

#ASSUMPTA

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April 2022 - N°7

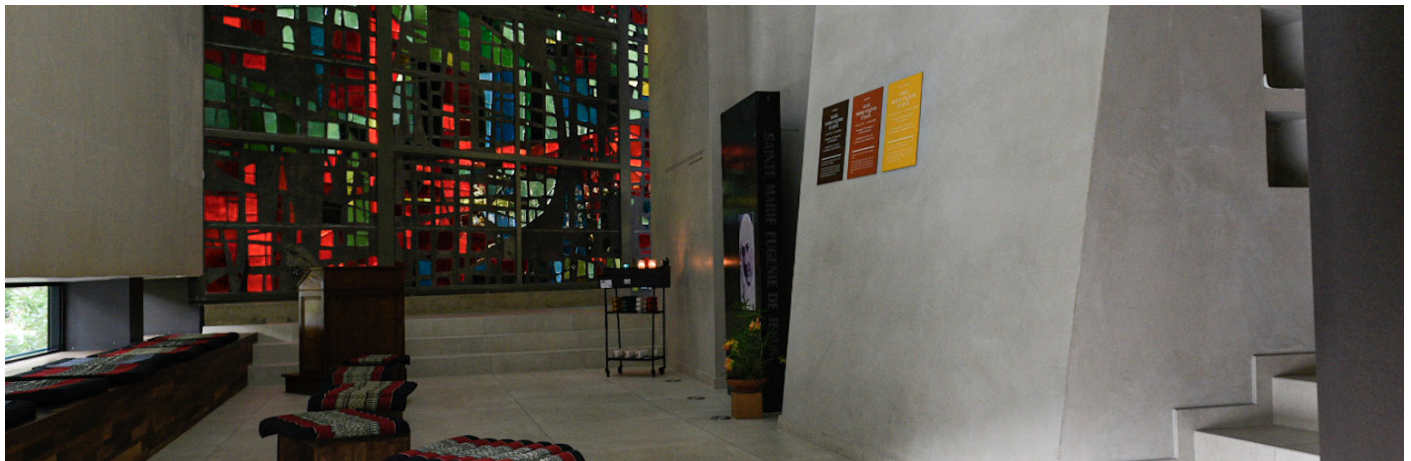


**“Nougnan, adjido
podo bégni”**

Knowledge is like the
trunk of a baobab tree

summary

"Each one of us has a mission on earth" (Marie Eugenie's credo)



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Year 2022 - n°7

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Transformative Education blends in perfectly with Eco Assumption perspective

editorial

“The Assumption charism in West Africa is to be artisans of a more humane, more just, and more united African society.”



The Assumption charism in West Africa is to be artisans of a more humane, more just, and more united African society. This is the path it is forging!

The Assumption charism in West Africa is thriving and remains a blessing for all those who live it and benefit from it.

Indeed, this gift of God to the Church, through Saint Marie-Eugénie, has been an ongoing reality since 1958 when our first sisters set foot on the West African continent. The new generations are pursuing this ideal received from Marie Eugénie by working to restore mankind's full dignity as a child of God, starting from the mystery of the incarnation of God in our lives. Indeed, each person is unique and called to become what God wanted them to be and to fulfil his mission on Earth, within their own sphere. Making Jesus Christ known and loved through transformative education is what we live and do through our charism. In all our schools, health institutions, and parish commitments, this passion for people and God is a blessing. Indeed, young people and their families, as well as all those involved in education, live through Jesus Christ, the values of faith, truth, openness, and righteousness. The intent is to transform their living environment and thus the African society at large.

In our educational mission, we continually aim at transformation by taking into account all the spiritual, affective, intellectual, moral, and even physical dimensions of the people, to awaken in them the desire to assume their own experience and to engage with passion in their environment. It also concerns the issue of transmitting belief, putting down roots which, sooner or later, will bear fruit according to the wishes of our Holy Mother, Marie-Eugénie.

The current context in which we live today is notably marked by questions related to security and health, as well as to social networks which create multiple perimeters. This requires more of our attention and passion to pass on the values of the Gospel. Our educational action focuses, of course, on young people, but also on their families and all those who collaborate with us. The aim is for the values of fraternity, social cohesion, and inter-religious dialogue to become a palpable reality.

Speaking of inter-religious dialogue, we are often in contact with a large number of Muslim families who appreciate our charism and who have a strong quest for spirituality and a solid attachment to the religious dimension in our educational institutions. They feel quite close to the values we uphold in our transformative education, especially the education of young girls. This is encouraging for us and the society of tomorrow. It is crucial because our young people learn tolerance and are convinced that we can live together, sharing the same values.

SISTER MARIE MADELEINE AGONOU

Head of communications
for the Province of West Africa
Original French

general community

“This is an opportune time! It is Kairos.”

When do we say these statements? Is it when there are no more problems? Is it when situations are better? Will there ever be an opportune time or Kairos?

Time after time, we welcome different events in our lives, and the invitation is to always make these moments opportune time to grow, to learn from the past and from our mistakes, to discover new things, to welcome new experiences, and to allow the transforming grace of the Spirit to have a gaze of the world with renewed hope for a better future.

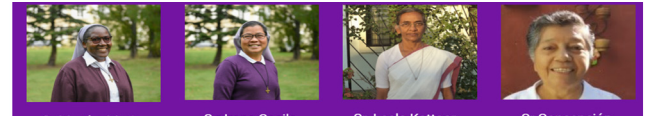
From the 1st to the 10th of December 2021, we gathered as formators through an online session. The session was planned to originally take place at the Mother House last 10-20 October 2020. Because of the pandemic, this did not materialize, and so the planning for the ripe time for the session went on. The synodal work with the Provinces on the revision of the Ratio (Formation Program) was undertaken for almost two years. Our openness to see what is possible allowed us to welcome the blessings of the new way of having an international session. More sisters were able to participate, less financial expenses, less carbon footprint on the air, and yet the objectives of the program were attained. We had meaningful conversations and we were enriched by the exchanges. We were graced by the presentations and sharing of the resource speakers on different topics:

- Opening Message by Sr Rekha Chennattu
- Essential aspects of the way of life of the Assumption today by Sr Clare Teresa Gretchen Tjader
- Who are you, RA, today? How to understand the vows today: Identity and mission by Sr Véronique Thiébaud
- The Challenges of Religious Life Today sexual and psychological abuse, abuse of power and support for vulnerable people by Sr Mary Lembo
- Formation in the Communication Era by Sr Mercedes Méndez Siliuto
- Accompaniment and Supervision by Sr Anne-Marie Aitken
- Economic Dimension of Our Life by Sr Cecile Franquin
- Uncomfortable conversations – addictions in formation by Bro Tom Kearney

We were especially grateful to the Ad Hoc Team: Sr Clare Teresa Gretchen; Sr Carmen Escribano; Sr. Leela Kottoor; Sr Concepción Hernández; Sr Céline Naboud; Sr Vicenta Javier; Sr Marthe Marie Nzabakurana GC; and Sr Irene Cecile Torres GC.



CGP Symbol



Sr Marthe Marie Nzabakurana CG Sr Irene Cecile Torres CG Sr. Leela Kottoor Sr Concepción Hernández

ADHOC TEAM



CPP West Africa



A classroom in West Africa



Sister Rekha with a group of lay people in Abidjan



Sister Rekha with the stagiers of Koudougou



Thank you for the work well done with great generosity and dedication.

The year 2021 was marked by opening ourselves to new ways of experiencing communion, animation and formation. "New wine, new wineskins", finding new ways of being and doing for greater life and service. We welcomed the year 2022 full of Hope in God's Words that "He makes all things New" (Revelation 21:5).

We were very happy to have been able to travel and visit our sisters from West Africa at the beginning of 2022. We met a Province full of vitality. We were touched by the warm welcome and all the cultural gestures, such as that of the "crossing of the water of peace". Our actual presence in the five countries of the Province has allowed us to meet our sisters who are fully committed to the mission as well as our friends and lay partners involved in the various insertions. We have also witnessed the shadows and lights in the reality of each country: the richness of culture, the ability to bounce back, hospitality, but also the reality of poverty, violence in a socio-political context of instability and confusion throughout the Sahel region. We are deeply grateful for the presence of the Sisters of the Assumption in this part of the African

continent. The faith of the people in a tense context, the ability to endure trial, the joy of living and vitality have edified us.

Last February 9-10, 2022, we welcomed the General Councils of the five congregations of our Assumption Family to our Mother House. It was a well-prepared gathering where we shared news and our experiences especially during the pandemic. We had common formation together, we deepened the theme of the "Covenant-Friendship Leadership Paradigm" presented by Sr Rekha. We had time to pray, to recreate, to strengthen our fraternal bonds and to continue to weave the richness of our diversity in the Assumption family.

From February 18-20, we had the canonical visit to the Auteuil Community. These were days of welcoming the grace of God to the community that has expanded as they welcomed the young sisters of the international juniorate. We appreciated so much the openness and the profound sharing in community. Thanks again to this beautiful community in Paris and Welcome to the International Juniorate at the Mother House!



The Auteuil community with the international juniorate

The CGP 2022 held in Olivos, Madrid from the 1st-30th of March was indeed an experience of God's favorable time – Kairos! From the first day up to the last day, we felt that we were led by the Holy Spirit as one CGP Community. It was a synodal journeying as Assumption Sisters, desiring and seeking to live the Assumption way for today according to Mother Marie Eugenie and our charism. We have allowed ourselves to flow with the grace of renewal, interiorly and exteriorly as we continue to build and reconstruct our Provinces/Region and Congregation. We grew in friendships and collaboration as animators and leaders aiming at greater life and service for all. The life and death of Sr. Carmen Escribano, who was totally given to God and to the Congregation up to the end, accompanied our grace-filled paschal journey. You will be hearing soon from your Provincial/Regional Superiors. We trust that God's grace abounds, the spirit that moved the CGP 2022 will accompany the different encounters. Let us recognize and affirm God's opportune time for each one of us and for the whole Congregation.

Through Sr Rekha, the Congregation was able to bring its small contribution to the life and mission of the Universal Church. Being a member of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC), she contributed to the document *The Body of Christ in the Pandemic: Theological Reflections from Asian Perspectives*. Among other things, she animated the online symposium of the BITA-7 [Bishops' Institute of Theological Animation] for the representatives of the Bishops and Theologians from South, East, and South-East Asian countries.

She will be in Rome from 28th April to 6th May. She will attend the UISG Plenary 2022 with the theme: *Embracing Vulnerability on the Synodal Journey*. She

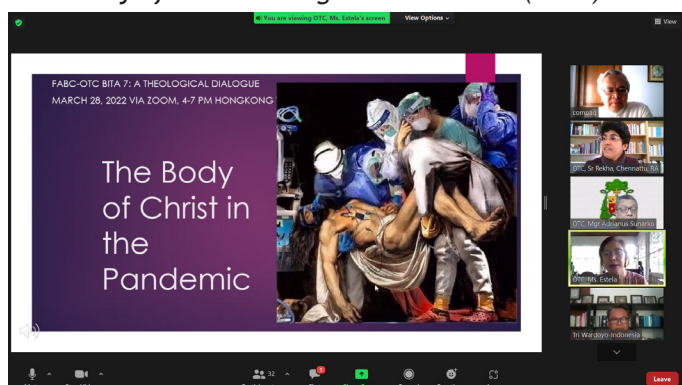
is one of the resource persons for the General Chapter of the La Salle Brothers in Rome, and she will present a Paper on "Towards a Synodal Model of Leadership: Insights from John's Gospel." She is also invited by the Trustees of the Institute of Saint Anselm (Rome) to participate in a consultation meeting regarding its FUTURE as providing a vital service to the Universal Church.

We have welcomed the sisters who will be participating in the Young Sisters' Session from 9 April to 15 June 2022. We count on your prayers.

Happy Easter! Happy Celebration of New Life!

SISTERS REKHA, SANDRA, ISABELLE, MARTHE AND IRENE
General Community

"The Body of Christ during the Pandemic" (FABC)



education

How to educate to go to the peripheries

“We wish (...) a spirit of solidarity and generosity be their leitmotif”

The Central African Region is made up of two countries - Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). That being so, there is one college in each of these countries. This article on education is based on the result of the educational encounters gained with students in educating them to reach remote places.

How are students educated to reach remote places? What student educational encounters have been arranged for them to reach out to remote places?

The coldness that characterises modern man today is a challenge faced by all those who have the responsibility of supervising and educating the children entrusted to them by the Church. Hence, there is often a noticeable gulf between the centre where well-to-do children are the majority, and the periphery, that comprises the underprivileged and the excluded. This reality raises questions of how do we educate our students to go to remote areas, and what educational encounters with our students have been put in place to reach out to remote places. Far from undermining our pedagogical spirit, such questions represent a challenge for us in the way we educate these sensitive souls that the Lord places in our poor hands; the challenge of ensuring their positive and complete transformation so as, in their turn, they will ensure the continual chain of transformation and development of humanity.

With this in mind, we ensure they receive a sound general education through an approach based on Human and Religious Formation (HRF) to be sensitive to all needs (difficulties/concerns) around them.

We wish to distance our students from the culture of indifference so that a spirit of solidarity and generosity be their leitmotif. In other words, we are seeking ways to train young workers for future work in the field of the Lord to give hope to all those who suffer around them, and the hope of accessing the light of the Gospel.





As a point of fact, for several years now, at the CPA (Collège Polyvalent Assomption) in Bafoussam (Cameroon) a yearning for generosity and solidarity has characterised many of our students, a case in point being one student – Martin - from a disadvantaged family who benefited from the spontaneous and voluntary assistance of his classmates and the educational community during his surgery. Today, little Martin is determined to continue his studies in good health in the higher class of the CPA. The same goes for another student in the ESF Terminale class (Final year in Socio-Economics) who, since 3rd grade, has been doing small paid jobs during the holidays at the school to pay for his education. Already this year, the students of the Terminale F8A class (Final year French and English) supported their classmate who, due to lack of financial means, had not been able to compile and send his file for the official exam. At our institutional level, some social cases have been welcomed and helped by the Sisters of the Assumption so that they can benefit free-of-charge without discrimination from lessons like all other pupils. The warm welcome given to some internally displaced students following the war in the North-west and South-west regions of Cameroon is another illustration. Likewise, in the framework of the visits to companies that our students in the technical programme make during their practical training; they set aside some time away from the workshops and laboratories of the CPA to see what is happening elsewhere around them.

Students from the F8 programme (science and technology of health and social work), in addition to hospitals and health centres, also visit centres for the visually and hearing impaired such as the CISPAM (Centre d'Intégration Scolaire Professionnelle pour Aveugles et Malvoyants) (Centre for the Professional Integration of the Blind and the Sight-impaired) so as to get a feel for the reality of this category of students

and to better help them by sharing their sufferings.

Here, charity and generosity are also the order of the day, as during these visits each pupil provides a donation in kind (soap, rice, beans, clothes and much more).

In order to improve their skills, students from the F7 programme (biological and medical sciences and techniques) visit the centres where there are laboratories. During the open days, our students carry out experiments at a low cost to allow the poorest have access to them. Other elements are also free of charge.

An exemplary experience from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Lycée Mpiko).

Student encounters in remote location

Since September 2018, several groups called "Friends of the Poor" have been set up in the school which work very well - better than all the others - because the students and the teachers who supervise them are very responsive to the cause of the little ones. During their annual project, they have several actions to carry out: in particular, visiting the sick in a public hospital – St Joseph's - run by a diocesan congregation that takes in the poor; visiting an orphanage and a reception centre run by the Sisters of Charity of Mother Teresa of Calcutta which shelters the homeless, mentally-ill children and abandoned old people - in short, all people rejected by society.

How this group works

Every Wednesday after school, they meet to reflect, plan and evaluate their actions. They consider how best to raise the necessary funds to share with the neediest. The students contribute by taking from their pocket money; they go without breakfast or snacks which they normally buy at the school market (the

ladies come to sell the students food) and donate the money instead. They also ask the other students in the school to participate in their actions by giving a little. As soon as they collect the amount they need, they buy food to share it in one of the above-mentioned sites. The students come back transformed; the contact with the reality of remote localities shows them that part of their brothers and sisters in humanity suffers more than they do and need them. They discover the need to alleviate the misery of the other in some way. Some sensitive students shed tears when they see the suffering of the people they visit. The review after the visits helps them a great deal to find a balance, to sort things out and to take courage to start all over again. They are all teenagers.

During the school year, due to the coronavirus pandemic, we stopped all extracurricular activities which were nevertheless beneficial for our pupils. We will revert to them after the confinement.

In short, our experiences are legion and we have drawn from only a few of them. They show that the sensitisation carried out within the framework of Human and Religious Education is bearing good fruit.

At the end of the day, we have high hopes for the future. For example, within the framework of the "Young Assumption", we could create agricultural farms in which needy but ambitious people could carry out small remunerative tasks, the income from which would allow them to learn, train and study in order to be useful to themselves and to society.

In this way, our learners in both Kinshasa and Bafoussam will become trees that bear better fruit, because they are planted on the fertile ground of faith in God, love of neighbour and well-thought-out solidarity. Nonetheless, one should never lose sight of the fact that in our environment there are people who play the needy with the intention of begging.

Hence the importance of listening and going out to the field in order to provide truly objective assistance. To these experiences in Cameroon, let us add those of our brothers and sisters in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At the Mpiko College in Kinshasa, although our realities are in fact not totally identical, we share similar experiences and feelings (learners and educators) in terms of the global vision of the remote localities in our respective environments. Therefore, our objectives and our deep aspirations tend towards one common point. That is "to help man stand on his own two feet" (M.E).

SISTER DELPHINE GRACE
Referent for Central Africa



youth

Renewing our commitment in vocational pastoral care

“Vocational ministry today has to be as cross-cutting as possible.”

Intervention by Father Vincent Breynaert, Director of the National Service for Youth Evangelisation and Vocations (SNEJV) at the French Bishops' Conference. Exchanges during a meeting with sisters from France on vocational pastoral care. He is a member of the community of the Chemin neuf (New Way).

Vocational ministry today has to be as cross-cutting as possible. It is not the sole concern of a single commission or the exclusive responsibility of a single sister in the community. It has to be a matter concerning each sister in the congregation and each community. What is the place of vocational ministry in the community projects, and how available is each sister to devote herself to it?

How can we administer a vocational ministry? There is no single or magical answer.

- **A pastoral conversion:** Pope Francis calls on members of religious orders to make a pastoral conversion, to a change of lifestyle. We must ask

ourselves both personally or within the community: What enables a young person to hear the call of Christ in their heart of hearts and within our community life? Consecrated life is a gift bestowed on us by God, something that we welcome, and this must free us from any fear of advocating consecrated life.

- **Today's youth culture has difficulty accommodating the celibacy of consecrated life.** We are in a world where celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom is very far-removed from the concerns of young people. This represents a challenge for us in showing the beauty and completeness of religious life. In some places, young people have grown up far from any feminine religious community. They have no concrete role models. In this context, it is important to give a highly narrated presentation (a first-person account, a testimony, "story telling"), creating a more explicit vocational ministry - a culture of appeal.

- **Vocational ministry needs to have nourishing soil for germination** on common ground with youth ministry



in general. Vocational ministry often emanates within the activities proposed by youth ministry and it develops from there. We must make our youth ministry attractive, extensive, and appealing to young people. It can sometimes happen during an activity in outlying regions, for example, that a young person comes across a sister who is radical and contemplative in her commitment.

SEVEN FEATURES OF VOCATIONAL PASTORAL WORK

1. Vocational ministry today is necessarily very personal and differentiated. Pope Francis in *Christus Vivit* insists on the need to differentiate proposals since young people come from very different backgrounds: whether or not they be from a practicing Catholic family, or a united or divided family, etc. He requires us to take time with young people. In our communities, does each sister accompany a young person or know a young person personally and offer them friendship and an attentive ear? Do each of you have a personal link with young women? It is not a question of age; that is a matter concerning everyone!

2. Our vocational ministry should be recounted and exemplified: The Pope speaks of "contagion", the contagion of our spiritual experience or that of our foundress, Marie Eugénie; an experience that inspires desire. Young people need to know and to hear our stories. Too often we think that all the sisters are same... to show who we are, to invite the sisters to speak about themselves, their spiritual journey, their humanity, the twists and turns of their story. It involves learning to testify, to share the joys and also the obstacles that we have had to go through. Young people need role models. Many of their questions have an emotional dimension...to inspire confidence, to talk about oneself, even to reveal oneself. The image of religious life is sometimes battered, even false. There is a need for places to meet.

3. An ecclesial and synodal vocational ministry. This is a matter about giving young people the possibility of taking initiative, of becoming actors and not mere spectators, and of deploying their talents. Young people become aware that it is possible to 'blossom' in the consecrated life; one renounces everything for Christ, but in so doing, one's entire humanity unfolds.

4. Offer accompaniment. Young people need to be enlightened on their journey; they need to be listened to. All of us can offer an ear, a friendly presence, engage in spiritual conversations, formal and informal, over a cup of coffee or during an activity. But sometimes we spend more time on administrative work or organising affairs rather than really offering our time. Goodwill...young people complain about adults not really listening... opening our communities, sharing our life of prayer, our meals. Young people will be very sensitive to joy, freedom, internationality and interculturality, to our capacity to celebrate together, to pray, to be silent, to commit ourselves, to ask for forgiveness...

5. Be persistent and patient with young people. Accept that young people go through a period of

inner healing that requires more approachability and being listened to. Often, young people feel a little crushed; they have had complicated family or emotional histories or have experienced academic or professional failure. Offer places to listen to and welcome these fragile situations.

6. Youthfulness. This does not depend on age. Pope Francis strongly insists on this point. It is good that the young and the old dream together. The older sisters can be very 'infectious'; they can also offer a listening ear without judging. Cultivate the capacity to leave room for young people, to transmit joy to them, as can be expressed when sharing a meal, through a burst of laughter, for example, and the capacity to celebrate, and to have fun.

7. Be bold in evangelisation. The new generation is more daring in endorsing explicitly their faith.

To conclude this presentation, I would add two convictions:

To pray peacefully together in community, to ask for vocations, saying to the Lord: "Look at your flock, send us vocations, call those whom you desire, you who wanted this congregation. Allow it to continue".

The charism of the call is the capacity to relay God's call at the right moments, leaving the young person very free, giving them space and distance. We have to exercise this charism of the call both individually and together. Sometimes we lack boldness in the Church. Each of us can exercise this charism of call; we must ask for the intercession of the Lord.

FATHER VINCENT BREYNAERT

Director of the national service for the evangelisation of young people and vocations at the French Bishops' Conference
Original French

spirituality

Animated by the Same Passion, Guided by the Same Philosophy

“A possible synthesis of what we believe to be the most important features of the spirituality of the Assumption.”

In Laudato Si, Pope Francis affirms: “The rich heritage of Christian spirituality, the fruit of twenty centuries of personal and communal experience, has a precious contribution to make to the renewal of humanity. A commitment this lofty cannot be sustained by doctrine alone without a spirituality capable of inspiring us, without an interior impulse which encourages, motivates, nourishes and gives meaning to our individual and communal action. (LS 216).

To live the spirituality of the Assumption is to have the same “interior impulse” that led Mother Marie Eugenie to extend the Kingdom in herself and in others. This article offers a possible synthesis of what we believe to be the most important features of the spirituality of the Assumption. We hope that it can help you to #BeAssumption with “the greatest possible fullness”. Of course, it is one proposal among many and to avoid being too long, we will not be able to specify the many writings of Mother Marie Eugenie that we have used. If you want to go deeper, you can read the Foundational Texts :(<https://assumpta.org/es/archivos-s-xix>).

We invite you to note any disagreement, doubt or contribution, and send it to the e-mail address in the signature at the end of the article. It would also be good if you would note down how you live or wish to live these qualities, so that you can articulate your own spiritual process. Don't worry if there are points in common with Mother Marie Eugenie; after all, the Holy Spirit awakens in founders the capacity to open a concrete way to live the Gospel in the Church for the realisation of God's saving plan. Others can follow it because it resonates with (and challenges) their way of living-being-thinking-doing.

The article has four sections that correspond to the four factors that configure the charismatic personality of the Christian who wants to live his following of Jesus according to a

concrete spirituality (Cf. Cencini, 2003):

1. A certain mystical experience, which reveals to the believer the elements that configure the charism, and makes it possible to personalise them by experiencing them.
2. Ascetical practices or tools, which a believer can use to freely collaborate with the grace that transforms him into Christ, in accordance with his own spirituality.
3. A sense of belonging of the one who loves the community or institution of which he is a part and commits himself to it.
4. A determined apostolic commitment which arises from spiritual experience and calls for action that transforms reality according to the values of the Kingdom.

1. Mystical Experience

The spirituality of the Assumption is based on a particular mystical experience, or personal experience of the mystery, from which the other elements of the charism are based and which at the same time sustains the other elements of the charism. It is an experience that shapes a particular confession and proclamation of faith, or, in other words, the particular features of the one infinite divine mystery. God is recognised by Mother Marie Eugenie as:

- Infinite Goodness, creator of all that exists, has revealed in Christ his Truth. God created human beings capable of entering into a relationship with Him. God is the one who guides everything with his divine providence; his Goodness guarantees the full realisation of his plan of salvation.
- The Son who became incarnate in order to redeem human beings,, revealing in his life-death-resurrection the way back to his origin, the Father, giving human nature the inner dynamism that makes possible the fulfilment of its original vocation: the praise and service of God. The believer, committed to following and imitating Jesus Christ, can learn this Truth present in his Word, and allow himself to be transformed by this mystery actualised in each Eucharist.

- The Holy Spirit, who brings about this “Christianization” of the person, integrating all his or her capacities in Love, in order that he or she may love. The same Spirit who brought about the establishment of the Kingdom of the Father through the Son, and promoted its extension at the beginning of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, continues to collaborate so that the Father, in the Son, reigns ever more in the life of the believer and in the world. This is the origin of Mother Marie Eugenie’s love for the Church as the repository of Truth.

- In Mary assumed into heaven, the forerunner of regenerated humanity, the believer discovers the realisation of this divine plan.

Think for a moment: who is God the Trinity for you in each of his ways of participating in our history and relating to human beings, as Father-Son-Holy Spirit? How would you define the Church? Who is Mary, the mother of God for you?

2. Ascetical Practices or Tools

In the life and writings of Mother Marie Eugenie we find some ascetical practices by which she freely collaborated with the Grace that transforms the human person into Christ. As St. Augustine affirms: “He who created you without you will not save you without you” (PL 38, 923) Having lived them as both gift and task, she proposes them to us in the same spirit:

- The believer who has experienced the Infinite Goodness of God, and himself as a being effaced in Him, responds with a love that reaches adoration, recognising and exercising his Rights, beginning by listening with faith and love, to the Truth that in Christ is communicated to him.

- This experience of the Infinite Goodness of God, recognized in his salvific historical action, which nourishes hope in the promise of the full realization of his saving plan, leads to joyful detachment, which is the means by which the believer progressively abandons all that separates him from God and turns him inward, all love for the things of the earth and even for himself; and engages in a process of simplification that leads him to communion with God.

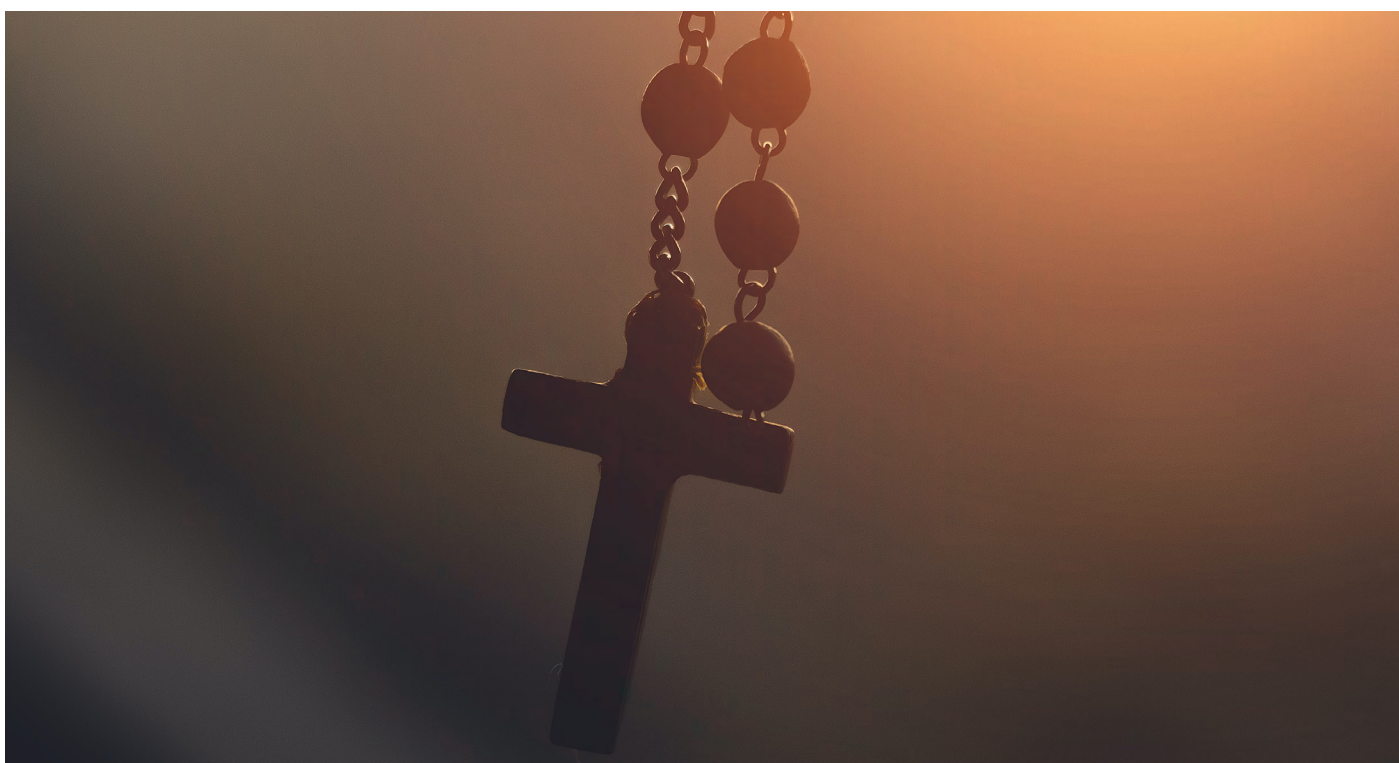
- The Truth about the human being and his vocation, recognised in the personal revelation of the Son, as an existence lived in praise and service to the God of the Kingdom and to the Kingdom of God, elicits a response of love that leads to following him and the imitation of his virtues: charity, uprightness, humility, conformity and abandonment to the saving will of the Father, spirit of work and sacrifice.

- The spirituality of the Assumption proposes a path of following and imitating Jesus which leads to the “Christianization” of the intellect and will. This takes place through study and prayer, which help to focus one’s attention on Him and which dispose one to the action of the transforming Spirit. It can even lead to union with God.

Think for a moment: did you know these elements, and do you think they are useful for lay people and Assumptionist sisters today? If you feel creative, how can they be explained in a more accessible vocabulary?

3. Apostolic Commitment

From the spiritual experience of the Assumption, and as part of it, we must consider the “thought of zeal” that constitutes “the guiding philosophy and the animating passion” of apostolic commitment in the Assumption: the transformation of society based on Gospel values.



- A thought of zeal that springs from the personal experience of redemption described above, and which commits us to the mission of proposing this path to others, in order to continue to extend the Kingdom of the Father which the believer has felt expanding in his own heart, freeing him from selfishness.

- Every person has a mission in this Kingdom. It is our right and our duty to discover and help others to discover their own vocation, so that all may work for the coming of the Kingdom in their "small sphere."

- The Kingdom of the Father, established and announced by Jesus and propagated in the world by the action of the Holy Spirit in his Church, offers a project of personal life and social order based on revealed Truth. This Truth, identified with Christ, is the basis of Christian education.

- This transformation in Christ of the individual and, through him, of society, which Christian education aims at, can never be imposed, but must be proposed to the free reason and will of the individual. Education will lay the necessary foundations so that grace can act in hearts and impel them to follow their own path of holiness.

Think for a moment: Do you share this thought of zeal? In what contexts do you live it more easily and in what contexts less easily? Why? How would Mother Marie Eugenie develop this "thought of zeal" in our context?

4. The Sense of Belonging

These elements, for those who have discovered and recognised them as their own, constitute the sense of belonging of those who know that they are members of the Assumption family, a family made up of all who share them, whatever their way of life. Mother Marie Eugenie offers us many ways For those who feel called to live their particular vocation to holiness in the "form" offered by Assumption spirituality, MME offers many ways to go about it:

- She recognises in her heart the three loves that are represented on the congregational coat of arms. According to Mother Marie Eugenie, these loves are essential in the heart of a member of the Assumption: Christ, Mary, and the Church.

- Such a person understands herself or himself as a member of a particular community and of the Church and is committed to both.

- He or she articulates his or her fundamental option concretely by living out a particular life project from a double angle: "Laus Deo" (Praise be to God) and "Adveniat Regnum tuum" (Thy Kingdom come). The praise of God and the commitment to the coming of the Kingdom make up the vertical and horizontal dimension of those of us who feel that they are Assumption.

Think for a moment: What is the meaning of the liturgy and the extension of the Kingdom in your life?

These are four possible dimensions of Assumption spirituality that can help us to live a particular "form" of holiness, through which a new person emerges in the image of Christ, capable of offering herself or himself to the Father through the Spirit in a life dedicated to the praise and service of the God of the Kingdom and the Kingdom of God.

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Original Spanish

Treasures of the Archives

In Memory of Mother Marie Catherine of the Child Jesus, Amélie Doumet (1852 – 1921)

“Thus, Sister Camille Stanislas put together the memories of Sister Imelda”

There are many souvenirs of the General Superiors in the Archives. In the spring of 2022, we will celebrate the centenary of the election of Mother Marie Joanna. She was elected “through correspondence”, after a sad episode in the history of the Congregation. Indeed, after the death of Mother Marie Celestine, in August 1921, the General Chapter gathered at Val Notre Dame had elected Mother Marie Catherine to succeed her as Superior General. The latter was carried away by a devastating illness, less than three months after her election. It is in Rome, land of the Popes and heart of the Church, that she rests for eternity. Many texts have been written by the Sisters to commemorate this great figure of the Congregation. Thus, Sister Camille Stanislas put together the memories of Sister Imelda. Through a few excerpts from this text, which can be found in full on the Congregation’s website, we are going to discover the personality of Mother Marie Catherine.

The childhood and vocation of Amélie Doumet

“Born in Cette in 1852, Amélie Doumet had been brought up in Nîmes at the Priory of the Blessed Sacrament... she had grown up in the midst of this Roman movement, of this ultra-montane school of which Father d’Alzon was the living and active spirit. She remained invariably faithful to it. The last years of her education had been spent at the boarding school at Auteuil. It was there that she gave this beautiful manifestation of her astonishing memory. She recited the names and dates of all the Popes from Saint Peter to Pius IX, and at the request of her Mistress, to recite them again backwards this time, that is, from Pius IX to Saint Peter, with the same ease (...) Returning to her family, Amélie seemed ready to follow the common path when she lost a much-loved relative, who was at the same time one of the dearest daughters of our Mother Foundress. She was the first Mother Marie-Catherine, a great nun and a soul intimately and tenderly united to Our Lord. At the hour of Mother Marie-Catherine’s death, Amélie, who was then in



Nîmes, clearly heard these words in her heart: "You will replace your aunt at the Assumption." She immediately laid down her arms, and when she was able to enter the novitiate on November 11, 1871, we were not surprised to hear Mother say to her when giving her the bonnet: "Be a second Sister Marie Catherine. I cannot wish anything better for the Congregation, for you and for me."

The attachment of Amélie's family to the Assumption became more concrete when her brother, Father François Doumet, made his profession in the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption and her mother, who had become a widow, entered the Little Sisters of the Assumption.

Love of the Church and Attachment to the Successors of Peter

One of the great characteristics of Mother Marie Catherine was her love for the Church, in particular her attachment to the Popes, which was evident from her youth when on a trip to Rome at the time of the First Vatican Council. "Amélie had made this first trip to Rome which had remained the dearest memory of her youth. It was during the Council, the Church had appeared to her in all its grandeur, and her enthusiasm for her was overflowing. She liked to tell us that, every day, the big event was to follow the Pope on his tour around the city. The driver was given this single instruction: "Follow the Pope's carriage", and then where the Pope got off, we got off (...) The good Pius IX had noticed this enterprising young girl whom he found everywhere and he called her 'my little French girl'."

Great apostolic influence

"At 29, she was Superior first for a few days of the Paris Day School which she founded, and then of Poitiers (...) In 1885, she returned to the Day School and, every day, under her guiding hands, the house was transformed, while the works grew and multiplied. More buildings were added. The chapel, dedicated to Our Lady of Salvation, became the radiant expression of her faith. There were courses for the children who were not boarders, conferences given (...). Retreats for the Children of Mary and for the ladies which augmented the influence of Mother and her beneficent and supernatural action. She was in the fullness of her activity and in all the brilliance of her marvelous gifts."

Fidelity to the commitments of her religious life

"What was first striking was the perfect regularity that Mother Marie Catherine made reign in the convent and of which she gave the first example. Assuming or directing all the works, occupied at the same time with the affairs of the Congregation, constantly undertaking new works, we saw her promptitude in all the Community exercises. When she missed a recreation, it was a "catastrophe" and, to ensure her afternoon prayer, she placed it at the first hour, before visits and business, and, disturbed once, twice, three times, we saw her returning as many times to Our Lord, drawing from there in prayer that patience and that gift of herself of which she has always remained the perfect model."

Deep and encouraging kindness

"At that time, she seemed strict rather than good. She was timid which was surprising since she had many gifts, she had a cult for perfection which then seemed almost inflexible, all these causes and others could give her an appearance of coldness, of extreme reserve at least, from which one suffered when one knew her only superficially. But, as one got closer to her, one was touched and delighted by this deep, effective kindness, full of attention and solicitude. One was also comforted and, in a way, gained strength and ardor, by the sincerity and generosity with which she encouraged the efforts made. Only she knew how to draw from each soul, from each intelligence, the maximum fruitfulness. She respected and favored immensely any beneficial initiative! She allowed everyone to act in total freedom and yet she was the soul of each individual action, because one was sure to find by her side all the inspiration and support needed."

Assistant to Mother Marie Celestine and General Bursar in difficult times

In 1898, "Mother Marie Celestine, elected Superior General, trusted fully Mother Marie Catherine as Assistant General for many years. Then came the terrible years

of persecution and exile. No other had struggled like her, none had to suffer like her, and yet, in this cruel hour, all remember with what hope-filled courage she organized all things so as to save what could be saved."

Indeed, Mother Marie Catherine ensured the resistance at the time of the seizure of the property of Auteuil, securing the possessions and the Sisters. Sister Camille Stanislas continues: "During these painful years, Mother Marie Catherine lived a little in all the houses, assisting Mother General and carrying with her the weight of all the affairs and all the difficulties, and the Congregation knows everything that it owes to this precious collaboration. In the midst of absorbing and tedious tasks, she was nevertheless able to occupy herself with two works which were very dear to her. She put together in a small volume the instructions of our foundresses on the work of the Assumption on Christian teaching, and she took care of abridging the life of Mother Foundress found in the beautiful book of the Origins which is a treasure, but that our children and our friends do not always have time to read. After persecution came war. The first days of August 1814 found her in Paris. Judging that her position as Assistant was to be close to her Superior General, she left for Belgium since communications were going to be broken. When she reached Val Notre Dame, the enemy was in Liege. After two terrible years, she went out with Mother Marie-Celestine to establish the novitiate in a safer place, she spent the rest of the war in France, sharing the country's anxieties and hopes. Then came the new trials. after the victory and its inexhaustible joys, it was the long and painful illness and finally the holy death of Mother Marie Celestine."

On September 26, 1921, when she was elected Superior General, "the Capitulants had not only recognized her high intelligence, her perfect knowledge of our history and our affairs. they were not only paying a debt of gratitude and admiration; they saw in Mother Marie Catherine of the Child Jesus, the living incarnation of the Assumption..."

The last trip to Rome

Mother Marie Catherine wanted her first trip to be for the Pope who had blessed her election. A beautiful echo of her journey when she was young: "She delighted in the houses she was able to visit on her way: Paris, Bordighera, San Dalmazzo, Genoa. In a few hours she made herself loved and with her, the dear Assistant whom she had chosen, Mother Marie Joanna, whose filial tenderness and vigilance proved delightful. She arrived in Rome on Monday, December 5. The next day, having struggled too much against the illness, she had to take to her bed under the influence of broncho-pneumonia which immediately seemed fatal. From the third day, it was necessary to think of Extreme Unction. Our Mother

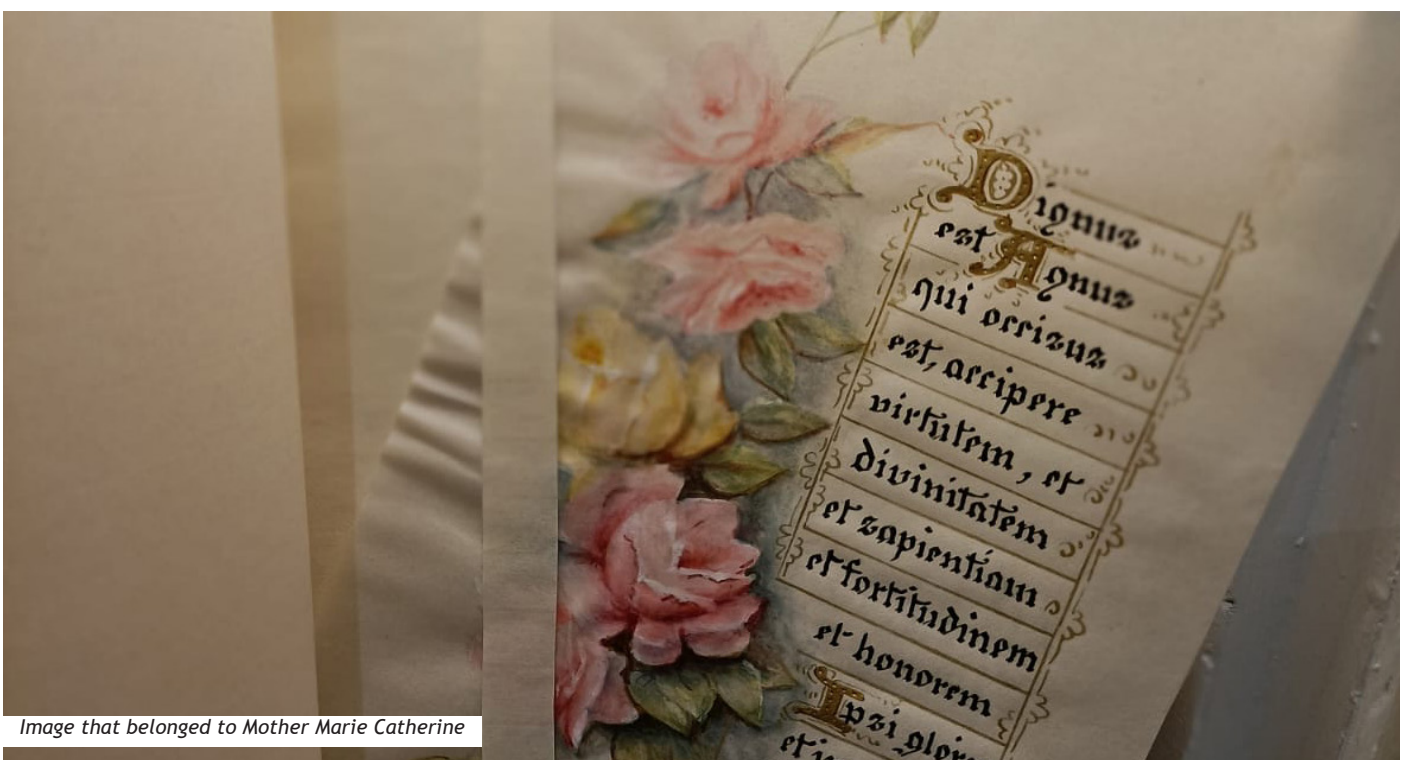


Image that belonged to Mother Marie Catherine



Mother Marie Catherine's painting notebook

was astonished but joyful and grateful. She received the sacrament of the dying believing herself to be in full life, but "admirable, it has been said, in her calmness, piety, and simplicity" (...) During this illness which continued to worsen, in the midst of painful suffocations, not once did she fail to welcome every care, every testimony of affection with a beautiful smile which was luminous."

It was on December 15, 1921 that she fell asleep, without apparent trouble, after recommending that we remain faithful to the spirit of our Mothers, to the traditions of the ancient Mothers, to the love of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, to the love of the Blessed Virgin, to the Office, to the love of the Church, to devotion to the Pope, to absolute submission "to everything that the Church says". She was 69 years old and had given 50 years of her life to the Assumption.

SISTER VÉRONIQUE THIÉBAUT

Based on the narrative by Sister Camille Stanislas

Archivist of the Congregation,

Original French

Photos: Aurélie Devalliere

CPAE- The New 'Normal'

1. This new 'normal' has rekindled our faith, hope and belief in Jesus.

With Jesus we are assured that after death there is bound to be resurrection. Family has become our last refuge. We spend more time with our loved ones at home. Instead of making us sad, the closure of the noisy discotheques and loud bars has made us discover the beauty of external and internal silence.

Hugs were forbidden, and the Africans found it difficult to live with this new vision of COVID 19.

Masses were suspended and were virtual. All parish groups ceased their activities.

Some relatives who had just returned from travelling and who were very ill were put in quarantine. Family ties and friendships deteriorated and became more distant.

Nevertheless, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for adoration and for the end of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This brought about the practice of saying prayers within the family, thereby preventing many deaths. The faith of the Africans grew as they turned to God. Contrary to what the World Health Organisation (WHO) had announced He had mercy on the poor.

This pandemic has shown the limits of science and demonstrated the greatness of God.

2. God takes care of us; prayer has been strengthened.

The modern world has discovered its limits. The economic, military, scientific powers and all sources of false pride have proven their powerlessness and weakness. These times show us that only God is the true God. It is He alone who, by his constant presence, directs the history of humanity; otherwise, the economically poor and vulnerable nations would be wiped off the world map.

3. Our bonds have been strengthened through marriages and deaths

Covid-19 has allowed us to be in communion with each other.

The teachings have helped us to know God better, to persevere in faith, prayer and devotion to the Church.

With Assumption Together we constitute a big family. We need to communicate at the international level to make it grow.

Testimony

During Covid 19 and up until now, the Blessed Sacrament has been exposed twenty-four hours a day in all the parishes of Abidjan. It is during one of these periods of veneration that God gave me the Psalm 57(56) for this scourge.

When my daughter tested positive, she was locked up for fourteen days; she had a three-year-old boy who couldn't see her. Meals were put in front of the door. The child suffered from his mother's absence because he was told that she had travelled. He could not come to his grandmother's house either.

After fourteen days the house was disinfected, tests were done for all those in the house who tested negative. All this time we were praying with this psalm.

Thanks be to God!

Covid - 19 in West Africa

In January 2020, when people talked about the "coronavirus", they believed that they were referring to a type of flu that was decimating the Chinese population. In mid-February, we learned that the West had been affected by the coronavirus. At the beginning of April, Burkina Faso was hit, and it was reported that during an evangelical meeting organised in France, religious leaders who were participating in this meeting returned and tested positive. Subsequently, we learned that political leaders were soon struck by the virus, and a woman-member of parliament even died of it. In April 2020, the whole of West Africa was affected by Covid. It was generally people living in the West who had spread the disease in Africa by not respecting the fourteen-day isolation period indicated by the health authorities.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) predicted a humanitarian disaster in Africa. We are now fully aware of how the situation developed. In Africa, after two years of circulation, Covid has caused fewer victims than in the rest of the world. We do not have well-equipped health structures here, and our leaders like to go to Europe for treatment. This disease does not differentiate between people; among the dead there are the poor, the rich and the powerful politicians. Despite being well protected and having access to the best health care, some heads of state and government were infected. The big cities have been more affected than the rural areas.

Today, we believe that we need to rethink the whole way everything related to public health works and create new forms of solidarity in the world. The whole world without exception has suffered; we now know that science has its limits. Scientists must stop manipulating viruses just to show that they can create supermen. The hand of man ends where the hand of God begins. It is God who drives everything.

SISTER MARTHE NZABAKURANA

West Africa Province
Original French

echo of the Archives

“If the Archives are to be alive, they must be available for consultation.”

19th century photos

Even though we know we don't have many of them, it seems normal to have pictures of Mother Marie Eugenie and our first sisters. In fact, the pictorial collection of the Archives is quite impressive. Many albums contain portraits of the sisters, groups of houses, students dressed in their own era. In addition to the albums, we have a large number of glass slides which were the usual material for photographs since 1850. These are negative or positive images that are made of glass. The glass is coated with a liquid mixture that is sensitive to light and cut into different sized glass tiles. The sensitive layer consists of silver salts mixed with a substance that adheres to the glass support. Thus, photographs on glass tiles have a glass side (the support) and semi-liquid side (the silver gelatin-bromide sensitive layer). They should be handled with care. During the second week of January, we took the boxes of glass slides out of the cupboards and, with the help of Alexandre and Muriel (the people who are working with us for the design of the museum), we scanned these photographs so that we could use them. Depending on the quality of resolution you want to achieve, it takes between 3 and 12 minutes to scan a photo. 131 documents were scanned in 3 days! Aurélie, a student on professional "stage" at the Archives for a month, was happy to take part in this adventure and to learn new skills. Thanks to this work, some collections will be visible in the museum.

The setting up of the Archives' library

If the Archives are to be alive, they must be available for consultation. Many researchers write to us asking for various information. Some of them would be happy to come and consult the documents they are interested in. The "Marie Eugénie" Library is the place to do this. We have been working on organizing the space so that it is pleasant and functional. In addition to the documents of the Congregation and the books of the original community library, one can find collections of different documents that can be consulted on the spot: on the congregations of the Assumption Family, on Saint Augustine, on the Church of the 19th century, on the great spiritual figures who have marked Marie

Library of the Archives



Eugénie. A cupboard also contains documents in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Japanese, Thai, Danish, Lithuanian, Malayalam... which allow one to go deeper into the history and spirituality of the Congregation in these languages. From now on, every visitor is welcome!

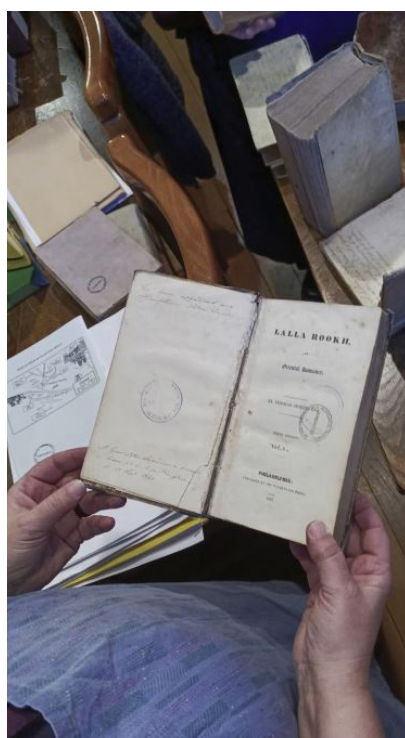
Talks and retreats

The end of the year 2021 new exchanges with the Provinces were held: lay people and sisters who wish to go deeper into the charism and history of the Congregation. After the 2nd series of conferences "Aux Sources", in September 2021, Sister Veronique had the joy of giving an 8 day retreat "drinking from our sources" for the sisters of the Mexican Province. Some other Spanish speaking sisters from other provinces (South Atlantic, Ecuador, Central America) as well as an Orante sister of the Assumption, joined this group. It was a beautiful experience, which awakened the desire to know more about the rich interior life of our foundress. After the retreat, three days of conferences were offered to the laity of the Province of Mexico: Marie Eugénie in times of crisis, the Incarnation in Assumption spirituality. It is a joy to see the lay people drink from the source. This was also the case with the Province of Spain, in Assumption Together, on the theme of accompaniment according to Marie Eugénie. And later, in January, on the theme of ecology. The first conference of the year 2022 was for the Provincial Chapter of Central America: Starting from the experience of Marie Eugénie, how do we deal with crises in our mission of education? Our Assumptionist brothers, reflecting on how to actualize the charism, also proposed an online conference on the shared responsibility for the charism.

All of this has enhanced the work with the Archivists of the Provinces, new and experienced ones! We

shared the joy of seeing the work progress in each place and of seeing new spaces dedicated to the Archives.

SISTER VÉRONIQUE THIÉBAUT
Archivist of the Congregation,
Original French



Discovering the treasures



Disorder time



Aurélie working joyfully

solidarity

Transformative Education blends in perfectly with Eco Assumption perspective

“Transformative education necessarily has a community and collective dimension.”

Creativity of creator and its creation creates wonder in the minds of one who is attuned to the transforming nature of the universe and its creation. The Lord God caused to grow from the ground every kind of tree that is pleasing to see and good to eat (Gen. 2:9). The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to till it and take care of it (Gen. 2:15). From the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly observed in what he made (Romans 1: 20). The Earth and the Sky, woods and fields, lakes and rivers, the mountain and the sea, teach of us more than we can ever learn from books. More over St. Marie Eugenie invites us to see the world as a place of glory for God.

Transformative education necessarily has a community and collective dimension. It relies on ecological relationships and beneficial inter dependence, lived as a sharing of wealth.

Around the world, research is showing that climate change, ecosystem degradation, and biodiversity loss are a threat to the very survival of humanity and most other species on earth (United Nations environmental programme (UNEP), 2007).

When we turn the pages of Indian educational system we find Rabindranath Tagore, the great Indian educationalist and environmentalist insisted that education should be imparted in natural surroundings. He said, “Children have their active subconscious mind which like a tree has the power to gather its food from the surrounding atmosphere”. He also said that an educational institution should not be “a dead cage in which living minds are fed with food that's artificially prepared”. He also lays emphasis on the learner's contact with nature. Apart from physical activity, nature teaches a man more than any institution. Tagore recommended that education should be provided in the company of Nature which will strengthen the ties between man and Nature. Both man and



Nature are the creations of one and the same God. Favouring ancient Gurukul system of education, Tagore recommends ancient system of education in which teachers and pupils should live together as family members keeping sweet relationship among them.

Blended with Indian Gurukula education and pedagogy of Assumption education the sisters of Indian province started Dnyanjyoti Kanya Ashram school (It is a residential school Only for Tribal girls) at Tilloli in 1996 with a mission and vision of St. Marie Eugenie. inspired by Saint Marie Eugenie, we impart quality education – academic excellence, character formation, and social and ecological responsibility – to young girls so that they might be confident and competent to face the challenges of our times and to become agents of transformation.

The school is situated in the midst of tribal villages. It is a tribal belt with agricultural back ground. When our sisters started social work at Dindori in Nashik district, Maharashtra, the people of the place were very close to the nature and proficient in agricultural work but they were not aware of the importance of education especially of girls. They were under the pretext that their girls were only for taking care of the daily chores of the house and their siblings. That was an excruciating experience for our sisters. So, they decided to have a bridge between informal transformative education to formal Assumption transformative education. The light Mother Marie Eugenie lit in the hearts of her daughters aflame with courage to take risk and reach out to the people who were at the periphery. So, we started a residential school for the tribal girls to fulfil the mission and vision of Mother Marie Eugenie in the Indian context.

It is an exuberant countryside with small hills and a small dam with the back ground of lush green vegetation. Here students are taught according to the Maharashtra government curriculum. We apply the educational pedagogy of Assumption within it. Students are promoted to have academic excellence, along with the capacity to have team work and have empathizing heart for all the living beings. They do yoga in the morning. Soon after the yoga, they go to the garden (flower, vegetable, fruit garden) for half an hour. This is the time they take care of the plants and in many other ways they are in touch with the environment. Each group of students is accompanied by a sister. They learn to keep the surrounding clean hand in hand. Here curricular and co-curricular activities go side by side. We took seriously the safe guarding of nature in June 2018. We planted varieties of fruit plants and forest trees in our school compound. Sisters, students and non-teaching staff take care of the habitat. Most of the trees started producing fruits. The varieties of forest trees we planted growing fast and it attracts so many birds and butterflies in our compound. Same year we designed and planted so many flower plants. It doesn't allow the visitors to take away their eyes from the flowers. They remark, this atmosphere vibrates lots of positive energy. The people visited our

place fascinated by the scenic beauty of it. These all brought transformation in the character and behaviour pattern of the students, parents and staff. The fighting nature of some of the parents, students

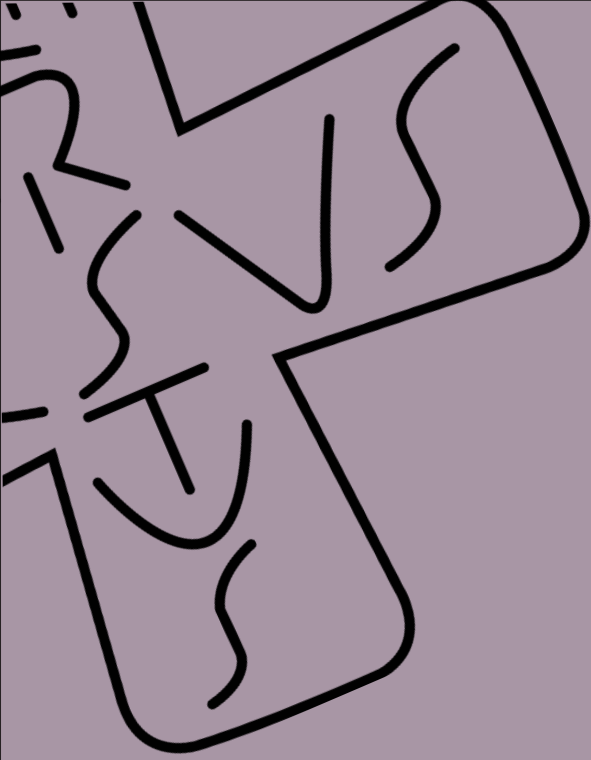
and staff is changed. They become more loving and lovable. The teaching- learning atmosphere of the school is changed slowly and steadily. Now lot of positive vibration is everywhere. Our place is an example of how the nature can contribute to the transformative education and to make the human being a better socially committed human being with a humane heart.

It is time to take nature seriously as a resource for learning and development. It is time to bring nature and nature - based pedagogy into formal education. When the young people are connected to nature, it has positive impact on their education, health-emotional & physical well-being and personal and social responsibilities. It helps them to build a society where justice, peace and integrity of creation reigns. Transformative education connected with nature connects the students with creation and creator with a thread of sincere love. It ignites the minds of the students and take them to the infinite opportunities of life

SISTER SUSAN VARGHESE

Province of India

Original English



Direct their flight, but don't clip their wings



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