

A News of the Assumption



EDITORIAL

A new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21,1)

« The renewal to which we are invited depends on resolute action for the transformation of our ways of acting. »

Agenda

Plenary General Council

- n°4: **June 8 to 18, 2019**, in Vietnam
Ordinary General Councils
- n°11: **February 5 to 8, 2019**
- n°12: **April 8 to 12, 2019**
- n°13: **May 30-31, 2019**
- n°14: **June 19, 2019**
- n°15: **September 9 to 24, 2019**

Benoît

- **January 9-29**: Korea and the Philippines.
- **February 14-16**: Florence (Oblates).
- **March 11-28**: Brazil

• Marcelo

- **February 2-4**: Paris (Council of Province of Europe).
- **March 11-28**: Brazil.

Didier

- **January 16-19**: Paris (College of Consultors).
- **February 20-March 6**: Brazil.

Thierry

- **January 21-26**: Istanbul.
- **March**: United States.

Miguel

- **January 13-20**: Florence (retreat).
- **January 31-February 4**: Paris (Justice & Peace Assumption)

On front page

The creation of Adam, by Michael-Angelo (ceiling of the Sixtine Chapel, at Vatican) - detail. An invitation to let God continue his work of Creation, in us as well as around us, making "all things new".

Letter from the Assumption Family to the Pope

CONGREGATIONS OF THE ASSUMPTION

Religious of the Assumption, Augustinians of the Assumption
Oblates of the Assumption, Little Sisters of the Assumption
Orantes of the Assumption

H.H. Pope Francis
Vatican City

Most Holy Father,

The religious men and women of the family of the Assumption want to show you their filial attachment. Meeting for the annual General Council of our five congregations, we wanted to reaffirm our loyalty to you. You lead our Church with the desire to make it ever more faithful to the Gospel and you constantly invite us to conversion in order to witness to the prophetic value of the consecrated life.

Our congregations are present in more than 40 countries in all continents and more than 3,000 religious men and women work for the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Our founders have communicated to us from the beginning their passion for Christ and their love for the Church. We share in the joys and sorrows of the men and women of our time and stand in solidarity with their efforts to build a peaceful and just world. Present in certain peripheries of our world, we want to testify to the mercy of God and his tenderness for all, especially with migrants, displaced persons, orphans, and people bruised by war and violence.

We are sons and daughters of the Church and we suffer especially in these troubled times by scandals committed by some of its members, especially those towards the smallest and the weakest. Together with you, we want to work on our conversion and that of our institutions and communities. We suffer also from the attacks on you which tear apart the unity and communion of the people of God.

You invite us to a high fidelity to the message of Our Lord Jesus. And together with you we want to work for the renewal of our Church. We recognize in you the Pastor who guides us with a firm and helpful hand on the path of the Kingdom.

We pledge to continue praying for you and for your ministry as bishop of Rome. We are available to answer any calls you make to us.

Most Holy Father, we humbly request your apostolic blessing for all our brothers and sisters of the Assumption and for the laity who collaborate in our mission. We express our filial affection to you.

December 1, 2018

Sister Rekha, R.A;
Father Benoît Grière, A.A;
Sister Felicia Ghiorghies, O.A,
Sister Marie-Françoise Phelippeau, P.S.A,
Sister Anne Huyghebaert, Or.A.

A new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21,1)



Fr. Benoît Grière
Superior General
of the
Augustinians of
the Assumption

Have you ever seen the wonder of children contemplating the Christmas crib? Their eyes shine with joy before the Child Jesus, Mary, Joseph and the various animals. The simplicity of their heart allows them to see the promise that is borne by the newly born baby. With Noel, we are invited to the unexpected of God bursting into our world. The new year is here and we all carry in our hearts the Hope of a better world. Faith in Jesus makes us wait in hope for the renewal of all things because the Incarnation of the Son of God is at the origin of a radical transformation of the universe. Creation as a whole is called to a renewal which will definitively establish it in the love of God. Such, then, is my hope and my wish on the threshold of this new year. I pray that each of us will be transformed and metamorphosed by the grace of God.

The Assumption, with a history of more than 160 years, continues its journey with its strengths and weaknesses. We all know the hardness of the road and we know that we need new forces to support our march. The first of the forces lies in our conversion to evangelical values. The religious knows that he cannot fulfill his mission if he has not been filled by the force of the Holy Spirit. To welcome the Spirit of Jesus is to renounce the values of the world: the thirst for power, the search for riches, selfishness and individualism, the quest for immediate enjoyment. If the fight is tough, we know that God is with us and He will never leave us.

The 33rd General Chapter asked that each of us work on unity in a divided world. This unity is already beginning in our hearts. No places for divided hearts, that is for hearts that have not really chosen God and his Kingdom. But the

struggle is also going on in community. The division of the brothers is a counter-testimony to the Gospel and its call for unity. Assumptionist communities must always meet the challenge of unity through concrete actions. Let us learn to look at the brother with gentleness and confidence. Let us see in him a being capable of conversion and renewal. The fight for unity unfolds in the Church, our Mother. The news shows us that the current stakes are huge. It is important not to give up on the difficulties we face. The renewal to which we are invited depends on resolute action for the transformation of our ways of acting. Let us give more room for debate, dialogue and fraternal exchange of ideas and opinions.

Let us learn to seek consensus and be ready to compromise. Let also our lay friends help us discern the signs of the times to be more faithful to Emmanuel d'Alzon. The new heaven that is promised to us is the horizon of the Kingdom of God which is revealed little by little in our eyes. Even if the weather is foggy, we know that the thinning will come and we can move forward. The new earth is the world reconciled. A world where men and women live in harmony and peace. A world of justice where everyone has his/her place. God is the God of the novelty and the unexpected. Let us not shut off the power of renewal brought by the child of Bethlehem in our calculations and strategies. Let him take the initiative because it can take us much further than we can hope.

So, let us keep our ability of wonder intact: God does all things new. With God, let us work for the renewal of our world. ■

Calls, nominations, changes...

Father Benoît Grière, Superior General, with his Council, has called

■ TO ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

1) **MUME BADESE Toussaint-Flavien**
(Africa), 17/12/2018

2) **CHIBALONZA Lubanja Marc**
(Africa), 17/12/2018

3) **VIHAMBAMUSOSOTYA Jean Paul**
(Africa), 17/12/2018

4) **KAKULE LUTUNDE Marius**
(Africa), 17/12/2018

5) **MUHINDO VAHOTERANA Eric**
(Africa), 17/12/2018



■ APPOINTMENTS

Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the consent of his Ordinary General Council, has appointed: :

Fr **KIZITO VYAMBWERA Henri, Superior Vice-Provincial of East Africa**, for a 1st triennium, from January 1st, 2019 (read the portrait of the new Vice-Provincial on Page 11);



Fr. **Gervais MUHINDO BAKERETI, Director of the "Development and Solidarity Office" (BDS)**, from January 1st, 2019 (read the portrait of the new Vice-Provincial on Page 10).



■ APPROVAL OF FORMATORS

Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the consent of his Plenary General Council, has approved the appointment:



of Fr. **Jean-Luc ECKERT as superior of the formation community of Lyon** (France, Province of Europe);



of Fr. **François-Xavier, NGUYEN Tien Dung as superior of the scholasticate of Saigon-Fatima** (Vietnam, Province of Europe);



of Fr. **Erick RAHARIVELO as superior of the formation community of Ampandranana** (Madagascar);



of Fr. **Jean de Dieu KATEMBO KAMUNDU as Director of Formation for the Province of Africa.**

■ OPENING & CLOSING OF HOUSES

Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the consent of his Plenary General Council, has ordered his agreement for:

- the opening of a community in **Miharisoa (Madagascar)**;

- the closure of the formation community **"Manuel d'Alzon" of Cerro Navia in Santiago (Chile, Andean Province)**.

The Rule of Life Updated

Following the 33rd General Chapter, and after consultation with the Holy See, the CGP (gathered in Rome in December, 2018) endorsed several modifications to the Rule of Life

We recall : the principal decision of the 2017 General Chapter regarding the Rule of Life consisted of returning to the previous text of 2011 on the subject of the General Treasurer (and, consequently, on Provincial Treasurers)

Decisions of the 33rd General Chapter

Where the 32nd General Chapter modified n. 131 to make the General Treasurer an Assistant to the General outright, the 33rd General Chapter chose to return to the previous text in rewording n°131 of the Rule: “The General Treasurer assists the Ordinary General Council. If he is not an Assistant, he votes only on matters that have economic implications.” (Acts nn. 180-181, as well as nn. 180 and 183 ff. for the Provincial Treasurer.) N. 101 of the *Rule of Life* was reworded in the same way for the Provincial Treasurer. Similarly, nn. 79, 87, 91 and 92 of the *Rule of Life* were each modified in their turn, to reposition the Provincial Treasurer within the various governing bodies of the Province (Provincial Council, Provincial Chapter, Council of the Province).

The reaction of the Holy See

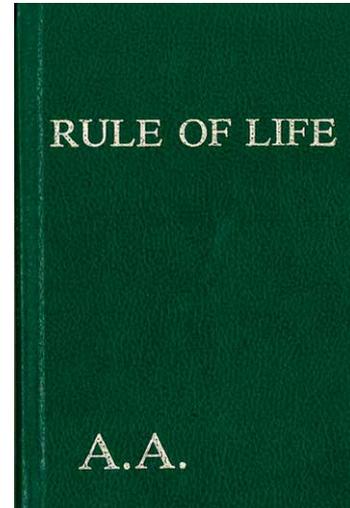
It is necessary for a religious institution to receive pontifical approval for certain decisions. Therefore, these modifications to

the *Rule of Life* were presented to the Vatican (CIVCSVA---Congrégation pour les Instituts de Vie consacrée et les Sociétés de Vie apostolique). Because we were returning to a previous version of the *Rule*, we expected that receiving this *nihil obstat* would just be a formality.

The response from the Holy See to our request was negative regarding the voting rights of the General Treasurer (and similarly for the Provincial Treasurer) if he was not an Assistant. In a letter dated June 12, 2018, the CIVCSVA justified its refusal on the following point: “The provisions n°101 and 131, that give the treasurer the right to vote only on economic matters if he is not an assistant, do not correspond to the norms and actual orientations on the office of treasurer, in particular the document ‘The economy at the service of the charism and mission’ (n°64 of our document).

The document noted here is dated January 6, 2018, and it was published by the CIVCSVA the following March. The following constitutes n°64: “it is appropriate that the treasurer participates in meetings of the Council of the Superior concerning financial matters, and although he doesn't have voting rights if he is not an assistant, he assures the Superior and his Council that he will provide the necessary knowledge to achieve a balanced decision.

The document from the Holy See is clear: if the Treasurer (General or Provincial, the local level not being concerned here) is



not clearly an Assistant, he does not have any right to vote in the Council, even for matters that have a specific economic impact.

For this reason, in its response to our request, the CIVCSVA stated: « We approve the proposed modifications in so far as the treasurer, either General or Provincial, is not an ex officio member of the Council. The treasurer will be invited to the Council to discuss economic questions so that he can provide the Council with his viewpoint.”

The decision of the Ordinary General Council and the opinion of the Plenary General Council

We have, therefore, made contact with the Vatican and with experts on the consecrated life, in light of finding a solution on this decision, which goes against the decision made by our Chap- ▶

ter. However, according to the information gathered, the latest philosophy of the Holy See is to confine the treasurer to a function of expertise: he should not influence decisions within his expertise (or even be a judge and party when the Council has to decide on Economic Council recommendations), unless he has been elected or appointed a member of the Council, thus having full capacity to participate in all decisions, including those with an economic impact. We are told to distinguish between management skills (relegated more and more to the laity) primarily, and the office of government (reserved to members of the Institute) on the other hand.

The Superior General, in his Ordinary General Council, has therefore endorsed the decision of the Holy See: if we wish that the General Treasurer (or Provincial Treasurer) no longer be a member by right of the Council (which was the decision of the 33rd General Chapter), we must then return to the texts before 2011, but with something added: this Treasurer will not have any voting rights unless he is also an assistant.

Solicited, in turn, to approve the new wording for the *Rule of Life*, the CGP gave its unanimous approval. We will find the new wording of the cited numbers based on the decisions of the 33rd General Chapter and the response of the Holy See. A new edition of the entire *Rule* will be prepared by the General Secretariat, in the three languages of the Congregation; translations in other languages will be able to be published, thereafter, by the Provinces according to their needs.

Fr. Michel Kubler
Procurateur General

The new wording of the passages of the Rule of Life modified following the 33rd General Chapter

* No. 79 (cf. Acts of the 33rd General Chapter, No. 184):

The Provincial Superior exercises ordinary authority in the Province. In this responsibility, he is assisted by his ordinary Council, the Provincial Treasurer and the Plenary Council. His role of animation and organization places him at the service of the unity of the Province.

* No. 87 (cf. Acts, No. 185):

The Provincial Chapter is composed of:

- a) Ex officio members: the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors, the Assistants to the Provincial, the Provincial Treasurer, the religious responsible for formation who has been selected by the Provincial with the consent of his Council, the Regional Superiors and those religious, be they local superiors or not, to whom the Provincial Statutes grant this right;
- b) Elected delegates. These must constitute a majority of the Chapter.

* No. 91 (not mentioned by the General Chapter) :

The Assistants form the Ordinary Council of the Provincial.

* No. 92 (cf. Acts, No. 186) :

The Provincial Chapter elects, in accordance with the norms established in the Capitular Rules, a certain number of religious who, together with the Ordinary Council and the Provincial Treasurer, constitute the Plenary Council of the Province.

* No. 101 (cf. Acts, No. 188) :

The Provincial Treasurer shall administer and manage directly all of the commonly owned assets of the Province and, where applicable, the property and contents of the Provincial House, under the responsibility of the Provincial Superior with the assistance of his Council, and in accordance with the norms of the Congregation and of the Province.

He is appointed for three years renewable. He is at the service of the local Treasurers and oversees their financial administration. He may be an Assistant to the Provincial but not the First Assistant.

If he is not an Assistant, he shall be invited to the Council for cases having an economic impact, in an advisory capacity.

On a regular basis, he reports on his management to this Council and submits to its approval the account books along with the supporting documents if need be.

* No. 131 (cf. Acts, No. 181) :

The General Treasurer, on a regular basis, reports on his management to the General Council and submits to its approval the account books along with supporting documents if need be.

If he is not an Assistant, he shall be invited to the Council for cases having an economic impact, in an advisory capacity.

Establishment of new structures

The PGC allowed reviewing the progress of the community organization decided by the 33rd General Chapter.

* Vice-Province of East Africa

The Superior General, after the consultation of all the religious of the current Region concerned, proceeded on December 17 to the appointment of the first Vice-Provincial of East Africa, in the person of Fr. Kizito Vyambwere Henri (read his portrait opposite).

Even before this “historical” appointment, the PGC had validated the next steps in the implementation of this new structure, namely:

- the inauguration on January 1, 2019, with the entry into office of the Vice-Provincial;
- the construction of the Vice-Provincial Council, which will prepare the electoral law and convene the constituent Chapter of the Vice-Province;
- the holding of the Chapter, before June 2019, which will in particular have to elect the Council of Vice-Province;
- the Vice-Provincial’s participation in the PGC in June 2019, in order to present his project.

The Superior General has strongly insisted, in this regard, on the great work of accompaniment of the religious that will be necessary in strengthening the international and intercultural fraternity. And he asked Father Miguel Díaz Ayllón, Assistant General, to accompany during this first year the young Vice-Province; he will be present at the Chapter. It was also pointed out that this Vice-Province will

be an integral part of the Province of Africa: there is therefore no need for religious concerned to be eventually transferred to the new structure.

* Vicariate of Asia-Oceania

The Inter-Asian Forum in June 2018 has enabled progress on the implementation process of this Vicariate, setting various committees: communication, formation, finances and Statutes. The Formation Commission will have a particularly busy program, including training of formators, language learning policy, CIFA, intercultural activities during the Summer, charism and a.a. spirituality, pilgrimages, new communities in Asia, meetings of perpetual professed, deacons and young priests, and finally formation for the mission.

Concerning the Statutes of the Vicariate, they have been prepared by a commission, presented to the Inter-Asian Forum, reworked by the Provincial Council of Europe and then sent to OGC, which slightly amended them. It is this final version that was presented to the vote of the PGC by the Superior General, and which was adopted.

* Vicariate of West Africa

Commissions were set up for the animation of the delegation and the preparation of this Vicariate. It is noted that the setting up of this structure is facilitated by the fact that the brothers of West Africa come from the same

cultural area. On the contrary, it is more complex in Asia, due to cultural differences between Koreans, Vietnamese and Filipinos as well as between old and younger.

The Statutes of the Vicariate of West Africa were also prepared by a commission, reworked in the Provincial Council of Europe and then transmitted to the OGC, which amended them. This last version was presented to the vote of the PGC by the Superior General, and was adopted.

* Vicariate of Kinshasa

The PGC, informed by the Provincial of Africa, noted a delay compared to the deadlines for the setting up of this structure. During his last visit, the Superior General asked for a work that will be evaluated during his visit next April: it is only then that it will be possible to move towards the work on the Statutes and to discern when the time comes the erection of the Vicariate.

It should be noted that after more than 25 years of presence in Kinshasa, where our arrival was motivated mainly by the concern for formation of our young brothers, our presence is now reduced to a formation house, a parish, the community of the postulate and a new community that starts slowly. The ambition of the Congregation to develop its activity in the West of the DRC is very strong. For this we need bold, generous and selfless apostles. ■

Following the Mobilizing Works

The CGP carried out its annual evaluation of four of the seven works deemed mobilizing works by the General Chapter for the whole body of the Assumption



ISEAB

Are you familiar with ISEAB ? Discover the UAC! Behind these acronyms, the same reality, however with a new status: our “Insitut Supérieur Emmanuel d’Alzon de Butembo” (Higher Institute Emmanuel d’Alzon of Butembo) has become “l’Université de l’Assomption au Congo” (the University of the Assumption in the Congo), due to the recognition by the State as University, for the whole of our establishment by the Congolese government. This prestigious recognition will permit us to grant diplomas that will be recognized in all fields of study.

Besides this major symbolic event, the news of our University in North-Kivu was marked by a seminar on the peaceful management of conflicts (with

80 participants, coming mainly from civil groups). Because of the creation of a computer laboratory, the following are remarks by Fr. Wilfrid Kibanda, its Director General:

“It’s been five years since ISEAB organized training in computer management due to difficulties associated with the absence of appropriate teaching materials and the absence of a permanent source of electrical energy. On October 15, 2018, due to the generosity of the Porticus organization and through inter-Assumption solidarity, we had the great joy of inaugurating this unique gem in its proper environment. It consists of 50 high-powered PCs networked through a central server. This network allows the teacher to evaluate and

supervise, from a distance, the students’ activities and achievements on their own screens. Additionally, it benefits everyone by projecting them onto the main screen using the Netsupport software, for which ISEAB now holds a perpetual operating license. The laboratory is protected by an electronic alarm, a grid circuit, an automated electronic door and surveillance cameras.

This useful teaching tool will enable students to be introduced to the newest information technology, in an automated management form, and lastly to progressively integrate Kivu into the world economy. This allows ISEAB to become competitive and to work toward opening up its economy and digital access of the region.

Thanks to all the communities that contributed to the Assumption Solidarity Campaign of 2017 and therefore aided in the realization of this project!"

Assumption College

Our university in Worcester understands full-well the challenges that face private institutions of higher learning in the United States. In fact, the population of prospective students is dropping, particularly in the Northeast of the United States. The reasons are demographic, but also, economic: the tuition is extremely costly, and one must look for solutions to these high costs. Moreover, the demand for academic training is changing. It is necessary to adapt by developing new programs in order to remain viable.

Another big concern is the presence of religious at Assumption College: the North American Province is such that it will not be able to sustain putting religious in teaching assignments, let alone having them in pastoral work on campus. However, this is a mobilizing work! The College truly hopes that more religious will become invested, either through teaching semester courses, or as philosophy students, knowing that the criteria for becoming instructors are stringent regarding language and academic requirements. An encouraging aspect: the collaborations with other Assumptionist institutions throughout the world are progressing well, notably in Manila (consultation), Butembo (help with management and development), Buenos Aires (welcoming Argentinian students to Worcester) and, most definitely, Rome (housing students in "Villino Dufault"). Assumption College also main-

tains connections with Bayard-United States.

Accompagner

The activity of this work was marked by a doubling of its salaried workforce between 2017 and 2018. It went from two employees to four---with two being full-time. In light of receiving recognition by the State, it was necessary to move to a more spacious location. The association carried out 1,037 "accompaniments" in all areas (health, lodging, etc.) that were the result of various means: 410 were requested "directly" (clients come to Accompagner requesting assistance for their needs), and 627 were requested through partner services. These partners do not have the means to fulfill the demands of the clients, therefore, they sub-contract with Accompagner.

It should be noted that the link with the Assumption is not only through the work of one religious, Guy Leroy, but through two. Fr. Paul Ngyuen Van Hung arrived from Vietnam to be trained in the field of social work. It goes without saying that we receive aid from the Assumption Prayer Group and also, most certainly, from the community of the Rue des Braves. In the short term, the main challenges are obtaining legal recognition, the relocation to a new space, the integration of the new staff and putting together the new management team. In the meantime, the management committee needs to be renewed.

Bayard

The presentation of this work was given to the CGP by two members of its Board of Directors: Pascal Ruffenach, President, and Fr. André Antoni a.a.,

Director General. In a time of major crisis for the press, Bayard appears to be one of the few stable and independent entities for quite some time. Additionally, its brand and its notoriety were never more prominent in France, than what we saw with the sexual abuse scandal in the Church. For this, its publications became an authority. However, being known and respected doesn't always mean it is being read and purchased . . . the breakdown appears as follows: 40% publications for the youth, 35% for religious topics and 25% for senior citizens.

The field of communication is very unstable, and could evoke a shift some day, due to economic standards and regulations, not to mention new practices of consumption: are we looking at free digital use, for example? The terrain is risky, and we are never safe from pitfalls. The same applies for the religious context, with the crisis throughout the Church, particularly in France and the United States. Bayard is clearly situated in the religious field, and even though it portrays an excellent image, societal behaviors can change rapidly.

Besides this actuality from our press group, the presentation with the CGP insisted upon internationalism, and in particular, the developments of the religious publications in the diverse continents:

- in West Africa : in Ouagadougou, Abidjan and now Accra, in partnership with the diocese; Bayard materials are dispensed in countries where there are no Bayard offices (Rwanda, Nigeria, Cameroun. . .);

- in East Africa: in Nairobi, since July 2018 (and later, near Kenya toward southern Africa ;

- in Asia: in Manila, Saigon ▶



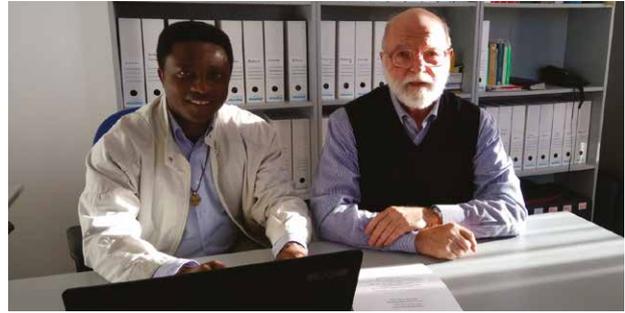
and now Mumbai (India), in partnership with Tranzmedia. Projects in Korea, Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and the Emirates!

The principal publications in these countries are Prions en Eglise (in English: Living with Christ, or Living with Faith, according to the countries), religious editions for youth, editions for local churches, and La Croix International. The challenge is to adapt existing titles to local realities.

The investment is significant, with a total of tens of thousands of copies, including nearly 30,000 copies of Prions en Eglise in all languages and editions combined. Of note is the important international development of the daily newspaper La Croix, centered on religious information through the Internet (Facebook primarily): La Croix Africa in French (free), La Croix International in English (must be paid), Vida, fe y actualidad in Spanish (free)

These settlements are often decided and made in conjunction with the Assumption (today 20 religious are working in Bayard on a world-wide scale, among 2,000 salaried employees). This poses the question of a co-responsibility of the congregation with this perspective: it is an enterprise for which we are all responsible along with the lay people who manage it. This realization should be promoted among the entire congregation. And we wish, in turn, that the company can benefit from our expertise in the various contexts where we are present: thus, a true partnership in the service of Christian humanism focused on encountering Christ through the media for which we are responsible. ■

Passing the Baton at the Development and Solidarity Bureau



This 1st of January, Fr. Gervais Muhindo Bakerethi replaces Fr. Luc Martel as director of the DSB

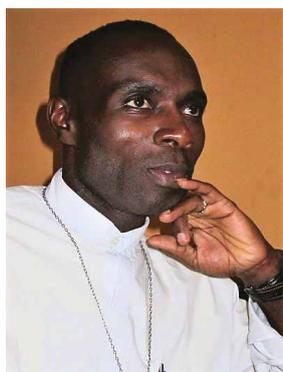
Created 10 years ago, the Development and Solidarity Bureau of the congregation had only one person in charge, its founder Fr. Luc Martel (Province of North America). Now that the DSB has come to its maturity, the time is ripe for the former General Treasurer, an American of 74, to pass the baton: this 1st of January, Fr. Gervais Muhindo Bakerethi (Province of Africa), up to now deputy director, will take over as the head of the organization in charge of finding financing for the development works of the Assumption. A Congolese of 44 arriving from Florence to Due Pini last September, he will be able to count on the assistance of Fr. Luc until next summer to receive the various dossiers: the transition should be rather smooth.

Upon leaving his responsibilities, Fr. Luc presented to the PGC his 'will', while Fr. General expressed his gratitude in the name of the whole congregation. The out-going director reported that the creation of the DSB was something quite new and that many people were then doubtful about its success: yet, this organization has allowed finding some 300,000 Euros yearly. Then he gave an account of his mandate, marked by ever increasing activity, passing from 39 to 57 dossiers a year. The bureau has acquired also necessary professional skills. Judging that the office is too heavy a workload for a single person, Fr. Luc suggests that a network of correspondents be established throughout the Provinces for the preparation and the follow-up of the various projects.

Fr. General took the opportunity to request from the concerned Provincials to see to the quality of the requests in the greatest transparency: in particular, it is necessary to make sure that religious do not make requests of solidarity outside the regular proceedings of the DSB or even their Provincial Superior. The members of the PGC thanked Fr. Luc, wishing him well while counting on his continual support which he himself promised. ■

Father Henri Kizito Vyambwera, Vice-Provincial of East Africa

“I am pleased to announce the appointment of Father Henri Kizito Vyambwera as Vice-Provincial of East Africa”.



Thus, the evening of Tuesday, December 18, the R.F. Benoit Griere, Superior General, announced to the members of the PGC the appointment of the very first superior of the new structure set up within the Province of Africa. Who is Henri Kizito Vyambwera? He is current-

ly Novice Master at Saint-Kizito Novitiate in Arusha, Tanzania. Aged of 49 years old, he started postulancy in August 1990 in Kindugu community in Butembo town. The following year, he made his novitiate at the Saint-Charles Lwanga community, an experience that ended with his first profession on October 8, 1992. He continued his religious journey in the Scholasticate community of Saint-Augustine of Bulengera for his studies in philosophy (1992-1995), then at the Theology Scholasticate Emmanuel d’Alzon in Kinshasa (1996-2000). After his ordination in August 2002, Kizito was appointed to the community of Rome for spiritual theology studies and training of formators at the Gregorian University.

After his training, he dedicated his ministry to the formation of our young brothers in the Province of Africa. He was successively Novice Master at the Saint-Charles Lwanga Novitiate in Butembo (2005-2011), Superior of the CIFA of Nairobi (2012-2014) then Master of Novices at Kizito House (Arusha) since August 2014.

Who knows Kizito cannot do without noticing, among other qualities, his passion for training in discretion, his availability and simplicity. He is a brother who takes seriously his religious consecration and who carries in him the concern to train young religious who are convinced and true disciples of Fr. d’Alzon.

F. Thierry KAMBALE KAHONGYA

Final homily, excerpts.

“To hope is to believe that God is acting in me”

Concluding this session of the GPC on December 12, 2018, Father General returned in his final homily to the virtue of hope. Excerpts.

Today we listen to the prophet Isaiah: *“Those who put their hope in the Lord find new strength; they spread like eagle wings, they run untiringly, they walk untiringly”*. As the congregation receives my letter on hope, I rejoice that we are leaving on this passage from Isaiah. To put one’s hope in the Lord is the strongest desire I have for each of us and especially for us who have for mission to support the weakest and to encourage our Assumptionist brothers.

So what can we do to put our hope in the Lord? First of all, we must surrender ourselves to God in prayer. God is the main actor in our lives, and we are collaborators in his work. Hope is already believing that, whatever my strengths, my intelligence, my abilities or weaknesses and my sin, it is God who acts in me. This attitude of abandonment contradicts our natural pride. We are so happy to take credit for the successes we have and so reluctant to be overwhelmed that we have bitter failures. Humility, dear to Augustine, is the only way to allow God to act with power in our weakness.

Hope is cultivated through action. We must not give up on the impossible situations we face. Desertion and abdication are always possible, but hope is the virtue that allows us to continue the fight. Those responsible today are overwhelmed by many concerns. Suffice is to talk about the drama of abuse, or embezzlement. Let us therefore remain in action, let us not desert the fight and let us seek, despite our poverty, possible solutions to pursue our mission.

Hope is also the lucidity about ourselves. God trusts us! Sometimes we may doubt our abilities, out of humility, but we must not despair of what God can do with us. God chose us not because we are the best, but because He loves us.

So everyone will join their province, their community, their mission. Fatigue will still be there. But Jesus tells us today: *“Come to me, I will give you rest”*. Yes, let us go to the Lord, it is He who gives us true rest. To do this, let’s give him some free time, make an appointment with him. Then the burden will be easy to carry.

**P. Benoît Grière
General Superior**

Farewell to the Boxtel castle...

After a full century of vivid presence, Assumption has just left this important community for the Dutch religious. The departure was highly celebrated on 26 August 2018. Here some extracts of the speech of Fr. Jan Zuiker on this opportunity.



Today is a very special day, a historical event, that of the farewell to the Castel and the park. In reality, this is the beginning of the end of the presence of the Assumption in the Netherlands. No doubt, you are aware of the specificity of this fact; the number of visitors speaks by itself. For the last 103 years the Assumptionists have worked and lived here. All of this is past history. One thing came to my mind: what has been its meaning, what good work has been achieved? In this castle and the big building next to it (Saint Teresa minor seminary), around 300 priests and lay brothers have received their formation. They have sown the message of the Kingdom in our country and abroad: Africa, South America, New Zealand and the Middle East. For sure, not all the stu-

dents of the seminary have become Assumptionists, far from that. But all have received an intellectual and spiritual formation which has prepared them for a respected contribution to society.

Along the years, the castle had many functions: minor seminary until 1927, warehouse for Saint Teresa, then, in 1938, it has become the center of all the apostolic activities of the Assumption in the Netherlands. The Dutch Province was erected in 1946: management, treasurer's office, external pastoral activities like the Apostolate for the Unity of the Church, missionary exhibits, vocation ministry, etc.

These last years, the activities were reduced and the life in the castle became somewhat quiet. But it always remained the mother-house, the center for missionaries coming for their holidays

and eventually their rest home. That has been up to now.

This would bring us too far if we were to mention all the various apostolic projects that were undertaken in the country. Nonetheless, let us state one particular apostolate: many young religious attracted by the life, the liturgy and the theology of the Orthodox Churches of the Middle East, have undergone specialized studies in this great field of the work of the Assumption. The Institute for Byzantine studies was born and it still exists under the Catholic University of Nimegen, under the name of The Institute for Oriental Christianity. Let us add to this the pastoral work in five parishes and the industrial world.

All of this is past history; nowadays, there are but 11 Assumptionist religious in the Netherlands whose median age is over 80. Some are still working part-time in the pastoral field. But all of this was made possible thanks to this mother-house and what was created elsewhere starting from here.

Of course, it is sad to say goodbye to this glorious past without future. But it seems to me better to remember it with gratitude rather than spending our time lamenting. This century long activity has brought much wealth inside and outside. We are closing in on an era with some melancholy in our hearts, but also with the satisfaction that a lot of good things have been accomplished. We hold firm the trust that the Spirit of God will not forget our dear homeland.

Fr. Jan Zuiker

Devotion, veneration, invocation

What does it mean for us to work for the cause of beatification of Fr. D'Alzon?

The text of animation produced by the 33rd General Chapter about the postulation, despite its too general character, wanted to give a few hints in order to develop a practical devotion to Fr. D'Alzon. To favor a closer look at the one who teaches us some heroic virtues recognized by the Church. The document suggests that we chose anniversary celebrations, pilgrimage initiatives, a more regular reading of his writings and study about him. In short, through a deeper understanding of the spirit of Fr. D'Alzon, the question is to build the way to have a greater devotion towards him.

First, let us get to know the nature of such a devotion. Would that be an outdated preoccupation or a remote idea from modern day religious sensitivity, a practice to be relegated to ancient popular religiosity? Which kind of devotion do we want to promote in order to advance the cause of beatification of Fr. D'Alzon? Would the best way to work at it be the prayer according to the characteristics given by saint Bernard: *'Prayer requires seven things: it must be dictated by faith, according to what the Gospel says: 'Whatever you ask through prayer, believe that you will get it indeed.'* (Mk 11:24). *Then it must be pure, like the prayer of Abraham who would scare the birds from his holocausts. Thirdly, prayer must be just, then diligent, humble and fervent: these two qualities are found in the image of*

the mustard seed; lastly it must be with devotion.' (1) This kind of prayer must use ancient and new practices defined by three principles: devotion, veneration and invocation, as will be now explained.

Devotion

What does the word mean? If there is but one word outdated and worn out, this is the one. Devotion (from the Latin word *devotio*, which produced the adjective *devotus*: devoted and the verb *ovovere*: to devote to, which gave the word vow) carries elements of unequal value and translates a notion somewhat old fashion. Already in his time, Fr. D'Alzon was denouncing this excess, quoting *'word falling into some sort of disdain caused by the mockery of the impious, the stupidity of some bigot, the hypocrisy of some others,'* and he would add: *'But is there something more beautiful than this feeling itself!'* (2)

In its Latin root, the word signifies an act inherited from the ancient pagan culture which took over the time:

1) a *religious* meaning to designate the action of a person with a sacred vow;

2) a *civic* meaning which refers to the devotion that a citizen vows to his leader;

3) an *ethical* meaning to show respect, obedience and faithfulness by attachment to a person or to a cause. The word is used to designate also an attitude of respect, submission of affection towards another person.

In the Christian tradition, devotion translates 'a sincere and fervent attachment to a religion and its practices.' It designates the external practice and the inner dispositions of a person. It translates a spiritual experience closer to the perceptive activity than the abstract speculation. It belongs to the symbolic order, to this sensitive sign always bearing a certain affective energy.

Already in the 3rd century, it covers the action of the worship and the virtues of religion. Saint Ambrose (340-397) speaks about *devotion* as '*charity at service*' and considers it as the basis of all virtues.



In the Middle Ages, this notion integrates the four activities of prayer: *lectio, meditatio, oratio* and *contemplatio*. (3) Saint Bernard (1090-1153) defines it as a gift from God: *'the inner fervor of the soul kindled by the fire of love'*. He says: *'it is a grace that few people receive but that can be increased and intensified. It fills the soul with joy, gentleness and sweetness'*. Saint Bonaventure (1217-1274) centers it on the person of Jesus, his humanity, his incarnation. Saint Thomas (1225-1274) sees it as the first inner act of the virtue of religion, as *'the prompt desire to give oneself totally to God and to all that belongs to the service of God.'* And he adds: *'You like devotion towards human beings, why wouldn't you love devotion towards God?'* Devotion means the personal union with God in view of the apostolic and liturgical service: *'That man consecrates himself to God adhering to him thanks to a certain spiri-*

tual union is an immediate act of charity. But the consecration to God by the works of divine worship is an immediate act of the virtue of religion and an act of the virtue of charity, which is the principle of religion.' (4)

It is only in the 14th century that what we refer to as 'modern devotion' started, a mystical movement that developed a spiritual doctrine called *Imitation of Jesus Christ*, a book attributed to Thomas a Kempis which proposes an emotional link between the individual and Christ. It is the book most published besides the Bible.. The word 'devotion' can be found in it 53 times as a noun (devotion) and 53 times as an adjective (devotus). (5) In the 17th century, the French School of Spirituality clings to this authentic Christian devotion in order to work for the renewal of the faith and of society. As a precursor, François de Sales publishes in 1608 his *Introduction to the devout life* which is some-

how an initiation to prayer life.

In the insight that it has developed, devotion has as a vector the virtue of charity (6): *'The essential quality that has made it possible for a person to receive the devotion of the Church is the recognition of his excellent love for God... Is worthy of devotion the person who has experienced by grace the love of God and has received from him the ability to love him faithfully until the end to a high degree of perfection in charity. Besides God, the Church grants its devotion only to the friends of God: which means to those persons who gave back to God the love that he first gave them in a supreme way, officially recognized after a meticulous discernment.'* (7)

It is really this kind of authentic devotion, when we speak about this permanent disposition of total offering that Fr. D'Alzon did of his person towards God. That is an offering from the creature to his creator, an attitude of total and active availability of himself in order to manifest the glory of God and to proclaim his most entire union with Christ, manifestation of the incarnate God. He speaks about it in order to ask himself about its nature, his devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist, to the Spirit who prays in us, to Mary in her virginity and her humility, to the angels, our guardians, to the saints, our guides.

The total availability of Fr. D'Alzon to the action of God thus invites us today to classify him as one of these great guides and to express to him veneration and invocation. These two hold a specific place along with devotion. They are expressed in a particular relation between an exceptional individual and a community which takes him as

1) Saint Bernard, Opus, 43

2) Les Instructions du Samedi, Paris, Maison de la Bonne Presse, 1932, p. 15

3) Article 'Devotion' by André Dodin, in Dictionary of Religions, PUF, 1984, p. 403.

4) Summa Theologia, 11a 11ae, q. 82, a.1 and 2 Quoted from Traité de théologie spirituelle from Charles André Bernard, Cerf, 1986, p. 345 (Collection 'Théologies')

5) There are like a hundred of French translations. Among the most famous ones are those of Pierre Corneille (1656), of Félicité Lamennais (1825). Fr. d'Alzon in a note of 7 January 1857 thought that each novice should have a Bible and an *Imitation of Jesus Christ* (Ecrits spirituels p. 1066).

6) Catechism of the Catholic Church (CEC) mentions it 4 times: no. 957 to give as an example the devotion to the martyrs according to saint Polycarpe, no. 2101 talking about personal promises or acts of piety made to God; no. 2102 when it states also that *'the vow of religion is an act of devotion in which a Christian vows himself to God or promises a good action.'* And lastly, no. 2208, quoting Jn 1:27: *'The pure and stainless devotion in front of God our Father means this: to visit the orphans and the widows in their ordeal and to stay away from any worldly stains.'*

7) *La théologie du Coeur de Marie chez saint Jean Eudes* by Paul-Marie M'Ba, Paris, Cerf, 2017. 638 pp. (Collection 'Patrimoines')

8) Vatican 11, Constitution 'Sacrosanctum Concilium' on liturgy, no. 13 and 125.

an example, recognizes in him a proper role and testifies to the action of God in the life of his time.

Veneration

Devotion is linked to veneration and invocation since the beginning of the Christian era. It is always associated to material elements since its supernatural reality brings together two components: human misery on one part, and the infinite love of God, on the other part. Its practice is thus exercised thanks to the supports of certain objects, often relics, statues, images, etc. but also some prayers and formulas. What is meant here, according to the Second Vatican Council, it is not to despise the devotion approved by the Church. (8) According to the Code of Canon Law, this veneration aims at *‘favoring the duty of sanctification of the people of God’* (canon 1186-1190) by reference to certain maxims or prayers.

Since 21 December 1991, Fr. D’Alzon has been declared ‘Venerable’: what does it mean for us? Venerable is an adjective that designates what is an object of veneration and signifies that the reputation of holiness from the testimonies carefully scrutinized lead us to think that his life has been an example. This term, though, is not part of the steps of an inquiry in view of beatification and canonization, since it has a private character, not a liturgical one.

The prayers of intercession to obtain the beatification of Fr. D’Alzon are numerous, as well as the novenas. A very last formula of novena has just been published in October 2018 by the Procure missionnaire de l’Assomption (Province of Eu-

rope) and widely distributed in the diocese of Nîmes. Beyond the formulas, today, it is the completion of an authentic miracle according to the norms of the Church that is sought.

Pilgrimages on the footsteps of Fr. D’Alzon are also numerous in order to promote this veneration at Nîmes, at Le Vigan, Lavagnac Lamalou, Montpellier, and of course Paris and Rome. They can also be a powerful means to popularize the veneration of this great man.

Invocation

Invocation is one of the five general categories of prayer with confession, thanksgiving, request and intercession. The word comes from Latin *invocare*, which signifies to invoke, to call. It is the action of requesting help, aid by a prayer to God, to a saint, a divinity, a genius, a spirit... It is mostly used in a religious or spiritual context.

This does not mean that we are inviting God to make himself present to our prayers, because he is always and everywhere present to them. In reality, in the invocation, we ask God to help us to acknowledge that he is already with us and to be conscious of his presence. God is not a foreigner, far and distant, that we need to invite and persuade to meet with us. God is closer to us than our own breath and closer than our very hands and feet.

A very nice quote that could have well been from Jesus but that is not part of the canonical Gospels goes like this: *‘Wherever two people get together, they are not without God, and where there is but one, I say it truthfully, he is not alone, I am with him. Pull out a stone and you will find me there, cut through the wood, I am still there’*. (Gospel of Thom-

as, 77) When the mason handles the stone or the carpenter wraps the wood, Jesus Christ is with them. In the invocation, we call to mind that presence of God in our lives. It is to the Father that prayers of invocation are directed. It responds so profoundly to the nature of God and to the condition of man in the heart of whom it springs spontaneously. *‘Invoke me and I will answer you; I will announce to you great things, hidden things, that you do not know.’* (Jer 33, 3) It comes from this question of saint Paul; *‘How to invoke him without first believing in him? And how to believe without first hearing him? And how to hear him without a preacher? (Rm 10:14) ‘When we want to put a request to important people. We do it with humility and respect: how much more should we implore the Lord, the God of the universe, with great humility and sincere devotion. And let it be clear: it is not with a flow of words but with a pure heart that we will be heard.’* (saint Benedict)

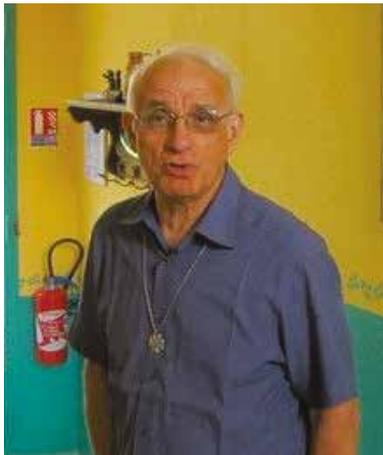
Conclusion

At a time when walls of division are being built and bridges of unity collapse, let us learn to nourish the true devotion whose name is ‘charity in service’. If we want it, it will direct us towards the example of Fr. Emmanuel d’Alzon because of the disposition of total offering of himself to God. The veneration that will be shown to him will be a guide for many people in confusion and it will make rise in the hearts this invocation which, in the midst of the people of God, will make manifest this sign that the Church is awaiting to proclaim him blessed.

Fr. Bernard Le Léannec.
General Postulator

The novitiates of the Augustinians of the Assumption (from 1990 to the present)

We are completing the publication of the overview of the novitiates of the Congregation, compiled by Fr. Patrick Zago, archivist of the European Province. This 6th and final installment corresponds with the “shift” of the Congregation from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern Hemisphere.



Fr. Patrick Zago

I want to thank all those who helped me with this research, in particular Julio Navarro for South America, Gwenaél Petton for Brazil, Arnold Castro for Northern Europe, Marcel Poirier and Claude Grenache (dec.) for the North American Province. And, I thank in advance, all those who might be able to add their contributions.

The characteristic of the period that we are in is the shift from North to South. It is a general movement that affects all religious institutions with an international dimension. It is due to the aging and the departure of religious in Christian communities of Europe and North America and their growth in the South. For us to understand, let me cite one example. In 2016, the Congregation had 8 novitiates¹: Juvisy (France), Ba Ria (Vietnam), Sokodé (Togo), Butembo (RDC), Arusha (Tanzania), Tuléar (Madagascar), Pinhal (Brazil), Quezon City (Philippines), comprising 52 novices. If we divided the novices not by the Provinces they are connected with, but rather by continent of origin, we can quickly see the change: Africa and Madagascar had 35, Asia 13, South America 3, Europe 1 and none in North America.

AFRICA BUTEMBO (RDC)

Maison Lwanga

In this period, the novitiate finds its rapid growth among constituents in their twenties. Their Novice Masters included Fathers Lucas Chuffart (1988-1994), René Mihigo Marhegane (1995-1999), Boniface Muhindo Mutahi (2000-2002), Ephrem Kasereka Kapitul (2003-2005), Henri Kizito Vyambwera (2006-2011), Kambula Sindirigha Si-

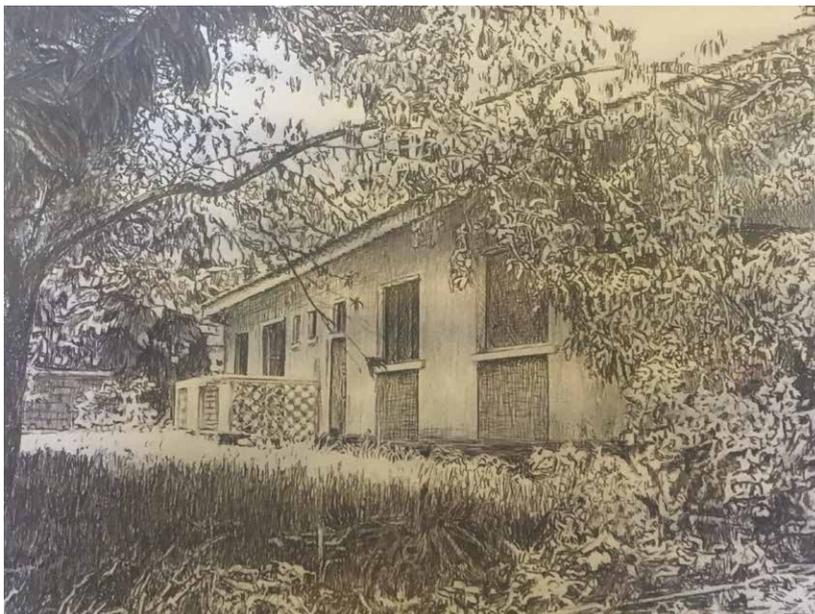
mon (2012-2016) and presently Augustin Kambale Tasi. The Bulletin of Rome² occasionally provides information on the novitiates : the community needs to face the difficulties caused by the insecurity and the recurring strife of Butembo. Sometimes it is necessary to flee and to hide in the forest. . .but Fr. René Mihigo doesn't forget, for a minute, his responsibility to initiate these young men in the religious life of the Assumption.

He tells of the «sacred wood of initiation » which he likes to call the novitiate, a Rule of life that seeks to hold onto the ancestral tradition of initiation. This is a beautiful attempt at inculturation. When the Congregation struggles with finances, the community of novices makes a significant effort, thanks to its livestock and agricultural work. Founded in 1981 as the Novitiate of the Province of Zaire, the Maison Lwanga has been active for 37 years and hails as the first place at Pont-L'Abbé for its longevity among the novitiates of the Assumption!

ARUSHA (Tanzania)

Kizito House is an English-speaking novitiate.

Fr. Ndakasi Mathe Victor, first Novice Master (1997-2001), spent one year in the Novitiate of Sceaux for his formation. Following him were Fathers Richard Brunelle (2005-2008), Nzuva



Arusha, Tanzania

Kaghona Yves (2009-2015) and Henri Kizito Vyambwera (2016).

SOKODE (Togo).

Fr. René Mihigo began the novitiate in 2011, followed by Frs. Benoît Bigard (2012-2016) and Boniface Muhindo Mutahi (since 2016). It began in a temporary location, a bit small for its purpose, while waiting for the construction of the novitiate. This did not impede the advancement of vocations that evolved in the life of the Assumption, which came about with seriousness and joy. As it is noted in the Rule of St. Augustine, “it is better to have little needs than a quantity of possessions” (3,5). Of note regarding this novitiate, the novices publish (paper editions and on-line) an illustrated review, “*Les couleurs du noviciat*”, that gives us first-hand information on the proceedings of the novitiate.

**MADAGASCAR
TULEAR Belemboka.**

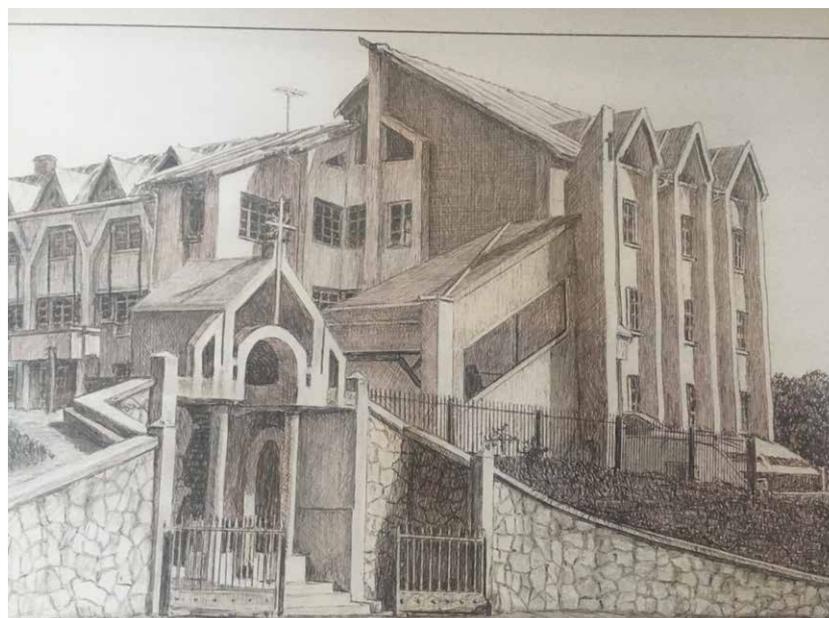
The Masters of Novices included : Frs. Maurice Laurent³ (1998-2001), Yves Rakotonirina (2002-2006), Albert Emasintsoa (2008-2015) and Lucien Razafi-

manantsoa (since 2016). The previous two Masters of Novices undertook one year of initiation at the novitiate of Juvisy.

**ROMANIA
Margineni, near Bacau.**

The House of St. Augustine opened in 1993 in the province of Moldavia, where there were many Catholics of the Latin Rite. It welcomed many young Romanians who found themselves leaning toward the Assumption. It was, therefore, a house of for-

Margineni, Romania



mation for candidates, as well as a novitiate. Fr. Maurice Laurent was superior and master of novices until 2001. The novices eventually returned to France for their formation.

FRANCE

Sceaux. The Province of France acquired a villa on the Avenue Fontenelle, near the prestigious Park of Sceaux. It was established as a retreat residence for religious, always active in their parishes (these communities were called “intermediaries” with many activities and for complete rest). This community had to move to a larger facility built in Vincennes, and the province considered selling the house in Sceaux. It was also looking for a house within the region of Paris for its novitiate of Lille. The place found at Nanterre was, unfortunately, pre-empted by the municipality; taken aback, they resolved to put the novitiate in Sceaux⁴, while waiting for a better location. They stayed there for ten years, from 1989 to 1999, under the direction of Fr. Marie-Bernard Kientz, Master of Novices, with the precious support of

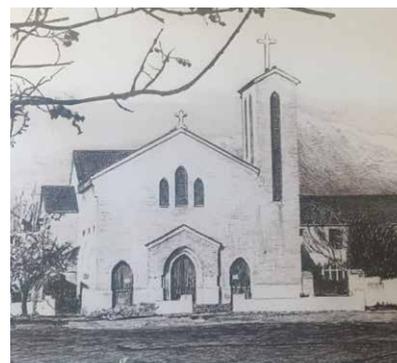


Juvisy, France

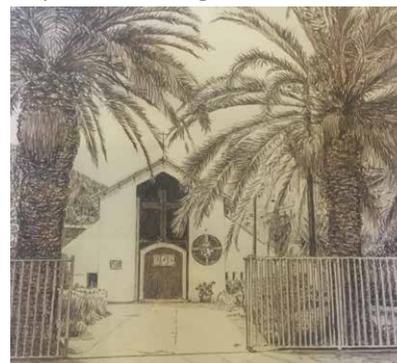
Fr. Jean-Paul Périer Muzet, who because of his research and studies had a great understanding of Fr. d'Alzon and of the history of the Assumption. His teaching was a perfect complement for the training of the novice masters.

Juvisy⁵ A good option later presented itself. We acquired a house in Juvisy-sur-Orge (Essonne), in a suburb of Paris, well served by two lines of RER, and in a quiet and calm environment. The house was situated on Rue de la Paix (street of Peace)! It was a suburban home--simple, modern and practical, with many amenities, since the previous owner was in construction. So, we could therefore, in close proximity to the novitiate, establish a little house for students⁶. Though close to the novitiate, it was independent, and it contained a vast collection of library books and archives of the Province. In the first week of October in 1999, the move was completed, and the plaster was wiped down as the work was not yet done. In 2001, Fr. Marie-Bernard transferred the novitiate, in

good order, to Fr. Lucas Chufart, who had received his training as master of novices in Zaire. This priest, chosen in 2005 as Secretary General of the Congregation, passed the torch to Fr. Claude Marechal, who after being Provincial Superior and Superior General, had all the necessary prerequisites to form the novices. In the final two years of his charge, he initiated Fr. Jean-Claude Erhart to take charge of this work, having returned from Madagascar and having accepted the call from the Church to the priesthood. Fr. Jean-Claude profited well from this rich experience, while leaving his own mark. In 2016, he was happy to leave this position for another apostolic adventure, by going to Vietnam to lend a hand to the formators who were few in number. His replacement was Fr. Gervais Kakule Mulim, a Congolese who was familiar with the Church in France after spending many years as chaplain for the youth in Nimes and in a parish in Montpellier. The novitiate at Juvisy was suspended, because Fr. Gervais left for Africa.



Valparaiso, Santiago, Chili



Pomaire, Chili

USA

Fiskdale Saint Anne's shrine, parish and place of pilgrimages. The novitiate was the responsibility of the following : Frs. Roger Corriveau (2004), Roland Guilmain (2004-2006) and Peter Precourt (2007).

Worcester⁷ Augustine House, with Fr. Richard Lamoureux (2013-2014).

CHILI

Valparaiso, with Fr. Jean-Pierre Bouteil (1991-1992).

Pomaire, with Frs. Jean-Pierre Bouteil (1993-1996), Julio Navarro (1996-1999), Edgardo Munoz (2000-2004) and Aldo Gajardo (2004-2006).

Rengo, with Fr. Aldo Gajardo (2007-2010). Since January 2011, there have been no novices in Chile.

BRAZIL

Pinhal. The novitiate « Notre Dame d'Amerique » serves all of South America with Fr. Joao Gomes da Silva. It was officially



Worcester, USA

inaugurated January 24, 2016, by the authority of the Province of Brazil and the Andean Province. The theological college, common to these two Provinces, is located in Buenos Aires (Argentina).

ASIA KOREA

Gwangju. Despite the small numbers of religious, a novitiate was established from 1997 to 1999, with Fr. Thierry Cocqueriez. This endeavor was not permanent. Eventually, all candidates were sent to the United States, to the Philippines or to France.

PHILIPPINES

Antipolo with Fr. Richard Brunelle (2009-2012).

Quezon City Emmanuel d'Alzon, with Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba (since 2015)

VIETNAM

Ba Ria Saint Augustine Novitiate. The first Assumptionist community was founded in Saigon in October 2006, with the first Vietnamese religious formed in France. The contacts with the Province, however, date back to 1997. The novitiate of Ba Ria

was constructed with two buildings well situated, 70 kilometers from Saigon, in a property that has become a beautiful garden. It was established August 28, 2009 with Fr. Paul Nguyen Van Dong, a young Master of Novices. However, a very hard test marked its beginnings: on December 2, 2011, Fr. Paul was killed in a motorcycle accident. He is the first Vietnamese Assumptionist to be buried near the statue of Notre-Dame de Salut. A grain of wheat was thrown into the ground, at the time, and it bears much fruit. . Fr. Paul Nguyen Van Hung courageously took over until 2016. Since then, Fr. Pierre Tran Van Huyen bears the responsibility. Continuing up to this year, many Vietnamese postulants have made their novitiate in Juvisy and continued their studies in Europe.

It is necessary to complete this journey on the research of the formation of novices---that is, the purpose of this formation and the means for putting it to work. Similarly, one could research the choices and formation of the masters of novices. That would take too long, though, but the option is open. ■

¹ According to the statistics from la *Répartition* des Religieux of 2016.

² *AA Info*, December 1995, N°152, p. 6. In N°156 (June 1996), Fr. Morand Kleiber writes that the inter-novitiate count for that year was 65 novices in the Assumption family, male and female religious.

³ Maurice Laurent senior, born in 1930, not to be confused with Maurice Laurent junior, born in 1942, who was notably master of novices in France (Cachan, Montpellier, Valpré, Lille, Paris-Denfert) and in Roumania (Margineni).

⁴ At the same time, the neighboring house was for sale, we bought it, which made the installation of the novitiate much more comfortable.

⁵ A permanent exhibit of the designs of Fr. Michel Bellanger, representing all the novitiates, decorated the staircases of the house on both floors. [NDLR : Most of these designs were illustrated in articles in this series in *AA Info*.]

⁶ Three youth from this region entered the Assumptionists : Wilian Aquije Matta, Milad Yacoub, Philippe Berrached.

⁷ *Éphémérides*, p. 171. There was also a St. Augustine Novitiate in Worcester, in 1990, without being found in *La Répartition*.

Sister Paul-Hélène, martyr in Algeria

On 8 December 2018, Sister Paul-Hélène Saint-Raymond, Little Sister of the Assumption, was beatified at Oran along with Bishop Claverie and 17 other 'Martyrs of Algeria', becoming the first LSA to be honored by the Church. Fr. Jean-François Petit consulted the archives concerning her.



Sister Paul-Hélène of Gethsemane joined the LSA in 1952 after studying physics and the beginning of a career. In 1963, one year after the independence of the country, she is sent to Algiers as a nurse. She will stay there until 1984 with a break of ten years to Morocco and Tunisia. She was living in the Casbah and in Belcourt with five other sisters; she remained faithful to her commitment until the end. She is considered as 'the first' of the martyrs of Algeria, before Fr. Henri Vergès, a Marist, in the library where they were working and where they were murdered on 8 May 1994.

During her funerals, we were reminded of her 'profession of faith' made during the Chapter of her community in September 1992: 'We believe that the Spirit dwells in all men who leads them, from the heart of their religious tradition, towards their

vocation of being Sons of God. Called to live in this 'house of Islam', we are conscious of the frailty of our mission and, from that perspective, of the wealth of the gift that God has granted us'. She had had this premonitory prayer: 'May the weakness and the foolishness of our small number and our ageing be our reason to welcome the power of the Spirit of God, so that our offering may be a sign where our witnessing is made most often in silence'.

Such a mature mind would be impossible without deep roots in the charisma of the Assumption, giving priority to this kind of disinterested presence, as much in the Magreb as in the popular neighbourhoods of France. But it would be so hard to show how this 'weak strength' of this Little Sister of the Assumption is rooted as well in a strong character and a deep quest for Christ.

For a long time ahead, this witnessing should contribute to deepen the sense of the charisma of 'the Kingdom of God' proper to the Assumption family while it is trying to redefine its insertion in the world, in the context of inter-culturality and internationality. More widely, all the actors of inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue will find here how to go deeper about their own itinerary. For what pertains to her, the last note of sister Paul-Hélène, quickly written as if time was running out, is dated 3 May 1994, five days before being murdered. It is quite clear: 'At the post office, a young woman notices my ring 'Mrs, be careful now... We too must be careful... I am a journalist... Do you speak Arabic? (I answer: 'I have lived here for 30 years')'.

Fr. Jean-François Petit



Mi Hogar, to serve the very poor

This work of the Lay Assumptionists in Columbia has been chosen to be the beneficiary of the solidarity of the Congregation for 2019.

The Assumptionist Foundation Mi Hogar (Funmiha) is located in Bogota, Columbia, and is part of the Andean Province. It was established 12 years ago, with the specific purpose of serving the poorest in the Kingdom. It has been run by the Lay-Religious Alliance. It functions as a legally developed institution, governed by the laws and regulations of Columbia, and is non-profit in nature. It is a space that promotes humanity and community building. It was begun explicitly to serve those most in need.

The following are the programs and services it offers:

For the elderly

It deals with those who are over 60 years of age who are in vulnerable economic situations, no longer working, those poorly nourished or malnourished, and who show a deterioration in their cognitive and physical conditions. The center focuses on cognitive stimulation (to reinforce attention, concentration and memory); a listening center (which is a space for interaction and mutual support among the participants); food needs (lunch and monthly marketing according to individu-

al needs); and recreational activities.

« Educate with love »

It works with children from 5 to 8 years of age, as well as pre-adolescents from 9 to 14. The program's objective is to reinforce the capacity of vulnerable children with strategies that are psychological, recreational, artistic and pastoral---where being and acting come together. It seeks to improve for children the capacity to understand, to manage and modify their emotional responses; for the adolescents, it helps them understand how their identities have developed up to this point in their lives.

« My decision, our future »

It works with mothers who have children in infancy and early childhood and seeks to provide them with empowerment tools to help them face their lives and those of their children and their environment. This comes in three phases: 1.) to reinforce self-esteem, assertive communication, parental practices and planning for the life of the mother; 2.) to develop personal skills to generate entrepreneurial resources 3.) to give assistance that is personalized for mothers after provid-

ing assistance with the first two phases.

In addition to the Lay Assumptionists, 12 volunteers give of their time and their knowledge in their profession or field. L'école Manuel d'Alzon (the Emmanuel d'Alzon School), another work of the Assumptionists in Bogota, supports the realization of resources with different activities for the children, the parents and the teachers. The Catholic University, Minuto de Dios, provides psychologists with tutors to maintain a complete development of the programs.

In summary, to live the charity of the Gospel is what motivates us---without this focus of motivation we would do absolutely nothing. We invite you to always be our strategic allies:

1) From one voice to another, make our work known

2) Help us come in contact with benefactors on an international scale

3) Give us some time/or some knowledge as a volunteer (contact us) to become familiar with the international volunteer program offered by Funmiha

Victoria Prada

Site <http://www.funmiha.org>

The Sisters of Saint Joan of Arc: 92 Years of Presence at Montmartre

The Canadian congregation, founded by Fr. Marie-Clément Staub, a.a., has just left its historical site in Québec.

Last April 2, the Assumptionist community of Montmartre, in Québec (Canada) celebrated with great joy the 92 year long presence of the sisters of Saint Joan of Arc at Montmartre. At the same opportunity, it celebrated, not without regrets, their definitive departure. Instead of tracing back the history of these daughters of Fr. Marie-Clément Staub in Québec, we will limit ourselves to sharing a few aspects of their lives which still mark the memory of the Montmartre.

The Sisters of Saint Joan of Arc arrived in Québec in 1917. After the erection of the Assumptionist community of Montmartre, they were called to participate in its apostolic work. They answered positively to that call and worked with great care in the services entrusted to them.

In particular, they accompanied the Assumptionist religious in the apprenticeship of various trades, like sewing and printing. Br. Pierre-Jean Genest has been one of their students in sewing. He has made hundreds of religious habits for Assumptionists of various countries and many precious liturgical vestments. He continues making habits for the Assumptionist religious of the Province. In the area of printing, many religious brothers have learned printing and binding. So much so that the Montmartre had its own printing shop for some years. This helped to publish *L'Appel du Sacré-Coeur*



and the *Digest du Sacré-Coeur*; both magazines had the vocation to support the apostolate of the shrine and to accompany the life of the devotees of the Sacred-Heart of Jesus who, in those days, were more numerous than today.

The participation of the Sisters of Saint Joan of Arc to the prayer of the community has been tremendous. They were present at the daily Office, to the Eucharistic celebrations and some other prayers. Caring about the quality of the prayer life, they were always ready to prepare the chapel and any necessary material as well as the singing. Moreover, they were even guides to people less familiar with the liturgy or the community prayers. According to the testimony of many persons, the Sisters of Saint Joan of Arc were

appreciated above all as women of prayer.

Our sisters are credited for many other services, like the sacristy and the laundry. Some of them were excellent cooks. These last years, they helped also as receptionists.

All along their presence at the Montmartre, the Sisters of Saint Joan of Arc have been living witnesses of the service of God and neighbour. They were proof of the joy and happiness in serving. Their life has been a sign of the coming of the Kingdom of God.

The community of Montmartre has expressed its gratitude and has wished them a happy stay in their new residence in Beauport (East of Québec), with the Sisters of Charity.

Br. Pacifique Kambale Tsongo

A person to rediscover

Our confrere, Jean-François Petit, a teacher at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Catholic Institute of Paris, has as wide a spirit as high: for whoever would ignore the diversity of his interests, just consult his bibliography of impressive variety: from Saint Augustine to Political Science, from the History of Ideas and the evolutions in Africa. Moreover, he has found interest recently in a passion for Sister Paul-Hélène Saint-Raymond, a Little Sister of the Assumption who has been beatified on last 8 December (see page 20); he has undertaken to publish her writings.

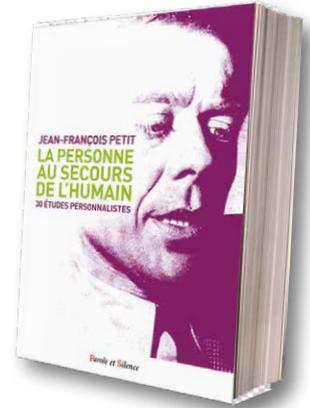
But the main interest of Fr. Jean-François has always been the great philosopher Emmanuel Mounier. The founder of ‘personalism’ was the subject of his doctoral dissertation and had put a parenthesis on the rhythm of his intellectual and even spiritual journey, particularly through the publication of well received books. The one that is published today *La personne au secours de l’humain* (1) is a collection of some thirty articles and collaborations dedicated to this thinker all along the past years, which makes it twice priceless.

First, indeed, this book allows us to discover the multiple aspects of the personalist vision and the project, as Mounier has envisaged and that could be extended today: beyond recalling what is the nature of this philosophical trend, the book calls our attention, specifically, on the actuality of the human person, its rapport to history, to politics, to the economy, its stakes for education and, of course, its profound link with Christianity. The last pages of the book bring together many texts pertaining to the future of personalism, in Europe but also in the United States and Africa.

Beyond this dimension of a collection, this work presents also another interest, no doubt more essential: to make the stake of personalism more clearly.

Can it be considered simply as one more philosophical trend, limited in time and space, or can it translate a unifying thinking for the future of humanity - or according to the final expression of the author, an ‘ultimate resort of humanism’? It is an open question. Whatever the answer, this book allows to test, if need be, how profound and faithful roots in philosophy can produce fertile results in the life of a man and a religious. Let us be grateful to Jean-François Petit to continue to share it with us.

Fr. Michel KUBLER



1. *La personne au secours de l’humain*. 30 personalist studies, Jean-François Petit. Ed. Parole et Silence 2018, 473 p., 25 Euros

Our bishops are moving

It is a coincidence: the two bishops that belong to Assumption now have both moved recently after having retired from Episcopal duties due to their age:

Dom José Geraldo DA CRUZ, 77 years old, emeritus bishop of Juazeiro (Brazil), after leading the diocese from 2003 to 2016, has come back to the area of his family roots at Muriaé (Minas Gerais); his new address can be found in the AA Directory 2019.

Bishop Louis-Armel PELATRE, 78 years old, Apostolic Vicar of Istanbul (Turkey) from 1992 to 2016 had retired to the community of Kadikoy. Due to health concerns, he has been admitted to the Little Sisters of the Poor. Here is how to reach him:

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OUR DEPARTED BROTHERS



† Father **Joseph LE BORGNE** (community of Layrac, Province of Europe) died on 30 October 2018 in Layrac (France). His funeral was held on November 2 in the chapel of the Prieuré, before burial in Layrac cemetery. He was 82 years old.

† Father **Enrique GOIBURU** (community of Dulce Nombre de Maria, Province of Europe) died on 16 November 2018 in Madrid (Spain). His funeral was held on November 17. He was 82 years old.

† Father **Marcel ARZEL** (community of Layrac, Province of Europe) died on November 21, 2018 in Layrac (France). His funeral was held on November 23rd in the chapel of the Prieuré, before burial in Layrac cemetery. He was 86 years old.

† Father **Teodoro ASARTA FERNÁNDEZ** (community of Dulce Nombre de Maria, Province of Europe) died on 23 November 2018 in Madrid (Spain). His funeral was held on November 24. He was 74 years old.

† Father **Michael LAMBERT** (community of Hitchin, Province of Europe) died on 2 December 2018 in London (Great Britain). His funeral was held on December 17 at Our Lady Immaculate and St Andrew's Church in Hitchin. He was 79 years old.

† Father **Omer CORNET** (community of Ciney, Province of Europe) died on 20 December 2018 in Belgium. His funeral was held on December 24 in the church of Xhos, Anthismes. He was 89 years old.