

EDITOR'S DESK

Greetings and welcome to this issue of the assumptionist... The Assumptionists' Rule of Life says that, through their work, the Assumptionists build up the Church and "give priority to awakening and affirming Christian vocations, particularly religious and priestly." Vocation ministry these days is not an easy apostolate. In his article, Father John Franck, Vocations Director for the U.S. Region of the Assumptionists talks about fostering a culture of vocations in a busy, noisy world.

Also in this issue of the assumptionist...you can read about the recent AMA (Associated Missionaries of the Assumption) commissioning and meet the exceptional five young individuals who have committed to a year of volunteer work. In addition there are stories about Father Olivier's final journey to East Africa, and details about this year's special celebratory Novena for Saint Anne at Saint Anne's shrine in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. It's a beautiful annual tradition that attracts the faithful to this nine-day prayer journey.

We are delighted to give a quick update on those Assumptionists currently in the formation process - Brothers Alex and Clem who have been in the Philippines since last January were joined this summer by Brothers Ricky and Ed. Brother Ronald started his novitiate at St. Anne-St. Patrick in Sturbridge, while Brother Dinh (Vietnamese) moved from Sturbridge to the Assumptionist Center in Brighton, MA to start his STL program at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology. Brother Carlos (Filipino) entered his third year of Theology at St. John's Seminary in Brighton. Matt McDonald (an American) has joined the Community in Brighton as a postulant.

Once again, thank you for your continued support and encouragement of our newsletter. If there is anything that you would like to share with our team, please do not hesitate to contact us. You can contact our team by email at: newsletter@assumptio.org

For more stories and information on the Augustinians of the Assumption, and for more pictures, please visit our website at www.assumption.us

FOSTERING A CULTURE OF VOCATION: Sr. Euphemia's Gift by John Franck, A.A.

As a young boy I can remember moving many times because of my father's work. Each time it meant uprooting the family, leaving friends behind, and adjusting to new circumstances. But some things never changed in the midst of all this upheaval.



John Franck, A.A.

Wherever we went, my mother insisted in placing us in Catholic schools. I am not sure of all the reasons for this choice: her own upbringing, her conviction that we would receive a better and more comprehensive education, the discipline, her desire that we learn our faith and its traditions, her wish that we find friends she could trust, or her sense that such

an education would provide us with some sense of stability and continuity. On almost each of these counts she would have been right. But there was something else about such a Catholic education which grounded us and gave our lives direction. I would call it a "culture of vocation." I do not mean to say that you were almost daily invited to consider a vocation to the priesthood and/or religious life. That goes without saying!! How many times during 7th and 8th grade did Sr. Euphemia, our diminutive but tough instructor, not dangle before us the image of Damien the Leper or Ignatius of Loyola or the North American martyrs and urge us boys to follow in their footsteps? How many retreats did we not attend? How many visits did we not receive from our local parish priests? What I mean to say in particular, though, is that in this context you were immersed in a world where the transcendent was present everywhere and where you could not avoid answering the question: Why did God place me on this earth? What am I called to accomplish? With the short span allotted to me, what difference does God want me to make in the world? With the air we breathed, we understood, almost unconsciously, that all of us had a vocation, a call from God, a role to play in his creation. It was just something we accepted and would never question. We counted on it as much as we could rely on the love and protection of our families and on the meaning of the world around us. It is such a situation that best fosters vocations to priesthood and religious life.



John Franck, A.A. with students at Assumption College

Without it, it is much, much harder to hear the voice of God, let alone believe that he is calling one to something.

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Today we live in a busy, noisy world , one that allows little time for reflection or discernment. We live in a world which, for many reasons, has forgotten or dismissed the horizon of the transcendent, of divine purpose. That is why it is so important for us intentionally to foster a culture of vocation once again in the Church and in society. Only when people pose the question of their God-given purpose in life will they begin to consider the possibility of a religious vocation. The quality of our own personal lives of faith and that of our families and parishes will go a long way to renewing this culture of vocation.

"If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me." (Ps 139: 9)



VOCATION DISCUSSION EVENING WITH THE SUPERIOR GENERAL



In April the Office of Vocation Ministry began a new initiative, a vocation discussion evening which is held every first Tuesday of the month at Emmanuel House in Worcester. Young men who have shown some interest in the priesthood and/or religious life are invited to spend the evening with the Emmanuel House community

attending Mass and/or Evening Prayer, having supper with them, and then concluding with a discussion on some relevant topic. On August 1, four young men joined five young Assumptionists in formation to listen to a presentation by our Superior General, Richard Lamoureux, A.A., who was in town that week giving the religious of the region their annual retreat. Father Richard spoke about the lessons he has learned in his post and proceeded to outline what he thought were the major challenges facing the congregation at this time. Young people who are interested in attending any one of these first-Tuesday sessions are invited to contact John Franck, A.A., the Vocation Director, at 1-508-767-7517 or at jlfranck@aol.com.



DEVELOPMENT OFFICE CORNER

New Giving Opportunity – The Pension Protection Act of 2006

The new law, signed this past summer, provides an exclusion from gross income for otherwise taxable IRA distributions of up to \$100,000 per year from IRA accounts. Those donors who are over the age of 70 ½, can make direct charitable transfers from their IRA accounts to support qualified charitable organizations – like Augustinians of the Assumption.

For 2006 and 2007, the United States Congress is allowing donors who have IRA accounts to make tax-free gifts to qualified charities. The Pension Protection Act allows donors to make a direct transfer from their IRA accounts and do not require reporting of the transfer amount as taxable income.

Previous laws required reporting the withdrawal as income. Even though that gift would be deducted as a charitable gift, the net effect was usually an increase in taxes to the donor. All those who might be required to take unneeded IRA withdrawals and other individuals who have experienced limitations on tax benefits in the past will find this new law of particular interest.



For more information on this and other giving options please contact Tomasz Kierul at 617-783-0400 by email at tkierul@assumptio.org, or by mail at: The Assumptionists Development Office, 330 Market Street, Brighton, MA 02135.

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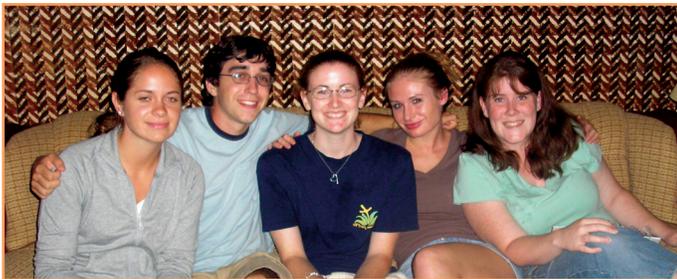
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**AMA ORIENTATION IN WORCESTER** by Beth Fleming

August brought together five young people in Worcester, MA who were preparing to go on their year-long mission as AMA volunteers. The young people spent four days together learning more about the Assumption, theology of mission, culture, and prayer with the Sisters of the Assumption and The Assumptionists. It was a wonderful four days, during which the volunteers formed bonds that will help to support them during their mission year and helped them to feel a part of the larger Assumption family.



This year's volunteers are:

**Liz Clayton**, from Jacksonville, FL, a graduate of Florida State University, Class of 2006. She will work at St. Peter's Parish and St. Andrew the Apostle Mission in the Main South neighborhood of Worcester, MA.

**Matt Collins**, from Auburn, MA, an Assumption College graduate, Class of 2006. He will be serving at the l'Arche community in Bognor-Regis, England.

**Andrea de Castro**, from Warren, RI, an Assumption College graduate, Class of 2006. She will be working with the Assumption Sisters at Casa Maria Eugenia in Chaparral, NM.

**Tina Grzeczowski**, from Media, PA, a graduate of Mt. St. Mary's University, Class of 2006. She will be working with Andrea and the Assumption Sisters among the immigrants of Chaparral, NM.

**Beth Sheehan**, from Mansfield, MA, an Assumption College graduate, Class of 2006. She will be working with Matt among the mentally disabled adults in the l'Arche community in Bognor-Regis, England.

They join **Bridget White** who is on her second year as an AMA in the l'Arche community in Cork, Ireland, and **Meghan Zack**, who renewed for a third year as an AMA in the l'Arche community in Bognor-Regis, England. Meghan is eager to welcome Beth and Matt to the community there.

Please follow the journey of the AMA's at [www.amavolunteers06-07.blogspot.com](http://www.amavolunteers06-07.blogspot.com) and pray with us that their missions can be an example of faith in action and a reflection of the light of Christ to others.

**Attentive to each one's vocation, we will seek to foster in our communities a truly fraternal life built on friendship, attentiveness, sensitivity, mutual support and forgiveness.**

Rule of Life #37

**FATHER OLIVER BLANCHETTE: A GLOBAL GIFT** by Pat Haggerty

One often hears the question: "What's in a name?" Well, for Father Oliver Blanchette, A.A. that can be many things. Not only does Father Oliver carry the moniker of an Augustinian of the Assumption, but over the years, he has been given many names. He is an African "Mzee" (elder); he is a missionary; he is an ecumenist. He has even been termed by his African brothers, "the fragrance of religious life." He is definitely a sage for us all.

Father Oliver, in his humility, would undoubtedly refute the title of sage. However, anyone who knows him would definitely agree that he is one. Father is known for his stories, for his compassionate understanding, and for his ability to give gentle guidance. This is truly the mark of one who has spent his life storing up wisdom and sharing it unabashedly.

At 90 years young, Father Oliver has been a missionary to Africa since 1999. It was then that Father John Franck, A.A., his provincial superior, asked him if he would share his generous spirit and extensive knowledge with the young men in East Africa. So it was that in 1999, Father added the term, risk-taker, to his ever-expanding list of titles.

Father calls Africa his home, and he more than fits in to its culture and way of life. He tells his young aspirants to hold on to the good things of their culture and to preserve what is good about their lifestyle. He has always believed in the richness of diversity and the wealth of an individual's heritage.

In a recent conversation, Father Oliver told me that this would be his last year working in Africa. He chuckled while saying this, however. Apparently, this isn't the first time he has called a year his "last year"! He spoke with certainty this time, though.

Father did provide me with a vocation update for Nairobi. Three young men are currently studying theology, three more are novices, and five postulants are currently residing there. There is also one deacon in the community, and one young man has completed theological studies.

Father Oliver quoted Fr. Edgar Bourque, A.A. when he said, "You need 100 to get 10." So, Father encourages us all to continue to pray for vocations and to pray for the persistence of the men in formation.

This year when Father returned to East Africa in mid-September, he will continue teaching English and helping with writing. He will teach aspects of religious life and will also serve as a counselor and guide. He would like to see a connection made between his East African protégés and some pen pals in the U.S. If anyone has an interest in such a connection, contact Father Oliver or this newsletter for further information.

It has been said that "the greatest gift we can give one another is wrapt attention to one another's existence." Father Oliver has certainly spent his life providing many with this gift. Thank you, Father Oliver!



**ST. ANNE'S SHRINE CONTINUES A TRADITION** by Pat Haggerty

From August 18 to August 26, throngs of pilgrims came to St. Anne's Shrine in Fiskdale for the annual Novena to St. Anne. Each evening, strains of "Oh, good St. Anne, we call on thy name" could be heard on the beautiful grounds of St. Anne's. Pilgrims could be seen processing up the hilly pathway singing, reciting the rosary, and contemplating the sacred mysteries.

St. Anne's Shrine in Fiskdale, directed by Father Norman Meiklejohn, A.A., has been the scene of the novena for many years. Recently, a devoted committee from St. Anne-St. Patrick has worked to renew and reinvigorate the novena. They have been successful!

This year the committee sought to involve more Massachusetts parishes and to promote more diversity in the nine-day prayer journey. Under the leadership of Sylvia Desautels, Lena Langlois, and Chuck Belisle, St. Anne's became the sight for joyous liturgies, varied music offerings, and the assembling of many faithful from throughout the area.

Using the theme, "A Time for Healing," as the central focus, different clergy came to Fiskdale each evening to pray and celebrate the mass. The Most Rev. Robert J. McManus, Bishop of Worcester, honored the proceedings by being the first celebrant. He was followed by Fr. Edwin Gomez of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Fitchburg. Other celebrants included Paul Vaudreuil, A.A. of Old English Road in Worcester, Fr. Francis Kahema from the Diocese of Singidia in Tanzania, Peter Precourt, A.A., pastor of St. Anne-St. Patrick in

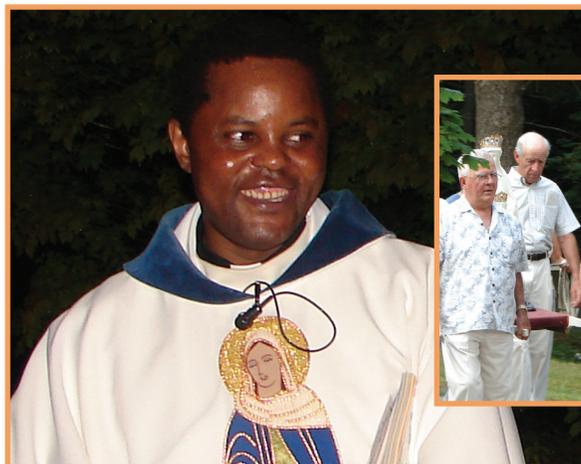


Sylvia Desautels

Fiskdale, Fr. Jose Rodriguez, pastor of St. Joan of Arc in Worcester, Norman Meiklejohn, A.A., Shrine Director, and Fr. Daniel Mulcahy of Good Shepherd Church in Linwood. The Most Rev. George Rueger, Auxiliary Bishop of Worcester concluded the novena on August 26.

During most of the liturgical celebrations the main celebrant was also the homilist. However, on a few evenings, an additional guest provided the reflection. Rev. Daniel Crawford of St. Thomas Church-in-the-Fields of Allison Park, PA, and Nicki Verploegen of St. Josephs' Dwelling Place in Rutland, VT, were two featured speakers.

Those who attended the novena felt a renewed devotion to St. Anne and a stronger sense of community. According to Sylvia Desautels, "the novena was more of a success this year because more people were involved."



Father Francis Kahema



Bishop Robert J. McManus



Bishop George Rueger with Charles (Chuck) Belisle

Photos by Charles (Chuck) Belisle