



## A Word From the Postulator

November 21, the liturgical feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple, has become an important date in the Assumption Family. On this day we remember the death of Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon. In earlier days people used the expression « *dies natalis* », that is, the day of one's birth to eternal life. Today we prefer to speak of his « *Passover* », the passage from death to new life in God. In many places, this date in November has been reserved for Lay Assumptionists to pronounce or renew their commitment to live the spirituality and mission of the Assumption. Still, the real reason for this feast is to recall a « father », a « spiritual master », a « model of holiness », who invites us to become saints ourselves and to imitate his virtues. This is what we hear from the bishop of Nîmes, Most Rev. Robert Wattebled, and from the Superior General of the Assumptionists, Very Rev. Benoît Grière, in their homilies on that day. Requesting the beatification of Fr. d'Alzon has no other meaning than that of presenting him to the People of God as a model of holiness for our day.

*Fr. Julio Navarro Román, A.A.*

## Emmanuel d'Alzon, A holy figure

Today we celebrate a man whose sanctity hasn't yet been officially proclaimed by the Church, but whom every Assumptionist is convinced is holy and now enjoys God's full favor: Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon. We must continue to believe that our founder is a saint because, in season and out of season, he was a tireless witness of the gospel. [...]

Emmanuel d'Alzon entered into God's family because he did the will of the Father. He left his earthly family in order to join the great family of the children of God. He gave up a family of his own, a reality envied by the aristocracy, as well as a personal fortune, all for the sake of the Kingdom. D'Alzon understood that there was a new attachment to be lived and that this could happen by choosing the Church and its service. The holiness of a man or a woman begins when he or she accepts to leave behind

the tranquil assurance of natural family ties in order to embark on the adventure of choosing God. Emmanuel d'Alzon was this kind of man who discovered the primacy of God in his life. Our founder wanted to do God's will and year after year he grew in setting aside his own will. Gradually he became an instrument of Divine Providence. Failure, sickness, the travails of founding a congregation --- none of this led him to turn from the path of holiness or close his ears to the Word of God. [...]

D'Alzon is a figure of holiness who calls us to become saints ourselves. We must live according to his spirit in order carry on his work. [...] May Emmanuel d'Alzon himself allow us always to be faithful to his spirit.

*Fr. Benoît Grière,  
Superior general*

*Homily from November 21, 2013,  
Rome*

### Fr. d'Alzon speaks to us

*You are ever at my side, O my God!*

*And when I wish to speak to your infinite Mercy, I always find  
you ready and willing,*

*So I don't go far from you. I find you near me, like a friend in  
the company of a friend.*

*(Spiritual Writings, pp. 627-628)*

## « Hear once again the Lord's call to holiness »



We are pleased to celebrate the feast of the Presentation of Mary this year under the patronage of Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon. This feast on November 21 calls to hear once again the Lord's call to holiness, lived a particular state of life, in accord with a specific vocation.

Here it is where I think d'Alzon can serve as a witness and, without a doubt, as a model. "*Be saints, become saints,*" he would often write at the end of some of his letters. Deeply troubled by a world that had distanced itself from the Christian faith, rejected it or was ignorant of it, he knew that a world without God was heading for its own destruction. He refused to withdraw to some remote mountain or to enclose himself in some sacred shrine, because religion, he was convinced, had something to say to transform this earth. You cannot save yourself

without getting involved in the salvation of others. As he said, "*I can't love Jesus Christ without wanting everyone to love him* ». [...]

« *Jesus Christ, the more you love him, the more you want to imitate him.* » Is that really true of us? Fr. d'Alzon, as did all the saints, wanted this without stinting. Perhaps this is a sensitive point, something that causes us to hesitate just as it was the case for those who put their hand to the plow but who kept looking back (cf Lk 9:62). "*Lord Jesus, may I be poor like you, obedient like you, chaste like you, in all things may I be like you*": perhaps we find this prayer difficult to recite when we're afraid that the Lord will take us at our word, even if we do believe that he never ceases to want us to be happy.

It is also true that imitating Christ goes hand in hand with obedience to the Church, with welcoming God's will as the Virgin Mary did, « "*Ah! How I must descend deep within my heart to see what prevails there: the Church or my interests and those of those around me! Woe to me if your Church is not above all other interests* ». « *Lord, may I imitate the dependence of your Mother in everything that you ask of me. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening* ».

In the world in which we live, people are always looking for what is « balanced ». In such a world there is a danger of us convincing ourselves that we should be able to carry out our mission without suffering. But the disciple is not greater than his master. We cannot eliminate the cross from our prayer and our activity.

Thinking of Fr. d'Alzon who made of his crucifix *a friend, a confidante*, let us ask for what Pope Francis called the grace of a « *combative hope* ». It neither promotes a cult of success nor settles for failure. It's what makes the difference between good and evil; it fights on, without either anxiety or illusion, but with the conviction of someone who is pursuing a sure goal. Hope is certain; it is the Father of truth who gives it to us (*In Him Alone Is Our Hope*, a compilation of the retreat talks given by then Cardinal Bergoglio to the Spanish bishops, 2006). One might add: it is the hope of the Virgin Mary.

This November 21, even if, and especially if, we have faithfully followed all the commandments for a long time (Mt 19,20), may the Lord help us hear again and understand better, in the words of Fr. d'Alzon, *this word which so few understand and which is, however, so full of love : Follow me* » ! And we can also make this prayer our own: "Lord, show me how to pray like apostolic men. And, by this prayer, if I am not yet sufficiently apostolic, may I become so more and more each day (*Prayers, Emmanuel d'Alzon, p. 73*). Amen!

+ Robert WATTEBLED,  
bishop of Nîmes  
Homily, November 21, 2013  
Mass at the tomb of  
Fr. d'Alzon



Sr. Claire Rabitz, OA and Fr. Julio Navarro, AA



Mr. Lachau, Sr. Claire, Fr. Marcelo Marciel, AA



Group sharing November 16



Bishop Wattebled, Fr. Julio Navarro and  
Bishop Bernard Fougère



Presentation by Postulator, Fr. Julio Navarro,  
to the priests of the diocese,  
November 21

## The total gift of self to Christ in the eyes of Fr. d'Alzon

O my Savior,  
grant me, I beg you,  
an immense love  
for you.  
O font of life,  
fill my soul;  
Savior of the world,  
may your blood flow in my veins.  
I want to love you alone,  
to live for you alone,  
to give myself entirely to you,  
regardless of the task  
or of the part of your field  
where you ask me to work,  
regardless of how  
you want to use me.

Lord, my God,  
come and live in my soul.  
Come and live in me  
so that I may live in you.  
May I be absorbed into that  
mysterious Oneness of which you  
spoke to your disciples  
at the Last Supper,  
those two great signs of love --  
the greatest man ever received  
from his God --  
the Eucharist and Calvary.  
And all my life I will remember  
that at its most critical moments  
I experienced an unlimited trust  
in Jesus.

(*Emmanuel d'Alzon, at 24 years old.*  
*Spiritual Writings, p. 765; Prayers*  
*Emmanuel d'Alzon, p.48*)

## Favors and graces received

- ▶ *Today the anniversary of Fr. d'Alzon's entry into God's Life in its fullness affords us a special opportunity once again to thank you for the time we spent with you (in Nîmes) in mid-October in the footsteps of the founder of the Assumptionists. Thank you so much for everything that we were able to learn about him through your community that makes him present today... Pierre continues to do extremely well and every day we give thanks for the goodness of the Lord and the powerful intercession of Fr. Alzon. Yes, he is ALIVE! (Pierre and Béatrice, Brussels)*
- ▶ *Would you be so kind as to celebrate Mass in honor of good Fr. d'Alzon, entrusting our three small grand-nephews to him? I made a novena to Our Lady in union with the religious men and women of the Assumption Family and all the pilgrims who attended the national pilgrimage in Lourdes... Good Fr. d'Alzon was there. (Yvonne, Sens, France).*
- ▶ *I received from the great and holy priest, Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon, founder of the Assumptionists, an enormous grace... I made the novena to Fr. d'Alzon; I had almost lost all hope for I didn't know what to do in the face of such a hopeless situation. When I was in the middle of the seventh day of the third novena, he conveyed this thought to me: "You can rest easy because the grace of God is at work." At that very moment I felt a great peace within my soul... Thanks be to God and to the intercession of Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon, I was able to be freed from such great suffering. (María, Vieiras, Minas Gerais, Brazil).*
- ▶ *Yes, I believe in God's intervention because I had no other recourse and I thank God because I didn't get all worked up but sought healing from Him alone. Recalling what I had learned as a member of the lay associates of the Oblates of the Assumption, the idea came to me to pray to Fr. d'Alzon and to ask others to pray for me. Yes, I really believe this miracle, the fact that my health improved, came through the intercession of Fr. d'Alzon. (Myriam, Butembo).*

## News from the Secretariats

- ▶ **Nîmes:** On November 21, the bishop of Nîmes, Most Rev. Robert Wattebled, celebrated the Eucharist with some 60 priests of the diocese in the chapel where the tomb of Fr. d'Alzon is located. He focused his homily on the Lord's call to holiness and he underlined how Fr. d'Alzon « appears to us as a witness and no doubt as a model ». He also composed a prayer to be distributed throughout the diocese requesting Fr. d'Alzon's beatification. In a presentation Fr. Julio Navarro, postulator for the cause, explained the reasons we have for making Fr. d'Alzon known and venerated as a saint of the Church of Nîmes. At the same time, contemplative nuns of the diocese joined themselves in prayer to those gathered for the same intention.
- ▶ **Goma :** Traditionally, on November 21 each year the Assumption Family recalls Venerable Emmanuel d'Alzon's birth into paradise. Lay Assumptionists in Goma solemnize this day by welcoming the latest contingent of candidates who have followed a formation program that year... This year the sixth group was inducted. The ceremony took place in very tense circumstances due to the extremely insecure climate of the eastern Congo. M23 rebels were at the city's gates... It took a lot of courage and faith in this context to take the time to honor Fr. d'Alzon's memory... Most Christians had just abandoned the parish where we remained – almost by ourselves... At 9:30 AM we began our gathering with Morning Prayer, during which our leader, Ferdinand, read the prayer for Fr. d'Alzon's beatification followed by the intercessions we have been addressing to him... Then we inducted the new group of Lay Assumptionists. At 11:30, we began the Mass... We proceeded to a reception and did not allow the general atmosphere of the city diminish the joy of our celebration... (Lay Assumptionists of Goma).
- ▶ **Kinshasa:** Greetings! Following the announcement of the members of the Secretariat of Kinshasa for the Cause of the Founder, we had a meeting which centered on a discovery of our mission, the demands of this mission, and the need to give new life to the Secretariat and to find new ways of collaborating with the postulator. The newly appointed members were pleased with the meeting and were really struck by the great responsibility they had accepted... Special note was made of the importance of taking as much advantage as possible of the postulation newsletter, SIGNS OF GOD (Fr. Jean-Marie Katabu).

A publication of the Secretariate for  
the Cause of the beatification  
of Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon.

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