

A News of the Assumption



EDITORIAL

The hope of a renewal

*On Easter morning the tomb was opened.
Life spread throughout the world.
May we all together be witnesses of this hope of renewal.*

Agenda

Plenary General Council

- n° 8: **June 1-8, 2021** (by video conference)

Ordinary General Councils

- n° 28: **May 10-14, 2021.**
 - n° 29: **June 14, 2021.**
 - n° 30: **September 6-24, 2021.**
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On the cover

Located in Conflans Sainte-Honorine, near Paris, the boat “Je Sers”, run by an Assumptionist community and an association, provides an important service of mutual aid, welcoming in particular many Tibetan migrants, at the same time as it serves as a boat parish: a very significant place for the commitment of our religious family to justice, peace, and the integrity of Creation (*read pages 5 to 8*).

The “long journey” of an Assumptionist Bishop

Bishop Emeritus of Juazeiro (Brazil), Msgr. José Geraldo da Cruz, celebrated 60 years in religious life on March 14. On this occasion, he prepared a text of thanksgiving of which this is the conclusion:

“Like Abraham, guided by faith, I was put on a path toward an unknown town of which God himself was the architect and the builder!

It was a long voyage made up of joy and pain, of encounters and inadequacies, of wins and losses, of sin and of grace. . . I was sometimes alone, often in community, always accompanied, supported and guided by a friend, a brother, a father!

I traveled some routes, some paths and some trails never seen or imagined... I encountered some countries and people who welcomed me like their son, their brother and their friend. . . I ventured into places that I never dreamed of and I met people and personalities who made me grow, who helped me, who edified me and who transformed me. In the world of public figures, the meetings with famous personalities and celebrities were many. In the ecclesiastical world, there were moments of great spiritual enlightenment with bishops, cardinals and popes, and certain saints who have been canonized. . . In the Congregation, I lived and rubbed shoulders with several generations of religious from all the countries where the Assumptionists are present. We have created solid connections of friendship and of fraternity.

We begin a journey, of which only God knows how long it will last!

During the middle of 1954, at the age of 13, I entered the seminary of Notre-Dame de Lourdes for studies. I never could have imagined that I would spend 60 years in religious life! It was the gift that God had saved for me!

I was Regional Superior for nine years, Assistant Vicar General for twelve years, the first Provincial of the new Assumptionist Province of Brazil and Bishop of Juazeiro (from 2003 to 2016, named by Pope Saint John Paul II).

There have been sixty years of calls and responses, conscious that ‘70 years is the total of our lives, the stronger can attain 80 years. Most of them endure suffering and emptiness, as the time passes quickly and we disappear.’ (Ps. 89)”

+ José Geraldo da Cruz, a.a.
Bishop Emeritus of Juazeiro, BA

Los Andes (Chile), March 14, 1961
- Espírito Santo do Pinhal, SP, March 14, 2021

The hope of a renewal

One year ago, the world was mobilized in the fight against the Corona virus. Covid-19 has spread its influence in all countries. The United States, Brazil and Europe have been strongly affected, but other countries are also cruelly affected.

Our concern about the prolongation of the pandemic must be put into perspective with the global reality of our world. Pope Francis has rightly recalled that Syria has been at war for ten years. Hundreds of thousands of victims, millions of deportees and abandoned children make up the sad record of horror. We do not forget North Kivu, which has been handed over to warring factions and soldiers for more than 25 years. The Butembo region is experiencing an acceleration of violence and instability. In addition to the rebels and bandits, there is the return of the Ebola virus. One year, ten years, twenty-five years, all this brings us back to the harsh reality and asks us one question: do we have the capacity to find life, peace, joy?

We do not have to go back to the “world before” the health crisis. There are two possibilities: to become better or to become worse. Obviously, everything must be done to make us better. But how can this be done? Our faith in God is our help. Without Him we cannot do anything good and lasting. The present situation pushes us to a salutary renewal. We need to change. We have learned that the resources of our earth are exhaustible; we have understood that pollution commands our future; we know that injustice and violence do not build peace. So what can we do to contribute to the emergence of a better world? We, religious, must rediscover with greater wonder the beauty of our consecration. Being a religious is a grace, because we have responded to

a call from the Lord. In freedom, we have accepted to become disciples of Jesus. We have decided to follow him and to give our lives as a witness to the Kingdom. It is good to encourage more and more fraternity: it is a concrete sign of the Kingdom that is coming. Do we have the desire for brotherhood? Are we ready for forgiveness and reconciliation in our communities, our parishes, our apostolic works?

It is important that we ourselves become better. Otherwise, we will be worse! It is urgent to deepen the meaning of the vows. Chastity, obedience and poverty are not an advertising slogan, they are a program of life, an ambition and a will to let the eternal realities shine through our poor humanity that seeks and hopes. For it is hope that we must announce.

As Frédéric Boyer wrote in *La Croix*, “*hope is our teacher when we no longer know anything, when we no longer have a support on which to rest, to catch our breath and reason. Hope patiently teaches us to think possible what seems to us in the present situation impossible or out of reach. It teaches us that our life exceeds what we have before us.*”

Easter is for us a reminder of the salvation definitively given. The world is saved if it believes in the life given by God in his Son and in the Spirit. Religious life can open the way by committing itself concretely to more life, more justice, more peace. By walking this path, it indicates to our world that hope is there and that the future is possible. A world where wealth is not the criterion for judging people; a world where power is not the imposition of force or violence; a world where everyone is loved for who they are: a son or daughter of God. On Easter morning the tomb was opened. Life spread throughout the world. May we all together be witnesses of this hope of renewal. ■



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

Calls, nominations, changes...

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

■ to PERPETUAL PROFESSION

- 1) **KOUEPOU KOUEPOU Jovie**
(East Africa) (03/22/2021)
- 2) **SSEMBAJJWE Kizito**
(East Africa) (03/22/2021)
- 3) **MUTINDA Dominic**
(East Africa) (03/22/2021)
- 4) **BYAMUKAMA Augustin**
(East Africa) (03/23/2021)

■ to the DIACONATE

- 5) **MWINGANIZA Joseph**
(East Africa) (03/23/2021)
- 6) **NKOYOOYO Ignatius**
(East Africa) (03/23/2021)
- 7) **MATONDO KABWIKU Dieu-Merci**
(East Africa) (03/23/2021)
- 8) **NGUYEN XUÂN Phúc François-Xavier**
(Europe) (03/24/2021)

■ to the PRIESTHOOD

- 9) **SAKAWA MOGIRE Kennedy**
(East Africa) (03/24/2021)
- 10) **MPOZEMBIZI SSENTONGO Joachim**
(East Africa) (03/24/2021)

NOMINATION of a REFERENT

Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, has named **Fr. Thierry KAMBALE KAHONGYA**, Assistant General, as a designate of the Congregation for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Individuals.

EXCLAUSTRATION

Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the consent of his Council, has granted permission for exclausturation, for one year, to **Fr. Alvaro JARAMILLO LONDONO** (Andean Province), on March 26, 2021.



DEPARTURES FROM THE INSTITUTE

The following religious, having signed the document of the Holy See granting dispensation from religious vows and loss of their clerical status, will no longer be a part of the Congregation:

- Fr. **Diego Martin NACE KOTE** (Andean Province)
- Fr. **Francisco Javier SEPÚLVEDA CONTRERAS** (Andean Province)
- Fr. **Daniel KATEMBO MUTOKAMBALI** (Province of Africa)
- Fr. **Léonidas PALUKU VYAMBWERA** (Province of Africa)
- Fr. **Jean Noël RANDRIATSIFERANA** (Province of Madagascar)
- Fr. **Anselme PALUKU MWENGE** (Province of Africa)
- Fr. **Ricardo Enrique ARELLANO CARTES** (Andean Province)
- Fr. **Gersain de Jesús SINISTERRA AGULEDO** (Andean Province)
- Fr. **Oswald PALUKU MALEMBE** (Province of Africa)

The Assumption family unites for Justice, Peace and Creation

For several years, a secretariat common to several Assumption congregations has been coordinating its efforts and raising awareness in the communities. It has just sent a letter to all.



The International Secretariat for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (SI-JPIC) of the Assumption family is a place for sharing the efforts of our congregations to make present the Kingdom of God in confronting injustice, violence and structures that destroy our future by destroying creation.

The Secretariat :

- is enriched by sharing different activities that our communities engage in throughout the world in searching for justice, in fostering peace and in taking care of our common home;
- celebrates the life of brothers and sisters who have made radical sacrifices defending the causes of God and humanity;
- proposes elements of reflection and of formation to encourage JPIC activities in our religious family.

In January 2019, our Secretariat delineated a three-year plan that was presented and approved at a meeting of the General Councils. The priorities that were determined are the following:

1.) service to migrants, to refugees and to displaced persons; a reality of suffering and death touches all our congregation;

2.) an integral ecological conversion to transform the world in changing the way we live and serve;

3.) education toward peace, that aims to sensitize and confirm efforts for constructing a just and honorable peace where violence has taken a stronghold on people's lives.

At the beginning of 2021, in the middle of the suffering caused by the pandemic that we are living with, we have continued our work. We continue to inform the General Councils on our work and our projects. We have written a letter to all the communities, and we propose some reflective material on peacebuilding, based on the recent encyclical of Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*.

I wish you good reading and a good reflection in your communities and with the lay groups who are associated with our lives and our mission.

Fr. José Miguel DÍAZ AYLLÓN
Assistant General

To the communities and groups of the Congregations of the Assumption

15 February 2021

Dear brothers, sisters and friends,

SIJPIC Assumption met from 29 to 31 January. This time, instead of a face-to-face meeting in Paris, we did so by videoconference. We are happy to have these alternative means at our disposal but, as we all live in these times of pandemic, we miss the conviviality that accompanies presence. On the other hand, we benefited from a wider participation thanks precisely to these means.



These times of pandemic make our fragility even more evident. This can help us to be able to revive “a new dream of fraternity and social friendship” (Fratelli Tutti 6).

SIJPIC had developed a JPIC Assumption 2018-2021 Project with the following priorities: Ecology, Migrants, Non Violence and Culture of Peace. In the course of this year we intend to evaluate the project. On the basis of the experience we have lived, we will make proposals for reflection in our next General Chapters and we will elaborate a new project for the years to come. We welcome all your suggestions and ideas in this regard.

As we announced in our letter of February 2020, the JPIC Assumption International Secretariat is preparing the session for July 2021:

***A World on the Move :
Migrants, refugees, displaced persons, victims of trafficking.***

A challenge for the Assumption today.

More than 60 brothers, sisters and lay people from all over the world are participating in this first stage of the session which will take place (of course!) through a videoconference platform.

The vocation of this session is to be incarnated in the places where the Assumption is present. This is why the stage that will take place from 5 to 10 July is only the first stage of the session.

The second stage will take place by region/country during the second half of 2021. The participants will be the driving force behind this second stage. During the July session, the different groups will be defined according to mission coherence and different possibilities.

The session will allow us to share the experiences that already exist around this “World in movement” in the Assumption family and to approach this reality in a more global way (see).

We will also approach it from the Word of God and the Social

Doctrine of the Church, in particular, in the Magisterium of Pope Francis (judging).

We count on the Spirit of the Lord to concretize our action, perhaps in projects within the Assumption family and/or in proposals to our next General Chapters.

We will conclude this stage with a Eucharist of thanksgiving.

We have planned some moments of broad participation. During certain contributions or important moments of the session (which we will communicate to you later), we will open participation to our communities and groups. This is the advantage of a videoconference session and we want to take advantage of it.

Without a doubt, you have all had the opportunity to approach the latest encyclical of Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti (FT) in one way or another. In the context of deepening Non-violence and the culture of peace, we suggest that you do so through chapters 7 (Journeys to find each other) and 8 (Religions at the service of fraternity in the world). We enclose a concrete proposal that you can use in community and with the different groups.

The website <https://jpic-assumpta.org/> and the facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/JPICAssumpta/> are regularly updated by JPIC. From March 2021 we begin the journey for the JPIC experiences of the Assumption

“How important it is to dream together! ...] Alone, there is a risk of having mirages through which you see what is not there; dreams are built together.”



Starting at the top, from left to right :
 Philippe Muhindo aa ; Pilar Trillo psa ; Deepti Srankal ra ; Viviane Sawadogo ra ; Sally Roddy lai que psa ; Sandra Durán ra ; Myriam Collon psa ; Mathilde Mbakaniaki oa ; José Miguel Díaz aa ; Carmen Chumillas psa and Madeleine Kambumbu oa.
 Anna Pagani ra and Maria Ferreira psa also participated.

Family in the different countries where we are. You are invited to visit the website and facebook and to send contributions on the different JPIC topics of your interest for publication (si.assumpta.jpica@gmail.com). You can also subscribe to the monthly newsletter of the website (on the website itself or by sending your request to the previous email address).

of having mirages through which you see what is not there; dreams are built together.”

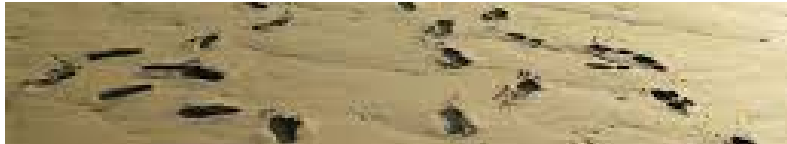
That is why we in the Assumption family love to dream the Kingdom of God together.

Fraternally,
 ISJPIC Assumption

Pope Francis reminds us (FT 8): “How important it is to dream together! ...] Alone, there is a risk

Tracks and tools to go further...

Here are some proposals from SIJPIC based on the encyclical *Fratelli tutti* (ch. 7 and 8).



* Read the tender speeches of Pope Francis:

- Apostolic Journey to Sri Lanka and the Philippines (12-19 January 2015). (225) (<http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2015/outside/documents/papa-francesco-sri-lanka-filippine-2015.html>)
- Diplomatic corps on their Apostolic trip to Colombia, 6-11 September 2017. (218) (http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2017/outside/documents/papa-francesco-colombia_2017.html)

* Reflection on the basis of some key words from chapter 7 of *Fratelli tutti* : Truth, Justice, Mercy, Dialogue, Memory, Forgiveness.

- Remember, to revisit writings and personal and community experiences; to reflect on the different ways of living the faith and the joy of sharing and social encounters.
 - Share about people or groups that with their life witness have built and continue to build fraternity and solidarity.
- Reflection with the following questions:
- Which position are we on? The side of the victims?
 - Consider whether each violence reduces us to all or only one category/class?
 - Who will take care of life if you lose heart?

* Pray the Hymn of the Fraternity narrated in the book of Genesis: (Genesis 4, 1 to 26):

- How can this hymn of brotherhood be translated today? What is Cain's ambition? Who hurts and kills? Who gets hurt?
- We are invited to reflect on the dimension of blessing in our different cultures.
- Let us evaluate and deepen our capacity to bless and curse our brother/sister.

* Pope Francis' pilgrimage to the Holy Land on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the meeting between pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras in Jerusalem

(<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2014/outside/documents/papa-francesco-terra-santa-2014.html>)

- What is the level/ thermometer of fraternity/ sorority in our personal / community relationships and with the people of God who share life and mission with us?

We have before us an encyclical not only to read, study and deepen, but to be put into practice in our daily lives, in firm hope and in our commitment to the Kingdom.



THE GOD OF LIFE

We are a new people
Dreaming of a different world,
Those of us who believe in love
Those of us who live in love.
We carry this treasure,
In clay pots,
It's a message from heaven
And nobody will be able to shut us
up.
And we proclaim, a new day,
Because death has been defeated.
And we announce this good news,
We have been saved
By the God of life.
In the middle of the night,
We turn on a light
In the name of Jesus.
In the middle of the night,
We turn on a light
In the name of Jesus.
Sowers of the desert,
Good news we announce,
Foreigners in a world
That does not understand our song.
And although sometimes we get
tired,
We never get discouraged
Because we are pilgrims,
And love is our way.
And we renounce the lie
We are working for justice.
And we reject, all ...

On a mission of accompaniment to our Orantes Sisters

Within the Church, the government of religious institutes is assured by the organs to which this power is entrusted by law. These bodies are usually the legitimate superiors assisted by the various councils and chapters. And the law enshrines this autonomy of leadership by reserving this power only to the members of the institutes concerned.

Nevertheless, and this has become a tradition, we note the presence of an Assumptionist Brother among our Orantes Sisters of the Assumption with the mission of accompanying the General Council. For the record, this mission was carried out for a good number of years by our esteemed brother Pierre Emmanuel Rospide. It has been almost two years now that, with the agreement of our two Supreme Moderators, he has just handed over to another brother, Thierry Kahongya.

One can always wonder what this mission really consists of, which is not foreseen in any text governing the congregation of our sisters. What would be the basis for this choice on the part of the sisters? One could spontaneously think of an ecclesiastical delegation on the part of the referent bishop, as we are dealing here with an institute of diocesan right - in this case, that of Evry (France). However, this is not the idea that presides over this practice.

Listening to the sisters, they express the need for the presence, in their company, of a brother of the Assumption family who walks with them and discerns with them the questions of general interest, while respecting the autonomy



For the past two years, Fr. Thierry Kambale Kahongya has brought his availability and his outside view to the governing bodies of this sister congregation

and independence of government and direction of the Institute. It is also a matter of remaining attentive to the orientations of the particular Churches in which our sisters are implanted, without substituting for the sisters to whom the texts entrust the responsibility of maintaining the links of the congregation with the ordinary people of the place.

I personally understand this mission as that of a companion, who gives a hand behind the scenes and who must not interfere in the decisions of government of the institute.

In order to assure this presence effectively, the brother is invited to participate in certain sessions of the General Council or of the Council of the Congregation, at the invitation of the Superior General, in order to bring his contribution to the basic concerns of the sisters and to give a point of

view from outside the congregation. The goal is also to strengthen collaboration within the large Assumption family, in fidelity to our common project: the coming of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in us and around us.

This closeness to our sisters is an opportunity for me. It is for me more a time of discovery and learning than of work as such. I take advantage of it to better understand their specific charism within the Assumption family: contemplative life at the heart of the world. This presence consists, if I am not mistaken, in bringing the contemplative life to the men and women of our time by maximizing apostolic prayer, liturgical life and adoration, work as a privileged place of presence in the world, and silence taken in the sense of recollection.

P. Thierry KAMBALE KAHONGYA
(Rome)

“Witnesses to the beauty of God”

The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL) published a letter on March 25 for the 25th anniversary of the apostolic exhortation **Vita consecrata**. We publish here the main excerpts¹

To our brothers and sisters in consecrated life,

(...) We do not wish the 25th anniversary (25 March 1996) of the publication of St. John Paul M's Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* (VC), the fruit of the reflection of the IX Assembly of the Synod of Bishops celebrated in October 1994, to go unnoticed. In that document, the Bishops frequently reaffirmed that “*consecrated life is at the very heart of the Church as a decisive element for her mission [...] a precious and necessary gift for the present and future of the People of God.*” (VC 3). (...)

Before God for the world

Vita consecrata was published in a time of great uncertainty, in a liquid society, with confused characteristics and weak commitments. The certainty with which the identity of consecrated life is defined is therefore surprising, “*icon of the transfigured Christ*” (VC 14) which reveals the glory and the face of the Father in the luminous splendor of the Spirit. Consecrated life as *confessio Trinitatis!* Truly, the concern here is not only to give a solid foundation to the consecrated person's identity, but more so as offering an original vision of that identity, integrating the divine and human, realizing that mysterious and luminous connection between ascent and descent, between the transcendent height

and the kenotic immersion on the borders of all that is human, between the sublime beauty to be contemplated and the distressing poverty to be served.

Valuable consequences flow from this fruitful insight.

The strength of the relationship

Vita consecrata is built upon the notion of a relationship, the relationship generated in and by the *Mystery of God* as Trinitarian communion. The *salvation* that comes through the lives of those who take charge of the other. A *witness* that is not unique, but that of a fraternity that lives and appreciates what it proclaims. Communal *holiness*, not of perfect solitaries, but of poor sinners who daily share and offer each other mercy and understanding. A *consecration* that does not oppose the values of the world and the universal thirst for happiness, but on the contrary reveals to all that being poor, chaste, and obedient has great humanizing power, is a true eco-system of the human condition, gives meaning and balance to life, harmony, and freedom in relationships with things, it protects from abuse, creates fraternity, and offers beauty... Today consecrated life is aware of being “poorer” than in former times, but lives - by grace - a much greater relationship with the Church and the world, with those who believe and those who do not, with those

who suffer and are alone.

The sentiments of the Son

A particular aspect of the relational dimension seems to reach its highpoint when the document deals with the subject of *formation*. Not just any relationship, but one that leads one to have the same *sentiments* as the obedient Son, the suffering Servant, the innocent Lamb.

This is not an essentially new element, considering that in the past we have resorted to the relationship of following, identifying, and imitating Christ, but here something more is said and, in some respects, something new, is offered by the Word (Phil 2:5). It is about the relationship that reaches such an intense and profound level that it rediscovers within itself the *sensitivity* of the Son, who is in turn, the image and incarnation of the Father's sensitivity. We Christians believe in a *sensitive God*: he hears the groaning of the oppressed and listens to the widow's plea; he suffers with and for humanity. We want to believe that consecrated life, with its many charisms, is the very expression of this sensitivity. It could be said that each institute emphasizes with its charism a particular *divine sentiment*. It is for this reason that formation is presented in the Exhortation as a process that leads in that direction: to have the same feelings, emotions, sentiments, affections, desires, tastes, objective criteria,



Brazilian Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

dreams, expectations, passions... of the Son-Servant-Lamb.

It is an exciting project that admirably brings together (“integrates”) the spiritual and anthropological dimensions. A project that could transform the idea of formation in its contents, methods, and timing. It would finally be an integrated formation, built on the rock of eternal love that sets one free, forming integrated persons who have learned to evangelize their feelings, to love God with a human heart, and to love humanity with a divine heart! It will be a formation that continues for a lifetime. It is another great insight, one that remains largely to be understood and even more so to be implemented now.

The enchantment of beauty

If God is beautiful and the Lord Jesus “*is the most beautiful among the sons of men*”, then being consecrated to him is beautiful. The consecrated person is called to be a witness of beauty. In a world which risks sinking into disturbing brutality, the *via pulchritudinis* seems to be the only way to arrive at the truth or

to make it credible and attractive. Consecrated men and women must reawaken in themselves, but above all in the men and women of our time, an attraction for what is beautiful and true.

Beautiful, then, not only courageous, and truthful, must be the witness and the word offered, because the face we proclaim is beautiful.

Beautiful must be what we do and how we do it.

Beautiful is the fraternity and the atmosphere that one breathes.

Beautiful the temple and the liturgy, to which all are invited because it is beautiful to pray and sing the praises of the Most High and allow his word to be my guide.

It is beautiful to be together in his name, to work together, even if tiring at times.

How beautiful is our being virgins to love with his heart, our being poor to say that he is the only treasure, our obedience to his will for salvation, and even among ourselves to seek only him.

It is beautiful to have a heart that is free to welcome the pain

of those who suffer, to show them the com-compassion of the Eternal One...

Even the environment must be beautiful, in simplicity and creative sobriety the house, the table that is set..., that there be taste and decorum in the surroundings, so that everything in the dwelling may reveal the presence and centrality of God.

Supreme beauty, the sacrament of the mysterious beauty of the Eternal One. As Peter exclaimed on Tabor before that burst of light and splendor.

Vita consecrata has certainly marked the experience and reflection of consecrated persons in these past years. We are convinced that it should continue to be a point of reference in the coming years, together with the documents of the Magisterium and CICALSAL that have deepened its fundamental themes. We are convinced that the Exhortation can still nourish the *creative fidelity* of consecrated persons, the cornerstone of consecrated life in the third millennium. Responding to the challenges that come from the Church and contemporary society involves growing in evangelical relevance: “*We cannot - Pope Francis exhorts - remain stuck in nostalgia for the past or simply keep repeating the same old things or everyday complaints. We need patience and courage in order to keep advancing, exploring new paths, and responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. And to do so with humility and simplicity, without great propaganda or publicity*” (Francis, Homily, 2 February 2021). (...)

¹ The full text can be found on our congregation’s website: <http://assumptio.org/>

English edition of Fr. d'Alzon's 'Spiritual Writings' to Appear ---- Finally!

This is great news, on the scale of the history of our Congregation: 65 years after the original edition of our Founder's Spiritual Writings, the English translation is now ready for publication.

It is a great joy to announce the translation of the *Spiritual Writings* of Fr. d'Alzon in English. It is particularly appropriate that it should appear during the 175th anniversary of the Congregation. At first the translation will appear in digital form (1). Once the text is ready for written publication, it will appear in book form as well.

The current edition of the *Spiritual Writings* of Fr. d'Alzon in English has been somewhat adapted from the original French edition both to include new (such as the *First Constitutions*) or revised (such as the *Directory*) texts and to address the particular needs of a non-French, English-speaking audience that would be unfamiliar with many French historical figures cited by Fr. d'Alzon and references to various geographical sites and historical events he mentions. As a result, there are numerous explanatory footnotes that do not appear in the original French edition.

It should be noted that this English edition follows upon an older edition carried out by English Assumptionist, Fr. Stephen Raynor, which never received widespread diffusion, for any number of reasons. Nevertheless, in parts his text did assist the various translators in their efforts to produce this revised version.

This edition features a much more detailed identification of the quotations from spiritual and secular authors than the original French edition. It has also, when necessary, noted Biblical passages that were misidentified in the original text. The editors have retained Latin quotations if these appear in Fr. d'Alzon's text and provides translations when they did not appear.

With regard to the numbering of the Psalms, the English edition tried to maintain the Vulgate version used by Fr. d'Alzon, which mostly follows the *Iuxta Septuaginta* version of the Clementine Vulgate.

Because of these many adaptations it was impossible to provide a page-by-page parallel of the French edition.

It should also be noted that Fr. Fortin, the translator who began this project, chose to include a later and more critical edition of the *Directory*. He also, when appropriate, availed himself of other revised texts produced by authors since the original French version appeared in 1956.

The indexes in the English edition have been simplified, e.g. eliminating some references in the original version that seemed unnecessary. Any reader interested in a more detailed index should consult the original French edition. It should also be noted that in the current digital

text there is no thematic index. This index will appear in the final written edition.

Finally, as the supervising editor, I would like to acknowledge the others who participated in this translation....of course, first of all, Fr. Robert Fortin himself who launched this project in 2014 and demonstrated such unparalleled expertise as well; Frs. Richard Lamoureux and the late Richard Brunelle; and Professors Marc Lepain and Brian Benestad of Assumption University. Although I tried to harmonize their various styles, the reader will still recognize that these efforts were not always successful and that the text remains uneven in parts. Lastly, in this list of acknowledgements, I would like to thank Br. Ryan Carlsen for his technical expertise and patience without which this edition would not have appeared as soon as it has.

I know that all of these collaborators contributed so much of their time and energy because of their love of Fr. d'Alzon and their desire to make these writings of his available to a larger public that they too might be inspired by this spiritual father of the Assumption Family.

Fr. John FRANCK

1) Available on-line at www.assumption.us



Almost all Bayard Afrique employees in Ouagadougou.

Bayard: a presence in Africa since 1993

Now present on almost every continent, the Assumptionist press group does not lack ambition in West Africa, as well as in the East.

Initially founded under the name La Bonne Presse, Bayard Press---known also under the name the Bayard Group---is an enterprise of written and audiovisual press established in France in 1873 by the Augustinians of the Assumption. Outside of Europe, of America and of Asia, there is also a presence in Africa.

Bayard Africa began in 1993, the date of the launching of *Planète Jeunes*, a pan-African magazine written for youth from 15 to 20. Since then, Bayard Africa, returning to its origins “Association Planète Jeunes”, has only produced magazines for the young (*Planète Enfants*, *J’aime Lire*, *Planète Okapi*) for the development of young Africans. To

promote the faith, Bayard Africa chose to go even further by means of religious products. It was because of this that the daily missals were born---*Prions en Eglise* in 2013 for the French speakers and *Living with Christ* in 2015 for the English speakers (Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, etc.).

Prions en Église and Living with Christ

With the support of the Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SCEAM), the missals *Prions en Eglise* and *Living with Christ*, in their African editions, were put in the hands of African Christians. The missals serve as a means of expressing the Christian faith amid the contemporary realities

of their continent. Totally produced in Africa, these two missals are made essentially by African staff and with African techniques for African readers. The staff of Bayard Africa is based in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), but the missals are printed in Abidjan, in the Ivory Coast. The distribution is done exclusively in Africa.

In their concern for the children of Africa, the staffs of *Prions en Eglise* and *Living with Christ* published their first issue of *Junior* in October 2020. These are missals for children to give them a taste of the Word of God with guidance from their parents. These quarterly booklets are rich in commentary based on texts taken from the liturgies of each day. They also contain illustrations and games that help the children familiarize themselves with the Word of God and to be nourished in a spiritual way. Moreover, different topics are addressed such as “My African Faith”, “African Wisdom and the Word of God”, “Life of the family of the Church”, “Life of the Saints”, and *Duc in Altum (Put Out into the Deep*---a monthly diocesan publication). There are also special issues on pilgrimages and conferences. Bayard Africa seeks to accompany Christians in their faith by giving them answers to their questions that are particularly relevant to Africans.

Contributors and collaborators

Through the contribution of priests from various countries and from the diaspora, through the commentaries of the liturgical texts (commentaries, universal prayers, proverbs, etc.), a true organic pastoral solidarity and ▶



Fr. Jean-Paul Sagadou, editor of French-language liturgical publications and chief editor of Prions en Eglise Afrique and its spin-offs:

"It will be necessary to form young African Assumptionists in the spirit of Bayard, and to form the lay professionals who join the enterprise in the history and spirit of the Assumption."

a cultural and spiritual sharing among the Christians of the Church-family of God in Africa is established and lived. This diversity of contributors is also an opportunity to make African theologians, exegetes and pastors known on an international scale.

In his letter n° 9 addressed to the lay and religious Assumptionists on the Alliance, the Superior General, Fr. Benoît Grière, reiterates the irreversibility of the Lay-Religious Alliance. At Bayard Africa we have noted a strong lay-religious collaboration: even though it doesn't have the status of an alliance, it is nonetheless important to emphasize.

Fr. Jean-Claude DIWEDIGA
Ouagadougou

*(the article first appeared in ATLPE n° 29,
December 2020)*

Bayard in East Africa

Present in West Africa (Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso) since 1993, the Bayard Group extended into East Africa through an establishment in Nairobi, Kenya as of May 2017. The principal objective is editing, publishing, and distributing works with a religious nature for evangelizing and catechizing for the awakening of the Christian faith.

The first title of Bayard in Kenya is *Living with Christ-Africa*, a monthly missal in an "African" edition. It opens with an editorial on the Christian faith as it is lived in Africa by the Africans. The commentaries of the liturgical texts are written by priests who are our collaborators. The other reflections are written by religious. *Living with Christ-Africa* is geared to the general public.

On the contrary, *Living Faith Kids-Africa* is a quarterly published missal for children (8-13 years of age). Its purpose is to give children a taste for reading and meditating on the Word of God with their parents/caregivers. It is comprised of commentaries connected to certain texts from the liturgy of the day; it is filled with illustrations and games so that the children can become familiar with the Word of God in simple, appropriate language.

We are equally present in the digital world, with Sunday homilies shared in video on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp for other productions. This publishing work is carried out by a team composed of an editorial coordinator (an Assumptionist religious), contributors, a marketing and sales department in collaboration with the technical team of Burkina Faso for the layout. We reach our readers through subscriptions or by selling the issue in parishes and church institutions. The current coronavirus pandemic is slowing down our activities and does not allow us to stay in constant contact with our readers.

Fr. François KAMBALE NZANZU
Nairobi



Emmanuel d'Alzon's "little family"

The editorial in the previous issue of AA Info spoke of the siblings of our founder, with only one sister: in fact, there was another sister, as well as a brother who died at a young age. An unpublished letter from Claire d'Alzon reminds us of this, transmitted by Fr. Jean-Daniel Gullung who presents it here.



The books in Italian brought back from Torino for Augustine

“Family Memories”, an unpublished document (see below), reveals two unsuccessful marriage projects: that of Fr. d'Alzon's mother, Clémence de Faventine, to Charles d'Alzon, and that of his daughter Augustine to Charles' son, Edmond d'Alzon. Claire d'Alzon, the wife of Edmond's son Louis, wrote this account; it was brought to her by Edmond's sister Charlotte d'Alzon, Superior of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul at the hospital in Agde.

The typed copy of this document was given to me by the descendant of the eldest branch of the d'Alzon family, Nathalie White d'Alzon, who volunteered in Jerusalem three times (in 2015, 2017 and 2018) to classify the old photos of N.-D. de France and to draw up a catalog of old books. She lives in Montpellier and has an apartment in the Château de l'Estang.

This document, which was sent to Rome for the archives, would have pleased Fr. Jean-Paul Périer-Muzet, who had been received at the château de l'Estang. Since it deals with Augustine, Fr. d'Alzon's somewhat forgotten sister, its publication is not without interest.

To situate the protagonists, a quick genealogical presentation is in order.

- Henri d'Alzon, Emmanuel's father, was the son of Jean Baptiste François Xavier d'Alzon (1739-1822), who lived in the château de l'Estang (in the town of Le Pouget in the Hérault) and had a sister, Louise (1751-1812) who married Clément de Faventine (1739-1803) whose family had bought the château de la Condamine in Le Vigan from the d'Alzons.

- Jean-François Xavier had nine sons and daughters: the eldest was named Jean-Louis (1758-1835) and the last Henri (1774-1864). Louise, having no children of her own, want- ▶

ed to adopt a d'Alzon daughter so that the d'Alzon family could benefit from her inheritance. Since Jean-Louis had only sons, the couple adopted a niece, Clémence de Faventine (1788-1860), with the intention of having her marry Charles (1783-1838), the eldest son of Jean-Louis d'Alzon.

Clémence had a penchant for Charles, but he made it clear by his attitude that his heart was elsewhere.

-Louise then thought of her nephew Henri d'Alzon (1774-1864), whom she welcomed to La Condamine in 1896. In May 1806, despite their age difference

(Henri was 32 and Clémence 18), the marriage was celebrated in Le Vigan. The couple moved to La Condamine where Emmanuel was born four years later.

The first born of the family, Emmanuel had a brother and two sisters: Augustine (1813-1860), with whom he had a particularly close correspondence; Jules, born in 1816, died in 1818, godson of Cardinal Jules Gabrielli; and Marie (1819-1869), who died the widow of the Count of Puysegur (1813-1851), leaving two children, Jean, who was born, and Alix, who entered the Carmelite order in 1857; a little girl, Marthe, was taken from their affection, at the age of five, following a fall on the stairs leading to the chapel of Lavagnac. Jean was a student at the college of Nîmes and inherited the castle of Lavagnac.

Augustine remained unmarried and lived with her parents, fulfilling the rather unassuming role of lady-in-waiting for her father and mother. Since she died in 1860, the same year as her mother, and Marie was the sole heir with Emmanuel, Augustine was somewhat forgotten in Assumptionist memory. Thus we read in the editorial of AA Info n° 21: "Emmanuel d'Alzon was the descendant of an aristocratic family. The family was small and he had only one sister." [The digital version has been corrected] It was indeed between Emmanuel and Marie, the only sister he had left, that the inheritance was divided: he left her the castle of Lavagnac where their father still lived, aged nearly 90, and kept for himself the house of La Condamine in Le Vigan, more adapted to his works, assigning the rest of his share to the mission with the United Bulgarians.

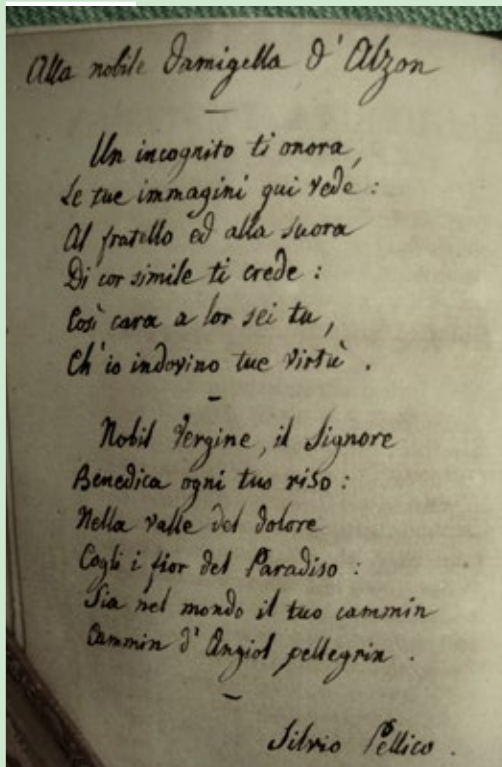
P. Jean-Daniel GULLUNG
(Albertville)

The memory of Augustine in Nîmes

The "Place of Memory of Fr. d'Alzon" in Nîmes keeps the memory of Augustine alive through a book in Italian, brought back by Emmanuel from a visit to his brother-in-law, the Viscount of Puysegur, who was seriously ill, in Turin. "I have good news to tell Augustine," Emmanuel wrote to his mother on June 21, 1844. "Mme de Barolo,

to whom Marie had spoken of our eldest daughter's desire to have some books in Italian, has taken the trouble to look for one [...] and to have a few lines written by Silvio Pellico put in it." Fr. d'Alzon was a fervent admirer of the writer and poet, author of *Mes prisons*, who served as secretary to the Marquise of Barolo.

Another display case in the Place of Memory alludes to the younger brother, Jules d'Alzon, with the reliquary cross offered by Cardinal Gabrielli, who received the hospitality of the d'Alzon family for a few months when Pius VII was exiled by Napoleon to Fontainebleau in 1814. The cardinal, who arrived in Le Vigan at the beginning of February, returned to Rome on 10 April and the next day sent Mr. d'Alzon a wooden cross containing a medallion with a fragment of the Holy Cross. He also enjoyed teaching Italian to Mme d'Alzon. According to an oral tradition, he blessed the young Emmanuel, whose vocation he sensed. It was out of deference to the cardinal that the parents gave the name Jules to Emmanuel's little brother, who lived only two years (1816-1818).



Autograph of Silvio Pellico,
Italian writer and poet

Family Memories

It was Charles d'Alzon's daughter, Sister Charlotte (for 50 years a daughter of charity) who told me what I am about to write. To me, the wife of his nephew Louis.

Madame de Faventine, having no children, asked her cousin Madame d'Alzon (née Le Boeuf) if she had a daughter to give her to raise as the heiress of Lavagnac. But Madame d'Alzon had only sons. Turning her views elsewhere, Madame de Faventine adopted her niece Clémence de Faventine. She saw it as another way to bring the d'Alzon's fortune and her beautiful estate to the eldest son of her cousin, Charles d'Alzon.

The latter, however, wanted to make a love marriage. Clémentine was not beautiful and did not please him. He did not weigh her wealth in the balance; perhaps he should have included the rare and solid qualities that one almost always finds in women predestined to become the mother of a saint and which replaced the physical advantages of the heiress.

Above all, he could have been moved by the deep affection that the girl felt for him. Pure and holy affection that even a happy marriage could not shake. Stronger than time and death, as it will be seen later.

But without doubt this virgin soul was a closed garden. In those days; young girls did not go about delivering the secrets of their hearts with jokes and laughter. And who even knows? Clémentine's efforts not to betray her love before the hour made her seem cold in the dear presence of her fiancé. In the long run how-



Château de l'Estang, Hérault

ever the indifference of the young man made her understand that her beautiful dream was not shared.

At this moment a new character appeared, Charles' young uncle, Henri d'Alzon. His father had entrusted him to the tutor who had raised his older brothers and had then been named titular of a parish in Normandy; having left as a teenager and returned as a man, he arrived one fine day at l'Estang to bid farewell to his family and to the South of France, for he too was preparing a rich marriage in Normandy. I imagine that on this point of expatriation, he was not without regrets. His father's castle was quite simple, no towers, no gardens; a large courtyard dominated by a massive porch, but one could breathe the native air. The sun shone all the more brightly in the blue sky, as there were no trees to hide it. All the ties that bound his soul to the home were tightened.

He went one last time to see his aunt de Faventine in Lavag-

nac. There it was the true paradise of his heart. The castle stands on two terraces overlooking a beautiful park and the lovely plain of the Hérault, bordered by blue mountains: the first foothills of the Cévennes where his ancestors had fought for religion and the king.

But it was not only the beauty of the site that attracted him, it was Clémentine whom he loved and yet wanted to flee since she was engaged to his nephew. She was the first to understand this, the old maid who had seen all the children of the family grow up. Impatient with any convention, she said to him abruptly: why are you leaving since you will have Clémentine? He does not deny his love. I see him lowering his head under the sentence pronounced by the parents. Clémentine is not for me, she is for Charles. But the old maid knew something else and held on to her idea: she will never be Charles' but yours if you want to ask for her. ▶



Cross offered to Henri d'Alzon by cardinal Jules Gabrielli

Others have said what this holy household was. God blessed him with a son who would one day be invoked under the name of St. Emmanuel. But although those who do not understand holy affections may be surprised, Madame Henri d'Alzon never forgot her first fiancé. She devoted to him a chaste and deep tenderness that never died out. Charles' children were almost as dear to her as her own, and she knew how to show them her concern.

Charles had repeatedly borrowed from his uncle Henry, and he died before he could discharge his debt.

One winter day, his mother and his wife were chatting sadly in the bright and cheerful living room with its harmonious vaulted ceiling and its beautiful portraits of ancestors. Henri arrived. With great delicacy he began the

question of the loans and presented them with the papers signed by his nephew, which they recognized. In all, the debt amounted to thirty thousand francs. When all was clearly established, Henri took the papers and coldly threw them in the red marble chimney saying to the two women: "at present we are even, that it is not question any more of that between us." "Henri, replied Madame d'Alzon, the mother, our children will know what you have done; we accept your generosity, but we do not want to be without thankfulness."

Yes, it was a love as strong as death that passed from the mother's heart to the daughter's heart. Augustine d'Alzon felt a more than fraternal affection for her cousin Edmond. She refused all marriages, giving as her reason that she did not want to change her name. A transparent objection that made it clear to her close friends what her dream was: to live as a beloved wife under this dear name. She knew to renounce it, like her mother, without ceasing to love in silence the one to whom she had given her heart. Thus, for the second time, an heir of l'Estang had only to stretch out his hand to receive not only a great fortune, a princely castle, but the thousand times more precious good of a love that never faltered.

Was it for the same reason as his father that he passed by such easy happiness without stopping? Perhaps he didn't know it; perhaps with a lesser fortune, he was afraid of appearing in-

terested. Besides, the woman he chose, Marie de Saint Germain, was a treasure that made any regret impossible. I found a letter from Augustine congratulating him on his marriage and praising the young woman she had just met. A serious letter, affectionate, almost banal but touching when one knows the bottom of his heart. And there is also a letter from Edmond to his wife recommending that she see her cousin often and show her much affection. The young woman had probably guessed Augustine's heart better than her husband and felt not jealousy but a sort of remorse for having innocently stolen from her a happiness whose price she knew.

And as if the name d'Alzon could only blossom and reproduce itself at the l'Estang, Clementine's son, at the age of twenty, left the joys and riches of the world and renounced all earthly alliances and became engaged to the One Spouse; his works are like his sons who have become legions working in France and abroad for the great cause of God.

When he died, he bequeathed his papers, his seal, not to his own nephew but to Edmond's son, the only one who now bears the name of d'Alzon, no longer in the noise, pomp and glory of the soldiers, martyrs and the Saint; but simple and dignified in the country where he is no longer the lord but the example and in fact the head, waiting for a son to be born who will reproduce in his life and especially in his soul the great things, the exquisite sentiments so well expressed by the noble motto of the d'Alzon family: DEO DATI.

Claire d'ALZON

Translations and recognition

How was Fr. d’Alzon led, after his death, to rest in the chapel on Segulier Street? And how was the canonical recognition of his remains in 1964?

One only learns to know by learning to love. This experience refers to the thought of Saint Augustine (“Noverim me, noverim te”), to the necessity of knowing oneself in order to know God and vice versa. But should we not apply this same principle to the knowledge of the one to whom we venerate beyond time and space? Getting to know our founder - his personality, his life, his times, his culture, his vocation, his commitments - is the only way to enrich our discovery of his holiness and to make it an ever more familiar reality.

Our purpose here is neither biographical nor hagiographical. It is simply to let this face, which has been hidden from our eyes, give us a vague but very real vision of his presence in a few strokes, like a watercolor painting, allowing us to breathe in something of the “smell of sanctity” that he exhaled. Unquestionably, for Fr. d’Alzon, Christ was the essence and the perfume.

Today, when we visit his tomb in the chapel on rue Séguier, we are enveloped by this atmosphere of silence and serene light. What is striking is both the majesty

and the sobriety of the space that leads to the foot of the altar, to the place where Fr. Emmanuel d’Alzon is buried: a simple white marble plaque marks the spot that takes us back to his *Dies natalis*, to that Sunday, 21 November 1880, when he died, on a day of rain mixed with snow covering the sky of Nîmes.

What do the ephemeris tell us? “*At noon, our beloved Father and Founder fell asleep in the Lord and left us to take the place in heaven that his holiness and all that constitutes a long and holy life had earned him.*”

In an article in *La Croix* in December of the same year, we read that the religious who surrounded him, after the prayers for the dying, recited the rosary: “*After the sorrowful mysteries, they reached the glorious mysteries, and when the 14th decade, that of the Assumption, had been completed, the Father uttered a final cry: ‘My Jesus, I love you! ‘It was the hour of noon, the feast of the Presentation: Our Lady of the Assumption had taken him to the eternal temple. On earth, the bells joyfully rang the angelus announcing to the faithful the good news of the angel: The angel announced to Mary that she had a son. ‘*”

Was there an intervention from heaven at his death? Two years later, on November 16, 1882, Mother Emmanuel-Marie Correnson, in a memoir presented to Bishop Besson, wrote: “*On the evening of that same day, November 21, at 7:00 p.m., an extraordinary thing happened. A light in the shape of a heart suddenly illuminated my cell; it rose to the height of one meter fifty; its ascent was slow, very slow and left a very sweet impression on me.*” (1) *Fr. Pernet speaks, during the funeral, of “the triumph of a saint who reveals himself when he is no more.”*(2)

A peaceful departure

How did this departure take place? The agony was slow and peaceful. Father d’Alzon’s last meeting with Mother Marie-Eugénie took place on November 14 at 3:00 in the afternoon, in the modest room that occupied the space above the back door of the school overlooking rue de la Servie. The farewell to Mother Marie Correnson and the Oblates took place on November 16 at 7:00 a.m. That same day, the farewell to the religious took place, the account of which is given to us by Brother Victor Uginet. (3) He received communion for the last time on November 20.

After his funeral, Fr. d’Alzon’s body was dressed in the religious habit and a purple stole, his rosary and crucifix in his hand. In



The chapel of the rue Séguier, in Nîmes.

the evening, around 10:00 p.m., he was taken from the room to the college chapel, where he remained until the evening of November 23. That evening, Mother Marie Eugénie wrote: “*Before this holy death, in which all the beautiful characteristics of Fr. d’Alzon’s piety shone so brightly in suffering, souls, and mine in particular, are all remembering his virtues and his action for the good. An admirable union is forming near his mortal remains.*” (4) The register of the funeral, with 1,377 signatures, gives an idea of the crowds that flocked to pay their last respects during the two days following his death.

His funeral took place in two stages on Wednesday, November 24: at 7:00 a.m. in the college chapel, a mass presided over by Bishop de Cabrières; at 10:00 a.m., the body was lifted and taken out through the porch of Feuchères Avenue to the church

of Sainte-Perpétue. After the requiem mass in the presence of Mgr Besson, the funeral procession reformed in the direction of the Saint-Baudile cemetery, taking the Notre-Dame street and the Chemin d’Avignon, a journey of about half an hour on foot to the sound of the bells of all the parish churches of the city. Out of an estimated population of 63,000, it is reported that 30,000 people crowded along the procession in silence and contemplation.

The body, in a double coffin of oak and lead, was then placed in the Assumption vault for the former teachers and students of the college, a tomb on which one can still read today “*Hic Assumptionis alumnorum ossa donec immutatio veniat.*” (5) His burial took place in the Saint Baudile cemetery on November 23 at about 9:30 p.m.

His return to the college

The first transfer of Fr. d’Alzon’s mortal remains from the Saint-Baudile cemetery to the college took place on 30 January 1892, early in the morning. He was then reburied in the chapel, at the foot of the altar from which he had so often addressed the students and religious. In 1900, following the dissolution of the congregation, the college was despoiled and transformed into a high school for girls. The chapel was disused and a partition separated the choir from the rest of the building, which was put to another use. When the opportunity arose, the religious passing through Nîmes did not fail to come on pilgrimage to visit his tomb.

What were the motives for the transfer of the body in 1892? Bishop Besson and then his successor, Bishop Gilly, were opposed to it, but the former students of the college ardently desired to see Fr. d’Alzon rest in “his” house.

Count Jules de Bernis, a former student of the college and deputy of the Gard, obtained the necessary triple authorization: from the Minister of the Interior, from the Prefect of the Gard, and from the municipality of Nîmes, on the explicit condition that this transfer would not be the occasion of any external demonstration. The request was made jointly by the Gard deputy and Father Alexis Dumazer, then director of the college.

The agreement of the authorities was announced on Thursday, January 28, 1892. The transfer of the mortal remains of Fr. d’Alzon took place on the following Saturday at 8:00 am. On Friday, the coffin was exhumed. The oak coffin had suffered a lot and the lead coffin was visible, so a new one was prepared and placed on a hearse that went without stopping from the Saint-Baudile cemetery to the Collège de l’Assomption, taking the route d’Avignon, the boulevard du viaduc and the rue de la Servie. But the procession entered the college through the gate on Avenue Feuchères, which had already been used eleven years earlier and which was closed again immediately after the arrival of the procession.

Fr. Picard was absent, but present were his assistant, Fr. Perret, (6) relatives of Fr. d’Alzon, former students and members of the clergy of Nîmes. The presence of Fr. Matthieu Lombard was also noted. In all, three Assumptionists were there. The parish priest of Sainte-Perpétue sang the Mass for the deceased and gave the absolution, then the coffin was lowered into the vault: “This morning, filled with joy and consolation, will remain as one of the best memories of the college,” writes Fr. Dumazer, who continued: “Our chapel has become a sort of

1) Quoted from *L’humble grandeur de la mort du P. d’Alzon* by Pierre Touveneraud, Rome, 1980, (Série Centenary Series, no. 2) p. 40-42.

2) Op. cit. p. 48

3) *Spiritual Writings*, pp. 1461-1464.

4) Op. cit., p. 44.

5) “Here lie the remains of the Assumption students until the change comes.”

6) He was to become his “emulator in beatification,” as Fr. Quenard said of him at the time of the 1942 transfer.

7) Dumazer’s letter of February 2, 1892 to Fr. Picard, quoted in *Souvenirs*, no. 95 of February 11, 1892, pp. 867-871.

8) The details of this second translation are reported in *Nouvelles de la famille occupée*, n° 13, p. 49-54.



The exhumation of Fr. d'Alzon's body on 26 November 1964. Aubain Colette, the postulator of his cause at the time.

meeting place for pious souls who have known the virtues of our Father. We will be very happy if this venerated Father, whose presence in heaven is not in doubt in our eyes, manifests the power of his intervention with God by graces of choice, and, let us say it, by miracles. We ask this of him with fervent prayers, and we will especially ask him to animate us with his spirit and to communicate to us his zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.” (7)

The risk of desecration

A second transfer took place, this time from the disused chapel of the former college of the Assumption to the chapel of the Oblate sisters on rue Séguier. (8) In order to protect his body from possible desecration, it was exhumed on Friday, 30 October 1942, and transferred by funeral van the following Tuesday, 3 No-

vember, to the vault that he himself had had dug at the foot of the sanctuary. Before the ceremony began, Mother Marie Correnson's coffin was exhumed from the Saint-Baudile cemetery and placed in the large parlor of the d'Alzon Institute, which had been transformed into a *chappelle ardente*. Gervais Quenard, Superior General, and his assistant Fr. Romuald Spinnael were present, as well as Frs. Bernardin Bal-Fontaine, Matthieu Lombard (the last Assumptionist to have known Fr. d'Alzon during his lifetime) (9), Saturnin Aube and Jude Verstaen, as well as about fifty religious who had come from all over the free zone. Around the Superior General of the Oblates, Mother Michaël Rainfray, there were also many religious: Oblates, Little Sisters and Orantes.

Father General had the oak lid lifted, revealing the lead cof-

fin. After a time of veneration for the many faithful, the two coffins were carried, respectively by the nuns and the religious, to the foot of the altar. After their deposit in this new vault, Canon Veyras, parish priest of Sainte-Perpétue, gave the absolution. This was followed by a mass of thanksgiving presided over by Fr. Quenard. During his homily, Father General said: *“Placed at the foot of the altar from which he had spoken so many times to his religious and his students, the Father still seemed to be guarding the cradle of his congregation, even since it had passed into other hands. We decided to take him back there, and this time we entrusted him to the tomb that had been prepared for him by an affection that could then be accused of being audacious, whereas this distant desire is now fully realized. We bring the founder back to this chapel which* ▶

he himself had lovingly conceived and which he had blessed shortly before his death with his already weakened hand.(10) *This dear shrine, belatedly recovered with the surviving lots of the former property of the Sisters, remains for us today as a common heritage, and each time we come to pray there at the family tomb, we will make a pilgrimage to the unforgettable past and we will replenish our strength for the present tasks, to the powerful breath of the first Assumption.*”

9) A native of Saint-Martin de Belleville (Savoie), he was one of the first alumnists to inaugurate Notre-Dame des Châteaux. He made his perpetual profession on November 11, 1877 in Paris, then went to Nîmes. After the death of Fr. d'Alzon, he completed his studies in Osma (Spain) and returned to Nîmes where Bishop Besson ordained him a priest on 23 December 1882; he remained there as a professor of history and mathematics, then of philosophy until 1919. In 1923, he became assistant general in Rome until 1929, before moving to Montpellier where he died on August 7, 1951 at the age of 93.

10) This blessing took place on Thursday, April 15, 1880.

11) The title given to the one whose canonization process was introduced in Rome (apostolic process): for Fr. d'Alzon, this decree of introduction bears the date of 29 May 1958.

12) Revue Assomption, February 1965, p. 12-19.

Much more than a recognition

The recognition of the remains of the Servant of God (11) took place on November 26, 1964. This ceremony, of a different magnitude, (12) was part of the process for his canonization. d'Alzon's coffin was taken out of the vault and placed in the large parlor of the boarding school, as it had been when he had arrived on Seguier Street. Three tables covered with white cloth were set up, behind which sat the Bishop of Nîmes, Bishop Rougé, the members of the ecclesiastical tribunal, two doctors, the personnel assigned to the transfer (undertakers and masons), and four witnesses from the previous transfer in 1942. Aubain Colette, the bishop admitted the presence of the Superior General, Fr. Wilfrid Dufault, and the Superior General of the Oblate Sisters, Mother Marie-Augustine Vigne.

On that occasion, the body of the Father was discovered in a good state of preservation. According to the surgeon's report, *“Fr. d'Alzon appeared dressed in the religious habit in which he had been buried: cassock with buttons, cord with tassels, cawl with a large hood covering the top of the head, laced shoes. The clothes are faded and damp, giving the impression of having been oiled, but intact. No smell. The face is blackened like the rest of the body, looking somewhat mummified, the detached lower jaw has fallen back on the chest, but all the teeth can be identified; the hands are sticking out of the sleeves, spread out on the cassock; the tips of the fingers are not visible, except for one phalanx that has remained quite pink with its nail. On the chest, one can see the drawing of a disintegrated crown. The body was measured and various re-*

ports were taken.” Near the body was a glass bottle containing a 74-line Latin manuscript that had been placed there in 1880 entitled *“Compendium vitae Emmanuel d'Alzon”*, signed by the secretary of the congregation at the time, Fr. Alexis Dumazer.

After covering the body with a layer of absorbent cotton, care was taken to keep it undisturbed on the base of the lead coffin. The coffin was placed in a new double coffin (zinc and oak), with the body resting on three bases: oak, zinc and lead. Before closing the coffin, a bottle containing a moisture-absorbing product and a little lime was placed in the coffin. The crucifix, the two lead plates with the inscriptions of the 1880 and 1942 coffins, the glass bottle of Fr. Dumazer's parchment, the 1942 document and the report of this last reburial were placed on the coffin.

Before closing the vault, the bishop invited the audience to pray for the beatification of the Servant of God and for vocations. Seals were affixed to the ends of the coffin, and a white silk ribbon was wrapped transversely around the coffin, passing under the crucifix. Then the coffin was returned to the vault, carried by the representatives of the six provinces of the congregation. The absolution was followed by a votive Mass for Assumptionist vocations, presided over by the Superior General, with the choir directed by Fr. Morand Kleiber, before a hundred religious present at the ceremony. It was the centenary of the approval of the Assumptionist congregation by the Roman Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.

Fr. Bernard Le Léannec
General Postulator

New book publications from the St. Peter-St. Andrew Center (Bucharest)

Our ecumenical center in Romania, whose activities have been greatly reduced by the pandemic, is nevertheless continuing its work through important publishing activities.

The St. Peter-St. Andrew Center has just published with Editions Galaxia Gutenberg the first volume of the Acts of the symposium organized in collaboration with the Académie catholique Val de Seine on May 17-18, 2019. The theme chosen for this first edition falls entirely within the mission under which our Center has operated for a decade in Bucharest: “Theology and Philosophy between East and West”.

This symposium brought together a dozen theologians and philosophers, half French and half Romanian. The Acts were likewise published in both languages. As the theme indicates, the symposium focused on the common roots of East and West, exploring the theological and philosophical heritage of great thinkers like Nicholas Berdyaev, Paul Ricœur, Jacques Maritain, Johannes Zizioulas, André Scrima, Martin Heidegger, and Michel Henry as well. The chosen themes express as much a legitimate diversity as a necessary complementarity. From the beginning, these two traits have characterized what later we have come to call the East and the West. Alas, the pandemic has prevented us this year from organizing the second round of the symposium with a theme both interesting and timely: “Unity in diversity”. However, it is simply postponed, not canceled.

The second book which just appeared with the same publisher covers an important chapter in the history of our congregation: “Witnesses of Christ during the Communist era. The Assumptionist Fathers in the

files of the *Securitate*”. This hefty volume, more than 400 pages long, was written by Fr. Lucian Dîncă and presents the history of our 15 priests, subjected to imprisonment, persecution, and surveillance for 44 years under the Communist regime (1945-1989).

Lucian, a credentialed researcher with the National Commission for Research in the *Securitate* Files (NCRSF) had access to 28 dossiers (15,000 pages) that the *Securitate* had created regarding our fellow Assumptionists. If this sheer quantity of information testifies in and of itself to the important role that the Assumptionists played in the eyes of the regime, it also reveals the totalitarian effort of the dictatorship where, in the words of the author, “everyone was spying on everyone”.

Without a doubt, the oldest priests aside, the names of Ștefan Berinde, Bernard Ștef, Teofil Pop, Liviu Leluțiu and Anton Vamvulescu were quite familiar to them. For the younger ones among us, it is an opportunity to dive once again into the dramatic history that the Assumptionist knew in Romania. Our rebirth after 1990 would not have been possible without the undeniable fidelity of our priests. This book does not simply do them honor; it satisfies the obligation to keep them memory alive. For those of us Romanians who are impatient to get our hands on it, let us not get discouraged by the fact that it will soon appear in French.

Iulian Danca
St. Peter-St. Andrew Center,
Bucharest



Editor

Michel KUBLER, General Secretary



Assunzione@mclink.it

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John Franck, Patricia Haggerty and Gilles Blouin, English
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Our deceased Brothers

† **Father José Ignacio CIORDIA**, of the community of Madrid-Dulce Nombre de Maria (Province of Europe), died on January 20, 2021 in Madrid (Spain). His funeral was celebrated on January 21 at the funeral center of Léganès, followed by burial in the local Assumptionist vault. He was 79 years old.

† **Father Yves PLUNIAN**, of the Valpré community (Province of Europe), died on February 3, 2021 in Ecully (France). His funeral was celebrated on February 6 in the Valpré chapel, followed by burial in the Loyasse cemetery. He was 88 years old.

† **Father Eugene (Henricus) DE ZWART**, of the community of Leuven (Province of Europe), died on February 6, 2021 in Grevenbroich-Gustorf (Germany). His funeral was celebrated on February 13 in the church of Our Lady of the Assumption in Gustorf, followed by burial in the local cemetery. He was 90 years old.

† **Father Maurice LAURENT**, of the community of Ampandrana (Province of Madagascar), died on 18 February 2021 in Antananarivo (Madagascar). His funeral was celebrated on February 21 in the church of Our Lady of the Assumption in Sanfily (Tuléar), followed by burial in the cemetery of Belemboka. He was 90 years old.