



AUGUSTINIANS OF THE ASSUMPTION

# the assumptionist...

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## LAY ASSUMPTIONISTS

Venerable Emmanuel d'Alzon dreamt of a religious order that would include priests, brothers and lay people. What made his dream original was that they would all be equal partners in the mission.

Of course, lay collaborators worked side by side with the religious from the very beginning. The ecclesial structures of the time, however, did not allow Fr. d'Alzon to fully realize his dream. But it remained part of the Assumptionist DNA.

When Vatican Council II brought the vocation of the lay person into sharper focus, the Assumptionists were inspired to fulfill their Founder's dream. After several years of research and experimentation, the General Chapter of 2011 formally accepted the **Lay Assumptionists as full-fledged members of the Congregation.**

A "Way of Life" for Lay Assumptionists, inspired by the "Rule of Life" for the vowed religious, was promulgated as a spiritual guide.

Membership has grown all over the world with the greatest numbers in the Congo. Every Province has active cells that remain very diverse with customs and procedures adapted to each group. In our Province there are cells in Quebec, Mexico and the USA.

Fr. Claude Grenache, A.A.  
Provincial Coordinator for the Lay Assumptionists  
Member of the International Commission



## LAY ASSUMPTIONISTS ARE FULL MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION.

## (GENERAL CHAPTER OF 2011)

FALL 2015

Our Lay Assumptionists in Sturbridge first came together as a result of a retreat given by Fr. Richard Lamoureux, A.A. in the Fall of 2013. We began as a small group of interested and committed women, and for quite some time remained just that – a small group of women who decided to follow the Rule of Life of the Assumptionists. Sr. Clare Bertero and Fr. Donald Espinosa would meet with us once a month for discussion and prayer feeding us spiritually but our meetings always began with the opportunity to be fed bodily as well. After approximately a year of studying the Rule of Life of the congregation and the life of our founder, Fr. Emmanuel D'Alzon, and trying to understand our role as Lay Assumptionists, which took us quite some time, we asked ourselves what defined this particular group of Lay Assumptionists.

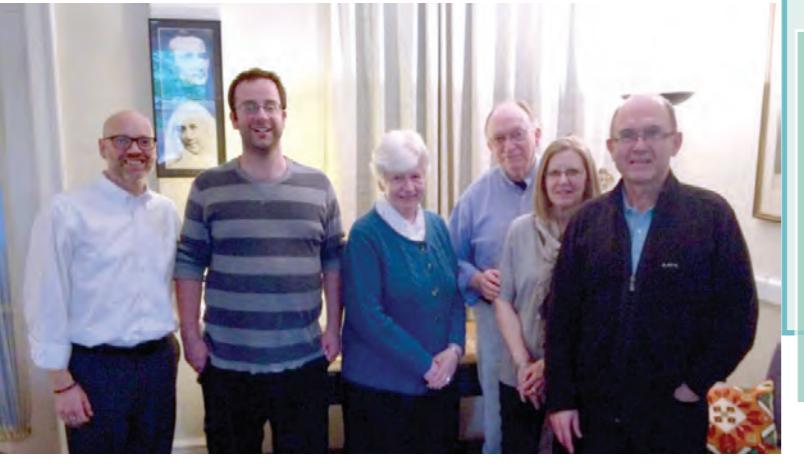
Praying had been a big part of our coming together each month and thought that prayer must be our main purpose as a group.



Brighton and Sturbridge groups meet for prayer and fellowship.

Prayer is still our priority when coming together and especially in our daily lives, but God seemed to have new plans for us. During a visit by Fr. Bernard Holtzer, A.A. from the Philippines, we asked if there was anything, as Lay Assumptionists, we could do to help. He immediately said: "education." Educating young women in the Philippines is very important – without an education they don't have an opportunity to break the cycle of poverty. Therefore, as a result of the meeting with Fr. Bernard, we established the "Fr. Chuvi Memorial Scholarship." Fr. Chuvi was a young Assumptionist who died tragically in the Philippines and it seemed very fitting to establish a scholarship in his name. Our first Student is a young Filipino woman, Hazel Vera Albesa. She is in a 5 year College program and is working toward a degree as an Engineer in Medicine. To date, after only 1 year, our members have now completed the funding for her 5 years of schooling. After a bit of recruiting and education about the Lay Assumptionists in our weekly parish bulletin, our numbers have increased. Clearly Fr. d'Alzon is leading us into the future.

Sylvia Desautels



Meeting with Fr. Benoit, Superior General, in Sturbridge and then with Brighton group. (Pictured left.)

Like other groups around the world, the Brighton, Massachusetts group of Lay Assumptionists meet regularly to pray, worship, discuss and socialize. We are a very diverse group coming from Boston, Dedham, Worcester and even New Hampshire. Formed two years ago under the guidance of Father Claude Grenache and Sister Clare Bertero, we meet every other month for dinner and discussion and so far have benefitted from two retreats which we shared with Sturbridge folks. We have read and discussed a biography of Father D'Alzon, the Assumptionist Rule of Life, and the new Way of Life for Lay Assumptionists. At every meeting we focus on the challenges of everyday life and how to address them as Lay Assumptionists in this busy world. Our time together strengthens our faith and brings us closer to one another, the congregation and God. New members are always welcome!

Allison and Brian Bialas

For a long time groups of Lay Assumptionists from the U.S. and Quebec have been wanting to get together at the Center for Faith and Culture at Montmartre. Recently this dream became a reality. Our visitors were welcomed by our local members into their homes.

Our time together began with a joint meeting. After a bilingual Morning Prayer, the agenda included a brief introduction of participants and a time to share spiritual and apostolic experiences. These exchanges focused on the daily lived experiences of one another, but also the concerns and challenges of the world today allowed each group to appreciate the different forms of apostolates that are taking place here or there.



Fr. Joseph Mahamba, A.A. and Sra. Bollo Maltos serve as the Lay Assumptionist Tandem in Mexico. In the Parish of San Andres Totoltepec on the outskirts of Mexico City, a new and dynamic group has been formed. Their contribution to the ministry of the parish is much appreciated.

Lay Assumptionists in Mexico



Lay Assumptionists join Provincial Chapter.

A spirit of joy characterized our time together which included visits to Old Quebec, to Montmorency Falls, to the Shrine of Saint-Anne-de-Beaupré, to the island of Orléans, to restaurants (La Cohue, L'Académie), and so much more. The family spirit of the Assumption was present till our brothers and sisters had to leave for home. In brief, this meeting allowed Lay Assumptionists and religious an opportunity to build ties to get to know each other better, and to engage in some dreaming together about the future of Lay Assumptionists in America and Canada, but also throughout the world.

Fr. Sébastien Bangandu, A.A.

I have been a member of the Sturbridge Lay Assumptionists since its inception four years ago. During that time I have experienced a clearer understanding of the charism of Emmanuel d'Alzon, a better perspective on the Assumptionist way of life and a more focused prayer life. At the end of May, the Sturbridge Lay Assumptionists met with the groups from Brighton and Québec at Montmartre, the Assumptionist's facility in Québec. This was a long talked about gathering, but it was definitely worth the wait.

What a wonderful meeting of the three groups! We shared fellowship, prayer and the basic principles of our mission as Lay Assumptionists. We were bound in a commonality of purpose and vision, connected by our love of the Lord and our devotion to Emmanuel d'Alzon. Our time together reinforced our living out of the principle from "The Way of Life" for Lay Assumptionists:

**"We propose to nourish fraternal communion within the Assumption family by coming together regularly for prayer, study and social gatherings with Religious both male and female and the other Lay Assumptionists."**  
**(From Chapter 2, #11)**



Patricia Haggerty



U.S. groups meet with Quebec brothers and sisters.



# MIAMI PILGRIMS COME TO VISIT



After four summers of living with the Assumptionists in Quebec, and almost 7 months of living with them in Florence, I cannot keep this a secret. I have to share this good news, and tell everybody about the Christ I have found within the Assumptionist communities. I have kept in touch with them now for many years. In recent months, I invited my friend Armando Echenique to come to Worcester with me for a visit. At that time, I also invited two Assumptionists to come to Miami and meet our Young Adults Group called Regina Coeli. Fr. Ronald, then Deacon, and Bro. Eddy came for that visit. As a result, a group of young adults went to visit the Assumptionists in Massachusetts this past summer in an adventure called, "Discovering the Assumptionists." Hopefully this relationship will continue to grow and not only foster vocation ministry but become an active cell of Lay Assumptionists in the Miami area.

Henry Garcia  
Friend of Assumption, Miami, FL



We regret to announce the passing of our Assumptionist brother, Fr. Robert J. Fortin, A.A., on August 13, 2015.

During Fr. Robert's long and varied priestly ministry, he taught English at Our Lady of Lourdes Seminary in Cassadaga, NY and Assumption Prep in Worcester, MA, was superior and provincial treasurer in NYC, superior at the College and trustee from '77-'82, chaplain of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, project director of Bayard Press in Paris, superior, rector and director of St. Peter in Gallicantu in Jerusalem, Knight of the Holy sepulcher in 2002 and translated many documents for the congregation from French to English.

May he rest in peace!



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