

A News of the Assumption



EDITORIAL

Happy are those called to the supper of the Lord

« For us religious, it is necessary to center our lives on the Word of God. It is crucial that this Word becomes the source of life and renewal. »

Agenda

Plenary General Council

- n° 5 : **December 2-10, 2019**, in Rome.
- n° 6 : **June 2-10, 2020**, in Worcester (United States).
- n° 7 : **December 3-11, 2020**, in Nîmes (France).

Ordinary General Councils

- n° 16: **November 11-15, 2019**.
- n° 17 : **December 11-12, 2019**.
- n° 18 : **February 10-14, 2020**.
- n° 19 : **March 18-19, 2020**.
- n° 20 : **April 20-24, 2020**.

Benoît

- **October 1-10**: Belgium and the Netherlands.
- **October 20-November 6**: Madagascar.
- **November 15-22**: Spain
- **November 27-29**: assembly of the USG.

Marcelo

- **October 1-10**: Belgium and the Netherlands.
- **October 13-20**: Retreat.
- **November 15-22**: Spain.

Didier

- **September 28-October 13**: East Africa.
- **October 14-15**: Paris.
- **October 20-November 7**: DR-Congo.
- **November 8**: Paris.
- **November 25-December 3**: CEC.

Thierry

- **October 3-12**: Rumania.
- **November 5-8**: Créteil (the Orantes of the Assumption).
- **December 15-28**: Créteil (the Orantes of the Assumption).

Miguel

- **September 29-October 2** : Paris (Inter-Assumption Migrant Commission).
- **November 1-3**: Paris (formation on interculturality).

On the cover

The Emmanuel d'Alzon College in Bogota, Colombia: the Rule of Life reminds us that "our missionary vocation invites us to become 'all things to all people' (RL 20).

Jubilee of the Province of Africa

The Assumptionist Province of Africa celebrates its 50th anniversary this year: a jubilee celebrated in Butembo at the end of the month of August. The following is the letter addressed by the Superior General for this occasion, on August 19, 2019, to Fr. Yves Nzuva Kaghoma, Provincial Superior:

Dear Brothers of the African Province,

It was 50 years ago, on July 3, 1969, that the Province of Africa was founded. Resulting from long missionary work by the Assumptionists, the young Province began its process of development and the progressive assumption of responsibility by the indigenous brothers. Today, though the missionary presence is very limited---too limited in my eyes---, you have yourselves become missionaries. The important number of religious present to the stranger for pastoral reasons, or for study, illustrate the maturity of the Province.

In addition to that, the foundations made in Kenya (1988) also in Tanzania and Uganda, confirm the apostolic momentum that you animate. Shortly, a new common foundation with Brazil will permit us to establish ourselves in Angola. Other places, such as in the DRC, may elsewhere also await your coming. The Assumption in the Province of Africa, is also schools, a University, some parishes, posts in bush areas, the Lay-Religious Alliance, communities of formation, etc.

I thank the Lord for the gifts given these last 50 years and for the support that he did not miss lavishing on us.

At the celebration of the jubilee of the Province one associates those religious who celebrate 25 years of their engagement in our family: Ndovya Kibonge Elis, Wayivuta Vihamba Jean Marie, Kambale Makasi Robert, Kambula Sindirigha Simon, Mawazo Kavula Sikirivwa, Paluku Kipandauli Rigobert. I associate, as well as the whole congregation, with their joy and I thank them for their fidelity to the religious consecration. In a time when engagement to life tends to be relativized or even suspected of hypocrisy, it is good that some men witness to their fidelity and to their attachment to God, to Christ and to the Church.

I thank all of the religious of the Province for the courage which they demonstrate in this time of insecurity and of health threats. I thank the Lord for the work that you perform and I present to all the assurance of my fraternal prayer and my religious devotion.

Fr. Benoît GRIÈRE, a.a.
Superior General

Happy are those called to the supper of the Lord

I must begin with a confession! I am getting irritated when the principal celebrant of the Eucharist says at communion: “Happy are we who are called to the supper of the Lord.” Though I am not an editor, I prefer the word choice that the Church made: “Happy are those called to the supper of the Lord.” The Church has reason to say this. Certainly, we rejoice to receive the “bread of angels”, but can we be satisfied that so few of our contemporaries have responded to the invitation to come and join us for the meal? The systematic repetition of the altered expression causes us to forget the urgency of the mission. Our communities have to be missionaries to welcome those who have not yet connected with Christ. There is an urgency to renew our missionary engagement.

The month of October is consecrated in its totality to the universal mission of the Church. As such, the Holy Father decided to expand to one full month the traditional day of prayer for mission. The Assumption, in a way, began preparing last June by organizing a session on “revisiting the missionary experience.” This has confirmed our search for a new apostolic dynamism for all of the congregation. The apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii gaudium*, talks of the “missionary-disciple” to characterize the Christian who witnesses in the world his faith in the Risen Christ. I love this qualifier that allows us to better understand our role as evangelizers. We are, therefore, disciples, that is to say, men and women who have heard the call of Jesus to follow him. The gospel illustrates on many occasions that which characterizes a disciple. First and foremost is listening to the Word of God. It is the Word that makes the disciple--words of life that deeply transform one’s being; words that lead to conversion. This Word contemplated in silence resonates in our hearts. It also makes witnesses of each of us,

people who reflect their hope in God. The witness exists only through testimony. The testimony is the announcing of the Kingdom of God that has already been manifested and which unfolds in the universe.

We are all missionaries through our Baptism. For us religious, it is necessary to center our lives on the Word of God. It is crucial that this Word becomes the source of life and renewal, and because of that, it is a priority to put into practice that which the Rule of Life demands: one half hour of daily prayer. Missing this practice leads to relativism and laxity. We will be subject to hear the reproach that God gave to his people through his prophet Jeremiah (2, 13): “(They) committed a double wrongdoing: they abandoned me, the source of living water, and they dug themselves cisterns, cracked cisterns that didn’t hold water!” If we do not return to the source of the living water, we are condemned to dryness, thirst and death. The Word of God is for us this source of life. We need not look elsewhere.

2019 marks the 175th anniversary of our foundation. We will be celebrating all that the Lord has done for the Assumption for all these years. Grace will rise from our hearts for our fidelity in God, for the love that surrounds us, and for the care that he brings still today to our little family. But, we will not be up to the task of this commemoration unless we strongly engage in an apostolic and missionary renewal. The Assumptionists are not museum keepers, charged with watching over precious souvenirs protected by glass cases or some walls. We are witnesses of the love of God for our world, and this calls for a firm engagement for creation. We are missionaries charged with telling our brothers and sisters in humanity that they are all invited to the table of the Lord. The mission is today. ■



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

Calls, nominations, changes...

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

■ to PERPETUAL PROFESSION

1) RAFANOMEZANTSOA Marie Joseph (Madagascar) (10/09/2019)

■ to ORDINATION TO THE DEACONATE

2) KIENTEGA Remi-Clovis (Europe) (11/09/2019)

3) MANZANZA TSUKA Benjamin (Europe) (10/09/2019)

4) TALAKE Paul-Martin Makawouna (Europe) (10/09/2019)

■ to ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

5) MATADI ASINA Willy (Africa) (11/09/2019)

6) RAZAFIMAHATRATRA Jean Paul (Madagascar) (11/09/2019)

■ INCARDINATION

At the end of the probationary period, Fr. Eduardo C. MOLINA (North America) was incardinated in the diocese of Novaliches (Philippines) on June 4, 2019.

■ DEPARTURE IN LIGHT OF INCARDINATION

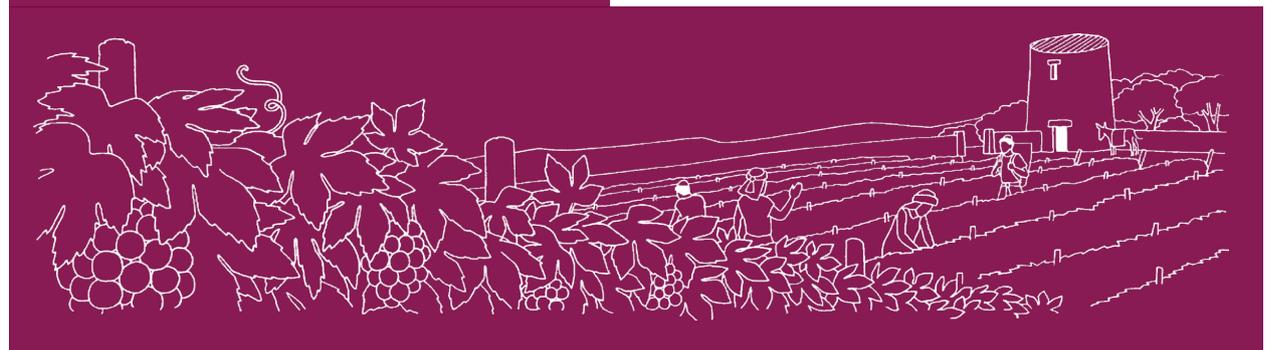
The Holy See has granted an indult to leave the congregation to Fr. Ovidiu ROBU (Europe), in light of his incardination “*ad experimentum*” in the diocese of Romania, on July 9, 2019.

■ DEPARTURE FROM THE CONGREGATION

The Holy See has granted an indult to leave the Congregation to Claudio Cesar FARIAS ROCO (Andean Province), on July 9, 2019.

■ EXCLAURATION

Father Benoît Grière, with the consent of his Council, has given an indult of exclauration to Fr. Francisco CAMINO RODRÍGUEZ (Europe), for one year, on September 24, 2019.



Assumptionist Missionaries Review Their Experience

From June 27 to July 4, 2019, a session brought together about fifteen religious in Rome for a work of renewal and deepening of their experience. This, was an opportunity for both personal and collective reflection on the mission at the Assumption. Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, a Congolese and missionary in the Philippines gives an account of the assumptionist mission, followed by his personal testimony.



Participants and animators of the re-reading session of the missionary experience in Due Pini.

Reunion, discovery and exchange of experiences

The sessions I attended, in Rome or elsewhere, were always a great opportunity to meet with brothers I had not seen for years, or to discover other brothers I had heard about without having met them yet. This may seem trivial, but it is important when I consider the different exchanges between us. Thus, during last summer's session in Rome, I had the opportunity to share with one of our elders in the mission, Fr. Daniel Carton, a Frenchman who has been on mission in Madagas-

car for more than 47 years: this kind of exchange can only motivate and strengthen fraternal bonds in the congregation, where finally we participate in the same mission: that of the Church through the Assumption.

One of the moments I personally appreciated was the opportunity to share our different missionary experiences. As I listened to each other, I realized that our stories, except for a few details, are similar. The experiences related to realities such as preparation for leaving on mission, welcoming on arrival, ad-

aptation, discovering the local environment and Church, community life... were almost the same, but lived at different times and circumstances.

A time of training

The quality speakers, whether Assumptionists or guests, helped us to rediscover the meaning of mission in the Church today (see box on page...). The paradigm shift, which our Superior General spoke of at the opening of the session, leads us to think and do mission differently today, without opposing those ad intra ►

and ad extra as if they were two totally different realities: «The change of missionary paradigm therefore lies in the observation that there are no longer Christian territories vis-à-vis mission territories. All the land is placed under the regime of the first announcement. If every land is a «land of mission», then the distinction between the life of the Church ad intra and its mission ad extra must be erased, in favour of a single perspective of decentralization that defines the very life of the Church. «This is perhaps the reason why, towards the end of his message, he told us that «missionary renewal at the Assumption requires the availability of all».

The visit to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and the meeting with Cardinal Filoni, Prefect of this dicastery, brought us into contact with the orientations of our mother the Church. Two speakers were waiting for us to present to us the way to be missionary in the spirit of Pope Francis. They also gave us clarifications regarding the reasons and objectives of the extraordinary missionary month (October 2019) which will be placed under the theme: «Baptized and sent: the Church of Christ in mission in the world». Our mission as Assumptionists is part of this great mission of the universal Church. Still, we must be burned by the love of Christ, as our founder Emmanuel d'Alzon asks us to do.

A time to recharge the batteries

At the end of the session, I had the feeling that my «missionary spirit» was renewed. I shared with the other participants the conviction that, if I had been able to live this session before going

on a mission in the distance, my experience would probably have been different. But it is never too late, they say. The mutual encouragement, the calls of the congregation and the Church have only further motivated us to accept and live the missionary experience in faith, hope and charity. It was also important for us, as a congregation, to reflect on practical ways of awakening the missionary spirit, preparation, accompaniment, etc. Therefore, mission training is needed.

A time to refine a certain pedagogy

As for training religious for mission, some of our fundamental texts already give us guidelines for living this mission in an Assumptionist spirit. Our Rule of Life, for example, in its n. 20, reminds us this: «Our missionary vocation calls us to make ourselves «all to all». This availability requires in particular:

- Openness of mind and heart to the cultural, social and religious values of different human environments;
- Willingness to receive as much as to give, in esteem and respect.
- concern for training, competence and adaptation;
- an effort of initiative and invention;
- zeal, love of work, openness and boldness. »

However, from a practical and pedagogical point of view, we had hoped that serious thought would be given (for example, at the level of the CGP) to the following points:

- How can we stimulate and develop in young religious the passion for mission?
- Criteria for the selection of missionaries in the future

- A good preparation for the mission
- Accompaniment and evaluation of the missionary experience
- How to pass the torch in missions?
- A certain Assumptionist style in the way we do the mission.

Practical guidelines to this end will be included in the synthesis of the activities of this session. And the Superior General asked that the proceedings of the session be published. I therefore wish everyone in the congregation a good reading of these acts.

Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba

On the session menu

- 15 participants: 7 Congolese (in 6 countries), 3 French (in 3 countries), 1 Belgian, 1 Malagasy, 1 Mexican, 1 Russian and 1 Vietnamese.
- Exchanges of personal experience, based on a preparatory questionnaire and with several more detailed testimonies.
- Lectures: Milan Züst (Jesuit theologian), Stanley Lubungo (Superior General of the White Fathers), as well as Benoît Grière, Vincent Leclercq, Dominique Greiner, Joseph Aï Nguyen Chi and Baudouin Ngoa Ya Tshihemba.
- A visit to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and a meeting with Cardinal Filoni, Prefect.
- The preparation of elements of Assumptionist missionary spirituality.

Celebrate the joy of being missionaries and preparing for the future



Cardinal Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, received the sessionists in audience.

Fr. Vincent Leclercq, Secretary General for Formation, was one of the speakers in the re-reading session of the missionary experience. He delivers us here a synthesis of his daily «thread red».

I lived this session in admiration for the commitment and success of our brothers. And with a question: does our current training meet the needs and realities they discover on the ground? *The Rule of Life* requires us to check the quality of our apostolates and to examine the necessary choices and adaptations (No. 21). The joy of being missionaries and the accompaniment of the new challenges of evangelization summarize these five days.

Joy, because the story continues

We are a small religious family, but our history reflects the universal of a Church embracing the whole world. It's about writing the rest of the story. Our missionaries want to do as well as their elders, without doing the same thing. During our exchanges, we talked about the past, the present and the future ... which is a good sign!

Joy of being a missionary body

Our congregation is characterized by a «family spirit». This spirit of the Assumption makes the difference on the ground. We propose unity against division, disinterestedness and not competition, openness to others rather than withdrawal. This Assumptionist «counter-narrative» is from the outset missionary because it implements the hope of the Church for the world. It is also good news for us. Our greatest joy is to have been welcomed where we have been sent.

Joy of deepening our charism

The Assumption is missionary even in nuances. «Are we a *missionary congregation* or a congregation *that has missionary works*? » asked the 33rd General Chapter in 2017.

For the brothers present in Rome, the mission is of the order of the being, more than to do it. It starts from the Assumptionist found- ▶

A moment of break
in the garden of Due Pini.



dations: an opening to the world and to others, a generosity and audacity to any test. It characterizes who we are, what we do and how we do it. The poor and the laity quickly perceive this identity. They help us to inculturate our charisma where we are sent.

Joy of being followers of Christ

More fundamentally, the mission is conversion to Christ. Jesus is our model, in deeds and words. And it shapes what we are, before we even guide us in what we undertake. We proclaim Christ to the extent that we have agreed to follow him. We are all the more missionary as we become disciples.

Joy of living in community

Our fraternity is a grace on the path of mission. The community is an asceticism that allows us to always start from Christ. It is also a help to discernment: «*In community, we complete each other, we nuance things. Gently and patiently, changes are made.*» (P. Milan Zust, sj) Attentive to each other, we take care of «*a Church that listens and learns to integrate the experience of each one*» (P. Dominique Greiner, aa).

Helping young people take up the torch of the mission

The mission is for all a personal conversion, not the ministry or the obedience of a few. But how to convey this conviction? How to prepare the youngest to a concrete mission and not only to the mission in general?

The participants made proposals to progress on the choice of candidates, specify the content of the mission or its evaluation, help communities that welcome and accompany religious outside their country. Their goal was to pass the torch by passing on their experience to those who will come after them.

Give a taste for interculturality

As our communities become more international, the mission is no longer just *ad intra* or *ad gentes* but *inter gentes*. This internationality places us in front of multiple borders, geographical and cultural but also internal. For «*in the life of every Christian, there are spaces that are not yet touched by the Gospel*» (P. Joseph

Chi Ai, aa). When a culture of origin is considered as absolute, it can become an obstacle to the discovery of the other or to ignore the values of his country and finally interfere with our «*living together*».

Internationality is a new «*missionary space*». It prepares everyone to live an «*efficient mission*». Yesterday, the Assumption gave birth to new missions. Today, it is the mission that gives birth to a whole new face of the Assumption. Mission is part of God's plan for us.

The Gospel is the power of salvation

In a divided world, God offers us the grace to live together. But there is «*no low cost in the life of grace. It is expensive to support a community and to give oneself to others in the mission*» (Greiner).

Let God be God in our life and for the world. The mission is a «*submission*» to his work of salvation: «*The servant is no greater than his master.*» (John 13:16)

Vincent LECLERCQ
Secretary General for Formation

Bishop Louis-Armel Pelâtre, former bishop and still Assumptionist religious

Now retired to the Little Sisters of the Poor, the 79-year-old Vicar Apostolic Emeritus of Istanbul, evokes nearly 50 years of fidelity to this immense city and this tiny Church.

Fr Benoît Grière, Superior General, and his Council visited Bishop Pelâtre in Istanbul on 13 September.



How did you feel when you were appointed Apostolic Vicar of Istanbul in 1992?

Bishop Louis-Armel Pelâtre: It was a surprise! I did not been appointed here for that ... I love Turkey, and I was happy there as soon as Fr. Bugnard, Provincial of Lyon, appointed me there in 1970. There was also talk of appointing me in Greece, but there were still a number of Greek Assumptionist religious to ensure the mission. I was seduced by the Orient, and this since my arrival by boat from Marseille, impressed by all these minarets! I came with an ecumenical concern, but soon realized that, in the Turkish context, the dialogue with Islam was an even bigger issue- I was later a member of the Pontifical Council for interreligious dialogue, in the Vatican.

Tell us about the Catholic Church of Turkey.

It is a very varied local church, to the point that one could say that the first ecumenism to be realized here is internal to the catholic community! Unity is to be built between our Latin Church and the various Catholic Churches of Eastern Rite (Armenian, Greek-Catholic, etc.), just as between groups of very different origins: Italian, French, German-speaking ... As bishop, I had to work for this unity of the people entrusted to me. I did it, in particular, by organizing three diocesan gatherings every year (including that of Corpus Christi, in Polonesköy) to give a face to this community and bring together its diverse components.

And your Vicariate?

What characterizes it the most is its very great poverty, in financial resources but also human. For lack of our own revenues, we can live only with external help, especially the Work of the East (OEuvre d'Orient) and the Holy See. This also applies to the ecclesiastical staff: The Vicariate no longer has any diocesan priests (there were three at the time of my episcopal appointment), but only religious: thirty, serving in particular a dozen parishes, and most often with a handful of faithful in each of them...

How did you realize your concern for Christian Unity?

It has especially manifested itself with the Orthodox Church, thanks to my relations of friendship and trust with its leader Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos, known when I was parish priest of Kadiköy and him, Metropolitan of Chalcedon. Knowing that he is sensitive to the question of proselytism, I have always refrained myself from actions that could be interpreted in this sense, such as giving communion to the Orthodox (what our fathers once did).

Patriarch Bartholomeos is an exceptional man, affable and very fraternal. But he has to face great difficulties, and has few people to face them. Moreover, given its international stature, and above all its universal ministry as an "ecumenical" patriarch (in the etymological sense in Greek: of global significance - which annoys Turks, who would like to keep their hands on their subjects!), local ecumenism, on the Istanbul scale, cannot be its priority.

Are we still a religious when we become a bishop?

I will answer in two steps. First, how I tried to live the epis-

copal ministry as an Assumptionist religious. We must remember that our congregation, when it arrived in Turkey, was not expected: we were perceived as intruders! It took the great work of our Institute of Byzantine Studies to earn us recognition. It is obvious that the concern for unity that has always inhabited me comes from my Assumptionist genes. And the spirituality that I shared as a bishop is none other than the one of the Assumption, starting with the triple love: I often preached from there, because there are my spiritual resources - even if people did not make the connection with the spirit of my religious family.

The other answer to this question concerns the way in which an Assumptionist religious can be perceived by his confreres as soon as he becomes a bishop: when that happens to you, you can have the feeling that, in the eyes of the confreres, you are now "lost to the cause", and so you are no longer counted as one of them. As far as I am concerned, I have never felt separated, cut off from the congregation, even if some Assumptionist religious - not all, thanks to God! - did not consider me anymore as one of their ...

Did your episcopal ministry have a special meaning because it was located in the Eastern Mission of the Assumption?

I had some responsibilities in the Eastern Mission of the Congregation of the Assumption before becoming bishop, and I had the concern to strengthen the links between the communities that formed it, even

if all did not feel the need. Today, I can only be worried to see the closure of this or that of our houses in the East. We must remember that, if Father d'Alzon came here, it was by obedience to the pope: he did not choose to engage his Congregation in the East himself, being spontaneously turned more towards the Protestant world. It is for the same reason that we, Assumptionist religious, must remain here today: because the Church asks us to do so. Of course, the modalities of our presence in the East can change to adapt to current realities: it seems to me clear for example that in Turkey, it is the dialogue with Islam which must be our priority today.

Collected by
Michel Kubler



Religious in the face of the Ebola epidemic in Butembo

Clinical psychologists by training, two religious are engaged in the fight against this scourge that is ravaging North Kivu

It has been more than a year since the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo was hit hard by the Ebola epidemic, which appeared in a critical socio-political context. North Kivu is going through the worst moment in its history in a form of terror: kidnappings (including our three fathers of Mbau and two diocesan priests from Bunyuka), massacres of the population by militias (ADF-Nalu) in the presence of the national army and UN forces (Monusco), proliferation of uncontrolled rebel groups, suffocation of the economy, against the background of an apparently deliberate absence of the State. This is where a terrifying epidemic emerges: the Ebola virus disease, known as MVE.

From August 1, 2018, the beginning of the epidemic, to September 30, 2019, there were 3191 registered cases in North Kivu and Ituri provinces, including 3077 confirmed cases and 114 probable cases. Of these, 2086 (or 67.8%) died and 991 (or 32.2%) recovered. Since the start of the vaccination campaign in August 2018, 230,489 people have been treated.

The Assumption at the rendezvous to save life

Since the outbreak of this scourge, the Church of Butembo-Beni has supported the teams of the «Riposte against Ebola», whose enormous consequences have to be managed over the



Health workers from the "Riposte against Ebola" evacuating a victim in Butembo.

years. The Assumption itself responded very quickly to this call. Two religious, Fr. Remacle Kambale Kamavu and myself, have joined the Riposte as clinical psychologists, responsible for the psychosocial care of victims within the framework of an Ebola Treatment Centre (ETC).

La Riposte is for us a place of witness of faith and support for man «broken into a thousand pieces». In team with other national and international experts, we work up to our own risks to cut the transmission chain of the disease. Epidemiologists, doctors, clinical psychologists, socio-

anthropologists, communicators, political-administrative authorities, police, etc., are joining forces to tackle this disease, which, in one year, killed more than 2,000 people in eastern DRC.

Psychological aspects of the MVE

Ebola is a contagious and rapidly fatal disease, characteristic of a traumatic event. To discover oneself affected is shocking and shocking news. The challenge for caregivers is to care for patients through a relationship of trust and hope. Because this disease generates a strong anguish ▶

>> Testimonials

of death, against a backdrop of guilt and anger. Faced with death, man feels helpless, hence, on the mental level, a breach of the conscious psyche, a stupefaction and amazement on the cognitive, emotional and psychomotor levels.

From the anguish of death comes a denial of the disease: «Ebola doesn't exist, so I don't die. «The population has therefore sought scapegoats in the form of rumours: «It is not Ebola, it is witchcraft; it is punishment inflicted on the population of the East by the power of Kinshasa; people are poisoned or sterilized with the vaccine and people are killed at the CTE, etc. »

These speeches caused public opinion to be poisoned. Any act or message that confirms the existence of the disease arouses hostility or aggressiveness. We talk about «resistance»: people refuse to be followed as a high-risk contact, to authorize safe burials, to go to the ETC, to be vaccinated, to take a sample... As a result, risk behaviours, and therefore the number of Ebola cases in the region, are increasing. Hence the objective of our fight against MVE: to cut the transmission chain.

Spiritual and psychological care

Our psycho-spiritual interventions against these resistances focus on the anguish of death. In a context of generalized fear, empathy helps to understand the suffering of the other and to consider it normal. Psychotherapies and spiritual accompaniment aim to reassure, both individually and collectively, by making the Riposte system as uninhibited as possible: humanization of care, psychological debriefing with caregivers. We give strong sig-

nals to patients that they will not die from this real but preventable disease. The aim is to bring the affected people (patients, carers, Riposte workers and the community) back to a normal, rational and justified fear.

Our interventions are mainly focused on announcing results to patients and families, as well as psychological and spiritual support for all: confirmed patients, suspects, healed, caregivers, orphaned and separated children, bereaved and affected families in different ways. We provide social assistance to affected families. We teach new behaviours that do not encourage the spread of the virus. Finally, we support the

other bodies involved in the fight against MVE: surveillance, medical care, infection protection and control, vaccination, laboratory, and the dignified and secure burial committees.

The Ebola epidemic leaves stigmas that will take time to heal, starting with the 1,296 orphaned children in the city of Butembo and Lubero territory alone. Its impact on the lives of the population is enormous, given the thousands of Ebola victims. Prophylactic measures are needed in several areas to accompany the people of God in the region. The challenge is big. We must act.

P. Jean-Marie WAYIVUTHA

Fr. Jean-Marie Wayvutha (right) puts on his protective clothing before starting his work as a psychologist in an Ebola Treatment Centre in Butembo.



An encounter in Mexico

The religious in formation from the Province of North America gathered in June for a time of exchange and formation



Participants and animators of the meeting of young religious in Mexico City.

They were part of a cohort of young religious Assumptionists from the Province of North America, who responded to the call from Father Peter Precourt, responsible for formation in the Province. He invited these young Assumptionists to a session so that they could meet one another and exchange ideas. The session took place in Mexico from June 9 to June 13, in a house run by the Josephinos. Brothers Jean-Bosco Kambale Kanyama, Daniele Caglioni and Germán Gonzalez Alvarez, respectively from Quebec, Canada, the United States and Mexico, represented the languages of French, English and Spanish. They speak here of their experiences.

A favorable moment that has been long-awaited

The session in Mexico was one long-awaited for by Daniele. It was an enjoyable time, in which he met the young brothers

from his Province---especially those he had never met and really wanted to meet. *“I am very happy that this gathering was held, as he explained in English. I wanted to meet my brothers, and I realized that other people counted on me and I counted on them. This gathering gives me the light of hope in listening to other brothers; in realizing that Pacifique, Sadiki and Jean-Bosco can also face difficulties in Quebec; Ciano (for Marciano), Rodel and others in Mexico.”*

For his part, Jean-Bosco reiterates that the session had its purpose in a Province where we seem to live in isolation. *“The gathering responded to my needs,”* he noted in mentioning the moment in which the brothers presented themselves to one another and shared their personal experiences.

Germán spoke in Spanish of an enjoyable encounter, an event that not only gathered the brothers from Canada, the United



States and Mexico, but that was a mix of different cultures.

An experience of internationality: riches and obstacles

« *This session enabled us to live in a concrete way the internationality that we speak of today in our congregation* », Jean-Bosco realized. In effect, explained Germán, « *Our international congregation encourages us to exchange ideas based on our cultural wealth. This gathering mutually enriched us and made us think about our other brothers in the Philippines, in Africa, and elsewhere.* » For Daniele, « *people who saw us walking together in the park or in the museum certainly asked the question: What gathers these Africans, Philippinos, Mexicans and Americans, these young men from all corners of the world?* » According to Daniele, the answer is always---Jesus Christ.

Jean-Bosco points out one obstacle of internationality, which is to understand the lan-

guage. According to him, ignorance of a language of a brother impedes an effective communication with him. « *It is from our languages that we can exchange the richness of our internationality and our inter-culturality,* » believes Germán. He stressed that he has been able to live well with other brothers, being able to relate to them and to benefit from their cultural richness, despite the difficulty that comes with a difference in common language. « *We are fortunate to have brothers to translate for us, so that we can easily understand.* » Jean-Bosco spoke of certain brothers who played the role of intermediary in translating the words of the other brothers. They have made communication easier. « *The brothers who know at least two languages helped us communicate, to live the encounter among us and to talk about numerous subjects,* » he explained. Jean-Bosco understands the importance of having these brother translators. He

thinks it is very important to learn the languages of the other

brothers to better communicate with them.

A beacon that lights the future

This meeting in Mexico constituted, for these three brothers, a beacon that lights the future. This bright beacon illuminates certain aspects of meeting together and of encountering other youth. The religious who were gathered in Mexico hope for other similar moments: they can be regular, by changing location. « *We will look to future occasions, like an ordination,* » noted Jean-Bosco. « *Despite the expenses connected to a trip, a physical presence in a place allows one to feel the reality of that place---like the popular devotions in Mexico and the near-empty churches in Québec.* » A magazine or journal would also allow for exchanges and connections.

« *I leave with one mission: to encounter the youth,* » excitedly remarked Jean-Bosco, regarding the impressive numbers of youth we met in the churches and with the Assumptionists in Mexico. « *This country inspires the future for the Province of North America,* » he noted but along with a question: « *How can we be present in the world of our youth? How can we share the experiences of Mariadelcarmen, Andrew and others responsible for the ministry of youth and for Assumptionist vocations in Mexico and in the United States?* » Jean-Bosco nurtures one conviction: « *We must commit to this apostolate among the youth.* »

Fr. Sadiki KAMBALE KYAVUMBA
(Community of Québec)

We come in pilgrimage

One of the events marking the 175th anniversary of the Congregation, in 2020, will be the session of the Plenary General Council (CGP) in Nîmes. This pilgrimage to the source will not fail to set an example. The experiences of these last years, as well as personal or collective initiatives, show us the steps that contributed to the promotion of the cause of sainthood of Father d'Alzon.

Father d'Alzon's reputation for holiness may be well established. And yet, we can ask how we can expand it . . . We have every right to wonder why, in this area, we are too often satisfied with some clichés and collected ideas. His holiness is confirmed by the devotion attested to those that we consider close to God, because of the virtues that he practiced to the point of making his life like a mirror of God. We know that from the beginnings of Christianity, Europe was born on a pilgrimage and developed in the shadow of high places where the faithful came to forge a common conscience and a common expression of fervor, close to revered founders, bishops, hermits, monks and nuns in whom the faith was like cement for the Christian people.

It is in this same spirit that today some faithful will go to Nîmes to the tomb of Father d'Alzon and desire to rediscover, in the steps of this man, the excellence of his virtues. This reputation of holiness goes beyond France and its borders and spreads today throughout the entire world. The sons and daughters of Father d'Alzon come from all over the world to reinvigorate themselves near the one they consider to be their model.



Pilgrims of the Lay-Religious Alliance in front of the tombs of the family of Fr. d'Alzon in Lavagnac, June 2019.

From all backgrounds, they converge toward the chapel on the street of Séguier where Father is buried. Whether the steps are individual or in a group, those who come from the ends of the earth add to their itineraries this provincial stopover like an obligatory passage. The places of formation of the Assumption family have become a milestone: the novitiate of the Little Sisters of the Assumption, the Oblate probationists, the Lay Assumptionists, etc.

A place of convergence

Bernard Franot, a Lay Assumptionist familiar with a visit to the tomb, recounts: *“It was 10 years ago, when an Assumptionist who was preparing for the priesthood followed the psychology training that I animated. Upon becoming a novice master, he asked me to take part in the formation of novices in his care. That is how I discovered the Assumptionist community and the personage of its founder, Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon, through the* ▶

booklets in the collection “*Vi-
enne ton Règne*”. This discovery
was very quickly enriched by the
books suggested to me by Fr. Pat-
rick Zago, so as to understand
more fully this extraordinary per-
sonality, in love with the Kingdom
of God. I participated, with curi-
osity, in exchanges with several
religious who spoke to me of the
relevance of d’Alzon’s thinking on
various current topics.” In many
ways, Fr. d’Alzon appeals to us
by his visionary outlook, his in-
tuition as a precursor and his au-
dacious spirit. These aspects are
revealed little by little in his reli-
gious journey and in the richness
of his spirituality: « *I am touched
by his passionate desire for the
Kingdom, with his staunch faith
in Jesus Christ, with his affection-
ate attachment to the Blessed Vir-
gin Mary and with his unfailing
faithfulness to the Church and to
the successors of Peter, whatever
the price to pay,*” continues Ber-
nard by focusing on the dynamics
inspired by such an individual.

An experience that concerns me

To come on a pilgrimage and
walk in the steps of a person
whose posterity shines through is
certainly a complex journey: “*It
was necessary, at times, for me
to put myself in his footsteps and
walk in his rhythm,*” confessed
Bernard in adding: “*I gradually
understood that his experience
touched me in a way that was
much more intimate, and three
years ago, I followed up by com-
mitting myself as a Lay Assump-
tionist of the Alliance. My discov-
ery of Father d’Alzon moved me
to want to see his surroundings,
travel his sites and touch the ob-
jects with which he was familiar
and which continue to speak to*

*us of him. Our human condition
moves us to rediscover concrete
manifestations and to come to a
more tangible understanding of
him who turns us toward the es-
sential.*”

The first words of God to
Abraham, are: “*Go, leave your
country.*” The pilgrimage con-
nects to this first experience and
is also an occasion to give hom-
age to the one to whom we feel
so indebted. To go where he has
lived and worked, to uncover his
familial surroundings, his places
of travel, his places of spiritual
renewal, of preaching, of foun-
dations of his works . . . these are
all opportunities to deepen and to
strengthen the convictions that
are gradually established in us by
our readings and by our exchang-
es. Ultimately, this pilgrimage
that we make together, religious
and lay, “*is a way of living to the
extent of the world. This year, we
will represent the Churches of
France, of Vietnam, of the Phil-
ippines, of Togo, of Madagascar,
etc.) in a climate of simple, uni-
versal fraternity. What a joy to
participate in these blessed mo-
ments, that will make Emmanuel
d’Alzon rejoice and that will
show him that his work is always
alive!*”

A moment of universal fraternity

The pilgrimage is not an insig-
nificant walk. It requires that one
leave the comforts of his daily life
to uncover a spiritual reality that
takes hold in the meeting of the
other, lived between the religious
and the lay; in daily Eucharist and
the celebration of the liturgy of
the hours; in symbolic places all
still filled with the memory of the
practices of Father d’Alzon and
of his way of praying, beyond the

time between us. The knowledge
of the individual is transmitted
through this concrete and physi-
cal experience. “*This year, it
will be made through the angle
of four conferences: one devoted
to the upheaval of the century in
which he lived; of a reflection
on his earthly family and on the
beginnings of his vocation; of an
exposition of the major themes of
his spirituality; and, finally, of a
clarification on his creative and
founding works.*”

The pilgrimage is equally a
huge moment of fraternity com-
prising enriching moments of
encounter, of contemplation of
places such as monuments as well
as nature, of time to listen to all
those who have been fellow com-
panions of Fr. d’Alzon during one
long period of existence: “*Esteem
and mutual consideration possess
the virtue of strengthening unity
and communion among people,*”
also remarked Bernard.

What can one say, therefore,
of the holiness of Fr. d’Alzon?
There is nothing better, to discov-
er it, than to take his route and to
live it like a fully traced model.
“*Four days to realize a certain
objective isn’t much, but it allows
one to know more fully the one we
came to encounter in his lands
and in the region to which he was
fiercely attached.*”

Impossible is not Christian

Obviously, we know the per-
son’s strong character, his pe-
remptory convictions and his to-
tal immersion in a very complex
era. Do not confuse holiness and
perfection! The roughness of
his personality could shock or
disturb one or the other. For his
contemporaries, could he have
been otherwise? When a man of



Pilgrimage of the Lay-Religious Alliance to the castle of Lavagnac, where Fr. d'Alzon lived from 1816 to 1832.

conviction puts all his energy and his imagination to the service of the mission he has been assigned, his zealous response to the call of the Lord ignores all obstacles. *“For me, the holiness of Father d’Alzon is revealed in his will, his courage, his perseverance in the accomplishment of his work for the Church, that in which he put his total person, with his resources, his intelligence and with his intuition that did not fail him, with the goal always clearer to spread the Kingdom of God.”*

As such, it is a stimulating example that helps everyone do their part, as modest as it is, toward this construction. The grandeur of his soul is like an encouragement to follow the path that he traced and to put our lives in full accord with the call of Jesus: *“That your Kingdom come.”*

« *Of all the pilgrimages to which I could participate,*” says

Bernard, *“this one gives me the feeling of being more present to the realities of the world. Often, the pilgrimages are directly oriented toward Jesus or Mary. This one invites us to fall back advantageously on the human experience of an exceptional person, but who reassures us on the real possibility of rejoining Christ through the path that he opens to us. A pilgrimage following a great witness gives us the feeling of being overtaken and accompanied on a difficult path, but a possible one.”* It is a pilgrimage that makes us say: *“Impossible is not Christian.”*

An older brother

To expand the reputation of sainthood for Father d’Alzon, it goes like good wine: it is not sufficient to breathe it in, to taste it, but one must talk about it, to

make it known, dare to testify to it based on our own discoveries, to become promoters. This isn’t easy in a world bombarded by thousands of demands! Pray to him, it is to hope for the support of one of our elderly brothers in the faith: *“I am hopeful that his evangelical model will bring us responses to the question of today, as long as we trust him,”* concluded Bernard.

An intercessor toward God is a big brother. *“This year, during the preparation of this pilgrimage, I am surprised to be asking him for “a helping hand” so that this walk will be well received, in alignment with the spirit of his work and with his spiritual life. I am sure that he will be present there.”*

Fr. Bernard Le Léanec
Postulator General



Emmanuel d'Alzon and the Youth Work in Nîmes (1/2)

*The history of Fr. d'Alzon's relations with the Youth Work in Nîmes (later called «The Argaud Work») has never really been studied. There are some references to it in Volume 1 of Siméon Vailhé's *La vie du Père d'Alzon*, which deals with the beginnings in the apartment on rue de l'Arc Dugras and the episode of the purchase of the Mont Duplan building called «Maison Prophette» named after its owner.*

In Fr. d'Alzon's correspondence, especially in his letters to Fathers Picard, Bailly and Marie Eugénie de Jésus, we must be vigilant to note here and there some lines explicitly referring to this Work and the adventures of the years 1872-1877. Jean-Paul Périet-Muzet did not have the opportunity to go into the subject in more detail, confining himself to what can be drawn from this correspondence. The only summary we have is a two-page note written by Bernard Le Léannec.

The Diocesan Archives are practically silent on this subject at this time. But, on the

side of the Œuvre Argaud and the Municipal Archives of Nîmes, documents exist. They were exploited by Mr. Bernard Petit as part of a master's thesis in contemporary history defended in 1996 at the Paul Valéry University in Montpellier, under the direction of Gérard Cholvy, a good connoisseur of the early days of the Assumption.

The sole purpose of the following pages is to gather this previously dispersed knowledge, to enrich it with more refined research in Fr. d'Alzon's correspondence, and to draw information from other sources in Mr. Petit's brief.

It is a subject that, for the Assumptionists, has the interest of illustrating the spirit of initiative of their founder, and the vision he had of action with young people.

Incidentally, we can see here that he too has experienced failures, for lack of the means to achieve his ambitions, especially in terms of manpower and time.

Jean-Michel Brochec

On November 14, 1835, Emmanuel d'Alzon, a 25-year-old priest, moved to Nîmes, rue de l'Aspic, to the home of a great uncle. Ordained a priest in Rome eleven months earlier, he has just spent a family vacation in Lavagnac. Despite many flattering requests from Paris and Montpellier, he opted for the young diocese of Nîmes, which was reconstituted in new frontiers in 1817 and given a bishop four years later. To keep this brilliant subject, Bishop de Chaffoy immediately appointed him honorary canon and honorary vicar general (then called «Grand Vicar»).

Father d'Alzon arrived in Nîmes with three projects: working on the «conversion» of Protestants through conferences and debates of a theological and historical nature; creating a college for the formation of a Catholic elite; bringing in Carmelites to carry out a prayer mission.

Alas! His bishop feared to awaken secular tensions between Catholics and Protestants and opposed this first project. On the other hand, d'Alzon was rushed by Father Vermot who created a boys' boarding school (the Assumption House); finally, the bishop delayed and did not show any enthusiasm for the idea of hosting a Carmelite monastery. The young and dynamic priest is limited to frequenting libraries, preaching, confessing, distributing the sacraments, leading people spiritually... while the diocese still struggles to meet many needs, especially in the field of catechesis for children, Christian formation for older youth and adults, and in the social field.

A few months after his arrival, d'Alzon changed apartments and moved to rue de l'Arc Dugras, in a shiny neighbourhood. He

lived on the first floor of a spacious but austere building, while the second floor was occupied by another young priest, Father Daudet (relative of the writer of the same name).

Youth training

On the Sunday after Vespers in the chapel of the Royal College, he taught a «catechism of perseverance» attended by a large number of young people but also adults. With the help of Father Daudet, he welcomes children from 10 to 15 years old from wealthy families into his apartment. Meetings are frequent and are held mainly in the late evening. D'Alzon prepares some for communion and continues the Christian formation of others. He plays with the children (pool, fencing, wrestling...), eats with them, talks in a relaxed way and leads a time of prayer at the oratory arranged in the apartment. This group quickly became an association: the Société Saint-Louis de Gonzague.

He asked Father Daudet, who lives on the second floor, to take care in the same spirit of children and young men from middle and working class backgrounds, most often already at work, constituted by D'Alzon in the Saint-Stanislas Society. Between the two groups, which share common spaces and the oratory, relations are sometimes difficult. When D'Alzon, who became Vicar general in title, moved to rue des Lombards, in an apartment more in line with his position, he appointed Father Daudet director of the two associations in 1839.

Success has been achieved, the number of employees is increasing and more suitable premises must be found. It will be rue

du Mûrier d'Espagne in 1837, rue de l'Enclos Rey (Bassot house) in 1842, then Petit Chemin Saint Gilles, currently rue Briçonnet (Gibert building), in 1846.

An education project

In November 1837, the date chosen as the date of the foundation of the work, he gave the children the rules of the Marseille work founded by Father Jean-Joseph Allemand (1772-1836), whose motto could be summarized as follows: «Here we play, here we pray».

The formula, pronounced by the priest in response to the visit of a government inspector who came to close the work and asked him what was happening there, hides a real educational project based on three bases:

- the socialization of young people through games and team sports,
- Christian and spiritual formation through prayer, the practice of the sacraments, readings and instructions,
- the responsibility and sense of responsibility of others, the older ones having to take care of the younger ones and get involved in the general good running of the Work.

In 1846, four members of the Allemand's work came to Nîmes to advise Father Daudet. He himself, accompanied by the elders of the Work of Nîmes, went a little later to Marseille to see Father Allemand's method applied in the field. In agreement with Fr. d'Alzon, Daudet then revised the rules of the work.

What is striking about this regulation is its requirements and the training for responsibilities it implements. The «Maison» in Nîmes welcomes its members on Sundays, Thursdays and every

day between 1pm and 2.30pm, and between 8pm and 9.45pm. To register, you must have made First Communion (around 12 years old); the age limit is 30 years old. The new member, accompanied by an older tutor (called a *zélateur*), undergoes a probation period of three months before being solemnly integrated. A wide distribution of tasks is planned, so that as many young people as possible have a responsibility: superiors, *zélateurs*, treasurers, secretaries are chosen from among the oldest and form a Management Board that can replace the director in the event of a vacancy. The Consultation Council brings together members who fill so-called secondary charges distributed on a yearly, monthly or weekly basis: playroom supervisors, doorman, sacristan, choirboys, choristers... The older ones must take care of the younger ones. As a young person progresses, he or she can thus move on to increasingly important responsibilities until he or she becomes a superior, i.e. assistant to the director.

The Sunday Mass, which is mandatory, takes place at 8 a.m. Vespers are sung around 4 p.m., followed by a short instruction. On Thursday, school rest day, Mass is celebrated at 7 or 8 a.m., and in the afternoon we go to the chapel to recite the rosary and then do a short reading and hear an instruction. Young people are invited to confess every eight or fifteen days. Communion should be as frequent as possible. Outside the days when the house is open, young people are encouraged to participate in Mass in their parish, to devote about fifteen minutes to a spiritual reading, an examination of conscience, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and to recite the Rosary.

Games are perceived as a means of personal development and socialization. Group games on the courtyard are preferred. But indoor games are also available. Members over 16 years of age have a lounge for this purpose, the youngest members have rooms supervised by a senior one.

A first test

In January 1851, the number of members reached about 150; in October it was down to 75. The causes seem to be the firmness of the rules, which have clarified the Christian purpose of the work, and the amount of the contributions (12 francs). However, Father Daudet accepts young people who cannot pay this sum, or he sends them to the patronage of the Assumption (1), which is more appropriate to their social environment and where they will receive appropriate assistance.

In 1852, the financial difficulties were such that Father Daudet had to resign and retire to Beaucaire, before joining the diocese of Marseille. It is also necessary to leave the premises on rue Briçonnet, which are too expensive, and find others. The elders, probably members of the Governing Council, went to the bishop, Mgr Cart, to ask for his support. They are received coldly. The priests of the city's parishes are no more welcoming. A space was found for the Saint-Louis de Gonzague section, rue Coutelier, and another rue de la Poudrière, at Mont Duplan, for the Saint-Stanislas section. Masses are celebrated in the chapel of the Collège de l'Assomption or in a parish. In the evening, an oratory is improvised on site.

On the advice of Fr. d'Alzon, who did not resolve the disappearance of the Work, the bishop asked Father Argaud, missionary of Father Soulas (2), to take charge of the financial management of the Youth Work, while forbidding him, for reasons unknown, to take charge of it! Fr. d'Alzon continued to work to prevent the work from sinking and finally convinced Bishop Cart to support it and allow Father Argaud to at least ensure its spiritual direction.

Thanks to the commitment of the senior members and the support of Fr. d'Alzon, the Work was saved. But the division into two sections and two locations is problematic. It was then decided to group everything together in the Mont Duplan building (Maison Prophette, named after its owner) where the young people of Saint-Stanislas already lived. It is a 1000 m² plot, overlooking the city, with a vast courtyard and a sufficient number of rooms. On January 1, 1854, on the occasion of the vows that the elders had come to present to the bishop, he announced to them that he had just bought the property of Mont Duplan for 8,000 francs, that he gave it to them, and that he officially appointed Father Argaud as director.

Here is what D'Alzon said about this episode in a letter to Marie Eugénie dated April 30, 1854:

«Some time ago, an association of young people was led by a certain Abbé Daudet, chaplain of the Ladies of Saint-Maur; he did some business badly, was forced to leave the diocese. Monsignor decided that the association would be dissolved, called Mr. Argaud for chaplain, in place of Mr. Daudet, and informed him that first of all he



Partial view of the Maison Prophette, from Poudrière street. The buildings still look the same from outside since the middle of the 19th century.

forbade him to take care of the Work of the Young Men. But I allowed myself to prevent the Work from perishing. Ignoring the defense given to Father Argaud, I asked him to help me support the Work, and today I have just blessed a chapel in a room bought with Monsignor's money for this association, which has Father Argaud as its director. And the Bishop is delighted with all this, since he is paying. »

A prosperous period then began for the Work of Nîmes, financially supported by elders, the bishop, Fr. d'Alzon and a few priests - few in number, because many priests saw in this work a competition that impoverished their parishes. We are innovating in terms of sports, cultural and religious activities. Adaptations to the evolution of mentalities are being tested, for example the creation of a swimming pool, the installation of a gymnasium, the authorization for older children to smoke in their room and to consume even alcoholic drinks

such as the chartreuse! Very quickly, adjustments are necessary in the face of excesses and the fact that the older ones are becoming less and less involved with the younger ones, which runs counter to an important objective of the educational project.

The return of Fr. d'Alzon

In July 1872, we learned that the bishop, Bishop Plantier, sold the Mont Duplan property to Fr. d'Alzon, and that he undertook to maintain the Youth Work in this property. Indeed, on June 22, a double contract was signed between Fr. d'Alzon and Bishop Plantier. By the first, the Bishop of Nîmes rented to Fr. d'Alzon for nine years, starting October 1, 1872, an enclosure located on Mount Duplan, «behind the enclosure of the city of Nîmes» (TD, n° 450, p.74). By the second, he sells it to him, with the authorization of the government, the lease to end on the day on

which the conditional sale becomes final with the approval of the government (T.D. 43, pp. 333-338).

It was the premises of the Youth Work, founded in 1837 by Fr. d'Alzon, saved by him in 1854 and entrusted to Father Argaud. The bishop cited the financial difficulties of his major seminary as a reason. It is a thunderclap that amazes the elders, who are very involved in material management. They ask themselves: why did the Vicar general and founder of the Augustinians of the Assumption wish to acquire this property?

Fr. d'Alzon has always shown his attachment to his creation through his gifts, his visits, his influence (3). He was also interested, that's for sure, in the land and buildings of Mount Duplan. According to Canon Argaud, «for a long time, Father d'Alzon had his eyes full of envy on the Prophette house and when Bishop Cart acquired it, he was on the verge of raising the price». By buying this building from the bishop, the founder of the Augustinians of the Assumption wished to establish the mother house and novitiate of his congregation there and find vocations (letter to Fr. Galabert, 4 June 1872). Indeed, the Collège de l'avenue Feuchères is not the ideal place for a novitiate. On the other hand, according to the records kept by Argaud, the work provides a large number of priests and religious: about 70 over a period of fifty years since 1845, including three Assumptionists between 1869 and 1872. Finally, D'Alzon thought it would be easy to find a religious capable of leading it, as he had promised.

On this project of Fr. d'Alzon, here is what Emmanuel Bailly ▶

wrote to Fr. Alexis Dumazer on May 9:

«For three or four months now it has been agreed with Monsignor that Father Argaud for 20,000 francs will transfer the house, garden and outbuildings of the Youth Work to the Fathers of the Assumption. In October, Fr. d'Alzon will establish his «residence» there with four or five more serious novices, more capable of a more advanced and complete formation. This will be the «true» novitiate and the Vigan will only be a developed aluminate. »

Responsibility therefore passes to Fr. d'Alzon. It seems that discussions took place between him and Argaud as early as May (letter to Fr. Vincent de Paul Bailly, 22 May 1872). Nevertheless, the situation is difficult for the ousted director. The latter considers that the director of the work must live on site. In July, Fr. d'Alzon sent Fr. Norbert Mathieu, an elder of the work (he had been with it for three years) and, on August 5, Fr. Alexis Dumazer to ensure the transition. He himself settled there on October 2, 1872 and appointed Father Blanc as director, a diocesan priest who had entered the novitiate a year earlier.

Fr. d'Alzon is very happy in his new environment. He enjoys the fresh air, the panorama, a relative tranquility that allows him to work more efficiently. Diocesan priests come to meet him more discreetly than at the College. Here are some excerpts from his letters:

«I never cease to bless God for the idea he inspired in me to come and take refuge at the top of Nîmes. I'm too good there. Loneliness will give me ten more years of life there. Some

people are sad about it, but there comes a time when you have to give yourself hours of retirement. Note that I go out every day, but these evenings are invaluable for me and allow me to work. « (to Marie-Eugénie, December 25, 1872).

«I am writing to you from Father Argaud's house, whose apartment I took from the Youth Work. I have a splendid view of the young people with whom I hope to find vocations. Priests come to see me a lot, and I have resumed the meetings of the past. « (to Fr. Galabert, 12 Dec. 1872)

«Pray, you too, for this work that makes me perch on a rock. Young people, men, priests, religious, that is what I would like to make heaven grow. « (to Miss Cécile Varin d'Ainville, December 6, 1872)

«Since I have been in my future scholasticate, I am, it is true, a little less disturbed; nevertheless, I have preached a retreat

there, the fruit of which will, I hope, first of all be a lay Brother. It seems to me that some other vocations are being prepared. I have arranged to have the Brothers' honor class on hand: they are their 30 strongest students. We will make them good Christians, if we do not make them religious, and that is still a lot. Already I had a small intimate conference of 5 or 6 priests (4). Today we are extending it: I have been asked to admit all those who would like to come to us. I have accepted and I intend to do something good, which will affect the priory itself, because I am sure we will have vocations for you and for us. Already here I more easily receive the confidences of some clergymen who would rather come to find me in solitude, and yet I am rid of a lot of unwelcome people. « (to Marie Eugénie, December 10, 1872).

(to be followed)

1) Patronage run by the religious and students of Collège de l'Assomption for popular neighbourhoods children.

2) André Soulas (1808-1857), a priest of the diocese of Montpellier, co-seminarian with Father D'Alzon, founder of Our Lady Auxiliatrix Sisters and of an association of diocesan missionaries.

3) In the publication of the feast of the Centennial, the Argaud Work, 1837-1937 (Nîmes 1938, pp. 34-49), recognizes that Father d'Alzon had been the founder. It is, as one can read, an initiative of the youth, in line with the patronages and following the spirit of the youth works of Fr. Timon-David of Marseille. This statement is anachronistic since the foundation was inspired by Fr. Allemand before the work in Nîmes ever existed, much later, under the congregation of Timon-David. It was sved, as here reported and as confirmed by the history of this rescuing by one of the young man of the Work during a public session held in Nîmes on 10 December 1854 (Revue des bibliothèques paroissiales, Avignon 1855, p. 48 and ff.).

4) It is to this group that were meant the 'Tuesday conferences for the priests of Nîmes; he still have notes of Fr. D'Alzon for the years 1872-1873. It was some kind of on-going formation for the clergy of the town.

The memoirs of an Assumptionist under the Soviet dictatorship

Fr. Eugene LaPlante, a religious of the North American Province who died on July 27, published a few years ago in the *Russia Review*, this review of the memoirs of Fr. Braun, his colleague to whom he succeeded from 1960 to 1965 in our mission in Moscow.

Fr. Léopold Braun has at long last received his due, some forty-two years after his death, with the publication of the memoirs of his long service to the American Embassy Community of Moscow and especially to his beloved Russian Catholic Community during the most trying of times and in the most dire of circumstances. His memoirs have been meticulously edited by Professor Gary Hamburg. It took the preparation for the centennial celebration of the Assumptionists' presence in Russia to bring about even the possibility of their publication, after Fr. Braun's long and unsuccessful battle with his ecclesiastical superiors to win permission.

Over the years, the memoirs had fallen into the oblivion of the Assumptionist archives, until Professor Hamburg was commissioned by the then provincial superior, Fr. John Franck, A.A., to prepare a study of the Russian Mission from the American Assumptionists' point of view, for a presentation to the Centennial Symposium held in Rome in November 2003. Gary Hamburg was a felicitous choice. He quickly recognized the importance of Fr. Braun's memoirs and has produced this excellent and extraordinary edition.

The eighty-two-page preface and introduction expertly and accurately portray the greater his-

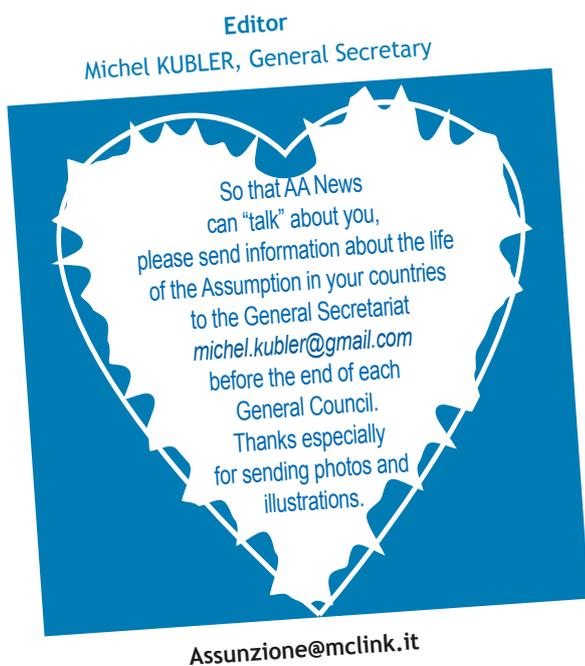
torical context of the Assumptionist Mission in Russia, and later in the Soviet Union, with all the ups and downs the mission would have over the years. Hamburg also gives a finely tuned analysis of the strengths and flaws of the various versions of Fr. Braun's manuscripts. Section V of the introduction analyzes with flair Fr. Braun's efforts to publish his memoirs, and the long, laborious, and often stormy negotiations with the superiors of this religious congregation and also the Vatican; it also illustrates well the politics, both secular and ecclesiastical, that Fr. Braun had to face, unsuccessfully.

The saga of the writing and rewriting of the memoirs and the struggle to have them published make for fascinating reading. The memoirs themselves, however, make for even more fascinating reading, because in Fr. Braun we have an eyewitness to twelve years of persecution of a people on the religious front, as one might expect from a priest caught in the turmoil of the Stalinist attempt to purge the country of religious belief and of all religion in the name of godless communism, despite the so called "constitutional guarantees," but also of any political opposition, including the people who adhered to any of the democratic ideals so dear to the American culture.

Because Fr. Braun lived and worked among the Russian people even if most of the time his residence was in the French embassy, he was able to seize the facts in reports from various parishioners and acquaintances, and their implications, better than anyone. In *Lubianka's Shadow* is an honest, generally very accurate, though not completely unbiased, and true historical account of life and politics in Moscow and the Soviet Union during twelve years of grim government-sponsored terror and turmoil, and World War II. A lesser man than Léopold Braun would not have been able to endure the extremely high level of stress for so long a time. Even if at the end of his stay in Moscow he had become somewhat paranoid, he was misunderstood and mishandled by his ecclesiastical superiors. I agree with Professor Hamburg that, "happily, the memoirs of Fr. Léopold Braun can now take their rightful place among the primary sources of the Stalin epoch" (p. x)..

Fr. Eugène V. LAPLANTE

Léopold L. S., A. A. In Lubianka's Shadow: The Memoirs of an American Priest in Stalin's Moscow, 1934-1945. Edited by G. M. Hamburg. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2006. lxxxii + 352 pp. \$35.00. ISBN 0-268-02199-6.



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Our deceased brothers



† Father **Paul VAUDREUIL**, of the Old English Road community (North American Province), died in Worcester (USA) on July 6, 2019. His funeral was celebrated in the chapel of Assumption College on July 12. He was interred at St. Anne Cemetery, Fiskdale, MA. He was 81 years old.

† Father **Antonius GAUTIER**, of the community of Leuven (European Province), died on July 22, 2019, at Leuven, Belgium. His funeral was celebrated on July 26th in the chapel of the community. He was 93 years old.

† Father **Mutien LAMBERT**, of the community of Brussels-Rue Braves (European Province), died on July 22, 2019. His funeral was celebrated on July 27 in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at Koekelberg. He was 88 years old.

† Father **Eugene LAPLANTE**, of the Old English Road community (Province of North America), died on July 27, 2019, in Worcester (USA). His funeral was celebrated August 1 in St. Anne's Church in Fiskdale, followed by interment at St. Anne's Cemetery. He was 87 years old.

† Father **Regis PHARISIER**, of the community of Layrac (Province of Europe) died on August 6, 2019, in Layrac (France). His funeral was celebrated on August 9 in the chapel of the priory. He was 101 years old.

† Father **Charles MONSCH**, of the community of Albertville (Province of Europe), died on August 29, 2019 in Albertville (France). His funeral was celebrated on September 2 in the chapel of Notre-Dame of the Vines. He was buried in Albertville. He was 97 years old.

† Father **Jean-Marie MUTULIRANO LWAYIVWEKA**, of the community of Kyondo (Province of Africa), died on September 19, 2019, in Goma (DR-Congo). His funeral was celebrated on September 21 in Butembo. He was 36 years of age.

We have recently learned of the death of Father Anton TOPLISKY (Province of North America), who passed away on July 30, 2014, at the age of 92.