

#ASSUMPTA

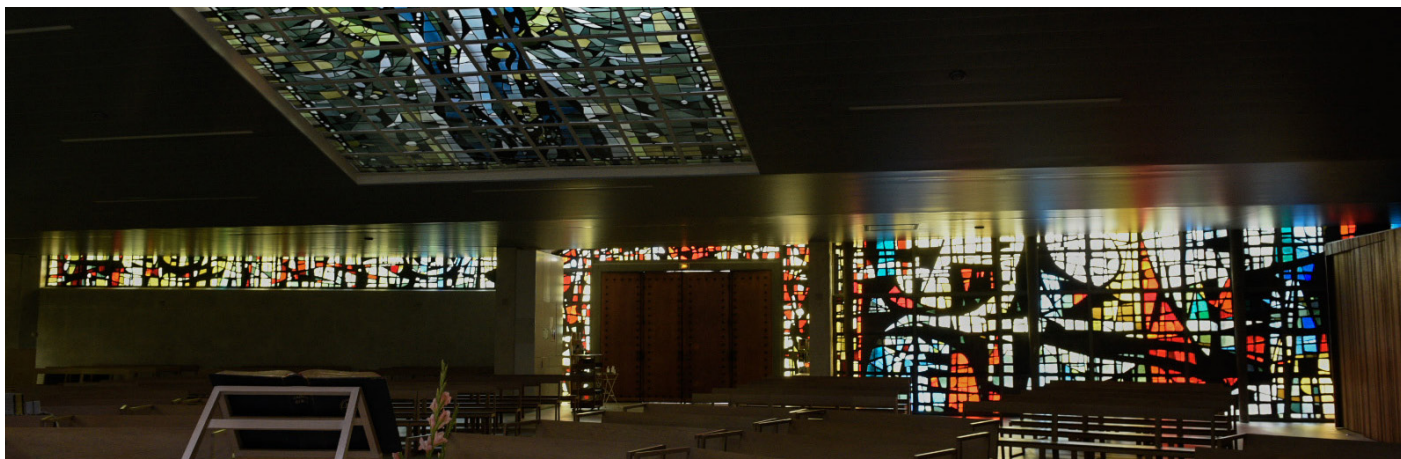
Religious of the Assumption magazine

August 2022 - N°8

सहभागिता और एकता में ही बल है
There is strength in
communion and unity.

summary

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



#ASSUMPTA

Year 2022 - n°8

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ASSUMPTION TOGETHER

*Preparing the AT international gathering: reflection
on the joy of our spirituality in the newness of our
times*

Explanation of the phrase on the cover: Hands folded together bind us together, keep us in communion and unity. As the theme of synodality is "Communion, Sharing and Mission", the joining of hands will remind us of synodality. It will remind us of communion with the Trinitarian God.

editorial

Synodality – A Way of Witnessing Life and Mission



In October 2021, the entire Church entered into a preliminary Synodal process. Pope Francis opened it in Rome and every Diocese across the whole world was called to celebrate the opening of the Synodal process at the local level. The theme for the Synod is For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission. The Church is given an opportunity to open ourselves to the journey of sharing, reflecting and listening to one another at all level across the entire Church from October 2021 – 2023.

Synodality

Synodality is all about “Journeying Together” through listening to one another in order to hear what God is saying to all of us. The Holy Spirit, the spirit of Truth (Jn 14:17) can speak through anyone to help us walk forward together on our journey as the People of God. Synodality is a way to be more united with one another and to better carry out the mission of Christ on earth.

Communion- By the same Spirit of Jesus

When we look around our world and society, we find many challenges: the wars and hatred, injustices, discriminations, corruptions, division in families, communities, churches and so on. These overwhelming threats affect human communion. Communion reminds us of a closer relationship with God and with His people. St. Paul says, “Making every effort to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is only one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:3-6). Therefore, it is a call for all of us to nourish and cherish the spirit of communion in our families, communities and wherever we are. Every baptized person is called to be a manifestation of God's love. Jesus our Lord and Master is our model of becoming a source of love, joy, hope and strength to each other. St. John Paul II states in his Apostolic Exhortation (Dominum et vivificantem) that Jesus Christ the incarnate Lord is the heart of trinitarian communion. Jesus Christ is the word made flesh, the perfect revelation of God the Father's love for humanity and the Saviour of the world. Jesus was in perfect communion with the Father and the Spirit of the same mind, with the same love and united in heart. Hence, it is an invitation for us to live in communion with each other in our families, communities, working places, etc. with the same mind, same love, united in heart as Jesus did.

Participation – By the same Spirit of Jesus

In the Gospel, we have a very clear example of feeding of the five thousand. Jesus said to his disciples, “make them sit down in groups of about fifty each. They did so and made them all sit down. And taking the five loaves and two fish he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke them and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd” (Lk 9: 14-16). In the same way, we find another example in the gospel of John Chapter 2:7-10, “The Wedding at Cana”. Jesus and his disciples were journeying together with the people, sharing and listening to each other. They became part of one another. Today, let us ask ourselves: How can the Church be complete without the participation of both men and women? When the People of God participate in every activity of the Church, it definitely becomes active and creative. The participation of the laity often brings unexpected and rich insights to the activities of the church.

Mission – By the same Spirit of Jesus

St. Marie Eugenie says, “Each one has a mission on this Earth.” Mission is rooted in our very being as a human, doing every work with our full heart and soul, giving our best to little or big things. In the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians we find, “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ” (Eph 4:11-12). Pope Francis underlines, “My mission of being in the heart of the people is not just a part of my life or a badge I can take off; it is not on “extra” or just another moment in life. Instead, it something I cannot uproot from my being without destroying my very self. I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world” (Evangelii Gaudium, no. 273). Thus our mission becomes dynamic when we take responsibility and commit ourselves fully with dedication. Let us therefore journey together with passion, zeal and enthusiasm in the mission of Christ, promoting and witnessing to Christ's forgiving love, mercy and compassion to all.

SISTER SUNITA BESRA

Responsible for the communication of the Province of India
Original English

general community

As a General Community, we felt the need to return (...) in order to better understand the prophetic and radical aspects of this way of life that following Christ implies.

In keeping with a well-established tradition, the Provincial Councils of the Continent of Europe will meet for three days. This year it will be from 9 to 11 July 2022 in Lyon in the Novitiate community. On the agenda: the continental journey, the current stage in the internal restructuring of each province with its good experiences and challenges, and the vision for the continuation of the continental journey; and the transmission of the CGP 2022 with three aspects to be deepened in the continent. Marthe Marie and Isabelle will have the joy of participating in the first day of the meeting.

On the 22nd of June 2022, the new Provincial Councils of the Continent of Asia (Asia Pacific Province and Province of India) met for the first time in the presence of two General Councillors: Sandra and Irene. The purpose of the two-hour Zoom Meeting was to get to know each other and to share the dreams and desires of the two Asian Councils. What emerged was the desire for deeper communion, collaboration, journeying together in new ways, reflecting together in the context of the world, and a deepening of RA Asian identity. The two Provincials also shared their plans for the Continental Journey for the next two years. The first communal activity is the formation session for all the superiors of both Provinces which will take place in August 2022.

On the American continent, an online meeting is planned for sisters over 40 years old on the theme: "Building 'Home Communities' and strengthening our passion for the Kingdom". This session will be facilitated by Sandra and Isabelle in line with the interventions and experience lived at the CGP 2022. About 40 sisters will participate. This meeting will be the first of a series of sessions for ongoing formation on the continent with various speakers.

For Africa-Madagascar, an online session for sisters in perpetual vows from 5 to 10 years is planned for December 2022 from 17 to 20. It will be a rereading of the covenant between the two cultures, African and Assumption, based on personal and community experiences. The objective of this session is to revive the love of the Congregation and the rooting of the Assumption in our cultures.

Through personal and community work, as a General Council, we want to re-collect the journey, from the General Chapter 2018 to the CGP 2020 and the CGP 2022, in order to orient ourselves towards CGP 2023. As a Congregation, what have we



International session: Group photo in Presich

Farewell to Louissette, Bego, Thérèse Agnès and Marie Claude



International session: L'Hôtel Dieu and Malagasy sisters



Linda, Isabel, Dragica and Juanita



International session: Rereading her life in the light of Marie Eugenie



Thérèse Agnès and Leela



International session: Group work



managed to discern as Newness for our consecrated life today, in line with Sr. Rekha's final message at the CGP 2022: "As our identity and mission are constantly evolving, how do we discern the signs of this "newness" in our personal and communal life? We cannot and should not reduce our charism to a program of education, to a set of prayers, or to a set pattern of life in our communities. At some point, we must let go of something of the old ways and choose to live in a new way in order to let our charism come alive more tangibly. The new manifestations of the Assumption charism should make God's healing presence, God's justice and compassion, more visible and make our communities a source of positive energy and prophetic hope for a better world"

The feedback we are receiving from the provinces on the transmission of the CGP 2022 is encouraging; it is an ongoing synodal process that requires ever greater personal and community discernment and specific ways to make the intuitions we have received become a reality.

The community of Auteuil and the general community bade farewell to Sr. Bego and Sr. Louissette on June 20 and 22. Sr. Bego served the Mother House as a sacristan, but also as a zealous missionary! The many bonds

she forged and her openness to the neighborhood through visits to the sick and outreach activities have strengthened the community of the 17th. Thank you, Bego, for all your consideration in community and your unfailing welcome. Sr. Louissette left very happy with her 9 months in France, divided between the training of religious formators at the Châtelard in Lyon and the rest of the course at the Centre Sèvres in Paris. She is preparing to take responsibility for the young sisters in formation in Madagascar. In this context, she has chosen as her personal work theme: "The importance of community life for young people in formation".

Sr Marie Claude and Sr Thérèse Agnès will also be leaving the Auteuil community this summer. Sr. Marie-Claude, an unobtrusive and friendly presence, has done meticulous work in the archives, in the background but effective. A work which consists of getting hold of documents as varied as they are interesting: inventories, letters from Sr Thérèse Emmanuel or her Intimate Notes, the General Councils from Mother Marie Eugénie to Mother Marie Denyse... nearly 7000 documents in all! It should be added that Marie-Claude has been at Auteuil for 22 years! An assiduous reader of the newspaper La Croix, she likes to put aside interesting articles for the sisters. The Province of France is sending her to Montpellier, where



Visit to East Africa

she is happy to find many familiar sisters. Sr. Thérèse-Agnès gave a year of service to the community of Auteuil and, with Sr. Leela, launched the International Juniorate project by making links with the Catholic Institute and by accompanying the young sisters in learning French. Thérèse Agnès is being transferred to the community in Lourdes to reinforce the team and enable the centre to continue its activities of retreats and sessions in continuity with the territory and the Francis Village project.

The eight juniors continue to learn French at the Catholic Institute de Paris with a rigorous evaluation every five weeks. They will begin their last session in July before leaving for an Ignatian retreat at Trappe de Soligny and then to Lourdes for a community vacation.

Another departure, that of Dragica, from the maintenance team, who has served in the house for 21 years. Dragica loved her work and had a quality of presence noticed by all who met her. The community and staff celebrated her departure in a family spirit. With joy, Dragica and her husband will return to their country, Croatia, happy to be reunited with their family.

The visit of Srs. Rekha and Irene to East Africa in June 8-18, 2022, was grace-filled, intense, and meaningful. The ten communities of Sisters in Tanzania and Kenya, together with their lay partners and students, expressed their warm hospitality and joy in a cultural welcome, cheerful and colorful. The meetings with the communities have helped us to get to know each other better and to share our joys and challenges. The two assemblies, in Tanzania and in Kenya, were opportunities to talk about the life of the sisters, their blessings and concerns, in an atmosphere of gratitude. Both assemblies and the meeting on the last day with the Provincial Council were marked with openness, trust, renewal, and the desire to continue journeying together towards becoming better Sisters of East Africa. Thank you, dear Sisters of the East

African Province. Together with you, we acclaim, "God is good all the time, and all the time God is good!"

The session of preparation for Perpetual Vows took place from April 8 to June 15, 2022. We thank the many sisters who spoke on the themes of the vows, the three poles of our life, the apostolic missions, the biblical themes etc. It was a work of quality! The many links between each intervention made it possible to gradually integrate the contributions even if it is only after the session that we can assimilate the tangible consequences of such a session.

As a General Community, we felt the need to return not only to the theological foundations of religious life but also to the anthropological foundations in order to better understand the prophetic and radical aspects of this way of life that following Christ implies. Like Jesus, to be centered on God and his Kingdom, to receive from him the passion of the Kingdom. That is what it means to imitate Christ. Marie Eugenie passed on to us this zeal for the Kingdom that she drew from her gaze fixed on Jesus Christ.

The international community that we formed and built every day, through the participation of each person, was a source of joy, of going beyond ourselves and of simplicity. Many have resolved to learn another language. We encourage them to do so! Thank you to the small communication team that regularly published news on facebook and the web page.

May the holiday season for the provinces concerned renew you inwardly and replenish your strength to build your communities. We will be united especially on Sunday 15 August, the feast of the Assumption.

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

finances

Another economy is possible! We need to wake up!

I would like to start with the global reality in which we are immersed. The social and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has deep and irreversible consequences, especially for the most vulnerable countries; people's livelihoods have been affected. It is now difficult to put food on the table every day, access health care, and get vaccines and education for all. Inequality, which I believe is the biggest problem facing the world today has been put out in the open and has become even more evident.

The pandemic is not the only cause. The wars in various parts of our Common House, in Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine... the Earth is suffering. Humanity is suffering! The selfishness of those who have wealth and who amass economic power is disproportionate. No group of people can escape its consequences. Like the pandemic, war generates poverty, hunger, and inequality.

In the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis calls for fraternity and social friendship; he describes war as a constant threat. And he argues that every war leaves the world in a worse state than before. War is a failure of politics and humanity, a shameful surrender, and a defeat to the forces of evil... He calls for the total abolition of arms and proposes to use the money to end hunger and improve the lives of the poorest countries.

In times of crisis, prophetic cries announcing life for all or denouncing what harms life often go unheard or are discredited.

I ask myself if we are sufficiently awake, or are we trapped in a lethargic state caused by individualism, uncontrolled consumerism, overwhelmed by the cult of money, too blind and paralyzed to do good?

All this prompts us to cry out, "Wake up! "Awake, oh! you who sleep, rise from the dead, and Christ will enlighten you" (Eph. 5:14). We must listen to the cry of the Kingdom that calls us to mobilise ourselves, we who claim to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

We must be sufficiently awake to have an impact on those around us, not giving up, because it is possible to transform reality with our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ and the extension of his Kingdom.

Through our practice as Assumption sisters, we have the possibility to reflect upon and reveal that another economy is possible. An economy that promotes community, cooperation, responsible consumption, fair trade, the well-being of every human being, and respect for the environment.

There are rich experiences of different types of solidarity and social economy that have as their premise the care of life in its integrity. In different countries where we are present, experiences exist, but unfortunately, in most cases, they are stifled by the dominant economy. However, we cannot give up. Another economy is possible.

These experiences emanate from concrete choices made by men and women who have rediscovered the value of the common good, of caring for the Earth, who have become aware that we cannot weave a network on our own, that we must recognise the other, that everyone has abilities and something to contribute. As a result, organisations have been created that, despite their weaknesses, actively influence social transformation. Various experiences have emerged at critical moments, in marginalised areas and among ancestral peoples whose culture is based on reciprocity and community work.

In order to live the Kingdom, we must strive for a social economy of solidarity. I repeat, we must wake up and strive to live differently.

The nutritional bread of listening that is broken and shared in dialogue nourishes hope. In these times of uncertainty, we must not let our spirit and our existence be destroyed by the meaningless noise and shrieking that prevent us from distinguishing them from genuine grievances, weeping, and laughter, or the person next to us who is entreating us to respond.

The bread of bonding is broken and shared through strong gestures which nourish the soul. In these times marked by tremendous selfishness, let us not allow the bread of our hearts to become hardened by irrelevant toughness that does not nurture life, and prevents us from feeling the heartbeat, the warmth, and the solidarity of the person next to us who is reaching out to us.

SISTER LEONARDA HOELER

Bursar of the South Atlantic Province
Original Spanish

education

In communion for mission

“Communion is our collective mission and we must create spaces to make this happen”

“Communion is our collective mission and we must create spaces to make this happen”. These were the inspiring words of our Provincial Superior, Sr. Lerma Victoria Pangantihon as the second Asia Pacific Province Administrators' Gathering opened on January 7, 2022. Sixty-four administrators from 16 schools gathered for their Bi-annual formation session with the theme: *Journeying in Communion for Mission*.

The 3-hour session was filled with sharing and learning. It was a rich exchange of experiences and school practices of the participants from 4 different countries that make up the Province: Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

The highlight of the gathering was the plenary session on Pope Francis' Global Compact on Education (GCE) with Ajan Chainarong Montheinvichienchai of Thailand as plenary speaker. Based on the African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child", this global pact aims to engage all sectors of society to create such a village. The Holy Father envisions a radical shift in education and makes it a venue to promote fraternity, peace, and justice. (Vademecum, 2021). In this session, the participants were introduced to the Seven Commitments of the Global Compact:

- 1) to make human persons the center,
- 2) to listen to the voices of the young,
- 3) to advance the women,
- 4) to empower the family,
- 5) to welcome,
- 6) to find new ways of understanding politics and economy, and
- 7) to safeguard our common home.

More sessions are sure to follow, not only to deepen every school community's reflection but also to consciously respond to this call.

After the plenary session, the participants were divided into 3 groups according to their distinct roles in school: Academics, Administrative Services, and Student Services. In these three breakout groupings, the participants shared how their schools are thriving in the Pandemic, what they have learned to do better, and what new ways of doing things are helping them fulfill their mission of education. Some schools volunteered to share best practices in their assigned groups. Everyone was engaged in meaningful conversations throughout the session.





Kannattha Siriphengrupo



Naomi Tanzawa



Lan Trinh

Here are some insights from the participants.

Lan Trinh from VIETNAM:

"I am grateful for the chance to attend this gathering. I feel so blessed to hear all the sharing from different schools about changing, creating, and adapting to the new situation because of the pandemic. I have learned many things and I felt connected with all of you. Somehow, I see the Pandemic challenging us to be the best of ourselves and also give our best to the students. May we always be "the bearer of hope" to the students and others."

Arlene Carlos from the PHILIPPINES:

"Innovativeness, agility, and resiliency- these for me are the words that perfectly describe the people behind the creative and relevant programs that were showcased in the meeting of the student services group during the January 7, 2022 APP admin meeting. Gathered together in a virtual assembly, we, the Assumption school heads, shared how we surmounted the challenges of distance learning to continue giving quality education even during the pandemic. Awed by the video presentations of four schools and recalling our experiences from the onset of the health crisis up to the present, we realized that no amount of pressure could hinder us from keeping our mission of educating the young alive. Inspired by the Assumption spirit, we continue to journey together treading the newness of life with the strong conviction that God walks with us as we deliver services that nurture the holistic formation of the students."

Kannatha Siriphen from THAILAND:

"I learned a lot listening to what my companions have shared. We do not always have control of situations or circumstances in our life and environment. But when we are open, somehow, we discover in ourselves the capacity to respond positively. We adjust personally, we work with others, and together find new ways of dealing with challenges in our work and responsibilities as administrators. I am happy to realize that we in St John's School-Thabom are part of a bigger family of the Assumption. I feel we are not alone. At the same time, I

feel one with my co-educators and administrators as they face difficulties and challenges and rejoice with them in their successes."

Naomi Tanzawa from JAPAN:

"I was so grateful to join the Administrators' gathering of the APP. I found that we are walking together towards the future. In our unity, we accept and understand diversity with a global vision together. Also, we had the chance to speak with other lay partners and discuss our challenges. This experience gave me the passion and the courage to face the new school year! I am truly grateful for this opportunity to experience and be Assumption Together!"

The Administrators' Gathering became a real communion experience. The sessions expanded our understanding and views of the varied issues and concerns that confront our schools during this time. The struggles were real, but so were the little victories that we achieved along the way. Everything is truly a blessing. We were transformed in many unexpected ways. We became better educators for our students. In sharing our stories, we realized that even if our contexts are unique and we are geographically distant from one another, we are never alone in the journey. Our biggest take-away is that we belong to ONE ASSUMPTION family that will continue to walk together, in communion, for the love of this mission of transformative education.

(Ajan Chainarong Montheinvichienchai is currently serving as a member of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications in the Vatican. He is the license holder of St. John's School in Thabom, Thailand, working closely with the Assumption Sisters.)

Global Compact on Education. (2021, October 5). Retrieved January 21, 2022, from <https://www.educationglobalcompact.org/resources/Risorse/vademecum-english.pdf>

SISTER MARIE GRACE MAGTAAS

Asia Pacific Province Reference Person for Education
Original English

echo of the Archives

The Inauguration of the Museum

“This Museum is a source of joy and inspiration, calling us to fix our eyes on Jesus Christ and the extension of His Kingdom...”

“Good news! Good news! The Museum of the Sources of the Assumption is open!” This is how Sister Prisca, from the Province of West Africa, invited those present in Auteuil on May 8, 2022 to cross the threshold of the door of the museum which had been in preparation for a long time.

Before the actual inauguration, the guests explored the historic paths of the garden. For each experience, two people came forward (The General Council, collaborators of the Archives, the Community of Auteuil, members of the Assumption Family) to discover a stele (memorial stone) and read the information on it. The 8 steles retrace, in 3 languages, the history of the house of Auteuil: the purchase of the Château de la Tuilerie (1855), the construction of the Monastery (inaugurated in 1857), the Chapel in the Woods and the tombs of our Mothers, the construction of the “Petit Couvent” (inaugurated in 1866), the boarding house for ladies and the Villa Saint Michel (after the evictions at the start of the 20th century), the Assumption family, the various chapels in the house, the current chapel (inaugurated in 1961).

The steles are in the shape of a shepherd's staff, which can be converted into a pilgrim's staff, to evoke the first Sisters who traced the path, to evoke all those who, through the centuries, have walked in the footsteps of the founders. They are made of metal, reminiscent of the Eiffel architecture used for the interior structure of the monastery, and are encrusted with colored stained-glass windows reminiscent of those in the chapel. Alexandre Drabzack, their creator, was happy to explain these on this Inauguration Day. On each stele, you can also discover a photo and a QR code allowing access to additional information.

On this Inauguration Day, the journey of the community, that we formed, was punctuated by the songs from our Provinces: the Rwandan drums sounded to summon the guests and a Malagasy song accompanied their entering into the hall of the house where, after the announcement following a West African rite, Sr. Rekha gave her inaugural address.

She reminded the audience that a museum “represents the collective memory we are proud of and from which we draw our identity”. “Museums have the role of making connections since they establish links between the past, the present and the future”; they also have an “educational value” because they are a place where the visitor can learn something new and sometimes acquire a new outlook on history. “This Museum is a source of joy and inspiration, calling us to fix our eyes on Jesus Christ and the extension of His Kingdom...” and we can dream, with Sr. Rekha, that visitors will have a “spiritual experience of encounter with Saint Marie Eugenie and Mother Therese Emmanuel” and that they “will

Library of the Archives



Inauguration of the Museum



Unveiling of a stele

make their rich spirituality their own in their daily life", with fidelity and creativity.

A delegation of 30 persons were then invited to go up to the Museum for the actual inauguration. Sr Ansuli, from the Province of India, performed the Arati and placed the flowers and the lighted candle in front of the crucifix in the old Chapter Room of the monastery. A crucifix which has witnessed so many meetings of the Sisters, from the beginning, and which "heard" the Chapters of Mother Marie Eugenie, which are our spiritual heritage today. The parish priest of Notre Dame de l'Assomption, Father Guillaume de Menthetaire, then blessed the room and all those who will visit it in the years to come. It was then the time of discovery. The persons who designed the lay-out of the Museum: Sister Marie Yvonne, Alexandre Drabzack (architect-designer), Laure Marin Cudraz (teacher at the Assumption of Chambéry), Sister Katrin Goris (member of the international Archives team) and Sister Veronique

presented each of the rooms.

After evoking the joy of working as a team, the complementarity of talents, after the thanksgiving for an enthusiastic and fraternal work of creativity, all those present turned to Marie Eugenie and Therese Emmanuel, in a prayer for the Assumption throughout the world. Sister Carolina (Mexico), Sister Anne Maria (Kenya) and Sister Rose (Democratic Republic of Congo) read the prayer in 3 languages: "Lord, you who gave to Marie Eugenie, to Therese Emmanuel and to all the first Sisters, the grace to consecrate their lives to the extension of your Kingdom, grant us to always be faithful to the heritage received, in a creativity inspired by the Holy Spirit. Amen."

SISTER VÉRONIQUE THIÉBAUT
Archivist of the Congregation,
Original French



During the historical journey



The Museum



Stele

youth

Youth Ministry in the Archdiocese of N'Djamena

“Formation in human, spiritual, biblical, and other domains is offered to them for their development and also to enable them to choose freely, with the help of the Spirit, a path that is their own.”

The Family of God church in N'Djamena is mostly a young congregation. Youth ministry occupies a special place in the Archdiocese and aims essentially at offering special attention to young people who are full of potential and very committed to our young Church. Vocation ministry is one of the entities that make up this great assembly: Youth ministry.

How Youth Ministry is Organised

The Pope's message for young people, the message of the Bishops of Chad, and the orientations of the diocesan pastoral project are a reference that allows the diocesan commission for youth ministry to draw up a plan of activities for young people with clear orientations for all. At the diocesan level, we have a youth chaplain who works in collaboration with the various parish delegates. This chaplain: provides spiritual direction for the activities of these young people, acts as a bridge between the bishop and them, and accompanies the diocesan youth organisations. Each parish or vicariate

manages parish youth coordination. This coordination brings together the various Catholic action movements such as the Scouts, the Guides, the Young Christian Students (YCS), the Young Witnesses of Christ (YWC), and the Young Christian Workers (YCW), as well as many other youth groups and services in the parish.

The different youth activities

Several activities are proposed including the Diocesan Youth Forum, which convenes a yearly gathering of young people with the Bishop. This forum is prepared at each parish youth coordination level based on the worksheets that the Diocesan Youth Ministry Commission has drawn up. Several workshops are offered to young people. At the end of the forum, the commission collects the various resolutions drawn up by the young people and gives them to the local coordinator. This kind of organisation enables a meaningful involvement of the young people in the activities that concern them. Deanery meetings are organised, as well as the participation or hosting of



The joy of reunion



Youth at the service of the church



A diverse church at the service of youth

the national forum once every two years, training days for all youth leaders, and weekly meetings in the respective parishes.

Vocation Ministry

Although it's different from the Youth Commission, the Diocesan Vocations Commission, of which I am a member, works in close collaboration with the latter since it deals with the same young people. However, the Vocations Commission develops its own programme of activities with themes that can help young people to discern their own path. These include themes such as God's call, faith, and vocational discernment, the highlights of the liturgical year, marriage and the consecrated life, affectivity and sexuality, etc. Recollections and retreats lasting from 3 to 5 days, depending on the group, are offered to some, as well as meetings with the family ministry, visits to the poor, and a gathering with the Bishop on Good Shepherd Sunday. On this occasion, the congregations present in the diocese come to meet the young people to present the different charisms in the Church, some through paintings, others through conferences and testimonies.

Every year, the Vocations Commission draws up worksheets for the parish groups which meet once a week with their parish priest or another designated guide; in most cases, it is a member of the clergy from their parish.

Formation in human, spiritual, biblical, and other domains is offered to them for their development and also to enable them to choose freely, with the help of the Spirit, a path that is their own. The presence of couples, sisters, and diocesan priests in the commission shows the particular grace of God's call and the different vocations in our Church.

Our Church rejoices in the enthusiasm of young people in the various church organisations.

SOEUR ALINE EMMANUEL B

Member of the Youth and Vocations Commission of the Rwanda-Chad Province.
Original French

spirituality

Synodality as a source of Vibrancy and Invigoration in the Central African Region

“Synodality is an assured way to live the mission in a detached and fulfilling way.”

To speak of synodality today implies carrying out God's mission together within our small sphere in our way. This experience is described below under two headings.

1. Synodality as a source of vibrancy at the Assumption Polyvalent College in Cameroon

When duties are shared, while putting to good use the skills and talents God gave each person for the success of the activities and events organised within our college, each one feels involved and responsible for the endeavours.

Here at Collège Polyvalent de Bafoussam, we have set up teams to reflect on and organise the different aspects of training and activities within the school (pedagogy, discipline, pastoral, post- and extra-curricular activities, communication, school orientation, internships/visits, open days, the coordination of workshops, the Teachers Party, the Christmas Party, the Harvest Festival, Saint Marie Eugénie's Day, Women's Day, and prize distribution at the time when

report cards are handed out...).

Each team determines its plan of action and the way in which it organises itself to prepare a programme for the entire school year. The Quarterly Calendar outlines the activities to remind everyone of their tasks. Some teams may include students to initiate them in the organisation and coordination. All these teams work under the general coordination of the principal sister. The entire educational team is energised by this esprit de corps experience which makes us grow in the same educational vision of Assumption.

2. Synodality as a radiating source for Mpiko High School in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The high school MPIKO located in the city of Kinshasa, is a school for girls aged between 11 and 17 years that aims to provide young girls with complete professional training. This training gives them a quality education so that they are equipped to confidently and competently ensure their future.

The educational team members



at Mpiko High School have felt the call to walk together as a community radiating the light of Christ. This invitation engages the entire staff of the school. Increasingly, we work as a team sharing the same vision and awareness that the charism of the Assumption concerns everyone.

At meetings, everyone is allowed to express their ideas, their views, and suggestions made by others, knowing full well that the responsibility for this school is everyone's. Our way of working together helps our students grow in their education, blossom in this environment, and to be agents of transformation in their families and in the environments in which they live.

Mpiko High School is a space where transformative education is experienced practically. This is why, in our region, we agree that the training received by the sisters and educators who share our mission and our educational project is important. It allows us to grow together knowledgeable about the Congregation's history while cultivating our vocation as Assumption educators. Sound collaboration must be based on knowledge of and respect for the way of life of each member.

The laity assume very important roles in the educational mission as we increasingly share the responsibility. It is this complementarity in responsibilities that allows everyone to feel valued and to be involved in considering different issues.

In short, we say that the experience of synodality in our different missions allows us to value our differences and to live communication as a new way of being. Thus, in the present reality of our world, synodality is an assured way to live the mission in a detached and fulfilling way. We know that it is not always easy to live synodality because differences are sometimes not appreciated. But experience confirms that we must

always move forward by drawing on the spirituality of the Holy Trinity and Mother Marie Eugenie's vision of interdependence in mission.

SISTER MARCELINE AND SISTER LAURETTE
Central Africa Province
Original French



Treasures of the Archives

Ernestine's Memories

“She repeats to us that human relationships are a gift from God and that we must nurture these friendships throughout our lives.”

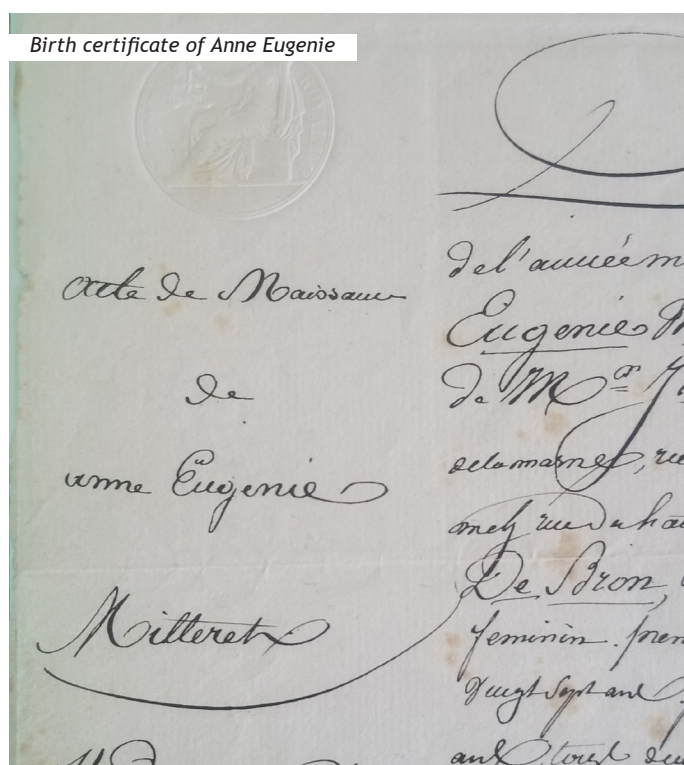
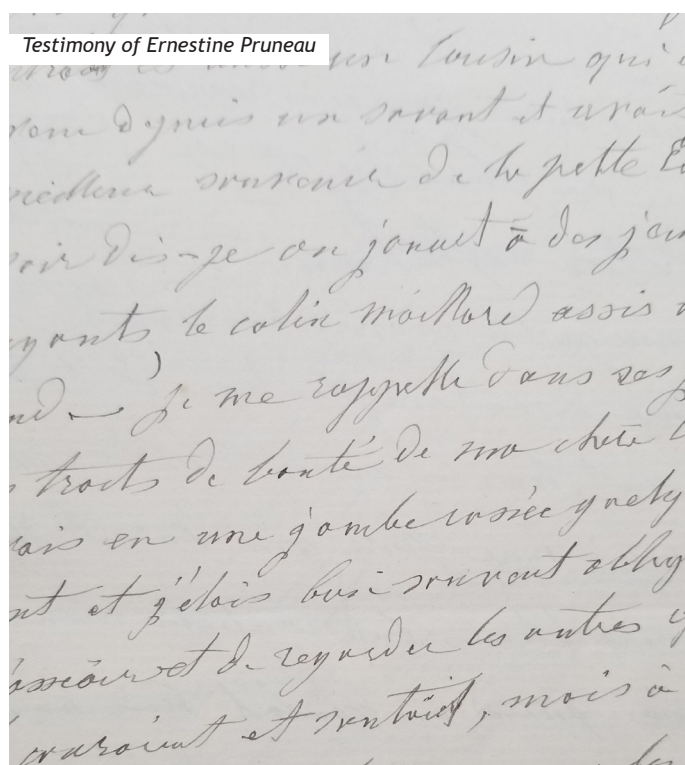
When we open the boxes in the Archives containing the documents related to the life of Marie Eugenie, we discover unexpected treasures. In box no. 2, in particular, are hidden her childhood memories: Marie Eugenie's letters to her cousins, documents evoking her visits to Lorraine and her visits to Preisch after the foundation, letters from her brothers or the spiritual testament of her father, a fairly extensive correspondence with childhood friends or their family. Among these many documents, witnesses of history, we find pages written by a fragile hand, which seem quite old... They are covered with a fine and trembling handwriting and speak to us of the young Anne Eugenie... It is Ernestine's testimony!

Who is Ernestine Pruneau? She had the great joy of being the childhood friend and cousin of Anne Eugenie, of running with her in the streets of Metz or in the woods of Preisch. This article suggests that we go over this touching testimony of Ernestine and stop to read a few passages. Ernestine's words speak for themselves. Let's listen to it! (cf. Archives of the Religious of the Assumption, MO 1 a)

Children's games

“As far back as I can remember in Metz, in a large house on Rue aux Ours where my mother lived with her parents and her children, the kind Eugenie de Brou came to stay with us. Her mother, related to mine, wanted to entrust her to us during a business trip she was to make to Paris (...) A second small bed was put in my room and we went to sleep side by side. What good chats, what fresh bursts of laughter morning and evening! After our prayer together and offering our hearts to God, what a peaceful sleep!”

“We were given permission to go and have our antics in a large hall located very close to the apartment. We settled there with joy, taking our study books and also old fairy tales that we read after working for a long time. Our favorite book—All



is in Everything Method—was its introduction. For languages it was perfect. From then on, Eugenie spoke German correctly. In the evening, when my sister and my brother came home in the evening, and also a cousin who has since become a scholar and had kept the best memories of little Eugenie, I say, we played noisier games..."

The celebration and reception when Anne Eugenie's father was appointed MP

"I remember this din of bells ringing, this crowd of greeters coming to announce the honorable news. All of Metz was there. I can still see the happy but calm face of the good young girl. In her place, I said to myself, I would absolutely lose my mind, I would be so proud, I would hardly think of my little friend and the rubber ball game installed from the top to the bottom of the stairs! She, on the contrary, did me the honors and did not want to let me miss a single game."

"Stagecoaches, coaches, etc., followed in number. Everything had been superbly organized by my friend's mother who combined kindness of heart and a most brilliant mind with an ability as an unparalleled hostess. (...) My good friend dressed in a simple white dress was having fun with all her heart, jumping, frolicking while hearing this good orchestra."

"Eugenie, always perfect and cheerfully resigned to the little annoyances of life, laughed heartily to put an end to my eternal grumbling and urged me to review our past glories instead of seeking an impossible sleep: travel, concert, ball, the conversation of kind guests who had not disdained to chat with two little girls like us, our return to Metz which would be a very amusing new trip, etc."

Human Virtues

Joy and frankness: "Eugenie, of a frank and cheerful nature, had a great deal of sense for her age and exquisite tactfulness. How often did I perceive that she did me good during her occasional short stays with us; with a word she stopped the mockery, made me obedient, me very independent. Her example influenced even the most scatterbrain."

Kindness: "I remember during our games the traits of kindness of my dear Eugenie. I had a broken leg, and I often had to sit and watch the others when they ran and jumped, but with only one leg I could do like the others and maybe better, that was what which is called "hopping on one leg" (...) When Eugenie saw me a little sad, she raised her voice and said: 'come on, let's play Ernestine' (...) I never thanked her for it but deep in my heart, I appreciated this dear child!"

Finesse and honesty: "I also remember a little conversation on the fairground in front of a toy store... We admired the toys and Eugenie told me that once, a gentleman they knew wanted her to choose something very expensive, she said to me 'I pretended that I did not like this toy, but that I ardently desired a skipping rope of 1 franc 25 [this sum is not high], he bought it for me and like that I have never abused his generosity!' I was very surprised and later I understood her finesse."

Reading these lines written by Ernestine, we seem to see a film about Anne Eugenie's childhood. We walk with her on the Street aux Ours, the Street Pierre Hardie, the Street Haut Poirier in Metz and we take a breath of fresh air looking out the windows of the castle of Preisch. We note above all that she was already animated by these natural virtues which will be a lever of education at the Assumption.

The faithful friendship

Ernestine was part of a group of friends that Marie Eugenie greatly appreciated and met again in 1837 during a stay in Lorraine. Here is what she says about it: "I am at the moment, in a house which I really like; they help me, perhaps too much; I find there three childhood friends and their mother, who was particularly good to me in sad moments of my past life. They are women of heart; there is one of them who would willingly follow me into religious life, but I do not believe she is called to it. They were all like me, saddened, lukewarm by an entourage of unbelieving men and by the influence of those boarding houses in Paris where

faith is barely visible. They breathe to find themselves with someone in front of whom they have nothing good to hide; my faith strengthens theirs and we get along well. Only, they believe me much better than I am, because I speak much better than I act. Sometimes I want to laugh at the way we go from our serious conversations to the games and laughter of the boarders, and to the memories of our early childhood, our quarrels and our pleasures." (Marie Eugenie, Letter to Father Combalot n°5, August 24, 1837)

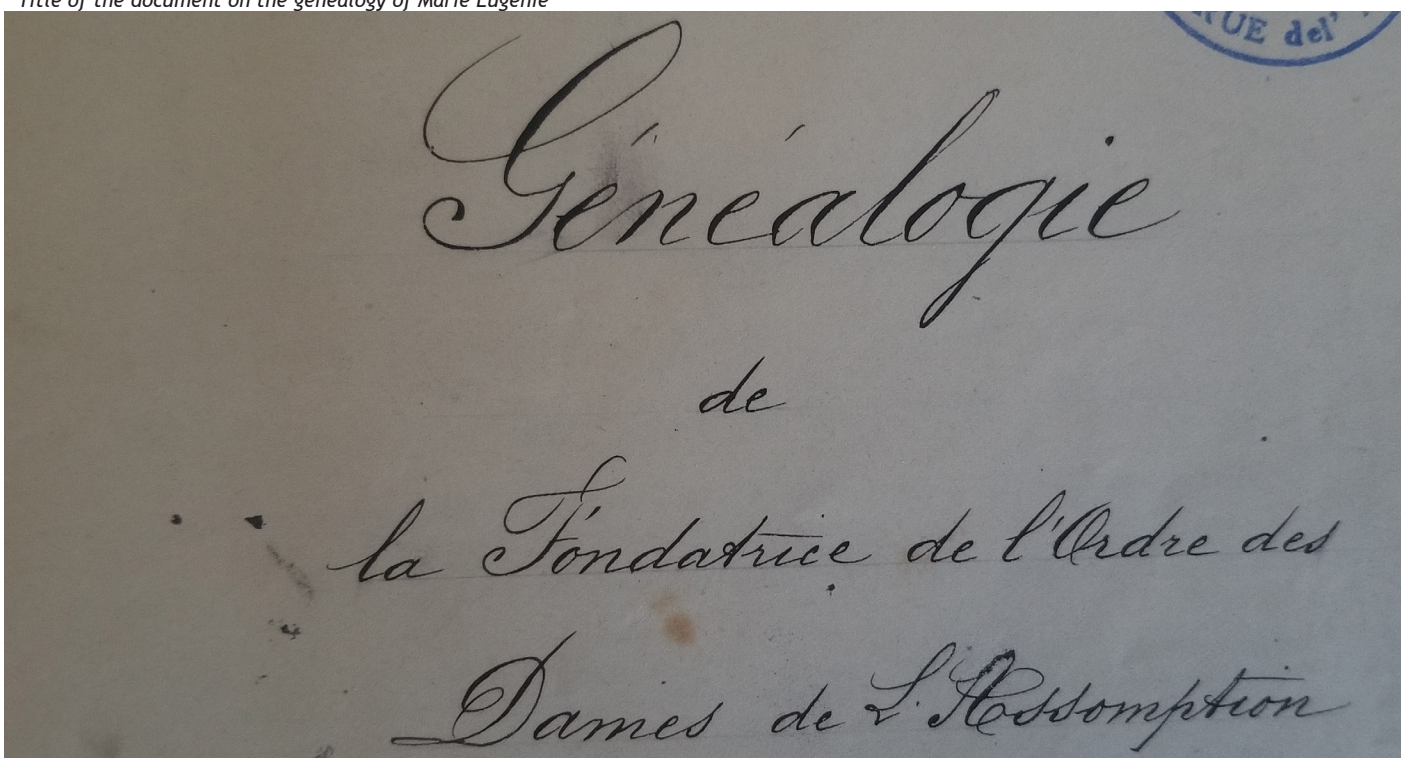
In fact, Josephine Néron, to whom Marie Eugenie alludes in this letter, tried to join the group of young foundresses, but she did not pursue the path.

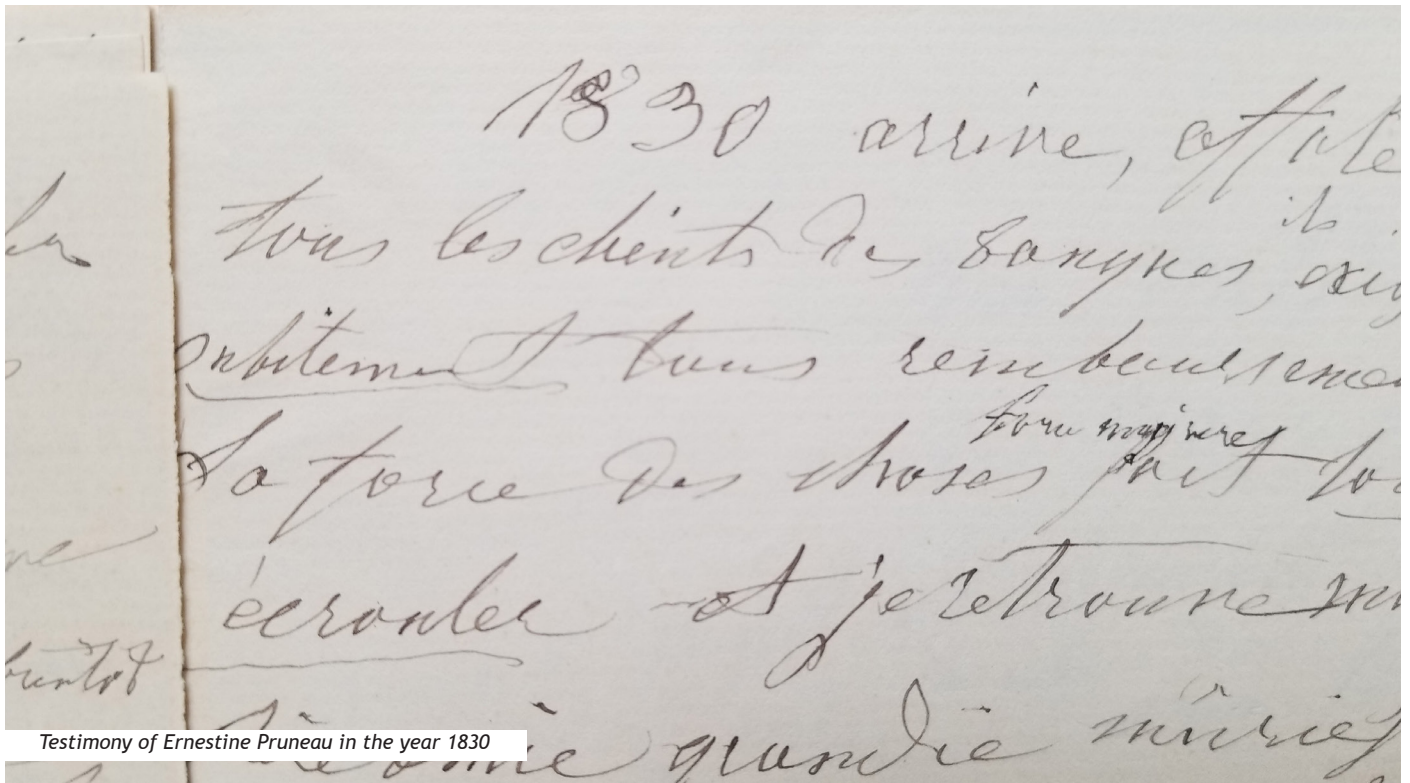
It is a fact that Anne Eugenie Milleret, Ernestine Pruneau, Josephine Néron, Adèle, Marie, or the other Ernestine (who will become Madame Rupied and will welcome the Sisters in the port of Dieppe when they have to take the boat) became adult women. They keep, however, between them, this joyful confidence of childhood which makes them feel good. They will always be ready to help each other in the twists and turns of life.

Marie Eugenie who, as we have seen through Ernestine's testimony, already showed a certain number of natural virtues when she was a child, is always surprised that her friends recognize these qualities in her. Thus, she wrote to Father d'Alzon: "Would you believe, Father, that a childhood friend whom I had not seen since the age of 15 told me that she still found me a model of obedience? It was my virtue, she said, to do everything I was told scrupulously, even long after, even when it upset me the most, and that without comment." (Marie Eugenie, Letter to Father d'Alzon n°1592, September 12, 1843)

She keeps, in any case, with her childhood friends, a special bond, as evidenced by this letter addressed to Marie Poujoulat: "Your beautiful sky inspires you and sanctifies you: yes, certainly, dear Marie, I would like to be there with you. I had never felt so much as before the harmony which our souls take on as they mature, and which makes itself felt to me much more urgently than the very friendship of our beautiful childhood days. I was happy to have seen you before your departure, and if it were possible for me to form a desire outside the enclosure where duty encloses them, certainly, my dear Marie, I would like to join the care of my old friendship to those of your new family. And as she felt weak, she recognized that the confidence of the childhood friend had a therapeutic virtue: "It's only with you, my dear Marie, that a long conversation did me good. Wasn't the doctor right in saying that my heart was the master of my health?" (Marie Eugenie, Letter to Madame Marie Poujoulat, n°4051, October 18, 1843)

Title of the document on the genealogy of Marie Eugenie





Testimony of Ernestine Pruneau in the year 1830

Marie Eugenie seems so close to us through these evocations of her childhood. She repeats to us that human relationships are a gift from God and that we must nurture, throughout our lives, these friendships that God gives us to relish in them a confidence that speaks of the Gospel.

Letters from my mother

In the same "treasure box" is an old envelope bearing an inscription by Marie Eugenie herself: "Letters from my mother". These are the letters that Madame Milleret sent to Caroline, Ernestine Pruneau's mother, in 1831-1832, when the Milleret family was going through the difficult times of bankruptcy. Madame Pruneau and Madame Milleret were friends and confidants. Thanks to these letters, we discover the dark events of those years and the female outlook on this ordeal. This will be the subject of an upcoming Archive Treasure!

SISTER VÉRONIQUE THIÉBAUT

Archivist of the Congregation,
Original French

solidarity

Burkina Faso: Relations of solidarity with the Assumption Homes for Girls!

“I have always been convinced that by educating a girl, you empower a whole nation”.

The former President of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, said, “I have always been convinced that by educating a girl, you empower a whole nation”. St. Marie-Eugénie also believed in the power of women to transform society through the education of young girls.

In a society that is becoming increasingly intolerant, with religious divisions and especially in a context of jihadist and terrorist violence, the Sisters of the Assumption teach the young girls they welcome to live in communion and solidarity with those who suffer, especially the internally displaced persons fleeing the jihadist attacks in the north and east of the country; they also teach them to denounce all forms of exclusion and intolerance.

Residences for girls in Burkina Faso

In Burkina-Faso, in Bobo-Dioulasso, the economic capital, and in Koudougou, the Sisters of the Assumption are doing wonderful work in transformative education in two residences for young girls:

Bobo-Dioulasso, home to 903,887 inhabitants in 2019, in the southwest of the country, is a cosmopolitan city with an agricultural, commercial and multicultural centre with modern infrastructure; it has several schools, both private and public, some of which are run by religious congregations. Since 1995, the city has had a Polytechnic University, and since 2005, a Catholic University of West Africa. This socio-economic development should not make us overlook the poverty of many inhabitants, including some of the parents of the 34 girls in the Assumption residence.

Koudougou, with its 160,200 inhabitants in 2019, is in the centre-west region and is located 97 kms from Ouagadougou - the capital, and 282 kms from Bobo-Dioulasso. There are 22 villages attached to it; it is from these villages that some of our girls come to study at the Middle school and to stay at the Sisters' residence for girls. The commune has 111 primary schools, 35 general and technical schools, a university, and several colleges. Agriculture occupies 50.5% of the population, commerce 17%, crafts 8%, and other activities 24.5%.



Bobo's foyer. Feeding the ducks, an apprenticeship



Foyer of Koudougou. An open-air hairdressing salon

The Sisters of the Assumption have been running a secondary and technical school since 1966. Today, they welcome 1,296 students from the 6th to the 12th grade, with a majority of girls, to offer them the same opportunities as boys'.

Within this school, the sisters have built a residence with 40 places to accommodate young girls of all school levels who have no family on site. Thus they can follow the teaching of the Assumption. This school has trained several young girls who, today, contribute to the development of the country through the education they have received.

Most of these girls come from modest and undermined families including single-parent families, divorced or very poor parents. In Bobo as in Koudougou, the objective is the same: to encourage the development of and balance in the lives of these girls, to offer them an attentive ear and advice, and above all, to give them the conviction that once they have completed their studies, they will become women capable of taking on responsibilities in society. They are from different religious faiths but the emphasis is on cohesion and fraternity.

The hostels offer the girls the opportunity to learn to take responsibility for themselves, including gardening, cooking in small groups, cleaning, doing laundry and community service (shelling peanuts at the end of the season or drying vegetables). It is also a way of educating them to combine school training with the practicalities of social life.

A first challenge for the girls of the home is not to repeat a class, which would lead to expulsion. In fact, they all have adequate schooling so as not to repeat a grade and also the ideal framework for working; but there may be exceptions for those who arrive at the residence with many gaps.

The other major challenge is the cost of the boarding

school. In Bobo, each girl has to pay the sum of 190,000 Cfa, or 289.60 Euros per year. In Koudougou, each girl pays 267.20 Euros per year. Unfortunately, in both cases, some parents find it difficult to honour their commitment because they are farmers or small traders.

The role of the Solidarity Bureau

In Bobo-Dioulasso, in 2018, for an amount of 3,000 Euros, a sheep and duck farm which generates an income, was created to help finance the boarding costs of young girls who are too poor. This project also enables them to learn about gardening and organic farming for a healthier diet. (see photos).

In 2019, the same residence helped to finance the costs of repairing the ceiling of the residence's library and equipping it with cupboards and books.

In Koudougou, this year, the General Bureau of Solidarity for Development (BGSD) will finance the repair of the ceiling and roof of the hostel, the sanitary facilities (showers and toilets), the purchase of 40 new mattresses and the installation of anti-mosquito nets. The showers, the dormitory and the study room will also be repainted. The total cost of this work is estimated at over 14,000 Euros.

By financing these projects, the BGSD and Assumption Solidarity have, since 1995, been fulfilling their vocation to support projects related to education, especially for girls. It is in this context that they have responded positively to the request of the nuns who run these homes.

SISTER MARIE-MADELEINE AGONOU R.A.
MRS ALIX DE CHAUMONT

Province of West Africa and France
The team of BGSD
Original French

assumption together

Preparing the AT international gathering: reflection on the joy of our spirituality in the newness of our times

A few months ago, the CPAE proposed to delve deeply into the groups and communities of Assumption Together to make everyone participate in the richness of the shared charism and spirituality. We wanted, and still want, to propose this time prior to the 2023 International Meeting as a path that will help us to deepen the joy of our spirituality in these new times ("new normal") after the scourge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We asked the different Provinces to share the life of Assumption Together based on some of these questions:

- How do you experience joyful detachment in this "new normal" reality?
- How is God being revealed to us in these unprecedented times?
- How does belonging to AT transform your life?

Many responses have come from the Provinces showing the availability and participation of the Communities as well as the depth of faith, fraternal life and the presence of God in the rereading of the life in community of Assumption Together. The following testimonies are from the Province of East Africa.

Joy in giving

Joyful detachment has not been easy for me to understand but I had always wanted to live this since it leads to a certain freedom of heart whereby I am invited to act from a heart that desires to give spontaneously and happily. I thank the Lord who lead me to join the Assumption Together family where I am learning and growing in my spiritual life.

Through learning in the formation we get from the sisters and sharing in our group I have realized that I as a lay man I have a lot to give to church, to society and to my family. It is now that I understand better the apostolate of the laity. Giving does not mean having much but even the little I have. What matters is how I give it. The call to be generous is persisting in me, especially now that I have retired from my job.

In my own little way, I have tried to answer this call. First I started with my family. I gave time to my family; my wife and my children. I simply listened to them, shared some news with them and prayed together. It is amazing the change it brought. We became more united, more loving to each other and serving one another. Then I extended this to the community. I found time to visit the sick and the needy, to join friends and neighbours in celebrations and in time of difficulties. I am now ready to render small services to the church unlike before when I used to give excuses for not being able to do so. This has changed the way I see life. It has given me so much joy and fulfillment in giving, depriving myself of what I possess and share it with others happily. So much has been given to me therefore I must give back willingly what I have received freely.

I thank my fellow Assumption Together Family for what I have learned from them and continue to do so and I invite others to join us so that together we can serve the Lord and our brothers and sisters with joyful hearts.

Submitted by Dr. William Mafwere, 25th January, 2022



Creating time for others

To whom shall we go

"I lift up my eyes to the mountains from where shall come my help?" (Ps. 121:1) This phrase of Psalm 121 kept on coming to my mind during the past two years. Like many of us, I was going through a hard time, had many questions without answers. I was confused and almost losing hope only to realize that I was not the only one in this situation. We all know what the covid-19 pandemic did to our world.

In our different families this covid-19 has affected us all. Some relatives, friends, colleagues have been affected and it even claimed the life of one of our Assumption Together members. In this confusion, we did not know to whom shall we go for help but deep down in our hearts there was a spark of light which assured us that God is there with us and with all those who trust in him. We have witnessed the power and protection of God during this dark moment of our lives. Although we were not able to meet and do our ordinary activities as planned, through modern technology we were able to communicate, to share experiences and to encourage one another. Both sisters and the lay Assumption were checking on one another on what was happening to our families. We felt united and supported in our different circumstances.

Yes, those who trust in God will not be disappointed! Indeed, God has given us even more than what we desired. Communion within the Assumption Together family has been strengthened. We were able to celebrate the lives of our two members who passed on; Mr. Jamaica and Mrs. Magdalene. We had the joy of welcoming new members in our family. Three of our members made their commitment and the rest renewed theirs. What joy this brought to us. There we really saw the hand of God strengthening us in our desire to live for him. Some of our sisters have celebrated their silver, golden and diamond jubilee of which we took part. It was wonderful! We were more than nourished spiritually.

I realized that the answer to the question: "from where shall come my help?" is found in the same psalm; 121 v. 2 "My help shall come from the Lord who made heaven and earth". The Lord has walked with us and provided all that we needed to be steadfast in our vocation in these unprecedented times. Life is moving on well with Him holding our hands.

Submitted by Sr. Constansia Maria Mosha, 27th January, 2022

Lord teach us to pray (Lk 11:1-13)

"Lord, teach us to pray..." Almost, twenty years ago, that was exactly what we lay Assumption in Singida, Tanzania had repeatedly confessed about prayer. Quite often, we asked sisters to teach us how to pray the Divine Office, how to do meditation before the Blessed Sacrament, how to overcome distractions while praying, we even asked questions like- how long does it take for God to respond to our petitions, how do I feel that my prayers are being accepted by God, etc. The spiritual exercise we struggled with most was prayer.

We sought help in our prayer life. The attitude we had was about how to pray for our needs, how to pray to God to answer immediately, what are the powerful prayers, etc. We did not reveal such attitudes to the sisters, but inwardly we had wanted to do it in a new way after having prayed for a number of years.

It took us time to realize that we were over emphasizing on activity and productivity, rather than attaining spiritual growth, development, adaptation, insight, renewal and exploration. We gradually started to discover that prayer is important in developing a contemplative attitude towards life and its values. That is how we could meet God; that is how we could realize the mission God wanted each one of us to fulfill. Our relationship with God could not be sustained without prayer.

The Assumption Together is an intimate interaction between vowed members of the Religious of the Assumption and the laity who, guided by the Assumption charism, emphasize active participation in the church through prayers and projects. Our basic mission is making God present to the world through our personal witness. This form of communion with God holds the promise and obligation entrusted to a person or a group of people.

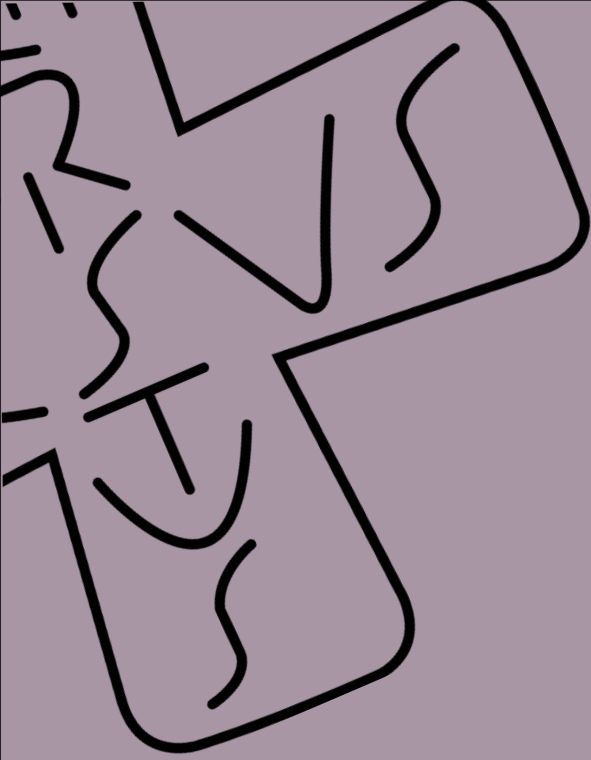
The sisters never gave us seminars, techniques, etc on how to pray, they simply taught us by praying in the same manner Jesus did to His disciples. We actually had needed a new perspective on prayer, it is nothing else than to spend time talking to God and listening to God. We came to understand that prayer is about engaging God in conversation and about getting to know Him more intimately. This grace of God is working in us through Assumption Together.

Gathering together in a chapel at the Assumption community has made us to understand that one among the ways to encounter God is to find a place of regular service to God; that is, you have to be doing the things of God,

We started our spiritual journey by praying the breviary every Saturday evening – a few of us could follow the pages of the breviary assisted by the sisters, adoring Jesus in the blessed sacrament, read the word of God, make recollection during lent and advent seasons, celebrate feasts honored by the congregation like the feast of MME, celebrate our different jubilee events, etc. Today, we are able to support each other in joyful moments and in difficult moments like illness, bereavement, etc. We pray for the needs of others as well. Such practices made us to realize that ordinary activities are the means through which God gives us wisdom to lead our families, and in every area of our life. "Lord, teach us to pray" because prayer is the foundation for everything else we do.

Submitted by Baltazar Sungi, 28th January, 2022

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Province of East Africa
Original English



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