

#ASSUMPTA

Magazine of the Religious of the Assumption

August 2020 - N°2



**”God guides everything and
never a more loving or wiser
hand can guide our path”
Mother Mary Eugenie**

summary

"Each one of us has a mission on earth"



#ASSUMPTA

Year 2020 - n°2

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editorial



The Church gives us the joy of a special moment with Saint Augustine. A testimony of predilection allowing us to enter into the theme of communion to which this magazine wishes to dedicate itself through life in movement.

Like us, Augustine lived through difficult moments: the end of a civilization, the end of the new yet to be born that must be watched over and hastened.

Like us, what the Church announced to him, by opening the Gospels to him and immersing him in them at baptism, means that they are made up of Three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Communion of Love. Three people so distinct and so intimately united that they mysteriously form the one God to Whom the Scriptures bear witness.

By His Incarnation, the Son, Who is one with the Father, binds us to Him so that we may be reunited with the Father and be together.

Every desire for communion has its origin and its horizon.

As the Bishop of a diocese devastated by Donatism, Augustine was well aware that to enter into such an attractive communion is beyond our human capacities. Nevertheless, he will look forward to sharing his dazzling love. When his work on the Trinity was completed, he prayed in the following way: "...whenever I could, whenever You gave me power, I sought You. I wished to see through my intelligence what I believed..."

But how could I see the communion of love that is the Trinity? "You see the Trinity if you see charity," replied Augustin.

For this reason, the Rule begins like this: "First of all, since you have come together in community, live in a household of perfect harmony, having but one mind and one heart intent on God".

This unity, vocation and mission, is not a uniformity because "it is the hand of His mercy that has shaped our hearts (...) one by one, (...) but hearts that remain in unity (...). In each member of Christ there is a diversity of grace and a unity of charity".

Every thrust towards communion, every effort to achieve unity in diversity, finds its stimulation and confidence in this unity.

The way to the latter is the humble Jesus. The artisan who builds it is the Holy Spirit who pours charity into our hearts. The sacrament that nourishes it is the Eucharist.

As you read through the pages of this issue of the Assumption magazine, may the Spirit give us the joy of discovering the fruits of communion and make us thankful for them!

SISTER BERNADETTE DELOBEL

Lourdes Community

Original French



“The Laudato Si week still remains in our memories with a liturgy that opened up to environmental realities.”

general community

In these times of COVID-19 or post-COVID, depending on the country, we come to give you news from Auteuil. In her last circular, Sr. Rekha recounted the first months of the pandemic, with its share of worries and glimmers of hope in this situation so unprecedented.

Since Pentecost, our chapel has reopened its doors to the parishioners, "after 77 days," remarked the celebrant of the day! In a quantitative way, this figure is very real, but symbolically, he wanted to awaken our faith in this "figure of God", to contemplate his work and to recognize his signature in the history of humanity which is ours!

It is a bit like when Jesus tells Peter that he must forgive "not 7 times, but 77 times" (Mt 18:21-22), thus indicating to him the perfection of Gospel love which has no limits. This time has made our love creative to go beyond the limits of space and of the pre-established order, in order to invent life where we are and to live an even deeper communion.

Indeed, here at the Mother House, these new ways of being and doing have created other links with the neighbours. For example, in the evenings, when we showed our gratitude to the nursing staff with applause, simple bonds were forged between us and the neighbours, from window to window or from window to balcony. Relationships in the neighbourhood became warmer. On Easter Day, the Midday Service was held outside in the garden with Manuel's family. We were surrounded on all sides by neighbours who participated in our liturgy, either from their windows or just on the pavement behind the garden gate!

The Sister who had prepared this prayer had done everything to give the Resurrection a colour of Joy, marked by our internationality: songs in several languages and spontaneity of movement, instruments ... Thanks to all those who knew how to maintain these bonds of good neighbourliness. As naturally as it is, we celebrated together the Resurrection of Christ, our own resurrection! We hope that these relations will find new developments in the coming days.

The Laudato Si week still remains in our memories with a liturgy that opened up to environmental realities. Yes, we were in contact with nature and its challenges, through praise, symbolic acts and intercession.

On the day of Pentecost, during the morning prayer, we meditated on the Gospel of the day, Saint John chapter 20. In the chapel, guided by Sr. Rekha, with a musical background, we tasted the Word of God, borrowing something from the Indian tradition. The desire arose to live from time to time this form of meditation to enrich our approach to the Word of God. A meditation of full presence to oneself, to God and to the reality that surrounds us. It is another way of reaching our interiority.

"On the day of Pentecost, they were all together in the same place..." Acts 2,1. As for the disciples, since Pentecost, nothing was as it was before. It is a Pentecost like no other. Nothing is or will be like before, we began to speak of a before confinement, an after... We were gathered together in an international community extended to the Christian community to celebrate Pentecost. We are witnesses to the love that unites us in our diversities ... our Communities and our liturgical celebrations are a reflection of it.

In fact, our two Communities were able, through Zoom, to meet several Communities in different Provinces (2 per continent). We experienced how communication can be an instrument of communion.

Thank you to all of you who made these exchanges possible through your availability and sharing.

On the Congregation's web page, the Sisters shared news of the Preparation Session for Perpetual Vows. The theme chosen was "Returning to the sources... at the service of life". Given the circumstances, we organized the session in three parts:

The first stage, with the Sisters present in France who had arrived for the session just before the total lockdown. This stage was done as a personal work. The sisters were accompanied by email, Skype or WhatsApp. We were also able to have common meetings by Skype.

The second phase began on May 13, 2020. We took advantage of the easing of the requirements of lockdown, to gather the 6 Sisters present in France at Auteuil. Having little time difference, the Sisters from Rwanda and a sister from the Ivory Coast joined us by Zoom.

Unfortunately, circumstances did not allow our Sisters from the Philippines, Vietnam, Madagascar and Cuba to come, nor to follow by Zoom. The time difference, the need for translation and the accessibility of the means of communication made this difficult.

With Sr. Veronique, we first of all revisited the sources of the Congregation, from the origins to the writing of the Constitutions. In the second part, we deepened the history of the Congregation through the Generalates, from Mother Marie Eugenie to the present day.

The other privileged subjects, dealt with the theme of consecration, a special way of deepening the Word of God and our Rule of Life in a precise context: the eve of perpetual vows!

The 8-day retreat, animated by Sr. Christine Gizard, a Sister Spiritual Guide from Lyon by Zoom, followed this

first week.

The deepening of the formula of vows was a strong and concrete moment because we had the joy of listening to the testimony of Sr. Cécile who had just celebrated her jubilee of 25 years of vows. The words of Sr. Cecile: fidelity, simplicity, total gift and renunciation had a depth that made the formula of vows come alive.

The third stage of the session lasted ten days, from 11 to 21 June. The group was enlarged by welcoming four other young Sisters who are in France: Marie Cécile, Francesca, Ada Luz and Eliane. Given the closing of the borders and the impossibility of traveling, we wanted to give them the opportunity and the joy of building relationships within an intercultural community.

Our gratitude goes to all those who contributed to the smooth running of the Session, without sparing their efforts: the Sisters who intervened, the Provincials who sent the Sisters or who allowed them to follow on site or to benefit from a tailor-made formation, the Province of France who welcomed the Sisters during the period of confinement and helped us to manage the unforeseen, the Community of Auteuil who continues to spread the stakes of their tent so that each Sister feels at home.

The Centre will not open until next September, but already some staff members are back to prepare for the new school year.

Wisdom leads us to cancel all the trips planned for this year. As a General Community, we are working on a new organization for ourselves and for the Provinces.

We plan to make the annual retreat this summer. We





Trinity Mass



Videoconference



Easter Liturgy



Jubilee Sister Cécile

hope that Sr. Irene Cecile will soon be able to return to Paris! She is making all the necessary arrangements.

We keep in our prayer the many challenges on the health, social and economic levels. Let us pray for our political leaders, that the common good and international solidarity may prevail, for the lonely and isolated elderly, for those whose professional future is uncertain and for young people. ...

We want to live with you in the days to come, watching for signs of God's presence and of His loving hand that leads us.



Session 7 - Stages 1 and 2

SISTERS REKHA, SANDRA, ISABELLE, MARTHE AND IRENE.
General Community
Original: French



Videoconference

covid-19

The Coronavirus and 7 Invitations for a Better World

We need to ask ourselves: What sort of impact the pandemic has and will have on our human way of life? our Christian way of life?

The Covid-19 pandemic has gripped the entire world in fear and uncertainty. It has been a totally new experience for all of us as none of us has lived through a time when much of our world has been brought to a standstill. I personally cannot believe how the entire world, that is more than seven billion people, changed within a few days and started to observe social distancing, to use face masks, and to get used to working from home, participating in online lectures, Zoom conferences, and virtual liturgies. I think many things will change in the post-COVID period, including our way of life: our sense of belonging, our liturgical celebrations, educational systems and policies, our social and pastoral ministries, the nature of international travels and conferences, food habits, cultures, and traditions.

We have overcome every crisis and have learned lessons from each experience. This time won't be different. It is a time for introspection and for some serious soul-searching. I hope we will see the universe and the human family from a new perspective. Here I talk about 7 promises of new life or 7 invitations for a better world.

1. Inclusion and Justice: An invitation to say NO to our discriminatory attitudes and behaviours.

The coronavirus respects no boundaries of class or creed. The virus is unconcerned about nationality, race, colour, ethnicity, status, wealth, nobility, and religion. In general, it relentlessly attacks members of the human family. The virus treats all human beings alike and challenges some of our discriminatory attitudes and behaviours.

2. Kindness and Positive Energy: An invitation to be a witness to the best of humanity

The crisis has stimulated people to be gracious and generous. The flood of stories of kindness and the way people are showing up for each other is a powerful witness to the best of humanity. As someone commented, "the world is full of nice people. If you can't find one, BE ONE." The light of human goodness shines through the darkness of the dread of the pandemic and its devastating effects.

3. Interconnectedness and Interdependence: An invitation to become more aware of our collective fragility and inter-connectedness

We had no choice and have been led, being more community-bound or family-bound, to explore new ways of living together. We have a renewed sense of belonging – we cannot be healthy without having everybody on board. The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged us to go beyond our individualistic mentality. We had to give up our personal privileges and freedom and to surrender ourselves to the decisions of the Governments for our own safety and that of others. It gave us an opportunity to become more aware of our collective fragility and inter-connectedness. It invited us to make a shift from self-centredness to our social identity and belonging.

4. Contemplation and Life-giving spirituality: An invitation to reclaim our spiritual space

We often express the desire to slow down and humanize our rhythm of life, but we have never managed to do so, until this invisible virus forced us to slow down a bit and find time for ourselves. We were all happy to get some personal time

to process changes. As some Sisters shared with me, we have learnt to focus more on the essentials of life. The “God-alone” experience of Saint Marie Eugenie became more real. Yes, living in lockdown provided us an opportunity to try and take a more careful look at what is happening inside of us. It was a moment to reclaim our spiritual space. It has instilled in us a longing for spiritual connectedness to God and social solidarity with the human family. It inspired us to appreciate the art of reading, to initiate creative ways of reinventing ourselves in our respective communities and families.

5. Deeper Communion and Relationship: An invitation to recover the new consciousness of being together in distance

The lockdown periods characterized by social distancing and isolation led us to a virtual or online social closeness. We tried to stay connected more by social media and digital socializing. There seems to be a new consciousness of being together in distance. We can share space in the same Zoom conference room, but we are separated and are miles apart. It is important to make a healthy distinction between loneliness and solitude in this context. While loneliness refers to an experience of being disconnected, solitude is a choice that we make to be in touch with our true selves at a deeper level which generates growth, inner freedom, and maturity. Yes, during the pandemic, we were in solitude to a certain extent.

6. Commitment to Social and Ecological Well-being: An invitation to mend our ways that disturbs our ecosystem

Environmentalists say that the lockdown truly lessened air pollution and improved air quality. Nature seems to have smiled at us and asked us to mend our ways that disturbs its ecosystem. It challenges us to make

a shift towards a more environmentally responsible lifestyle. In other words, there is an invitation to choose a life-style that makes greater investment in social and ecological well-being.

7. Discernment and Daring Spirit: An invitation to explore new ways

We need to ask ourselves: What sort of impact the pandemic has and will have on our human way of life? our Christian way of life? Our consecrated life? Community life? Our family life? It is a kairos moment for change. The pandemic experience taught us that rapid changes are possible and we can do things differently. It impels us to explore new ways and to make a difference in our lives and those of others – the people with whom we live and whom we serve in our respective apostolic ministries.

Sister REKHA M. CHENNATTU
Superior General
Original English



echo from the archives

**Thus 330
boxes have
already been
filled, put
in place,
labelled and
inventoried.**

With the COVID-19 pandemic, the last few months have seen the cessation of certain activities around the world, a reorganisation of time and a return to the essential. The work of the Archives was no exception, however the time freed up by the cancellation of sessions and meetings enabled us to spend long days inventorying the boxes in the new room. Thus 330 boxes have already been filled, put in place, labelled and inventoried.

Precious help

Providential help always comes when we need it! It has happened before.

First of all, Sr Ada Luz, from the Auteuil community, and Eliane, a lay friend of the community, patiently set about wrapping Marie Eugénie's letters in PH-neutral paper. Their meticulous work is indispensable; they can turn it into a path of contemplation, a silent prayer, which opens up to a greater closeness with our foundress.

After March 15, Sister Elizabeth (from East Africa) and Sister Octavie (from Central Africa) arrived in Auteuil for the Session of Preparation for the Perpetual Vows and found themselves confined with the Community. They came to help tidy up the Archives twice a week for almost two months: Thus, the documents, sometimes dusty, went up the shelves faster! The old room was gradually emptied... and the new boxes multiplied. At the same time, our two Sisters were able to discover some of the treasures of the Archives: the manuscripts of the Constitutions, copied, annotated, worked on by Mother Marie Eugénie, Mother Therese Emmanuel, Father d'Alzon and many others; the photo albums of the origins (Sisters, pupils, families, first foundations...); the illuminations for the liturgy and those for the feast days (which show the care taken in celebrations of all kinds); and many other things... Each time, it was an opportunity for a historical discovery and a greater closeness with our foundresses. Each one is invited to come and enrich herself by making herself useful!



Eliane and Sr. Ada Luz working



Empty antique furniture

A digital inventory

In contrast to the handwritten inventory drawn up by the former archivists, the list of contents has been entered into the new digital inventory. This prompts a double thanksgiving: gratitude for the work of the previous archivists who have annotated, adjusted, corrected the inventory from the start (their annotations make it possible to solve almost all research problems!) and the joy of now being able to search the documents by keyword on the Congregation's server (the search is faster, more complete; links are possible between different series).

The names of the archivists over time

Furthermore, thanks to Sister Marie-Claude, we are now able to share a list of the archivists recorded in a register (H RV I c1). It begins during the Generalate of Mother Marie Joanna:

- Sr. Camille-Stanislas and Sr M. Agnes in Val
- Mother Marie des Neiges and Mother Françoise-Isabelle in Val, in 1953.
- Mother Marie-Bernard, in Auteuil, from July 1955 to July 1958, then from July 1959 to August 1963. There was no-one from 1963 to October 1971.
- Sr. Jeanne-Marie: from 1971 to 1978.
- Sr. Therese-Maylis: from 1977 to 2018.
- Sr. Veronique: from August 2018 onwards.

Many more Sisters were involved in the work for the cause of the Beatification and the Canonization of Marie Eugenie, from 1932 to 2007, in Val Notre Dame, Auteuil and Rome.

The joy of sharing

Just before the confinement, Sister Véronique was happy to make a return trip to Brussels to share the evening of March 10 with the sisters and lay friends, gathered to reflect on the relevance of the message

of St. Marie Eugénie today. After the talk opening the evening, the comments of the participants highlighted the extent to which the charism of the Assumption is one of transformation, drawing the strength for a firm commitment in society from contemplative life and open-mindedness.

With the month of May came the possibility of intervening for the session of preparation for the perpetual vows. The history of Auteuil, the vocational journey of Marie Eugénie, the years from the foundation to the crisis with Fr. Combalot, the history of the Congregation through the work of drafting the Constitutions. The sisters were able to begin to revisit their own founding story through the symbol of the "bond of love" used by Marie Eugénie to talk about the way the Lord led her life.

Finally, your questions, your research, the exchanges with you are always a pleasure! The messages arrive in great numbers and we try to respond to them as quickly as possible, even if it is always a challenge.

For any suggestion or request: archives@assumpta.org

Sister VERONIQUE THIEBAUT

Archivist of the Congregation,
and the International Archives Team
Original French



Sr Elisabeth, Sr Marie Claude and Sr Octavie

SPIRITUALITY

After COVID-19: Life will spring from death!

Since December 2019, a virus that originated in China has caused a global catastrophe!

Indeed, on February 11, 2020, the WHO officially named the disease "coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)": global panic, suffering, death... what's going on, people everywhere are wondering! For some it is God's punishment, for others this disease is a fabrication of the Western powers to destroy the world. In Africa in particular, comments are going around accusing, rightly or wrongly, the world powers seeking to reduce the population...

What must we think? There is no need to go back over all that this has caused in the social, health and economic life of peoples. The important thing is to ask ourselves what is the spiritual meaning of this event for the life of the believers that we are?

Is God seeking to punish humanity? Certainly not! Since the time of Noah when God promised not to destroy the world, our hope is unequivocal; He is not the God of the dead but of the living! This pandemic has forced us to stop, the world itself has stopped as if to tell us: where are we going? Why or for whom are we running? What is the meaning of our lives? Deprived of their Eucharistic assemblies, have Christians acquired another sense of God?

What we observe is that our lives, our comforts, our habits and even our certainties are so fragile, and that a small virus could endanger what we thought we had mastered.

The biblical image of the calming of the storm can be evoked. We have the impression that Jesus sleeps while the world trembles! Yes, He sleeps because He is confident; He to whom the world and all creation belongs "sleeps" but watches, He will not let the world fall apart through the fault of men. Rather, He invites humanity to wake up and seek the essential: Life! God invites us to live fully in the present time and to cultivate hope in the future. He invites us to weather the storm of this pandemic for more life.

During this time of forced pause due to Covid-19, we did not stop praying, begging the Lord to take this pandemic away from us; on the contrary, we grasped from within what gives us life: personal prayer, prayer as a family, more attention to each other, more creativity in organizing our daily life, etc... So it is the present moment that counts, how we can live it intensely and spiritually so that God is at the center and helps us to get through this storm that has risen without warning... Where will we draw the strength to make life triumph if not in the Resurrection of Christ victorious over death?

After Covid-19, will we still have the humility to hold on to the essential and to know how to ask the Creator for help no matter what happens? St. Maximus the Confessor said: "Humility is continuous prayer in tears and sorrow. Never ceasing to call on God for help, it does not allow anyone to rely madly on his own power and wisdom, nor to rise above others. These are the hard diseases of prideful passion."

One of the great lessons we will have learned from this pandemic is humility and simplicity in welcoming the unexpected and the audacity to turn constantly to God. Christ tells us: "Take My yoke upon you ...yes, My yoke is easy to bear, and My burden light. (Mt 11:29, 30). In the face of trial, sickness and suffering, be aware that the Lord carries our burdens with us; we must make ourselves small and humble so as not to rely only on our own strength, for it is a temptation that always lurks, but to rely on the One Who has overcome evil and suffering.

In this Easter season, let us allow ourselves to be enlightened by a living faith in Christ's Resurrection, to contaminate the world with the joy that flows from within each one of us, in contact with the Risen One, to make life triumph. Whatever happens, Life will have the last word. Otherwise our faith in the Risen Jesus is in vain!

SISTER MARIE MADELEINE AGONOU

Responsible for Communication

West Africa Province

Original French



Life will spring



Taking care of life

finances

The economy at the service of the charism and mission, ... when the Church challenges us

Two years ago, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSVA) published "The Economy at the Service of the Charism and the Mission" (ESCM). This very rich document is an interpellation primarily for the Congregations but also for our way of positioning Cisters, laity, and ourselves in a world where economics seem so predominant.

During the Session of the Provincial Treasurers (October 13-23, 2019), this text was often quoted. More recently, the Covid- 19 pandemic crisis was another opportunity for us to question ourselves.

Let some passages resonate in us.

"Christian spirituality – the Pope writes – proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack ». Consecrated persons with their choice of poverty are living and credible witnesses that « moderation, when lived freely and consciously, is liberating. It is not a lesser life, or one lived with less intensity. On the contrary, it is a way of living life to the full " (ESCM 8).

For some of us, the experience we made during the period of confinement in our different countries was a tangible rediscovery of this "return to simplicity that allows us to stop". Getting back to basics, relishing the little things, being satisfied with what we have ... It concerns exercising and conquering our true inner freedom. The experience of voluntarily not having or having "less" can help put things in perspective; can free us from addictions that have insidiously infiltrated our daily lives. Important invitations and challenges given that we allow ourselves to be caught up in the frantic pace of our search for effectiveness and efficiency ... for more life

"This focus of placing the person at the center, [...] recalls the continuous challenge to overcome a functionalist mentality even within the Communities. Thinking about the economic structures means being part of the humanizing process, which makes us a person in the fullest sense of the word, aware of oneself and of one's relationship-mission in the world: " I have a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world" (ESCM 13&14)

By applauding day after day, the doctors, the nurses but also all those people who serve our society, from the cashier of the supermarket to the crews responsible for cleaning the streets, did we not regain awareness of our interconnectedness and interdependence, the mission of each person? It is a question of being and not just doing, an invitation to change our way of considering others and ourselves. We have a testimony

to give, one that values each person for what he/she is, rather than his/her usefulness, his/her function... In this sense, let us be sons and daughters of Marie Eugenie. God, Who created human nature and made it in His image, loves this work of His hands. It is not necessary that the creature be endowed with beauty, greatness, intelligence, all that interests fiction and captivates the attention of man in order to attract His attention. The humblest, the most obscure, the most despised life has a deep interest for Him" (MME, Chapter of december 28, 1879. The importance of life).

"If economic structures are an instrument, if money must serve and not govern, then it is necessary to look at the charism, at the management, the aims, the meaning, and the social and ecclesial implications of the economic choices.

"Thus, any economic decision has a consequence. It is therefore necessary to look at the charism, direction, goals, meaning and social and ecclesial implications of economic choices". "Thus every economic decision has a moral consequence". (ESCM 14 and 15).

When we talk about economic decisions often we imagine great things out of our reach. Yet every act, even insignificant, in our daily life, has its economic impact: the choice of the store where we will shop, the country of origin of the item that we buy, the respect of the working hours of the person who provides the cleaning, the recycling of wastewater, the care for the maintenance of what we possess, our resistance to the culture of waste ... the list would be endless. In recent years our attention to issues of justice and respect for creation has often been at the center of discussions. We also know how often there is a distance between our desire for consistency and our concrete actions, our habits. Yet we are witnesses: little by little a conversion of mentalities can be perceived. Let us be bearers of hope for no effort however minimal, is useless. We can also continue to go deeper, to question our practices in the light of our charism, the goals and directions we seek

Are the projects that we choose to support by our time, our efforts, and finances, related to our desire to support growth, to sustain life, to educate? In the aftermath of the COVID 19 crisis, there are no lack of examples: how to keep access open in our schools for the children of the families most affected economically ; how to involve the children but also their families in the reflection on another mode of consumption, what concrete form of solidarity to help migrants while the labor market is going down, ...? Here too, we can participate in the growth for a more just and fraternal world that God desires for all humanity

SISTER CECILE FRANQUIN

The General Bursar of the Congregation

Original: French

Testimony of an Assumption Youth

“to be a young Assumption is to be surrounded by more young people who share the charism, who dream and seek the way to transmit the message, it is to grow together and to be better persons each day, it is to live the charism of the Assumption and to be characterized by having a different stamp than other young people, it is to feel a profound love for Mary and for the Church.”

“ My name is Kimberly Flores, I am 23 years old, an ex-student of “La Asunción” in El Salvador, I studied International Relations and Business and I am just finishing my university studies. I am currently part of the Asunción Joven group. I participate as a youth advisor in the JAEM movement (Juventud Asuncionista En Misión) and in the Easter and Christmas missions.

How and since when?

My life in the Assumption began in 2004, when I transferred to grade one in that school. I came from a very small kindergarten and without a Christian education based on values, values that always characterized the Assumption. At that time there were many traditions that I didn't know about and everything made me uneasy, because I wanted to know and to know everything.

With the passing of the years, I began to get to know the religious and to deepen the charism. In my last year, I had a more intimate experience; on one occasion they told us that every year a group of senior students accompanied the mission immersions during Holy Week and they needed young people who were willing to serve to go to the communities they planned to visit. During this mission I experienced a close encounter with Jesus. I was able to feel a very strong reality that I only knew in name and that penetrated me deeply. I got to know a different feature of God. I was able to recognize Him in the humblest of people, in those who, having little, gave us everything with joy and without attachment. It was there that I began to feel a deep love for the project of Marie Eugenie.

After that experience I began to get closer to the Community that accompanied us and to become fully involved in the activities of the school. I was delighted to see how lay people and religious lived the charism and worked together, giving their gifts and putting them at the service of others. That is how I began to stay and to feel a deep love for the Assumption.

What have I learned in the Assumption?

There are two phrases of Marie Eugenie that were repeated to me many times in school and that at the time I did not know how to understand; “It is madness not to be what one is as fully as possible” (MME to Father d'Alzon, October 11, 1842, n°1563) and “The world is not big enough for my love”» (MME, Notas Íntimas, n°160/01). In the Assumption I have learned to be in fullness in any area of my life, to love deeply and to give myself completely. The Assumption taught me to forge my character, to have a critical sense of the reality in which we live, I learned to always seek justice and peace in my environment. I learned that education and love for Jesus Christ are the only things that transform our society that the construction of the Kingdom begins with ourselves, here on earth. I learned to feel proud of what I am and what I represent. I learned to love, care for and deeply respect my roots and those of others. I learned that caring for the common house is of vital importance for the integral and sustainable development of our and future generations. In the Assumption everything is a constant learning process and I continue to learn how to strengthen my faith, to seek and always put in place the necessary means for a better encounter with Jesus and my neighbor.

What has helped me the most?

The accompaniment of the Sisters in my life, the openness and the trust that they have given me by allowing me to share with them in Community has helped me to strengthen more and more the way in which I live the charism of the Assumption. As young people, we have also been given spaces such as Provincial meetings which have been a means of strengthening our charism. All of this has helped me to be aware that I cannot transform the world starting from the greatest and here is where I remember another phrase of Marie Eugenie “be strong and have a clear-cut and positive action even in our own little sphere.” (MME to Father d'Alzon,



2018: Young Asunción in the community of Santa Familia, Santa Ana - El

July 19, 1842, n°1556), I think that what I do from where I am in favor of others, transforms my environment and those who welcome it and share it with others; they also transform little by little the society in which we live.

What is it for me, being a member of 'Assumption Youth'?

For me, being an 'Assumption Youth' is swimming against the current, it is what defines my way of life and it is what guides my journey. Today being young and Christian is not very common, and being a young Assumptionist is even less so, since we live in an environment that is becoming less and less tolerant of the practice of Jesus' teachings. We also live in a society where many young people find themselves in situations where they are forced to follow a mold in order to be socially accepted and very difficult to find "their place in the world".

To be an 'Assumption Youth' has been a profound joy for me, I have always felt that this is where I belong and that it is very difficult for me to leave it; to be an

'Assumption Youth' is to be surrounded by more young people who share the charism, who dream and seek the way to transmit the message, it is to grow together and to be better persons each day, it is to live the charism of the Assumption and to be characterized by having a different imprint than that of other young people, it is to feel a profound love for Mary and for the Church.

How do I plan for the future?

Finding my vocation is and has been a constant search; however, I am very clear that whatever vocation God calls me to, I want to live it fully and with great joy, to continue to transmit the charism of the Assumption wherever I go, to continue to make Jesus Christ known as the liberator of the world; to live love, rectitude and humility with deep gratitude for life.

KIMBERLY FLORES

Ex-student.
Member of the group "Asunción Joven" from El Salvador



Year 2014: first Easter mission

assumption together

“God will always triumph...”

**She personified
“intentional loving
and serving”**

Maria Lourdes “Baby” Goyena Herrera, “Baby” as we all fondly called her was a woman of faith and action, who lived an extraordinary life by giving of herself to others in love and devotion. This was Baby’s life choice, that gained for her the trust and esteem of all those she came in contact with, both professionally and personally. She personified “intentional loving and serving”, which meant she chose to do everything with all her mind and heart and left nothing to chance convinced that this was her way of doing God’s will. She was most efficient, dependable, honest, and sincere with unmatched humility and calm that made the unimaginable and almost impossible happen, with grace and simplicity. She did all things well – no half measures – so “Assumption” in its essence.

Baby was the first official Lay Provincial Representative of what was then the Philippines-Thailand Province of the Religious of the Assumption, a role she assumed with all her heart in 2006. Always with deference to Ms. Lirio Ongpin Mapa, her immediate predecessor who was the Province’s first Lay Member of the International Permanent Council of the “Friends of the Assumption” – the term used prior to what we now call, ASSUMPTION TOGETHER. Baby built on what was then coming to birth and assumed this with strong, unwavering FAITH and magnanimity – attentive to where the SPIRIT was leading and always in partnership with the Sisters and other lay friends of the Assumption. This is one of Baby’s many gifts – the ability to work with others and to bring out the best in them so that together, the best was possible. And this was fully exemplified to the hilt when together with the Sisters, Baby assumed and inspired getting her Team motivated, to prepare for the Canonization of Mother Marie Eugenie in 2007 – rounding up a delegation of more than 1000, for the “once in a lifetime” experience in Rome on the 3rd of June 2007.

Baby continued to assume her role as Lay Provincial Representative until 2018 – organizing Assemblies and Congresses as well as Formation Sessions – to make St. Marie Eugenie of Jesus known and furthering the Assumption Spirit rooted and standing on the three pillars of prayer, community and mission.



Baby in Japan



Friends



First Congress of Assumption Together in 2010 of the Province of Philippines-Thailand 2016

But more than all the accomplishments, Baby always preferred to be effaced and even almost hidden – but most certainly remained the faithful, undaunting spirit behind all that is Assumption Together today in the Province, now called Asia Pacific.

Baby was a graduate of Assumption College, San Lorenzo where she served as Vice President for Human Resources and Administrative Affairs. She also served as the President of the Assumption Alumnae Association from 2005 – 2009. These are just a few of the positions and offices Baby held, not to mention her other Professional posts such as the Chief of Staff of the Office of the Prime Minister of the Philippines and the Chief of Staff of the Office of the Vice President of the Philippines, among others.

We lost Baby’s physical presence so unexpectedly and we still have not fully gotten over the shock and the grief, but true to form, Baby remains present in all that is Assumption Together today in the Province, but in another and perhaps even more efficacious way. And if Baby were here and was asked how she would like to be described, I reckon it would have been fairly simple and straightforward – Assumption Together “God will always triumph...”

“Remember me as a loving wife, mother and grandmother...”

Remember me as a kind friend always ready to lend a helping hand or simply be a presence of affection...

Remember me as a true Assumption girl who only wanted to bring my humble “stone” to build a better world...

Remember me as someone who loved Marie Eugenie, our Blessed Mother and our God above all else...

Remember me as always praying and preparing a place for you – looking forward to the day when I can welcome you home here, where there is unceasing joy and celebration, forever...

Both in life as well as in her passing, Baby has been a beacon of hope whose FAITH we all can emulate. In her last message to our good Cardinal with whom she worked in various projects, just a few days before she met her MAKER, she said, “GOD WILL ALWAYS TRIUMPH.” May this be her message to us all in the Assumption family, whom she loved dearly and who was certainly blessed to have had her among us.

SISTER MARIA JOSEFINA “MARJO” MATIAS AND INEZ ALVAREZ POLOTAN
 Asia Pacific Province
Original English



Provincial Chapter of the Province of South East Asia 2016

education

Citizenship as education for communion

“which was a beautiful expression of healthy patriotism, not vengeful or triumphalist, but popular, serious and happy”

In the context of the rise of nationalism in Europe, it is sometimes inappropriate, and perhaps even dangerous, to talk about national unity and citizenship. In Lithuania, at the Assumption School of Blessed Theophilus Matulionis, we have the opportunity to live this as a positive experience of community building. A bit of history: on 1 January 1918, one month before the restoration of the Lithuanian state, a group of resistance fighters for independence raised a Lithuanian flag - yellow, green and red - on the tower of Gediminas Castle, the symbol of the state. It flew for only a few days, until the Bolsheviks tore off the yellow and green stripes and raised the red Communist flag. After that, until the 21st century, this flag was raised more than once and lowered again by the occupying regimes. Now it has been flying freely for more than thirty years. On January 1, Flag

Day is celebrated, and every year a Lithuanian school that has stood out for its education in patriotism and civic values is chosen to receive and keep the flag for the coming year.

This year, the flag was given to our school in Assumption, the School of Blessed T. Matulionis. A large number of students, teachers and parents participated in the ceremony, which was a beautiful expression of healthy patriotism, not vengeful or triumphalist, but popular, serious and happy. The school continues to talk about this event. It is a symbol that sends a message to the students: Lithuania is above all about the people who live there.

And what can I do for my country? A coming community event will make it possible to live this out: the



Flag Day at Blessed T. Matulionis' school

ALFREDAS PLIADIS
PHOTOGRAPHY & EDITING

blood donation on January 13, to which senior students, parents and staff are invited. On January 13, we remember the deaths that occurred at the television tower in 1991 at the time of the second independence.

What does community spirit have to do with these civic actions? For our contemporaries, however autonomous they may be and with a fluid identity, it is very important to belong, to have communities with which one identifies. These communities can be very diverse, ranging from neighbourhood or class to nation, state or climate fighters. Although we have moved away from the logic of the nation-state in the 21st century and talk more about citizenship than nationality, this does not negate the need to “belong” to something. Through these events, we have had a positive experience of community - nation, community - civil society. A community we are proud of and committed to. Because in a real community, it is not enough to “feel good” with like-minded people, but the community engages, it compels you to take responsibility for those around you. We hope that our students will learn about civic community through these citizenship experiences.

SISTER KOTRYNA DANGUOLĖ GERVYTĖ

Community of Vilnius, Province of Europe
Original english



Flag Day at Blessed T. Matulionis' school



Flag Day at Blessed T. Matulionis' school

solidarity office

25 years at the service of Solidarity

From 1994 on, the way of living solidarity in the Assumption, beyond its financial aspect, became, for the General Chapters, the object of a search and deepening that was constantly taken up and updated

New structures to promote Solidarity.

"Assumption Solidarity" and the General Bureau of Solidarity for Development (BGSD) are two structures created by the 1994 General Chapter. The Chapter Delegates had voted at that time to create two Funds: the Congregation Solidarity Fund (FSC) and the Solidarity Fund for Development (SDF) and the structures that were to manage them. The purpose, constitution, management, general lines of action, and organization of these funds were carefully specified and integrated into the Chapter documents sent to the whole Congregation. From 1994 onwards, the way of living solidarity in the Assumption, beyond its financial aspect, became, for the General Chapters, the object of a search and deepening that was constantly taken up and updated. The Chapter of 2000 would give the Congregation a specific orientation under the evocative title of the concerns of the moment: Solidarity: Toward a Christian Practice of Globalization. Later on, solidarity would be integrated both in the orientation concerning Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC, which then became JIPC-S) and in that concerning the economic dimension of our life. It is in this context of a reflection that is always attentive to making the dimension of solidarity present and active in our religious life that Assumption Solidarity and the BGSD put into effect their mission and make their specific contribution.



Mrs. Viviane Poulaine
President of Assumption Solidarité

The juridical structure of Assumption Solidarity and the BGSD

Assumption Solidarity has the legal structure of a French non-profit association, (NGO type). Its Board of Directors is composed of 8 members: 3 are members by right: the Superior General (Sr. Rekha), the Delegate General Councillor (for the present Council, Sr. Marthe Marie), and the General Bursar (Sr. Cécile Franquin).



Sister Claire Myriam, Sister Adaluz and Sister Octavie in front of the project



Bafoussam School, the joy of working with textbooks

The other members are Sr. Clare Teresa, Sr. Michèle Barrot, psa and 3 lay persons, Viviane Le Polain, Belgian, currently president of the Association, Carlos Arenal, Spanish and Bruno de Monplanet, French. This Council, responsible for managing the SDF, meets twice a year to choose the development projects to which it wishes to give financial aid and to decide on the amount to be allocated to those it has selected. The projects are presented by the BGSD, currently composed of 3 members: the permanent delegate appointed by the General Council (Sr. Claire Myriam) and two lay volunteers, Isabelle de Monplanet and Alix de Chaumont. The BGSD is the kingpin of this Association. It also links up with the Assumption Provinces, in particular with the Provincial Solidarity Desks which send the projects, and with the donors and organizations that provide financial support.

The mission entrusted to the BGSD

The BGSD provides the permanent secretariat at the Congregational level to serve the objectives of the SDF. Its mission consists essentially in helping the applicants to compile files for financial aid using the forms it has developed for this purpose; to verify that each project has the written approval of the Provincial; to study the projects and verify their adequacy with the criteria established when the SDF was created. Revised in 2008, the criteria currently in force require that all development projects must be educational in the broadest sense, promote employment if possible, ultimately aim at self-sufficiency, comply with the rules of transparent accounting, make a local contribution, even a very modest one, and be able to present results that can be evaluated through



The new rubber plants

financial and activity reports.

Once the projects have been studied, the BGSD presents them to the Assumption Solidarity Board of Directors to obtain financing. It informs applicants of the decisions made and follows up on projects that have received financial assistance. It then makes the funded projects more widely known and proposes others of a more modest amount and with more flexible criteria. These so-called "small projects" are not directly supported by Assumption Solidarity and therefore need to find donors for their financing.

To conclude, we would like to mention a clarification on the action of Assumption Solidarity and the BGSD regarding the dramatic situations related to the Covid-19 pandemic that we are currently experiencing.

These two solidarity structures have not been given the mission of financing projects of an emergency nature, that is to say, projects that immediately come to the aid of populations affected by natural disasters, epidemics or armed conflicts. Of course, reconstruction projects to promote a better future can always be carried out where these misfortunes occur and be sent to us quickly. They are always received with particular attention. But in order to live in solidarity with those affected by great hardships, the General Council uses more rapid procedures by setting up specific and punctual Solidarity Fund

and invites Provinces and friends to contribute generously to them. For the Covid-19 pandemic a Fund is already operational.

In a forthcoming article we will give details on the financing of the projects and their geographical distribution, and in another on the type of projects financed and the areas of activity they promote and support



Despacho de BGSD. Marthe Marie y Claire Myriam

SISTER CLAIRE MYRIAM
Responsible for BGSD
Original: French



Koudougou



Koudougou



Planting rubber trees



Abidjean. The rabbits in the new hutch

ARCHIVE TREASURES

The old monastery of auteuil

In the Archives, a treasure trove of superb albums (photos, charcoals, watercolours) opens up for us the possibility of wandering through the former monastery of Auteuil, built in 1856, on the current site of the Square Rodin. We can take a virtual walk in the park, with its shady alleys, and push the door of the monastery, with its frescoes, iron structures and stone arches. An experience that suspends time and gives us the opportunity to share the emotion of the first sisters who set foot in Auteuil. After reading this article, you will no doubt want to browse through the pages of the albums, decipher the blueprints and count the trees and the flower beds!

The purchase of the property

Since 1845, the Assumption was installed at Chaillot, near the Champs Elysées, in a monastery that was becoming too small due to the expansion of the Congregation. The sisters were therefore looking for a place where the life of the Assumption could unfold in all its dimensions: a silent monastery, in the countryside, a space for true formation, for a contemplative, austere and regular life; a boarding school, with spacious grounds, where the students could learn how to direct their flight; a home base for the gatherings of the Congregation, at a time when it was beginning to grow outside of Paris.

For obvious financial reasons, the Chaillot monastery had to be sold before considering the purchase of another property. In March 1855, the search became a reality: "The Empress has just bought for her sister the Hotel [= the wealthy house] of Mme de Lauriston near us and all the land up to our street. If she bought our property for half the price she put into it, we could buy the 12 acres that we liked at the top of Chaillot and build the whole monastery there with the amount from the sale." (MME to Father d'Alzon, March 7, 1855, n°2468). Then in April: "...we are on the market for our property, not with the Empress, but with M. de Pontalba who would sell it to her and to others... Ask God and the Blessed Virgin in particular that this might be done and that we might have a property at the top of Chaillot which is not the one you saw, but which would suit us even better if it is not on quarries." (MME to Father d'Alzon, April 30, 1855, no. 2481) Initially, therefore, it is in another property in Chaillot that Marie Eugénie is planning to settle.

But business progressed less quickly than expected and finally she chose a new location: "A magnificent property surrounded by woodland, orchards, villas hidden among the trees ... for a relatively modest price" (Origins, Volume 3, Chapter XVII). The Auteuil

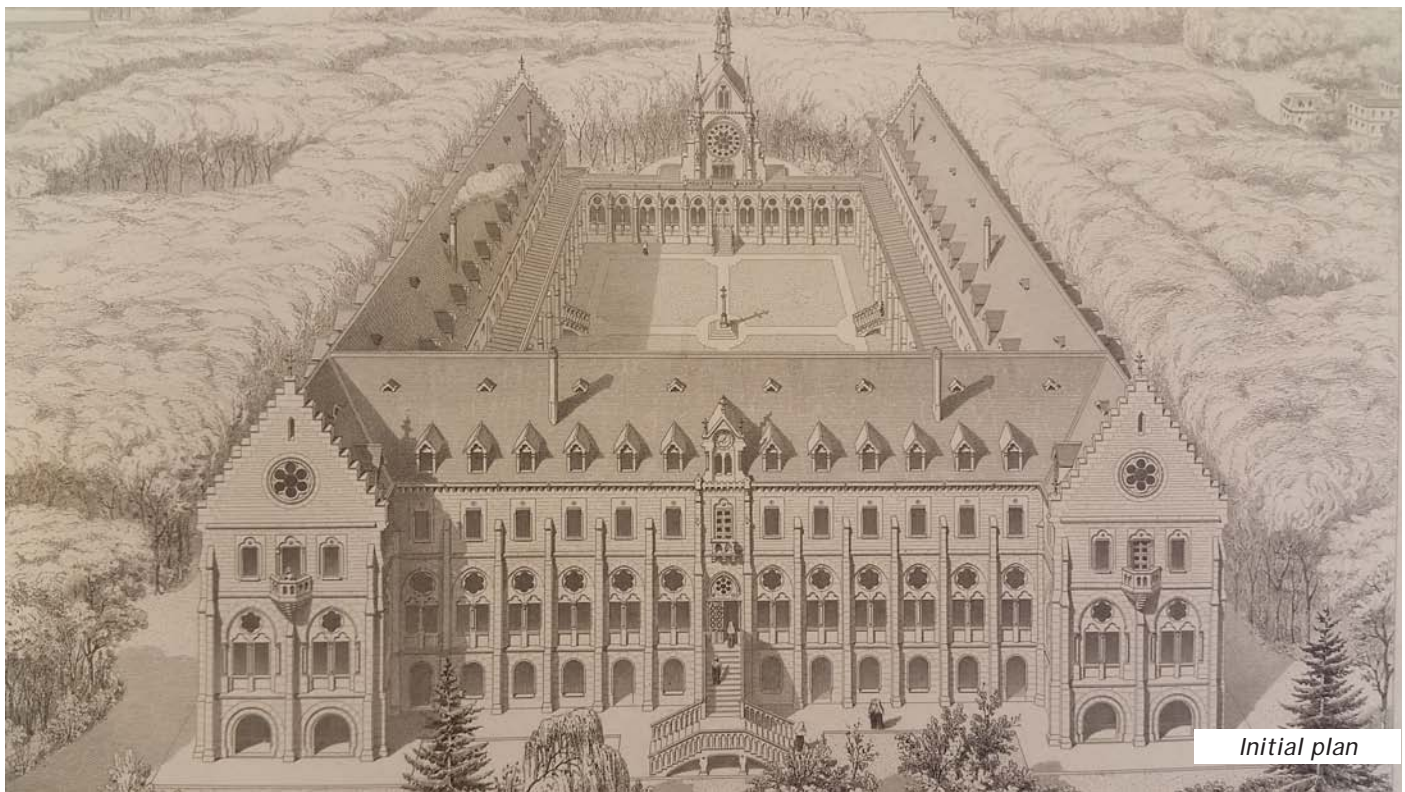
project was born! On this property, in the middle of the forest, was the Château de la Thuilerie, so called because of the tile factory that was there in former times. In the 16th century, a hunting lodge had been built; and later on, a mansion that had belonged to prestigious families.

In the autumn of 1855, Marie Eugénie signed the final contract for the sale of Chaillot and the purchase of the Thuilerie (Cf. MME to Mother Marie Bernard, 14 October 1855, no. 5272). The construction work could begin. On this large property - bounded by Avenue Mozart, Rue de l'Assomption (formerly named, in the 19th century, Rue des Tombereaux, after the land carts that passed through there), Rue Lafontaine and Rue Ribéra - there was only one building: the small château with its tower. Difficult to install nuns there! So, the project was to set up the boarding school in the castle and to have an adjacent monastery built for the community and the novitiate.

The move to Auteuil had a financial impact on the young Congregation, which had to save money for a long time. In October 1855, Marie Eugénie shared with Father d'Alzon that she was not sure that she would receive the money needed for the Thuilerie soon enough. She was always very careful with expenses: "I am delighted that we are sorting out the yard, but I wish we could use the dumper truck at 10 Francs only for one day and take some unused gravel. It's the price of the dumper that bothers me..." (MME to Mother Therese Emmanuel, May 24, 1861, no. 510). And she was quite proud if it turned out that the management had been good: "We have given much more than I thought to the contractors and to the sellers of the Thuilerie and of the lots; we have given much more than we have received from M. de Morny, so that we are in a good position... I must confess that these calculations tempted me with pride...". (MME to Mother Therese Emmanuel, May 16, 1857, n°462)



Château of the Thuilerie



The construction of the monastery

Then began a phase of major works, with Marie Eugénie as the master builder! In March 1856, the foundations of the new monastery were dug; it was quite a discernment to choose the soundest position: "Yesterday I went to the Thuilerie, the trees were falling under the axe, but the excavations had not yet begun. We have decided to build two sides of the cloister to host the children temporarily, we will do the hostel when we have new resources, because the château can only be arranged as a boarding school by destroying the chapel, and still it would never be very good." (MME to Father d'Alzon, February 20, 1856, n°2531); "Yesterday, and the day before, I went to the Thuilerie where the foundations of the new building are being dug. It's a very important to get it right. Today I am going to the Visitation to see their internal fixtures". (MME to Father d'Alzon, March 6, 1856, Letter n°2535). Marie Eugénie multiplied the visits to decide on the interior design; she reviewed the architect's plans, proposed the design of the flower beds or the methods for draining the lawns. In fact, the Archives of the Mother House contain original blueprints, drawings of columns or cornices. One can almost examine these documents and imagine that Marie Eugénie is standing beside them, commenting on them with the architect Verdier, Father d'Alzon or Mother Thérèse Emmanuel who took over the supervision of the works when her Superior was away from Paris.

As for Father d'Alzon, as early as January 1856, Marie Eugénie insisted for him to come and rest at the Château of the Thuilerie: "...Why would you not come here immediately? (...) When I go to the Thuilerie, I see a thousand things to be done there, which are precisely the only suitable occupations for you at the moment: flower beds to be created, lawns to

be drained, to be cultivated, etc..." (MME to Father d'Alzon, January 27, 1856, no. 2524). "When are you now thinking of coming?... The Thuilerie being free only until June 1857, I hope that your projects will not be delayed for too long." (MME to Father d'Alzon, February 19, 1856, n°2530)

Father d'Alzon finally arrived in December 1856: "Fr. d'Alzon was to arrive with such a flurry of wishes to settle down quickly at the Thuilerie that ... I was just trotting around, either here to look for things to organize a small temporary chapel, or at Auteuil to clear and prepare the place (...) For us, it is so delightful that he should go to the Thuilerie; he will have the big chapel organized, he will speed up the work, he will supervise and initiate all the necessary arrangements, which I have no time to do, and which would be quite necessary." (MME to Sister Marie Augustine, November 26, 1856, n°1384). Father d'Alzon was promoted to supervisor of the works! Once he had settled in, on the days when Marie Eugénie did not come or when she left Paris, he wrote to give news: "I thought, like you, that it would be better to plough the lawn. Bülher replied that this was impossible. Indeed, the soil is so hard that it would take at least four horses; and then... the horses will damage the flower beds by entering them". (Emmanuel d'Alzon to MME, March 5, 1857, no. 804) He took good care of the garden, but when Marie Eugénie was away, he sometimes feared that his arrangements would not please the Foundress!

Anyway, his long stay, from the end of December 1856 to April 1857, made him grow fond of the monastery and rave about its beauty: "La Thuilerie is being prepared every day to receive its future inhabitants. One day it will be very beautiful, almost too beautiful (...) What treasures of wisdom will be locked up in these cells, where nevertheless holy



The stairs of the old monastery



View of the cloister with the heater

poverty will reign!". (Emmanuel d'Alzon to Sister Marie de la Croix Aubert, January 9, 1857, n°781)

An ecological concern

Even if, to build the great monastery, some trees had to be felled, Marie Eugénie took care of them during all the works ... Father d'Alzon wrote to her one day: "Before you leave, I would like to point out to you a fact that I noticed last night. Mr. Demion had the trees at the end of your forest cut down... the very trees that you wanted him to keep the night before last. See if you have to give some orders." (Emmanuel d'Alzon to MME, February 15, 1857, no. 790) A few days later: "We are preparing the courtyard, we are keeping the trees that will shelter you on the side of the road, we haven't even touched the others yet; but we may have to decide on a few that might produce dampness, or may prevent the new building from drying out." (Emmanuel d'Alzon to MME, February 27, 1857, n°800). Felling a tree is never an insignificant decision and Marie Eugénie wants to avoid doing it as much as possible. Thus, during later arrangements, she will advise Therese Emmanuel to send a Sister "who cares about the trees, to check if it is really necessary to cut down those about which Sister Marie Marthe is talking... I want to spare all that we can and yet we must also cut down what is a hindrance." (MME to Mother Therese Emmanuel, December 11, 1863, no. 557).

Between tradition and modernity

"It is not a monastery in the technical sense of the

word; it is not a convent, nor a Congregation, nor a school, nor a boarding school, it is all of these things at once..." we read in an architectural review of the end of the century about the monastery of Auteuil. In the château, converted into a boarding school, the large reception hall was changed into a chapel. The Consul's lounge, where Napoleon once liked to come, became a large parlour. Even if it turned out to be necessary to reduce Marie Eugénie's original plans, involving a cloister closed on four sides, to two wings only, the building was imposing: the cloisters kept "the very pure lines of the Gothic style" and they gave the long cell corridors, the refectory, the Community Room and the Chapter Room "that religious aspect which made a deep impression on the soul." (Origins, volume 3, chapter XVII). Let us close our eyes and imagine ourselves contemplating the frescoes painted by Sister Anne-Marguerite on the walls of the cloister, of the refectory, frescoes of which the Archives keep photographs.

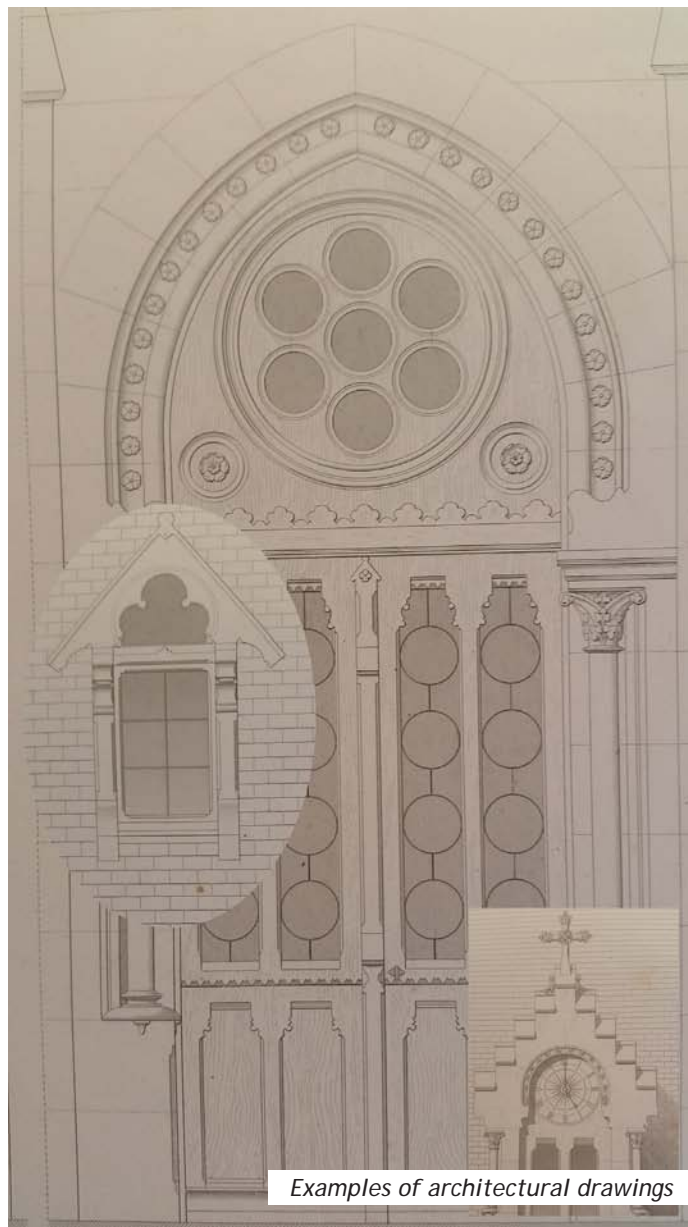
"A large external porch with a double staircase rises up from the ground below the garden to the entrance hall, which overlooks the internal courtyard on the same level." Let's go through the door and put our hands on the modern heating system to warm them up: "On the left and on the right, there are some easily accessible parlours, one smaller for the teachers, the other one larger for the students. Further on, the Community or Chapter Room, the long and spacious refectory for the nuns..." All this is built with a clever mixture of old and modern, the architect having used beams and iron joists all visible

in the middle of the pottery tiled floors according to the "Eiffel style", popular at the time.

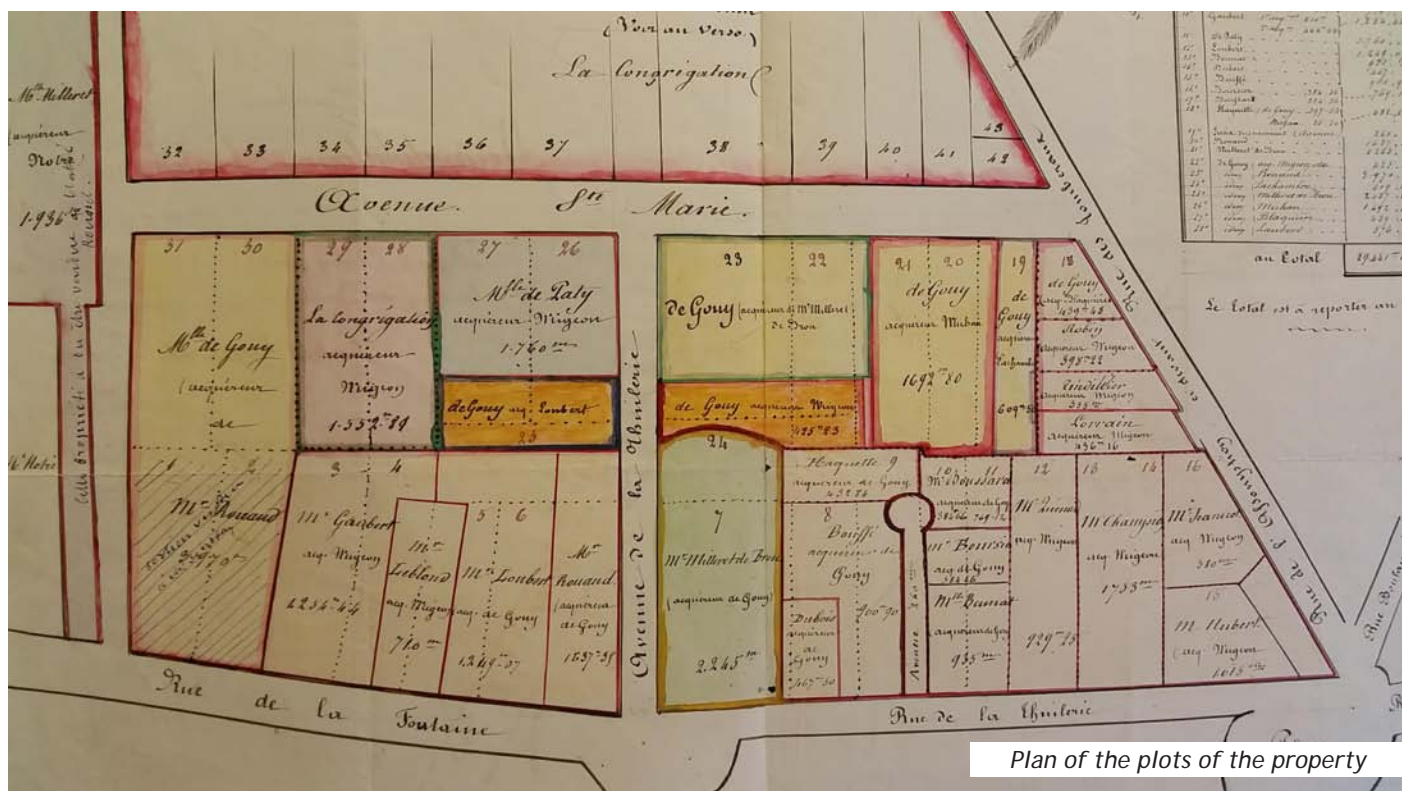
The Community moved in on August 10, 1857. More building works were undertaken afterwards (notably the present building, the "Convent of the Immaculate Conception", inaugurated in 1866, on the other side of the park). A final chapter opened in 1925, after the expulsions, when property developers began to destroy the park with its century-old trees, the château and the big monastery. Fortunately, the memory of this place, the home base of the Congregation, dwells with us through its pictures.

SISTER VÉRONIQUE THIÉBAUT

Archivist of the Congregation,
Original French



Examples of architectural drawings



Plan of the plots of the property



Direct their flight, but don't clip their wings



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