

Writing about our meeting of November 12, Dennis said: "...The conversation was situated between two important events: the address of our Superior General Richard Lamoureux at the August gathering of lay friends in Worcester and the upcoming Provincial and General Chapters, both of which will again include the participation of lay associates... Recognizing that the charism of the Assumptionists is a gift to the whole Church and the desire on the part of an increasing number of lay people to share that charism more deeply, the conversation turned on the most promising and effective ways to build partnerships for the extension of God's Kingdom in our time and place.

The participants in the discussion had the benefit of drawing upon the observations, insights and dreams of lay groups in Brighton, Fiskdale and Worcester **whose love fore the Assumptionists is evident and who are restless for the AA charism to radiate more widely...This is truly and important movement, not only because** it gives expression to the founder's vision but because it has the capacity to enliven our hope, even in the face of diminishing numbers of religious, that the wider assumption family has a mission to fulfill in the world of today. One of the fruits of the celebration of this 200

th birthday of Fr. d'Alzon has been a strengthened conviction that his "little family" bolstered by lay friends imbued with spirit, can contribute much to the great causes of our time. Together, may our hearts be opened to this moment of grace."

The French Provincial Chapter in its discussion concerning "The Lay-Religious Alliance says: "Many lay people (up to 250), want to travel with us... But they do not progress at the same pace. If some will, this Saturday, make a public commitment that does not mean that there will be an Assumptionists Laity running on two speeds. All those who live from deep within their hearts the "Way of Live, even if in halting manner, are members of the Alliance... A way is opening; a route to follow, one stage of the journey has been covered. It will be necessary to advance while evaluation regularly the road already traveled."

In addition to Dennis' encouraging observations I would like to note these facts: the lively meeting with our families, the gathering with a few former Assumptionists, the constantly growing activity of our Development Office as it reaches out to more lay people, to Bayard Press, to other Regions and Provinces and as it uses the improved resources of our website. One thread runs through all the above, that of Relationships and efforts to improve them. Hardly surprising! Jesus did tell us: "Love one another as I have loved you". H. Nouwen gives relationships a new twist saying that hospitality seen as key to good relationships, "is not a subtle invitation to adopt the life style of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find how own." Many experiences of the past months, the way that our Development Office has

functioned, and what we are learning from others encourage us to make a concerted effort to create relationships in that spirit and we do well to put all our efforts under the banner “Partners for the KINGDOM.” And to do it, whether we are first trying to create new and rich relations with the laity, raise funds, or seeking laity who might feel called to follow the Assumption “Way of Life” as lay people. The choice of our new tandem, their being close to one another in Brighton and close to the Development Office, as well as the greater facility for all of us of working together, while being in close touch with Fr. Dennis should be of great assistance in doing all this together. As for myself I would be happy to help in all these areas and in this spirit. As best I can, while offering, once more to seek out and encourage any lay people who might feel called to the Assumptionist “Way of Life” as lay people living our fully their lay life.

Olivier