

# AA News of the Assumption



- THE PGC MET IN WORCESTER
- EASTER FOR JERUSALEM
- THE BROTHERS MEET



# Agenda

## Plenary General Council

n° 3 : **December 2-11, 2024** (Rome).

n° 4 : **June 2-11, 2025** (Buenos Aires).

## Ordinary General Council

n° 10 : **September 4-20.**

n° 11 : **October 28-November 1.**

n° 12 : **December 12-13.**

## Fr. Ngoa

- **July 2-Aug. 21** : Congo (canonical visit and vacation).
- **Sept. 22-Oct. 25** : Florence (Italian course).

## Fr. Benoît

- **July 19-Aug. 27**: France.

## Fr. João

- **all summer in Rome.**

## Fr. Thierry

- **July 2-Aug. 31**: Congo.

## Fr. Étienne

- **July 2-24**: Congo (canonical visit).
- **July 25-Aug. 24** : Madagascar.

### On the cover

During their 2nd session, held in Worcester, MA, USA, the members of the Plenary General Council prayed, with the religious from Emmanuel House, in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, at the heart of Assumption University. Beneath the organ is the motto of this mobilizing work of the Congregation: "Until Christ be formed in you", which is quoted in Father General's editorial on pg. 3.

# The invitation of the Assumptionists from Abidjan



« To be attentive to the context of our times to give meaning to one's life through the example of Fr. d'Alzon.» That was the message of the day focused on Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon, founder of the Assumptionists of the Assumption, organized on the 10th of February in Abidjan (the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire). How can one find meaning in the Christian life in an Africa marked by attacks against Christianity and with the development of artificial intelligence? "The recent General Chapter of the Assumptionists insisted on a formation for the current generation adapted to reality," remarked Fr. Jean-Paul Sagadou, superior of the community. "To maximize the formation of theologians in our community is a challenge."

"Fr. d'Alzon's era was marked by dechristianization and urban and industrial development," noted Br. Maurice Honzounnon before about 30 invitees: a context that focuses the priest on teaching and education, but also on the media which this congregation pioneered through Bayard.

"Fr. d'Alzon showed us that the best way to find meaning in life, is to be attentive to the problems that undermine the social, politico-religious, and cultural situations in which we find ourselves," said Br. Honzounnon. "From this attention, we can bring some elements of response to this social context, and that is what marks the reason of being for each one of us."

"What I recall from Fr. d'Alzon's life, is that he succeeded in forming his character as a force to impose his vision on what the Gospel should be in each one's life," remarked Jean-Claude Bilgo, who came with his wife and their three children. "This day helps me to better understand what it means to be an Assumptionist, their values and the quality of their interventions."

From the example of Fr. d'Alzon, the Assumptionists have as their mission, according to Fr. Sagadou, "to announce the Gospel by blending a renewal of solid doctrine, working to understand the thinking and convictions of other Christian denominations to further unity, and to have an impact on life in society by working on the transformation of social behavior in union with the lay."

The five religious who have been working in this area of Abidjan for two months are ready to receive people in discernment of their vocations, and those working in the media. They will open a library in the community.

(excerpt from La Croix Africa,  
February 15, 2024)

# “...until Christ is formed in you” (Ga 4, 19)

Last June's Plenary General Council (CGP) was held in the United States of America. It took place on the campus of Assumption University. The Emmanuel House community is located on the same campus. Those who have already visited the site will know that, as you enter the university's central chapel, you see directly above the altar these words from the Apostle Saint Paul to the Galatians: “*Until Christ be formed in you!*” For an Assumptionist, these words in the center of a university chapel should be more than just a reminder.

They remind us of an idea, a preoccupation, a mission central to the life and spirituality of our founder: to form Christ in souls. Education continues to be a priority apostolic project. As observed during the 34th General Chapter, from kindergarten to university, our congregation welcomes some 30,000 students each year in 88 educational establishments to face a variety of challenges: ignorance, secularization, unbelief, indifference, individualism, social discrimination, insecurity, poverty, materialism (cf. Acts n. 178).

Every day, during the time of meditation before morning Mass, these words “*Until Christ is formed in you*” were above the altar, in front of me. They nourished my prayer, motivated my hope, but also raised questions deep within me, not only as an Assumptionist religious, but above all as the successor of the man who had found in these words the *raison d'être* of all Christian and religious education. The formation of Jesus Christ in souls,” said our Founder, “is the sole purpose of education. And he continued: “*When we have set young souls on the path where they can approach the perfections of the God-Man, we will have given them the most admirable preparation for life.*” (E.S, p. 235-236.)

In a letter to Marie Eugénie (December 14, 1868), D'Alzon explains that the triple incarnation of Jesus Christ - born in the crib, on the altar and in our souls - is a mystery that should absorb us whole. All of us should be absorbed in bringing Jesus Christ to birth in us and around us, especially in young people. Since this cannot be done without the “pain of childbirth”, this question from Fr. d'Alzon can serve as a key for rereading, especially for those directly involved in the education of young people: “*Do I have for them the suffering of the Apostle who sought to give birth to Jesus Christ in the souls he was charged with*

*evangelizing?*” (E.S. p. 99).

The pain of childbirth is only endurable if we believe in what we hope for. Jesus gives an example of this in the Gospel: “*The woman who gives birth is in pain because her hour has come. But when the child is born, she remembers her suffering no more, and is overjoyed that a human being has come into the world.*” (Jn 16, 21) Yes, no one can take away our joy when we have accomplished the noble task of preparing the young people we accompany for real life.

For the “mystical incarnation” to succeed, that is, the double birth of Jesus in our souls and those of others, Fr. d'Alzon proposes Mary as a model in her obedience, her humility, her contemplation and her love. How can we live these virtues in a society where they are less and less esteemed? Today's young people, and those of us who accompany them, are faced with a number of challenges that also affect the religious experience: pressure and manipulation through social networks, axiological subjectivism, individualism, questioning of authority, mimetic desire, and so on. While everybody seems to agree on the importance of freedom in life, both on an individual and societal level, the question still remains: what meaning should we give to this fundamental value?

There's no reason to give up. On the contrary, this is the time to live serenely what we believe. When the image of God becomes blurred, when the name of Jesus Christ no longer means anything to people, when religious experience seems to have slipped off the list of essential things, especially for young people, then comes the urgent need to repeat with Fr. d'Alzon: “*I cannot love Jesus Christ without wanting all creatures to love him, and this is the reason for what must make up the apostolic character of my life.*” (E.S p. 123) It is therefore with this assurance, faith and hope that the message must be proclaimed with fidelity and creativity, because the story of Jesus touches our deepest desires for love, freedom and happiness. Yes, even if it must come with a certain pain of childbirth, I urge each of us to carry the torch of constant pursuit of our founder's holy desire: to form Christ in souls. ■



**Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba**  
Superior General of  
the Augustinians of the  
Assumption

# Calls, nominations, agreements...

Father Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, Superior General, with the consent of his Council, has called:

## ■ TO PERPETUAL PROFESSION

- 1) **N'DRI KOUAME Expédit**  
(Africa) (04/29/2024)
- 2) **MUMBERE MATANDA Wasingya**  
(Africa) (04/29/2024)
- 3) **KAMBALE MUSONGORA Hervé**  
(Africa) (04/29/2024)
- 4) **NZYAVAKE KATEKE Magloire**  
(Africa) (04/29/2024)
- 5) **MUHINDO KISOMO Emmanuel**  
(Africa) (04/29/2024)
- 6) **KISIKISI WOYITA Joël**  
(Africa) (04/30/2024)
- 7) **KAKULE TASI Gabriel**  
(Africa) (04/30/2024)
- 8) **KATEMBO KABWANA Charles**  
(Africa) (04/30/2024)
- 9) **KAKULE KAGHOMA Samuel**  
(Africa) (05/01/2024)
- 10) **KAMANA BIHOGO Christian**  
(Africa) (05/01/2024)
- 11) **MAPENDO KAGHENI Benoît**  
(Africa) (05/01/2024)
- 12) **KAMBALE MUYISA Moïse**  
(Africa) (05/01/2024)
- 13) **APIPAWE KANGERO Eloge**  
(Africa) (05/01/2024)
- 14) **KATEMBO KANGITSI César**  
(Africa) (05/02/2024)
- 15) **TSONGO NZEMBA Richard**  
(Africa) (05/06/2024)
- 16) **KAMBERE MUSEYA Gervais**  
(Africa) (05/06/2024)
- 17) **Casimir KOUWAMA**  
(Europe) (06/11/2024)
- 18) **Noël TOMFEI**  
(Europe) (06/11/2024)
- 19) **Rafael HUERTA RAMOS**  
(North America) (06/11/2024)

## ■ TO ORDINATION TO THE DEACONATE

- 20) **MUMBERE NDAKASI Jérémie**  
(Africa) (04/30/2024)
- 21) **Maurice Billy HONZOUNNON**  
(Europe) (05/02/2024)

- 22) **KAMBALE NDAMBUKO Gervais**  
(Africa) (05/02/2024)
- 23) **KAKULE TEGHEKA Grâce**  
(Africa) (05/02/2024)
- 24) **PALUKU KIHEMBO Dieu-Merci**  
(Africa) (05/02/2024)
- 25) **KAMBALE MBOGHA Georges**  
(Africa) (05/06/2024)
- 26) **MUHINDO ISUNGU Vianney**  
(Africa) (05/06/2024)
- 27) **MALIDRALE MOKILI Crispin**  
(Africa) (05/06/2024)
- 28) **KAMBALE MUVAKULI Jean Baptiste**  
(Africa) (05/06/2024)
- 29) **WOMBARAGUEMA BEDJIDA Maurice**  
(Africa) (05/07/2024)
- 30) **MUHINDO LUTSUMBI Paulin**  
(Africa) (05/07/2024)

## ■ TO PRIESTLY ORDINATION

- 31) **Boniface ANDABWA MAKOMBE**  
(East Africa) (05/07/2024)
- 32) **Gregory KIMANI KURIA**  
(East Africa) (05/07/2024)
- 33) **Joachim NGUYEN MANH Hung**  
(Europe) (05/07/2024)
- 34) **Augustin YAMBA**  
(Europe) (05/07/2024)
- 35) **Fr. Rodrigue OUEDRAOGO**  
(Europe) (06/11/2024)
- 36) **Armel YONI**  
(Europe) (06/11/2024)
- 37) **Dominic MBAEZE**  
(Europe) (06/12/2024)
- 38) **LUKALA BURU Freddy**  
(Africa) (06/12/2024)
- 39) **KAHUNGU TWABATWA Éphrem**  
(Africa) (06/12/2024)
- 40) **MUSAFIRI MUHITSYA Jean**  
(Africa) (06/12/2024)

## ■ OPENING AND CLOSING OF HOUSES

Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, Superior General, with the unanimous approval of his Plenary General Council, has given consent for the **opening** of:

- 1) An **apostolic community** at **Butembo-Mahamba** (DR-Congo, Province of Africa),
- 2) An **apostolic community** at **Iași** (Romania, Province of Europe),

And for **closings** :

The **community** of **Mărgineni** (Romania, Province of Europe),  
The **community** of **Ciney** (Belgium, Province of Europe),  
The **community** of **Zepperen** (Belgium, Province of Europe),  
The **community** of **Bruxelles-Braves** (Belgium, Province of Europe).

## ■ AGREEMENT FOR THE NOMINATION OF FORMATORS

FR. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, Superior General, with the unanimous approval of his Plenary General Council, has agreed to the nominations of the following :

- 1) Fr. **Luiz Gonzaga DA SILVA** , as **Provincial Formator** for Brazil,
- 2) Fr. **PALUKU KIPANDAULI Rigobert** as **Superior** of the **Scholasticate of Saint-Augustin de Bulengera** (Province of Africa),
- 3) Fr. **Blaise BONOU YEHOUEYOU** as **Master of Novices** in **Manila** (Province of Europe),
- 4) Fr. **Donatien VULA MBWAMOSI** for a 3rd year as **Superior of CIFA of Ouagadougou** (Province of Europe).

## ■ EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY VOWS

Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, Superior General, with the approval of his Plenary General Council, has given his consent for a one-year extension, for the following religious:

- Br. **Gilbert RAJAONARISON**, of the Province of Madagascar ;
- Br. **Jean Emilien RANDRIANANTENAINA**, of the Province of Madagascar;
- Br. **KAMBALE BALEWA Mutumishi**, of the Province of Madagascar;
- Br. **KASERKA MBAGA Muhungamuvi**, of the Province of Madagascar;
- Br. **Hugo MORALES BALLESTEROS**, of the North American Province.

## ■ INCARDINATIONS

1) Fr. **Ovidiu ROBU (Europe)**: Definitive incardination in the diocese of Iași (Romania), for a period of five years ad experimentum, expired in July 2022.

2) Fr. **Willian AQUJE MATTA (Europe)**: definitive incardination in the diocese of Versailles (France), for a period of five years, ad experimentum, expired November 2022.

## ■ NEW PROVINCIAL SUPERIORS

Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, Superior General, with the approval of his Ordinary General Council has appointed :

- Fr. **Marcos Antônio DIAS, Provincial Superior of Brazil**, for one triennium, beginning April 17, 2024.
- Fr. **MUSANGANIA KOMBI Jean-Paul, Provincial Superior of Africa**, for one triennium, beginning June 1, 2024.

# Two new Provincials

## FR. MARCOS ANTÔNIO DIAS (BRAZIL)

He was born in 1980 in the State of Minas Gerais. He is the second of three children and became familiar with the Assumptionists through his parish. At 17, he became an aspirant at Eugenopolis and at Campinas, where he spent two years as a postulant (1999-2000), while studying philosophy. In 2001-2002, he made his novitiate in Pomaire (Chile). He also studied theology in Sao Paulo



for four years. In 2006, he was ordained a deacon and was named treasurer of the young Province of Brazil. He was ordained a priest in 2007, and has had the following assignments:

- Formator of aspirants at Campinas (2005-2008).
- Vicar in Rio de Janeiro (2009-2012).
- Diploma for the 3rd cycle of philosophy in Sao Paolo (2013-2015).
- Pastor in Eugenopolis (2016-2020, and most recently from 2022 to 2024).

He had been the Provincial Secretary since 2015 and was also responsible for formation since 2016.

## FR. JEAN-PAUL MUSANGANIA KOMBI (AFRICA)

He is 46. He was born in Butembo (DR-Congo). He is the 8th child of nine (he has a sister who is an Orante of the Assumption). After his 1st profession in Butembo, he has held the following positions:

- Studies in philosophy at Bulengera (2002-2005).

- Studies in social communication at Kinshasa (Catholic University of Congo, 2005-2012), concluding

with a doctorate. He created a journal of formation and culture, Le Chevalier, and had an internship at Radio Vuvu Kieto.

- He did his theological studies at the University of St. Augustine of Kinshasa (2012-2015) and was an Assistant at the Catholic University of Congo.

- He worked as a journalist at Bayard (2016-2022) for La Croix and Prions en Église. He was in community at Cachan where he helped with the chaplaincy of l'École Normale Supérieure Paris-Saclay. He was ordained a priest in Paris in 2016.

He was superior of CIFA of Kinshasa since 2022.



# New horizons for Assumption

One year on from the 34th General Chapter, the CGP meeting provided an opportunity to tackle new topics, while at the same time welding together a much-revamped team.



▲  
The PGC meeting in Worcester.

Of course, there was the verdant setting of the Assumption University campus, with its modern pavilions and inspired sculptures, but also, at its very heart, the Chapel of the Holy Spirit and the community of Emmanuel House... not to mention the countless squirrels, rabbits and birds, when it's not a deer or an eagle you come across in its walkways! Of course, there was the impeccable welcome from the North American Province, which had been waiting three years to finally host a CGP session, and from the heads of "our" famous university in Massachusetts...

But there was also, and perhaps above all, a profoundly renewed group which was able to work in the best possible conditions, and with a happiness that was a

pleasure to see: not only, in fact, has the General Curia included five new members since the 34th General Chapter which elected it exactly one year ago, but in the same interval four out of seven major superiors have themselves been appointed during these past twelve months. Do the math: nine new members out of the 14 participants - two of whom, Frs. Kizito and Musangania, had to follow the proceedings online for lack of visas.

On the menu for this 2nd session of the CGP: recurring topics (news from the Provinces, exchanges between Provincials...), and a few specific issues, starting with the presentation of the Superior General's annual report (1). Here are a few highlights:

1) A daily summary of the proceedings is available on the Congregation's website in the form of a «fil rouge», written by P. Thierry Kambale Kahongya: <https://www.assumptio.org/en/news>

**- Formation issues**

In addition to the CGP’s “musts” of approving First Apostolic Appointments and approving new formators, this session addressed other important aspects:

- Specialized studies: To respond to the Congregation’s mission and maintain its apostolic vitality, each Province identified its needs in terms of people or positions to be filled, as well as the human resources available, the criteria for choosing candidates for formation, and the places and opportunities for study.

- Ongoing training was encouraged by the Council, who heard with interest of the plan currently being deployed in the Province of Europe at three stages of every religious’s career.

- Leadership training, meanwhile, is the focus of much attention in the North American Province, which is currently setting up a training course for governing bodies (Provincial or Province Council, etc.) that could be opened up to religious from other Provinces.

The Council has also worked on a new organization of presentation files for perpetual vows and orders, to enable the CGO to better discern the admissibility of candidates.

**- Economic issues**

Father Alex Castro, Econome General, had just held a meeting of the Congregation’s Economic Council (CEC) in Mexico when he joined the CGP. He was able to present the accounts for 2023, with a particular focus on the costs of religious in formation and the Annual Solidarity Campaign (see box). As our resources are increasingly limited in relation to our needs, the CGP reminds all religious to manage

**“Assumption Solidarity” campaign 2025**



**A**t the suggestion of the CEC, the CGP examined two projects that could be included in this annual campaign for needs that are difficult to meet with the help of charitable institutions.

The Council decided that the Assumption Solidarity Campaign in 2025 should benefit the Kambali Institute in Butembo (DR Congo, Province of Africa), to complete the rehabilitation of the roof of this educational complex.

He would also like to thank all those who have already handed in their contributions for the 2024 solidarity campaign for the construction of a dormitory for boys at Assumption High School (Nairobi). Those who have not yet done so are urged to do so, in order to make up the amount required to complete the project.

our assets more rigorously. We need to maximize the fruits of our labor, develop a culture of pooling goods and encourage the generosity of the faithful by ensuring the quality of our pastoral commitments. But we also need to keep a tight rein on spending, including by performing certain domestic tasks ourselves (cooking, laundry, cleaning, etc.) in order to reduce the number of employees in our communities.

The Council also took time to review the workings of the Congregation’s Bureau Développement et Solidarité (BDS), based on a report by its new director, Brother Didier Remiot.

**Mobilizing works**

As we know, the 34th General Chapter wanted to continue mobilizing the entire body of the Assumption around a limited number of significant works from our historical, charismatic and missionary heritage. It therefore asked the CGP to review the relevance of each of the current “mobilizing works”, to study new proposals that might come from the Provinces, and to update the list on this basis. The Worcester session produced such a list, which will be further developed in the future.

## The Superior General's 1st letter

During this session, the Superior General gave the CGP the scoop on his Letter no. 1, addressed to all Assumptionist brothers and sisters, religious and lay: devoted to the implementation of the 34th General Chapter and entitled "The jar of flour shall not run dry, nor the pitcher of oil be emptied." (1 Kings 17:14), is to be distributed to all religious this July.

This 40-page "epistle" essentially invites our religious family to allow itself to be shaped by the reality of the Kingdom's nearness and the demands of proclaiming the hope of the Gospel. The model of the widow of Sarepta will be our paradigm of life and hope in situations where, like her, we might believe that everything is over.

With this letter, Father General proposes a four-step dynamic:

- *Understand* the reality of the crisis experienced at every level as a reflection of our fragile condition as individuals and structures.

- Engage in the first remedy to these fragilities, namely *taking care*: of ourselves, of others, of our vocation, of our mission and of the Lay-Religious Alliance.

- *Adopt the attitudes* that are essential to our walk in the synodal spirit: humility, listening-discernment and trust.

- Finally, to *risk gestures of love and faith*, following the example of the widow of Sarepta, and avoid the temptation of defeatism to dare a generous gesture.

### - Contribution to the Synod

Like all religious institutes, our congregation contributed to preparations for the 2nd session of the Synod on Synodality, to be held in Rome next October. The exercise has led to a heightened awareness of the need for a more synodal Assumption and Church. Consecrated life, moreover, lacks neither resources nor experience to promote a culture that engages all the baptized in following Christ together: community life, fraternal correction, Councils and Chapters - not to mention, as far as we're concerned, the Augustinian charism that urges us to have only "one heart and one soul stretched out towards God"!

### - New Assumptionist lands

Following the last General Chapter, the CGP was once again called upon to re-examine the criteria and procedures to be followed when studying and setting up a foundation in a new country. The missionary expansion of our congregation implies a substantial commitment of human and material resources. For this reason, the Council felt that it would be preferable in the near future to first consolidate our presence in the entities where we are currently present, so as to be able to use them later as points of departure for new countries.

### - North American context

Two major realities of the North American Assumption were the subject of exchanges between the CGP and local players:

- Welcoming migrants, through the El Paso foundation, recently reinforced by religious from Africa. The Council welcomed Deacon Paul Covino, head of the Assumption University chaplaincy,



and David Crowley, professor of biology, who accompany groups of students there, enabling them to better understand the situation in border regions, to identify the reasons that drive these populations to flee their countries, and to question their convictions and their faith...

- And **Assumption University**, of course: the CGP spoke with its president about our educational mission at the university. According to Greg Weiner, our university is one of the few institutions offering a liberal Catholic education (in the sense of the "humanities"), when most of its counterparts prepare exclusively for professional careers. The teaching at Assumption University aims to develop in young people an openness to the essential questions of society in the light of reason and Christian faith. This is why he insisted on a greater visibility of Assumptionists on the Worcester campus, giving a testimony of life and an international horizon.

Fr. Michel KUBLER  
(Rome)



# “The challenge of trust”

On Saturday June 8, at the close of this 2nd Plenary General Council session held in Worcester, the Superior General delivered a closing address, the gist of which is as follows.



**“My dear brothers,**

If I may, I’d like to entitle this closing address to our 2nd CGP: the challenge of trust. Our Council was scheduled to run from May 30 to June 8. And if it’s June 8, then it’s over. And yet, for some of us, this apparent sense of closure feels like a mission that’s only just begun. For the newcomers among you, it’s exactly that.

With what attitude or disposition do you expect to face what lies ahead in your Provinces after this CGP? Perhaps we should bet on trust. In the letter I presented to you, there is a point on trust. This is one of the dispositions I consider fundamental, especially at a time when we are called upon to “walk together” to face up to the challenges that lie ahead, but also to take advantage of the new opportunities that are also before us.

Stephen M. R. Covey, whom I quoted in the letter I presented to you, asserts that if trust disappears, even the most powerful government, the most successful company and the strongest leadership cannot withstand the fall. The consequences of a lack of trust are many: it causes tensions, sometimes hidden; there are rivalries between groups whose thoughts are guided by the pursuit of victory; communication becomes defensive; decisions are suspected and the wildest rumors emerge.

The 34th General Chapter presented us with a challenge: the challenge of trust. This trust is necessary, and we know that, depending on people and circumstances, its level can be low or high, and effectiveness depends on it enormously. Since we want to continue our journey as a Con-

gregation, the big question is how, in each of our encounters - personal, community or intra-Congregational - we are going to inspire in ourselves, through our words and actions, a trust that is truly enriching.

As we have some new Provincials in our midst, I’d like to say just two things at the moment: the first is that we have a history. A friend of mine, the superior general of a congregation, used to say to me (perhaps to ease my anxiety): *“Your congregation started before you and it will continue after you.”* We’re just continuing a mission, because we believe there’s still more to do and live. This is the moment to salute the memory of those brothers whom we can call “discreet heroes” in the history of our congregation, who believed in the future of our family. They risked gestures of love for our congregation. You and your collaborators will do what you can. I wish you a successful mission.

If you ask me for a little advice - this is my 2nd point - I’ll simply say this: Give priority to the people (the brothers). If you take care of your relationships with the brothers, you’ll also be saving the works they manage. Once again, this means trusting. It’s difficult to risk a gesture of trust, but you have to try, you have to dare. We have an elder in the Congo who used to ask the question: can a man change? Doubt, in certain situations, is legitimate. But we can always dare (...) Thank you. ■

# First apostolic appointments

The “first apostolic appointment” of any religious at the end of his or her formation is determined within the framework of the CGP and published at the time of presbyteral ordination (for religious brothers: at Perpetual Profession). We publish here the nominations received by religious ordained to the priesthood in the last year.

## • AFRICA

- **NSENGE MPIA Stanislas**: Lecturer at the UAC in Butembo.
- **KAMATE KITSAKULENDE Gaston**: Serving the parish of Kasando.
- **KIBALA TARIKO Ferdinand**: “Mgr Henri Pierard” community in Beni-Butsili: teacher at the “Prince de la Paix” school, self-financing (chicken coop) and youth ministry in the parish.
- **MUHINDO SAASITA Faustin**: Training in printing in Nairobi, with a view to teaching in Mahamba (Butembo).
- **MUMBERE SEKERAVITI Justin**: Member of the training team at Katendere Postulancy (Kyondo).
- **PALUKU KAHUMULA Jacques**: Prefect of studies in Luofu, before specializing at the Institut Supérieur Pédagogique (ISP-Muhangi) in Butembo.
- **TIENE NGANGA Fabrice**: Sainte-Isabelle sub-parish, Kinshasa.
- **KAMBALE KASAMBYA Moïse**: PhD in management information systems, with a view to teaching at UAC.
- **KAMBALE YALAMIZE MUSAVE Éric**: Maison Quénard, for accounting in Kambali and youth ministry in Kitatumba (weekends).
- **MATONDO LUBIKAMO Juvens**: Accountant at Institut Mahamba (Butembo), in community at Kindugu.
- **MUZUDI KINDALA Dieu-Merci**: Sainte-Isabelle sub-parish, Kinshasa, also as local treasurer.

## • EAST AFRICA

- **Augustine BYAMUKAMA**: Parish and school pastoral work in Kyabakadde (Uganda).
- **Kizito SSEMBAJJWE**: At St Mbaga Tuzinde postulancy in Nairobi-Katua (Kenya), while looking after the computer lab at Assumption High School.
- **Dominic MUENDO MUTINDA**: Youth and parish ministry in Mombasa (Kenya), and bursar of this foundation.

## • BRAZIL

- **Jefferson DE OLIVEIRA MARQUES**: Parish pastoral work in Eugenopolis, with particular emphasis on lay formation and pastoral renewal.

## • EUROPE

- **Jean-Baptiste TRẦN KHẮC Trúc**: Auberge Adveniat, with additional social involvement in Paris.
- Fr. **Joachim NGUYỄN MẠNH Hùng** (Europe): Jerusalem: welcoming pilgrims, integration into the local Church, ecumenical and interfaith dialogue, biblical training.
- **David BINIDI**: Brussels-Woluwe: youth ministry in the diocese and animation of the Madeleine church.
- **Jean-Valère KOUWAMA**: Canonical degree in ecclesiology and pastoral theology, with a view to communication (Bayard).
- **Stéphane TRAN QUYET Quyen**: Saigon Social Community, as a member of the mixed lay-religious team running the orphanage.

- **Pierre HO SY Can**: Member of the formation team at the Saigon scholasticate, with the possibility of training in accompaniment and interreligious dialogue.
- **Augustin YAMBA**: Training in ecumenism at the ISEO (Institut supérieur d'études œcuméniques) in Paris.

## • MADAGASCAR

- **Marie Joseph RAFANOMEZANTSOA**: Fotadrevvo: dispensary nurse, health ministry for bush schools, parish vicar.
- **Julien RAZANAJATOVO**: Member of the training team for pre-postulants in Ankazobe, in community in Fianarantsoa-Manirisoa.
- **Sambevoatse Jean Félix TONGASOA**: In Nasandratrony, youth chaplain and head of district schools.
- **Justin RAKOTONIAINA**: Vicar at N.-D. de l'Assomption parish in Sanfily (Tuléar).
- **Richard ANDRIAMAHENINARIVO**: Postulancy in Miharisoa, to help the team of trainers and the parish priest of St-Augustin parish on Sundays.

## • PROV. ANDINA

- **Jonathan Esteban RUIZ RIVERA**: In Bogotá, in charge of vocational pastoral care for the whole Province and the accompaniment of postulants.

# In Jerusalem, hoping for Easter morning

Every year, the Holy City relives the last days of Christ in the very places where they took place. Local Christians, usually joined by numerous pilgrims, proclaim the death of Jesus and the joy of his resurrection.



The Palm Sunday procession from the Mount of Olives to the Old City of Jerusalem.

**E**aster 2024 will be sadly and dramatically remembered by the inhabitants of the Holy Land. Admittedly, it has never been easy! For decades, conflict has been omnipresent, more or less perceptible in daily life. However, it has never been so violent since the tragic events of October 7.

It has reduced expectations of lasting peace to zero, and closed the doors to a brighter future for all the inhabitants of this land. Intentions and efforts for peace, dialogue and reconciliation have given way to feelings of incomprehension, mistrust, resentment and betrayal.

Today, it's hard not to sink into fear, anxiety, despair and hatred.

### Particularly topical

It is in this heavy and uncertain context, where the passion and death of Christ take on a particular topicality, that the Catholic Church in the Holy Land remembered Christ and his passage from death to new life. Easter celebrations have thus been maintained, albeit in a much more restricted configuration.

Since recent events, for fear of escalating violence and spreading conflict, pilgrims, ▶

usually numerous at this time of year, have deserted the Holy Land. They have left the streets and holy places of Jerusalem desperately empty. The majority of Christians from the Palestinian Territories were unable to reach the Holy City for security reasons, further reducing the number of participants in the Easter festivities

### In tune with the Passion of Christ

As Assumptionists in Jerusalem, sharing the daily life of the local people and suffering the consequences of this situation, we live with them in tune with the events that marked Jesus' last days in Jerusalem. After the Last Supper in the Upper Room and the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, the journey of his Passion leads to St. Peter's in Gallicantu, a landmark that commemorates Christ's appearance before the high priest Caiaphas, his condemnation to death by the Sanhedrin, Peter's triple denial and his repentance at the crowing of the cock.

For almost 20 years now, the Assumptionists, White Fathers and Chemin Neuf consecrated persons, three communities of French origin, have been working together to offer a "Passion Pilgrimage" to various places significant of the Holy Days of which they are the guardians: Palm Sunday mass at the top of the Mount of Olives in the Pater garden, Good Friday at Ecce Homo, Easter Vigil in the Basilica of Saint Anne. On Easter morning, the Resurrection is proclaimed and celebrated from the rooftops of the Old Town.



A fraternal meal after the celebration of Maundy Thursday at Saint-Pierre en Gallicante.

### An intense moment of communion

The highlight of the week for us Assumptionists is the evening of Holy Thursday. It begins with the celebration of the washing of the feet and the Lord's Supper. At the end of this, a procession accompanies the Blessed Sacrament to the resting place prepared in the crypt; it follows the Holy Staircase and stops in the space that would correspond to the courtyard where Peter stood at the moment of his denial, before taking a time of silence, prayer and adoration.

This intense moment of communion continues with a frater-

nal meal, shared with all those taking part in the celebration. Brothers, sisters, consecrated men and women from the various communities, employees of the St. Peter's Shrine, friends and acquaintances from around the country, as well as pilgrims present for the occasion, all gather in conviviality around the same table set up in the community courtyard.

The evening continues in the expectation of those who, after the holy hour spent in Gethsemane, come in procession to continue praying late into the night. Remembering Christ's passage through this place on

the evening of the Passion, they like to rest on the Holy Staircase, illuminated by torches and candles, before making their way to the deep pit. This is where tradition likes to remember Jesus' captivity while awaiting his appearance before the Sanhedrin. Psalm 87 is then offered up for prayer and meditation, as we think of Christ's night of anguish, and the anguish that still grips so many men and women today.

### A call to Easter Peace

From the summit of the Mount of Olives, where the traditional Palm Sunday march begins, to the dome of the Anastasis covering the empty tomb of the Crucified One, from which the joyful news of the Resurrection is proclaimed, a single watchword is shared! It is whispered in the streets of the Old City, in every sanctuary. It is relayed loud and clear by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa.

It's a call to hope, to trust, to bet on peace, and to rebuild fraternal relations based on genuine reconciliation. Wasn't this the experience of the Apostle Peter after his betrayal and repentance?

The conflicts and trials that may befall the region can never rob the Church in the Holy Land of the joy of Easter and the hope raised by the Resurrection: an Easter morning when peace, justice and reconciliation will once again flourish under the skies of Jerusalem and in the land of the Incarnation.

Fr. Jean-Luc ECKERT  
(Jerusalem)

<https://www.stpeter-gallicantu.org>  
(article published in ATLPE n° 42,  
April-June 2024)

# Echoes of the Oriental Mission

## Session on Byzantine liturgy

At the request of the 34th General Chapter and on the initiative of the Province of Europe, a training session on the Byzantine rite will take place in Plovdiv and Sofia (Bulgaria) from October 20 to 28. It is intended for some fifteen religious from the Province of Europe who are directly or indirectly involved in the Oriental Mission, but is also open to religious from other provinces. The Oblate Sisters of Bulgaria will be taking part, as will one or two local lay people. It will be conducted in French.

The aim is to help participants understand the spirituality of this rite, practiced daily by our Bulgarian brothers and sisters: concrete aspects and theoretical contributions, meetings (Mgr Proykov, ex-archbishop emeritus of Byzantine rite Catholics in Bulgaria) and visits: Kuklen parish, Batchkovo monastery, Sofia Byzantine Carmel... and of course the daily celebration of the liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom!

## Closure of Assumptionist centenary in Romania

Opened in September 2023 in Bucharest and Blaj (south and west of the country - see AA Info no. 3), the celebration of 100 years of Assumptionist presence in Romania was closed last June in Mărgineni, in the province of Moldavia (north-east). A solemn Eucharist of thanksgiving, presided over by Bishop Iosif Păuleț with the participation of his predecessor Bishop Petru Gherghel, brought together on June 9 a large assembly of religious, but also of Oblate Sisters of the Assumption and friends of the local community.

The emotion of all present was all the greater as this community, founded in 1992 after the fall of communism, is currently living its final days, before the opening of a new house in Iași next September (read page 9): the occasion of a new birth for a 2nd century of presence!



# The celebration of the young Assumption in Brazil

The canonical visit of the Superior General, the first of his mandate, addressed a particular significance with the 25th anniversary of the Province.



The Brazilian Provincial Assembly held in Pinhal in March 2024.

Small in numbers, but extended over three of the 27 States of Brazil, this Province offers the Church a continued witness that is humble and generous. It offers the Congregation a loving presence that is engaged in a passionate service of evangelization through countless ecclesial communities. In rural surroundings and large metropolises, it has less than 30 religious in five communities; five among them are foreigners (three Congolese and two Bretons), as well as a few youth in formation.

### The history of two groups

At the beginning of the 1980's, some Assumptionists dared to take the plunge in Campinas, near São Paulo, with a focus on vocations and formation. Young men

came to make a discernment. 40 years later, the Assumption yielded local fruit in that initial investment, and a new hope shone in the young Province: a small fraternal group with the ambition for working for the Kingdom of God. Economically, an important work was realized on the management of its real estate assets, enhancing the value of undeveloped properties through a rental policy. Raising awareness and the progressive participation of all with self-financing helped maintain the provincial community. The contribution of parishes constituted the principal support of the communities---similar to the structure of formation and of the mission of the Province of Angola.

Our parish presence explains the history of the two groups, which were combined

to give birth to the Portuguese-speaking province: a Dutch and a region animated by the French. Each group responded to the local need, but also resonated with the fruits of discernment at each moment and in each place. The little chapels, like those in São Paulo and Pinhal, were established as parishes. These establishments guaranteed the presence of a Dutch community---albeit aging and lacking in vocations for their numerous apostolic endeavors, generous but somewhat scattered.

### Necessary changes

The missionary creativity of the Assumptionists of this era and their many activities in their respective dioceses were not limited by economic concerns. The Europeans, without exception, worked tirelessly, with initiative and generosity, constructing many places of worship and maintaining charitable organizations with the resources of their countries of origin. There is no doubt that they have done well and contributed to the human, spiritual, and social well-being of the people and the communities they helped. But, over the past 25 years, it has been left to the locals to assume a change in attitude that was both necessary and urgent.

Nearly 90 years of Assumptionist presence in Brazil have anchored the roots of this Portuguese-speaking group in Brazilian soil. As members of the international organization of the Assumption, it is now possible to welcome the arrival of new missionaries, this time from Africa, as well as the dispatch of some locals for service beyond our borders. The Province's attention now turns to the foundation in Angola, formed as a partnership with the Province of Africa: if all

goes well, we will soon welcome our first young people in formation in our community of Benguela.

### The expansion of the Alliance and missionary reinforcements

On the horizon of the pastoral conversion of the Church's evangelizing activity, the perspectives for reinforcing and moving the mission of the Assumption forward in Brazil required bold efforts to promote vocations. In fidelity to the founding inspiration of the Province, their care remained in pastoral activity. In addition to pastoral maintenance, it is about using their energy and resources in welcoming, accompanying and mobilizing the young, in daring to propose educational itineraries in favor of an integrated formation, with the participation of religious in formation.

The expansion of the Lay-Religious Alliance follows the same efforts in apostolic work. Many lay people become spiritually enriched by discovering the Augustinian and d'Alzonian resources in the Assumptionist consecration. Joining in relationship with the brothers, they provide the gifts of their personal, familial, and professional experiences.

While waiting, we look forward to the imminent arrival of three Malagasy missionaries, who have started the administrative formalities and are preparing to come to Brazil in the second part of the year. They will join Fr. Paluku Wayameka Faustin, who recently arrived from the DR-Congo and is in the community of Rio de Janeiro.

The Province does not want to lose its capacity to dream. A foundation, outside of the axis, formed by the States of Minas Gerais, Rio

de Janeiro, and São Paulo remains on the horizon. The reinforcement of communities favors creativity, forging other apostolic areas with the new Brazilian brothers who are arriving.

We must emphasize the desire of the Provincial Chapter of 2022, for creating a study commission to find another use for two buildings situated in Eugenópolis and Pinhal. The lay, friends of the Assumption with professional expertise, are ready to help the Assumptionists with this work.

Finally, the initiatives around the cause of beatification of Fr. Matheus van Herkhuizen (1915-1973), offer an opportunity to strengthen the charism and spirituality of the Congregation. This includes a better understanding of the venerable Emmanuel d'Alzon and the context of his foundation, as well as the history of the Assumptionists in Brazil and in the world.

**Fr. João GOMES DA SILVA**  
Assistant General (Rome)



# A first for religious brothers!

Following the recommendations of the 34th General Chapter, an international meeting of 15 religious brothers of 9 nationalities and of all generations, representative of the forty Brothers in the congregation, was held from June 26 to July 4 in Rome. Here is the assessment they drew.



**D**uring these ten days, we experienced a beautiful fraternity, whether through work, during times of conviviality or during outings: mass at the Vatican, visit to the Dicastery for Religious Life (DIVCSVA), pilgrimage on the footsteps of Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon, mass at the Saint-Augustin basilica, meetings with congregations of Brothers. It was an intensive session, with a program rich in fraternal and spiritual exchanges, thanks in particular to the facilitators Vincent Leclercq, João Gomes Da Silva, Benoît Bigard and Milad Yacoub.

### Tell your experience

Each participant was invited to share the story of their journey as a religious brother at the Assumption. Some entered having made the choice to live the religious life as brothers. Others initially

considered the priesthood then, following personal discernment or reflection with a provincial leader, assumed or made this choice.

When the brothers are given the floor, they have a lot to communicate, particularly regarding their life journey. They did so in truth, evoking their positive experiences: self-realization in following Christ, in the service of the brothers of the community, through professional activity, even in a pastoral apostolate. But they also reported certain more difficult experiences: lack of consideration towards them, assignment of second-rate tasks, failure to take into account their skills and their ability to assume responsibilities.

However, most of the brothers were not sidelined and some were given great responsibilities within or outside the con-



gregation. Others humbly put themselves at the service of the community in the acts of daily life or provided assistance in pastoral activities.

All insisted in their stories on the necessary equality between brothers and fathers for a good life together (“An art of living”) with a view to the advent of the Kingdom. This is how this exhortation is verified in daily life: “Above all, you are brothers”.

### From fraternity to mission

As our humanity is divided, brotherhood can be a remedy for our wounded human relationships. This is both a gift and a daily task that the Lord entrusts to us. Religious life can contribute a lot, with regard to the “art of living” fraternity, in terms of the meaning of this fraternity. The experience of fraternal life, beyond all borders, in community, is not simply about knowing how to live together or a useful, even necessary, means to be effective at work. No, the universal fraternity that we are aiming for has as its horizon the communion of all humans with each other and with God, that is to say the Kingdom of God!

The meeting with the Brothers of the Christian Schools challenged us on our own way of expressing our charism, as Augustinians of the Assumption. A common point: fraternity is linked to the mission. Fraternal life is not something in itself (one between oneself) but a point of departure towards the outside, towards a mission or an apostolic commitment.

Like the Brothers of Saint John of God, we are called to a fraternity (hospitality) understood as a gift from God and oriented towards the little ones: the poor, the sick, people with disabilities, the marginalized. Our fraternity



is not only lived between us, it is missionary and must be lived in a balance between the inside and the outside. It is therefore a question of building fraternity, and the mission will ensue. The unity of the fraternal community is the *sine qua non* condition of the mission. In any case, the Brother’s mission is not reduced to the activity he carries out, even if this is apostolic. The religious is “on mission” by virtue of his very consecration, according to the project of his institute. It is therefore not a question of task but of identity.

### Promote the vocation of brother at the Assumption

The vocation of “brother” constitutes the essential part of consecrated life, whether one is a religious brother or a religious priest. This is our common identity. The religious brothers are thus a living reminder that fraternal life, consecrated life, is first, even before our missions or our ministries.

How can we encourage the young people who come to our door to join this vocation, if that is their wish and desire? It would be appropriate:

- to consider an exchange with those watching, postulants, novices, based on testimonies from

- a.a. religious brothers (a video was made during the session), meetings with congregations of Brothers... in order to highlight this vocation;

- to make formators and community superiors aware of the value of the vocation of religious brother and the benefits that the congregation could derive from it. An animation document has been produced for this purpose and will be sent to them.

- to promote, within the Assumption, fulfilling missions for religious brothers, within communities, in AA works, in the Church or even in society, outside the ecclesial field, the guarantee of its quality.

At the end of this session, a message was also sent to the CGO and CGP with a view to promoting and better supporting the vocation of religious brother. This session in Rome is only the beginnings.

Our thanks go to Father General and his Council, who took the initiative for this session; to the facilitators of this meeting, for its preparation, their contributions, their animation, their listening and their kindness; and to the members of the Generalate (brothers, sisters, staff) who did everything possible to make us feel at home. A great first! ■

# The Little Sisters celebrate 200 years of their founders

In 1824, Etienne Pernet and Antoinette Fage were born. Today, two women, one lay and one a consecrated religious, evoke the actuality of the mission and charism of the Little Sisters of the Assumption in the world.



Fr Etienne Pernet, AA, and Sr Antoinette Fage, PSA.

« **M**y history with the Little Sisters of the Assumption began before my birth. My first woolen booties were knitted by a Little Sister. So, I received the spirit of the charity of God at a very young age.” (Isa Moreno, teacher, wife, mother of three children)

« I was thirteen when I first met a Little Sister of the Assumption. . . Eventually that narrow street, that darkened door, and those stairs that led to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor where life of the neighborhood mixed with coffee, became so familiar that my father prophesied: “You will end up bringing your own mattress.” (Sr. Maria José Vallejo, PSA)

We studied the relevance of the heritage that we received from Fr. Etienne Pernet and Mother Antoinette Fage, our founders. We discovered the elements of a spirituality that crossed time and borders. And it

seemed to us that in following in the shoes of our founders, we could walk in their footsteps.

## The shoes of tenderness

In this time of hatred (especially toward the poor), the founders invite us to look at wounded people with a huge amount of tenderness, respect, and dignity: without paternalism, without taking their place, but in a spirit of reciprocity, by empowering them and believing in their ability to take life in their own hands. We invite them to do the same: “The workers are the best apostles of the workers.”

In this time of violence and neglect, we are invited to make tenderness a means of disarmament in the lives of our communities: “Live what you wish to proclaim.”

“We have to use the broom, the dishes, serving the poor, and always like the apostles. . .”

In that service, there is a marvelous strength and a richness that doesn’t fade. The Little Sister shows the world the tenderness and charity of the Good Samaritan.

« I see myself walking toward the house of a family, sorting through the neighbor’s papers, or carrying the butane cylinder to an elderly woman living on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor without an elevator.” (Isa)

« If Odette wanted to go to school, she had to get water, light the fire, do the dishes from the night before and wash the clothes of the other children in the house...Odette is nine years old. How could I not kneel with her at 6:40 a.m. over the washbowl so she could go to school? Once the clothes

are hung on the line, she puts her notebook in her plastic bag and gives a half smile: "Thank you." (Maria José)

### **The shoes of nearness**

Communication instantly transports us to distant places, globalization inundates us daily but also isolates us. . . Etienne and Antoinette were the precursors of the closeness that we strive for today: help with the home, delivering meals to the aged, apartment-sharing, helping with childbirth and home delivery. . . The home, this sacred place which we have discovered as a place of connection, of communion, the sacrament of the visit, the gospel of everyday. The nearness that becomes neighbor, friend, brother and sister, communion.

« It's in the homes, in the places of travel, in the neighborhood gatherings and in associations that we see the signs of transformation. . . amid simplicity, fragility, and daily life." (Isa)

"As I walked out of the house, trying to avoid stepping on electric cables and sewage, I couldn't help but look back. Carmen saw my look: "Do you think, sister, that this is the life we want?"

---"No, Carmen, I don't think anyone lives this way because they want to." (Maria José)

### **The shoes of transformation**

Bombarded with images, inundated with misfortunes that disappear quickly behind ads, the temptation is to give up, to look elsewhere, or to say: there is nothing we can do. . . Our founders invite us to believe in the power that is little, daily, and collective. To plant the seeds of transformation behind us.

Sometimes our efforts seem like they are doomed for failure. That is the time to insist, to rest, to hope against all hope. Suddenly, where nothing seemed possible, something rises up. . . Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation are enriched in the darkness of the earth. . . and from this is born an association, a group, a project that enriches the community, a school project, a community garden, a bus for the area, a nutritional service, a law called into question, a new right recognized, a fraternity that emerges, a

group of women around the Word. . . a Kingdom that announces itself and to which we are witnesses.

### **The shoes of internationality**

At a time of big business, of the construction of enclosures, of walls and barricades; at a time when being a stranger becomes an offense and being an immigrant is a crime; at a time of regionalization and ethnocentricity, our founders taught us to open doors, to uncover a horizon of internationality that has been with us since our beginnings.

### **The shoes of others**

Because we have the tendency to create groups in the Church, the founders have told us that belonging to a religious family frees us from pretensions of absolute truths. Our founders have made us seekers, along with many others---believers of other religions. . . or no religion at all. Together we walked toward a horizon of Glory where each woman and each man is respected in her or his humanity, where all of Creation is respected in its diversity, where the Earth lives in peace.

Let us put on their shoes and keep walking, between shadows and gaps of light. The mission holds the same spirit, but transforms and adapts: Columbia, Canada, the United States, Burkina Faso, DR-Congo, Spain, Vietnam. . . Communities of Little Sisters of the Assumption, lay, Fraternities, bearers of seeds of hope.

Thank you, Etienne and Antoinette, for letting us borrow your shoes, for inviting us (200 years after your births), and for giving us the ability, without counting the cost, to know each person as brother and sister in Christ. This is so that our prayer and our engagement, our work, and our relationships become Kingdom.

Put on your shoes, look in the mirror, open the door, and get out.

Sr Maria José VALLEJO, PSA (Cartagena, Espagne)  
and Isa MORENO, engaged lay member

# Sr. Paul-Hélène, martyred in Algeria: it has already been 30 years...

On May 8, 1994, Sr. Paul-Hélène Saint-Raymond, a Little Sister of the Assumption, was assassinated in Algiers during a civil war. She was beatified in 2018 with 18 other religious who gave their lives to bring the gospel to that country. On May 8, 2024, a ceremony was held in Paris to give her homage.



For the celebration, we invited our brothers and sisters in the Assumption family, the Auxiliary Sisters of Charity, the Marists, other religious communities, Andas, Fraternities, associates, and lay friends. Paul-Hélène's family was there also: her brother Fr. André, her sister, her nieces and nephews, and a great niece.

A large crowd filled the hall. Two videos were shown that depicted what happened to Paul-Hélène and Fr. Henri Vergès (a Marist) in the Casbah library in Algiers on Sunday afternoon, May 8, 1994.

Several testimonies were shared :

Some people who lived in Algeria at the time recalled the dark years during which 200,000 Algerians were executed, especially the Christian martyrs.

The role of the Cistercian Monastery of Tibhirine was emphasized, and the young visitors who come to get recharged, to breathe an air of peace, know well this history of Algeria.

A Jesuit priest said, « If we are still holding on in Algeria, it is thanks to those who preceded us.»

The Director of the Institute of Christians of the Orient, also present, remarked how he was touched by the faith of these martyrs: "The last word will always be of Love."

This testimony was followed by a Eucharistic celebration in the chapel, presided by the Vicar General of Nanterre, the Provincial of the Assumptionists, and a dozen concelebrants. Sr. Nathalie Lafforgue, Superior General of the Little Sisters of the Assumption, welcomed the assembly.

After the Mass, a gathering in fellowship was held in which warm greetings were exchanged that were full of hope. It was an opportunity for exchanges with the family---those coming from France and Algeria. ■

## The Oblates of the Assumption. . .

celebrated 150 years of the d'Alzon Institute last April in Nîmes: begun in 1874 by the inspiration of Mother Correnson and Fr. d'Alzon, this institute launched the educational vocation of our religious family. Today, the d'Alzon Institute includes 6,700 students---from infancy to higher studies, with branches in three other towns in the middle of France. The Assumptionists in Nîmes collaborate with the Oblates for school-based pastoral work. <https://www.dalzon.com/edito/>

## and the Religious of the Assumption. . .

are holding their 30th General Chapter from June 29 to July 28, in their General House in Paris. Approximately 60 delegates (which includes 14 laity during the first week), will gather representing their 14 Provinces, around the theme: "Moved by the Spirit, around dialogue and connected to our realities, we will discern new pathways of synodality for our time. Metanoia---a prophetic mission---a culture of care. »

"My attention is in Jesus Christ and the extension of the Kingdom." (St. Marie Eugénie) [30ème Chapitre Général des Religieux de l'Assomption \(assumpta.org\)](https://www.30eme-chapitre-general-des-religieux-de-l-assomption.org)

# Fr. d'Alzon and young people

In 1871, our Founder was preoccupied with the question of recruitment. The Congregation had only 40 professed members; many were not yet ordained or lay brothers. What was to be done?



The site of Notre-Dame des Châteaux, in 1871.

**C**onfident in the success of the Congregation, Fr. d'Alzon had resigned himself to the fact that he could not be certain of this during his lifetime. His anxiety disappeared when he saw the success of a foundation: Notre-Dame des Vocations or the work of the alummates. "God willed that the future of the Congregation should lie above all in the alummates. Three or four years ago, we weren't even thinking about it. The thought of it was sown like a foreign seed by a passing bird; but, thanks be to God, it has borne fruit. It's now up to us to thank God for having fertilized the seed so well. « (1)

## Difficult recruitment at the outset

D'Alzon believed that the few entries to the novitiate at Le Vigan would not be sufficient in number. What's more, he was not satisfied with the quality of the "first formation" of those who entered. In March

1871, he organized a novena of masses to ask for new vocations. At the end of the novena, but without having taken part in it himself, Abbé Desaire, whom he had met at the Council in Rome, presented him with an idea he had previously dismissed: founding clerical schools.

But the Savoy priest mentioned an abandoned house and chapel at an altitude of almost 1,000 meters. The owner would be willing to cede the property to Assomption, on condition that a priest be made available year-round to celebrate mass at the Notre-Dame des Châteaux sanctuary, which is quite popular in summer. The chapel has no resources.

The house is dilapidated. The adjoining fir-tree wood provides little income. But the region is populated by fervent Christians. Seeing in this proposal the answer to his prayers, Father d'Alzon accepted without hesitation. ▶

### An unpremeditated initiative

In his instruction to the Collège de Nîmes the following Saturday, the Father hinted that God had grown tired of vainly striking at the hearts of the children of the rich, and had turned to the poorest. On April 1, 1871, he asked Abbé Desaire to prepare the case. Emmanuel Bailly joined him during Easter week (April 9-16). Together, they met with the bishop and inspected the site. The chapel was in very poor condition. The house has no furniture whatsoever. Roof, floors, windows, doors: everything needs to be redone. But the site is absolutely charming and suitable for a vocational work. What's more, the enthusiastic bishop immediately gave his blessing to "such a beautiful work in such a poor asylum". D'Alzon bought a few meadows to complete the lot, thus bringing the title of Prince de Beaufort to the manor.

For the next

few months, Abbé Desaire remained alone at the "Châteaux". He improvised as architect and contractor. All materials were transported by mule, and the workers adapted to the nonchalant pace of the animals. By the end of the summer, nothing was ready and the repairs were unfinished. The monks of Nîmes and several benefactors hastily collected some furniture, linen and basic necessities. Among them was Mademoiselle de Bastard, who died a Religieuse de l'Assomption in Auteuil in 1874, bequeathing the money needed to build the new house.

### Notre-Dame des Châteaux

Fr. D'Alzon arrived on August 23, preceded by Frs. Emmanuel Bailly and François Picard and Pierre Descamps, the future director of the establishment. To-

gether, they decided on the rules and, above all, the spirit of the establishment, which was given the name of "alumnat" (2). On August 28, the feast of Saint Augustine, D'Alzon celebrated mass at Les Châteaux at 7 a.m. for five students aged 12 to 14, entrusted to him by local priests.

As he contemplates them, he thinks of the six urns at the wedding feast of Cana: *"My dear children, you are a bit like the jugs at Cana. At present, you contain nothing of great value, but Our Lord is going to fill you with the exquisite wine of knowledge and virtue; the new miracle will be performed for you as for the butler of whom the Gospel speaks, through the intervention of the Blessed Virgin."* (3)

### The "jugs", Father d'Alzon's joy

His prediction proves correct: three of these "jugs" will persevere "containing the generous wine of the priesthood". That morning, Fr. d'Alzon left the Châteaux for Annecy, where he thanked Saint François de Sales, invoked in 1855 to receive vocations: he named him patron saint of the work. A few weeks later, six young men joined the Châteaux, five of whom were to become priests.

Touched by the freshness and naivety of their letter of application, D'Alzon replied with great tenderness and a slightly teasing sense of humor:

*"My lovely jugs, I can't tell you what a pleasure your letter gave me [...]. Yes, you are admirable jugs, alabaster jugs, onyx jugs, priceless jugs, since you are destined one day to receive the very perfumes of heaven. In the meantime, put a lot of humility, hard*

*work, obedience and application into them.*

*I confess that I make no distinction between old and new jugs. What I do care about is that they are both very large and, above all, very intelligent for jugs."*

### A special touch in the service of vocations

The organization put in place in the early days of Notre-Dame des Châteaux was to become a model for all the other alumnae of the Congregation. Pupils follow the grammar course up to 3rd grade: they are therefore no more than 15 years old. (4) They recite morning (prime) and evening (compline) prayers together, and sing vespers. Reading is done during meals. Every day, the community gathers for penance. Every evening, the Father blesses the alumnists, as well as every time they leave the house and when they return.

Manual work sessions are organized to develop their sense of responsibility. Vacations are spent on site, with short excursions and recreational activities.

Fr. d'Alzon put all his weight into this work of old age, his favorite because the most explicit of what he wanted for the Congregation:

*"I would remind you that we must bring ourselves and our children to a very great spirit of faith, frankness, sacrifice and initiative. After that, it's absolutely essential that we allow them a certain freedom of development. However, let's return to the three great principles that we must constantly instill in them: love of Jesus Christ; love of the Blessed Virgin, protector of their purity; love of the Church, that great cause for which we must set them ablaze."* (5)



Father d'Alzon with his «jugs» at Les Châteaux (watercolour by Damblans, 1921).

### **Priests for parishes, missions or religious life**

The aim of the work is openly clerical: “In founding the alumnats, we wanted to raise children destined for the priesthood, either in the ministry of parishes, missions or the regular clergy”.

The admission criteria are precise: “We accept children who are poor, not destitute, with serious and well-marked indications of a vocation, provided with a good primary education, of above-average intelligence, having received a careful Christian primary education, belonging to a family willing to act with complete loyalty to the work.”

Answering his critics in advance, he took it upon himself to recruit from the poorest fami-

lies. Despite the prejudices of his time, D’Alzon believed that poverty in no way precluded noble sentiments. To demonstrate this, he uses the example of Jesus: “Jesus Christ, our model, had composed the first of all seminaries, the seminary of which he himself was superior, of very poor and coarse craftsmen.”

Finally, he was anxious to distinguish his work from other similar establishments: “The aluminate, made up of children who want to be priests and even religious, must have its own stamp.” (6) This stamp guarantees its typically Assumptionist identity: at the service of both the Church and the child’s vocation.

### **A spirituality of education at the service of grace**

Above all, Fr. d’Alzon brought to the alumnates thirty years of experience in education and a genuine theology of education. Today’s Assumptionists, when talking about their own vocation or mission, still draw on this spiritual heritage.

For D’Alzon, it is the Trinitarian life that makes the child grow: the Father gives his strength to the soul; the Son opens his intelligence, and the Holy Spirit develops his capacity to love. Strength, an intelligence enlightened by the truth of faith in Jesus Christ and love then dispose the young person to commit his or her life to the service of God and the Church. ▶



L'ALUMNAT GREC DE SAINT-PIERRE, A KOUM-KAPOU, ET SES PROFESSEURS  
A droite et à gauche, deux de nos religieux du rite grec, revêtus du costume du clergé d'Orient.

The Byzantine rite Koum-Kapou aluminate in Constantinople.

God the Father enables children to overcome their inconsistencies and weaknesses of will. By raising his gaze to the Father, he gradually learns to overcome his fears and inner resistance. The Lord then gives him the strength to unify his heart, and the impetus to repair within himself and around him what needs to be repaired. Before proposing this strength of the Father to the young, the religious must experience it personally for himself. An educator always proceeds first

the pupil on the path:

*"Let's see how God himself acts, and how he manifests himself: he creates, he repairs; it's through this double action that he manifests himself in the world. [...] Let us repair our own little world, and the little world around us [...] God associates us with himself and has wanted us to be his cooperators... Helped in this way by God's strength, gathering in him our divided and shared will, we will effectively communicate to children the strength they lack*

*and which will have been transmitted to us."* (7)

Teaching makes it possible to communicate this strength. For D'Alzon, it always leads back to the truth that is the Son: to his action, his will and his plan for souls. *"Thus, in education, we must mold and model our statues on Jesus Christ if we want them to succeed."* (8)

Education, according to Emmanuel d'Alzon, aims to make Christ grow in souls: young people are neither lost nor left to



their own devices or to the relativism that surrounds them. On the contrary, they have a model to follow: Jesus. And he finds in the Father the strength to unfold this model in him.

But the truth of the Son is not inert. It cannot remain the object of mere thought or the concept of a theory.

The truth of Christ must be desired and sought. Once it has grasped the human soul, the heart attaches itself to it with passion, offers itself to it with zeal, and begins to love with “*apostolic love*”. This type of love is precisely what D’Alzon feels for young people, and what he was already looking for in every Assumptionist, religious or lay, at the Collège de Nîmes:

“*Let us be passionate about this apostolate [...] Priests and lay people, we are all called to this communication of truth and love through education. Let us make it the object of our meditations, our desires, of all our efforts.*” (9)

### **The founding of the alumnae, a paradigm that gave birth to the Assumption**

Fr. d’Alzon launched the alumnae because he wanted vocations, but they didn’t just give vocations to the Assumption: they gave it an identity and definitively oriented the vocation of the congregation. They enabled the Founder to implement a founding spiritual line. If the Assumption made the alumnae, the alumnae have in a way made the Assumption, by putting into practice all the richness of its educational experience. They are a paradigm for considering education and, even more broadly, the mission as a whole.

Based on the strength, truth and love of a Father-Son God and Holy Spirit, the alumnae have attracted many young people to

Assumption, enabling them to realize their call to serve God and the Church. In this way, they have helped shape the face of the Assumption and the legacy of Fr. d’Alzon. Our founder understood this very well: “*The alumnae are like the nests of our spiritual family. They prepare the generations who will inherit our legacy.*” (10)

### **Portrait of the young man on leaving the alumnae**

To commit oneself to Assumptionist life, here are the natural qualities that Fr. d’Alzon was looking for above all else: courage, purity of intention focused on the search for Christ Jesus, self-giving, a spirit of sacrifice, and the charity without which there can be no zeal or true commitment to the Assumption mission: “*The young man ready to enter the novitiate who does not have the sacred fire of the love of Our Lord, who does not have the enthusiasm of the Church’s battles, will perhaps make a good priest, pious, regulated, modest, mediocre and vulgar: he will never make a true son of the Assumption.*” (11)

A thought by Saint Thomas Aquinas is probably the key to Emmanuel d’Alzon’s educational practices: “*Grace does not make nature disappear, but completes it.*” He looked for personal qualities in young people marked by uprightness, frankness and generosity. And then he gambled that the Lord’s grace would lead them along the path to holiness.

Evoking the portrait of a candidate for Assumptionist life, Fr. d’Alzon writes: “*Certainly, I don’t suppose him to be perfect yet, but I want him to have the necessary elements to become so. How will he communicate the flame if he doesn’t have it? And how will he*

*inspire to action if he is asleep [...] Will he in turn form saints, if he is not a saint himself, or at least [...] capable of becoming one promptly?”*

Choose young people carefully, encourage them assiduously to develop their natural qualities, and ultimately let God work so that the best of themselves becomes in them the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity.

**Fr. Vincent LECLERCQ**  
Postulator General

- 1) Écrits spirituels p. 251
- 2) From Latin *alumnus*, meaning insignificant baby, pupil, disciple; the *alunat* designate usually a house of secondary studies where a number of religious institutes would prepare their recruitment.
- 3) Siméon Vailhé, *Emmanuel d’Alzon*, vol. 2, p. 273
- 4) On this matter, Fr. D’Alzon was very strict. According to him, it was a rule to separate the youngest (grammar level) from the oldest (humanities level). In 1878, he refuses to visit the alumnae of Clairmarais, in the diocese of Arras (North of France), because the formators had not followed that rule. See Vailhé, *Emmanuel d’Alzon*, vol. 2, p. 278
- 5) *Ibid.* P. 276.
- 6) *Id.*
- 7) ES p. 1330-1331.
- 8) ES p. 1333.
- 9) ES p. 1336.
- 10) 7<sup>th</sup> Circular letter of Fr. D’Alzon 13 July 1874. ES p. 251.
- 11) ES p. 250

# Fr. Julio Navarro: “Rediscover a more humble, more prophetic religious life”.



Having passed away last March, Fr. Julio was not only a leading figure in our Congregation, but also a point of reference for the Church in Latin America. By way of a spiritual testament, here are extracts from an interview given in 2019 to the Conference of Religious of Chile<sup>1</sup>.

(1) Full text:  
Fr. Julio Navarro,  
A.A.: «We need  
to rediscover a  
Church and a  
religious life that  
are more humble,  
poorer and more  
prophetic» –  
*Conferre*

## - What was consecrated life like when you launched *Conferre*?

In 1975, the Conference of Religious of Chile brought together 250 congregations, representing 8,000 consecrated people. We were at the beginning of the military dictatorship, with all that this meant in terms of repression, persecution, torture, disappearances and expulsions from the country. Many religious men and women were deeply committed in various ways to providing shelter or saving lives.

At this time, the 2nd General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate (Medel-

lín, 1968) raised awareness of the reality of poverty and marginalization throughout the continent, the result of institutionalized social injustice. Medellín invited the whole Church to make an effective commitment to the poorest and to fight for justice and human promotion.

## - What influence did this have on religious life?

It began to experience an “exodus” towards the poorest. A large number of men and women religious left the large convents to live in marginal “cities”, in small communities of four or five people,

in neighborhood houses, leading a simple and austere life, close to the people, inserting themselves into the basic ecclesial communities. This process has not been easy, and has been accompanied by painful ruptures and even divisions within communities and provinces.

Another line of force will be insertion into the life and pastoral care of the local Churches: not remaining at the service of “our works”, our school, our parish, but feeling part “affectively and effectively” of the local Church in which we live.

It was a time of new winds and important changes for the life of the Church, with the internalization and application of the Second Vatican Council. There was a great need for formation, updating of the theology of religious life, training of formators, and so on. Religious life for young people.

**- How has religious life developed to date?**

It's losing its dynamism and is becoming more and more ageing. There are few, if any, new vocations. Several factors combine to explain this situation: society itself has changed at a rapid pace; there is talk of individualism, loss of ideals, fear of permanent commitment; young people are looking for an easy, comfortable life or effortless personal fulfillment, and prolong parental dependence for many years...

**- Has this permeated religious life?**

Many young brothers and sisters withdraw from religious life, citing a lack of motivation or a loss of enthusiasm. Soon after perpetual profession or ordination, they look for other paths

in life. The ideals of dedication, service, option for the poor, missionary spirit, fraternal life and commitment to the Church and their religious family seem to disappear.

This situation is aggravated today by scandals of sexual abuse or abuse of power and conscience in the Church and religious life. Many people have lost confidence in ecclesial institutions. Young people are not interested in the life of the Church, or are totally alienated from it.

**- What could be our hopes or avenues for improvement?**

First of all, we must look to the present with hope, for there have already been other times in the Church when conflicts have been experienced and overcome. To this we must add the faith that the Holy Spirit is at work in the Church, which is the Church of Jesus Christ, so we must always preach and reaffirm this hope in the Church.

A second thing is that we need new leaders in the Church, new prophets like there were at the time of the Council, of Medellín, of Puebla. We need pastors and religious, priests, educators, committed lay people who reach out to the frontiers the Pope is talking about today, to those new suffering faces, like immigrants. All this gives us hope: the Church has new challenges and must respond with new pastoral choices for today's world.

**- How do we go about it?**

We need to allow time for purification and conversion. And then we need to discover new languages, new ways of reaching young people. Living testimonies that can speak for themselves. Pope Francis emphasizes that



we need to find these witnesses to the Gospel who are humbly working out there, and it is they who will raise new concerns, new challenges, new commitments in the Church.

**- What would be your message to the new generations?**

In crisis situations, a message of hope is very important. What the Church and religious life are going through today must be interpreted as God's call to purification and conversion. It's about healing wounds, even if the treatment is painful. And it's about returning to the essence of the demands of the Gospel and the mission entrusted to us by the Lord. We need to rediscover a Church and a religious life that are humbler, poorer, more prophetic, more fraternal, more apostolic, more present in the various peripheries of our society. ■

Editor

Michel KUBLER, General Secretary



Assunzione@mclink.it

**Translator**

Patricia Haggerty and  
Gilles Blouin, English;

Tomás González, Spanish  
... and the help of DeepL

**Model and laid out**

Loredana Giannetti

Composed in  
June 30, 2024

This no 5 of AA-News  
is printed in 220  
copies:

160 in French

30 in English

30 in Spanish

And 350 electronic  
shipments.

Agostiniani dell'Assunzione - Via San Pio V, 55 - I - 00165 Roma  
Tel. : 06 66013727 - E-mail : assunzione@mclink.it

**2 OFFICIAL**

- Agenda
- The Invitation of the Assumptionists from Abidjan

**3 EDITORIAL**

- "...until Christ is formed in you" (Ga 4,19)

**4 OFFICIAL: CALLS, NOMINATIONS, AGREEMENTS...**

**6 PLENARY GENERAL COUNCIL**

- New horizons for Assumption
- "The challenge of trust"
- First apostolic appointments

**11 LIFE OF THE PROVINCES**

- In Jerusalem, hoping for Easter morning
- Echoes of the Oriental Mission
- The celebration of the young Assumption in Brazil

**16 AA GATHERING IN ROME**

- A first for religious brothers!

**18 ASSUMPTION FAMILY**

- The Little Sisters celebrate 200 years of their founders
- Sr. Paul-Hélène, martyred in Algeria: it has already been 30 years

**21 POSTULATION**

- Fr. d'Alzon and young people

**27 TRIBUTE**

- Fr. Julio Navarro: "Rediscover a more humble, more prophetic religious life".

**28 OUR DECEASED BROTHERS**

# Our deceased brothers



† Fr. **Albert FAILLER**, of the Layrac community (European Province), died on May 16, 2024, at Agen (France). His funeral was celebrated on May 22 in the chapel of Prieuré. He was 87.

† Fr. **José Antonio ECHANIZ**, of the community of Madrid-Dulce Nombre de Maria (European Province), died on May 27, 2004, in Madrid, Spain. His funeral was celebrated on May 29, in the chapel of Our Lady of Butarque, at Leganés, followed by a burial in that cemetery. He was 78.

† Fr. **Justin SENGER**, of the Albertville community (European Province), died on June 10, 2024, in Albertville, France. His funeral was celebrated on June 13, in the chapel of Notre-Dame des Vignes, followed by burial in the cemetery of Chiriac. He was 97.

† Fr. **Jean-Claude de ROSNY**, of the Albertville community (European Province), died on June 13, 2024, in Albertville, France. His funeral was celebrated on June 19, in the chapel of Notre-Dame des Vignes, followed by a burial in the cemetery of Chiriac. He was 92.