel Brajon, Secretary and Procurator (age 57)

It was one of the youngest Curias in a long time (average age: 49.4). At the helm for six new years, it lost only one of its members when Father Thomas de Leeuw died of a heart attack on January 23, 1986 in Hilversum, Netherlands. Because the death occurred close to the next General Chapter, he was not replaced.

The annual meetings of Council of the Congregation took place regularly between 1981 and 1987, illustrating the vitality of the Congregation:

- 1981: Rome (May 27-2nd session): the way in which the new Constitutions were received, provisional edition.
- 1982: Jerusalem (April 19-May 2): The Rule of Life, the poor, the appeal from Zaïre, vocations and formation, reports.
- 1983: Rome (April 11-19): rediscussion of the topics of the previous meeting.
- 1984: Madrid (April 30-May 8): the poor, *the Rule of Life* and the local community, international sessions, reports and miscellaneous affairs.
- 1985: Paris (April 15-23): the poor, the General Chapter of 1987, international sessions, meetings of young religious during 1986.
- 1986: Boston & Beauvoir, April 20-25: reports of the General Council, preparation of the Chapters, *Ratio Institutionis*, vocations, and ecumenism.
- 1987: Rome (May 25-1st session): reports of the officers, requests for help.

The specific characteristic of this second term was that it was both missionary and international. It sought to broaden the perspectives of the Congregation by giving the French provinces the common responsibility for the mission in Zaïre, including the construction of a novitiate and a scholasticate in 1981-1983 as well as the appointment of professors, by supporting the indigenous development of Madagascar (novitiate in 1983 and a foundation in Tananarive), and by organizing international meetings between young Assumptionists (CAFI, 1986). Unfortunately, the living out of the missionary ideal sometimes included suffering: on April 10, 1985, *Father Daniel Gillard* was shot to death by the police in Cali, Colombia.

Begun at the Council, the process of *aggiornamento* bore fruit: in 1981, the text of the Constitutions was voted by the Chapter, the name of Augustinians of the Assumption was recognized by the Sacred Congregation for Religious, and the *Rule of Life* was approved on December 8, 1983 after the requested changes had been included. That very year, the heroic virtues of Father Etienne Pernet were recognized.

A series of centennial celebrations confirmed the Assumptionist identity throughout its history, an identity which various descriptive texts re-expressed in their own way: the centennial of the pilgrimages of *Notre Dame de Salut* to Jerusalem (1982); the centennial of *La Croix* (1983), on which occasion John Paul II granted an audience to its journalists and to 600 of its readers (April 23, 1983); the 16th centennial of the conversion of Saint Augustine (386-1986); and the 50th anniversary of the death of Father Marie-Clément Staub (September 1986).

During this period, in the North American Province, the provincial house moved in 1982 from 329 West 108th Street in New York City to Milton, MA. That same year, the Province handed over the parish of Our Lady of Esperanza in New York City to the Archdiocese. Emmanuel House was founded in 1986 on the campus of Assumption College in Worcester.

Despite the constant decline in numbers (-25% in 10 years), and despite a rising average age (61 in 1986), the period of this second mandate was characterized by hope, courageous foundations, and a search to find solutions to

the vocation problems affecting all of the provinces of the Institute, regardless of where they were located. It may seem obvious that the results did not always measure up to the hopes expressed and to the energies expended, but the will and courage to undertake certain measures and to leave behind the gloom of the recent past gave the Congregation a burst of energy that was liberating, self-assured, and felt.

Statistics

December 31, 1981	1,205 religious (1,007 priests)
December 31, 1982	1,168 religious (975 priests)
December 31, 1983	1,142 religious (948 priests)
December 31, 1984	1,122 religious (925 priests)
December 31, 1985	1,089 religious (894 priests)
December 31, 1986	1,066 religious (869 priests)
December 31, 1987	1,059 religious (856 priests)

In six years, the total number of religious decreased by 146 members.

QUESTIONNAIRE - PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. What were the main characteristics of the mandates of Father Hervé Stéphan?
2. After twelve years of living *ad experimentum*, the Congregation submitted to Rome the text of the *Rule of Life* drawn up in Chapter. What changes were introduced? Why?
3. Why did the Congregation have to wait so long before the name given to it by Father d'Alzon, Augustinians of the Assumption, was finally recognized?
4. During the two mandates of Father Hervé Stéphan, how did the Congregation renew with its apostolic tradition as a missionary foundation?
5. The causes of Fathers Pernet and d'Alzon were reactivated. Who was appointed by the Curia to carry out this work? What written documents have been made public in their regard?
6. The celebration of the centennial of the death of Father d'Alzon in 1980 reawakened his memory. What work was set in motion at that time to help better understand his thought?
7. Why did the General Curia take the initiative in 1986 to create the CAFI, an Assumptionist community geared to giving the religious an international formation? What subjects does it treat and what are its objectives? How often does it meet?
8. The tradition of forming religious in Assumptionist scholasticates was also renewed during this period. Do you know of any achievements along these lines, of any religious volunteers for this mission?
9. What were the different phases through which the former French provinces worked together in order to achieve common ways of thinking and acting before they attempted to unite into a single province?

10. Vocation ministry is having positive results for the Assumptionists in the southern hemisphere. Why, in your opinion, did the Institute take so long before opening its doors?

9. The end of the 2nd Millennium

A. First mandate of Father Claude Maréchal: 1987-1993

The years 1987 to 1993 were the context of Father Claude Maréchal's first mandate as Superior General. They were in line with the overall policies of the pontificate of John Paul II, which were to guide the Church as it headed toward the 3rd millennium. For its modest part, the Assumptionist Congregation courageously continued its work of evangelization, moving toward new apostolic and missionary endeavors in keeping with its tradition and the current needs of the Church.

General Curia: 1987-1993

The General Curia elected in 1987 was completely renewed, except for Father Luc Mattel who stayed on from the previous Curia:

- Fr. Claude Maréchal, Superior General, born in France (Jura) in 1935 (age 52)
- Fr. Dominique Bouverot, Assistant, Vicar General, born in France (Franche-Comte) (age 58)
- Fr. Luc Mattel, Treasurer General, born in the USA in 1944 (age 43). The only member of the former curia.
- Fr. José-Geraldo da Cruz, Assistant, born in Brazil in 1941 (age 46)
- Fr. Louis Augustijns, Assistant, Procurator, born in Flanders, Belgium, in 1929 (age 58)

Fr. Pierre Charon, born in Belgium in 1935 (age 52), titular Secretary General (replaced on occasion by Fr. François Bernard (1987-1988) who was appointed documentalist in 1989). Average age of the Curia at the beginning of the mandate: 50.6 years.

Overall organization of the Congregation

In 1987, the Institute was administratively divided into **9 provinces**:

- Netherlands (July 1946)
- England (December 1946)
- North America (December 1946)
- South America (August 1953)
- North Belgium (June 1963)
- South Belgium (June 1963) -Spain (July 1969)
- Zaïre (July 1969)
- France (September 1978)

However, **5 vice-provinces** depended directly on one or another of these 9 provinces:

- France: Vice-Provinces of the East, the North, and the West
- South America: Vice-Province of Brazil
- North America: Vice-Province of Canada (June 1981).

Moreover, even the vice-provinces had **regions** and/or **subgroups** of their own, depending on their geographical location:

- The Region of Italy: Cannero and Florence
- The Bulgarian and Romanian diaspora
- The 2 communities in Turkey: Istanbul and Ankara
- The Greek community: Athens
- The community in the Ivory Coast: Port-Bouet
- The Region of Madagascar: 3 communities and 8 outposts
- The community in Jerusalem
- The Region of Brazil of French origin: 4 communities

- The Region of New Zealand
- The 7 Dutch religious in parishes in the Rhineland (Federal Republic of Germany)
- The community in Mexico of American and Canadian origin
- The Region of Colombia of Flemish-Belgian origin
- The Region of Colombia of Walloon-Belgian origin

Other countries in which the Congregation was present in 1987 with only one religious each: Yugoslavia, Switzerland, and Tunisia.

Highlights of the period 1987-1993

The accomplishments of this period (1987-1993) did not radically change the map of where the Congregation was present. The Institute nevertheless suffered in its own way from the shocks and counter-shocks stemming from courageous decisions that were taken, sometimes painfully, to found and re-found, or from needed or inescapable restructurings, province by province. The evaluation of this period is not necessarily negative if it does not focus solely on having had to endure and manage powerful situations that could not otherwise have been changed.

From 1987 to 1993, and despite its weaknesses, the Congregation pursued the same apostolic orientations it had previously, showing itself to be attentive to new requests and to emergency situations. During his second mandate, Father Hervé Stéphan, using an expression borrowed from Saint Paul which quickly caught on, identified a call from the *new Macedonians* and encouraged a missionary and international mindset which does not limit itself to managing small numbers but accepts, in fact, the ebb and flow of the promptings of the Spirit. His successor, Father Claude Maréchal, with help from all of the provinces, did not drop the ball. Mentioned below are some of the events that helped the Congregation as it headed toward the year 2000: 1987: Creation of a Malagasy novitiate in Belemboka and establishment of a house of formation in Antananarivo (Tananarive).

- 1987: Creation of an international d'Alzon Center, the computerization of the texts of Father d'Alzon and of the first religious, and the creation of a thesaurus.
- 1987: Foundation in December of a second community in Mexico: Casa Manuel, a vocation-oriented community.
- 1988: Foundation during the summer of an international community in Nairobi, Kenya.
- 1988: Arrival in September of the first Zairian Assumptionists in Kinshasa at ASUMA before the future construction began at Mount N'gafula.
- 1988: Decision to found a community in Korea, which became a reality in 1991.
- 1989: Decision to regain a foothold in Moscow within a new context (Father Bernard Le Léannec). Repossession of the church of Saint Louis des Français in 1991.
- 1989: In June the provincial house moved from Milton to Brighton, MA., USA. At the same time, the novitiate/house of studies also moved to Brighton from Buckminster Road, Brookline.
- 1990: Appointment (August 14) of Charles Mbogha Kambale as bishop of Wamba, Zaïre.
- 1990: Celebration of the Centennial of the Assumptionists in Chile; Council of the Congregation in that same country.
- 1991: Decision in September to re-found in Romania, first in Bacau, then in Moldavia.
- 1991: Inauguration in October of a vocation center in Athens; celebration of the centennial of the Assumptionist presence in Chile.
- 1991: Proclamation in Rome on December 21 of the heroic virtues of Father d'Alzon.
- 1992: In January, arrival in France of several young Bulgarians in view of a re-foundation in Bulgaria.

- 1992: Celebration in May of the centennial of the Assumptionist presence in Belgium.
- 1992: Creation on June 12 of the vicariate in Colombia (Father François Lenglez).
- 1992: Appointment on July 19 of Louis-Armel Pelâtre as apostolic vicar of Istanbul and his episcopal ordination on September 13.
- 1992: Inauguration on November 21 of the house in Margineni, Romania.

These were some of the events, especially outside Europe, that enhanced Assumptionist life during these six years. They tell about the living hope that continued to fill the hearts of Father d'Alzon's sons who were working for the Kingdom.

Councils of the Congregation, 1987-1993

From 1987 to 1993, seven meetings of the Council of the Congregation were held with their usual annual frequency (sequential numbering since 1969):

- 1987: Rome (June 6, 1987-2 session): initial contacts and beginning of a new mandate, with the usual related questions at that time.
- 1988: Rome (April 12-21): report of Father General on "Faith in Jesus Christ," animation, vocations and formation, miscellaneous questions.
- 1989: Hoepertingen, Belgium (April 3-13): report of Father General, laity-religious, ecumenism, international formation, deacons, *Ratio institutionis*, local superiors, sessions, various reports.
- 1990: Santiago, Chile (April 22-May 3): report, life in the provinces, ecumenism, laity-religious, deaconate, inadequacy of certain structures, aging, international sessions.
- 1991: Rome (April 8-18): previous topics, internationality, perspectives for the next Chapter, cause of Father d'Alzon.

1992: Wimbledon (April 27-May 7): reports, Solidarity Fund, Assumption's apostolic tradition, laity-religious, solidarity with the poor, aging, Near Eastern Mission, change of structures, evaluation of the *Ratio*.

1993: Rome (March 20): finances, Solidarity Fund.

Six-year statistics

Despite the arrival of new religious, the personnel continued inexorably to grow older and to decrease globally, albeit somewhat more slowly than during the previous period:

December 31, 1987	1,059 religious (856 priests)
December 31, 1988	1,052 religious (843 priests)
December 31, 1989	1,037 religious (816 priests)
December 31, 1990	1,032 religious (795 priests)
December 31, 1991	1,011 religious (767 priests)
December 31, 1992	1,010 religious (755 priests)

Humanly speaking, and looking toward the year 2000, it was estimated that the Congregation at that time would be well below the level of 1,000, whereas in 1964 - just 36 years before - the level was just under 2000. Nevertheless, hope and the vocation policies of the last 10 years made the future look a little less somber.

The present situation

According to the *Directory of Religious* for 1992, the Congregation had **1,018** religious living in or attached to:

148 Communities in:

France	43	Canada	3
Belgium	16	Italy	3

Brazil	12	Argentina	3
Netherlands	11	Mexico	2
Zaire	10	Romania	2
Chile	8	Turkey	2
Spain	7	Kenya	1
Colombia	6	New Zealand	1
USA	6	South Korea	1
England	5	Greece	1
Madagascar	4	Israel	1

There were also a few religious in other countries: 2 in Russia, 5 in Bulgaria, 1 in Yugoslavia, 1 in Tunisia, and 11 in the Federal Republic of Germany where their presence dated back to 1987. Including the 5 countries just mentioned (Russia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Tunisia, and the FRG), the Assumptionists were therefore present in **27 countries**.

Plans at the time called for establishing communities in Russia and perhaps in Bulgaria. Also, for a long time, there had been plans to found a community in Tanzania with the help of the Zairians. The Chapter of 1993 was to decide about the situation in Brazil: would there continue to be 2 regions, one French-speaking and the other Dutch-speaking, or would the 2 regions be merged into a single Assumptionist Brazilian province? In that same vein, the communities in Colombia were merged in 1992 and now form the Vicariate of Colombia which depends statutorily on the General Curia.

6 bishops: Bishops Varthalitis of Corfu, Cristea (retired), Stratiev in Sofia, Djourdrine in Rouse, Mbogha in Wamba, and Pelâtre in Istanbul.

9 provinces, 5 vice-provinces, and 6 regions.

7 novitiates: Sceaux, Tuléar, Worcester, Valparaiso transferred to Pomaire, Leuven, Brussels, and Butembo.

B. Second mandate of Father Claude Maréchal: 1993-1999

The 29th Chapter of 1993 was held in Rome on March 4-25. Its topic: The Assumptionist mission after 150 years.

1993, a year of Chapters for the Assumption family

Four Assumption families renewed their General Councils during General Chapters held in 1993: first, the Assumptionists in March, then the Little Sisters of the Assumption in May on rue Violet, followed by the Oblates in July at Orsay, and the Orants in Sens also in July.

The Assumptionists modified the General Council rather than change it completely. Four former members were kept on:

- Fr. Claude Maréchal was reelected (age 58)
- Fr. José Geraldo da Cruz (age 52), Vicar General
- Fr. Dominique Bouverot (age 64), Assistant and Secretary
- Fr. Louis Augustijns (age 64) Two new members were also elected:
- Bro. Bernard Holzer (age 45)
- Fr. Marcel Poirier (age 52), Treasurer General

It should be noted that, for the first time in the history of the Congregation, a Brother was elected as an Assistant. Average age of the General Council: 55.8 years (up from 50.6 in 1987).

However, there were bigger changes at the General Chapters of the Sisters: at the Little Sisters of the Assumption, Céline Huon was reelected Superior General and given 4 new councilors: Eliane de Montebello, Anne Becher, Maria Mercedes Martinez, and Blanca Marina Rojas. At the Oblates, Sister Claire de la Croix Rabitz, Superior General, was given 4 councilors, almost all of them renewed: Paule-Bernadette Bourdon, Marie-Aline Vauquois, Régine Mardsen, and Béatrice Musighiro; Véronica Van Gerven was elected treasurer. At the Orants, Sister Jeanine Gindrey, Superior General, was given an entirely new Council: Marie-

Salome Amigon, Catherine Vaucelle, Sylvestrine Hangi Kakule, and Anne Huyghebaert.

Decisions

In order to prepare the Congregation for the challenges of the year 2000, the General Chapter of 1993 tried to recapture the apostolic spirit of the founder by stressing evangelical unity, truth, and charity, all of which were presented in modern terms under 7 headings: option for justice, ecumenism-interfaith relations, lay-religious collaboration, formation and vocations, inculturation of religious life, links with the other congregations of the Assumption family, and means of communication.

Moreover, the Chapter was pleased to decide on April 21, 1993 in favor of a new “Vice-Province” in Brazil in order to create a truly Brazilian Assumption, thereby regrouping within a single structure all of the Assumptionist personnel in that country. On the other hand, Canada went back to its old status of a Region (June 1, 1993) within the context of the Province of North America.

Main events of the period 1993-1999

Chronicle of the final years of the 2nd millennium

During Father Claude Maréchal’s 2nd mandate, several important events took place:

In **1993**, the Vice-Province of Canada became a Region once again within the context of the Province of North America, contrary to what happened to the Vice-Province of Brazil which regrouped 40 religious from several countries who were working in the country. In the fall of 1993, a novitiate was opened in Margineni (Romania). During the summer, the first Assumptionist Summer University was given a trial-run in Valpré, revealing itself to have a promising future.

In **1994**, religious were chosen for the new community entrusted with the re-foundation in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, where they were given completely renovated living quarters that were officially inaugurated on January 28, 1995. In Jerusalem, an ambitious project to renovate the buildings and the shrine of Saint Peter in Gallicantu, to build additional facilities for the sisters and pilgrims, and to improve and beautify the property was undertaken by Father Robert Fortin who secured the financial help of numerous benefactors. The killings that took place in Rwanda saddened the Assumptionist families, particularly the Religious [Sisters] of the Assumption and the Oblates.

In **1995**, a community began preparing itself for a first foundation in Arusha, Tanzania. The Congregation celebrated the centennial of the Assumptionist presence in the USA.

1996 was the centennial year of the Orants. It was also the year of the foundation of a community in Riobamba, Ecuador (July), a joint project of all of South America, and the year of the 50th anniversary of the Assumptionist presence in Colombia. In November 1996, the diocesan judicial inquiries began in Plovdiv concerning the three Bulgarian Assumptionists who were shot in 1952. Bishop Charles Mbogha, bishop of Wamba in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was transferred to the see of Isiro-Niangara. Also in 1996, work on the publication of the letters of Father d'Alzon was (almost) completed, while the team responsible for computerizing the writings of Father d'Alzon successfully completed the re-reading of all of the texts, thanks to a thesaurus composed in the early 1990s. In July 1996, the d'Alzon-Milleret Center for Spirituality opened in Worcester, Massachusetts (USA). On September 15, a farewell ceremony brought to a close 48 years of Assumptionist service at the shrine of the Sacred-Heart in Beauvoir, Quebec, Canada.

1997 was the year of:

- The re-consecration of the church of Saint Peter in Gallicantu in Jerusalem by His Beatitude Michel Sabbah, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem (May 13).
- The priestly ordination of Brother Bernard Holzer, Assistant General (May 31).

- The appointment of the first Congolese Assumptionist provincial, Father Jean-Chrysostome Kanyororo (June 10).
- The opening of a novitiate in Arusha, Tanzania (end of June).
- The end of 91 years of Assumptionist presence in Brockley, England (July 7).
- The suppression of the Region of Colombia (August 8).
- The arrival of the first Vietnamese seminarians to be trained in the Province of France, with freedom of choice regarding their future.
- The adoption of a new name for the Province of Zaïre, re-baptized the Province of Africa (October 24).
- The holding of a colloquium in Rome on Archbishop Louis Petit (December).

1998 was the year of:

- The publication of the 6,000th issue of *Pèlerin Magazine*, the weekly magazine begun in 1873.
- The creation of the Vice-Province of Madagascar (April).
- The death of Bishop Samuel Djoundrine (March 19).
- The publication of Volume I of the diary of Father Galabert (May 21).
- The transfer of the theologate in Kinshasa from Mount Ngafula, where the Congregation had been present since 1991, to the Ngaliema quarter (July).
- The change in name of the Province of South America to the Province of Chile-Argentina.
- The withdrawal of the Assumptionists from the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe in New York City. The parish was handed over to the archdiocese and combined with St. Bernard's Parish.

1999 was the year of the General Chapter. Held in Rome, it was preceded by Provincial Chapters which elected delegates. The Congregation prepared itself to celebrate the Jubilee Year 2000 and its 150 years of history.

1999 was also the year of the withdrawal from Moscow of the last American Assumptionist chaplain, Father Norman Meiklejohn, who left the Russian capital on June 14, leaving the post to a Marist religious, Father Michael Ryan. The Assumptionists who served in Moscow during the chaplaincy's 65-year history are the following:

- Fr. Leopold Braun: 1934-1945
- Fr. Antonio Laberge: 1945-1949
- Fr. Louis-Robert Brassard: 1950-1953
- Fr. Georges Bissonnette: 1953-1955
- Fr. Louis Dion: 1959-1961 (1st tour); 1968-1971 (2nd tour)
- -Fr. Joseph Richard: 1961-1965 (1st tour); 1971-1976 (2nd tour)
- -Fr. Eugene La Plante: 1965-1968 (1st tour); 1979-1983 (2nd tour)
- Fr. Philip Bonvouloir: 1976-1979
- Fr. Robert Fortin: 1983-1986
- Fr. Norman Meiklejohn: 1986-1999

QUESTIONNAIRE - PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. The fall of communism in Eastern Europe was for the Assumptionists like a “divine surprise” that allowed the Congregation to actively renew its Near Eastern tradition. With the encouragement of the central authority of the Congregation, what initiatives were taken that strengthened and ensured this return to its tradition?

2. What do you know about the achievements that took place during this period in Jerusalem, Moscow, Romania and Bulgaria, and about the religious who brought them about? Were there any ecumenical considerations behind this effort to re-found these Assumptionist communities?

3. Do the foundations in South Korea and Ecuador have any symbolic meaning?

4. How did the Assumptionists make inroads into East Africa? What did the Provinces of North America and Zaïre do in order to pave the way for these achievements and openings?

5. Father Claude Maréchal wrote many letters to the religious. What were their main themes and what effect did they have on the General Chapters of 1993 and 1999?

6. What is the d’Alzon Computer Center doing at the present time and what has it produced? How can this center encourage further study of Father d’Alzon?

7. Computer science has partially changed the way in which we communicated in the past. What do you know about how the Assumptionists are making use of this science? What are the local, national, linguistic, and general websites?

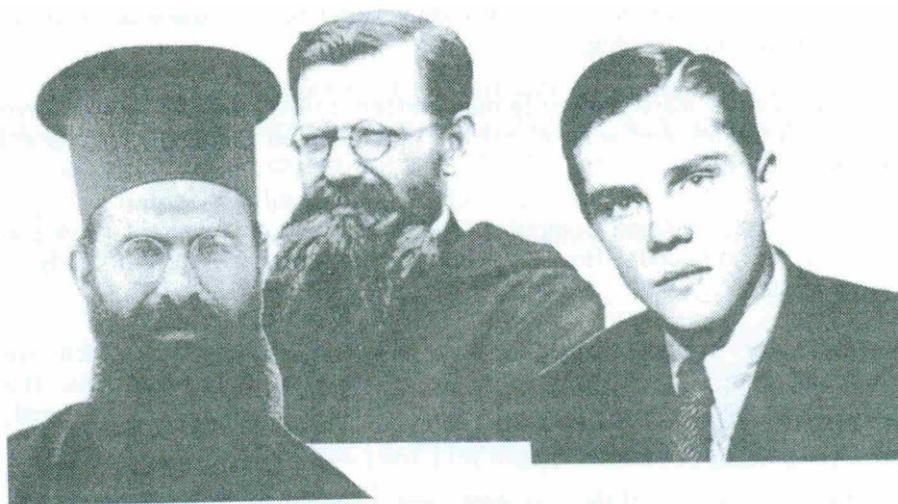
8. The practice of holding Assumptionist colloquia has intensified in recent times. Are you familiar with the publication of the Acts of the Colloquia on Archbishop Petit held in Rome in 1997, on Marie Correnson held in Paris-Nîmes in 2000, on the Missionary Adventure of the Assumptionists held in Lyons in

2002, and on the Origins of the Assumption Families held in Paris in 2004? How do these sessions stimulate interest in the history of the Congregation?

9. Father Claude Maréchal spoke about the importance of having an Assumptionist policy on intellectual life. What concrete consequences can this desire have on the young generations of Assumptionists?

10. The reduction in the number of religious in the provinces calls for a re-adaptation of the structures of the Institute which were put in place from 1923 to 1969. What procedures are foreseen in the *Rule of Life* in this regard? What must be done?

11. What are the Assumptionists doing to promote ecumenical dialogue as well as inter-religious dialogue?



Kamen Vitchev, Josaphat Chichkov, Pavel Djidjov
Assumptionist Bulgarian Martyrs

10. The beginning of the 3rd Millennium

A busy calendar full of symbolism

The Assumptionist calendar at the end of the millennium got a head start on the Christian calendar. The 30th General Chapter was held in Rome May 2-21, 1999, just a few months before the December opening of the Jubilee Year 2000. This helped the Congregation receive the grace-filled changes it would be called to make in a spirit of fidelity and conversion.

On May 11, a new Superior General was elected in the person of Father Richard Lamoureux, an American. A new Curia was rapidly elected, except for two members from the previous administration: Fathers Bernard Holzer, French, and Marcel Poirier, Quebecois-Canadian. The new Assistants were: Fathers René Mihigo Marhegane, the first-ever Congolese Assistant-General, and Julio Navarro Román, Chilean. The international character of the Congregation was thereby accentuated. The average age of 52.4 moderately reflected the aging of the majority of the religious, more accentuated in the northern hemisphere than in the southern hemisphere where the arrival of new vocations has continued regularly since 1980. The new General Curia was charged with helping the entire Congregation enter into the spirit of two large-scale celebrations: the Jubilee of the Year 2000 and the 150 official years of the Congregation.

New priorities were quickly determined that stressed: a strengthening of the international character of the Congregation by the systematic translation of all documents emanating from the generalate into the 5 quasi-official languages,⁵⁷ a more collegial approach to the work of animation, and a more realistic adaptation of the structures of the Institute.

⁵⁷ To the four official languages traditionally in use, viz., English, Spanish, French, and Dutch, because of the presence of the Congregation since the beginning of the 20th century in countries where these languages are spoken, Portuguese, as spoken in Brazil, has now been added to that list.

The Vice-Province of Brazil became a Province (1999) in answer to its request, and the Province of England, created in 1946, accepted to be retrograded to the level of a Region within the Province of France (2000). The French Vice-Provinces, suppressed in order to be merged into a single Province (1999), gave up the over-representation they had had when the calculation was based on their overall numbers, in favor of a wiser calculation based on the number of active members within each age bracket. This first reduction in the number of provinces was possibly only a prelude, because the idea had already been floated to restructure the representation by continent.

Changes in progress

As he visits the Assumptionist world, Father Richard Lamoureux assesses *in situ* the expectations, needs and realities of the Congregation. One after the other, each province, vice-province or region receives his visit, deepens its understanding of the challenges to be met, draws up a provincial project after holding its own Chapter-of-implementation, and considers solutions for the future. In this way, the Congregation prepares itself to face the future without being crushed by the present.

Several mandates of provincials came to expiration, occasioning a number of appointments and reappointments in June 1999 and in 2002:

- Fr. André Antoni (age 40), provincial of France; reappointed in 2002
- Fr. Arnold Castro (age 59), provincial of North Belgium; reappointed for 1 year in 2002
- Fr. José-Geraldo da Cruz (age 58), provincial of Brazil; reappointed in 2002
- Fr. John Franck (age 52) reappointed provincial of North America; renewed in 2002
- Fr. Jean-Marie Denis (age 60), provincial of South Belgium; replaced in 2002

- Fr. Manuel Martinez Alaminos (age 51), provincial of Spain; renewed in 2002

Celebrations and events in the year 2000

The approach of the Holy Year and of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Congregation largely determined the Curia's agenda. November 21, 1999 mobilized the Congregation for a triduum of prayers for vocations. On Christmas Eve 2000, all of the religious were invited to renew their vows in union with the members of the General Council gathered in Nîmes on the tomb of the Founder. A little everywhere during this anniversary year, many initiatives were taken: books, movies, lectures, exhibits, visits, meetings of the last five Superiors General in Paris (March 2000), pilgrimages, televised Masses, plays, and CD recordings. All these initiatives attested to the vitality and variety of expression of the entire Congregation and occurred against the backdrop of the World Youth Days that took place in the heart of Rome during the month of August and in which participated a delegation of young people recruited by the various Assumption families. A colloquium on the *Assumptionist Missionary Adventure* took place in November 2000 in Valpré and kept its promise to review in a few days the entire history of the Congregation.

The joy of these celebrations was dampened by constant accounts of the open war that was taking place in the Congo, a war that had been ravaging this immense country since 1997 and that had struck several local communities on many occasions. In October 2000, a great servant of the Church of the Congo and a highly esteemed friend of the Assumptionists, Archbishop Emmanuel Kataliko of Bukavu, died. In 1966, he had succeeded Bishop Piérard in the episcopal see of Butembo-Beni. He was the second bishop close to the Assumptionist family to die during the Jubilee Year, Bishop Cristea, the bishop of the Romanian Diaspora, having passed away in January 2000 after a long retirement.

Good news came from Asia: thanks to the communities of the Religious [Sisters] of the Assumption in the Philippines, young Filipinos became interested

in Assumptionist life. The first to come forward was Ricky Montañez who went to Assumption College in Worcester in August 2000 to learn concretely about the realities of religious life. For the Assumptionists, this meant opening a possible third door to Asia, one of which is already ajar in Korea where the community hopes to take root with a local candidate, Joseph Baik-Ho. The other two doors, Vietnam and the Philippines, remained only a dream at this time.

Other appointments were also made in the year 2000: Father Jean-Marie Meso Paluku was appointed Provincial of Africa, and Father Mart Lemmens was reappointed Provincial of Holland for a 4th term, an indication that the Dutch were obviously running out of breath.

Midway through the mandate

The absence of commemorative events during 2001 and 2002 did not slow down the pace of visits, encounters, and initiatives here and there which energized the Institute and set the tone. Father Miguel Fuentealba was appointed Provincial of Chile-Argentina for a third consecutive term in July 2001, and Father Daniel Carton, at the same time, was appointed Vice-Provincial of Madagascar. However, Father Daniel's activities were initially disrupted by the events surrounding the political unrest that rocked the Red Isle.

As a matter of fact, it must be said that the common characteristic of much of the Assumptionist world during 2001-2002 was this uninterrupted round of serious, destabilizing, and even worrisome events in the main centers where the Congregation was present. Turkey was devastated by a killer-earthquake; Colombia was disfigured by more than 40 years of civil war compounded by drug-trafficking; Argentina was shaken by an economic depression without precedent; the USA was hit by terrorism in the heart of New York City (September 11, 2001); the Democratic Republic of the Congo was mishandled during more than five years of conflict, punctuated by peace accords that went nowhere; and Russia was suffering from an identity crisis in which ecumenism

was being stifled, against an overall context of misery aggravated by Mafioso practices.

Western Europe was not spared the infernal cycle of natural disasters, sudden floods, and violent storms, to say nothing of the discouraging surprises of real electoral typhoons. One begins to dream about the paradisiacal mirages that appeared during the run-up to the new millennium. What became of those naive but positive signs of a return to the Golden Age? What threshold has humanity wanted to cross or even crossed already? Misery, violence, and inequality continue to be present around the world. The “advancement of the Kingdom” seems to have been pushed away or kept for some time in the future, and the handful of active religious seems to be too few or too dispersed to have a strong impact, particularly at a time when the world is moving toward an ambivalent globalization.

Circular letters with a more intimate tone

In this gloomy and morose atmosphere, the Circular Letters⁵⁸ Father Richard has addressed each year to all the religious are meant to reawaken in their hearts the best of their dynamism and energy. They invite them to reflect about the reasons, the bases, the intentions, and the motivations of the choices underpinning religious life, over and above the standard answers, the thought-patterns, and the routines inherent in all forms of life. They bring the fresh air and openness that are so needed to uplift an individual or a community because, at each step of the way, the ultimate goal seems to be more distant or more inaccessible. Before or after the year 2000, the goal of a religious remains a *loving passion for the Kingdom* to which he can *succumb over and over again*. Before or after the Great

⁵⁸ The official texts are published in *Assumption Documents*: No. 1, January 24, 1999, untitled, written after the first meeting of the new General Council; No. 2, *Falling in Love Again*, March 25, 2000; No. 3, *Re-expressing the Charism*, June 29, 2000; No. 4 (Part I), *Faith in Jesus Christ*, December 25, 2000; No 4 (Part II), *Faith in Jesus Christ*, August 28, 2001; No. 5, *Witness to Love*, May 26, 2002; No 6, *Many Gifts, One Body*, May 15, 2003; No. 7, *Come See This Man*, November 21, 2003. There are also other collective letters or circulars addressed to individual provinces or to a particular category of religious, e.g., the letter of December 27,

Jubilee, his eyes should be fixed on Jesus Christ, *the icon of God*, in order to discover in His image the millions of human faces he is called upon to know, love and accompany. Chapter after Chapter, is he not invited to *re-express the charism*? In the final analysis, is not the core of the language used in community and in its manifestations a matter of love, to which each religious in his own way must bear witness?

In reading these meditations, which are also examinations of conscience, one quickly understands that what is important is not so much one's intelligence and ability to analyze rationally, but the fire or secret stirrings of the heart, whatever one's age, country of origin, or apostolic experience. Writing about the sacred, searching for the deep meaning of things, and finding the path to an interior life are in sharp contrast with the more classical approach of long, subtle and doctrinal exposés to which we had become accustomed under his predecessor, a former professor of dogmatic theology. But is it not the practice of someone familiar with the world of architecture to make solid masses speak for themselves, to rearrange the constituent elements of space, to question apparent equilibriums and functional structures in order to bring out and have others perceive another meaning of this architectural reality, a meaning that is hidden or buried in the depths of its foundations, one that reveals something of the interior makeup of human beings? This is a sure change in style which is deeply appreciated.

The first Assumptionist Blesseds

The year 2002 was brightened by the perspective of the coming to fruition of a project that had been in the works since 1993, namely, the presentation to the Congregation of the Causes of the Saints of the *positio* of three Bulgarian Assumptionists shot in 1952, Fathers Pavel Djidjov, Josaphat Schiskov, and Kamen Vitchev, in view of their beatification. Father Bernard Holzer, the postulator, had assembled the writings and all of the archival material needed to

establish this *positio* in proper form before the official opening of the diocesan Judicial Inquiry in 1997.

The chance of obtaining a Roman decision to beatify them increased with the decision of Pope John Paul II to travel to Bulgaria in May 2002. Could he arrive empty-handed in this country that was yearning for recognition? Regardless, the decision to declare these three religious as martyrs was not reached precipitously. All of the stages in the normal procedure were respected and, until the very last moment, all of the details involved in a beatification (texts, translations, pilgrimages, etc.) were prepared without any assurance that a formal positive decision was in the offing.

It was therefore with great joy that, having waited calmly, more than one-hundred religious representing all corners of the Assumptionist world, together with the entire General Curia and the Superiors General of all of the women congregations of the Assumption family, made their way to Plovdiv for the ceremony of beatification which took place on Sunday, May 26, 2002. Though he was very tired, the pope joyfully greeted all of the Catholic Bulgarian bishops of both rites, accompanied by their clergy, in the presence of approximately 20,000 people. He gave the local Church the gift of these witnesses to holiness, pleased to tie it in with the presence of representatives of the other faiths in the city, among them, the Orthodox Metropolitan of Plovdiv, Archbishop Arsenij. At the end of the ceremony, the pope addressed a few words of welcome and congratulation to the Assumptionist family, mentioning Father d'Alzon, the initiator of the Near Eastern Mission in 1862, as well as the unforgettable help of Father Victorin Galabert, a portion of whose writings are in the process of being published in two languages.

This important moment of communion will remain a high point for the Assumptionist family whose liturgical calendar has now been enriched. Among other things, traveling to Plovdiv allowed a number of religious to travel to Bulgaria and to make a pilgrimage to the roots of the Congregation, thus enabling them to rediscover the historical, cultural and ecumenical presence of the Assumptionists 140 years ago, all of which is admirably described in a book by

Professor Alain Fleury, *Un collègue français en Bulgarie, Saint Augustin, Plovdiv, 1884-1948*, published by L'Harmattan in 2001.

Living at all times the holy call to love

One way to actualize this presentation of the final segment of the history of the Assumptionists is to take into account, in the context of the beatification of the Bulgarian martyrs which profoundly affected the life of the Congregation, the interior dimension to which we were all called in the Superior General's Circular no. 5:

A community cannot be sound if its members are immature or not serious about deepening their own relationship with God in faith. To foster strong fraternal relations, each member needs to develop a rich interior life, a substantial measure of self-knowledge, a good sense of humor especially about himself, an inclination for prayer and for reflection, a liking for serious hard work, a sense of initiative, and a personal commitment to living in fidelity to the Lord.

If ordinary men like the three Bulgarian martyrs knew how to bear witness by giving their lives during an extraordinary and tragic period, it had to be because their hearts burned with that interior fire of love of which Christ is the source. The words to express it may change, but the reality about religious apostolic life remains the same at all times: a call to holiness out of love for God in the service of mankind. At all times, Assumption aspires to do no more and no less than that.

QUESTIONNAIRE - PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. What has impressed you about the personality of Father Richard Lamoureux?

2. In your opinion, what were the high points of his first mandate (1999-2005) which struck you as times of grace and of significant questioning for the Assumptionist family?

3. One of the means of animating the Congregation is to write, translate, and send to the communities the circular letters of the Superior General. Have you kept a (bound?) collection in the community library? How have you reacted to these letters?

4. One of the functions of the current General Staff is to implement the major decisions taken by the General Chapter which elected them (2005). What do you think of their work of implementation? What are its main thrusts?

5. One of the major links between the general and the provincial levels is the annual meeting of the Council of the Congregation. Can you find any traces of its work of reflection and of the decisions taken between 1999 and 2005, and can you highlight the concrete progress that was made in internationality?

6. On a regular basis, the Superior General and the General Assistants in charge of your region make what are called canonical visitations to the provinces, vice-provinces, regions, and communities. In your opinion, what follow-up is given to the visitation letter that is issued at the end of the visit?

7. Assumptionist inter-provincial financial solidarity generally takes place through the office of the General Treasurer. Have you picked up any information on this subject in the quadrilingual bulletin *AA News* or elsewhere? Who are the principal recipients of the Congregation's interprovincial financial solidarity program?

8. A greater mobility of the religious can help create international communities, particularly when new foundations are involved, and help

strengthen local communities through gestures of interprovincial solidarity. Do you know of any concrete examples of this in the last ten years?

9. What are the ten most recent communities that were founded, regardless of whether they were established in a provincial, interprovincial, or international context?

10. Assumptionist foundations in Asia are being planned. What do you know about these projects? Do you know of anyone who might be available for this work? How, in what circumstances, and by whom was the Congregation contacted in view of its development in Asia?

Provincial structures

A progressive development

As a religious institute develops, it finds the organizational structures it needs in order to grow. To be sure, at the outset, everything is concentrated in the hands of the Founder or Foundress who shares his/her authority with a small group of councilors, the first companions judged to be the most qualified to exercise the service of authority, to make decisions, and to share in the initial thinking. That was the historical experience of the Augustinians of the Assumption with the small group of novices in 1845, then of the first professed on Christmas 1850. To be convinced of this, suffice it to reread the testimony found in Father d'Alzon's enormous correspondence between 1852 and 1880 when he was the superior.⁵⁹ Little by little, the first General Chapters progressively designated one, then two, and finally four Assistants General, according to the numerical development of the Congregation which, we know, was relatively slow if we take into consideration the stability of the old members and not just the ever-changing number of new members. Also, Father d'Alzon wanted to experiment with a Council, known at the time, as the Council of Six/Seven, especially with respect to the animation and direction of the College in Nîmes.

⁵⁹ This correspondence was edited between 1923 and 2003. See the various volumes: A.B.C (Vailhé), I and II (Touveneraud), III-XI11 (Deraedt), and XIV-XVII (Périer-Muzet). See also the database, series B, as well as the available CD.

A significant step, 1876

At the General Chapter of 1876, Father d'Alzon wanted to make an important change in the organization of the Congregation. He requested, despite the formal objection of Father Picard, that it adopt the normal system of having two religious hierarchies: a central government as well as provinces based on the number of religious, works, and geography.⁶⁰ This was the official beginning of the division of the Congregation into provinces. Three of them were created: Adrianople with Father Victorin Galabert, Nîmes with Father Emmanuel d'Alzon, and Paris with Father François Picard. Each province, with its center in the designated geographical area, had to have a novitiate as well as a formation program for clerical studies, and had to foresee the possibility of regrouping promising religious in a future student community in Rome. The novitiate in Le Vigan had been closed in 1874; Paris opened its own on rue François I^{er} but later moved it to Sèvres; Nîmes returned to its tradition of having a novitiate at the College, a tradition it had abandoned in 1864. In the Near East, after candidates had discovered religious life in the local communities, they were sent to the established novitiates in the West.

⁶⁰ The chronological order of the foundation of the Congregation in the various countries is as follows. The list takes into account the political map of the respective countries at the time of the foundation: 1845 France; 1861 Australia; 1862-1863 Bulgaria; 1867 Turkey; 1880 Spain; 1883 Italy; 1887 Jordan (Jerusalem was then under Ottoman occupation); 1890 Belgium; 1890 Chile; 1891 USA; 1900 Netherlands; 1901 England; 1903 Russia; 1910 Switzerland; 1910 Argentina; 1912 Luxembourg; 1917 Canada-Quebec; 1924 Romania; 1925 Yugoslavia; 1928 Germany; 1929 Belgian Congo; 1934 Greece; 1934 Tunisia; 1935 Brazil; 1935 China (Manchuria under Japanese occupation); 1946 Colombia; 1947 Mexico; 1948 Israel (Notre-Dame de France and St. Peter in Gallicantu, formerly under Ottoman occupation, came under the British Mandate from 1917 to 1948. Between 1948 and 1967, Notre Dame de France found itself in Israeli territory on the edge of the No Man's Land, while St. Peter in Gallicantu was in Jordan. In 1967, when Israel occupied the West Bank and East-Jerusalem, St. Peter in Gallicantu came under Israeli administration); 1949 Algeria; 1950 Lebanon; 1952 New Zealand; 1953 Madagascar; 1954 Uruguay; 1957 Ivory Coast; 1962 Costa Rica; 1987 Kenya; 1991 South Korea; 1995 Tanzania; 1996 Ecuador; 2006 Philippines, 2006 Vietnam; and 2006 Togo. The Assumptionists withdrew from: Australia in 1875, Luxembourg around 1919, Switzerland around 1930, China in 1954, Uruguay in 1954, Lebanon in 1958, Algeria in 1963, Tunisia in 1964, Costa Rica around 1966, Yugoslavia in 1982, and Ivory Coast in 1991.

Return to a centralized government: 1880-1923

The events of 1880, with the first expulsion and the sending of the novices to Spain, provoked the return of a centralized government in the hands of Father Picard and the suspension of the provinces. Though this situation had been foreseen as a temporary measure in response to the difficulties created by the French laws against religious teaching-congregations, it continued until 1923. Also, other important measures meant to be temporary, like the cooption of permanent Chapter members and life-long mandates for the Superior General, created a situation that ran counter to the provisions of Canon Law. A protest in the form of an appeal to Rome in 1906 brought the controversy into the open. The Congregation was obliged to align its practices with Canon Law which, at the time, was still being drawn up and, as a matter of fact, was not promulgated until 1917. Such was the internal dimension of a growth crisis that affected the body but did not break its dynamism.

After Livry, where the novitiate had been established in 1886 upon its return from Osma, a second novitiate was opened in the Near East in Phanaraki (Asian Turkey) in 1889, serving simultaneously as a house of studies beginning in 1904. The closing of Livry, following the expulsions in 1900-1901, led to the opening of the important house in Louvain which, at the same time, regrouped novices as well as students in philosophy and theology until new provisions were made for a novitiate in Gempe (Belgium) in 1906 and in Limpertsberg (Luxembourg) in 1912. Well before that, however, a new network of houses of formation had been created: houses of studies in Rome and in Istanbul Kum-Kapu in 1883, in Jerusalem at Notre Dame de France in 1887, in France at Breuil in 1888, and in Toulouse in 1893, plus Kadikeuï on the Asiatic coast of Istanbul in 1895. All this to say that, though there was a strong centralization of the government, there was also, in fact, a broad geographical decentralization of Assumptionist formation which went hand in hand with the first forms of internationalization.

Return to provincial structures in 1923

In line with the provisions of Canon Law, Rome imposed on the Assumptionists a complete break with its then-current practices and traditions. Following a secret consultation, Father Gervais Quénard was appointed Superior General in 1923 and ordered by Roman decree to create the normal structures of a decentralized Congregation organized into provinces. According to the text that was submitted, corrected, and eventually recognized, the *Constitutions* were aligned with the common law for religious and included precise juridical clauses: mandates of limited duration and the creation of 4 provinces with vicariates.

It was in this way that the four historical Assumptionist provinces came into being. France was divided geographically on the basis of the country's civil departments, which created true "boundaries." Three provinces were established: Bordeaux with the vicariate of South America, Lyons with the vicariate of the Near East, and Paris with the vicariate of England-North America. The Belgian and Dutch entity formed the fourth province. This administrative structure continued until 1946. It was Assumption's second decentralized form of government, if the one established in 1876 is taken into account.

Nevertheless, the term "decentralization" must be understood as it was at that time, given the fact that the authority of the Superior General remained entire over certain areas of the life of the Congregation, particularly in France, particularly over what were called the Common or General Works. It also remained considerable everywhere regarding formation (novitiates, scholasticates and theologates), and it remained significant regarding new foundations. Consequently, each province organized on its own territory a residence for its administration, which replicated the model at the general level, complete with a council, a treasurer's office, and a procurator's office.

For the houses of formation, each one became more or less autonomous as soon as possible after the initial period of interprovincial communities. **Louvain** remained the most important common theologate in the West until 1934, the year that **Lormoy** came into existence on the territory of the Province of Paris. Lormoy was the sole and common scholasticate for the three French provinces before the

creation of **Valpré** in 1947. Similarly, **Saint Gérard** in Belgium became the common house of studies for philosophy beginning in 1924 before the three French provinces set up their own institutions. In 1927, the Province of Lyons opened the St John Center in **Scy-Chazelles** which served for a while both as a novitiate and as an inter-provincial house of philosophy for France. **Layrac** was established in 1934 for Bordeaux.

A similar and even more precocious division took place among the novitiates. **Saint Gérard**, the former common novitiate in 1924, became the house of philosophy for the Belgians, the Dutch, and the Anglo-Saxons. In Canada, in 1927, **Bergerville** became the novitiate for North America, while **Taintegnies** served the Belgians and the Dutch. **Les Essarts** next to Rouen served the Province of Paris and the English candidates, while **Nozeroy** in the Jura served the Province of Lyons, and **Pont-L'Abbé d'Arnoult** the Province of Bordeaux, which also received Spanish-speaking candidates. This “withdrawal” of the provinces within themselves might have been justifiable from the point-of-view of personnel, but it was nevertheless prejudicial to the international character of the Congregation, which tried to compensate for this shortcoming with its Roman center which served, at the same time, as the general house and as a house of studies at its various locations: **Ara Caeli**, **Tor di Nona**, and **Via San Pio V**.

World War II would bring its share of transformations to this network. In 1946, the Dutch, who had been isolated at the beginning of the war as a result of the Nazi invasion, were obliged to organize on the spot their own centers of formation. They also obtained full autonomy with the creation of a distinct province, a status which, it must be added, was justified by the explosion of their numbers. Likewise, North America and England, whose vicarial links with Paris had been loosened due to the hostilities, also gained their independence. The Province of Belgium lost its house in Louvain which was bombed in 1940. The French provinces experienced half-tragic and half-comic exoduses: a general withdrawal to the South, the transformation of **Cavalerie** into a war-time novitiate, of **Nozeroy** into an aluminate, of **Layrac** into a theologate, ordinations and professions delayed because of the military obligations of the religious or

because of time spent either in the Obligatory Work Service⁶¹ or in concentration camps. Even the members of the Curia abandoned Mussolini's Rome, spreading themselves out in various geographical zones (Chaville, Lyons). The post-war period was a time of reorganization but also of a certain amount of dispersion.

Fluctuation in the number of Provinces between 1946 and 2003

During the last fifty years, worldwide trends have had unavoidable repercussions on the basic organization of the Congregation. The aging of its personnel in the northern hemisphere, accompanied by a strong reduction in numbers and by the concurrent development that has taken place since the 1980s in the southern hemisphere as a result of having accepted native vocations, obviously called for a restructuring of the Congregation. It follows that the trend pushing for autonomy and decentralization greatly accentuated itself beginning in 1958 with the creation of the Vice-Province of Brazil within the Dutch region. In 1969, the Vice-Provinces of Spain and of the former Belgian Congo, which later became the Province of Zaïre before becoming the Province of Africa in 1998, became independent provinces without either of them having necessarily adhered to the requirements of a minimum number of religious or of some type of financial autonomy, either total or partial.

Trends favoring collegiality, decentralization or even decolonization encouraged these transformations, even when they weakened ties with the provinces of origin, all of which gave rise to consequences that have had multiple, often unexpected and long-lasting effects. For example, a Development Office (Procure) was established in Brussels to help finance the needs of the Congolese

⁶¹ The Obligatory Work Service (*Service du Travail Obligatoire - S.T.O.*) was established in France in 1941 by the Vichy government under pressure from the country's German occupiers. It conscripted French workers and sent them to Germany in order to meet the industrial and agricultural needs of that country which was short-handed because most of its young workers were serving in the military. This posed serious problems of conscience for the French youth who were being conscripted. Resisters went into hiding, joined the underground resistance movement, or were taken prisoners. Most of the French bishops agreed with the measure, though several spoke out against it, among them Cardinal Saliège of Toulouse, saying that it was not sinful to disobey this order because it was a question of freedom of conscience.

Province whose anticipated ability to finance itself has often, over the years, proven to be illusory. Inter-provincial solidarity programs had to be set up at the general level, and the need to train formators was increasingly felt. As for the inevitable division in 1963 of the single Belgian Province into two Provinces due to the linguistic realities of that country which divide it in ways that even include violence (Flemish and Walloon, with repercussions in Colombia), it evidently did not bring any long-term solutions to the basic problem of trying to revive a dynamism that had seriously slackened in the 1960s.

The Curia had already lost its direct control in France over what was known as the Common or General Works which were regrouped by a decree of September 5, 1958 into a **Quasi-Province**. This Quasi-Province became the **Province of France** by a decree dated July 3, 1969. Its ambivalent title should not be confused with the territorial realities of the Provinces of Bordeaux, Lyons, and Paris which, in 1978, after ongoing inter-provincial discussions, gave rise to the future **Province of France** that included the former “common works.”

As for the first **Province of France**, between 1969 and 1980, it had a life, an organization, and an animation of its own, including its own bulletin, under the direction of Father Emmanuel Brajon, the first and last provincial *sui generis*. Nevertheless, since it did not have the possibility of recruiting or renewing itself and, consequently, did not have a formation program, it could never aspire to be more than a second-class entity. As mentioned above, as of 1978, the territorial Provinces of France (Bordeaux, Lyons, and Paris) voluntarily undertook a process of unification for reasons similar to what was happening in Western Europe at the time. The **Province of France**, having become territorial, now comprised for about twenty years the former territories inherited from 1923, which subsisted as Vice-Provinces during this intermediary period, and included the Common French Works.

After the General Chapter of 1981, **Canada** tried living as a Vice-Province (decree of June 20), but could not hold on and had to become once again a Region within the North American Province (1993). In 1999, the former vice-provincial structures of **France** were suppressed when the reunification was completed. In

1998, the Region of **Madagascar** became a Vice-province. In 1999, following a progressive process of unification of its Vice-Province and of the Region of Rio de Janeiro, **Brazil** also became a Province in its own right. So that the names of the Provinces might better correspond to their geographical realities, the former Province of South America, established in August 1953 when it was detached from the Province of Bordeaux, became in 1999 the Province of **Chile-Argentina**. In the year 2000, the Province of **England**, realistically coming to terms with its ever-diminishing numbers, accepted to be downgraded to a Region within the Province of France, thus putting an end to its prerogatives as an independent Province.

Facing a future with more flexible structures

At the present time, a search is on to find new formulas for the Congregation in all of Western Europe, formulas that would better conform to the perspectives, predictions and realities of this third millennium. In this half-century, the general thinking is to refocus on and become more aware of the transformations that are taking place during this period in the life of the entire Congregation. Already a number of new projects have been completed which depend on various types of inter-provincial solidarity and which are less dependent on human boundaries. Undoubtedly, in the near future, Eastern Europe will want to find new structures that are better adapted to the present situation in order to avoid the fragmentation and isolation of its local communities which are still set up in line with and geared to a narrow national context.

Finally, if the Assumptionists manage to establish themselves in Asia, those responsible will need to imagine structures that are both flexible and dynamic and that avoid the pitfalls of linguistic, cultural, and national isolation that can be detrimental to an international apostolic spirit which is meant to be evangelical before all else. It has been well established that, if the provincial structures of a congregation in full expansion respect its origins, encourage its development, and stimulate its sense of the apostolate by making new foundations from time to

time, the dismantling of outdated organizational structures becomes an essential ingredient in daring to undertake that which is no longer possible in the eyes of mortals but which remains possible with the living strength that comes from God through the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

List of Assumptionist Provincials

Provincial of Adrianople: 1876-1880

Fr. Victorin Galabert 1876-1880

Provincials of Belgium: 1923-1963

Fr. Rémi Kokel 1923-1929

Fr. Norbert Claes 1929-1937

Fr. Dieudonné Dautrebande 1937-1946

Fr. Rodrigue Moors 1946-1952

Fr. Stéphane Lowet 1952-1961

Fr. Martial Ronvaux 1962-1963

Provincials of Belgium-North: 1963-2005

Fr. Augustin Van Engeland 1963-1966

Fr. Frans Houbey 1966-1978

Fr. Louis Augutijns 1978-1987

Fr. Arnold Castro 1987-1996

Fr. Jef Bergmans 1996-1999

Fr. Arnold Castro 1999-2003

Fr. Lambert Maurissen 2003-2005

Provincials of Belgium-South: 1963-2005

Fr. Martial Ronvaux 1963-1965

Fr. Gérard Istace 1965-1970

Fr. Francis Schaeck 1970-1976

Fr. Félix Mallet 1976-1979

Fr. Pierre Charon 1979-1988

Fr. Frans Desmet 1988-1990

Fr. Arthur Jallet 1990-1996

Fr. Jean-Marie Denis 1996-2002

Fr. Guy Leroy 2002-2005

Provincials of Bordeaux: 1923-1978

Fr. Félicien Vandenkoornhuysse 1923-1929

Fr. Séraphin Protin 1929-1933

Fr. Michel Pruvost 1933-1938

Fr. Zéphyrin Sollier 1938-1946

Fr. Régis Escoubas 1946-1949

Fr. Marie-Noël Izans 1949-1950

Fr. Régis Escoubas 1950-1952

Fr. Denis Geoffroy 1952-1958

Fr. Tanguy Jointer 1958-1964

Fr. Henri Guillemin 1964-1973

Fr. Emmanuel Rospide 1973-1978

Vice-Provincials of Bordeaux: 1978-1999

Fr. Vincent Hémon	1978-1986
Fr. Raphaël Le Gleuher	1986-1991
Fr. Joseph Henri	1991-1999

Vice-Provincials of Brazil: 1958-1999

Fr. Arthur Horsthuis	1958-1959
Fr. Ignatius Weijis	1960-1963
Fr. Arnoldus Nulle	1963-1969
Fr. Emanuel V-D. Stappen	1969-1981
Fr. Alcuino Derks	1981 -1983
Fr. Fidelis Nulle	1983-1989
Fr. Pedro Wouters	1989-1999

Provincials of Brazil: 1999-2...

Fr. José-Geraldo Da Cruz	1999-2003
Fr. Marcos Bento De Souza	2003-

Vice-Provincials of Canada: 1981-1993

Fr. Marcel Poirier	1981 -1990
Fr. Gilles Blouin	1990-1993

Provincials of Chile-Argentina: 1953-2...

Fr. Régis Escoubas	1953-1958
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Fr. Joachim Duret	1959-1964
Fr. Dionisio Solano	1964-1969
Fr. Pedro Vargas	1969-1974
Fr. Julio Navarro	1974-1983
Fr. Miguel Fuentealba	1983-1989
Fr. Julio Navarro	1989-1995
Fr. Miguel Fuentealba	1995-2004
Fr. Edgardo Muñoz	2004-

Vice-Proprietarys of Congo: 1959-1969

Fr. Edgard Cuypers	1959-1964
Fr. W. Muermans	1965-1969

Proprietarys of Zaire: 1969-1998

Fr. Marc Champion	1969-1978
Fr. Stephan Smolders	1978-1984
Fr. Marc Champion	1984-1987
Fr. Théodard Steegen	1987-1995
Fr. Giulano Riccadonna	1995-1997

Proprietarys of Africa: 1998-2...

Fr. J.C. Kanyororo	1997-2000
Fr. Jean Marie Meso	2000-2006
Fr. Vincent Kambere	2006-

Provincials of England: 1946-2000

Fr. James Whitworth	1946-1952
Fr. Austin Treamer	1952-1961
Fr. Walter Robinson	1961-1964
Fr. Paul McNicholas	1964-1968
Fr. Kieran Dunlop	1968-1971
Fr. Bernard Rickett	1971-1974
Fr. Andrew O'Dell	1974-1983
Fr. Aidan Furlong	1983-1988
Fr. Andrew O'Dell	1988-1994
Fr. Robert Henshaw	1994-2000

Provincials of France: 1978-2...

Fr. Emmanuel Rospide	1978-1984
Fr. Claude Maréchal	1984-1987
Fr. Jean-Pierre Dehouck	1987-1993
Fr. Patrick Zago	1993-1999
Fr. André Antoni	1999-2005
Fr. Benoît Grière	2005-

Provincials of Holland: 1946-2005

Fr. Wiro V.-D. Dungen	1946-1955
Fr. Marius V.-D. Boogaard	1955-1967
Fr. Edward Van Montfort	1967-1979
Fr. Jan V.-D. Meer	1979-1991

Fr. Mart Lemmens 1991 -2005

Provincials of Lyons: 1923-1978

Fr. Elie Bicquemard 1923-1929

Fr. Zéphyrin Sollier 1929-1938

Fr. Maximilien Malvy 1938-1946

Fr. M.-Germain Filliol 1946-1952

Fr. Bruno Under 1952-1957

Fr. Joseph (Celse) Ract 1957-1963

Fr. Noël Bugnard 1963-1969

Fr. Morand Kleiber 1969-1978

Vice-Provincials of Lyons: 1978-1999

Fr. Morand Kleiber 1978-1981

Fr. Dominique Bouverot 1981-1987

Fr. Michel Zabé 1987-1999

Vice-Provincials of Madagascar: 1998-2...

Fr. Jean-Claude de Rosny 1998-2001

Fr. Daniel Carton 2001-2007

Fr. Michel Jary 2007-

Provincial of Nîmes: 1876-1880

Fr. Emmanuel Bailly 1876-1880

Provincials of North America: 1946-2...

Fr. Wilfrid Dufault	1946-1952
Fr. Henri Moquin	1952-1964
Fr. Armand Desautels	1964-1969
Fr. Joseph Loiselle	1969-1975
Fr. Edgar Bourque	1975-1981
Fr. Joseph Loiselle	1981 -1984
Fr. Richard Lamoureux	1984-1990
Fr. Roland Guilmain	1990-1996
Fr. John Franck	1996-2005
Fr. Marcel Poirier	2005-

Provincials of Northern Europe: 2005-2...

Fr. Arnold Castro	2005-
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Provincials of Paris: 1876-1880; 1923-1978

Fr. François Picard	1876-1880
Fr. Aymard Faugère	1923-1929
Fr. Clodoald Sérieix	1929-1935
Fr. Bernadin Bal-Fontaine	1935-1946
Fr. Rémi Kokel	1946-1948
Fr. Merry Susset	1948-1952
Fr. Louis-Henri Bélard	1952-1957
Fr. Paul Charpentier	1957-1964
Fr. Emmanuel Brajon	1964-1967

Fr. François Péjac 1967-1975

Fr. François Mudry 1975-1978

Vice-Proprietarys of Paris: 1978-1999

Fr. Maurice Laurent 1978-1981

Fr. Jean-Pierre Dehouck 1981 -1987

Fr. Patrick Zago 1987-1993

Fr. François Morvan 1993-1999

Quasi-Proprietarys of the O.G.F.P.: 1957-1969

Fr. Bruno Linder 1957-1961

Fr. Justin Munsch 1961-196

Fr. Emmanuel Brajon 1967-1969

Proprietary of France, O.C.F.: 1969-1978

Fr. Emmanuel Brajon 1969-1978

Vice-Proprietary of the O.C.F.: 1978-1984

Fr. Henri Guillemin 1978-1984

Vice-Proprietarys of Spain: 1964-1969

Fr. Francisco San Martin 1964-1967

Fr. Alberto Garcia 1967-1969

Proprietarys of Spain: 1969-2007

PROVINCIAL STRUCTURES

Fr. Alberto García	1969-1972
Fr. Enrique Goiburu	1972-1978
Fr. Miguel Iriarte	1978-1981
Fr. José Ignacio Ciorda	1981-1984
Fr. NicetoCalle	1984-1990
Fr. Miguel Iriarte	1990-1996
Fr. Manuel Martinez	1996-2005
Fr. José Dominguez	2005-2007
Fr. Niceto Calle	2007-

For more information about the religious who died before December 31, 1999, see the 5 volumes by Jean-Paul Périer-Muzet, *Notices Biographiques*.

QUESTIONNAIRE - PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. How is the Congregation organized in your country? How did it get started? Is there a written history of it in your language?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the successive organizational structures the Congregation has had as a whole?
3. If it has not yet been written, gather the documents needed to write the history of the Assumptionists on your continent, in your country, and in your region, from the beginning until today.
4. What concrete differences do you see between a province, a vice-province, a region, and a vicariate? How and under what conditions does an area pass from one level to another? Is rising to a higher level irreversible?
5. Can an international congregation content itself with having only provincial structures? What are the advantages and risks?
6. Does the *Rule of Life* give any precise indications about how to make possible changes in the structures of the Congregation as the need arises at the regional, vice-provincial and provincial levels?
7. How can the international dimension of a congregation be served and also disserved by the provincial framework?
8. What types of Assumptionist inter-provincial and general-level solidarity are you aware of?
9. Throughout its history, has the Assumptionist Congregation demonstrated that it could transcend the boundaries of language, race, and origin? What were the circumstances? Do you know of any examples?
10. In order to give more vitality to the entire Congregation in the future, can you imagine any organizational structures that would be more continental in scope? What would be the criteria for making changes?

11. What do you think of the statement made by a Jesuit to the effect that, in reorganizing themselves, religious Institutes can do what is right only when they are forced to do so? What did he mean by that?

VIII

Annotated Bibliography

History of Assumptionist publications

An article by Father Le Dortz in *Assomption* 1967, no. 7, pp. 45-47, was the first attempt to draw up as complete a bibliography as possible of the internal publications of the Assumptionist Congregation. The desire to make an inventory and to put to good use all of the richness of the Congregation's history is not new. At different times, efforts have been made to systematize the written sources of this history, but for a variety of reasons, e.g., to keep alive the memory of the past, to exalt or recapture the spirit of Assumption, to recall the meaning of certain events or commemorate anniversaries, to establish ties among the isolated or dispersed communities, to present the Congregation to others, etc. The fervor of certain celebrations, centennials, anniversaries, and foundations or re-foundations sharpens or renews a sense of history and requires a review of what took place as well as an updated appreciation of the key Assumptionists involved. Listed below, in chronological order, are the most important documents available. For practical purposes, they are also listed geographically, proceeding from the general level to the local level.

Monographs on the Assumptionists

- Quénard, A. A., Gervais, *Les Augustins de L'Assomption; Origine, esprit, organisation et oeuvres*, Paris, B.P., 1928, 172 pages.
- Monval, Jean, *Les Assomptionnistes*, Paris, Grasset, 1939, 256 pages, collection *Les grands Ordres monastiques et Instituts religieux*.

- Guissard, A.A., Polyeucte, *Un siècle d'histoire Assomptionniste 1850-1950*, Worcester, 1950, 143 pages. Booklet *Les Religieux de l'Assomption*, 1956 (Notre-Dame des Vocations), 40 pages. *Les Augustins de L'Assomption, mémorial du centenaire*, Lormoy, 52 pages.
- Canu, Jean, *Les Ordres religieux masculins*, in the series *Je sais-Je crois*, Arthème Fayard, 1959, 110 pages.
- -Pépin, A.A., Adrien, *Les Religieux de l'Assomption*, Paris, B.P., 1963, 252 pages.
- Audio-visual presentation on the occasion of the centennial, 1980.
- Le Segretain, *Les Augustins de L'Assomption in Religieux et moines de notre temps*, Le Cerf, 1980, pp. 211-221.
- Illustrated brochure: *The Assumptionists, Men of faith on mission to the world*, Strasbourg: Edit, du Signe, 1993. Published in 10 languages.
- Video, *Assumptionist Planet*, 1999.
- *Mémoire Assomptionniste, Ecrits au fil des ans 1850-2000*, Edit, du Bugey, 2000, 181 pages.
- Périer-Muzet, A.A., Jean-Paul, *Notices biographiques des Religieux de l'Assomption 1850-2000*, 5 volumes, 2000-2001. In vol 5, cf. appended article : *Assomptionnistes, Entrée d'un nom dans l'histoire de la société et de l'Eglise*.
- Fortin, A.A., Robert J., *Windows on Assumptionist history; Short biographies of Assumptionist religious*. Mystic Connecticut: Bayard, 2002, 373 pages.
- Guissard, A.A., Lucien, *The Assumptionists, From Past to Present*, Mystic Connecticut, Bayard Publications, 2002, 140 pages.
- Acts of the Lyons-Valpré Colloquium, November 2000, *L'Aventure Missionnaire de l'Assomption*, ed. Bernard Holzer, A.A., 2005, 751 p.

Anniversaries and collections

The following are anniversary celebrations that gave rise to various publications:

- 1893 The 50th anniversary of the College in Nîmes.
- 1910 Centennial of the birth of Father d'Alzon.
- 1913 30th anniversary of the foundation of *La Croix*.
- 1922 50th anniversary of the foundation of Our Lady of Salvation
- 1922 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Near Eastern Mission.
- 1930 50th anniversary of the death of Father d'Alzon.
- 1939 Centennial of the foundation of the Religious (Sisters) of the Assumption.
- 1950 Centennial of the foundation of the Assumptionists.
- 1959 Centennial of the *Directory*.
- 1963 Centennial of the Near Eastern Mission.
- 1965 Centennial of the Oblates and of the Little Sisters of the Assumption.
- 1965 25,000th issue of *La Croix* (March 9).
- 1973 Centennial of Our Lady of Salvation.
- 1973 Centennial of the *Pèlerin*.
- 1975 Beatification of Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus.
- 1979 50th anniversary of the foundation in Congo-Zaire.
- 1980 Centennial of the death of Father d'Alzon.
- 1980 Centennial of the Assumptionist presence in Belgium
- 1983 Centennial of *La Croix*.
- -1989 150th anniversary of the Religious (Sisters) of the Assumption.
- 1990 Centennial of the Assumptionist presence in Chile.

- 1991 Decree declaring Father d'Alzon Venerable.
- 2000 150th anniversary of the Augustinians of the Assumption (televised Mass in Valpré on April 30, 2000).
- 2000 Centennial of the death of Mother Correnson.
- 2004 Centennial of Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts, USA

The above-mentioned events were generally described in the following publications:

- *l'Assomption et ses oeuvres*, Paris, B.P, 1893, 638 pages. -*L'Assomption*, special issue no. 168, December 1910, pp. 177-256.
- -Magazine of the alumni of the College of Nîmes, 1910, 112 pages.
- *l'Assomption*, special issue no. 356, 1931, pp. 33-64. -*Mélanges Emmanuel d'Alzon, Conférences de la semaine alzonienne*, Saint-Gérard, 1952, 296 pages. -Series on the Centennial of Father d'Alzon (1880-1980), monographs, 1980(11 booklets).
- Series on the Centennial of Father d'Alzon at the Oblates, monographs by country.
- Audio-visual presentation on the occasion of the centennial in 1980.
- *Hier et Aujourd'hui, d'Alzon et l'Assomption*, 3 lectures by Guissard, Pierrard and Wenger, Série du Centenaire, Paris, 1982, 90 p.
- Acts of the Colloquium on History, December 1980, *Emmanuel d'Alzon dans la société et L'Eglise du XIXeme siècle*, Centurion, 1982, 334 pages.
- *L'Assomption et ses oeuvres*, special centennial issue (1980).
- Poulignier video (1992).
- *Cent ans d'histoire de La Croix 1883-1983*, Le Centurion, 1988, series *Chrétiens dans l'histoire*.

- On the Byzantine Institute in Paris, Albert Failler, *Le centenaire de l'Institut Byzantin des Assomptionnistes*, in *Revue des Etudes Byzantines*, 1995, vol. 53, pp. 5-40.
- Publication of the entire correspondence of Father d'Alzon, *Lettres du P. Emmanuel d'Alzon (1851-1880)*, Rome, 1923-2005, 20 volumes.
- Two works by Father Georges Tavard on Father d'Alzon: *Les lettres aux Adoratrices*, Rome, January 1992, and *Le P. d'Alzon au concile de Vatican I*, Rome, 1996.
- *The Assumptionist Spirit according to Emmanuel d'Alzon*, Rome, 1993.
- Galabert, A.A., Victorin, *Vingt-deux années parmi les bulgares: Journal (1862-1866)*, Sofia, Okhridski, 1998, 2 volumes.
- Aalst, Burg and Krijnsen, *Dat alien een zijn. Het Christelijk Oosten 1948-1998: de geschiedenis van een tijdschrift, Das alien ee zijn*, Nijmegen, 1999, 259 pages.
- *Mgr. Petit, Assomptionniste, Fondateur des "Échos d'Orient, " Archevêque latin d'Athènes (1868-1927)*, Actes du Colloque de Rome, Rome 1997, ed. Bernard Holzer, A.A., *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, no. 266, Rome, 2002, 229 p.
- Fortin, A.A., Robert J., *The Catholic Chaplaincy in Moscow, a Short History 1934-1999*, Brighton, 2004, 89 p.
- Moynihan, Kenneth J., *Assumption College, A Centennial History, 1904-2004*, published by Assumption College, Worcester, MA, 2004, 333 pages.
- *Les Assomptionnistes et la Russie (1903-2003)*, Actes du Colloque d'Histoire, Rome 2003, ed. Bernard Holzer, A.A., series "Recherches Assomption" no. 2 [2006], 319 p.

Official Acts of the Institute

Acts of the General Chapters /Actes des Chapitres Généraux, from 1850 to 1876 (summary); see also the chronology of chapters from 1929 to 1999.

Circulars or *Letters* of the Superiors General to the Religious.

- **Fr. d'Alzon:** some of his circulars (1868 to 1879) were edited by Fr. Bailly in 1912.
- **Fr. Picard:** an edition of his circulars was published by fr. Bailly in 2 volumes. They are numbered 1 to 147.
- **Fr. Bailly:** Circulars nos. 1 to 100 (2 volumes, no preface and undated).
- **Fr. Maubon:** Circulars 1918-1923.
- **Fr. Gervais Quénard:** Circulars, 2 volumes for the period 1923-1948, and one volume for the period 1948-1952.
- **Fr. Dufault:** 2 series, the first numbered 1 to 39 (1952-1964), and the second 40-54 (1964-1969).
- **Fr. Charpentier:** inaugurated a new format entitled *Lettres aux Religieux/Letters to the Religious* (1970-1974) which he combined with a series entitled *Reflexion et recherche* (I to IX).
- **Fr. Stéphane:** a series of 45 Letters to the Religious in *Documents Assomption*.
- **Fr. Maréchal:** a series of 12 letters in *Documents Assomption*.
- **Fr. Lamoureux:** series in the making.

Directories of Religious (Répartitions des Religieux)

The principle is simple, but the history is complex. The “genre” began with Father Picard. The list of the addresses of the houses and names of the religious, at least of the superiors, was included in one of the annual issues of the periodical called *Souvenirs*. But with the dispersion in 1901, discretion and even fear of all possible types of written indiscretion prevailed, which created a hiatus of more

than 20 years (1900-1922). Starting in 1922, thought was given to publishing an annual edition entitled *Répartition des Missionnaires*, which remained coded or doctored until 1930. It then became the “classical” *Répartition des Religieux/Directory of Religious*, based at first on the school year (e.g., 1954-1955), then on the civil calendar as of January 1st (e.g., 1970). However, it was not published in 1969. In the year 2000, the publication became quadrilingual. Since 1970, an alphabetical listing of the religious is found at the end.

Necrologies

When did the annual *Necrology* first appear? Here too, the genre began with a page in the internal bulletins (e.g., *Les Souvenirs*) of the Congregation. Significant importance was clearly given to the deceased in these various bulletins, to the point of encumbering them. Beginning in the 1980s, the necrologies began appearing as fascicles and offprints of *Documents Assomption*. Until 1991, they were printed on tissue paper by Bayard Presse/Bonne Presse and drawn up by Father Laurien (Joseph) Richard.

In the past, the *Ordo* of the Congregation was printed separately, but today it is appended to the necrology.

In fact, even though all these documents are scattered here and there, they are invaluable for the history of the Congregation. They testify to a desire to remember, communicate, and organize the Institute little by little. These annual documents truly deserve to be preserved and bound.

News bulletins for both internal and external purposes

1. *L'Assomption de Nîmes*, no. 1 (January 1, 1875) to no. 48 (December 15, 1879), a bimonthly. It includes news especially about the College in Nîmes, but also about the work of Our Lady of Vocations and the Congregation. Because of the events that took place in 1880, there is no news about that year, which makes for a first gap in our information. This periodical includes 3 precious alphabetical

tables: no. 24 (1875), pp. 213-216; no. 27 (1876-1877), pp. 389-396; no. 47 (1878-1879), pp. 382-388.

2. *L'Assomption et ses OEuvres*. This periodical began in 1897 and continues to this day on a quarterly basis. It presents the apostolate of the Assumptionists and of the Assumption Family to the larger public of friends of the Congregation. Its history has been written, cf. *L'Assomption et ses CEuvres*, 1999, no. 678, pp. 28-29. The history of this publication, now almost 100 years old, deserves a few additional comments:

- It was first called “*L'Assomption, oeuvre de Notre Dame des Vocations, Échos du noviciat des Augustins de L'Assomption*” and appeared monthly: no. 1 (January 1, 1897) to no. 59 (November 1, 1901). It contained edifying topics, hagiography, and news about the novitiate in Livry.
- It then became “*L'Assomption, Échos du noviciat exilé*” and appeared monthly: no. 60 (December 1, 1901) to no. 211 (August 1, 1914). The exile was itinerant, as the novitiate moved from Gemert, to Louvain, to Gempe, and to Limpertsberg.
- Its first interruption came as a result of the war of 1914-1918. It resumed as a quarterly carrying the same title but also the mention “wartime edition”: no. 212 (January-June 1918) to no. 216 (April-June 1919). Then came the move to Notre-Dame de Lumières and to Saint Gerard.
- It returned to its former format as a monthly without undergoing any changes: no. 217 (July 1919) to no. 233 (December 1920).
- Times had changed. The term “in exile” was suppressed: no. 234 (January 1921) to no. 281 (December 1924).
- Starting with no. 282 (January 1925), the monthly inaugurated a “new series” whose title became “*L'Assomption et ses oeuvres*” until no. 466 (May 1940). It was no longer concerned only with the novitiates but also with the scholasticates and with the apostolic activities of the Assumptionist communities near and far. However, it remained an in-house publication.

- Once again, war disturbed the life of the publication. From 1941 to 1947, 22 issues were published giving Bits of News to the Friends of Assumption. With no. 469 (January-February 1948), it became a bimonthly (every two months), with additional and diversified types of information, until no. 542 (May-July 1965).
- It was with issue no. 543 (autumn 1965) that the periodical became a quarterly, enlarged its format, came out in color, and opened itself more broadly to the life of all of the Assumption families. At the outset, there were several editions (according to the houses, the development offices (*procures*) and the provinces), then progressively, everything was brought together. Among the periodical's recent directors and editors were Fathers Le Toumellec, Proust, and Michel Charles, and an editorial staff working with Brother Robert Migliorini.

The Congregation had its national equivalents, particularly English: *The Assumptionist* (London) from 1946 to 1967 (?) and *Our Lady of the Assumption Parish Magazine* (1924-1952); also Dutch: *Assumptie* (Boxtel) 1924-1964 (?).

Cf. the historical study of the periodical made by Jean-Paul Périer-Muzet, "Les ages d'un centenaire," *L'Assomption et ses Oeuvres*, 1999, no. 678, pp. 28-29.

3. *Les Souvenirs* (1st series: no. 1 (February 28, 1881 to December 1899), a total of 416 issues. They were written by Fathers Germer-Durand, Vincent de Paul Bailly, Paul-François Doumet, and Claude Allez. Because of the events that took place in 1900, that year is not covered, hence a second gap in our information. Between 1881 and 1891, the frequency of the publication was uneven, but between November 1891 and December 1899, it appeared almost weekly.

4. *Aux frères de la dispersion en Orient* (1st series: July 2, 1900 to May 15, 1902): 44 issues. Its purpose was to serve as a link with those who were furthest away. The editor was Father Vincent de Paul Bailly. There is a gap between nos. 43 and 44 due to police censorship.

5. *Les Souvenirs* (2nd series: from July 15, 1902 to October 18, 1906): 45 issues. Father Armand-Gabriel de Combes produced the publication in Rome. A 3rd gap occurred between 1906 and 1908.

6. *Lettre à la dispersion* (2nd series: September 24, 1908 to November 20, 1912, to which must be added 6 supplementary issues dedicated to Father Vincent de Paul Bailly who died on December 2, 1912). A fourth gap occurred at the end of 1912 until the beginning of 1914.

7. *Les Souvenirs* (3rd series: 8 issues from February 28, 1914 to July 18, 1914). Compiled and edited by Father Germer-Durand.

8. *Lettre à la dispersion* (3rd series: 550 issues from 1914 to 1918). Editor: Father Ernest Baudouy. It carried a subtitle “*L’Assomption aux armées*” and was censored in June 1916. The censored edition became *Nouvelles de la famille*, while the other non-censored edition continued as *La Lettre à la dispersion*.

9. The first series of *Pages d’Archives* appeared as a supplement to *La Lettre à la dispersion* (1 vol. of 240 pages).

10. The two formulas continued to be used after the war: *Les Nouvelles de la famille*, from July 1916 to December 15, 1921 (425 issues), and *Lettre à la dispersion* (4th series), from January 1, 1922 to May 31, 1941 (840 issues, almost all of them published by Father Ernest Baudouy).

11. *Nouvelles de la famille occupée*: Father Gervais Quénard personally published in the form of letters 37 issues of this newsletter which kept contact with the religious between 1942 and 1944.

12. *La Lettre à la famille*: edited successively by Fathers A. Cleux, R. Kokel, E. Jubert, and A. Picot. It was published from January 15, 1945 to December 1964 (382 issues). It had 9 supplements in 1945.

13. *Assomption 1965/66/67*: new formula, new format, only 10 issues. A remarkable periodical produced by the AA students in Rome under the direction of Father Touveneraud. It did not survive the upheaval of 1968.

14. *Pages d’Archives* is in a category of its own. The first series was intended as a Supplement to the *Lettre à la Dispersion*: 240 pages (1926-1935). The

second series (nos. 1-13) covered the period from 1954 to 1963. The third series (nos. 1-7) contained serious studies which presented biographical sketches of individual Assumptionists, and focused on questions of the apostolate or the missions. The fourth series was simply a monograph on Father Pernet, yesterday and today (April 1966). There were also special issues featuring a single topic, e.g., in 1921 the alumnae, and in 1929 the life of Father Jaujou.

15. Since 1989, the Assumption families together created a periodical called *Itinéraires Augustiniens* in order to deepen their Augustinian heritage. It succeeded *Alype* (1978-1981), a periodical created by the Orants.

Other internal publications

- *Bulletin Officiel de L'Assomption, B.O.A.* (1946-1975).
- *-Documents Assomption* (1976), an annual publication that provides all of the official acts of the Congregation. Special editions of necrologies contain biographical sketches of deceased religious throughout the entire Institute (8 issues, 1980-1999).
- Quarterly Bulletin from Rome: *ART informations* was published from 1969 to December 1989. It became *AA Info* in 1990, then *AA Informations, Informatie, Noticias, and News* as of October 1999. It is published in 4 languages. (See *Index General A-Z: 1969-1999* of Périer-Muzet, A.A., Jean-Paul, Roma, 2001, 98 pages).

Missionary publications

- In French: *Missions des Augustins de l'Assomption* (Paris, Lyons), originally focused on the Near Eastern Mission, begun in 1886, appeared irregularly, then monthly, and finally quarterly. It featured various Assumptionist apostolates. From 1963 to 1965, it was known as *Missions Assomptionnistes*.
- In German: *Missionen der Augustiner von Marie-Himmelfahrt* (Scheidegg).

- From French-speaking and Flemish Belgium, for the Congo Mission, 2 periodicals: *L'Afrique Ardente* (1932-1962) and *Ontwakend Afrika* (1947-1962), which respectively became: *Qu'il Règne* and *Groeiende Kerk* (1963-).
- In Chile: *El Eco de Lourdes* (Santiago, starting in 1901) and *Pages Chiliennes* (1910-1914).
- In Argentina: *Auras de Lourdes* (Santos Lugares, since 1913).

There is also a wealth of information about the Assumptionist missions in the various newsletters of the provinces on which they depend [ed].

Provincial newsletters

Little by little, as the Congregation became international and organized itself into provinces, the need was felt for newsletters that were close to the Provinces and intended for them:

- Province of Bordeaux: *A Travers la Province* (Bordeaux), starting in March 1950. It became *Ouest-Assomption* (1978-1980).
- Province of Lyons: *Rhin-Guinée* (1957-1966). It became *Lyon Assomption* (1966-1981).
- Province of Paris: *Paris-Assomption* (1950-1980).
- Province of France (ex-O.G.F. and O.C.F.): *Nouvelles de la Province de France* (Paris), 1970-1978.
- Province of France (united): *A Travers la Province* (Paris), starting in 1978. Special annual issues of the Necrology (starting in 1983).
- Ex-Province of England: *Newsletter* and *Assumptionist Newsletter*.
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- Province of Belgium (united): *Contacts* (1952-1964).
- Province of Belgium-South: *Belgique-Sud Assomption*, starting in 1964.

- Province of Belgium-North: *Onder-Ons*, starting in 1963.
- Province of Holland (Netherlands): *De Schakel*, starting in 1946. It was the first provincial newsletter to appear.
- -Province of South America, created in 1953, *Vinculum* (appeared in 1954); then *Asunción Chile-Argentina* when this province became known as the Province of Chile-Argentina.
- Province of North America: consult first the periodicals published by Assumption College in Worcester: *L'Assomption* (starting in 1912), *The Assumption* (1963-1970), *Assumption Magazine* (Assumption Preparatory School), and *Assumption North America (A.N. A.)* starting in 1967.
- -Province of Spain, created in 1969: *Boletín de la Provincia d'España* (1970).
- Vice Province of Brazil, became a Province in 1999, *A Vice Provincia Informa* (1970), then *U.N.A. (Informativo Unidos Na Assunção)*, then beginning in 2000, *Agostinianos da Assunção*.
- Ex-Vice Province of Canada, *Bulletin Assomptionniste*.
- Province of Congo (1969), later called Zaïre, then once again Congo, and finally the Province of Africa: *Asproza*, *ART- Zaïre*, and presently *ART-Afrique*.
- -Region of Madagascar, became a Vice Province in 1998: *Lettres du Régional*, then *Assomption-Madagascar*.
- -Region of Argentina: *Asunción*, *D'Alzoniana*, *Feuilles d'informations*.
- Vicariate of Columbia: *El d'Alzon de los Andes* (1994).
- For Romanian-speaking religious: *Augustiniana* (starting in 1999).
- For the English-speaking of East Africa: *Assumption East Africa*.

QUESTIONNAIRE - PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. What do you think of this mass of dispersed documents, unequal in value but nevertheless impressive, which brings to mind the apostolic history of the Assumptionists? By country? By language? By types of activity? By period?

2. What written sources do you have available locally, either in the community's library, in the stock held by your province, vice-province or region, that will help you learn about the history of the Congregation in your country and in your own language?

3. The Assumptionists have defined themselves as a doctrinal congregation. Can you point out the titles of periodicals geared to scientific and religious research, in years past and today?

4. The Congregation, from its very beginning, has heavily involved itself with the press, the media, and the means of social communication. Can you find traces of this tradition in various countries? Give concrete examples to illustrate the point?

5. Do you know the names of several Assumptionists who, today, have become well-known authors in various fields? Give some contemporary examples with the titles of their works.

6. Some fields of apostolic endeavor hardly leave any written traces, parishes, for example. Would that not be a possible explanation for the relative silence that surrounds them?

7. Education in all its forms, according to the expression used by Father d'Alzon and the First Constitutions, was often pursued by the Congregation in the context of teaching in schools. Can you name a dozen or so educational institutions that are directed today by the Assumptionists or under their sponsorship?

8. Do you know of any other contemporary religious congregation engaged in the field of publications? Does the Congregation not stand out as unique in this field? Why?

9. By what concrete means can the faith be transmitted in today's world?