

A Word from the Postulator

For religious men and women, chastity or virginity are the object of a vow. But Fr. d'Alzon prefers to speak of the «virtue of chastity», of the «gift of virginity», of the «purity of heart» as the evangelical requirement for all Christians whether they be religious or lay. It is a virtue linked to the theological virtue of charity, that is, its reason for being is the love of God, it is the total gift “of all my being” to Jesus’ person and mission. Fr. d'Alzon is not concerned with juridical or ascetic considerations: «chastity does not need explanation»; and in the rule for the lay associates he writes: «the Brothers are committed to keeping the chastity which suits their profession» (*E.S.*, p. 1287). Chastity assumes an ardent apostolic zeal, passion for the Kingdom, for the Church, for people; “apostles, like angels, are messengers” (*Dir.* P. 54). Chastity frees us and makes us available «always ready to set out and to go where God sends us» (*E.S.*, p. 1279). Fr. d'Alzon lived chastity and purity of heart with characteristics which are proper to him: respect, loyalty and truthfulness in his relationships, tenderness and discretion in his friendships, a close and affectionate brotherhood towards his disciples.

Fr. Julio Navarro Román, a.a.

His love for purity

« I will dictate at random my memories insofar as they come to me. I cannot help but begin with one of the traits of Fr. d'Alzon which has most impressed me and has impressed all those among us who have approached him. What love for purity in this soul! How his exterior has always been penetrated by it ! How he knew how to inspire it ! and what angelic gift God had given him to speak of it, either in his public discourses, or in his private relationships. It is the lever by which he formed so many vocations. He inspired love for this white crown which we sensed so well that he himself had never tarnished. It seemed to me that he loved souls in proportion to their being pure; undoubtedly he gave himself to all, but I have never known him to befriend anyone but those above all suspicion. He had many enemies, they have attacked him in all possible ways, but never on this point has a single

doubt ever been raised, despite the works which gave him so many relationships, he was never the object of a single doubt nor of a single attack. I knew him in his youth; his behavior was even more strict that it was later in life. To a continual mortification which I shall recount my memories later, he joined forms so reserved, so severe, so marked by the highest appropriateness that even when his natural cheerfulness became obvious he never lost anything of the dignity and of the decorum which inspired respect and would not have allowed anyone the slightest act of familiarity. I believe that he always used the greatest *prudence* to avoid seeing suspicious persons to whom he needed to render a service either in the confessional or in places where there was a witness, for example, in convents.» (Saint Marie-Eugénie of Jesus’s Testimony at the death of Fr. d'Alzon).

In the words of Fr. d'Alzon

I can offer God no greater proof of my love for Him than to freely renounce even lawful affections, in order to practice chastity.

(Directory, p. 55)

Friendship, tenderness, love

A fiery being, Emmanuel d'Alzon kept watch over his heart, his emotions and his body without killing them. He discovered that the more loving we are humanly speaking the more we can love God.... The geography of his heart covers four areas: the friendships of his youth (only men); his family, especially his sister Augustine; his directees (who were all women), especially Mother Marie-Eugénie, his great friend; and the religious of his congregation.

His tenderness within friendship

He had no trouble finding God in a man-to-man encounter. And he never thought he had to turn away from men and women when he was with God. There was no dichotomy in his ideas about it because his heart was not divided. He was incapable of maintaining a friendship far removed from God, and equally incapable of forgetting his friends and his undertakings when he was close to God. I see in this the triumph of his tenderness. A loving heart integrates more things and does so more easily than a heart that is somewhat dry. It is because our hearts are dry that we often choose activity as *against* prayer and prayer as *against* tender friendship. This beautiful, warm and pure tenderness had an immense place in the life of Emmanuel d'Alzon.

He had an especially close relationship with his sister Augustine three years his junior. In his correspondence with her we admire his tenderness and psychology, but also his way of respecting a woman, by not fearing to share with her the lofty subjects that interested him intensely.

The friendship that lasted forty years

In 1838, Father d'Alzon wrote to Eugénie Milleret who was to become Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus. He was 28, and she 21. He would be her director and she his. Together they would found the Sisters of the Assumption and the Assumptionists. She would be in Paris, and he in Nîmes. For forty years, by correspondence, they carried on a dialogue, sometimes on a daily basis, which was an amazing mixture of business, canon law, tenderness, and entreaties to holiness. Theirs was the story of true friendship which never ceased examining itself on the place it should have in two lives totally given to God.

One of Father d'Alzon's first analyses of this friendship places it *within* two immense loves: « Between the supereminent love of God and the general love of our brothers, grace prepares other relationships in silence. Through you I have understood a little bit about a friendship that calls for almost infinite respect. I shall be indebted to you for the desire and the strength to remain more habitually in a loftier atmosphere which I cannot quite describe. »

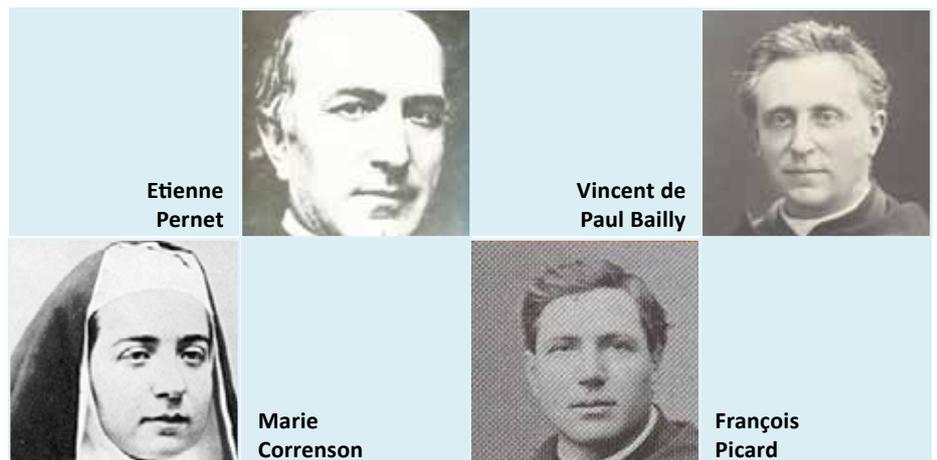
Tender friendship

Father d'Alzon's own relationship with his first religious could not be anything but the cloudy authoritarianism common to founders. But he saved the day by his tenderness. He called Father Pernet « his Pernichon ». He wrote to Father Vincent de Paul: "I love you very much. That is well known, but it should be a bit of velvet to your heart." Writing to Father Galabert who was doing outstanding work in Turkey: "Allow me to speak a tender word to you. I love you a little more every day, and I probably don't let you see enough all that I feel in my heart for you."

Being hypersensitive himself, he noted that friendships need signs: « It is not enough to have good feelings in our hearts for our friends. We must also let them know about it. » Manifesting friendship was surely his secret. This outgoing, warm and friendly behavior on his part has put its mark on Assumptionists as a whole. It is what we call « the family spirit »: simplicity in relationships, joyous cordiality and openness.

(Extracts : André Sève, *Christ Is My Life*, chapter 5)

The friends of Fr. d'Alzon

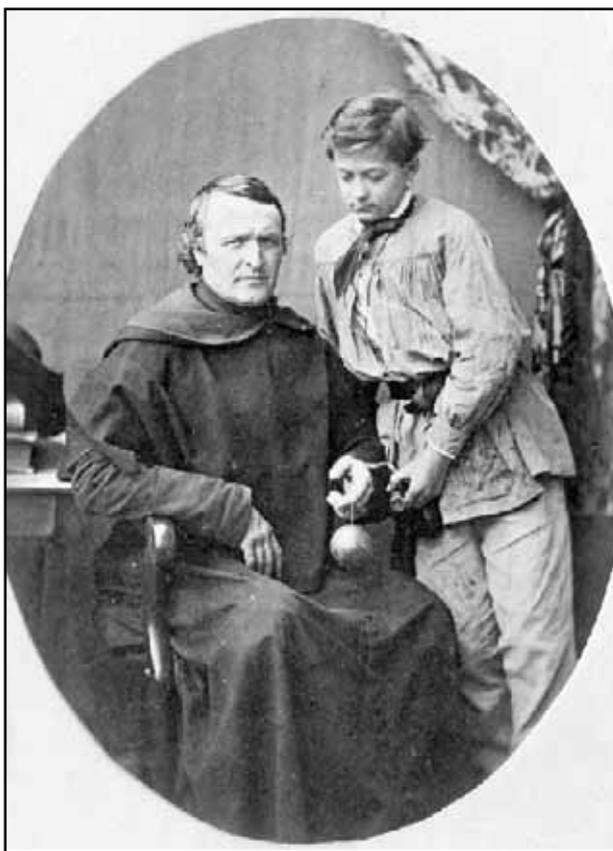


What he teaches us

For Father d'Alzon chastity is a virtue that finds its roots in charity, in the love of Jesus and in the love of humanity that needs to be saved ; it is linked to the gift of self, to apostolic zeal, to the spirit of unity; its fruits are freedom and happiness.

1.- Chastity is proof of love

« It is from the devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and from a childlike love of the Blessed Virgin that the members of our little family will draw the strength necessary to keep this vow. We shall try to be fully occupied at all times so that we may more easily avoid pointless or dangerous conversations. Our actions should be such that we need never fear or be ashamed to have them known; apostles, like angels, are messengers, and to be true apostles we should possess the angelic virtue of chastity. Unless our hearts are transparently innocent, we can never hope to enjoy an intimate relationship with Him Who is the eternal and pure image of the Father. (Dir. p. 54).



Fr. d'Alzon with his nephew Jean de Puysegur

2.- We become similar to God by it

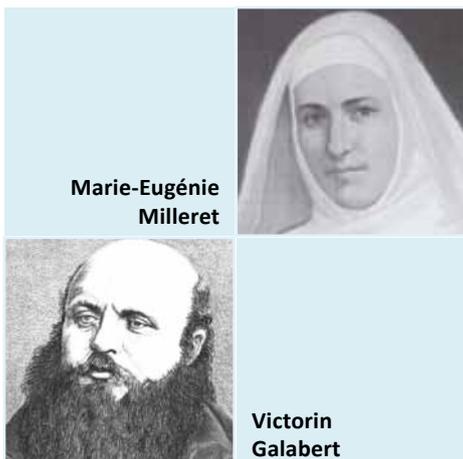
« The first of all the privileges of chastity is similarity with God. What is more pure than God Himself? Well, this is one of the principle effects of God's mercy, that without changing our nature which He created and which implies within us the indissoluble union of body and soul, nevertheless we can always tend, by his grace, to approach his infinite purity. This is the work of perfection here on earth. Oh !, when shall we be to such an extent the image of God that he shall make to shine on us the light of his face and that, in this indestructible light, thanks to which we will resemble him, he recognizes us as his sons ! »

3.- Liberty and joy

« The chaste soul enjoys an incomparable freedom to turn towards all that is good, noble, grand, generous. Ask of it a sacrifice: the more pure it is, the more it is free to accomplish it; no earthly bond detains it; the thought of an eternal reward enflames it; it has from God a trait that the unchaste will never have. Purity is restrained by no weight; it is free, it has wings, it can thrust itself towards the glory of God.”... “The joys of Christ's virgins are not the same as the joys of those who are not virgins... Each has its joys, but no one else these.” (E.S., p. 518).

4.- To the “Adoratrices”

« The objective which you should propose for yourselves, is to live as religious within the world so as to be more every day the brides of our Lord... You should apply yourselves to live in the world, like the Blessed Virgin lived in it. Mary was not hidden by a cloister, but protected by her modesty. You can do as she did and by imitating her in your external relationships, you can aspire to the highest perfection. You should apply yourselves to imitating Mary's spirit of humility, of prayer, of obedience and of charity.” (E.S., p. 1225).



Favors and graces received

→ **Testimony on Micael Aleix ACOSTA**, born February 8, 2013 at San Martín, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

On February 8, 2013, at 3:30 am, Marisol, being five months pregnant, had her home broken into (two men and a woman violently entered by the balcony) ; she and her son Aleix were alone. After having searched the whole house and having discovered that her husband was a police officer, she was given a severe blow to the head and then was shot purposely in the stomach. Subsequently she was helped and brought to the hospital where she underwent a Caesarean operation.

Mother and son stayed in the hospital for four months. Micael was three months in intensive therapy and in an incubator to complete the gestation period. From there he was transferred to the neonatal department where he remained under observation for nine months. He was then allowed to exit the hospital but needed to regularly report back for tests. The mother was informed that the child would have after-effects caused by his premature birth ; one of these after-effects was an inoperable cranial tumor.

Because of this, the mother went to Lourdes (Santos Lugares, Buenos Aires) on July 11, 2014 to pray the Virgin for her son. She was welcomed by Cristina who proposed that she pray a novena to Father d'Alzon. On July 12 the mother took Micael to the hospital to be prepared for an eventual high risk operation. At that time the doctors informed the mother that the operation was no longer necessary because « the tumor had disappeared » ; the doctors could not find any explanation : the tumor appeared in the x-rays and now it no longer appeared (we have the x-rays with the tumor and those without the tumor).

→ **Prayer to Fr. d'Alzon** : Fr. d'Alzon gave his life, his intelligence, his fortune and even his health. With you I ask his intercession: that he obtain for the youth of France and particularly for our family, which is his own, similar generosity. This is my daily prayer in union with that of your community... (Hesse d'Alzon, February 5, 2015).

→ **Thanksgiving:** Good morning Father ! I wanted to communicate that yesterday, Gabriela, for whom in December I asked you for prayers, told me that the doctor informed her that she was 90% cured ! And that she did not need to undergo chemotherapy! Many thanks to you and your community for the prayers ! (Celeste, Buenos Aires).

News from the Secretariates

***Brussels** : Meeting on February 8, 2015 of the *Friends of Father d'Alzon*. We read his text on *poverty*. Fr. d'Alzon was born in a well-to-do family but he always lived the spirit of *poverty*... During this Lenten season, let us deprive ourselves of something in favor of those poorer than we... Then followed a time of prayer of intercession to Fr. d'Alzon for different people. We propose novenas to Fr. d'Alzon, during the months of March and April for the sick and other intentions.

***Nairobi** : Best wishes from our parish in Njiru. This is to give you news that one week ago, I have constituted the local secretariat team. We have already begun our work. I will send you the complete information a bit later for my schedule is very tight now. Pray for our success in this new apostolate. Fraternally, Fr. Muvunga Charles, a.a.

***Buenos Aires** : Father Julio, I am sending you a dossier with the list of sick persons for whom we have prayed since 2009 asking the intercession of Father d'Alzon. I am sending also, as promised, three medical dossiers of possible miracles : that of Micael, of Alex (six years have already passed) and that of Maximo. Soon I shall send you a fourth case, very important, where everything seems to be a true miracle.

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of Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon.

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