



Adveniat Regnum Tuum

Augustiniani
ab Assumptione

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF THE LAY - RELIGIOUS ALLIANCE

Protocol of Formation for the Lay Assumptionists

Introduction

The International Commission of the Lay-Religious Alliance composed of Fr. Claude Grenache, Fr. Marcelo Marciel, Mrs. Victoria Prada, Ms Marie-Claire Rouquet and Mr. Francisco Rentero at their meeting of 27 October- 4 November in Florence, IT, examined the various protocols of formation in use in the six Provinces of the Congregation.

In 2007, the previous International Commission prepared a proposal composed of criteria, content, pedagogical principles, means and tools in use in the various Provinces.

In March, 2007, the synthesis of this work was presented to the Major Superiors and the Tandems to be distributed to the various Provinces and new foundations.

The General Chapter of 2011 declared: "The Chapter asks the international Lay-Religious Commission to establish the major elements of a formation plan for laity from which each province could elaborate its own." (#136)

Given the current organization of the Lay Assumptionists, the International Commission believes that the best way to assure the animation of the Alliance requires something outside the current provincial structures. Consequently, the Commission proposes that responsible persons from linguistic groups (French, Spanish and English) be appointed to assure this formation. The other linguistic groups will be accompanied directly by the International Commission.

The International Commission and the persons mentioned above will:

1. Share formation experiences among the Provinces so that what has already been done may become a source of enrichment for all.
2. Inform the Congregation and the Provinces of these experiences on a regular basis via the web.
3. Assist the Tandems by communicating new information or pedagogical methods elaborated in the different Provinces.

We present here the general guidelines on which to base a protocol of formation in each Province:

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I. CRITERIA for formation in the spirit of the Assumption

Four fundamental elements:

1. Form Christ “in us and around us.” The General Chapter of 2011 indicated that: “...a Lay Assumptionist is one who commits himself/herself to living his /her baptismal vocation and the mission that flows from it, within the Assumption, within the Church and within society.” (#143) To do this one must be rooted in the Word of God. “We want to incarnate Jesus Christ in us, live his life, be other Christs, and walk with Jesus Christ.” (Emmanuel d’Alzon)
2. Drink from the “common font” of our spirituality: Fr. d’Alzon, St. Augustine, the Spiritual Writings, the “Way of Life” for lay people, the “Rule of Life” for Religious, and the orientations provided by the various Chapters.
3. Be conscious and respectful of the diversity of nationalities and cultures in our family. Allow the Tandems in each Province to adapt their program of formation to the persons, places, and ways of life and realities of each country. The Tandems will be accompanied by those responsible for formation in each linguistic group.
4. Make progress gradually in the acquisition of knowledge, the Christian life and the spirituality of the Assumption.

II. CONTENTS of the program of formation

The General Chapter of 2011, article 136, invited each Province to elaborate its own plan for formation. Accordingly, the International Commission believes it necessary in applying the aforementioned criteria to keep in mind the reality of each country where there are lay Assumptionists. Those responsible for the linguistic groups will be expected to support the provincial Tandems.

We are proposing a program in four steps. They are inspired by what is already found in some provincial programs. They define the various elements necessary for the development of a common spirit throughout the Congregation. This program intends to reach beyond the purely intellectual dimension, often committed solely to defend a particular kind of knowledge, in order to give pride of place to a lived spirituality and promote a way of life shared among lay people and religious.

Each provincial Tandem tasked with providing this formation will be responsible for adapting the program to its concrete situation and using the appropriate means to attain this goal.

Step 1: Welcome Christ as He is found in the Scriptures.

- Seek a personal encounter with Christ. What does it mean for lay people to live and announce what is essential to the Gospel? How can we recover in the Alliance that which identified the first disciples and followers of Jesus?
- Form Christ in us. How can our daily lives bear witness to the hope in the risen Christ? How can we welcome together the joy of the Gospel and be attentive to the prophetic spirit of Jesus?

Step 2: Discover the charism of Fr. D'Alzon and the Assumption.

- The Kingdom "in us and around us": What does this mean?
- Fr. D'Alzon, our Founder: How do we come to know him, appreciate the context in which he lived, his spirit, his legacy?
- The three loves that characterize the Assumptionist: Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Church. How do these three loves shape our spirituality?
- St Augustine, our Patriarch: What does he have to say to us today?
- The "Way of Life" for the Lay Assumptionists and the "Rule of Life" for the religious: How can we live out our baptismal vocation guided by these inspiring texts?
- A creative fidelity: How can we appreciate fully the Assumptionist tradition which has been given to us, so as to live it today, and transmit it for tomorrow?

Step 3: Live, celebrate and transmit the Assumptionist spirituality in all its dimensions.

- Jesus Christ, Mary and the Church. Who is Jesus Christ for me? What place does Mary hold in my life? What is the Church for me?
- The Community: What does community mean in the thought of St. Augustine and in the "Way of Life"? What can it mean in the daily life of a lay person in the family, at work, at gatherings of the Alliance and in the greater Christian community?
- The Christian virtues that characterize the Assumptionists: How do lay people develop the virtues of faith, hope and charity in their daily lives? What about courage, initiative, humility, frankness and apostolic zeal?
- The Assumptionist spirituality: How important is prayer in the Assumptionist way of life? How does one live the privileged connection between contemplation and action? What is the importance of the Eucharist and the other Sacraments in the life of a lay person?

Step 4: Grow in the Alliance: reaffirm our vocation and our mission as lay people and Assumptionist religious:

- The vocation of the lay person: How does one understand the lay vocation in the world and in the Church?
- Live the realities of the world in the spirit of the Assumption: How does one live the "Way of Life" and put into practice the apostolic priorities brought forward in the General Chapter and Provincial Chapters?
- Deepen prayer life and commitment, using themes such as: Peace and Justice, Vocations, Ecumenism, the Media, Education, etc...
- Identify the great causes of God and man which are worth pursuing today.
- Make the "Way of Life" of the lay Assumptionists known to the Religious.

III. A PEDAGOGY OF SHARING

This formation is meant to favor life, celebration and the common witness of a particular spirit. For this to happen, it is essential to establish a solid bond between knowledge and prayer, community and personal life, sharing of experiences and the mission, fraternal trust and communication.

The national Tandems will assure that the meetings of the Alliance provide a balance between study and reflection, providing the indispensable knowledge needed to make progress using the following:

- A personal encounter with Christ, through the Sacred Scriptures, tradition and the teaching of the Church; a personal encounter with Fr. D'Alzon and St. Augustine, through reading their works;
- The sharing of life experiences and commitments, since these constitute the lived wealth of the participants and the concrete realities in which the spirit of the Assumption finds expression for the coming of the Kingdom of God.
- Shared prayer in communion with the Church and in common, since this is where action and contemplation find their mutuality;
- Fraternal communion between lay persons and religious in the spirit of simplicity, truth and brotherhood.

IV. THE MEANS AND TOOLS AT OUR DISPOSAL:

1. The communities of Assumptionist religious, the lay groups already in existence, the bonds of friendship, collaboration and apostolic sharing forged over time.
2. The International Commission of the Lay-Religious Alliance.
3. The "Tandems", those responsible for formation, the lay people and the religious
4. The gatherings that may be held in one or other Province (one or two per year) for formation, prayer, fraternity each already marked with a particular style and tradition.
5. The means of communication already in existence (bulletins of the Congregation, the Provinces, and the web sites ...)
6. The rich bibliography available.

The international commission for the lay-religious Alliance:

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