

A News of the Assumption



EDITORIAL

God, you are my God!

“Let’s make our Assumptionist communities, but also our works, areopagi where we can speak of God in all serenity. God hidden, but also God who lets himself be found.”

Agenda

Plenary General Council

- n° 8 : September 28-29, 2021 (by videoconference).
- n° 9 : November 30-December 11, 2021, in Rome.
- n° 10 : June 1-11, 2022.

Ordinary General Councils

- n° 31 : September 13-27, 2021.
- n° 32 : November 8-12, 2021.
- n° 33 : December 14-15, 2021.
- n° 34 : February 14-18, 2022.

On the cover

« *God hidden... God who lets us find him...* », calls forth Father General in his editorial (*found here-in on p. 3*). One of the contemporary artists most inspired by the theme of the light of God, always in the grip of darkness, is undoubtedly the Dominican friar Kim en Joong, whose oil painting is featured on our cover. Born in 1940 in South Korea, baptized in 1967, and joined the Order of Preachers in 1970, Fr. Kim now “preaches” a luminous and warm artistic gospel throughout the world through paintings and stained glass. Website: www.kimenjoong.com

Togo: session on “being peacemakers”

It is not every day that the Vatican speaks about a meeting of Assumptionist postulants and novices! Here is the article published by Vatican News on the session held from May 10 to May 15 in Sokode on the theme: “being peacemakers”



The session was facilitated by Fr. Moïse Dadja, o.c.d., and it took place in the multipurpose hall in Notre Dame parish of the Assumption (Komah). The building of peace, as Pope Francis has said, involves all people without exception and “a task without respite that requires the commitment of all” (cf. Encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, nn. 231 and 232). One cannot aspire to peace without working or committing oneself to its construction.

In this dynamic, the participants of the session were instructed on the necessity of seeking and preserving this good. This was accomplished through five presentations followed by clarifying questions. The first presentation focused on the understanding of the word “peace”, the second on peace in Sacred Scripture, the third on peace according to the teachings of the Church, the fourth on the architecture of peace, and, finally, a presentation on justice and peace.

Outside of the presentations, the participants benefitted from two breakout sessions, in small groups, on subjects relative to the theme of the session. They watched a film, listened to testimonies of Frs. Boniface Mutahi and Vincent Kambere, a.a., and experienced a field trip to the Renaissance Village of Yao-Kopé, situated on the outskirts of Sokodé (7 km). These days of exchange enabled the participants to prioritize what is necessary to collaborate for peace.

Jean-Pierre Bodjoko, SJ (with Fr. Moïse Dadja) -Vatican City

<https://www.vaticannews.va/fr/afrique/news/2021-05/togo-session-sur-l-artisanat-de-la-paix.html>

God, you are my God!



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

Lately, I have been thinking that we are rather discreet about God in our communities. Certainly, we are religious who are assiduous in prayer. We address God Father, Son and Spirit in the liturgy several times a day. I also believe that we are committed to maintaining our relationship with him in prayer and study. But in reality, the conversations we have are rarely about Him. Yet, like St. Augustine, we define ourselves as seekers of God: “You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they dwell in you.” To love God is to seek him. Why are we so secretive about our approach to the divine mystery? Are we afraid of being judged, or of being mocked? I must say that, for me, this silence is a nagging question.

We are in a world that wants to evacuate the presence of God. “Where is your God?” says the unbeliever in Psalm 42, over 2,000 years ago. Today, the question is still being asked forcefully. Certainly, many of our contemporaries do not believe or no longer believe in God. They have abandoned the Supreme Being who dominated the universe and who did not answer their questions: why evil and suffering, why injustice? They turned their backs on an impersonal God, who was conceived more as a power capable of responding to all their desires and needs than a God close to man in Jesus Christ.

God is the companion of our lives. I love Psalm 62, which puts on man’s lips this call: “God, you are my God; I seek you from the dawn; my soul thirsts for you.” The life of a religious has as its horizon this unceasing search for the God of love. We can meet him in Creation, in the splendors of the Universe, but we know that he is also present in the other, in the brothers and

sisters who walk with us.

The secularized world can be an opportunity to go further in the search for God. I don’t think that the God of the Christian faith was easier to discover in times of Christendom.

There was certainly a religious environment that made the existence of God seem self-evident, but are we sure that the world was evangelized in depth? Was the God who was worshipped and most often feared the God who was unveiled and revealed in Jesus Christ? Today, we have lost the crutches of a faith still carried by a certain culture; we must move forward resolutely in an adult faith capable of giving an account of its hope.

So let’s make our Assumptionist communities, but also our works, areopagi where we can speak of God in all serenity. God hidden, but also God who lets himself be found, as Blaise Pascal thought. I wish that we also have the capacity to manifest God through our daily lives. A smile, a forgiveness, a look of tenderness, a help given to the one who reaches out his hand, all this makes the God of our faith visible.

To seek God is our vocation. For this, we have the treasure of the Church and of tradition. Let us take time to explore the riches of our charism. Let us look at how Emmanuel d’Alzon dedicated himself to the cause of God. When he spoke of “God’s rights”, he emphasized the primacy of these rights in order to live a life in conformity with our condition as sons in Jesus Christ. Yes, God has rights over us because he is our father and creator. I believe that the Assumption can go further in its quest for God. In a world where the futile and the ephemeral seem to triumph, we have a sure value: our faith in God. ■

Calls, nominations, agreements...

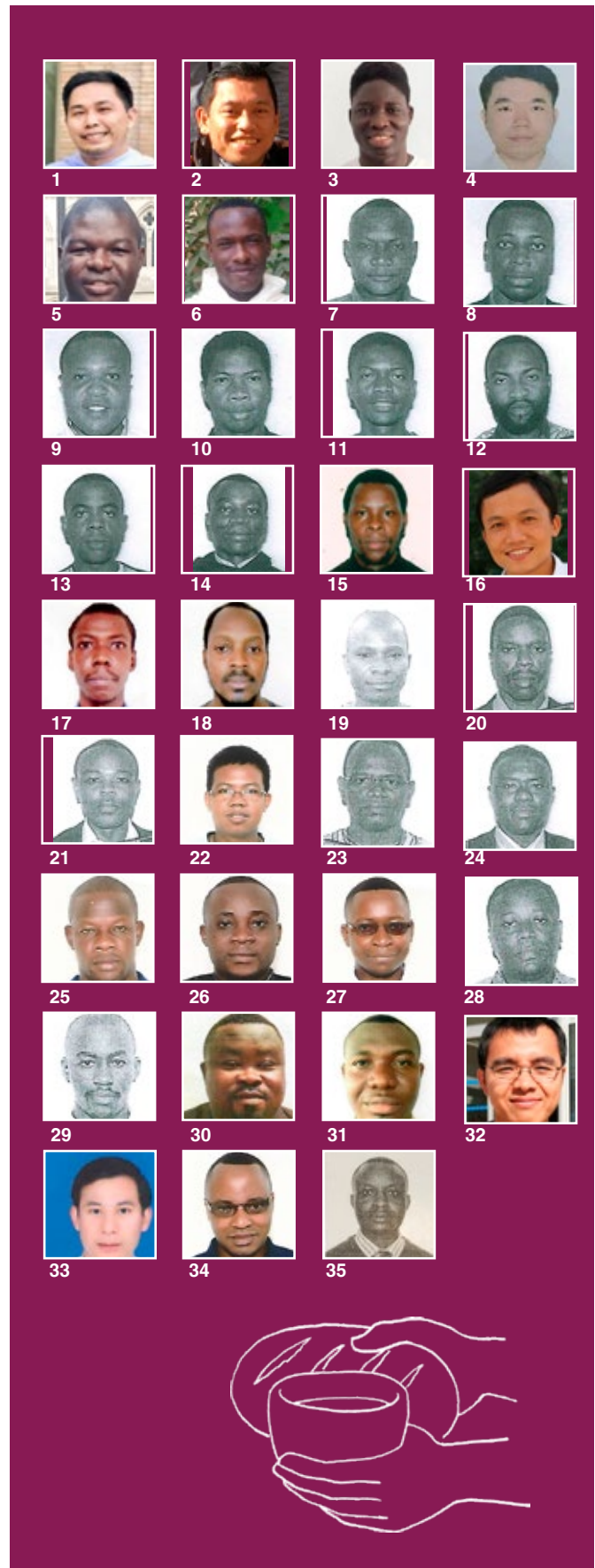
Father Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the consent of his Council, has called:

■ TO PERPETUAL PROFESSION

- 1) **VERGARA Elmer**
(Europe) (05/10/2021)
- 2) **MADRONERO Mark-Vincent**
(Europe) (05/10/2021)
- 3) **DAMIBA Honoré Ramondgwendé**
(Europe) (05/10/2021)
- 4) **NGUYEN QUOC Son Joseph**
(Europe) (05/10/2021)
- 5) **KOUWAMA Lamegou Jean-Valère**
(Europe) (05/10/2021)
- 6) **YONI Armel Dakiswende Michael**
(Europe) (05/11/2021)
- 7) **KIBALA TARIKO Ferdinand**
(Africa) (05/11/2021)
- 8) **PALUKU KAHUMULA Jacques**
(Africa) (05/11/2021)
- 9) **KAMATE KITSAKULENDE Gaston**
(Africa) (05/11/2021)
- 10) **RAKOTONIAINA Justin**
(Africa) (05/11/2021)
- 11) **RAKOTONOMENJANAHARY Armain**
(Africa) (05/12/2021)
- 12) **TIENE NGANGA Fabrice**
(Africa) (05/12/2021)
- 13) **MUMBERE SEKERAVITI Justin**
(Africa) (05/12/2021)
- 14) **KAMBALE YALAMIZE MISAVE Eric**
(Africa) (05/12/2021)
- 15) **ATUNGA Felix Keriga**
(Andean Province) (06/10/2021)

■ TO THE DIACONATE

- 16) **NGUYEN VAN Dung Joseph**
(Europe) (05/12/2021)
- 17) **KANTCHIRE Augustin-Bernardin Lénan**
(Europe) (05/13/2021)
- 18) **AKPABIE Yvon**
(Europe) (05/13/2021)
- 19) **AKPO DOVI Augustin**
(Africa) (05/13/2021)



- 20) **MUHINDO LUKOGHO Christophe**
(Africa) (05/14/2021)
- 21) **MUHINDO VUHESE Léon**
(Africa) (05/14/2021)
- 22) **RAKAJIHARISON Alain Félix**
(Africa) (05/14/2021)
- 23) **RIRI LEONCE Edson**
(Africa) (05/14/2021)
- 24) **SANGALA VUTSEME Richard**
(Africa) (05/14/2021)
- 25) **GNOM Paglam-Long Pierre**
(Africa) (05/18/2021)
- 26) **KAMBALE SABWIRA Jean-Marie Vianney**
(Africa) (05/18/2021)
- 27) **KATEMBO SIWATHULA Anicet**
(Africa) (05/18/2021)
- 28) **MUHINDO MALISAWA Bienvenu**
(Africa) (05/19/2021)
- 29) **MULOPO TONA BARNY Emmanuel**
(Africa) (06/10/2021)
- **TO THE PRIESTHOOD**
- 30) **AÏSSAH Ignace Akoule**
(Europe) (05/18/2021)
- 31) **PIESSOU Bonaventure Agbéko**
(Europe) (05/18/2021)
- 32) **NGUYEN VAN Tuan François-Xavier**
(Europe) (05/19/2021)
- 33) **NGUYEN HUU Du Joseph**
(Europe) (05/19/2021)
- 34) **KASEREKA MUMBERE Zéphyrin**
(Africa) (05/19/2021)
- 35) **KAMBALE KYAVUMBA Sadiki**
(North American Province) (05/19/2021)

NOMINATION OF PROVINCIALS

Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the approval of his Council, has named :

- **Fr. Yves NZUVA KAGHOMA, Provincial Superior of Africa**, for a second triennium, beginning June 1, 2021 ;
- **Fr. Luiz Gonzaga DA SILVA, Provincial Superior of Brazil**, for a third triennium, beginning August 1, 2021.

OPENING AND CLOSING OF HOUSES

Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the consent of his Plenary General Council, has given his approval for:

a – opening :

- An apostolic community in **Bukavu-Kamisimbi (DRC, Province of Africa)**;
- A parish community in **Kalemie-Kifungo (DRC, Province of Africa)**;
- A parish community in **Kinshasa-Sainte Isabelle (DRC, Province of Africa)**;
- A parish community “of the rubber trees” in **Binh Phuoc (Vietnam, Province of Europe)**;

b – a closing of the house at Old English Road (USA, North American Province).

AGREEMENT ON FORMATORS

Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the approval of his Council, has given his consent for the nominations of:

- **Fr. Dieusé KATEMBO KAGHOMA** as **Master of Novices** for the Vice-Province of East Africa in **Arusha (Tanzania)**;
- **Fr. Wilson GICHUKI WAWERU** as **Vice-Provincial Formator** for **East Africa**;
- **Fr. Pierre TRAN VAN Khuê** as **Superior of the Scholasticate of Saigon-Fatima (Vietnam, Province of Europe)**;
- **Fr. Godefroy MUMBERE PEMBENI** as **Master of Novices** for the **Province of Africa**, in **Butembo (DRC)**.

EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY VOWS

Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the approval of his Ordinary General Council, has considered an extension of temporary vows to two brothers:

- **Fr. Dieu-Merci MUZUDI KINDALA**
 - **Fr. Juvens MATONDO LUBIKAMO**,
- Both from the Province of **Madagascar**, for one year.

DEPARTURE FROM THE INSTITUTE

Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the approval of his Ordinary General Council, has granted an indult of departure to **Br. Emilson Laurent ANDRIANANTENAINA (Andean Province)**, temporarily professed.

DISMISSAL FROM THE INSTITUTE

Pope Francis, upon a request from the Provincial of Madagascar supported by the Superior General with the consent of his Ordinary General Council, has dismissed from the clerical state and from our institution, **Fr. Samuelson RAMANANDRAIBE MAMITIANA (Province of Madagascar)**, by decree of April 29, 2021.

“Let’s dare to hope!”

The 8th session of the Plenary General Council, from June 1 to 8, 2021, was also the 3rd one that did not physically bring together the participants, because of the health crisis at Covid 19: its work was therefore held by videoconference, opened by a speech of the Superior General, of which the following are the main extracts:

Dear Brothers,

I am happy that we are meeting again for this time of exchange and work in common. Our session begins with a two-day meeting with the members of the Economic Council of the Congregation. The latter has already had a week of meetings and work behind it. I think that our treasurers brothers are already tired from the files they have had to study, but it is good that we can work with them to know their concerns and their joys. So welcome to you!

I. Important events since December 2020

Of course we are all facing the pandemic. It is becoming a permanent fixture on the global health landscape and there is a real risk that we will have to live with COVID-19 for many years to come. Vaccination campaigns around the world are beginning to show results. If the epidemic is slowing down in the northern countries (Europe, North America), it remains particularly worrying in Brazil, Africa and in other countries that are not on the front page of our newspapers. I am thinking of Madagascar, which was hit hard and is still suffering from the spread of the virus. Our brother Etienne himself was affected along with other religious of his province. In Brazil, several brothers have been contaminated.



Fr. Luiz Gonzaga Da Silva, reappointed as Provincial of Brazil (right, with Fr. General and Bro. Didier Remiot).

We know that the number of victims is impressive and that it weighs heavily on the economies, especially on those of the poorest countries of the planet. I am not forgetting the DRC, which has to deal with COVID, but also with Ebola in the region of Butembo. The calamities are numerous. Thank God, the Assumptionists remain faithful to their mission. I thank the religious who are exposed for their commitment and their courage.

When I look at my schedule, it is marked by the absence of travel outside of Rome. Apart from a trip to France for a vaccination, I have not had any other outings.

The appointment of the Provincial of Brazil

In the smallest province of the congregation with 25 religious, Father Luiz Gonzaga finished his second term as provincial. I reappointed him with the agreement of my council, even though

our Rule of Life stipulates that a third mandate is exceptional. We felt that the province had been traumatized by the sudden loss of two young religious in the previous year, Fathers Jobson and Mauro. In addition, the virulence of COVID in Brazil, despite the denials of Mr. Bolsonaro, is seriously affecting our communities. The province expressed a desire for some stability and continuity in its government. Luiz Gonzaga who, after reflection, agreed to be reappointed. I thank him wholeheartedly. The province asks for support for its parishes. I thank the Province of Africa for having given him several brothers.

The appointment of the Provincial of Africa

This is another case because we have the second province in number of religious with 250 brothers present on its territory. The DRC has been experiencing a very strong political and social



Fr. Yves Nzuva Kaghoma, reappointed as Provincial of Africa

the Lay-Religious Alliance and as you already know the meeting in Nîmes has been cancelled; instead a meeting by videoconference will take place in October. The international commission is concerned about maintaining an animation in connection with the provinces, but sometimes there is a lack of collaboration that can raise questions.

Father Miguel is in charge of several files. Responsible for the follow-up of Madagascar and the vice-province of East Africa, he had the opportunity to participate by videoconference in the last council of the vice-province. The exchanges were fruitful. Miguel is in charge of “Justice and Peace” at the level of both the Inter-Assumption and the CGO for the USG. He is well invested in this dossier and the meeting on the theme of Migrants and Refugees and Displaced Persons will be held online at the beginning of July.

Father Marcelo is involved in the follow-up of the International Education Commission and has one meeting per month by Zoom. An animation is made for the whole congregation. For some months now, it is the Global Education Pact, set up by the Holy See, that has preoccupied the commission. As the Pope says, it is a question of “concluding a global educational pact for and with the younger generations, which commits families, communities, schools and universities, institutions, religions, governments, and all of humanity to the formation of mature persons.

We have good partners around the world. The follow-up of institutions located in secularized countries, such as Belgium, is

crisis for several decades. The various governments have not succeeded in getting the Congo out of its problems and the recurrence of insecurity, violence, the plundering of resources, the lack of a health system and of schools are catastrophic. It is in this very difficult context that our brothers must live. I am thinking in particular of those in the region of Butembo (North Kivu) who are exposed to violence and armed exactions. Dalmon, a brother who has just arrived to study as a formator in Rome, lost his father a few weeks before his arrival, massacred in his field with other villagers. In spite of all this, the religious are committed to their pastoral and teaching mission. I thank them wholeheartedly for their courage and dedication.

In this very difficult context, I have asked Father Yves for a second mandate. We have reflected together on the means he should take to assume good governance in this context. Father Yves will be able to explain to us the priority orientations of his second mandate and also tell us what means

he is giving himself to meet the many challenges.

The participation in the consultation was good with almost 80% of responses. I think that this province has a strong potential and that it already supports the congregation by sending brothers to the missions or for studies. But there needs to be more discernment about vocations and a stricter accompaniment of the brothers in formation to help them develop their human, spiritual, and spiritual capacities

II. Some activities of the Curia

Father Thierry has been appointed to be the delegate of the ordinary general council for the protection of vulnerable persons. Thierry has a legal background and is interested in issues related to abuse of any kind by religious. He is also taking an online training course and has participated in several webinars organized by the USG and the UISG (the two conferences of religious men and women, superiors general).

Thierry is also in charge of

>> Plenary General Council

more difficult, at least for one or the other of the 4 colleges. In South America, we have lay people who are sensitive to the question of the Christian and Assumptionist character of the schools. In Africa, the work of animation needs to be deepened. For this, the Acts of the Worcester Colloquium, which took place in 2016, will finally be available in the 3 languages soon.

Brother Didier also has a busy schedule with the follow-up of the general accounts, and those of the provinces. The closing of the annual accounts was completed within the time frame Didier had set for himself. Didier, as he will have the opportunity to say, often finds it difficult to have sufficiently responsive contacts to enable him to do his monitoring work. The lack of travel makes it difficult for him to prepare the budgets in which he usually collaborates and the planned training sessions (West Africa, etc.) have been postponed or will be done by videoconference. I must point out a beautiful initiative of formation that we have been able to realize in Rome with the reception for 6 months of Brother Morris Gitau Macharia, a Kenyan deacon, in training in Tanzania. He, along with Didier, was able to be trained a little more in the economic life of the congregation. The experience was very positive and allows me to say once again that we are ready to welcome other brothers to Due Pini for specific training in bursar's office, secretariat, archiving, etc.

As for me, the work consisted in preparing several letters to the congregation. One for the brothers in formation ("Do not be afraid, little flock") which will

soon be distributed and another on the theme of the Kingdom ("May your kingdom come") will be proposed for next autumn. In the first, I wanted to insist on the context in which we must be apostles while keeping the hope and dynamism of our founder. The second is in view of the preparation of the General Chapter. Finally, an initiative in the wake of the 175th anniversary of the Congregation has been launched to give the pen to some twenty religious to express the theme of the Kingdom in various ways: formation, education, pilgrimages, ecumenism, etc. We will publish these texts in several editions.

I have also been able to participate in meetings organized by the Union of Superiors General. Since the pandemic, we work more often with the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) which gives more richness to our exchanges. The Holy Father is preparing a Synod on "synodality" which will take place, a priori, in October 2023 after a decentralized preparation. The two conferences of superiors general, male and female, have raised the possibility of a synod on religious life organized by our two conferences. The air of the times is very much in favor of synodality.

Since December, I have had two exchanges with the Superiors General of the Assumption to discuss various themes and to prepare a meeting of the general counsels. It will take place in February 2022 with the theme: "Evangelical leadership in our congregations"

III. A look to the future

If the present is indeed the place of our commitment, we must have an eye on the future in

the exercise of our responsibilities. We invest a lot in training. We have a demography that we are going to study which presents encouraging aspects. But let's not be fooled: there are weaknesses on which we must act quickly. Among them, I am thinking of the weakness of our recruitment criteria. We have difficulty separating the wheat from the chaff. Even if the young people who come to us have qualities, there is sometimes a spiritual, human and intellectual mediocrity that can be an obstacle to a good formation. Another weakness is that too often it is the presbyteral vocation that is sought and religious life appears to be a minor option. Finally, we have a long period of formation, but in spite of that there are important gaps in it, especially in everything that concerns the Assumptionist roots and the spiritual life. Our formation is too clerical and not pastoral enough.

The Assumption has a good potential to realize its mission. We need to mobilize ourselves even more to be like Father d'Alzon: daring and disinterested. If "hope is the passion for the linked to the imagination, insofar as the latter is the power of the possible, and the disposition of the being to the radically new". So, let us dare to imagine, let us dare the radically new. I believe that our CGP is a tool to live more fully our mission by imagining the possible and by making something new to continue our journey in joy and peace. Thank you!

P. Benoît GRIÈRE
Superior General

Paul RICOEUR, "La liberté selon l'espérance" in Le conflit des interprétations, Seuil, p. 399

New economic and health provisions

At its last session, the CGP approved several proposals made by the Congregation Economic Council (CEC)

Health insurance: a small step forward

The 2017 General Chapter had asked the Congregational Economic Council (CEC) to study the situation of the congregation with regard to health insurance (cf. Acts n. 137) and to submit possible proposals to the Plenary General Council.

The CEC needed several years to investigate the health insurance offered in the more than 30 countries in which the Congregation is present. The subject is complex, and many religious do not understand the ins and outs. But this work has allowed several Provinces to modify and improve their practices in terms of medical insurance, leading to the fact that no perpetually professed person benefits from a minimum of protection.

The report of the CEC was sent to the members of the CGP at the beginning of 2021, and the CGP has just dealt with the subject at its June session. It approved the recommendations made by the CEC in its report. The changes decided upon are for the religious assigned to the Province of Africa and the Vice-Province of East Africa, since the medical coverage that exists today for the other religious is considered acceptable for the moment.

With regard to the religious assigned to the Province of Africa and the Vice-Province of East Africa :

a) As of January 1, 2022, every religious will be covered by Option 5 of the EMI as of their first vows.

b) From the first vows, an annual contribution of 15 USD per religious will be paid by the communities to the Provincial Treasurer in order to contribute to the costs of the EMI coverage.

This decision brings two novelties:

1) On the one hand, in the Province of Africa and Vice-Province of East Africa, it is from the first vows that the religious will be covered by the EMI option 5, while since 2014, this coverage had been introduced for the perpetually professed only. As a reminder, IME Option 5 only reimburses hospitalization expenses incurred in the geographic area of the DRC and East Africa.

2) A local contribution of 15 USD per year per religious is introduced to help pay for the IME insurance. It was important to make the religious aware that medical insurance has a cost (IME option 5 costs about \$55 per year) and that if they want to benefit from it, they must help finance this cost. The rest of the funding will be covered by inter-provincial solidarity.

Some will be disappointed: they would have liked the congregation to pay for a more generous medical insurance. But the requests for financial aid are multiplying: solidarity to finance the

budgets of the houses of formation, financial aid for the opening of new communities, financing of the medium-term real estate plan (construction of buildings), aid for the acquisition of vehicles, etc. It was not considered possible to further increase the requests for financial assistance, which are always addressed to the same provinces. The decision of the CGP will have to be re-evaluated in a few years and may be modified according to the demographic and economic situation of the congregation at that time.

I would like to conclude by recalling an obvious point that the CEC emphasized in its report, and which of course applies to all the religious of the Congregation:

“The first of the medical insurances is to take care of one’s health capital by doing sports and by ensuring a balanced diet that limits sugars, fats and alcohol.

However, we must recognize that many religious do not pay attention to these aspects. Very few of them seem to be aware of the basic dietary recommendations and, when they are presented to them, they often do not attach importance to them.

Why are so many religious people overweight?



>> Plenary General Council

In some communities, the consumption of carbonated drinks (Coke, Fanta, etc.) or alcohol is too much for the good health of religious.

The best of medical insurance will not prevent health problems due to the poor eating habits and lack of exercise of religious.”

Purchase of vehicles

At the proposal of the CEC, the CGP approved a measure at its December 2020 session to help the Province of Africa and the Vice-Province of East Africa finance the purchase of vehicles. Here is the text of the resolution that was adopted:

“The Plenary General Council approves the proposal presented to it by the Congregational Economic Council to establish a solidarity mechanism within the congregation to facilitate the purchase of vehicles for the benefit of the houses of formation and the provincial administration of the Province of Africa and the Vice-Province of East Africa:

1. We should always begin by trying to finance the purchase of a vehicle through the Development and Solidarity Office.

2. Work communities should have their vehicle needs funded by the work (parish, school). The mechanism described below does not apply to the vehicles of the communities of work.

3. The congregation establishes a mechanism to assist in the purchase of vehicles for the benefit of formation houses and provincial administrations:

a. A provision of \$1,500 per year will be added to the budget of each formation house. This will

lead, all other things being equal, to an increase in interprovincial solidarity of \$13,500 per year.

b. The amounts set aside will be kept at the General Bursar’s Office.

c. The Province receiving the aid will always have to contribute 25% of the financing of the vehicle.

d. Requests for financing should be sent to the General Bursar’s Office for study by the November Congregational Economic Council and presentation for decision to the December General Plenary Council.

4. This mechanism will come into effect beginning with the 2022 budgets.

After a few years of operation, this mechanism will be re-evaluated. “

Didier REMIOT

Solidarity & Parishes

The economic agenda of the CGP, which is always full, also included two important topics this time:

- One is the “**Assumption Solidarity Campaign**”, which in 2022 will finance the creation of a computer lab at Assumption High School in Katua, Nairobi (Kenya): the budget covers the purchase of 25 computers and furniture.

- The other, addressed for the first time, concerns the **economic life of our parishes**: the CGP welcomed the recommendations made by the Congregational Economic Council. The CEC report, as amended by the CGP, will be published and circulated for implementation within the congregation.



First apostolic appointments

The “first apostolic appointment” of every religious at the end of his formation is fixed within the framework of the CGP, according to a decision of the 32nd General Chapter (2011), and is published at the time of priestly ordination (for religious brothers: at Perpetual Profession).

We publish here the nominations received by religious ordained as priests in the last year.

- Europe

- **Blaise BONOU YEHOUEYOU** : Sokodé (Togo) for formation, with accompaniment of postulants from West Africa and pastoral insertion in parishes.

- **Yves ATIDEPE**: Lomé (Togo), to contribute to the mission of this foundation in the service of ecumenical dialogue, interreligious and intercultural dialogue, as well as youth ministry, based on a parish implantation.

- **Nicodème INANDJO**: Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), with the concern of self-financing and a parish service.

- Paul-Martin Makawouna **TALAKE**: Lyon (France), for a thesis in exegesis and the formation of young brothers.

- **Benjamin MANZANZA TSUKA**: Parish ministry in Spain, especially in the service of youth and vocations, as well as religious education in schools.

- **Eddy GONZALEZ FLORES**: Elche (Spain), for parish ministry, solidarity (prison and hospital chaplaincy, Caritas) and youth ministry.

- **Renaud Assou Komlan KOMABOU**: Conflans (France), at the barge Je sers, with a formation on the charism of the Assumption.

- **Juan Manuel NÚÑEZ RUBIO**: Florence (Italy), to continue his mission with the local Latin American community and to support the pastoral work in the parish of San Donato.

- **Charles VU VAN Hue**: Vinh (Vietnam), serving in the parish of Phan Thon, especially in youth ministry.

- François-Xavier NGUYỄN Văn

Tuan: Ecully (France), in Valpré, to support the community mission and the Welcome Center project, with parish insertion and training of young brothers.

- **Bonaventure Abéko PLESSOU**: Jerusalem, for the service to the pilgrims, youth ministry, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

- **Ignace AÏSSAH**: Rome (Italy), for a formation at the Pontifical Institute of Arab Studies and Islamology (Pisai).

Africa

- **Jean Bertrand KATEMBO VULIME**: Novitiate St-Charles-Lwanga of Butembo, in the team of formators.

- **Jean-Pierre KAKULE KALENGEHYA**: University of the Assumption in Congo (UAC) of Butembo, in community at Kambali College.

- **Jean-Bosco MUHINDO KAGHENI**: Katendere, for the training of postulants, with contribution to self-financing.

- **Benjamin KAMBALE KAMATHE**: Kayna, in parish.

- **Kizito MBUSA KITAMBALA**: Kindugu, in education at the elementary school.

- **Luc MUGOVOLYA VISSO**: Kindugu, to teach at the Mahamba Technical Institute.

- **Jean-Bosco SAWE MBIONGO**: Goma, in pastoral work at the Emmanuel parish.

- **Bonaventure SIVAMINYA VANGISIVAVI**: Luofu, curate at Sainte-Monique parish.

- **Evariste KAMBALE SYALEMBA**: Kasando, in pastoral work at the parish.

- East Africa

- **Alfred WANYONYI MUKOLWE**: Austin House (Arusha, Tanzania), as formator and local bursar.

- **Ignatius SILILIO MATONGWA**: Loliondo (Tanzania), to continue his apostolic experience there, before going to teach at Assumption High School.

- **Moïse KASEREKA MUSAVULI**: St-Mbaga Postulancy in Katua (Kenya) as formator and local bursar, with involvement in youth ministry in the parish.

- **Musondoli KILOKOTA MOLO**: Kyavakadde (Uganda), for parish pastoral and youth work.

- **Peter GATUNA**: Kijenge (Arusha, Tanzania), for parish youth ministry.

- **Kennedy SAKAWA MOGIRE**: Njiru (Kenya), to work in education at our Assumption High School in Katua, along with studies in education.

- **Joachim MPOZEMBIZI SSENTONGO**: Kyavakadde (Uganda), for parish pastoral work and Ugandan vocations promotion.

Madagascar

- **Jean Aimé RASOLONJATOVO**: Postulancy of Miharisoa, in support of pre-novitiate formation, with apostolic activity in the neighboring parish of Betsinjaka.

- **William Johnes RANDRIANANDRASANA**: Ejeda, for teaching and youth ministry.

Four births and a funeral

The 8th session of the CGP validated the closing of a house in North America, but also the foundation of four new communities in Africa and Asia



The house on Old English Road, in Worcester, MA (USA).

Closing of the house on Old English Road, Worcester (USA)

This house of the North American Province was built in 1972 on a hill on the edge of the Worcester campus for religious teaching at Assumption College. However, with more than 20 rooms, it has become too large for the use we now have. In the meantime, Emmanuel House has been built on the campus of our University for the religious who work there, and Old English Rd has been used mostly by elderly religious.

The rationale for closure is the under-utilization of the space, the need for medical assistance for many of the current occupants, the unsuitability for elderly religious, the high cost of maintenance, and even more so if the house were to be brought up to senior citizen standards. It

was felt that it would be better to develop Emmanuel House to accommodate those elderly brothers who did not need to be moved to a nursing home. Finally, the sale of Old English Rd. will help finance the new foundation in El Paso.

At the request of the North American Province, the CGP has approved the canonical closure of this community.

Opening of a house in Kamisimbi (DR-Congo)

This project is a continuation of the last Provincial Chapter of Africa, which expressed a desire to extend the mission beyond the diocese of Butembo and North Kivu. This second community in the diocese of Bukavu will be located in Kamisimbi, 25 km southwest of the capital of South Kivu, and will begin with three

religious. It will be involved in parish (Saint-Jacques) and school pastoral work. The brothers will have to learn the local language, Mashi, especially for the liturgy. The faithful will provide for the material needs of the community; the Province will provide the initial investment, evaluated at 2,200 USD. To date, two brothers already serve the parish but from our house in Bukavu.

At the request of the Province of Africa, the CGP has approved the foundation of this community, called Bukavu-Kamisimbi.

Opening of a house in Kifungo (DR-Congo)

This time, it is a Congolese diocese where the Assumption was not yet established that will welcome a community. For the Province of Africa, it is a question of a mission *ad experimentum*, agreed upon for 5 years with this diocese of Kalemie (Bishop Amade Aloma) to serve the parish "Marie Reine" of Kifungo. It is a question of leaving not only Butembo but also Kivu, since the new mission is located in the province of Tanganyika. Since its foundation in 1889, this parish was animated by the White Fathers, but they have just left it to reorganize themselves. There is no longer any other male congregation present in the diocese. It can be reached by bus from Bukavu or Uvira, or by plane from Goma.



The site of the future community of Binh Phuoc (Vietnam)

It is planned to assign three religious to this new community, for an installation cost reduced to the expenses of daily life, since the church and the presbytery already exist. Not knowing the economic capacity of the parish, the Province has asked the Congregation for financial assistance for the first few years.

At the request of the Province of Africa, the CGP approved the foundation of this community, called Kalemie-Kifungo.

Opening of a house in Kinshasa - St. Isabelle (DR-Congo)

This sub-parish in the Congolese capital, created in February 2020, has been served since the beginning by our brothers of the community of Maréchal, with expensive and complicated cab trips. The purpose of this foundation with a pastoral aim, located near the airport, along the railroad, is to bring religious closer to the faithful. The residence will be in a rented house, while waiting for the acquisition of a piece of land by the parish to build the church and the presbytery. The population

was young, of average means; the faithful, already numerous, were very mobilized.

We will start with three religious, whose daily needs could be modest given the prices of the sector and a taking in charge by the faithful. They are motivated by the idea of becoming a parish in their own right, but the bishop's agreement is conditional on the acquisition of land. However, significant costs will be incurred for construction on behalf of the diocese, for which financing will have to be found.

At the request of the Province of Africa, the CGP has approved the foundation of this community, called Kinshasa-Sainte Isabelle.

Opening of a house in Binh Phuoc (Vietnam)

It is an old project that has found its culmination here, since the idea of a community near our rubber tree plantation (27 ha) has been germinating for some fifteen years, not far from the cashew nut plantation of the Oblates of the Assumption. It is located in the district of Phuoc Long, Binh Phuoc province, 136 km north of Saigon.

The mission of this foundation will be to accompany the employees of our plantation (8 workers, 1 permanent employee) and to follow it more closely, as well as to ensure a social and spiritual presence for the poor, especially the ethnic minorities. It is also a possible place of collaboration with lay people, especially in the sanctuary of Our Lady Thac Mo where many pilgrimages are made. A collaboration with the diocese (the 4th Vietnamese diocese where our congregation is present) is also possible, and the parish priest of Phuoc Binh would be willing to help us.

We are planning a group of three or four founding religious, already ready to leave to get to know each other and make themselves known. A simple one-story house is planned, with financial autonomy thanks to the income of the plantation, still young.

At the request of the Province of Europe, the CGP has approved the foundation of the community of Binh Phuoc.

Assumptionist Schools in time of crisis

The worldwide coronavirus pandemic has clarified the important role of education in our scholastic foundations: in Madagascar and Chile, for example



Children in a bush village in Madagascar.

In Madagascar, to the service of development

In Madagascar, the further we go from urban centers, the less menacing is the coronavirus. It is then less likely to hinder the daily customs already well affected by the economic situation of a country that sees the price of its currency falling. All the schools of the bush of the Augustinians of the Assumption, almost 40 in a perimeter of 200 kilometers, are therefore “a priori” from the protection of the coronavirus in as much as the channels of communication are very precarious and not very widespread.

Our schools have remained open: the community pays to have a school and a teacher, and it was normal to maintain continuity of classes, when for two months, all the schools in Madagascar were closed. Having visited one of the villages, I observed the decline of

the population. There was only one scant weekly market, sometimes within a two-hour walk, to refill baskets of greens, some cassava, and other legumes. The cook of the village, his cheeks sunken from deprivation, confided in me how many families counted on the schools so that the children will have a bright future filled with hope.

Thus, the reason for our presence. The work is plentiful. The priests, strengthened by the laity, have a great deal of work to do to find construction materials (found in Tulear, some 300 kilometers away). These solid rock foundations are a visible sign of the true commitment of our congregation to the Malagach population on the south of the isle, by far the least developed area of the country. For now, famine has not

hit the region of our schools, but the neighboring region (Androy) suffers the full force of climate change which increases from year to year. It warms the land already so dry that some people have chosen to leave.

Who are our missionaries ?

Fr. Aristide is a rugged man and a tireless driver. The schools of the bush and the development of churches (fiangonana) occupy all his time. He goes on trip after trip, only stopping to fix his vehicle, that isn't doing well because of the rough condition of the roads. To comply with the diocese's guidelines for teaching, he goes several times a month to Tulear. It goes without saying that Aristide doesn't count the number of kilometers he travels or his nights in the bush. He is much

appreciated by the people with whom he mediates.

Fr. Daniel, a Frenchman, has been in mission here for fifty years. He is an authority figure due to his age and his expertise in the language. For forty years, his principal mission has been the networking of schools, along with the animation of the Province and the technical upgrading of the communities (pumps and solar panels, water towers, plans and architecture). He is a man of faith---faithful to prayer and solicitous of the well-being of his brothers in community. He spends a lot of time in his truck searching for construction materials in Tulear and delivering it to the carpentry workshop that he manages in Ejeda, in addition to his responsibilities as pastor and formator. Fr. Daniel is always involved in the effectiveness of the schools and with many other things in the Province.

Lastly, there is Mr. Roger, a sturdy Lay Assumptionist. Hidden behind his strength is a large smile and piercing eyes that show signs of fatigue. Naturally reserved, Mr. Roger speaks to the point and does not like to waste time. His motivation is demonstrated in the long trips he undertakes. He travels throughout the bush on his new motorbike to collect registration fees and examination papers. He makes himself available for any situation the inhabitants may have and to follow-up with the instructors. Mr. Roger is very generous with his time. He is an indispensable support upon which Fr. Aristide, busy with ecclesial duties, can rely.

Br. Clément LÖBEL

(This article first appeared in L'Assomption & ses œuvres, n° 765, April-June 2021)

In Lota, an educational silence

Despite the health crisis, society has not died. Witness the effort that has been made to devise means to reach everyone, albeit with limits.

As d'Alzon would say, being women and men of our time, we have to adapt ourselves to the context in which we have to live, being inventive, nurturing initiative, effectively using all means of communication to reach every heart.

And so, communicative adjustment has been reflected in almost every aspect: religious, cultural, academic. For example, at "Padre Manuel d'Alzon School" in Lota, about two years ago, taking a picture of these buildings in the morning of Easter Monday meant to capture a building full of life, bustling with activity, a bouncy to and fro..., for on this Monday our school community would be celebrating the Resurrection of the Lord. No so today; the same snap taken on the same Easter Monday morning, shows a seemingly empty, lifeless place, quiet as never before. However, it is not the stillness of death, but rather a silence that I would call active or educational. For underneath it, should we listen deeper to this silence, we would perceive plenty of significant noises enlivening and moving the souls of those who used to run about these empty spaces, of the ones who once crowded the place whether sitting or dancing, or standing and sharing experiences.

In our Lota School everything has become virtual: online school, online student, online teacher. The school has adopted an application (Teams) to carry on with its activities: lessons, meetings, communication. At the same time our school website and the social net-

works of the educational community have increased their activity, thereby playing their true role as communication channels reaching every student, every parent...



We have also had to adjust our campus ministry to the requirements of the moment. Our pastoral project ("Father Emmanuel d'Alzon's Footsteps") had to undergo some tweaking, due to time restrictions and because priority had to be given to certain other subjects. Although the activities in the project would require physical presence, we had to settle for online celebrations, virtual meetings of pastoral councils with teachers and assistant collaborators, etc. And we still face the challenge of fully adapting our pastoral plan to the online mode targeting students, parents and guardians, and thus being able to reach our entire educational community. We trust the Holy Spirit will inspire us in this endeavor.

Our community, by virtue of its Assumptionist hallmark, has seen the image of God threatened in some of its members who are in some kind of need, and the operation "D'Alzonian Family United" to help the families of some school members, under the leadership of "DeFe" (the Department of Faith), has had a generous response among teachers and assistants.

**P. Vedastus
PALUKU MASIMENGO**

At Montmartre in Québec, we are not bored



Fr. Edouard Shatov presides over a celebration at the Centre Culture et foi in Québec City (below: exterior view of the building).

A Lay Assumptionist from Canada shares her experience of Christian formation received at the Center of Culture and Faith

My life hasn't been the same since I participated in formation offered by the religious of Montmartre in Québec. I have the feeling of experiencing a rebirth as much intellectually as spiritually. Whether it is the reading and comprehension of Biblical texts or the study of paintings inspired by the Bible that cross centuries---these spiritual encounters have affirmed our Faith. There is also the depth of the epistles of St. Paul, especially the one in which Paul addresses the Romans, which we are working on with Father Edward [Shatov] and which, starting from the person of the risen Christ, gives us a greater vision of the human being in communion with God.

We have learned to look at today's problems, such as the pandemic, the impact of American politics, the medical aid to the dying, and the light of the good news of the gospel. There are also the workshops given by Father Marcel (Poirier) on the Creed, which help us understand the fun-

damentals of our Christian faith in the contemporary world.

Our Faith is also in need of inspiration. Father Jean-Bosco (Kambale Kanyama) instructs us on the steps of the great spiritual figures such as: Meister Eckhart, Teresa of Avila, Marie of the Incarnation, Pierre de Chardin. . . In another formation session, Father Jean-Bosco presented the genealogy of Jesus as it is outlined in the gospel of Matthew.

Several partnerships are being planned by the Center of Culture and Faith. These are to underline the possibility of developing, with Charlotte Plante, the skills to better enhance our spirituality. Along with Monique Lortie, we seek to live the present moment with the help of spiritual exercises. She fa-

miliarizes us with the sensibilities of the grand masters of yesterday. For his part, Thomas de Koninck offers reflections on the nature of thought and on that of love. Regular meetings are also being proposed with the diocese of Québec and with the Chair of Philosophy from the University of Laval.

For several weeks we have benefitted, thanks to technology (You Tube), from short videos focused on the word of God. These five-minute videos, in the middle of the week, help us to broaden our beliefs and our spirituality. They also emphasize the homilies given by specific religious. These meaningful homilies, always in line with liturgical texts and our daily lives, assist our community members in working toward the Kingdom of God.

All of our meetings are conducted through a Zoom platform. You can find the necessary information on the following site: <https://www.lemontmartre.ca/culture-et-foi/activites-celebrations-et-agenda/acivites-2021/formation/>

Michèle CASTONGUAY
Lay Assumptionist

(this article first appeared in « La vie au Montmartre », n° 67, April 2021)



Fr. d'Alzon and aging

On many occasions and with many correspondents, our founder was led to meditate on the advancement in age and its consequences.

« Aging is a shipwreck, and the elderly are a wreck », wrote Chateaubriand. . . From a miserable old man to a golden retiree, through the figure of the centenarian and the invention of the “third age”, the exploration of the spectrum of the scope of aging is infinite. One must give reason to Chateaubriand: the elderly are a wreck but discovering them always elicits huge surprises because they embody fabulous treasures!



as 30 years.

Advancing in age

« We are at an age, when life moves through grief to alert us that eternity is very close »,¹ wrote Fr. d'Alzon when he wasn't even 60 years of age. “I read yesterday in St. Augustine that between middle age and old age, there is an age of heaviness. I am there.”²

Ten years before his death, he wrote a sort of premonition to Mother Marie Correnson, once when he arrived in Rome: “I sometimes think that God will give me ten more years of life, from 60 to 70 years of age, and just like the public ministry Our Lord lived for three years and three months, maybe he will grant me three times as

much time to complete our work. If I don't have another ten years, we must hurry, so that I won't have empty hands when I am presented before his tribunal.”³

Aging, developing, and growing in experience as the years go by---doesn't it make one ponder many questions, like the one he posed to his young friend Luglien de Jouenne d'Esgrigny: “Are you familiar with the Book of Job? As I advance in age, this book appeals to me more and more, because of the truth of the sadness that it depicts.”¹

To Eugène Germer-Durand, he wrote on July 19, 1856 from Lavagnac, where he was regaining some strength: “It is not true to say that I still love you. The truth is that I love you much more for a thousand reasons, among which I put two very sad ones at the top of the list: first you suffer; next, the ranks of the old Assumption strongly clarify that the trees remain standing in this nursery so full of hope that they can blend their branches. It is not my fault if my illness causes me to be transplanted; I always find my former spot with joy and everything that grew there, grew next to me.”¹ It saddened him to see his relationship with Mr. Durand change, finding it gratifying, “but, he said, in aging, we become very strange.”

To Josephine Fabre, one of his spiritual directors, he spoke of the modesty of the needs he felt: “Saint Francis de Sales said: “As I age, I want very little and still, I need them very little.”⁴

Old Age

Old age doesn't refer to a specific age, it is the state of functional incapacity shown subjectively or objectively according to the elderly themselves. In the West, they consider 80 years of age as the beginning of old age.

Fr. d'Alzon wrote to Fr. Vincent de Paul Bailly, on October 23, 1869, not without ▶

¹Letter to Luglien de Jouenne d'Esgrigny of September 7, 1832, in *Lettres du Père d'Alzon*, t. A, p.338-341.

²Letter to Eugène Germer-Durand of July 19, 1856, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. II, p. 114-115.

³Letter to Mère Marie Eugénie of November 3, 1858, *ibid.*, p. 557.

⁴Letter to Joséphine Fabre from January 10, 1870, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. VIII, p. 119.

⁵Letter to Fr. Vincent de Paul Bailly from October 23, 1869, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. VII, p. 435.

⁶Letter to Mother Marie Eugénie from January 29, 1867, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. VI, p. 214-215.

⁷Letter to the Children of Mary of the Assumption from November 30, 1869, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. VIII, p. 32-33.

⁸Letter to Sr. Thérèse de la Conception Bardou from July 24, 1865, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. V, p. 369

⁹Letter to Marie Correnson from September 1, 1865, *ibid.*, p. 401-402.

¹⁰Letter to Juliette Combié from December 17, 1856, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. II, p. 166-167.

¹¹ Letter to Mother Marie Correnson from February 20, 1869, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. VII, p. 263-264.

¹²Letter to Léon Bérard from January 1874, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. X, p. 174.

¹³ Letter to Mother Marie Correnson from August 9, 1872, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. IX, p. 410-411.

¹⁴ Unpublished letter.

¹⁵ Letter to Louise Chabert from January 11, 1875, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. XI, p. 19-20.

¹⁶Letter to Louise Chabert from August 22, 1875, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. XI, p. 217-218.

a touch of humor, as he was preparing to attend the Council in Rome: “Yesterday’s letter brought great joy to Mother Superior of the Oblates and a modest amount of joy to Fr. Emmanuel. It seems that I am in old age, loud, coughing, out of breath, thinning, and that I am in need of someone to make my tea and to keep me from drafts. They are all afraid of my impending demise, if . . . on the other hand, they find that far from being an old shoe, you are like a new shoe, the boot of a police officer, purple brocade, all that is most wonderful, but I don’t have any money. I lost it, I don’t know how or to what. Without money. . . Perhaps far from being a shoe, you are a wing. You want to fly through the air; whenever you arrive, we will be more than happy to see you.”⁵

Aging

At the beginning of 1867, Fr. d’Alzon was at Lavagnac, suffering from influenza. The difficult time forced him to rejoin Le Vigan. Mother Marie-Eugénie was concerned with his health and checked in with Fr. Vincent de Paul Bailly for news. He wrote to Mother Marie Eugénie, in a letter of January 29, 1867: “I believe I am getting old.”⁶

The infirmities of age exert a strong influence on one’s character and behavior. Fr. d’Alzon was no exception. « If the émotions wear and make one age, I will be at least three centuries when you see me you again,”⁷ he wrote from Rome to the Children of Mary. He had had an audience with Pope Pius IX who finds him better than the last time he saw him. “I don’t feel worn but tired”, added Fr. d’Alzon in the same letter.

On his 65th birthday, he wrote to Mother Marie Correnson from the Chateaux on August 29, 1975: “I have stomach cramps; even though the food is excellent, and my appetite is good. One must age and surrender.”

The Twilight

Death is but a passage to the other shore. We prepare ourselves after many separations and uncertain hope to see one another. We are happy when the hope of seeing one another still remains. Several hours more or less should not create concern. « The body is just a cloth, and can we not put it in the laundry,” he wrote to Sr. Therese de la Conception, and he added: “We are ruins that will resurrect. What a beautiful sight, when we shall reunite after the last judgment! Do you not want to be there?”⁸ He wrote to Mother Marie Correnson: “Tomorrow, it will be fifty-five years since I was baptized. That means that I am no longer young. How much longer should I stay on this earth? Only God knows. I would like, if it is his will, to leave a series of ideas that will help in the development of the reign of Our Lord. It is probably selfish vanity that makes me say such a thing, but it is very true that I see a strong need to complete. My daughter, I would like it if you could help me accomplish this.”⁹

My Staff of Aging

Better than a cane, one speaks of the staff of aging like a consolation, a comfort, a support, a back-up. He wrote to Juliette Combié, on December 17, 1856 in asking if she could be his staff of aging: “Until proven otherwise, I consider in the most absolute manner, with all the strength of my words, so



The Belle Croix Square in Nîmes on a market day in the 19th century.

that it is not this or that thing that attracts you, this or that work that concerns you, but the thought of being my rod of aging, a good support, such as the heart a friend can offer. I offer you this position, there is still time. Are you afraid, or will you accept all the consequences? They will be difficult, bitter at times. If your moral energy can handle it, it will be satisfied. Leave it to Our Lord, he will not let you stumble.”¹⁰

On February 20, 1869, he wrote to Mother Marie Correnson: “Remember that I have need of you and that while submitting to the holy will of God, if he wants to call you to heaven, I feel obliged to do everything I can to keep my old age stick as long as possible. It seems that before I leave for the other world, we should take a trip to Bulgaria together.”¹¹

On January 2, 1874, he wrote

to Leon Berard: “I am counting on you. There are two or three other students on whom I will count one day, but the first will come on my old age stick. Remember that this staff should be strong, so that I can rely on it; for that I will sometimes put it in the fire, but finally, God helping, I will make a good stick of it, while waiting for something else to be made of it.”¹²

Leon Berard was a former student of the college, originally from Montpellier; he had the intention of becoming an Assumptionist, but he died that same year at the early age of 20.

The Sorrows

Everyone experiences grief and sorrow in their own way. Each person has a different way of healing and of overcoming obstacles. For our founder, there were many sadnesses: the departure of novices, and the

closing of houses--like Rethel, in 1858. However, it was definitely the death of friends and those close to him which caused huge heartache: Louis Fournery (1846), Victor Cardenne (1851), his cousin Blandine-Madeleine-Juliette d’Alzon, at 35 years old (1853), Abbot Vital-Gustave Goubier and Msgr. Cart (1855), Jules Monnier (1856), Abbot André Soulas and Jean-Baptiste-Félix Varin d’Ainvelle (1857), François Roqueplane (1858), his sister Augustine and his mother Jeanne-Clémence de Faventine, Viscountess d’Alzon (1860), Abbot Léon Conte (1863), the poet Jean Reboul, Jean-Baptiste Nicot, Msgr. Gerbet and his father Viscount Henri d’Alzon (1864), Marie de Puysegur, his sister (1869), Charles de Motalembert, Br. Edouard Patt (1870), Anselme Valat (1871), Abbott Combalot (1873). . .

He spoke of this sadness in a letter from Paris to Mother Marie Correnson on August 9, 1872: “A whole world is beginning to crumble for me. There were four of us: Gourand, d’Esgrigny, du Lac and myself. Du Lac disappeared. . In dying, he hurt poor Gouraud, because having been cured by a homeopath, some time ago, Gouraud came to his deathbed only as a friend. The Veillot’s were admirable, but at last the downfall began.”¹³ Sadly, all of our friends leave us at a certain age and we do not make new friends,” he wrote to Madame Varin on October 6, 1879.¹⁴

He wrote to Mademoiselle Louise Chabert, from Nice, on January 11, 1875: “I have several sorrows. It seems that Mother M.-Gabrielle is suffering. One of our superiors, Fr. Halluin, has erysipelas, which could cause him great pain. I also see some of our lovely young Sisters, who God seems to want to take before their time. Ah! One must always be ready! After all, each moment belongs to the good God.”¹⁵

He wrote another letter to Mademoiselle Chabert, from the Chateaux, on August 22, 1875: “Other than old age, I am doing well. My strength has returned at an amazing pace. Don’t worry.”¹⁶ On March 24, 1876, he addressed himself to the alumnists of the Châteaux who, in a letter published in the Assumption of April 1, 1876, had asked his permission to take in an old man who had no means of support and who was overwhelmed by infirmities, and to take care of him: “Take care of your protégé like Our Lord whom he represents.”¹⁷

On December 2, 1876, he wrote to Mademoiselle Antoinette Gaidan, from Nimes:

“I have become a sluggish old horse, although I am still quite healthy. I have recovered a bit and I am fine. Alas! Life is very sad, and it becomes more so every day, to the point that we feel the emptiness of the tomb. We have only to look to the heavens and hope.”¹⁸

Jean-Joseph Poujoulat (1808-1880) was the parent of Mother Marie-Eugénie. He was a historian, author of *History of St. Augustin* (1844). After the revolution of 1848, he became a deputy of the Constituent Assembly and the Legislative Assembly. He was also a journalist and he published a number of writings relating to the Roman question. When Fr. d’Alzon learned of his death he wrote to Mother Marie Eugénie on January 8, 1880: “You are quite right, everything passes, but the death of Mr. Poujoulat made me think of you. The day before New Year’s Eve, Madame de Surville died, the mother, with whom I played some sixty years ago. ¹⁹ The thought of death is always with me; I had better be ready. I always have my liveliness, but it seems it is only on the surface. Maybe I am deluding myself. I am distracted in prayer as one cannot, and I believe never to be separated from God.”²⁰

On July 16, 1860, Fr. d’Alzon lost his oldest sister Augustine, and he lost his mother on October 12. His father, Viscount d’Alzon, died in 1864, and his sister Marie, Madame de Puysegur, on April 4, 1869. On July 14, 1871, he wrote to Mother Marie Correnson, “On Sunday it will be eleven years since I lost my oldest sister. Everything is falling around me. When I rely so heavily on your affection, I wonder if it is

not selfishness on my part. You must take me as I am, and when I make you suffer, be good enough to remember what God allows you to be to me. The memory of all the graves that hold those I love has a sweetness for me, because it would seem that God has mercy on these lives that are so pure in the eyes of man. His justice is so broad, but his goodness is also. I will pray for all, and I ask that you pray also because there are many things that we should do together. Monday I will petition for you the union of love and humility which made Saint Thérèse and so many other virgins whose first years were so painful. When I urge you to ask for humility, I do not want to prevent you from asking for love. You must ask for everything, but I don’t know why a love for Our Lord, that is very ardent and very humble, seems so beautiful to me that I would like to make it your veil and your crown.”²¹

A Happy Death

Very much in vogue at the time is what is called “ars moriendi”, the art of dying, the happy death. The Church tried to tame death by giving advice and exhortations to prepare for this event or by giving as an example the death of great people.

In the evening of August 15, 1880, our founder, began a 15 day retreat to prepare for his 70th birthday. He wrote to Mother Marie Eugénie: “I have been failing lately. I think my final hour is coming.”²² This was the first time he spoke of his death as being so near. The night before his previous birthday, on August 29, he had written to Madame Paulin de Malbose : “Tomorrow I will be 69, please pray for my happy death.”²³

In an archival document written by Fr. d'Alzon between 1844 and 1854, we read:

“What a purer disposition than that, my dear brothers! And yet it is a man who, in a moment, gives himself over to sin. Is this not the case when you desire death or when you fear it? When you desire it, is it not in the hope of being happier? When you fear it, is it not because of the thought of not being well prepared? Let it no longer be so! Let us remember that the Lord did not make death, that it was sin that introduced it to the earth... Let us therefore accept death as the atonement for sin, but let us sanctify our death by accepting the penalty of sin. Then it will no longer be death, but a transformation.”

The length of a voyage

At the end of a retreat for religious in 1871, he said: “Death is eternal wickedness, eternal life is eternal love.”²⁴ He wrote to Sister Thérèse de la Conception Bardou: “Are you afraid of dying? I am surrounded by people who say that the world will end soon, and I ask myself which I would prefer: to die before, or close to, the end of the world. I leave that discussion of this doubt for when we are together. Finally, one must die, one must always prepare, it is necessary to destroy sin in oneself; one must always do penance, to practice the separation of creatures by voluntary separations from Spitz. Ah, my daughter, what sacrifices in life! I do not congratulate you less for your generosity.”²⁵

On November 19, 1871, he wrote from Vigan to Sister Thérèse de la Conception Bardou: “The other day I was reading a medical journal, in which the author affirmed that death being the end of life, is the length of

a journey, and for that reason alone, we should be content to turn our eye. And I thought, “Is he crazy? Death is a punishment and those who are afraid of it are adhering to truth.” Be afraid of death. Therefore, this thought will preserve you from sin; then, you will have the chance to die in consolation, what generally happens to the saints who during the days of their pilgrimage have experienced occasional terrors. So be very afraid, and, without being either a dog or a cat, be a very holy spouse of Our Lord. This is the grace I wish for you.”²⁶

On June 3, 1866, he wrote from Vigan to Madame Eulalie de Regis: “Saint Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, whose feast we celebrate today, and who died at forty-one, had as her motto: Suffer without dying. When will we be there, my daughter? This is frightening for poor nature, which does not want to die or suffer, and which prefers to act without suffering and to live to do much that suits it. Finally, my child, I wish you to be a Saint Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, and to die only when you have loved a lot and to suffer much without aging. Do you doubt similar wishes on my part? What do you wish? We can at least have hopes of sainthood for ourselves and others. It is a compensation, as feeble as it is, of reality.”²⁷

The treasures that Fr. d'Alzon still hides from us are far from having yielded all their secrets. His wisdom, full of timeliness and freshness, is still there, like an unexplored deposit ready to instruct us and to enlighten our lives.

Fr. Bernard LE LÉANNEC
Postulator General



Father Peyramale, pastor of Lourdes

¹⁷ Letter to alumnists of the Châteaux from March 24, 1876, *ibid.*, p. 355.

¹⁸ Letter to Antoinette Gaidan from December 26, 1876, *ibid.*, p. 533-534.

¹⁹ Born Anne-Louise-Lucie de Ricard, wife of Surville through a second marriage, was the same age as Emmanuel d'Alzon.

²⁰ Letter to Mother Marie-Eugénie from January 8, 1880, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. XIII, p. 264-265.

²¹ Letter to Mother Marie Correnson from July 14, 1871, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. IX, p. 116-117.

²² Letter to Mother Marie Eugénie from August 15, 1880, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. XIII, p. 370-371.

²³ Letter to Madame Paulin de Malbosc, from August 29, 1880, *ibid.*, p. 383-384.

²⁴ Instructions on the Eucharist, in *Les Cahiers d'Alzon*, t. II, p. 84.

²⁵ Letter to Sister Thérèse de la Conception Bardou from February 18, 1866, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. VI, p. 31.

²⁶ Letter to Sister Thérèse de la Conception Bardou from November 19, 1871, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. IX, p. 217.

²⁷ Letter to Miss Eulalie de Regis from June 3, 1866, in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, t. VI, p. 68.

The “Great Catechism in pictures” of the Pèlerin

This catechism, the work of Fr. Vincent de Paul Bailly, is an international bestseller from the Maison de la Bonne Presse, which has marked generations of Catholics. Here is the presentation given by Fr. Zago at the 2018 Congress of Religious Archivists of France.

I will present the Grand catéchisme en images du Pèlerin; it is also called “Catechism of the Bonne Presse” or “of Father Bailly”.

The sources

The sources for this presentation should normally be found in the Archives of the Bonne Presse, which until 1900 were shared with the Archives of the Congregation, but in the end very little is in Rome (1), except for Father Bailly’s mail and some scattered accounting data. It is also important to know that in 1940 the Germans took away the archives of the Bonne Presse and they were never found. (2)

I will base myself mainly on the Archives of the Assumptionists in Paris (3), where we have this Catechism in its various forms:

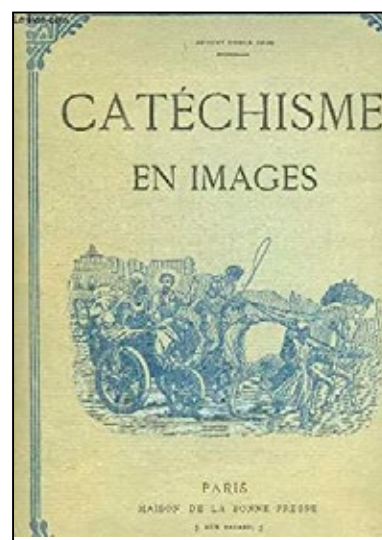
-They have two copies of the Large Catechism in images, complete and in good condition. One was bought at a flea market in 1993, the other was given by the Bayard documentation service when the company moved from Paris to Montrouge in 2008. Each copy is in two volumes.

-An edition of the catechism on glass plates for light projections.

-Thirty oil paintings on canvas, which served as models for the chromolithography.

-Nineteen wall paintings on canvas.

-The edition in reduced format and in black and white, in the following languages: French, Spanish, English, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese, Polish, Chinese (copy offered in homage to Mr. Paul Féron-Vrau, Director of the BP by the Vicar Apostolic Bishop of Peking from 1905 to 1938, Mgr. Stanislas-François Jarlin), Hindi (with a letter of



thanks from Fr. Sontag, a Jesuit, who translated it), Thai, Tamil (Pictorial catechism, translation by Fr. Roche, a Jesuit (4)), Annamese (a copy given in 2017 by the mother of a Vietnamese Assumptionist novice, kept preciously in her family).

Bailly’s writings (20 volumes of his writings, typewritten edition), as well as the story of the making of this catechism, which lasted 10 years (from 1882 to 1893) and which is recounted in *Le Pèlerin*, and one can also find some indications in *Le Fascinateur*, *Le Noël*, and in the various catalogs of the publications of the Bonne Presse.

But to speak of it with the critical eye of a historian, one is obliged to refer to a work by Isabelle Saint-Martin: *Voir - Savoir - Croire. Catechismes et pédagogie par l’image au XIXe siècle* (preface by Ségolène Le Men, Paris, Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2003), 614 pages with well-supplied indexes, 25 color plates and 107 black and white figures. This well-documented book (5), which takes up

his thesis, traces the entire history of catechisms in images, and points out that “the Bonne Presse catechism is neither the first of its kind, nor an isolated case, but its most innovative reproduction techniques, its exceptional diffusion and its influence on generations of readers make it an emblematic title of this corpus” (p. 118). Moreover, chapter III of the work is entirely devoted to it (pp. 120-173).

The editorial context

It is understandable then that the editorial context is a very important element in the success of this catechism. It is not enough to write a book for it to be read. It still has to be sold and distributed! This is where the voluntary approach of the Maison de la Bonne Presse and Fr. Vincent de Paul Bailly comes in. La Bonne Presse was created by the young Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption, founded in Nîmes in a college by Fr. Emmanuel d’Alzon, vicar general of the diocese in 1850. It was not until 1862 that the first community came to settle permanently in Paris, at Rue François 1er. And it was in this community that the Assumptionists’ “press work” was founded with the first review, *Le Pèlerin*, in 1873.

Father Vincent de Paul Bailly

Father Vincent de Paul Bailly, promoter and editor of this catechism, was born on December 2, 1832 in Berteaucourt in the Somme, property of his mother’s family Vrayet de Surcy, and he died in Paris on his 80th birthday on December 2, 1912. But with his family, he always lived in Paris. His father, Emmanuel, journalist and printer, director of *L’Univers* from 1837

to 1844, before Louis Veuilot, had many activities. Among other things, he ran a kind of boarding house (6), where young people, French or foreign, who were studying at the Sorbonne, stayed. It was called the “Society of Good Studies”, where lectures were given on law, medicine, literature, and philosophy. The young D’Alzon and Ozanam were among them.

It is worth remembering, because it is sometimes forgotten, that M. Bailly was also co-founder with Ozanam of the Conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul. Four of his six children (three boys, three girls) have passed to posterity: Vincent de Paul, the eldest; Marie who became Superior General of the Ladies of Saint Clotilde; Bernard, a naval ensign, who participated in the foundation of the “Oeuvres de mer” and was director of the review *Cosmos* at the BP; and Benjamin, the last one, who became Superior General of the Assumptionists, under the name of Emmanuel, from 1903 to 1917. He was remembered in the Congregation as an intelligent, learned, fussy and authoritarian man.

It is worth noting that in his training, Fr. Bailly (7) had more of a taste for science and technology than for literature. He obtained a bachelor’s degree in literature in 1848, and in science in 1850, and was eligible to enter Polytechnique, but he preferred to enter the new administration of telegraphs. He was even attached to the service of the cabinet of Napoleon III, in the sector of dispatches and encrypted communications. But a few years later, following a retreat under the direction of Father d’Alzon, he entered the novitiate of the Augustinians of the Assumption in Nîmes in 1860. And consider ▶

1) Agostiniani dell’Assunzione, Via san Pio V, 55 Roma 00165. Archives: ArchivesACR@gmail.com

2) The Gestapo was looking for the names of those who in Nazi Germany informed the Bonne Presse, and in particular the newspaper *La Croix*, about the regime. See: - Gervais Quenard, *Le miracle de la Bonne Presse*, p.19, manuscript, Archives Paris, code IBAI - Yves Pitette, *Biographie d’un journal. La Croix*, Perrin, 2011, p. 156-157

3) Provincial house, 79 avenue Denfert-Rochereau, Paris 14e, with a depot at 8, rue de la Paix 91260 Juvisy.

4) It is, no doubt, in order to acclimatize this catechism to the Jesuit mission, that he took care to remove the motto of the Assumption *Adveniat Regnum Tuum*, and to put the well-known *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*.

5) Charles Monsch - librarian and documentalist of the BP throughout his professional life, and later Archivist General of the Congregation in Rome - did a lot of research and wrote several notes on this Catechism of Fr. He was able to provide interesting information to Isabelle Saint-Martin, as he was also the memory of the house.

6) Maison des Bonnes Etudes, located at 11 and 13, rue de l’Estrapade

7) When we say “Fr. Bailly”, we are always referring to Fr. Vincent de Paul, unless otherwise specified.

8) Sister Marie-Samuel Rommelaere (1882-1964) did not have both feet in the same shoe! In charge in 1909 of the 24 linotypes and the training of the apprentices of this service, she was able to dismantle a machine by herself, to clean it and to reassemble it. She was admired by the mechanics... See *Pages d’oblation. Mémorial et souvenirs*, Tome VI, Paris Maison-mère, 1981, p. 107-113.

“In June 1940, when *La Croix* left for Bordeaux, she cleaned, revised and refurbished the twenty-eight machines in the workshop, before putting them in a cocoon. As soon as the authorization to reappear was obtained in January 1945, the clicking of the linotypes was heard again on rue Bayard, without any prior revision” in Y. Pitette, *op. cit.* p. 94.

>> Pages of history

9) *Le Pèlerin*, last issue of December 1876, article entitled 1877, signed V. de P. Bailly.

10) R. Kokel, *Vincent de Paul Bailly. Un pionnier de la presse catholique*, Bonne Presse, 1957, p. 115.

11) Achille Lemot (1846-1909) was not a choirboy! A cartoonist, he was also a good engraver, because in 1874, at the age of 28, at the Court of Assizes of the Seine, he had been sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment (he did 7), because he had engraved fake banknotes. An excellent artist, he was as poor as Job, and unfortunately crazy about a woman who was a devilish spendthrift, Augustine Reine Attagnant, an extra at the Montparnasse theater. As he was afraid to be dropped by her if he did not maintain his luxury, he was reduced to engraving fake banknotes of 20 francs... Discovered almost immediately, he was judged and condemned.

12) Georges Michel Coissac (1868-1946). In 1892, he joined the Bonne Presse, where he was in charge of the projection service that was to develop during the first half of the 20th century. He had the genius to associate three elements that favored success: 1- Creation of a collection of views, drawings or photos, on religion of course but also on history, travel, education (about 35,000 views on glasses). 2- Development and commercialization of cameras and fixed projections, and all accessories (lighting systems, etc.). 3- Edition of various booklets of conferences to be made more lively by the views. But he also distinguished himself by founding and directing one of the first film magazines, *Le Fascinateur*.

13) From this date on and until the complete edition of the pictures of the Catechism, Fr. Bailly will try to find the financing of this work: "Subscriptions", "Model of good promise", "Other model of good promise", "Without interest", "Free subscription". And *Le Pèlerin* of September 12, 1887 (n° 558, p. 527) was to publish "The history of the catechism in pictures" and to make new conditions of purchase, and proposals to former subscribers: the catechism in pictures was to be sold not 140 francs, but 100.

14) Words underlined by Fr. Bailly.

the depth and breadth of his theological studies... on January 1, 1863, he was ordained a priest in Rome!

In April 1869, he was assigned to the new Assumptionist community in Paris, at 8 rue François 1er. François Picard, his young superior, who would become Superior General after Fr. d'Alzon. The two complemented each other admirably as characters. Bailly, impulsive, creative, passionate about technology and Parisian. Picard, the son of a cooper from Saint-Gervasy in the Gard region, wine country, calm, thoughtful, a strategist for all the press and pilgrimage activities. It was this combination that succeeded in creating, in the 1890s, a veritable arsenal of presses: in 20 years, 36 titles, not counting the 95 local editions of the *Croix de province*. In saying this, I am not forgetting that the Bonne Presse was obviously created with all the staff of the company: journalists, workers, printers, administrative staff. And above all I do not forget our Oblate Sisters of the Assumption (8). They were the ones who directed the women's workshops and trained the apprentices. Their community of *La Bonne Presse* numbered up to 60 sisters.

But let's go back to the *Pèlerin*, because it is with the publication of its first issue, on July 12, 1873, that we date the foundation of the Bonne Presse. This date is rather symbolic, because it is only in 1899 that the name "*Maison de la Bonne Presse*" appeared for the first time. Before that, it was called "the offices of *Le Pèlerin* and *La Croix*". In July 1873, *Le Pèlerin* was still only

the official organ of the Central Council of Pilgrimages and the Association Notre-Dame de Salut. It was a small-format, non-illustrated magazine on the work of pilgrimages. Everything changed when Fr. Bailly became its editor in 1877. He made it a large format magazine with 16 illustrated pages. When he took over *Le Pèlerin*, there were only about a hundred subscribers; in 1891, there were 80,000.

The reasons for a publication

Why did the Bonne Presse want to make a catechism in pictures? Obviously for apostolic reasons, especially since it was thinking of magazines for children. There was also a conjunctural reason: the laws of the anticlerical government of Jules Ferry suppressed the catechism in elementary school: in the future, it was necessary to teach it outside of the school setting, and therefore at the expense of the parishes. This is where the blossoming of catechisms in images comes in, without forgetting however that images already existed for the missions: Lacoste's *Great Catholic Images* and Fr. Vasseur's *The Work of Images*.

Bailly had a predisposition to do this catechism, for he was passionate about images in all their forms: photos, caricatures, drawings, art paintings. He was the first one who had the audacity to put caricatures in a Catholic newspaper. When he took over the direction of *Le Pèlerin* he wrote: "*Le Pèlerin* takes on a new mantle, it doubles its format and it becomes more illustrious, because it knows better than anyone else, through

its long travels, how powerful is the preaching made to the eyes. From now on, we will know the sanctuaries by the figures before touching them in reality. We will learn to love the saints better by looking at their images.” (9) In his letters, he returns very often to this concern. He wrote to the Superior of Jerusalem on April 27, 1894: “The salon of the Champ de Mars contains 270 paintings and many sketches by a painter, Mr. J. Tissot, who lived in Jerusalem and who has represented the whole life of Jesus Christ, with the costumes and sites of Palestine. It is strikingly true... Did you not know this artist in Jerusalem? I would like to be able to approach him for our pictures.” (10) And on June 15, 1894, he chided the Superior for stirring up his religious who had promised him photos and illustrations, and he became impatient: “How far along are the excavations in Sion? Photographs, if there are any... That’s what would excite the readers to go on pilgrimage...”

Finally, Fr. Bailly knew how to choose collaborators to develop this dimension of the Good Press. First, he chose a cartoonist in 1884. Since he could not find him in the sacristy of a church, he went to find him in the Parisian cabaret of the Chat Noir, in Montmartre. His name was Achille Lemot (11) (1846-1909), called Uzès. He had built up a small reputation in the boulevardière, through his caricatures of Parisian celebrities, literary, theatrical, but also political, in the newspaper *Le monde pour rire*. His friends called him “Lemot pour rire”. He ended his career at the BP, where he worked mainly for *Le Pèlerin*, *Les Contemporains* and a little

also *La Croix*. He opposed with his verve and his line, sometimes cruel, those who were then called the enemies of God and of religion. Fr. Bailly also had the good fortune to put Mr. Georges-Michel Coissac (12) in charge of the audiovisual activities of the BP. It was he who organized throughout France conferences and illuminating views on all sorts of religious and secular subjects.

The launch

The intention to publish a catechism in pictures was officially announced in *Le Pèlerin* of July 22, 1882, on a whole page. (n° 290, p. 488). It was announced in response to a letter from Abbé Delaforest, pastor of Saint-Hilaire in Poitiers. Isabelle Saint-Martin suggests that this letter could have been nothing more than a commercial device, which would be a good measure of Father Bailly’s publicity skills. In any case, authentic or not, this letter and its answer are an intelligent presentation of the catechism under the heading which will be taken up often, *The weapon of the image*.

I summarize the letter of the parish priest: “I ask the Pilgrim to help the parish priests of France and others. From now on, we will be obliged to devote more time to the teaching of catechism, and it will be necessary to take the children to be catechized from the age of 8 years. Now, at this age children understand very few words of their language, the surest and shortest way to give them the right ideas of all things is to show them in pictures [...] For one child, a small book of pictures is enough; for 30, 40, you need pictures... These pictures do not exist. Is there not some-

one of good will among the artistic staff of *Le Pèlerin* who would agree to undertake a series of large pictures for catechisms?”

And Fr. Bailly delights in answering: “We have been working on this problem for several years. We have not yet spoken to our readers about it, and we would not have done so, had it not been for the letter that provoked us, because we wanted to be sure first of all to overcome the obstacles soon. “So what are the obstacles? Here is the first one: “It is necessary to have a good market and it is necessary to make art: these are two terms which seem incompatible. “But, for him, one of these terms must not be renounced, otherwise one will either have to let the poor down, or one will make a work of bad quality. So, to achieve this, one must find capital and find buyers. He then suggested a loan guaranteed by the plates produced, and began a ten-year period of subscriptions: in each issue of *Le Pèlerin*, he would report on the receipt of funds and make new proposals. (13)

On the other hand, he says, the real and great difficulty consisted in finding capable artists, Christians and educated, who could succeed in religious subjects. And in one sentence, he sums up his project of the Catechism in images: “The image is a real book, (14) and it wants a real author, even more than a drawer. “ And he ends by saying, “We have partly solved this problem, by looking for these rare men.”

P. Patrick ZAGO
(to be continued)

The missionary, teacher taught

Lucas Chuffart's testimony about his years in Zaire gives precious indications about the art of mission in the Assumption

At the intercession of Vespers of the 3rd week of the French Breviary, the 4th intention states the following: "We pray to you (Lord) for those who are far from their country: may they find a land and friends." In our congregation, several brothers who have been appointed to distant countries have been shaped by the mission to such an extent that they have been able to identify with the People of God they were called to serve. They found a land and friends.

This is the case of Fr. Lucas Chuffart who, in his book *Dans les yeux de mon chevreau* (collection "Mémoire assumptionniste", 167 pages - read below), relates his missionary experience in the city of Butembo where he lived from 1986 to 1994. Butembo is located in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, about 2,000 kilometers from the capital Kinshasa. Lucas arrived in Zaire at the age of 38 and his primary mission was the formation of young Zairians who were preparing for Assumptionist life. In addition, he taught French and religion at Kambali College, he became involved in the local Church by participating in certain projects of the diocese such as the Catholic University of the Graben and he discovered the culture of the Nande people whose virtues he admired.

Lucas places the origin of his missionary adventure in the love of the Church, the need of the congregation as he responded to a call and his personal curiosity to discover a culture different from his own. He first stayed in the community of Kambali for a year as superior and

master of postulants, before being appointed master of novices. His experience at the novitiate is very rich: he knows his novices well, he collaborates with the workers of the novitiate, almost nothing escapes him. In addition, he taught at the internovitiate where Bishop Emmanuel Kataliko, then bishop of Butembo-Beni, also taught at the time.

Far from being satisfied with his teaching duties, the young missionary was interested in the culture of the area and sought to understand the habits and customs of the Nande people; he was interested in the geography of Butembo. He noted the misery of the Zairian people under the dictatorship of Marshal Mobutu. The roads are not maintained, the state structures are failing, corruption is rampant, etc. Lucas' experience allows us to understand that the mission has a transformative dimension. Here is a religious who allowed himself to be transformed by his mission, who was enriched by contact with his novices, the people who confided in him, events, etc.

Like a father who rejoices to see his children grow up and become more responsible, Lucas does not hide his joy to see many of his former novices participating in the mission of the congregation by assuming great responsibilities in Africa as well as in other Provinces. This does not prevent him from having esteem for those who did not continue their formation, but became good fathers. Until now, Lucas remains in contact with the religious he formed at the novitiate and with some acquaintances in Butembo.

**P. Jérôme KASEREKA
MASUMBUKO KOMBI (Rome)**



The "Assumptionist Memory" collection

Lucas Chuffart's book has taken its place in a collection that the Province of Europe is reviving: "Assumptionist Memory" is intended to give pride of place to the figures and experiences of religious who have had significant journeys in the charism of our Congregation. The following have also been published:

- *My Encounters with Dom Helder Camara. Le choix de la pauvreté*, by Fr. Paul Riou (36 p.);
- *Mes voyages avec Paul VI. La grâce d'informer*, by Fr. Pierre Gallay (37 p.).

All these books are available at the secretariat of the Province of Europe.

Rich as Job

Sylvain Gasser's book testifies to what a relationship with God can be like in times of trial - including the trial of being afflicted by the coronavirus

"This book marked my religious sensitivity at a key moment in my life when I was ready to give in to despair." The preface to the book by our Assumptionist brother Sylvain Gasser, editor and living in community in Paris, sets the tone. It announces an existential reading of the book of Job, a journey that is skin deep but where Scripture also resonates in the depths of the human soul, as much by taste as by necessity.

For Sylvain, the meditation begins with a rather comfortable reunion. It was a matter of rereading the "legend of Job" in *The Bible, New Translation* published by Bayard in 2001; of finding an old companion that our lectionaries skim over and that our liturgies rarely mention. The spiritual exercise was long overdue. The confinement imposed in mid-March 2020 during the first wave of the Covid finally makes it possible.

But as in Mark 7, the crossing does not go as planned. At the heart of the storm; legend and reality intermingle, text and context respond to each other. Indeed, six of the eight brothers of the Paris Morère community will be affected by the disease in turn. Plunged into isolation and uncertainty, tested by fatigue, struck by bereavement and his own suffering, Sylvain gives up his heart while his body struggles. His soul emerges with a *"new hope, freed from its complacency and certainties"* in order to *"stay the course for the life to come"*.

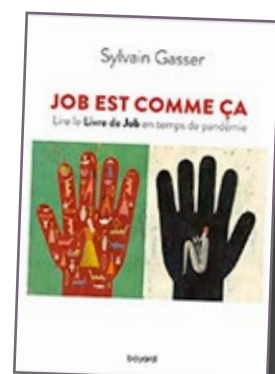
In 42 moving chapters - which the author calls "lessons", written in two or three pages - the figure

of the righteous man in the grip of suffering is examined under the prism of the fall and the remission. Without realizing it, Job was the object of a bet between God and Satan. His trial is authorized by a God who trusts him. And it is circumscribed in advance by the love of the One who has already answered for his courage and faithfulness before Satan. But the latter hopes that Job, in his misfortune, will doubt God and even more that God himself will doubt his servant.

Job suddenly sees all that he had disappear. He becomes a shadow of his former self. He finds himself naked before a radical choice: collapse or learn to be vulnerable. Job chooses to accept the uncertainty of his condition without giving up his relationship with God.

In this book, neither Job nor Sylvain deny their faith. But they walk the path of renewed trust, in the light of faith, but also in the blind, because illness can become a black hole ready to swallow everything.

I discovered this book first hand. After a few lines of support assuring him of our prayer, Sylvain sent me his pages every day and the continuation of a story shared with many others. At the end of April, I remember sending him this: *"Thank you for Job 38. Hoping that it is going well for you physically and morally. Prayerful union in this experience of God, of Job."* God, who visits man in his helplessness as a creature, seeks in him the power



of his likeness"... *I like this very much*".

The way we write guides the way we read. Before becoming a book, this text is a gift, delivered over the good and bad days, in a few sheets that Sylvain often sent at the end of the afternoon so as not to be alone, to remain connected, to remain confident and believing as much as possible in the unpredictability of the crossing. When I received them, I knew that Sylvain was writing and that reassured me enormously. What I read helped me to pray and to believe: *"Job's tragedy was not so much that he had lost everything, starting with his children, but that his relationship with God had been altered."* I like this very much...

P. Vincent LECLERCQ
(Rome)

Job is like that. Reading Job in a time of pandemic
by Sylvain Gasser
Bayard, 420 p., 21,90 €.

Editor

Michel KUBLER, General Secretary

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can "talk" about you,
please send information about the life
of the Assumption in your countries
to the General Secretariat
michel.kubler@gmail.com
before the end of each
General Council.
Thanks especially
for sending photos and
illustrations.

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2 OFFICIAL

- ◆ Agenda
- ◆ Togo: session on "being peacemakers"

3 EDITORIAL

- ◆ God, you are my God!

4 ◆ Calls, nominations, agreements...

6 PLENARY GENERAL COUNCIL

- ◆ "Let's dare to hope!"
- ◆ New economic and health provisions
- ◆ Solidarity & Parishes
- ◆ First apostolic appointments
- ◆ Four births and a funeral

14 A NARRATIVE

- ◆ Assumptionist Schools in time of crisis

16 A TESTIMONY

- ◆ At Montmartre in Québec, we are not bored

17 POSTULATION

- ◆ Fr. d'Alzon and aging

22 PAGES OF HISTORY

- ◆ The "Great Catechism in pictures" of the Pèlerin

26 BOOKS TO READ

28 OUR DECEASED BROTHERS

Our deceased Brothers



† **Father Jean-Noël VERMEIRE**, of the community of Albertville (Province of Europe), died on April 2, 2021 in Albertville (France). His funeral was celebrated on April 7 in the chapel of N.-D. des Vignes, followed by burial in the Chiriack cemetery. He was 98 years old.

† **Brother Roland DUNY**, of the community of Layrac (Province of Europe), died on 5 April 2021 in Agen (France). His funeral was celebrated on April 7 in the Priory chapel, followed by burial in the Layrac cemetery. He was 89 years old.

† **Father Francis SCHAECK**, of the Province of Europe, died on April 11,

2021 in Brussels (Belgium). His funeral was celebrated on April 16 in the church of St. Augustine in Forest; his ashes rest in the Assumptionist cemetery in Koekelberg. He was 82 years old.

† **Father André MADEC**, of the Layrac community (Province of Europe), died on April 29, 2021 in Agen (France). His funeral

was celebrated on May 3 in the Priory chapel, followed by burial in the Layrac cemetery. He was 89 years old.

† **Father Rubén MELLA MEZA**, of the NS community in Lourdes (Andean Province), died on May 1, 2021 in Santiago (Chile). His funeral was celebrated on May 2 in the Basilica of

Lourdes, followed by his burial in the crypt of the shrine. He was 93 years old.

† **Father Klaas (Henri) SCHILDER**, of the community of the Netherlands (Province of Europe), died on May 29, 2021 in Boxtel (Netherlands). His funeral was celebrated on June 3 in Volendam. He was 83 years old.

† **Father Jean-François LAURENT**, of the community of Layrac (Province of Europe), died on June 7, 2021 in Agen (France). His funeral was celebrated on June 10 in the Priory chapel, followed by burial in the Layrac cemetery. He was 92 years old.