

#ASSUMPTA

Religious of the Assumption magazine

April 2025 - Nº13

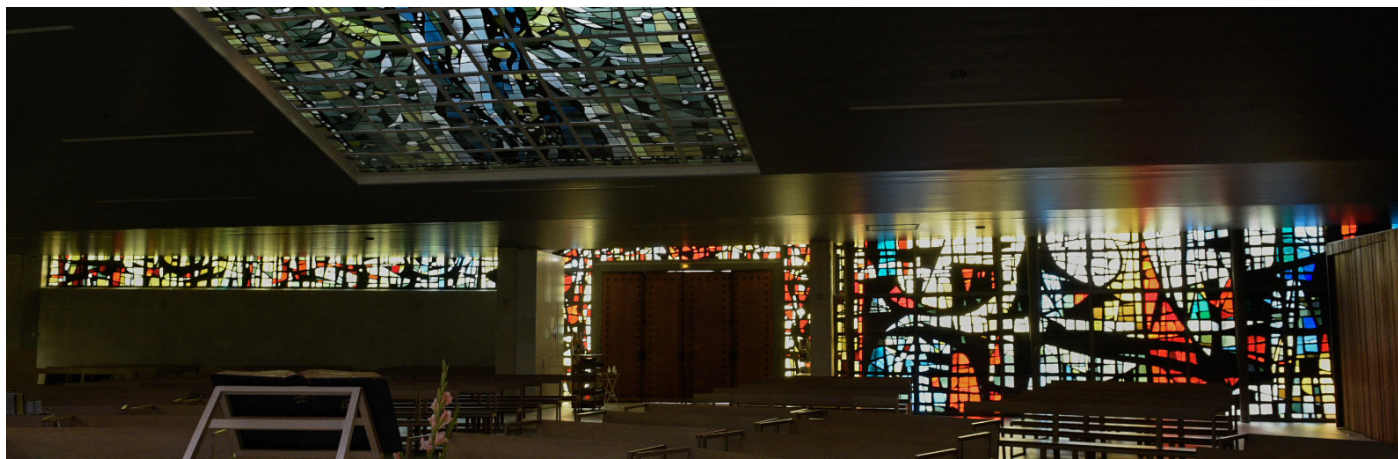
**“Vida Religiosa
Consagrada: um farol
de esperança para o
mundo”**

**“Consecrated Religious
Life: a Beacon of Hope
for the World”**



summary

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



#ASSUMPTA

Year 2025 - n° 13

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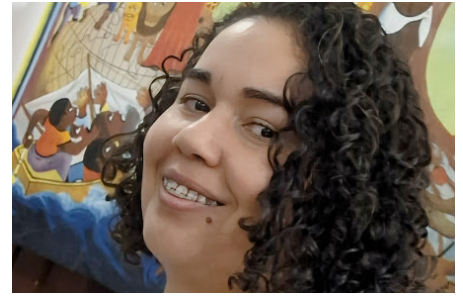
ASSUMPTION TOGETHER

Our journey as a shared mission

Explanation of the cover: The image of Pope Francis opening the Holy Door marks the beginning of the Jubilee Year of Hope. The phrase in Portuguese highlights the prophetic mission of Consecrated Religious Life as a beacon of hope. The Jubilee logo reinforces the message: an invitation to walk in faith toward a future of peace.

editorial

How can we be 'living flames of hope' in a world marked by challenges and uncertainties?



In calling the entire Church to enter into the Holy Year of Hope, Pope Francis invites every person to experience the hope that springs from God's grace—a hope that surpasses all understanding—and to “discover it in the signs of the times that the Lord offers”.

This invitation deeply resonates with the mission of Consecrated Religious Life: to be a visible sign of hope for the world. It is precisely in a world marked by challenges and uncertainty that we, as consecrated sisters, are called to be beacons of hope, pointing toward a future grounded in peace, justice, and love.

Peace, in the vision of Pope Francis, emerges as the first and brightest sign of hope for humanity. In response to this call, we are led to a profound examination of conscience: to what extent do our daily actions within our communities reflect the peace we long for? Religious life, in its essence, is a continual invitation to witness to this peace—a peace born of divine love, which permeates our being and radiates through every gesture.

To live our lives rooted in Jesus Christ—our one true centre—and to place before Him all the challenges and uncertainties of our reality is to live, as Marie Eugénie said, “confident and grounded only in God.” It is only when anchored in Jesus that we can truly “see the world as a place to give glory to God” and become instruments of lasting peace.

Hope is a theological virtue—a gift from God. It does not stand alone; it is intimately linked with faith and charity, which are also bestowed upon us through grace. Because hope is divine in origin, it must be nurtured by a continual intimacy with God in order to remain alive and radiant within us.

Religious life, as part of a society that lives ‘without time,’ needs to be vigilant so as not to fall into the temptation of activism. When engaged in numerous activities - serving the poor, managing social works, evangelising - there is a real risk of placing trust in our own efforts and losing sight of the transcendent dimension that is sustained through personal and communal prayer. It is through this prayer that we bring to God the cries and concerns of a world wounded by injustice. In worship, we are renewed in our hope in Jesus—the One who conquered death and revealed to us the light of a new day.

Marie Eugénie reminds us that “Hope unites eternity with time.” We believe this because our hope is rooted in the Resurrection of Jesus. From this foundational event, we are drawn into God's deepest desire: fullness of life for all His children. In Him, we find the meaning of our existence and the courage to face the future with faith. Only in

Jesus do we find the solid foundation for our hope—that we, too, are called to rise to new life in its fullness.

Hope propels us into the future, expanding our vision beyond what we can see and understand. It calls us into active waiting - entrusting to God all that lies beyond the reach of reason, yet is deeply felt in the heart. Marie Eugénie beautifully expresses this trust when she says: “To wait is to put your hand in God's hand, your heart in His heart, and walk.”

Moving forward with faith and believing in life is essential for us, the sisters who have dedicated their lives out of love for Jesus and the Kingdom. It is in hope that we find the strength and perseverance to continue striving for a better world and working for the coming of God's Kingdom. Our society thirsts for the values of the Gospel, and we, the Religious of the Assumption, are called to educate and form others based on these very values. May our mission shine as a beacon of hope within the realities we live and serve.

To be “pilgrims of hope” is to journey through life with the unshakable certainty of God's love—a love that never abandons us, that accompanies us on every road, and that calls us to live in the fullness of divine charity. Part of our mission is to share this certainty with others, to spread the contagious joy of knowing we are deeply loved by God.

In a world burdened by challenges and uncertainties, hope emerges as a guiding light, leading us through the storms of life. Pope Francis' call for the Holy Year of Hope deeply resonates with the mission of Consecrated Religious Life: to be living witnesses of divine hope in the midst of darkness.

Peace, as the first and clearest sign of hope, demands an active commitment - both in our daily relationships and in our service to the world. It is through prayer that we are renewed, drawing from God's grace the strength to keep the flame of hope alive within us.

As we embrace our vocation, we are invited to be living flames of hope, radiating the light of Christ through our words, actions, and presence. May we, inspired by faith and animated by love, help transform the world—building a future rooted in peace, justice, and love.

SISTER ANDREIA MARQUES BARBOSA

South Atlantic Province

Communications representative and Pastoral representative in the Province's schools

Original Brazilian

general community

“I ask the Lord Jesus Christ that from his holy Heart may flow for all of us those rivers of living water that heal the wounds we inflict upon one another, that strengthen our capacity to love and to serve, that impel us to learn to walk together towards a just, united and fraternal world” (1)

The jubilee year has set us on a path marked by “Hope that does not disappoint”, our eyes fixed on Jesus, as we make our way through this time of so much uncertainty and events that shake our world and endanger our common home. There are also stars on the horizon that show us that the light is present, and that God accompanies our life and our history with a heart that beats with infinite mercy for our broken and wounded world.

Pope Francis has given us the latest encyclical “Dilexit Nos” which takes us to the deep source from which he has flowed these last years of his teaching and his prophetic witness in the Church and in the world. The closing of the Synod on Synodality has been an event that marks the history of our Church on its path of conversion to the gospel and that sets out a roadmap for us to realize the call of the General Chapter to be a more synodal congregation.

¹ Encyclical Dilexit Nos # 220 P. Francis.

² “The first signs of my vocation came to me under the arches of Notre Dame during the conferences of 1836...the desire to consecrate myself to the cause of God and the Church without knowing where or how.” MME Letter to F. Picard No 1509 8 November 1862

³ <https://dioceseparis.fr/dossier-de-presse-retrouvons-notre.html>

⁴ Doc. Assumption Together. General Chapter 2024

As a general community, we share with you the first steps of our journey together after the General Chapter.

General Community

At the outset, our priority was to lay the foundations of the community experience that we desire and that we ask God for the grace to live during this time. We spent time together at the Benedictine Abbey in Limón to meet as sisters, to get to know each other, to share our desires and concerns and pray together. We reread the experience of the General Chapter, discerned how to live our mission at the service of the Congregation and organized the community and the mission. We continued our pilgrimage as we walk while building the bridge.

Sr. Rekha' visit to Madrid, Spain.

Sr Rekha had a short visit to Madrid from the 18th to the 21st of January. She





received a warm welcome from the sisters of the six communities in and around Madrid. She had three fraternal meetings – the first in Olivos for the four communities together (Cuestablanca, Santa Isabel, Vallecas, and Olivos), the second in Riofrio, and the third in Collado Mediano where she was happy to visit our elderly sisters, an experience of grace in abundance. The sharing focused on the decision of the General Chapter 2024 for the Foundation of an International Community in the Canary Islands to respond together with others to the drama of our migrant brothers and sisters.

The Canary Islands are one of the most dangerous migration routes from Africa to the European continent. This is due to the strong sea currents that sweep small boats into the deep waters of the Atlantic Ocean where many have died. In the midst of the complexity of this reality, the drama of unaccompanied minors and young Africans continues to be a pressing call.

Together, the General Council and Provincial Council of Spain have taken the first steps to make this mission a reality in the Canary Islands. We began by SEEING AND LISTENING to the people and getting closer to this reality for better preparation of the foundation. One meeting online after the first visit and two visits have been made to Tenerife and Gran Canarias, first Lola and Lourdes from the Provincial Council of Spain at the end of February and in mid-March Marthe and Sandra from the General Council. These contacts have allowed us to broaden and refine our understanding of the mission of both our community already present in the Canary Islands and the people and projects that are trying to respond to this reality. Our visit has confirmed that there is a real need to collaborate with others and within the Church. Becoming aware that an intercultural community at the service of migrants can in itself be a prophetic



sign for our divided and wounded world.

The reopening of the Cathedral of Notre Dame which took place from 7 to 10 December after 5 years of laborious reconstruction work is a symbol of the living Church, the body of Christ. Notre Dame is dear to us because of the spiritual experience and graces received by Marie Eugenie in her youth. (2) The relics of St. Marie Eugénie together with those of other saints from Paris: St. Madeleine Sophie Barat, St. Catherine Labouré, St. Charles de Foucauld and Blessed Vladimir Ghika (3) are sealed in the new altar. May Our Lady accompany us with her help and protection and walk with us as "pilgrims of hope". May we be witnesses of this Hope in our communities and places of mission.

On February 9 the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the beatification of St. Marie Eugénie enkindled in us the desire for holiness. The video about the three-day celebration in Rome brought us back to this great day.

On March 10, the Eucharist was presided by the Archbishop of Paris Mgr. Ulrich and numerous priests. Brothers and sisters of the Assumption Family and the friends and lay partners brought us the joy of belonging to a worldwide community of people journeying together in the footsteps of St. Marie Eugénie.

International Secretariat JPIC of the Assumption Family

Sisters Lerma and Sandra participated in the annual meeting of the JPIC International Secretariat of the Assumption Family, which took place in our Mother House in Auteuil from January 17 to 19. Brothers and sisters from the four congregations and a laywoman from the Little Sisters of the Assumption



also participated. The topics that accompanied our meeting during the three days revolved around formation, the plan of our work and communication.

This meeting was a rich fraternal space, we felt that we were walking together from the diversity of our charisms with the desire to listen to God in reality and to put our small stone at the service of the great calls of the Church and the urgencies of our world. The following task was to organize the online session in July this year with the theme "A world of living beings sharing a common home: New ways of inhabiting the planet and acting in favor of the world's migrants."

Council of Assumption together

"Assumption Sisters and lay persons foster, in complementarity of vocation, a dynamic and inclusive community working together with mutual respect and shared responsibility to promote, social justice, and transformative education, in the light of the Assumption charism. Assumption Together aims to build stronger fraternal bonds, deepen spirituality, enhance collaboration, and inspire innovation to address contemporary challenges and opportunities within our global community, with a particular focus on youth." (4)

One of the decisions of the General Chapter 2024 was to create the Council of Assumption Together, comprising representatives from the 14 Provinces and the Superior General and her Council. Its mandate is to facilitate and ensure the implementation of the General Chapter 2024 regarding the spirituality, life, and partnership.

We had our first online meeting on March 29, 2025, to get to know each other better, establish our connection and commitment to this special mission, and launch some of the reflection questions for the next meeting.

Canonical visit of the Auteuil Community

The first canonical visit of this new General Council to the community of Auteuil took place on the 4th on April 6, 2025. The community, Sisters Françoise and Lerma had taken enough time to prepare it. All the sisters made this journey together in an atmosphere of listening and joy.

Like any visit, it was a time to reread together the life and the mission experiences. This canonical visit has



strengthened their communion, their consecrated life and stimulated them in their different apostolic missions. The Auteuil community offers them experiences of internationality, intergeneration and interculture. This is one of the realities of the community, especially since it is part of the Mother House with this specific mission of being at the centre of the congregation. Each sister is conscious of her place, her joys and her difficulties, her desires and her aspirations with a deep desire to find the best in different people and events encountered. They have a great desire to be a sign of the Gospel through the power of the Word of God, the celebration of the liturgy and the joy of a life given for the Kingdom. May the Lord help them to continue the pilgrimage of Hope by welcoming ever better the diversity that represent others, taking the time and freeing up space for more communion and freedom that only Christ gives to those who open themselves to Him in their poverty.

Let us pray for one another so that we never get tired nor discouraged by the seemingly endless path for "one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a day" (2 Peter 3:8-9) in the presence of our God. The Risen Lord walks with us and gives us the joy of journeying with Him, this is our HOPE.

SISTERS REKHA, SANDRA, LERMA, FRANÇOISE AND MARTHE
General Community

Living our JPIC-S mission by paying more attention to vulnerable young people!

“Inclusive education offers us a powerful way to stand in solidarity with the broader population - in a spirit of humility, sincerity, and compassion.”

In the report to the 2024 General Chapter, we read: “The international JPICS session held in India toward the end of 2023 marked a significant moment in the articulation of a shared vision among the participants. The convictions and calls that emerged from this gathering paved a new path for a renewed commitment to deepening our JPICS mission as a vital expression of our educational charism.”

The call has gone out, and we now feel a pressing need within our educational structures to identify effective ways of welcoming young people with physical disabilities who seek to benefit from our education, which we believe holds the power to transform lives.

At the start of the school year, we were informed of a visually impaired young man who had successfully completed his Brevet d’Études du Premier Cycle (BEPC) and aspired to continue his secondary education at our institution. Sadly, he was unable to do so, as Collège Sainte Monique, one of the schools under our management, does not accommodate students with this type of disability.

This experience has brought us to a moment of reflection and realisation: we must move towards a more inclusive model of education, one that responds to the diverse needs of children and young people, especially those in marginalised and vulnerable situations.

This situation led us to take stock of the situation and critically assess the broader context in order to deepen our reflection on the issue of inclusion. According to World Bank data from 2018, Burkina Faso, a Sahelian country, is marked by significant socio-economic challenges: 40% of the population lives below the poverty line, and 59% of adults over 15 are illiterate. Since 2014, the country has also been grappling with socio-political and security crises which has steadily worsened due to the presence of armed groups affiliated with Islamist movements. Regular terrorist attacks have led to large-scale internal displacement, with more than one million people affected by 2021. As a result, Burkina Faso finds itself in the midst of a worsening security and humanitarian crisis, creating an atmosphere of instability and uncertainty about the future.

In such a context, access to appropriate, quality education, vocational training, and integration into the socio-professional world represents significant challenges, particularly for people with disabilities and their families. According to the international NGO Handicap International, more than 72% of children with disabilities do not attend school, and over 56% of persons with disabilities in Burkina Faso are unemployed.

The few existing care and support structures for people with disabilities are largely concentrated in Ouagadougou, the capital city. In light of this situation, we ask ourselves: What can we, as educators, do to contribute to a more inclusive education system?

We believe it is essential to change the way we perceive people with disabilities - to shift mind-sets, promote diversity, and embrace difference as a valuable component of the teaching-learning process. Inclusive education is a powerful lever for human development, and it begins with openness: a willingness to welcome children and young people with disabilities into our educational institutions.

To do this effectively, we must secure greater and more appropriate resources that will allow us to care for and support these students. This includes ensuring they can take part in most of the activities offered to all learners. By creating opportunities for interaction between students with disabilities and their peers

without disabilities, we nurture an environment where mutual understanding and empathy can flourish. These relationships help children know each other better, appreciate their differences, recognise each other's strengths and complementarities, and build lasting bonds of friendship. Such a foundation is essential for the development of a more inclusive society, one that is less burdened by prejudice, discrimination, and violence.

Schooling for Disabled People in Burkina Faso

According to the results of the 2006 Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitation (General Population and Housing Census), the proportion of children living with disabilities in Burkina Faso is relatively low: 0.53% (or 12,954) among 7 – 12 year olds, and 0.62% (or 7,724) among 13 – 16 year olds. The most common disabilities in these age groups are lower limb impairments and hearing or speech impairments. Among children aged 7 - 12, 28.9% live with lower limb disabilities and 24.7% with hearing or speech impairments. In the 13 - 16 age group, these figures rise to 31.9% and 17.9%, respectively.

When it comes to school attendance, children with hearing and speech impairments have the lowest rates - only 10.3% of 7 – 12 year olds and 7.4% of 13 – 16 year olds attend school. In contrast, children with lower limb disabilities have the highest school attendance rates among children with disabilities, second only to children without disabilities.

School Enrolment of Children with Disabilities in Koudougou

In the Centre-West region and particularly in the commune of Koudougou, various efforts are underway to ensure that children living with disabilities have access to education. In 2009, the Union Nationale des Associations Burkinabé pour la Promotion des Aveugles et Malvoyants (UN-ABPAM / National Union of Burkinabe Associations for the Promotion of the Blind and Visually Impaired.), in collaboration with Catholic Education, launched a project titled "Access to Specialised and Integrated Education for Children Living with Visual Disabilities in Burkina Faso." Through this initiative, 96 pupils were admitted into transitional classes, and 67 were integrated into regular classes (source: Lefaso.net).

Thanks to the combined efforts of the state and its partners, some schools in the city now accommodate visually impaired children. In the Catholic education sector, supported by the NGO Light for the World, these children are welcomed at Lycée Saint Augustin. There, they spend three years learning Braille before being gradually integrated into mainstream classes alongside their peers. Upon completing primary school and earning their Certificat d'Étude Primaire (CEP - Certificate of Primary Education), they may choose the secondary school that suits them best.

However, significant challenges remain. Apart from Lycée Saint Augustin and the public Lycée Provincial, other secondary schools in the city are not equipped

to receive visually impaired students. The lack of teacher training and adapted infrastructure limits opportunities for these students. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing are welcomed at Benem Nooma School (meaning "Joy of Life"), a private, secular institution.

To support these children, various charitable NGOs and associations are active in the region. Organisations such as OCADES (L'Organisation Catholique pour le Développement et la solidarité / Catholic Organisation for Development and Solidarity) and the Association des Élèves et Étudiants Vivant avec un Handicap (Association of Students Living with a Disability) work to raise awareness, advocate for the rights of children with disabilities, and ensure they are enrolled and retained in school.

The Contribution of the Religious of the Assumption: Deepening our JPICS Mission as an essential element of our educational charism

- It would be vital to set up an ad hoc committee composed of sisters and lay Assumptionists, to reflect on inclusive education in our structures;
- To consider providing training for educators in our schools, capable of supervising young people living with a disability, as well as specialised people trained for this specific mission.
- Seek support from the government and other partners.
- Adapt school environments to accommodate students with disabilities, with the help of the congregation.
- Raise awareness among young people without disabilities to promote a culture of inclusion, acceptance, and mutual respect.

It is essential to put these foundations in place before deciding to welcome young people in vulnerable or disabled situations.

As the Religious of the Assumption, the dynamism of the mystery of the Incarnation is the foundation of our educational action. We are profoundly convinced that in becoming human, God joined our human family, revealing the inestimable value of each human life so that each human being can attain their whole dimension. Inclusive education is key to our mission of transformative education. It is a path toward building a more just, humane, and compassionate society.

Today, more than ever, our education must adapt to the realities of a society and its educational structures and options, with a view to asserting the right of every human person "to life, to the goods of the earth and education, to knowledge, to the mastery of technology and culture, to information and communication, to religious freedom itself and the expression of one's faith," as emphasised by the International Congress on Education in July 1998.

Inclusive education is a project that calls for bold



ambition and sparks creativity, as we strive to live out JPICS as an essential dimension of our transformative educational charism.

In the words of the 1998 International Congress on Education: "Today's world is the place where God continues to speak and to be present. Through His Incarnation, God takes on the face of every human being, especially the excluded, the poor, and the suffering. This is why reality is the starting point for all transformative action."

Inspired by our Holy Mother Marie-Eugénie, who envisioned an education that transforms the whole person, we believe that inclusive education will give a unique, personalised cachet to our mission. Every human being is educable. Vulnerable children and young people with disabilities, in particular, are deserving of our presence, support, and expertise. With our help and attention, they can develop the confidence and full potential they need to take their rightful place in their environment and society as a whole.

Our essential mission with these vulnerable young people is not only to provide an education but to help each young person discover and realise their unique vocation. As Saint Marie-Eugénie reminds us: "Each of us has a mission on earth" (Letter to Father d'Alzon, 1841 - 1844)

Through inclusive education, each of these young people will come to understand what God is calling them to, and what gift lies within them. They, too, can become artisans of a more just, humane, and loving society. The love of truth will guide our journey - not only in the pursuit of justice and societal transformation, but also in fostering communion with the suffering of the world and denouncing every form of exclusion and intolerance.

Inclusive education offers us a powerful way to stand in solidarity with the broader population - in a spirit of humility, sincerity, and compassion. In this noble mission, we are called to be witnesses of humanity and fraternity, so deeply needed today. It is a mission of presence and accompaniment that will require everyone to be supported, encouraged, and listened to as we walk this path. There will be no shortage of challenges and difficulties, but as our holy Mother Marie-Eugénie used to say: "We must dig our furrow and feel the weight of the earth." (Letter to Father d'Alzon, March 20th, 1853)

SISTER MARIE-MADELEINE AGONOU
West Africa Province
Original french

homily

Mass on the feast of Saint Marie Eugenie of Jesus - March 10, 2025

**“The Pope
invites us to
be “pilgrims
of hope”**

As we celebrate Saint Marie Eugenie today, I allow myself to recall, as you surely do as well, that a relic of Saint Marie Eugenie is enshrined in the recently consecrated altar of Notre-Dame de Paris. This, of course, refers to the fact that Saint Marie Eugenie found her vocation at Notre-Dame, upon hearing Father Lacordaire preach. There, she discerned the path she would follow throughout her life. And it is precisely this aspect that guides us tonight: having clearly heard a call to open a new religious way, a new form of consecration, and at the same time understanding that her mission would be primarily in the field of education. Education was a crucial issue, as it is in every century, but at that time, particularly in France, it was a key point in human development and growth. It was something to be promoted with the conviction of guiding people toward the Lord, toward the Kingdom of God, and with the certainty that the participation of the Sisters and all those who would receive their education would be an anticipation of a better society, allowing it to develop according to the Lord's desire for social and human life.

As we reflect on the mystery of Saint Marie Eugenie's vocation, I find it beautiful to highlight some aspects of the readings we have just heard, which contribute to this meditation on vocation and allow us to learn from her life.

First of all, in the book of Isaiah, what struck me the most this afternoon, as I meditated on this text before coming, is the use of the future tense: “You shall be called...”, “You shall be a glorious crown...”, “You shall no longer be called Forsaken...”, “You shall be called My Delight...”, “This land shall be called Espoused...”. This is an entire life project entrusted by the Lord Himself. He makes this promise, and Saint Marie Eugenie understood well that this promise was addressed to her, but also, through her, to the entire people of God. It is not merely about the relationship between our God and Father with one individual, but rather, through that person, it extends to an entire people. This is a wonderful opening. Today, the Lord says, “You shall be my bride,” and He says it to the one we honor today, but also to all those touched by her vocation. She is the origin of a new covenant, the unfolding of the eternal Covenant that God makes with





humanity in Jesus Christ. This use of the future tense in the text is a powerful sign. God is always the God of promise, a promise He fulfills and will fulfill. He desires to make a covenant, and He truly does so.

This continues in the Letter to the Corinthians: "Neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything." This means, of course, that it is good, right, and necessary for the Lord's disciples to work, but this work would not exist or bear fruit if there were not Someone who gives the growth. Once again, growth points to what is yet to come, to the promise—the promise of fruit, the promise of what will happen when the Lord's Word is received, when one enters His school, when one allows to grow what He has desired and promised.

We could continue reflecting on this theme of promise and fruitfulness, and the Gospel indeed does so, but I would like to emphasize another element in these texts: the diversity of names given to the Lord's disciples.

In the Letter to the Corinthians, we are told that we are "God's co-workers." It also says that we are the "house" that God builds. These words are not insignificant when referring to a foundress. To be a co-worker of God to this extent, to be the house in which future generations will find refuge—and this is precisely what has happened with Saint Marie Eugenie's mission—is no small thing. To be a co-worker, to be a house, and above all, to be the foundation on which others will build, is a magnificent image that reflects all the work accomplished by Saint Marie Eugenie and by you, who continue welcoming and associating more people in her work, firmly established on the only true foundation: Jesus Christ.

In today's Gospel, other names for the Lord's disciples also appear: that of "servant." Of course, as the evangelist Luke says, we are "mere servants." We

have been called to serve in a mission and to serve the Son of God in the Gospel. This is what we try to live out day after day. But we see that these servants are now called "friends." And they become bearers of hope, because once again, the image of growth appears, the image of fruit—the fruit that remains, the fruit that multiplies. God's promise is fulfilled in the one He has chosen, and this word "one" must be understood in both singular and plural. God's promise is realized and bears fruit: it is He who gives fruit and who allows us to understand how much good this life has done, how useful and fruitful it has been.

I cannot conclude without giving thanks to God for all of this. Because you have perceived within yourselves what the Lord has accomplished. And in the Church, He has desired to manifest that His choice was a good one, and that what happens through your Congregation, spread throughout the world, is the promise of God still being fulfilled in your works today.

May the Lord continue to bless you, may He make your mission fruitful—a visible fruit, a fruit of hope in this jubilee year, a year of joy, marking 2025 years since the Incarnation of the Son of God. The Pope invites us to be "pilgrims of hope," one more title to add to the previous ones. To be bearers of hope is one thing; to be pilgrims of hope is, in addition, to walk towards a world so diverse, so vast and scattered, that we never finish serving and leading it to the Lord, to the door of His Kingdom.

Blessed be the Lord!

MGR. LAURENT ULRICH
Archbishop of Paris
Original french

Readings:
Is 62,2B-4; Sal 83; 1 Co 3,7-11; Jn 15,9-17

echo of the Archives

The Heart and Spirit of the Archives

“They
dedicate
their hands
and hearts
up to the
very depths
of a history
spanning over
200 years.”

The Archives teams in our Provinces are a beautiful expression of a hidden work serving the life and identity of our Congregation. They dedicate their hands and hearts up to the very depths of a history spanning over 200 years. Sisters and lay share this mission. Here is the testimony of Rosa Ana and Caroline, two lay collaborators who do this work joyfully!

A Fascinating Work: Testimony of Rosa Ana (Province of Central America – Cuba)

When, in 2019, Sister Odessa Herrera, then Superior of the Province of Central America and Cuba, called me and Sister Violeta Pacas to organize the Province's Archives, I had no idea what it would mean.

I worked at the Colegio La Asunción in Guatemala for 63 years, which allowed me to meet many religious, from whom I learned how to work and to discover the importance of the documents that are preserved there. However, starting an archive with everything that had been preserved was not only a very delicate task... It was a task that required a lot of heart and mental agility.

Following the list of tasks Sister Veronique sent us at the beginning, we set to work. It took time, and we're not finished yet, but we had a lot of fun. It's a fascinating project that takes us on a journey through time, recognizing what the Congregation in this Province has done for the benefit of countries and their people, through schools and missions in various locations. Unfortunately, as the Province is made up of four countries, a lot of information and documents in each country were lost due to earthquakes that caused the destruction and closure of houses, such as the Colegio La Asunción in Managua, or the fire at the Colegio La Asunción in the city of León. As the first work of the Congregation in the American continent, it suffered the destruction of great documentary treasures since its founding in 1892.

However, as Guatemala is the seat of the Provincial Superior, we have a great deal of material to organize, which has allowed us to see from where we are, the events in the other countries of the Province, especially the work carried out over the years by the Assumption in the different regions. Their sufferings, their



International Team in 2023

successes, their failures, their joys, and also, more than once, the sadness of houses and Communities that had to be closed.

I am deeply grateful that they thought of me, that they trusted me to place in my hands the story of the Assumption's passage through these lands, with its lights and shadows. And, above all, for the incomparable companionship of Mother Violeta, who is an open book for me, because she lived and helped forge the mission in this little corner of the world.

It is a treasure hunt organizing documents from the past: testimony from Caroline (Province of France)

The other day, while inspecting boxes of archives already classified of the "Closed Communities" category, I noticed, discreetly placed above the row, an unlabeled box whose handwritten marker "Archives Compiègne" suggested that documents from this former Community remained, even though its classification was supposedly complete. Upon opening the box, I found intermingled documents having to do with CGPs spanning a decade, General Chapters from the 1980s, some extracts from Provincial assemblies and PPCs, letters to Provincials, a Provincial Chapter and various other documents, some of which were undated.

An investigation then began, based on the CGP documents: by examining two archive boxes containing three of the CGPs documents in the first box I discovered a merry mix-up of papers in all directions, waiting there, waiting... for someone to make sense of them?!

Then followed the beginnings of a reconstruction based on a brief schedule and a letter giving broad guidelines: to find a common thread through this disorder so that the past wouldn't lose its meaning... Once the duplicates, triplicates, and quadruplicates were eliminated, little by little, sections emerged from this chaos that could fit together, like puzzle pieces forming a whole. Then I paused, and resumed a little later to assess the relevance of the assemblage... Next, it was a matter of creating the cover page and, if necessary, the pages and half-pages of the sub-sections for greater clarity.

When, finally, the layout seemed beyond improvement, a structural closure within the binder gave the complete document its definitive appearance, chronicling the key moments of a CGP for its longevity. The same passage on the binder is sometimes necessary to assemble, independently of the main agenda of the CGP, the reports from the different Provinces on the topics discussed. I then placed them in the appropriate archive box, and while I was at it, I replaced the non-regulatory and less legible labels. Opening the box is now much more enjoyable! Onto the next one!

An Archivist in Heaven: Message from Sister Regina Victoria

"Marie Eugenie welcomed me with open arms... She knew how much I loved to talk about her and with what dedication I had taken care of her heritage. She smiled to see my roots growing in Heaven! Do you know that she congratulated me? She was delighted to see how much I had modernized the Archives of the Asia Pacific Province! She admired my perseverance! And she whispered in my ear that it was while visiting them that Sr. Veronique was inspired for the Auteuil projects. She also confided in me that, in the international Archives team, my passion for this mission, my memory of recent history and my technical knowledge had been a great asset! During the International Session of archivists, in 2023, I even taught them how to clean a document! It took my patience and precision to succeed! The others were afraid of damaging the manuscripts of Mother Marie Augustine which we were testing! Ah! I almost forgot, Therese Emmanuel also gave me a warm welcome: I was so happy to meet her! Veronique, Katrin and Corinne often wink at me and tell me that they will miss my wisdom: it's true that we made a great team!

SISTER VÉRONIQUE THIÉBAUT

Archivist of the Congregation,
Original French



spirituality

Our novitiate experience

“ They seemed so joyful and radiant (...) was engraved in my heart! ”

Sarah, Sibylle, and Pauline are three novices of the Sisters of the Assumption in the Paris-Lübeck community. They answered a few questions about their novitiate experience...

Have you experienced a key moment when your call to religious life became clearer?

Pauline: Ever since I was a little girl, religious life has always been a “possibility” of life choice, alongside marriage. Choosing one inevitably means giving up the other, but I’ve always been certain that I could be happy choosing either. I have a vivid memory, in particular, of listening to the testimony of nuns returning from a mission in Brazil when I was seven years old. They seemed so joyful and radiant that the certainty that “giving your life to God makes you happy” was engraved in my heart! Later, as my studies drew to a close, I came to realise that the attraction of religious life was there, quite simply, as a vast and open horizon to be discovered... to my great delight!

How did you discover the Assumption Congregation?

Sibylle: When I moved to Paris, my parents told me I was going to be educated “by nuns.” So, for two years, I was a schoolgirl in Lübeck and began to discover the Assumption. However, I didn’t immediately want to join this particular congregation. It came gradually as I got to know myself better and became aware of my attraction to education and the life of prayer offered there. I often passed an Assumption house but didn’t dare ask to enter. It wasn’t until after my studies, when I moved to Lyon, that I really got close to a community.

What is it about life at Assumption that particularly touches you?

Pauline: I believe deeply in the power of a resolutely benevolent educational approach, as experienced and transmitted at Assumption. Everyone has the opportunity to become who they are entirely! And for us, this mission of transformative education can only be rooted in an intense life of prayer and a wonderful fraternal life. It’s the subtle balance between these three “poles” that has drawn me to the Assumption, and I’m gradually discovering something of the mystery of the Incarnation.

Were you apprehensive about entering the novitiate?

Sarah: My biggest concern was integrating into a new community! I was worried about how the sisters would perceive me, and above all, I was afraid of hiding behind a mask and not really being myself. But when I was leaving for the novitiate, one of the sisters said to me, “Be wise... but not too wise!” Hearing this from her, who has a long experience in religious life, reassured me a lot.

What was the most significant change in your daily life when you arrived?

Sarah: For me, the specific rhythm of the novitiate was the main change. After ten years of professional activity, I was used to structuring my day around work. And when I arrived at the novitiate, which offers a more peaceful setting, I had the impression of floating in time. But little by little, I welcomed this new rhythm, and, above all, I realised that slowing down didn’t mean that nothing was happening. God doesn’t work according to my schedule or my agenda!

What’s your typical day like?

Sibylle: Our daily life, like that of every Sister of the Assumption, revolves around the three “poles” Pauline spoke of: prayer life, community life, and apostolic mission.



The liturgy of the hours punctuates our days, as do times of personal prayer, in particular, the morning prayer and adoration in the afternoon. We also take part in household services (cooking, cleaning, gardening, etc.) and fraternal moments (meals, Gospel sharing, free time, etc.). As for the apostolate, all three of us have a small mission with students at the school, but most of our time is devoted to formation. So, there's a certain regularity, but no two days are ever the same!

Can you tell us more about the training?

Sibylle: An important point to start with is that the novitiate is a time of discernment in which formation is personal and interior rather than intellectual. It enables us to anchor our lives more firmly in God, to deepen our understanding of religious life in the congregation, and to discover our own path so that we are better able to commit ourselves to following Christ. In concrete terms, every week, we have specific times with Sister Catherine-Marie, who is our novice mistress: several meetings every four weeks to get to grips with spirituality based on the Rule of Life and an individual accompaniment interview. The regular programme is quite flexible, leaving plenty of time for personal work and integration. Every month, we also meet novices from other congregations for an inter-novitiate session to tackle the fundamental themes of religious life (prayer life, community life, the three vows, etc.), and we regularly meet those from the Assumption family for more specific training.

How does the example and life of Saint Marie-Eugénie nourish your journey?

Sarah: I'm particularly touched by Marie-Eugénie's lucidity and vulnerability. In her letters, she expresses frankly that she doesn't think she has the qualities of a foundress. But little by little, she discovers God's plan for her, and she blossoms in her gifts. I'm a worrier by

nature, and I often doubt my abilities... but with Marie-Eugénie's example, I tell myself that God wouldn't put me on this path if I weren't capable. All I have to do now is welcome the gifts he has entrusted to me for this adventure!

What advice would you give to a young person wondering about religious life?

Pauline: What a joy it is to discover that God's love can make up for anything! Don't hesitate to ask someone who can help you with your questions, and take the time to dig deep, little by little, into the secret...

SISTER CATHERINE LIÉNARD

Province of France
Original french

treasures of the archives

The February 1841 Act – Obedience Founds the Congregation

**“We had such
a high idea
of obedience
that we didn’t
argue”**

The HSP series of the “Origins Collection” of the Archives of the Religious of the Assumption contains many important documents for understanding the genesis of the Congregation. Among them, the 1841 act (HSP V – 1 – f). Here is the content of this document:

“Our Father has kindly consented to grant us, from now on, the right of active voice in the Chapter since we have it in passive voice, as the Rule defines. We are far from wanting anything other than what our Rule requires; we want to obey him as our Superior, as the Rule states, and we want to come to an agreement with him at the same time as he has granted us the right to pass in Chapter, by a plurality of votes, any change to the Rule that we would like to obtain from Monsignor. Thus, until profession and until the approval of the Rule, this Rule will serve as our law as if we had been professed for ten years;” and at the profession, the first six novices will receive the right of active voice as well as passive voice.

Paris, February 18, 1841

*Father Combalot
Sr. Marie Eugenie of Jesus, Superior
Sr. Marie Therese of the Incarnation, Assistant
Sr. Therese Emmanuel of the Mother of God
Sr. Marie Josephe of the Nativity
Sr. Marie Augustine of St. Paul
Sr. Marie Gonzague of the Conception*

This act would play an important role in the Sisters' relationship with Father Combalot, particularly at the time of his departure a few months later. It also illustrates the place of obedience as the foundation of the early years of the Assumption.

In a conversation, Marie Eugenie said: “We went about very simply. We had such a high idea of obedience that we didn't argue: we didn't even talk about it among ourselves. I believe that this simplicity of obedience in the beginnings of



Mother Marie Eugenie's apron



Label on Mother Marie Eugenie's apron

our Congregation, is one of the greatest graces that God has given us. It is most certainly to this, that we owe the existence of the Assumption (...) Fr. Combalot had first made me take a vow of obedience for two years. When I came to see him, I wanted to join the Daughters of Charity; he said to me: "No, my daughter, I don't want it," then, later: "There is a work I want to do, and you will be part of it." "I was bound by my vow. I then went to the Visitation; I would have happily stayed there, but after ten months, he wrote to me to come back. In obedience, I returned."

¹ Marie Eugenie of Jesus, n°1505

² Marie Eugenie of Jesus, conversation quoted in the Foundation Texts, volume 2

³ cf. ME, Letter to Abbé Combalot, February 3, 1830, n°71

⁴ Notes dictated by Mother Foundress on Mother Therese Emmanuel – n°1 (O'NI a)

⁵ ME, conversation notes

⁶ ME, conversation notes

⁷ ME, Letter to Father Combalot, April 7, 1840, n°118

⁸ Idem

⁹ ME, Letter to Father Combalot, March 18, 1841, n°129

¹⁰ ME, Letter to Father Combalot, March 28, 1841, n°130

¹¹ ME, Letter to Father Combalot, August 1841, n°136

This sharing by Marie Eugenie already highlights some interesting traits: despite Father Combalot's somewhat unsettling and unpredictable attitude, the young women chose fidelity to the vow of obedience, living it with rectitude, discretion, detachment...

Marie Eugenie later confided that the difficulties with Father Combalot had appeared from the beginnings at Rue Férou: "As soon as a certain Community life had thus been established, Fr. Combalot's failings in governing, his impatience, the lack of reason in his actions and plans, the constant variation in his absolute will, his tyrannical childish character, and consequently, for me, the fear of compromising others, the dread of the path I had embarked on, all of which combined to throw me into great anguish." I had never had the desire to found, I did it out of obedience...¹ Elsewhere: "I wondered (...) how something good and regular could come out of it, because, in fact, we had neither Rules nor Constitutions. Fr. Combalot changed his mind every two weeks about everything (...) We were so convinced of the necessity of obedience that we would not have believed it possible not to do what he told us: and certainly, I sometimes found that it was not entirely wise."²

This resolute commitment to obedience, while questionable, was based on a mutual affection and esteem that allowed Marie Eugenie to continue obeying Father Combalot. The Sisters took the habit on August 14, 1840, which prompted Marie Eugenie to emphasize the necessity of Father Combalot's regular presence in the Community, since they were living a kind of novitiate.³

"Affection (...) for the ideas of the nascent work"⁴ was then decisive, and it was the desire to succeed in this undertaking inspired by the Lord that led the Sisters to choose obedience at the cost of their own ideas, sometimes doing what they did not consider entirely reasonable: "... In the beginning, if we had stopped to see whether things pleased us or repelled us, we would never have done anything, especially those things that were obviously unwise."⁵ "Obedience was the supreme reason. This is why the Congregation was founded; if just one had

brought a reason, even a just and legitimate one, if she had wanted to moderate her obedience, the bond would be broken; these five people would not remain together; the work of God would be destroyed."⁶ Thus, according to Marie Eugenie, in adversity, obedience tightens bonds and strengthens communion.

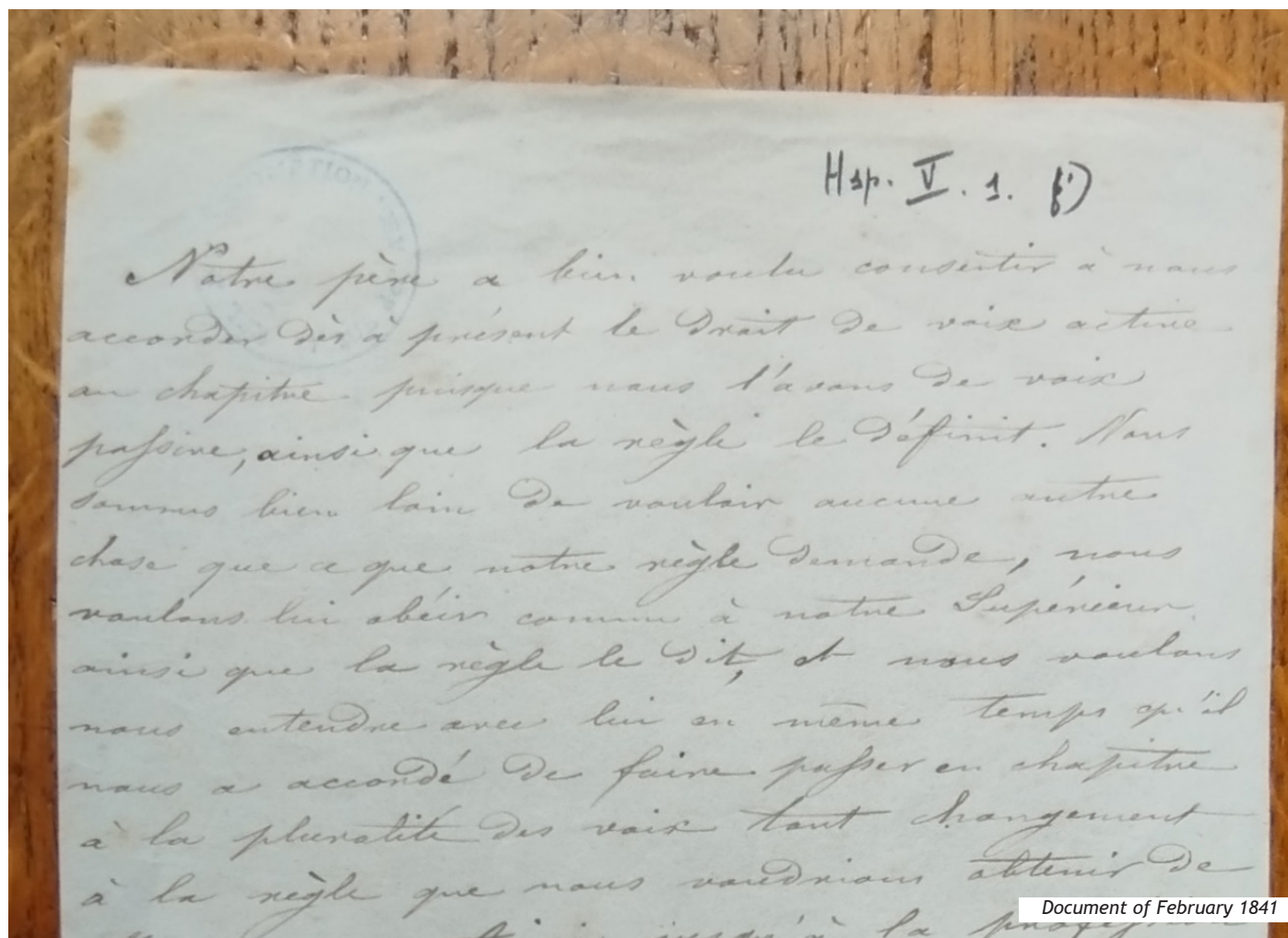
However, in order not to be mistaken, it must be noted that, for Marie Eugenie, this seemingly unconditional obedience could not exist without frankness. In 1840, when the upheavals announcing the crisis arrived, Marie Eugenie opened her heart to Father Combalot: "I believe I have told you, it is trust that I lack; often I no longer dare, either because I fear you, because I fear myself or because I fear the future."⁷ ... But recognizing the specific role of her director, she resolutely opts for the restoration of this trust in him: "Give me back this trust, my dearest Father, give it back to me always by being truly my father, according to the full extent of the word..."⁸ In her, frankness of words and sincerity of heart are inseparable from an act of free and chosen obedience.

Little by little, Marie Eugenie felt that the priority should no longer be her own security, based on the relationship that united her to Father Combalot, but the very good of the work she was founding. The Rule [the Constitutions], a first version of which had already been written, then became an ally: Marie Eugenie obeyed the Rule.

It was in this context that in February 1841, while the first six Sisters were still novices, Father Combalot granted them the opportunity to have an active voice in the Chapter, that is, to take part in Community decisions from then on. Marie Eugenie was then elected Superior of the Community. Even though the Sisters reaffirmed their desire to remain in good harmony with Father Combalot (see text of the document), this was an important step for the Community's responsibility and freedom.

The Parisian context is not very favorable to the Community. The clergy of Paris distrusts Father Combalot, worries about the age of the Sisters, their lifestyle. Marie Eugenie needs to be reassured. In a very beautiful letter to Father Combalot, she states that her priority is now the interest of the work and that she expects it to be the same for him: "...it is true that it would be a very great consolation for me to count on your devotion and your affection, I do not say for myself, I am not worth it, but for the work of Our Lady (...) I sincerely desire that (...) you be ready to do everything for this work, and to always show yourself to be its friend and not only mine, which is too little. I confess to you that the most lively feelings of my gratitude and my tenderness are and will now be for the souls who will unite most closely with me in the accomplishment of this foundation; It will be those who do the most for the work of Notre-Dame that I will love the most..."⁹

The priority of the work leads Marie Eugenie to



Document of February 1841

De vais active aussi bien que
sive

Fabbé Combalot

18. février 1841.

M^{re} Marie Eugénie
Supérieure

M^{re} Marie Thérèse
de l'Incarnation, assistante

M^{re} Thérèse Emmanuel de la Pureté

M^{re} Marie Joseph de la Nativité

M^{re} Marie Augustine de St Paul

M^{re} Marie Gomzague de la Conception

Signatures on the document of February 1841

distance herself from Father Combalot and she insists on obedience to the Bishop, the figure of the Church: "The greatest attack that is made on us is to say that we, like you, are very independent of the authority of the Archbishop... Please, my dear Father, avoid anything that would corroborate this rumor, the most unfortunate of all for a Community, since our first obedience must be to the Bishop." ¹⁰ What guides her, from now on, is the good of the work and her attachment/obedience to the Church.

With criticism of the Community mounting, Marie Eugénie met with Monsignor Affre, Archbishop of Paris, during Father Combalot's absence. At the Archbishop's urgent and realistic suggestion, the need to appoint a new Ecclesiastical Superior was considered. This had to be announced to Father Combalot upon his return on April 11. We know the rest of the story: Father Combalot then sought by all means to remove the Community from Parisian authority, attempting to convince the Sisters to leave with him for Brittany. But strong Community cohesion was expressed against this project. Mother Thérèse Emmanuel acted as their spokesperson. The document signed in February played a crucial role. The Sisters had an active voice in the matter! Thus, on May 3, 1841, while Father Combalot attempted a final approach, bringing the Sisters together and trying to convince them to immediately take the decision to leave for Brittany, without Marie Eugénie, the Sisters exercised their right to an active voice. By a unanimous vote, they affirmed their decision to remain in Paris, with their young Superior.

Although the ordeal was terrible for everyone, especially for Marie Eugénie, it allowed the Foundress to move from obedience to a man in her own life,

to obedience to God for the good of the work. Her line of conduct, at the height of the crisis, was this: to maintain gentleness and moderation, not respond to Father Combalot's provocations, and to stand by the Lord...

After these events, in a letter to Father Combalot, she returned clearly to this question of obedience: "None of us, Father, had the desire to establish this foundation: we all came to it in obedience to your advice... Is it our fault if, by dint of living together, of trying to absorb the spirit of this work, of making it our duty to persevere in it, we ended up becoming attached to it, and indissolubly attached to one another?" Is it our fault again, Father, if we could not come to understand obedience in the way you understood it?¹¹

Another "treasure" from our archives symbolizes how Marie Eugénie understood her mission as Superior: her apron, which is in the museum. It demonstrates this sense of service and this desire to work for the common good that would always be her guiding principle until her death. It was to Christ that she relied on her daily "yes."

SISTER VÉRONIQUE THIÉBAUT

Archivist of the Congregation

Original French

communication

Evangelization in the digital world...

Pope Francis reminds us that “the digital world can be a space filled with humanity; a network of individuals, not just wires.” This underscores the remarkable potential of social media for sharing our charism and engaging in meaningful evangelization. The digital realm is not simply an information hub but a mission field where we are called to share the Good News.

Today, many seek spiritual nourishment and guidance online, with numerous young people turning to digital platforms for answers to their most profound questions. Our absence in these spaces risks leaving them to voices that might distort Christ's message. Being present opens the door to opportunities for encounters, dialogue, and growth.

The digital realm is now vital for communication, community-building, and evangelization. As Assumption sisters, we are called to embrace this reality, ensuring our engagement on social media and digital platforms is meaningful and transformative. Evangelization today is more than just visibility; it involves cultivating authentic encounters, deepening faith, and addressing the spiritual needs of a connected world.

Social media and digital tools present an unparalleled opportunity to engage with a global audience beyond geographical and cultural boundaries. By actively participating online, we can share our faith, provide spiritual insights, and foster a sense

of community among those seeking meaning. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and podcasts enable us to express our spirituality and charism dynamically and accessibly. Through videos, reflections, online retreats, and interactive discussions, we nurture faith and promote dialogue among believers and seekers alike.

A crucial aspect of digital evangelization is engagement. Unlike traditional communication forms, digital platforms facilitate real-time interactions, nurturing connections. By responding to comments, hosting live sessions, and sharing personal stories, we create a space where faith is lived and shared authentically. Today, individuals yearn for genuineness, and our presence must reflect the true joys and challenges of faith, making our spirituality relatable to everyday life.

Education is foundational to the Assumption charism, and this must extend into the digital space. Through videos, discussions, and online courses, we can offer resources that enhance spiritual formation. By providing high-quality content grounded in solid theological principles, we help individuals deepen their understanding of faith and integrate it into their lives. Given the prevalence of misinformation online, we, as Assumption, have a duty to share truth with clarity and wisdom.

Nevertheless, digital evangelization poses challenges. The digital divide limits access to technology





for some, affecting the reach of our initiatives. Moreover, social media can contribute to division, misinformation, and superficial engagement. We must navigate these issues thoughtfully, ensuring our online presence fosters unity, respect, and critical thinking. Furthermore, while online connections are valuable, they should enhance rather than replace physical community and sacramental life.

Looking ahead, the Assumption congregation must continue to innovate and adapt in the digital sphere. Training religious and lay leaders in digital communication, collaborating with other faith-based organizations, and encouraging young people to engage in online evangelization are critical steps. By incorporating digital tools into our mission, we remain true to our charism while addressing modern realities.

In conclusion, our presence on social media is a crucial element of our evangelization efforts. The call to share our spirituality and charism extends to all realms, including the digital landscape. As Assumption sisters, we must approach this mission with creativity, commitment, and faith, ensuring our online presence serves as a beacon of hope, truth, and love for those seeking God in today's world.

Moreover, we should not perceive digital evangelization as a temporary measure, but rather a long-term commitment. The swift advancement of technology requires continuous evaluation and adaptation of our strategies. We must be open to learning, adapting, and trying new platforms and methods to maintain our outreach's relevance and effectiveness. Collaborating with experts in digital communication and young individuals active on social media can yield valuable insights and keep us in tune with contemporary audiences.

Ultimately, our digital presence is not merely about increasing visibility; it's about witnessing to Christ in

the modern world. With myriad voices competing for attention online, our challenge is to ensure that the voice of faith remains strong, compassionate, and inviting. We must endeavor to create spaces of encounter, reflection, and transformation where individuals can experience God's presence in their lives.

As we advance on this journey, let us be guided by our foundational mission: to bring Christ to the world through education, dialogue, and service. Through dedication and discernment, we can ensure that our digital presence is not just another voice amid the noise but a source of inspiration, guidance, and spiritual nourishment for all who seek truth and meaning in the digital age.

SISTER GEETA PRAYIKALAM

Province of India

Original English

assumption together

Our journey as a shared mission

Fifteen years ago, the Province of Spain embarked on the journey of a Shared Mission across all our schools and ministries. This initiative, rooted in the Assumption Together movement, was born with a clear goal: to create spaces where religious and lay people could come together to share Mission and Spirituality. How to bring this vision to life, however, was another question. The words of Antonio Machado "Traveller, there is no path; the path is made by walking" resonated deeply with us. They became our starting point, inspiring us to engage closely with our own diverse and unique realities. From this foundation, we began to reflect, pray, and imagine together, discerning the steps to take and how best to take them.

We began by organising Mission Sharing Teams in each school and an insertion programme made up of a sister and a group of lay people. We set out with as much uncertainty as enthusiasm. I believe we were all driven by the conviction that the charism of the Assumption was a treasure we had in our hands, a legacy that had to be passed on and shared with all those who, in one way or another, were part of the Assumption in Spain. And so, with hopeful hearts, we set out to take those first steps.

At our school in Vallecas, the first thing we did was to stop. We dedicated an entire academic year to thoughtfully analysing our reality and collaboratively designing a shared roadmap. Teachers, sisters, and members of the Management Team came together - often over coffee - to analyse our reality, to learn about the Assumption's presence beyond our borders, to deepen our understanding of its charism, and to uncover what truly united us. These encounters helped us feel part of the same family, beyond our

cultural differences. Together, we rediscovered the values, priorities, and way of life that define the Assumption. We came to realise that how we shared our message was just as important as what we shared. Our priority was to foster a spirit of family, one that was warm, relaxed, joyful, and inviting, hoping it would inspire our colleagues to willingly stay after working hours. What a challenge that was!

From the very beginning, the Province's Mission Sharing Leadership Team accompanied and supported us, organising—among other initiatives—the annual gatherings at the house in Olivos. These became spaces for formation and celebration, helping to weave a strong network of communion and collaboration among us. The WhatsApp group of Mission Sharing coordinators and sisters also played a key role, allowing us to stay connected, share ideas, and support one another with ease.

At first, the Shared Mission proposal took the form of three meetings throughout the academic year: two were voluntary, and one was a training session held during school hours. The voluntary nature of the meetings was intentional—we believed that if what we offered was meaningful, word would spread organically among our colleagues. This challenged us to be creative and make each proposal truly engaging: mountain outings open to the entire educational community, café-style debates, visits to the older sisters' communities and Assumption-linked NGOs, testimonies from sisters or teachers who had lived the Assumption mission abroad, and moments of shared prayer. All of these were carefully crafted to cultivate a warm, welcoming, and informal atmosphere.



Once a year, we also held a formation session for the entire staff during school hours, where we explored the charism of the Assumption more deeply—rediscovering our roots and reflecting on how to bring them to life within our diverse contexts. Our goal was to remain faithful to the spirit of the Assumption while finding new ways to embody it in today's world.

And then the pandemic hit - harsh, painful, and unpredictable. We lost sister Pilar Ruiz who had been walking alongside us from the Province's Leadership Team. In those difficult moments, our WhatsApp group of coordinators and sisters became something more: a shared living room where we could open our hearts, cry together, support one another, and pray in communion. I believe I speak for all of us when I say that the pandemic marked a significant turning point. Together, we came to understand that accompaniment and care are not just important - they are essential elements of our Shared Mission. The pandemic, in its own painful way, gave us the gift of stopping once again. And in that pause, we found space to listen to the quiet intuitions the Lord sows in each of our hearts. From there, new expressions of Shared Mission began to emerge—rooted not in big events, but in simple, everyday gestures. In staff meetings, we began sharing small “capsules of good news from the Assumption,” which helped widen our perspective and connect us more deeply to our global mission. We planned small surprises and thoughtful gestures that brought a sense of joy and warmth to our communities. Shared Mission took on a new presence, a new way of being among us. The pandemic made something very clear: living the Shared Mission was never just about planning three meetings a year. It meant lay people becoming true companions on the journey - not merely collaborators of the sisters, who are becoming fewer in our communities. Companions who share life, who make decisions together, and who participate fully in the same Mission: to transmit the Assumption charism through an educational project that still has much to offer our societies. As Carmen Escribano reminded us a few years ago, this project stands on four fundamental pillars:

1. The dignity of the person as a child of God and a brother or sister to all.
2. The conviction that every person can be educated.
3. Faith in the goodness of human beings.
4. The desire for a world transformed by the values of the Gospel.

Perhaps this is our challenge: to inspire educators and sisters to live the values of the Gospel with passion, and from that foundation, to commit - as Mother Marie Eugenie urged - to nurturing the natural virtues of each student; to help them become good, faithful, and honest people. And from there, to accompany them as they open themselves to deeper truths, guiding them in discovering the meaning of their lives and their unique mission in the world. As Carmen

reminded us, “We need educators and sisters who live our educational project with integrity. And for that, it's essential to know the charism deeply, to live it personally, and to pass on the baton with care. Because today, the world needs witnesses, not just teachers.”

We began our journey with Misión Compartida just 15 years ago, and already it feels as though the world has changed at breakneck speed. The rise of social media and Artificial Intelligence, the instability of both social and global contexts, the growing impact of technology on young people's mental health, and the constant flood of information all weigh heavily on us. Added to this are the demands of new educational laws, with their evolving pedagogical and regulatory requirements. As a result, many in our educational communities live their vocation with deep commitment, yet feel overwhelmed by an ever-growing list of responsibilities and administrative pressures. This reality calls us, once again, to pause, to discern, to be attentive, and to remain rooted in what truly matters. Otherwise, we risk allowing the Shared Mission to fade into just another blurred task among many.

The General Chapter encourages us into a process of synodal discernment, encouraging us to reflect on the continuity, discontinuity, adaptability, and innovation of our “being Shared Mission”. And that is precisely what we did during our most recent gathering of sisters and coordinators. Two key conclusions emerged above all others: the importance of continuing to deepen our understanding of the Assumption charism, and the urgent need to offer quality time to the teams driving this mission forward. In a world that rushes ahead distractedly, often without a clear direction, our sisters and educators are asking for time - time to reflect, to pray, and to return to what is essential. They are asking us to resist becoming boats tossed about by a restless sea. Because, as someone beautifully expressed it, “it's not so much about doing tasks together, but about sharing the journey as an educational community—with a clear identity and a strong sense of belonging.”

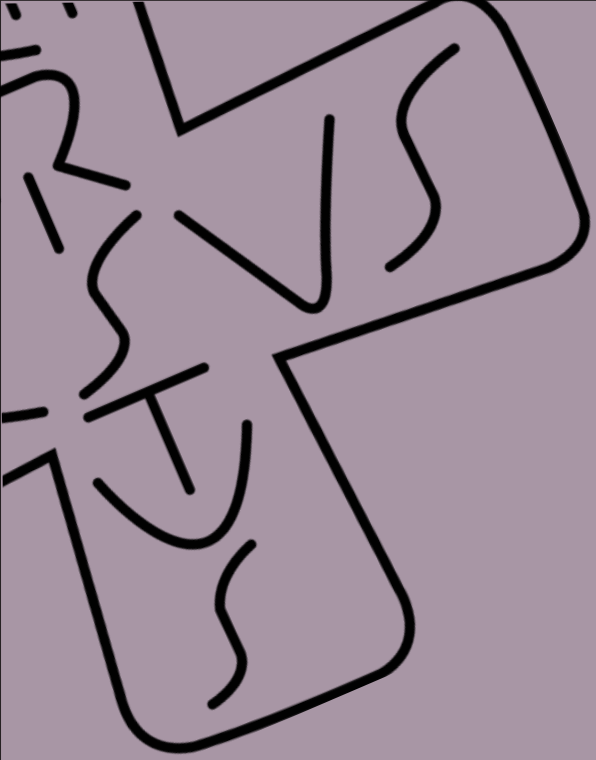
Thank you to all the sisters and lay people who, throughout these years, have shared - and continue to share - your dedication and good work in this beautiful Mission of the Assumption: the dream of Mother Marie Eugenie, to transform our world through the values of the Gospel.

MARI PAZ AGUDO

Province of Spain

Original Spanish

(1) Carmen Escribano. ‘Sharing Mission’ Meeting of the MC 2022 Core Teams



Direct their flight, but don't clip their wings



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