#ASSUMPTA

Religious of the Assumption magazine

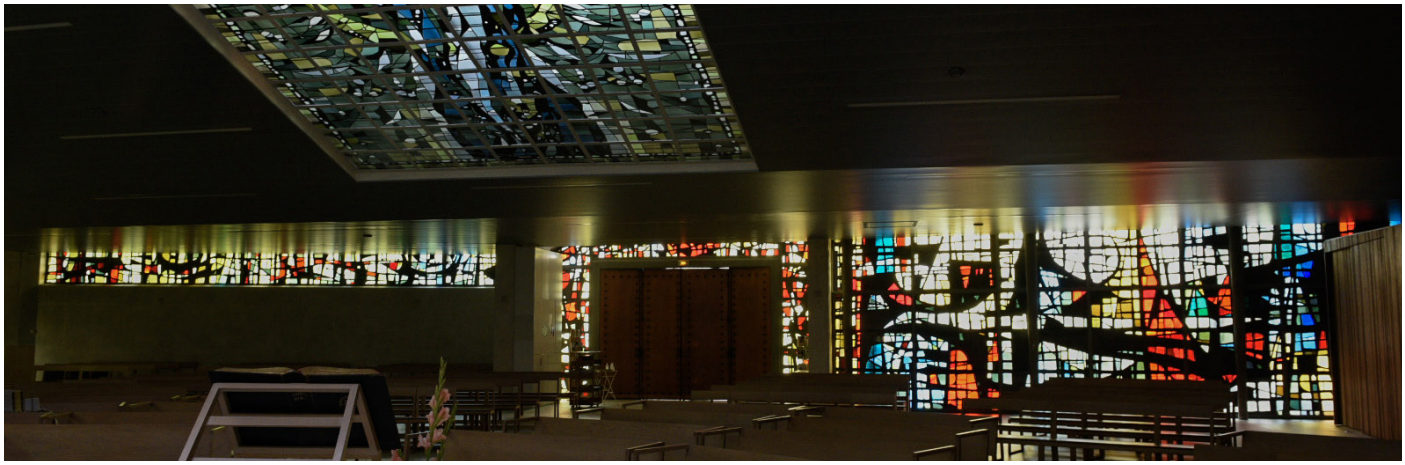
April 2023 - Nº9



With Christ for the love of the world

summary

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



#ASSUMPTA

Year 2023 - nº9

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Explanation of the cover: the phrase is the slogan of the Province of the United States. The photo is a mural of the Inigo Sadan Residence, part of the Jnana Deepa University, Institute of Philosophy and Theology, Pune, Maharashtra-India, where the CGP2023 took place.

editorial



The Bible is full of stories about the unexpected births of people – from the birth of Isaac right down to those of John the Baptist and Jesus. Sarah considered the idea of her bearing a child in her 90s as utterly laughable, but God had the last laugh. Zechariah couldn't imagine the notion of a son being born to his elderly wife and himself; his suspicious questioning led him to nine months of silence, followed by a word of wisdom and a song of praise. Mary, too, wondered how what she had heard from the angel could happen, but since her questions stemmed from pure wonder rather than suspicion, she was able to say yes before "the angel departed from her" (Lk 1:38).

These examples and many others like them point to a God of surprises. This God is at work in and for Israel - standard operating procedure for the gods of antiquity, bound as they were by ancient borders. But this is also a God who promises Abraham that he will not only be the father of a great nation but that "all the communities of the earth will find blessing in you" (Gen 12:2). In other words, this is a God who transcends borders and boundaries set up by human invention, who claims the whole world as his own possession. Surprising indeed.

This God is a mysterious -- even an exasperating -- God, too. As Naaman the Syrian angrily asks when Elisha instructs him to go and bathe in the Jordan in order to cure his leprosy, "Are not the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than all the waters of Israel?" (2 Kings 5:12). Just who is this God who disturbs our perceptions of good, better and best? Who overturns ideas, procedures, and structures? Who seems to revel in a certain untidiness?

Not surprisingly, this same surprising, mysterious God refuses to remain safely within the pages of the Bible. No, this God craves action by people, whether it takes the form of simple kindness or care of the sick or liberation of slaves or care of creation or education -- even of girls. And it's here that a certain young lady, born to luxury but tested by suffering, enters our story.

One hundred eighty four years ago today, on April 30, 1839, Anne Eugénie Milleret and Anastasie Bévier began their life together at the house on rue Férou. Joined soon by Kate and Josephine and the others, these "few poor girls without a place on the earth" found their place in the divine pattern, breaking through man-made barriers of culture and class to start something new. But of course, entering into that pattern didn't – and doesn't -- guarantee anything other than surprise on surprise.

So they knew disorder and pain – Father Combalot was the first of many who made sure of that, with his imperious possessiveness – but they carried on in faith. They knew mystery – the deaths of so many young sisters from consumption and other endemic diseases of the time – but found in themselves the compassion they needed to respond.

And they also knew friendship, remembering years later how the dark, low-ceilinged rooms of the house at Chaillot, which one person described as a kind of "Noah's Ark," rang with the laughter of all those "venerable Mothers who were not yet even thirty years old."

In 1989, Mère Hélène concluded her biography of Marie Eugénie by observing: "Marie Eugénie has accomplished miracles since her death, but the greatest miracle is the very existence of the congregation she founded 150 years ago. What is not possible to express concerning the foundress can be revealed by the Assumption's living its mystery in spite of its weaknesses, short-comings and failings."

It seems to me on this special day that that is our call – to live in the mystery, the surprise, the untidiness and the strangeness of our life in God with each other in the Assumption, and to celebrate it all. After all, the purple was for penitence, but the white was for joy. Happy Foundation Day!

SISTER NUALA COTTER
United States Province
Original English

general community

“We are all heirs to a tradition that we have deepened together”.

The beginning of January was marked by the **international session of Assumption Together** at the Mother House-Auteuil. The theme chosen for this meeting was: “Connecting with our roots, going back to the sources”. In this session, lay people and sisters deepened their understanding of the gift of baptism through the Scriptures, the teaching of the Church, the heritage of the Congregation, while allowing themselves to be enlightened by the human and spiritual experience of Saint Marie Eugénie. The varied contributions of the participants from the four continents reflected the different realities of life and mission in which the Assumption is implanted. Through this formation, the conviction that the Assumption charism has a particular touch to bring to the movement initiated by Pope Francis towards a Synodal Church was reinforced.

In her opening message, Sister Rekha said that “Our fundamental identity is that we are all disciples of Jesus. And we want to follow Jesus by living our baptismal grace in its fulness. In other words, in and through the initiation of baptism, all of us (both religious and laity) are called to be holy (consecrated or set apart) and to share in the mission of Jesus.”

In practice, the synodal dynamic which consisted in living the ten days of the session including a weekend of pilgrimage to Preisch was appreciated! The symbol chosen for our gathering was a polyhedron constructed from the symbols sent by our different Provinces and Region to mark our diversity.

We are all heirs to a tradition that we have deepened together. We want to share it, taking into account the complementarity of our vocations and the variety of our gifts. Religious and lay people share the same struggles to lead a life faithful to our Christian vocation; to combine family/community responsibilities, the life of faith and Christian commitment as a lay Assumption or as a Religious of the Assumption. This tension between prayer, mission, community/family is a common reality in our following of Christ. We all feel called to help each other to discern our priorities and to make this sometimes inevitable tension fruitful, at the service of life.

We feel in tune with the vision of the Church of which Pope Francis speaks: “ A Church that is intent on mission, where all join forces and walk together to



Assumption Together Group

Assumption Together Group in Metz



Bethany Ashram - celebration of the Malankara Rite



Celebration Mass on 10 March



MAHER Centre



General Community - Mars 2023



Wagholi community with candidats, postulants and novices



proclaim the Gospel. A Church in which what binds us together is our being baptized Christians, our belonging to Jesus. A Church marked by fraternity between laity and pastors, as all work side-by-side each day in every sphere of pastoral life, for they are all baptized."

The ways of belonging to the Assumption were clarified, and all the participants felt the need to form themselves together for the Mission of God. Within this belonging to the Assumption, lay friends feel another call to commit themselves to the Way of Life: the need for preparation and support to go further in the baptismal commitment within a contemplative community for mission.

The Plenary General Council (PGC) in India

The meeting of the General Council and the Provincial/Regional Superiors in India, the cradle of ancient civilizations, plunged us into an unsuspected cultural wealth. For many, it was their first experience of the sub-continent! As part of our meeting, we were exposed to some realities rather than others. Thanks to the experience of immersions in the four states that make up the country, we had a very diverse geographical, ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious panorama.

Some aspects fascinated and surprised us in their contrasts. The religious tradition: in addition to Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism..., other religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam... are present in India. Even if during our stay we had to rub shoulders with many religions or beliefs during the visits, the immersions were the occasion to discover the Catholic Christian religion according to three liturgical rites: Latin; Syro-Malabar; and Syro-Malankara. The linguistic disorientation allowed us to meet in what unites us: communion in the celebration of the Paschal mystery. In the other two rites the liturgy is more dialogical/sung. This repetition gives room for interiorization, with some borrowings from local religions in terms of songs and attitudes, which give the celebrations a greater depth and sense of the sacred.

Ancestral wisdom: Indians are proud of their tradition and live by it. We were hosted in one of the residences of the Pontifical University of Pune: Inigo Sadan - House of Ignatius. The walls were studded with sayings, proverbs and other words of cultural



Candidats, postulants and novices in Wagholi community

wisdom, so that the mind is perpetually nourished by these thoughts. The quality lectures on religious life: [Religious Life: Sociological Perspectives; Religious Life and New Forms of Presence; Mission: Theological Perspectives] deepened our reflections and prepared us for the visits to the important places. Immersed in the local context of each of our communities, we are witnesses to an Assumption presence in India that is characterized by this closeness to the poor. The apostolic choices are clear: to work for and with the forgotten of our societies.

The work as CGP has moved towards this theme: Moved by the Spirit, in dialogue with our realities, we discern new Ways of Synodality for our time: Metanoia; Prophetic Mission; Culture of Care. "My gaze is fixed on Jesus Christ and the extension of his Kingdom" MME

This path of discernment commits us to be open to the work of the Spirit in our places of life and mission. Differences remain our richness as a Congregation and we are convinced that each Assumption presence in different parts of the world will bring its own particular touch to the transformation of the people and the realities into which God sends us.

After the CGP, it was a favourable moment for other meetings to complement the online canonical visit to India: thus, Sr Cécile met the sisters in charge of the Accounts in the province, Mercedes was able to give a formation on Communication, Sandra and the local JPICs team began to organize the international session that will be held in India from 26 November to 7 December 2023. We then had two days of formation: one with the young sisters of the Province and another with the superiors of the communities. All these meetings were a gift, they opened our eyes to understand better the reality, the gifts and the challenges that the sisters face. It was also an opportunity to visit some of our communities.

A visit to two social centres in Maharashtra: Snehalaya and Maher, open to all, interfaith and deeply evangelical at the same time! Snehalaya means "House of Love". It is a space where the most vulnerable in society have the right to live a life, free from discrimination, inequality and exploitation! The Maher Centre's mission is to provide a safe haven for women, men and children who are victims of violence.

In both cases, we have touched the peripheral situations of our societies today, the new poverties resulting from the consequences of modernization and/or individualism.

We are grateful to these apostles of love who help people to give meaning to their lives. We have been called to multiply these new modes of presence, to be part of a Church that cares through attention to the most fragile, not to get used to social injustices. We want the impulse to work for the transformation of situations for a better life to continue to reverberate in people's hearts.

The 125th anniversary of the birth of St. Marie Eugenie in Heaven - March 10 - was celebrated in a special way in Auteuil. At the beginning of the Mass, Rekha welcomed all the guests and invited us to follow the path of sanctity of Marie Eugénie, awakening us to a contemplative outlook and a zeal for the Kingdom of God. Our parish priest, Father Guillaume de Menthière, presided at the Eucharist, surrounded by 15 other priests. A good hundred people responded to our invitation: the personnel of the house, the other Assumption religious families, the classmates of our young sisters at the university and the young people of the chaplaincy whom they supervise in

the different apostolates. The March 10 celebrations were concluded by a visit to the MME museum. The time of conviviality brought together people from all walks of life; an enrichment and a blessing for this day.

March 19, St. Joseph's Day is significant for our General Community. We are happy to welcome Sister Françoise Martin to the General Community. In addition to the General Secretariat, she will keep the services at the Mother House and her apostolic commitments.

The Online Education Session will take place from 20 to 24 March. Its theme is "Journeying together towards becoming a village of care". Fifty-seven participants are expected to attend.

Let us fix our gaze on the One who is the Resurrection and the Life and let Him lead us to our brothers and sisters who long for this life in God.

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



Hindu Temple

Visit to the museum March 10



education

The school meeting, to form and to transform

"Our role becomes crucial and gives another look at the educational vocation "

If we were asked what education means in our lives, we would surely answer by recalling the experiences of sacrifice, dedication and personal growth, and we would also include those in which the significant presence of our peers and teachers left their mark on the construction of our life project. If we asked children and young people the same question, what would they answer? Would they be able to name positive experiences, people who help or helped them grow or would they just mention the amount of homework to do, how difficult it is to get up early in the morning or how tedious the school routine has become since the return to face-to-face classes.

Ecuador returned to the classroom, face-to-face, this year. Expectations have ranged from biosafety standards, mobilization, health contingencies and curriculum adaptation. The face-to-face classes motivated remembering how to carry out student life activities in the Assumption and making decisions about changes and possibilities to carry them out. What have been the specific difficulties we have encountered in education to date?

The schools received the endorsement for the revision and levelling of the skills and knowledge necessary for each level. The results of the virtual experience, however well-intentioned it may have been, have shown that very few students have taken advantage of the platforms and other technological resources that teachers have used to maintain an educational activity that supports an education with options that have not been promoted until now. Despite this, the reality shows that in classrooms, the number of children and young people with strong difficulties in performing mathematical operations has increased. Access to more effective tools for searching for information has not shown an improvement in the ability to reason and argue. The apathy towards handwritten texts as opposed to digital texts to hide dysgraphia (the inability to write correctly) and spelling mistakes is alarming. Virtuality has led students to consider that keeping a low profile and minimal effort in terms of their academic responsibilities is sufficient.

Another aspect to take into account is the sedentary lifestyle we experienced during the two years of the pandemic, which has meant that our bodies have not yet become accustomed to the movement and timetables that face-to-face attendance demands. It has been a constant occurrence to see students with immobilizers and crutches to facilitate their going to the classroom. Many are suffering from allergies and eating problems. Students and teachers are exhausted and illnesses have increased among them.

One of the difficulties that has hit hardest this return, which at first we received with hope, has been the emotional state. Our children and young people have more difficulties to face and process the difficulties of everyday life. Their sadness and attitudes of natural rebellion tell us of a background that needs to be addressed and guided by the adults around them. Is the school a space for catharsis of everything that affects the individuals who attend it or has it become one of the factors that throws into disarray the relationship with oneself and with others? How has the "UEDLA" (Educational Unit of the Assumption) worked with these difficulties throughout this year, which has entered its final stage?

Education and transformation

From an everyday point of view, creating spaces for meeting, for formation and transformation, learning values for a life project has been an important part of the construction of the school's educational model, maintaining a particular style, which forms generations of men and women with a different, humanizing nuance and with a faith motivated towards the common good and teamwork. This way of being is born from a project that combines faith, science and activity. Sisters, teachers and students share a common space in which they live together very particular educational moments that help to form and transform the people who are bound



together. Each space is used to promote the learning of values necessary for their life project.

In this period of taking up again and rethinking things over, the Assumption has maintained those aspects of its institutional life which have become a bridge between the generations of schoolchildren and the indications of the educational curriculum for our country. The school day begins with the first moment that allows the connection between the groups: the encounters, the morning contact, the greeting and the prayer that gives motivating messages for daily life. But it is not a prayer that is recited to get it out of the way but a community prayer, which is made up of petitions and wishes in which each group has the opportunity to participate by expressing what is in its heart, deepening its knowledge of the situation of the others and of relevant issues that deserve attention. It is the first step towards the awareness we need as human beings.

School activities allow children and young people to develop individual and group work thanks to normalization and pedagogical silence that promote a state of concentration and attention that leads them to conduct themselves in a conscious manner and avoid unnecessary hustle and bustle and noise that can disturb others. This respectful silence arises from the formation of work habits that require a state of autonomy and personal regulation. The self-control that emerges as a result is an element that will allow the Assumptionist to abstract and internalize, to search for answers, to give space for creativity. The plenary sessions are an important source of feedback and development of oral expression, as well as note-taking in the case of listeners. The use of the designated places for displaying flipcharts and charts is maintained, as well as the use of the virtual platform to share audiovisual material created by the students. In both cases, a sober, focused and well-founded presentation with information obtained from reliable sources is required.

Knowing how to behave and make use of common materials in certain places such as the classroom, laboratories, library and other school premises is also a fundamental axis that is practiced on a daily basis. The recreational spaces allow for relaxation and encounters that foster a lively atmosphere that needs to be accompanied and guided in order to achieve its purpose. Many of our young people seek to talk among themselves or with the teachers to express their doubts and fears. We become a source of listening and advice, so the teacher in the Assumption also grows in this style. The same values that are instilled in the young people are those that are reflected in the teacher in the Assumption. All our anxieties and woes are left behind to make way for the concerns of the young, we stay up all night looking for the most appropriate strategy, the activity that will destabilize them cognitively and lead them to probe more, always more.

How do we teach children and young people to deal with emotions, how do we make sense of everything that happens around us, what to do with our burdens that weigh as much as our doubts? It is not an easy situation for any age group. Giving a name to what we feel and not knowing what answer to give. This is a great challenge that has moved parents and teachers to care for young minds. To teach them that the words spoken so long ago are still strong, still permanent: I abandon myself to you Lord, I leave everything to You because I can't do it any more... Teach them to see in others the image of God, He is there, He accompanies us, He waits and welcomes us.

As educators we are aware that the aspects mentioned above are an important legacy in the history of the institution, each teacher who joins us receives it and makes it his/ her own with the support of the Religious and the senior teachers. Our role becomes crucial and gives another look at the educational vocation because we are not only dedicated to developing the skills required for each level, but we are aware that each student is a promise to be fulfilled, that the words and deeds with which we fill their days leave a permanent mark, and that both students and teachers, this style of education shapes and transforms us.

MARIA LOURDES BONILLA PALACIOS
Teacher of the Unidad Educativa Particular
Province of Ecuador - México
Original Spanish

echo of the Archives

The Archives' hive

"The experience of Marie Eugenie (…) sheds light on ours and we can feel close to her, humanly and spiritually."

The rooms of the Archives are like the cells of a hive in which everyone is busy setting it up. This hive even goes far beyond Auteuil, through all those who collaborate in the collection, seizure and translation of documents. Thus, in Brussels, Sister Anna Kristina prepared, for many months, the classification of all the documents of Denmark and Sweden. She was helped by Sister Marie Bonin who stayed with her several times. These documents arrived at Auteuil already neatly arranged and it was child's play to put a code on each box and to specify the inventory according to the criteria of the General Archives. We therefore now have a Scandinavian Collection, made up of about twenty boxes filled with documents on the foundation of each Community in its countries, photographs, reflections on the Lay community and on the future of the Assumption in northern Europe and magnificent illuminations, traces of the liturgical life of the foundresses of Copenhagen.

The Marie Eugenie library, the Archives' consultation room, has also been efficiently tidied up. Sister Marie Yvonne and Sister Veronique transported magazines, books, tables, then Sister Marie Bonin did a balancing act to make an inventory of all the books of the 1st library of Auteuil, transported first to Val, then returned to Auteuil. This work was completed by the inventory that Sister Marie France carried out on the Val library in Belgium. Sister Illuminata took over by doing the inventory of publications on the Assumption family and documents in different languages. It is therefore with joy that we welcome all those who wish to work on documents or do digital research on the archival collection.

The Museum is always a place of interior experience for those who visit it. Sisters from Europe or elsewhere, participants in the sessions, friends from various countries (they now arrive knowing that there is a museum to visit and ask for it!), people from the neighborhood or the parish, groups from Assumption France, Assumption Together, Brothers and Sisters from other Congregations. Thanks to the inventory work, we still discover new wonders to highlight. The Association of Archivists of the Church of France (AAEF) asked if we could welcome, in May 2023, a group of archivists in training on the theme of the enhancement of archives. Each time, it is a joy to see that Mary Eugenie's message is very topical, full of meaning and joy.



Sister Marie Bonin in an ocean of books



Assembly at work in Madagascar - August 2022

The archives also have their virtual side. We joyfully inherit the painstaking work of Sister Catherine Sesboüé who, for years, had collected digital documents in a software called Docushare. We have taken it in hand, updated it and now we can classify thousands of documents produced by the Congregation over the years, in particular during the last 40 years. In addition to the Archives room on the second floor, there is also a virtual Archives room. This software is not intended to be public because it stores all the documents of the Archives but it greatly facilitates the search and the use of the wealth that we possess.

Madagascar – Session on the History of the Congregation

Since the celebration of the fusion with the Augustinians in 2016, the Province of Madagascar has taken on the rhythm of the Assumption. The session on the history of the Congregation for all the Sisters of the Province, in August 2022, was to allow each one to assume its history, to receive new light in order to better understand the choices and the current lifestyle.

The opening celebration set the tone: in the chapel of Ambohimahasoa, a carafe of water invited to "drink at the source". The session showed that the sources were multiple and that we in turn become a source when we accept to let ourselves be irrigated. Each day, a typical element of the country came to support our reflection: the palm tree of the traveler opened the road, then the bricks which are manufactured throughout the country), the small brazier in front of the houses (fire must be taken care of so that 'it does not die out...)

A conviction emerged: the experience of Marie Eugenie (her youth, her search, her conversion, her vocation…) sheds light on ours and we can feel close to her, humanly and spiritually. It precedes us on the road and invites us to revisit our inner life. During the session, each recognized herself as responsible for the charism of the Assumption and the Communities committed themselves to continue the work of deepening together.

The joy and dances united us in a great movement of hope and creativity which was also revealed when it was necessary to find symbols for the charism (the tree, the fire, the spring, the house…) or for Community life (the bouquet, the cake to share, the house to build, the dance, the strings of the musical instrument, etc.). Immense thanksgiving for the life received and given.

SISTER VÉRONIQUE THIÉBAUT
Archivist of the Congregation,
Original French

ama

International AMA session from October 31st to November 9th, 2022

“ It was a grace filled and renewed experience for me. ”

I am blessed by attending the International AMA session at Auteuil in Paris on 31st October to 9th November 2022. There were 18 participants from 12 Provinces. The International AMA session was a very informative, enriching, inspiring and learning experience for me.

Every day was a new learning and discovering things about AMA. In the beginning of the session I was like an empty pot not knowing much about AMA but as our session started and as the days were passing by, I could learn and understand many things regarding AMA and grew in deeper understanding and knowledge of the role of AMA in our Congregation.

The mixed group of sisters and lay AMA co-coordinator and AMA participants was a very rich experience for me. We had many topics to discuss in the group like what the profile of AMA will be, criteria for the selection of AMA; how do we train AMA and how do we welcome AMA in our provinces etc. The exchanges of experiences, reflections, insights and thoughts in the small as well as the big group were excellent and stimulating. In the discussion every group was coming up with new, innovative and creative ideas which were admirable. The group was very dynamic, optimistic and open to listen to the Holy Spirit in sharing the experiences with one another.

The Group was ever ready, enthusiastic and very energetic to come up with a draft which is acceptable, adoptable and valuable in this modern world with the culture of youth today without losing the originality of the Assumption. The unity and the single mindedness of the group was very touching and moving. I strongly felt oneness and strong bond of family spirit of the large international Assumption family.

I could feel and see in the group the sense of responsibility and belongingness to the large international family. The love and care for one another was very genuine. I experienced the Synodality, communion, collaboration and participation. I felt



Final party of the AMA session



Participants of the 2023 session

deep within me the accompaniment of God, active presence of Holy Spirit and guidance of St. Marie Eugenie throughout the session. It was a grace filled and renewed experience for me. I really enjoyed and cherished each moment of my stay in Auteuil. I was nourished by each one's gracious presence at the foot of St. Marie Eugenie in Auteuil. I am very grateful to my provincial and her council for giving me the chance to attend this session and have this marvelous experience. I am also grateful to the commission for organizing this session with diligence and meticulous planning.

SISTER ALICE TOPPO
Province of India
Original English



Sightseeing tour of Paris



Closing prayer of the AMA session



Day at the Forges Transition Campus. Reception area for youth groups

treasures of the archives

Marie Eugenie and The School of Silence

"Marie Eugenie recognizes in each member of the extended Holy Family (...) a friend of the Lord who helps us to welcome Him into our lives "

What are the objects that surround us and help us to live a permanent contemplation? This is the question we can ask ourselves when discovering the objects that surrounded Marie Eugenie during the last moments of her existence, 175 years ago. In addition to the crucifix that she contemplated for a long time, as she had done all her life, during the last months when she was slowly weakening, we have preserved, thanks to the delicateness of the Sisters, multiple treasures that surrounded the one who gradually surrendered into the hands of the Lord. What are these objects that speak to us of the spiritual life of Marie Eugenie?

• A statue of the Blessed Virgin: dressed in a white dress, with a blue mantle edged in yellow, Mary is gentle and recollected, her hands open in an attitude of benevolent welcome. Peaceful. Smiling. Under the statue, this inscription: "This statue was on the desk of our venerated Mother Foundress".

• A statue of Saint Anne, offered to Marie Eugenie by students for her birthday in 1896. Saint Anne is holding a book where her daughter, the Virgin Mary, places a finger suggesting that she is learning to read. Two rather serious faces but a certain closeness between the mother and her daughter. In addition to being her patron Saint, Saint Anne undoubtedly reminded Marie Eugenie of the founding intuition of Father Combalot. He had indeed received her at the sanctuary of Saint Anne d'Auray, in Brittany. Saint Anne, accompanied by the Blessed Virgin, is also a figure of discreet and effective education, whom she certainly prayed for the Sisters engaged in education, for the students and for the families of the schools of the Assumption.

• Images that supported her prayer at the end of her days, in particular an image of Jesus blessing Saint Joseph. The image is accompanied by this comment: "Image that Mother Marie Eugenie of Jesus had in her hands the last days of her life and which was on her bed when she breathed her last". Saint Joseph, a man of silence and effacement, becomes a way to welcome God's blessing.

• A Crucifix, which was alternately in the room of Mother Thérèse Emmanuel and in that of Mother Marie Eugenie.



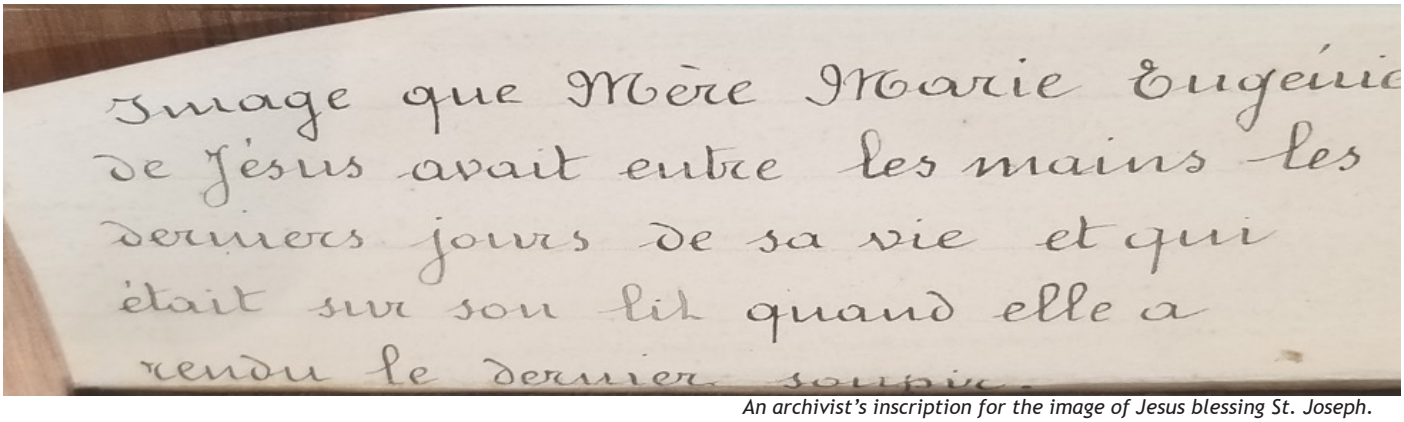
Statue of St. Anne and the Virgin Mary



Saint Anne at the Museum



Statue of the Virgin Mary



An archivist's inscription for the image of Jesus blessing St. Joseph.

These treasures remind us that Marie Eugenie, despite a lively, busy life, devoted to her Sisters, to the Congregation and to the Church, always loved silence.

By turning her gaze to Christ on the Cross, she said, "one learns to love"... And it was precisely in the silence of Christ that she found an expression of her own love and a school to love in our turn. "Silence is a difficult thing, because many people have an enormous need to speak when they only suspect that they are held in a little less esteem. When something demeaning has been said to them, or when it has been allowed to think that they have been wrong in this or in that, it is for many people an occasion for great speeches: our Lord kept silent. He was silent in pain, he was silent when humbling Himself, in the face of insults, humiliations, contempt. It was silence that sanctified His Passion! We could talk about it indefinitely. It is better to pray, to meditate, to stay at the foot of the Blessed Sacrament to nourish oneself there with the words which are in the Gospel, and to try to penetrate them to the depths". (Marie Eugenie, Chapter Instruction, March 30, 1879)

The Holy Family is also for her a school of silence and trust in the love of the Father which accompanies all our paths, even if they lead us outside our land and out of safe places. Marie Eugenie recognizes in each member of the extended Holy Family (Mary, Joseph, but also Anne, Joachim, Elisabeth...) a friend of the Lord who helps us to welcome Him into our lives: "Have also devotion to the parents of the Blessed Virgin, to Saint Joachim, to Saint Anne, to Saint Elizabeth, and so on for all the evangelical Saints. You will thus get used to penetrating further into the inner life of the Holy Family. I believe that it is a very sure path to arrive at devotion to the Sacred Heart, to seek to imitate those who have been very much in the Heart of Jesus, those whom Jesus loved and whom He had chosen as friends. How could the friends of our Lord not be the special objects of our affection, of our worship and of our prayer, so that they may make us, in our turn, the friends of our Lord Jesus Christ?" (Marie Eugenie, Chapter Instruction, January 13, 1878)

The Holy Family of Nazareth is for her an eloquent cradle of silence: "Let us again take the sweetness of Divine Wisdom. What is sweeter, more soothing than a little child who smiles at us, who abandons himself, who lets himself be carried to Egypt, brought back when we want? In the hone of Nazareth, what sweetness, what peace! A holy Father reports that Saint Joseph spoke little there, the Blessed Virgin even less, and the Child Jesus even less. It is because the prayer was so elevated there that the souls understood each other. (Marie Eugenie, Chapter Instruction, January 12, 1873)

Mary and Joseph, each in their own way, introduce us to this silence. Mary knows how to be silent and burn with love in silence, "always recollected, always occupied with God, always gentle, always humble, accepting everything, submitting to everything, renouncing everything" (Marie Eugenie, Chapter Instruction, July 4, 1877). She said little: "The Gospel brings us her Magnificat, but it is a canticle of praise. Do we say that someone speaks when he recites his breviary? Apart from this canticle, the words of Mary are very few. It was by her union with God, by her humility, by the grace she bore within herself, by prayer, that she spread what is good and practiced her eminent charity." (Marie Eugenie, Instruction of July 2, 1876)

As for Saint Joseph, we are called to imitate "his simplicity, his obedience, and finally the fullness of his love. He only loved Jesus and Mary, everything in him was centered on Jesus and Mary. Jesus and Mary were his whole life, his whole love, his whole

conversation, his whole support. This is our model. There is nothing extraordinary in the life of Saint Joseph. He just does whatever God tells him to do. He simply observes the law of God, he simply becomes the greatest of Saints after the Blessed Virgin, because he only has Jesus and Mary in view and lives only for them. When, as head of the Holy Family, he must command them, he does not follow his will, but that of God, accomplishing it simply, absolutely, without ''because'', without ''if'', without '' but'', neither ''yes'' nor ''no''." (Marie Eugenie, Chapter Instruction, April 26, 1874)

Who speaks to us through these treasures contemplated in our Archives? Anne, caring and humble? Mary, servant in all things? Saint Joseph, obedient and faithful? Or does Marie Eugenie herself come to visit us, making us feel that she is close, that she watches over our steps?

This strength of silence, drawn from the school of the friends of God, she experienced concretely at the end of her life. During the last months, she consumed herself in prayer, in a life of silence, abandonment and love. Here is what Father Odelin said during the General Chapter of 1898, after the great passage of Marie Eugenie: "When she had a presentiment of God's plans for her, after placing the government of her Congregation in the hands of her Vicar, she seemed to have disappeared. The word of the Gospel that we will read tomorrow on the feast of Saint Laurent came true in her. Truly, truly, I tell you, if the grain of wheat thrown on the ground does not die, it remains alone, but it dies it bears much fruit. It seems that Our Mother wanted to practice this death of the grain of wheat. We have witnessed this decrease in the manifestation of her life and her activity. Her soul withdrew within herself, in humility in the sacrifice of his personality, in the silence she loved and seemed to have adopted as a line of conduct. I remember speaking to her about the silences of Saint Joseph. Saint Joseph was silent because he listened, because he was obedient. These thoughts had struck her, it seemed that she appropriated this silence and said to herself: Here is my lot, I am silent, I keep silent like Saint Joseph. We cannot fully appreciate all the graces and fruitfulness that this annihilation, this humility, this disappearance of herself, this silence of your Mother during her last years has earned for your future which begins today."

SISTER VÉRONIQUE THIÉBAUT
Archivist of the Congregation,
Original French


Crucifix of Marie Eugenie and Therese Emmanuel


Image of Jesus blessing St. Joseph

jpics

Follow-up to the Migration session

"One of the commitments of each participant in the session was to transmit, as far as possible, the lived experience"

In July 2021 the JPIC Secretariat of the Assumption Family held the International Session on Migration with the theme: A World on the Move: Migrants, Refugees, Displaced Persons, Victims of Trafficking. All of this is a challenge for the Assumption today. The JPICS referent persons from each Province participated in this session, as well as representatives of each Assumption family in the world.

Even if the session took place virtually, it did not limit our discussions and it enriched us as an Assumption family in our commitment to JPIC on this very challenging theme in our world today.

One of the commitments of each participant in the session was to transmit, as far as possible, the lived experience by region where the different Assumption families are located. So, each Province looked for ways to follow up on this session in its own context.

Although it is impossible to share all the richness of the fruits of the session, we want to share some signs that show how this experience strengthened the momentum of the concrete responses of each Province on the issue of migration. Below, we share some elements of some of them.

- The Province of Mexico chose to carry out activities of solidarity with migrants in each of its Communities according to their reality. Their solidarity takes the form of direct support to migrants, through Religious Sisters or groups of students and lay people:

• The Community of Puebla supports a refugee center where they teach Spanish to people from Haiti.

• The Community of Querétaro supports the Marist Migrant Centre (CAMMI), which takes care of refugee families from UNHCR. The support consists of presence and animation of activities with the children by the High School students. It also



supports the Yimpathi Shelter for displaced Mexicans, mainly to help them look for work or to sell their handicrafts. The High School students do the serving at dinnertime and also carry out improvement projects at the shelter. Support is provided in the form of food and clothing.

• The Aguilas Community creatively supports the Refugee House Program, an organization with which we have been working for more than 15 years. They accompany the refugee children who find it difficult to join the national education system. This service is carried out by volunteer teachers from the school and by the High School students who, in this manner, carry out their Social Service requirements. The children are helped through their learning the Spanish language and the regularization of their academic and age level.

- In the Province of Ecuador, Quito is a Community that is in contact with migrants, trying to integrate them into the life of the Church and to enable them to participate in the activities of the Community. It seeks to create a space where they can meet, share, reflect and feel part of the Community.

- In the Province of Central America and Cuba, after the Session on Migration 2021, the Communities were invited to get acquainted with the materials and conferences. For World Migrants Day 2021, the Communities of the Province were likewise encouraged to unite in prayer through a prayer guide that each Community produced locally. Through the JPICS links of each Community, a list of the names of our migrant brothers and sisters was produced so that we could pray for them, especially, uniting us to the brothers and sisters who are migrating massively because of the economic and political situation of their country and the lack of opportunities.

On October 8 and 9, 2021, the Session was shared with the Province, for which the materials and lectures were adapted, and some people were invited to share their experiences with us. In this session we were able to renew our commitment to look for ways to engage ourselves on the local level with migration from our own possibilities and contexts. There were 20 participants from different Communities of the Province, Sisters and lay people. The participation of members of the school community and of other works was important, as it enriched our perspectives and concerns. Three aspects were emphasized from the content of the session:

- The importance of working on the causes that generate forced displacement.

- To continue the search for comprehensive formation projects to prepare today's young people for the challenges generated by human mobility.

- To form ourselves in legal issues in order to strengthen the accompaniment of our brothers and sisters who migrate.

Two significant events in the Province are highlighted in the line of commitment towards migrants:

- Sister Carmen Amalia Ortiz is living for a time in the Community of El Chaparral to integrate herself into its mission and to strengthen the links and exchanges on this with the Province of the United States.

- In the readjustment of our Provincial Project 2022-2024, it was agreed to seek the creation of a Provincial Project that responds to the reality of human mobility.

- In the United States Province, as a follow-up to the international session on immigration held by the five Assumption families and organized by the SIJPIC, the Assumption Sisters of Chaparral and the Augustinian Fathers of the Assumption of St. Francis Xavier Parish in El Paso, held a common meeting with their lay associates on January 22 in Chaparral.

It was a joyful and fruitful gathering, a real Assumption family reunion! The Assumption of Chaparral had prepared their parish hall and joyfully welcomed the Assumption of El Paso. Dylan Corbett, representative of the Dicastery for Integral Human Development, Migrants and Refugees section was the special guest. We exchanged on possible practical actions to support our migrant brothers and sisters. We are especially concerned about the suffering of those in Ciudad Juarez.

- In the Central African Region, the Novitiate Community in Yaoundé listens to and accompanies the people who knock at its door. One day, an 11 years old child, KONA Boniface Raphael, had a big wound on his left hand. The wound was almost infected so the Community took him to the hospital.





After his recovery, Raphael, to show his gratitude, came with his sister and two brothers to thank the Community. They brought with them bananas, the gift of the poor.

In connection with the transmission of the session, three meetings were held with the Oblate Sisters of the Assumption in the Democratic Republic of Congo to share ideas and to summarize the transmission. Rereading the notes and experiences, Power Point presentations were made to share the information with the Sisters in initial formation.

Regarding the transmission done in the Novitiate, the novices were happy to discover that each one of us is a migrant and that our foundress, St. Marie Eugenie, had the same experience. This awakened in them a concern for the displaced. As an international Congregation, we are called to be constantly on the move.

The transmission of the session on Migration in India was done by Sisters Lissy Antony and Deepti. It was heartening to note that the five Assumption families took to heart the issues of justice, peace, integrity and solidarity, as well as their own concern, their call and their challenges.

The Sisters continue to put some of the intuitions into practice. We cannot be indifferent to the tragedy of old and new forms of poverty, isolation, contempt and discrimination suffered by those who do not belong to our group. Thus, the Sisters get involved with migrants in the local areas and collaborate with NGOs and like-minded people in welcoming them, being sensitive, identifying their needs, sufferings and exploitation. In this way, they do their bit to reduce their misery.

These are some of the ways in which our Sisters collaborate so as to be a light for them:

• Registration of their names and the detailed proof of their identity to help them get what they don't have.

• Distribution of school bags and lunchboxes.

• Registration and data-gathering on their basic information on health, hygiene, living and working conditions.

• Organization of a health camp: general check-up, distribution of medicines, blood group, HIV/AIDS, filariasis, etc., and distribution of preventive medicines.

• Accompanying migrants to doctors to translate their health needs, since the doctors only speak in English, which is a language not known by the migrants.

• Faith formation is another wonderful intervention of our Sisters.

• Organization of Eucharistic celebrations in different areas where there are more Christian groups. Organization of classes on the Sacraments and the life of the Saints.

The Migration session held in 2021 helped the different Provinces to concretize and strengthen their commitment to the stark and challenging reality of migration.

SISTER ALICIA PRIVADO
JPICS Team
Province of Central America and Cuba
Original Spanish

spirituality

Silence

"The beauty of nature (...) help the Bishop to raise his heart and mind to the creator of heaven and earth."

Silence is a state of mind. When something extra ordinary happens to us or when we achieve something great in our life we become speechless or silent for a while. Imagine a poor man wins a lottery 10 million rupees! It is unbelievable for him. At first he becomes stunned! He becomes very silent for a while.

In the olden days there were many 'Sannyasis' (Monks) who used to live in caves to experience God. They used to chant different types of 'manthras' all throughout the day. They discovered the divine presence of God in nature. These 'sannyasis' (monks) gave up pleasures of the world and lived in their hermitage in silence and solitude.

Quite recently, the auxiliary Bishop of Pala Diocese Mar Jacob Murickan, after many years of prayers and discernment, obtained permission to exempt him from the duties of the Auxiliary Bishop of Pala to realize his long awaited dream to lead a solitary life in a hermitage.

On a very fine morning, the Bishop left the bishop's house carrying a small bag in his hand to reach his destination. He arrived at a remote mountain area where he has a very small hut with one room and minimum facilities of life in Nallathanni, in Idukki district.

Like all the 'Sannyasis', Bishop Murickan does cooking, cleaning and washing. He grows some vegetables. He takes only one meal per day. It consists of some watery rice 'Kanji' and some green gram. Mar Jacob Murickan followed the path of Jesus who identified himself as one among the poor and the marginalized. The beauty of nature, the high ridged mountains, the mist in the valley, ever flowing blue waters in the river help the Bishop to raise his heart and mind to the creator of heaven and earth.

As we go through the writings of St.Marie Eugenie, our Mother Foundress and those of mother Marie Emmanuel, we are struck by the emphasis they give for silence and solitude in our religious life. Both St. Joseph and the Virgin Mary spoke very little but they communicated to each other by the union of their heart and mind. Certain religious orders like the Trappists, the Benedictines etc. observe strict silence. Our Rule of Life reminds us the need of keeping silence and solitude in our life to have a deeper communion with God and nature. Mother Marie Emmanuel says silence is an excellent means to lead a peaceful and harmonious life in communities especially when we are dealing with certain issues in the community. Jesus Christ kept quiet when he was accused unjustly and condemned to death on a cross.

In short, as we go through the scriptures and the writings of St. Marie Eugenie and Mother Therese Emmanuel, we realize how essential silence is for our personal and community life and growth.

SISTER MARY THOMAS
Pala Community, Province of India
Original English





communication

Working within the Congregation of the Religious of the Assumption?

A brief anecdote: One morning, I arrived at the office, it was still dark, a little tired from the commute, I turned on my computer, I checked the work to be done for the day, I took notes for the organisation when, SUDDENLY, I heard singing, I immediately opened my window and saw all the sisters singing a beautiful Spanish song for a younger sister's birthday, one on the guitar, the others in a circle, and each in turn kissing and hugging the younger sister and congratulating her. . Then, in all 3 languages, singing the well-known 'happy birthday' song, it brings a smile to your face and makes you reflect on life all day. A real joy

I have been working for three and a half years with the sisters of the Assumption as a bilingual administrative and communication assistant. A real experience among the sisters and the laity. My name is Linda Plant and I work at the General Secretariat, a company and a status not quite like the others, in contact with the sisters every day, alongside their daily lives, it is both enriching and exciting. Their routine, which starts with prayers in the chapel, their common task; they all have a different identity, but they have the same faith, the same desire to serve God for life.

I was drawn to the freedom and trust I was given to do my job. The recognition of the work, the encouragement, the accessibility to others, are all perceptible. They are very attentive, sensitive, and support whoever needs it, which are great values. These values are part of a wider shared worldview. Working for a Congregation or in a religious institution, contributes in my own way in helping the Provinces in which we are implanted, something I am particularly happy about, we have developed a relationship and a deep respect for the work we do throughout the year.

The fact is that people outside the church don't really understand what my work consists of, how I work, the ins and outs, the reasons for being here; they don't know much about the life of the church and its customs. I try to explain as best I can, they are curious, they consult articles and I even have friends who check out the website to find out about the Assumption; it's quite funny to know their feelings afterwards. People don't realize the level of work, organization, intense dedication of the sisters, the positivity AND luminosity brought to the Provinces (to the disadvantaged).

But above all, I am totally in admiration of the internationality of the sisters, the spoken languages, the relationships we have between the religious and the laity, a fascination for all these women who have dedicated their lives to others and to God.

I also treasure the memories of our dear deceased sisters, those I was lucky enough to know and all the others. The videos we have been able to make show their identity, their generosity, their passion and their commitment to the Assumption. We will continue to remember their legacy in our lives through these videos.

This is the reason why I work at the Assumption, for this privileged and unique relationship I share with the sisters. A life lesson that would enrich the whole world.

LINDA PLANT
General Secretariat and Bilingual Communication
Original french



assumption together

Christian Commitment from a Lay Perspective

Ajan Chainarong Monthienvichienchai is a Thai citizen, rooted in his people's culture and traditions and yet has been involved in activities of universal dimension. A devoted family man, he is an active parishioner , a valued commentator during royal and international Church events. A 'media man', he is a sought-after formator of priests and Asian Bishops on digital evangelization. He is a most valued lay partner of our Sisters in their mission of education in Thailand, considered by them as "a son of Marie Eugenie" who passionately promotes her "transformative education ".

Tension, confusion, frustration, and even spiritual defeat often confront me when I try to balance serving the Church and my family. Occasionally, I give myself to one area more than another and I must ask myself: Is this imbalance God's intention? Or is it His will that both areas thrive so that they can fuel each other to greater fulfillment?

God not only speaks of our role in the family but is equally clear about walking in synodality with Him through service to the Church, using the resources that He has given us: our financial resources, knowledge, spiritual gifts, and so on.

However, we all have a set amount of time – twenty-four hours in a day and most of us have these hours filled, whether we are Christians or not.

As new opportunities come up such as Assumption Together or other pastoral activities, we get busier. As our family expands, we also get a lot busier.

Sometimes we can "re-capture" time through improving our efficiency, but other times we realize that something will have to be sacrificed. The cause of this tension is usually our conflicting values. Therefore, the solution should be grounded on considering whether we manage our time according to our values. Since our life situation often change, we will also regularly need to reevaluate how we balance these two areas.

What should not change is our heart's Christian commitment to both Church and family. God empowers us in both, works through us in both, and He sanctifies us through both.

The ability to stand by one's principles, to live with integrity and faith according to one's belief — that is what matters, that is the difference between a contribution and a commitment. That devotion to true principles — in our individual lives, in our homes and families, and in all places that we meet and influence other people — that devotion is what God is ultimately requesting of us.

In other words, religion is more than a knowledge of God or a confession of faith, and it is more than theology. Religion is the doing of the Word of God.

Christian commitment in my opinion means that we



Catholic School in rural Thai village



Mr. Chainarong Monthienvichienchai

can be religious in worship on the Day of the Lord, and we can also be religious in our duties on the other six days of the week. How important it must be that all our thoughts, the words we speak, our acts, conduct, collaborating with the Sisters in the spirit of synodality in dealings with teachers, students, colleagues, neighbors, and all our everyday affairs be in harmony with our religious beliefs, shared mission, and to be witnesses to the love of God.

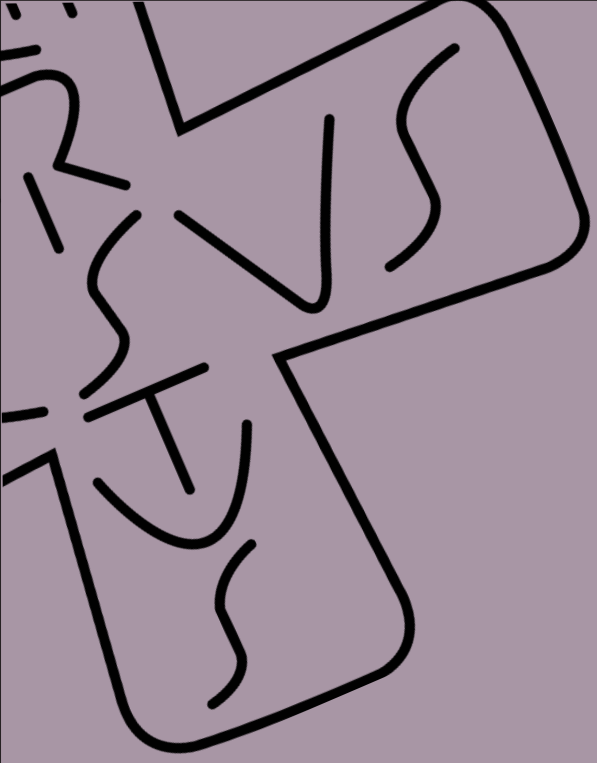
A successful life, the good life, the righteous Christian life requires something more than a contribution. Ultimately it requires commitment — whole-souled, deeply held, eternally cherished commitment to the principles we know to be true in the commandments God has given. With God at the center of our mission, we are constantly invited to be proactive and generous to reach out far and wide, making God's love known and transforming lives.

Keep in mind also that submission to commitment is not a bonus that we do; it is our obligation, our duty. Jesus is not stating that our service such as Assumption Together is aimless or pointless, nor is he withholding any rewards. He is confronting unjustifiable self-confidence and spiritual pride.

We therefore should continually give thanks for our privilege of commitment. We should find and have joy in supporting each other and learning from one another.

Even if we receive no thanks for doing our responsibilities or for doing our commitment, we are to continue anyway, in the belief that God Himself will reward our efforts when we go to be with Him. In all this, we should be driven by inward spiritual desire to do what God wants us to do through the gifts and talents that he has bestowed upon us. It is in this way that we will be able to work together as one family for the Church, our community, and glorify the Lord our God.

MR. CHAINARONG MONTHIENVICHIENCHAI
Thabom, Thailand
Province of Asia Pacific
Original English



Direct their flight, but don't clip their wings

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