

A News of the Assumption



Get up and walk

“The year 2023 is in our hands. If we overcome our paralysis, those caused by fear or doubt, we will be the artisans of a renewal. May the Lord give all Assumptionists this strength for renewal.”

Agenda

Ordinary General Councils

- n° 41 : **February 6-10, 2023.**
- n° 42 : **April 17-21, 2023.**

34th General Chapter

- **June 1-25, 2023** in Rome (Passionist House).

Fr. Benoît

- **December 26-January 7** : France.
- **January 9-18**: Angola.
- **January 23-February 9** : France (canonical visits).
- **February 13-23** : Ivory Coast and Togo.
- **March 2-21** : Vietnam.

Fr. Marcelo

- **January 4-8** : France (Chapter of the European Province).
- **January 9-18** : Angola.
- **February 13-23** : Ivory Coast and Togo.

Br. Didier

- **January 1-8** : Belgium.
- **January 9-15** : Tanzania.

Fr. Thierry

- **December 22-January 17** : Butembo (Chapter of the African Province).
- **February 27-March 1** : Preparatory Commission of the General Chapter.

Fr. Miguel

- **December 16-24** : Kenya (Chapter of the Vice-Province of East Africa).
- **December 22-January 4** : Chapter of the Province of Madagascar.
- **January 25-31** : France (JPIC).

On the cover

This icon represents the four martyrs of Bulgaria, shot in hatred of the faith on November 11, 1952 in Sofia: Bishop Eugen Bossilkov, a Passionist, Latin Bishop of Nicopoli beatified in 1998, surrounded by the three Assumptionists Josaphat Chichkov, Kamen Vitchev and Pavel Djidjov (*from left to right*), beatified in 2002. It was “written” (that is the word used in the Byzantine tradition) by Dimitar Elenov, a member of the Eastern Rite Assumptionist parish of Plovdiv and an iconographer, to support the cause of canonization that now unites all four of them (*see page 18*).

Chronicle of “Due Pini”



The photo below is of all the religious present at the end of September. From left to right:

(1st row) Br. Justin Rakotoniaina, Fr. Gervais Muhindo Bakerethi (BDS, Congo), Fr. Emmanuel Muhindo Ngayavuyira (Biblical Theology, DR-Congo), Fr. Ignace Akoule Aïssah (Islamology, Togo), Fr. Alexis Kasereka Valyamugheni (Fundamental Theology, DR-Congo).

(2nd row) Fr. Dalmon Katembo Kamera (student in spirituality, DR-Congo), Fr. Vincent Leclercq (Secretary General for Formation, France), VRF Benoît Grière (Superior General, France), Fr. Michel Kubler (Secretary and Procurer General, France), Br. Dominique Nguyen Van Tho (in service to the house, Vietnam).

(3rd row) Fr. José Miguel Díaz Ayllón (Assistant General, Mexico), Fr. Thierry Kam-bale Kahongya (Assistant General, DR-Congo), Fr. Marcelo Marciel (Vicar General and local Superior, Chili), Br. Gilles Allard (service to the house, Canada), Fr. Fabrice-Marie Adzakli (clinical psychology, Togo), Br. Didier Remiot (General and Local Economist, France).

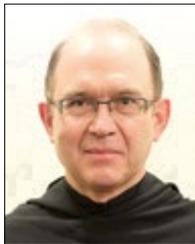
Can there be two subsequent years that are similar at the community in Rome? It is unlikely! The General House always sees a turn-over with its occupants. While waiting for the new General Curia, which will be the result of the 34th General Chapter next June, the final mandate is in progress with a significantly altered staff, at least on the side of the students sent to Rome to pursue specialized studies.

With this new beginning, the Superior General and his assistants have taken up their staffs as pilgrims, for the final canonical visits. They will also be accompanying the various Provincial Chapters (see the Agenda included). On the part of the students, there were two departures (Fr. **Jérôme Kasereka** Masumbuko, who received his doctorate in liturgy, and who was sent to Kinshasa; and Fr. Bienvenu Kamsele Agbaka, who received a diploma in Islamology and in Missiology, sent to Ouagadougou). They were replaced by the arrival of two others who have come to study in their specializations: Fr. Fabrice-Marie Adzakli (Togo), who will study clinical psychology, and Fr. Emmanuel Muhindo Ngayavuyira (DR-Congo) for biblical theology.

Additionally, Br. Justin Rakotoniaina (Madagascar) has been in formation for finances for several months. Our numbers for the year are 15 religious residing at Due Pini, where they will be happy to welcome brothers who are traveling through, especially those who will be coming to participate in planning sessions for the General Chapter.



Get up and walk



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

The new year has begun. We have celebrated the birth of the Lord Jesus and we have entered the last phase of the preparation of our 34th General Chapter. In six months the chapter members will gather in Rome at Mount Celio, at the Passionist religious. We will have 25 days of work to give our religious family a new dynamism and a new team of government and animation.

Meditating recently on the episode of the paralytic healed by Jesus, I began to reflect on what might be hindering our march towards the expected renewal. It seems relevant to me at the beginning of this year to invite each one of us, religious and laity, to leave our stretcher and to overcome the paralysis that can threaten us.

I love this call of Christ: “Get up and walk”, it is a command to which the response cannot be postponed. We are called to get up and walk. Sometimes the prospect of a chaotic road makes us doubt our abilities. Will we have enough strength and perseverance to complete the journey ahead of us? Will we have enough courage to overcome the various obstacles along the way? Will we have enough faith not to look back and to advance resolutely towards the Kingdom?

Recently I was reading a treatise by St. Ambrose on the Gospel of Luke. I particularly liked what he said about the episode of the paralytic. The bishop of Milan said that he was healed of “the dislocated bones of his life and the lame legs of his actions”. Our lives are marked by happy or difficult events. Religious life is sometimes crossed by moments of doubt and the times we live in the Church are particularly turbulent. Have I done well to dedicate my life

to the proclamation of the Gospel? Have I contributed to the coming of the Kingdom? The questions keep coming up in our heads and we sometimes feel dizzy. We can have the impression that our lives are dislocated, weakened by successive crises. We also have “lame legs in our actions”. We want to do well and we stumble and fall by the wayside. I am sure that the Lord continues to heal us of our paralysis today. It is the urgency of the Kingdom that is at stake and God does not leave us with our infirmities. The gift of his love is permanent and his grace never ceases to flow. Get up and walk! Like the risen ones, we choose to walk towards the Jerusalem above. We are sure that the Lord will accompany us on the way. But we must continue to overcome our paralysis. First of all in our communities. Can we move towards greater brotherhood? Do we have the capacity to overcome our differences in order to work towards reconciliation and forgiveness? It is also important to work for unity in our Church. Ecumenism remains a priority task for the Assumption. Inter-religious dialogue is also a necessity in this globalized world. Finally, it is good to work for the safeguarding of our Earth. This is not a fashion to be sacrificed to, but an absolute emergency.

The year 2023 is in our hands. If we overcome our paralysis, those caused by fear or doubt, we will be the artisans of a renewal. May the Lord give all Assumptionists this strength for renewal. Assumption, rise up and walk! Happy New Year to all.

Fr. Benoît Grière,
General Superior

Callings, nominations, agreements...

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

■ TO PERPETUAL PROFESSION

- 1) Romel BAUTISTA
(Europe) (11/14/2022)
- 2) Pascal GABIAM
(Europe) (11/14/2022)
- 3) Joseph THAI Dinh
(Europe) (11/15/2022)
- 4) Antoine-Marie TRAN VAN Hung
(Europe) (11/15/2022)

■ TO PRIESTLY ORDINATION

- 5) Joseph LE TUAN PHUOC Thien
(Europe) (11/16/2022)
- 6) Justin TIENDREBEOGO
(Europe) (12/13/2022)
- 7) SANGALA VUTSIME Richard
(Africa) (12/13/2022)
- 8) MUHINDO VUHESE Léon
(Africa) (12/13/2022)

ERECTION OF A VICARIATE

Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the consent of his Plenary General Council, has given his approval for the **erection of the Region of Kinshasa to a Vicariate, linked to the Province of Africa.**

This Vicariate will be established before the 34th General Chapter, to be held in June 2023.

OPENINGS OF HOUSES

Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the consent of his Plenary General Council, has given his approval for the **opening of a parish community in Beni-Emmanuel (DR-Congo, Province of Africa).**



NOMINATION OF A FORMATOR

Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the consent of his Plenary General Council, has given his approval for the nomination of **Fr. Jean-Paul MUSANGANIA KOMBI** as Superior of the Scholasticate of Emmanuel d'Alzon in Kinshasa-Ngaliema (DR-Congo, Province of Africa).

EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY VOWS

Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the consent of his Plenary General Council, has agreed to an extension of his temporary vows for **Br. Vincent VU QUANG THINH**, of the Province of Europe, for one year.

DEPARTURE FROM THE INSTITUTE

Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, with the consent of his Plenary General Council, has agreed to an indult of definitive departure from the institute to the temporary professed:

- Antoine TRỊNH TIỀN Giang (Europe),
- Paul Galey KLOUTSE (Europe),
- Joseph MAKORI MAYENGA (East Africa).

RECTIFICATION

Contrary to what was indicated in AA Info n°21 (page 9), the **first apostolic appointment of Bro. François-Xavier NGUYEN XUÂN Phuc** was not to the Postulancy of Saigon, but to the foundation of Phuoc Binh, called "Rubber trees".

A General Chapter, Provincial Chapters!

The last session of the PGC for this mandate was held in Rome, all oriented towards the the capitular deadlines of the next six months.

We are now in the “home stretch”: in six months, the 34th General Chapter will have taken place, and before that, the General Council will have been able to meet for the first time.

General Chapter will have taken place, and before it the seven (vice)Provincial Chapters that will have prepared it and will have provided their delegates! This shows the importance of the 11th session of the Plenary General Council (PGC): held in Rome from November 30 to December 9, it was logically the last one of the mandate that is about to end. And for the first time in three years, all the members (except Fr.Kizito, who was denied a visa) were physically present, accompanied by the vicars of Africa and Asia-Oceania..

The preparation of the 34th General Chapter naturally occupied a good part of the work. Thus :

- *The Preparatory Commission*, led by Fr. Thierry Kambale Kahongya, sent to the communities a synthesis of the answers to its questionnaire, asking to react to it.

- *Bro. Didier Remiot*, General Treasurer, presented the budget for the 34th Chapter.

- *The Precapitular Commission on Structures* has developed several possible models of evolution that can be discussed by the Chapter.

...and, of course, the Prov-



inces presented the preparation of their own Chapters, which will soon express their convictions and their proposals for the whole body of the congregation. The Andean Province has already done so, as early as the month of October!

Other subjects occupied the PGC. Some are ritual: the opening or closing of houses and appointment of formators (see p. 4), the first apostolic appointment of brothers at the end of their formation, evaluation of mobilizing works, updating of the “key positions” of the congregation.

In addition, it was decided this time :

- to erect the Vicariate of Kinshasa within the Province of Africa, in accordance with the will of the 33rd General Chapter;

- to put in place a plan for the prevention of old age in order to ensure a limited subsidy for religious who need it (see page 6)

- to launch a new “Medium

Term Real Estate Plan” for the years 2023-2025 (see page 6)

- to hear Fr. Vincent Leclercq, Postulator General, present a new way of promoting the cause of Fr. D’Alzon (see page 19)

- to proceed with an inventory of the “stable patrimony” of the Congregation, that is all the goods that are useful to the life of the communities and the Institute and that cannot be alienated without broad agreement.

Finally, the Plenary Council benefited from the reflections of Sr. Nathalie Becquart, a Xavarian religious, under-secretary (i.e., no. 2) of the Synod of Bishops, who came to present the preparation, underway on all continents, of the Synod assembly that will be held in 2023 and 2024, as well as her reflection on “Synodality and Consecrated Life”: a perspective that could challenge our functioning and even our structures!

P. Michel KUBLER

An “old age pension” for certain religious

The CGP validated a proposal by the CEC to set up a contribution scheme for religious in the provinces most disadvantaged in this regard.

This was a request of the 2017 General Chapter: the Congregational Economic Council (CEC) was to study old age provision in the congregation and make a recommendation to the PGC. Brothers from countries where there is no public (state) pension system were very interested and their expectations were high!

The task was difficult in many ways:

- Each country has different regulations: some reserve a pension for those with an employment contract; many require long contributions, or cover only their citizens, etc.

- In most countries, state pension systems are struggling to finance themselves and it is increasingly dif-

icult to obtain a pension: the age limit is decreasing and the number of years of contribution is increasing.

- The subject brings into play multiple parameters that are difficult to control: life expectancy, amount of contributions, return on investments, inflation, amount of the pension, age at which one can benefit from it, etc.

After studying the pension systems of the countries where the Congregation is present, and then making financial simulations, the CEC submitted its report to the PGC in June 2022, which adopted its recommendations in December. The first discovery was that none of our provinces had a pension policy that covered all of their religious. The CEC therefore asked the Provincial Councils to define such a policy. The best provision for old age is community life: it is up to the younger religious to take care of the older ones, so that they can live their religious life to the end.

According to the simulations, in order to systematically distribute a pension equal to the “cost of living” to the brothers in Africa, Madagascar and Asia after the age of 65, it would be necessary either to ask for a contribution of more than 700 dollars/year, or to create an investment fund of more than ten million dollars: both of which were impossible to implement. The solution chosen was to create an old age solidarity fund. The aim would not be to pay a pension to all the brothers over 65 years of age, but to provide the most fragile communities with assistance in taking care of the elderly brothers.

This fund, invested in the stock market, is dedicated to the solidarity of African, Asian and Malagasy brothers, perpetually professed or at

least 35 years old, and under 65 years old. It will be fed progressively by the following contributions:

- The Province of Europe hopes to contribute one million euros, but will need several years to reach this amount.

- Each African, Malagasy and Asian brother should contribute 50 € or \$ per year. (1) This amount will seem high to many, but it is important to know that in the West, an employee contributes about one third of his salary to the state retirement system: to be helped when one is old implies making sacrifices during one’s active life.

- In solidarity, religious from other countries will also contribute 50 €/ \$ per year, until the amount invested reaches the value of 1 million euros.

- For brothers living outside their province, the host province will contribute if they are students; if they are on a pastoral mission, it will contribute the corresponding amount to the system of the state where the religious lives.

Since the fund is too small for all needs, only the most limited communities will be able to call on it. Criteria have been established to define when it will be possible to request support, based on the accounts and budgets of the communities. It will not distribute any aid until the amount of one million euros (adjusted for inflation) has been reached. The process, started *ad experimentum* on January 1, 2023, will be managed through the provincial treasure offices and the general treasurer’s office.

Br. Didier REMIOT,
General Treasurer

1) This figure will be increased each year to account for inflation.

The 2023 Solidarity Campaign

The 2022 campaign financed the creation of a computer laboratory for “Assumption High School” in Nairobi (Kenya).

As for the 2023 campaign, it will be used to renovate the presbytery and build a water tower in Nasandratory, Madagascar, for an estimated budget of 22,696 USD. Assumption has been responsible for the pastoral animation of this district for more than 10 years, and a community has lived there since 2019. Long abandoned, the presbytery is in poor condition and does not allow our brothers to live in a decent way.

Assumption University has a new president

Prof. Greg Weiner, until now interim president, succeeds Prof. Cesareo as 17th president of our university in Worcester (USA)

On October 19, the Assumption University Board of Trustees elected Prof. Greg Weiner as the 17th president of Assumption University, having served as interim president since last April. Fr. Dennis M. Gallagher, North American Provincial and Vice Chair of the University's Board of Trustees, said, "*Since stepping foot on Assumption's campus, Dr. Weiner has demonstrated a strong commitment to the Catholic educational mission of the University. He is a man of deep faith, compassion and character who brings great energy, innovative ideas and humble leadership to all he does.*"

Weiner earned a master's degree in liberal studies from Georgetown University and a doctorate in government from Georgetown University. After a career as a political consultant in Washington D.C., he joined Assumption University in 2011 as a political science instructor, bringing deep and relevant experience. In 2019, he became the University's Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. In addition to his teaching duties, Dr. Weiner served as a member of the Faculty Senate office and helped restructure the institution from a college to a university. In recognition of his dedication to Assumption students, Dr. Weiner received

the Student Association's first 'Above and Beyond' award for faculty. He also received the Presidential Paul Ziegler Award for scholarly excellence.

A prolific political science writer and lecturer, Dr. Weiner's articles have appeared in The New York Times and The Washington Post, as well as several national magazines. He is also the author of four books on American political thought and has enjoyed an influential presence in Washington, D.C. Among his roles in national politics, Dr. Weiner has served as communications director and political advisor to several U.S. senators.

"I am grateful to the Assumption University Board of Trustees and the members of the Presidential Search Committee for the extraordinary opportunity to lead this university," Weiner said of his appointment.

I am honored to help lead Assumption into new possibilities that embrace our Catholic educational mission and welcome all, whoever they may be, to pursue truth in the company of friends."



About Assumption University

Founded in 1904 by the Augustinians of the Assumption, Assumption College was one of the first universities in New England to offer a high-quality education that integrates career preparation and education of the whole person. Located in Worcester, Massachusetts, the institution has undergone a series of major advances since its transformation into a university, including new academic buildings, degree programs and athletic facilities for student athletes. The University offers its 2,200 students 38 majors, including liberal arts, sciences, business and nursing, as well as graduate and professional degrees.

For more information:

www.assumption.edu



“The Assumption is changing its face”

Excerpts from the closing address of the 11th CGP session by the Superior General.

“We have had many PGCs since 2011; they have contributed in some way to the creation of a new face of the Assumption. A more international face, a face more open to diversity and a face more collegial in the exercise of responsibilities. We have been actors in this renewal of our congregation. Of course, we should not be too quick to place the crown of laurels on our heads, but we can be sincerely grateful for all the progress we have made in the last twelve years.

First of all, I want to mention a greater co-responsibility. The Assumption is a family united and in solidarity with its members. The Provinces, large or small, are not indifferent to the life of the whole body. The Provincial Superiors have a greater awareness of belonging to an international family. It also seems to me that we have contributed to a greater interculturality. Solidarity has probably been another key word of the period that ends next June. The scrupulous and methodical work of the General Treasurer allows us today to have a more realistic panorama, more in line with the economic reality of the whole body of the congregation. We thus have a dashboard that allows us to better steer our ship to avoid the pitfalls on our way and to make the right decisions. (...)

The face of the Assumption is changing and it will continue to evolve profoundly in the com-



ing years because the mutation is far from over. Born in France, progressively internationalized, our religious family has the ambition of becoming ever more diversified by assuming the riches of the world's diverse cultures. This enriches our understanding of Christ's message and allows us to be better apostles of the Good News.

Our December PGC confirmed our apostolic ambition. We are lucid and the fragilities exist everywhere, but hope is there. The Lord is always calling young people to join us. Even if some provinces have a strong shortage of vocations, the international situation is rather good. Other territories will soon contribute to the cultural expansion of our family: Angola, Ghana, Indonesia, etc. Even the old provinces have not said their last word (...)

I would like to say that I am grateful for all that I have received during my 12 years of service to the congregation. Certain-

ly, the exercise of responsibilities is not always easy. There are great moments of solitude. But God is present and fraternal charity is a useful support. Thank you to the brothers of the PGC, thank you to all of you for having helped me to accomplish my task. I have done my best, but I know that not everything has been perfect. I ask for forgiveness for the weaknesses I may have had in my ministry. God is merciful, I count on your mercy too (...)

There will be no final word because, as Saint Augustine says, “when a man thinks he has finished, he is mistaken, for it is then that everything begins.” With Gregory of Nyssa, we know that in the Christian life, one goes “from beginning to beginning, through beginnings that have no end” (Homily on the Song of Songs).

P. Benoît GRIÈRE,
Superior General

The Chapter, a necessity that has become an obligation for every religious family (Part 2)

We are completing the publication of a conference given in 2017 by Fr. Claude Maréchal, former Superior General: here he examines the functioning and reception of General Chapters



Participants in the 32nd General Chapter (Rome, 2011).

The Chapter is not a matter for the elected members or capitulants alone. It is important that the whole Congregation be involved in the theme that is going to be discussed, because its application will concern the whole Congregation. That is why the report of the Superior General on the state of the Congregation and the preliminary reflection on the theme chosen is sent to each religious in one of the official languages of the Congregation.

The Chapter is of considerable importance for the life of the congregation. Upon his election or re-election, the Superior General will have to implement it with his councilors: they are the executors. It is during his second term of six years that a Superior General, if re-elected, follows a course of action that he has helped to set.

A. Preparation of the Chapter

The material aspects (the place chosen, lodging and food) are quite demanding, because everything must be planned so that the organization of the Chapter is completely in order. The ordinary General Council is responsible for this. The theme is the responsibility of the Plenary Council, which works on it at least two years in advance. In the past, religious life was not confronted with fundamental questions in a vast and ever-changing society.

The year of the Chapter guides the choice of theme. It is clear that in 1993, 150 years after the birth of the congregation, we were going to reflect on our mission 150 years later; and in 1999, six years later, on the new millennium: “*Passionate for God in a new century.*” But the 1987 Chapter played a decisive role ▶

insofar as the trilogy of Faith - Justice - Communion, corresponding entirely to the Rule of Life and popularized as “*Man of communion, proclaiming the faith, in solidarity with the poor*” became the fundamental expression of our mission, taken up again in different forms by subsequent Chapters.

In six years, between two Chapters, many things happen. There is always an evaluation of the changes and progress made by taking into account in our family the texts of the last Chapter. We always note the positive - for there are some - and the negative, in other words: the encouraging signs, but also the worrying signs of lives that are not sufficiently marked by belonging to Jesus Christ and mobilization for the Reign of God, as well as aging and all its consequences, and the regular decline in membership. The letter then announces the theme and possible avenues of reflection. We see that themes such as the re-expression of the charism, the scope of the mission of the Assumption and its most indicated fields of application today, constitute a permanent work in progress with the emergence of more and more accentuated preoccupations, such as internationality and the evangelization of the continents.

Such suggestions do not restrict the Chapter, for it remains free to follow one path and not to commit itself to another. It is the Chapter that determines its program. But one cannot convoke a general assembly without prior documents that mark out possible paths: to leave it entirely to the spontaneity of an international assembly, whose members are not used to working together, is to doom it to sterility if it has to vote on precise, written orienta-

tions that are valid for the entire Congregation.

Do such letters from successive Superiors General contribute to changing mentalities? Very little, in fact, because they are not taken seriously enough, at least in our country. But religious cannot pretend that they are not informed. And such letters help them to see what is really going on in their community and beyond. So should the texts voted on by the Chapter.

B. The holding of the Chapter

I do not want to dwell on the unfolding of the Chapter, the succession of stages, the importance of community and personal prayer, the mingling of participants, the successive realizations, the maturation of projects born of the exchanges, the importance of the initial presence of the laity. I would simply like to respond to two common objections.

1. Does this institution, desired by the Church, still have a reason to exist? Do we not spend a lot of energy and money for a very modest result? This is a justified question and one that deserves reflection. But what other way is there to preserve the unity of the congregation, which is increasingly inculturated in very different peoples and churches? Where else can we determine orientations for the whole congregation? Where can we benefit from the inventive daring of some and the fears of others who fear that we are venturing too fast and too far and who do not feel able to follow?

I still agree with what I wrote in 1999: “*Chapters are great moments of discernment on a large*

scale. For their mission, let us not forget, is above all the updating of the evangelical demands of our vocation today and the permanent readjustment of our mission in constantly changing societies. A Chapter is first of all an act of faith where everything is seen, or should be seen, in the light of God in view of the Kingdom.”

2. But why have we focused in several chapters on the actualization of our charism, its re-expression? Are we not repeating ourselves a lot in slightly different formulations? The development of the Assumption in Africa and elsewhere made such a reflection urgent. The charism of the Assumption was transmitted a great deal by slow assimilation and experimentation in an Assumptionist atmosphere (alumnae, novitiate, scholasticate). This is no longer the case. There is no longer a centenary old tradition.

We must also take into account a considerable mutation of lifestyles on all continents. The reflection resulted in a first quality document entitled *The Apostolic Spirit of the Assumption* in 1993. *A Passion for the Reign of God in the World of Our Time*. A further step was taken at the 1999 Chapter, with a document inspired in large part by Bruno Chenu, entitled *Nous redire le charisme de l'Assomption*, of which the following is an excerpt: “*It is a question of taking up the original impulse in historical conditions that have changed. The heritage remains alive only by allowing new discoveries of the Mystery of God and of man's desire, by nourishing a project. The resemblance between the past and the present*

must be a resemblance of dynamism through a concrete form that can be substantially different.” And the 1999 Chapter explicitly asked that this work of reflection continue.

C. The reception of the Chapter texts by communities and individuals

This third stage is as important as the two preceding ones. It is not limited to the holding of an “application chapter” in each of the Provinces. This is the stage that leaves the most to be desired in the men’s branch of the Assumption: we have difficulty taking seriously and applying what is required of us. How many texts of Superiors General invite us to this indispensable assimilation!

Here is one of them: *“Every General Chapter is a grace of renewal for a religious family, on the condition that it is welcomed. If this text receives little attention, it will not bear much fruit. If, on the other hand, it is received, deepened, and prayed over, it will instill a new dynamism. May it awaken in us a passion for the reign of God in the world of this time!*”

Are Provincial Chapters of application necessary for texts that are sufficiently clear? Don’t the texts drawn up by the Provincial Chapters duplicate each other, substituting themselves for the texts of the General Chapters? When we compare the tables of contents of a General Chapter and the Provincial Chapter that follows it, we see clearly that this is not the case; the Provincial Chapters do not simply repeat otherwise: they do original work, by incarnating the texts in the country or countries under the jurisdiction of the Province, even if this is



Participants in the 33rd General Chapter (Valpré, 2017).

more difficult for the very diverse Province of Europe.

It is interesting, for example, to compare the table of contents of the General Chapter of 2005 with the summary of the Provincial Chapter of France that followed it. The latter takes up the basic questions dealt with by the former, but it addresses seven questions that are particular to it, taking into account the major works entrusted to the Province and other apostolic works that arose from bold initiatives ratified earlier.

We could continue the comparison between the two instances in 2011 and in 2017, not only in France-Europe but in other Provinces. The same conclusions would be reached, I believe. If the two undertakings are well prepared, they do not duplicate each other. But this presupposes that both Chapters have the energy, otherwise the second one will be content to follow in the footsteps of the first.

This presentation is only an introduction to the importance of General Chapters, especially

in the large religious families, whether male or female. I believe that they are truly indispensable in order to mature together decisions on how best to distribute our numbers, to stimulate our apostolic dynamism in fidelity to our charism, to increase unity and solidarity among us and to prevent the gradual widening of gaps between Provinces. But the Chapters require a long preparation, a real involvement of the participants, a consideration of the decisions through prayer, study and exchange. It is really a pity that at the Assumption we believe that 4/5ths of the work is done when the Chapters end, whereas the reception, the most delicate operation, has only just begun. (end)

Fr. Claude MARÉCHAL
(Albertville - France)

Text published in ATLPE n°
16, February 2018

In Abidjan, opening of possibilities

Consisting of five religious, the Assumptionist community in Abidjan has been functioning for almost a year. Fr. Jean-Paul Sagadou, Burkinabe, spoke last September about this foundation in the Ivorian capital, as well as its projects and its hopes for Africa.



The Assumptionist community in Abidjan. From left to right: Jean-Paul Sagadou, Maurice Billy Honzounnon, Jean-Claude Diwediga, Christian Nikiema, Yvon Akpabie.

It is a bit like we are dreaming! How quickly time passes! It has already been ten months since the Assumptionists have arrived at Abidjan! It marks 64 years since the first foundation and 32 years after leaving that country, we have returned to the Ivory Coast. The first Assumptionist community was installed canonically on November 29, 1957. Later, in 1989, for various reasons, the Assumptionists terminated this mission in the Ivory Coast

Beginning again with three religious

History will recall that in 2021, three of us - two Togolese, Jean-Claude Diwediga and Yvon Akpabie, and myself, a Burkinabe - were the pioneers of this refoundation. I am the editor-in-chief of *Prions en Eglise Afrique* (Bayard Africa), while Jean-Claude is the editor of the English-speaking part of the Bayard group. And Yvon has just completed a diaconal internship at the Good Shep-

herd parish of the Riviera III (in the east of the capital), the parish territory where the Marianist community that welcomes us is located.

It is there that our lives have unfolded for ten months. A house of formation for Marianist students in philosophy, this community has been retained for our lodging, because it is very close to the offices of Bayard and of our different apostolates, and it is within walking distance. The irony of this story: in 1966, the Assumptionists left the College of Notre Dame of Africa, that it ran upon the request of the diocese, to invest themselves in pastoral ministry. It is the Marianists who took over in this prestigious college. Upon arriving in Abidjan, we had a slight tug at our hearts: we would have been happy to inherit this school and to continue the educational work of Fr. d'Alzon on Ivorian soil. But such is life..

Digital media, a tool for prayer and evangelization

Today, the focus of our mission is centered on our work for Bayard Africa (read the enclosed) with a new challenge: that of transitioning to a digital platform. This choice of work has a pastoral side: bring the word of God to as far as possible, in responding to the call of Pope Francis to “*become digital citizens*”. We are keenly aware that present and future generations are and will increasingly be in the digital space. What has become a real culture allows our contemporaries, including in Africa, to interact across borders, to access information and to exchange, sometimes for

the worse, but also for the better. Technologies are a gift with an extraordinary potential to spread the message of the Gospel and there is today, in Africa, an expectation and a real curiosity around the digital as a tool for prayer and evangelization.

Also, accompanying our contemporaries in this digital space, is the work of Bayard, and through a mission of study. At the beginning of the coming year, two Assumptionist brothers will join the community of Abidjan for formation in philosophy or in theology.¹ We also hope to serve, upon request, The Good Shepherd parish or the laity involved in Our Lady of Salvation (NDS) for the organization of pilgrimages to Lourdes. We are searching for a house that might welcome us and would permit us to experiment with an apostolic community among the Assumptionists. As we are on a buying spree, we are taking our time to find something good.

A library, intercultural trips...

In addition, for several years, I have been working on the project of a library specialized in the field of communication and journalism. It could be placed at the disposal of the students of the faculty of communication of the Catholic University of Abidjan and be the location to organize days around communication within the community. We are therefore looking for donations of relatively new books on communication and journalism or financial support to acquire new ones.

Finally, I plan to continue the African Integration Journeys (AIT), which contribute to the peace effort. I hope to mobilize more young Ivorians to join their comrades from Burkina Faso, Togo, and other countries where these trips have already taken place, for the next edition, in August 2023 in Rwanda. The theme will be “Youth of the African Worlds: How to Build a World of Commonality”. Once again, we will need financial support.

The event will be our teacher. . .

What will the mission be ▶

Response to the call of Bayard for francophone titles

Bayard Africa is an African edition that develops and disseminates fun and educational content for youth. The magazines Planète J'aime Lire and Mes Premiers Planète J'aime Lire are distributed in the Ivory Coast, in Burkina Faso, in Cameroun, in Mali, and in Nigeria: www.planetemag.com

It also publishes the religious site La Croix Africa : <https://africa.la-croix.com/>

Additionally, it produces and distributes Prions en Église Afrique and Living with Christ in a digital version : www.prionseneglise.africa
www.livingwithchrist.africa
www.bayard-afrique.com

>> Life of the Provinces

like in the Ivory Coast? No one knows! As the philosopher Emmanuel Mounier said, “*the event will be our internal teacher*”. That much is certain, it is that the author of that letter carries questions, but also some convictions. All in all, some questions: can the announcement of the Kingdom of God open possibilities for Africa? How can we present the Kingdom of God to reinvigorate “our most colorful utopias,” as Yacouba Konaté, director of the Rotonde des Arts in Abidjan and professor of philosophy, puts it, without the “nightmares that keep us awake”? How can we ensure

that Africans remain men and women who stand upright, without falling into despair?

I am also convinced that on African soil, the Assumption must take on the questions of the young. It is among them that the leaders, the businessmen, the thinkers, and the artists who will be able to mark the destiny of Africa will emerge. Because it is centered on the Kingdom of God, the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption will have to work at founding an active utopia - this has nothing to do with sweet dreams - which identifies the signs of the mo-

ment, as well as what is developing on the continent. From the interior, as well as in its diasporas, young people dream of an Africa that stands up, powerful and singular within humanity, an Africa capable of grafting a nucleus of futuristic technology onto thousand-year-old indigenous traditions. Let us effectively accompany them in this quest.

Fr. Jean-Paul SAGADOU
(Abidjan, Ivory Coast)

This article first appeared in **L'Assomption & ses œuvres** n° 771 (nov. 2022-janv. 2023).

1) Effectively, since the publication of this article, the community of Abidjan has been enriched with two additional members, Brothers Maurice Billy Honzounnon and Christian Nikiema.



Group of young people participating in a “Journey of African Integration”, in 2019 in Abidjan (Ivory Coast).

Miracle in Madagascar?



The members of the “Special Tribunal” for the recognition of the miracle that benefited the young Sidonie in Fianarantsoa (Madagascar).

A “tribunal” has been set up in Fianarantsoa to discern the causes of the healing of a young woman, Sidonie, which occurred while the Little Sisters of the Assumption were praying to Father Pernet on her behalf.

There are days when everything seems to belong to a special time of grace, well beyond what our hearts and spirits are capable of imagining or even hoping! This Sunday, 27th November 2022 will remain one of these moments “of an eternity of happiness”, for a people, a neighbourhood, the Church, and all of us Little Sisters, laity and friends.

Indeed, assembled together in the cathedral of Fianarantsoa in Madagascar, all who are “invited to the wedding” did not miss this rendez-vous, in order to participate in the prayer for the official opening of the Special Tribunal for the recognition of the presumed miracle of the healing of Sidonie, in favour of the beatification of the Venerable Etienne Pernet. In the presence of Srs. Nathalie, Superior General, and

Dominique, General Councillor, of the people and of the Church, we inaugurated this first stage. What deep joy for all of us, and our friends who came to fill the cathedral! Words are too inadequate to reveal the immense happiness in our hearts to live this moment of grace. As one woman, a witness said, *“it isn’t every day, in our lives, that we are asked to be witnesses and above all in the presence of the Bishop...”* The emotion is deep and personal!

United to all those beyond our borders, who joined us by their prayer, we entered into the solemnity of the prayer, presided over by the Bishop, Mgr. Fulgence Rabemahafaly. With one heart and one soul, through the hymns and prayers, we gave thanks to God for His presence

in our lives and for the exceptional grace in the life of Sidonie. After that, Mgr Fulgence called each of the five members of the Special Tribunal, responsible for hearing the witnesses, to present their letters of mission: two priests, canon lawyers, an expert doctor, Odile (Isa) as vice postulator, and a priest representing the Bishop. The 15 witnesses, having received a letter of convocation, were then invited, to follow the bishop in procession, and the members of the Tribunal to begin this process of inquiry. Little by little, the tension mounts.

A few minutes later we met, the 15 witnesses, with the members of the Tribunal, in a big meeting room in the Bishopric. A silence ‘of intimidation’ reigned for all of us witnesses, because we didn’t know exactly how the



The installation celebration of the Special Tribunal.

interrogation would be conducted, or how we would be interrogated!... Happily, the bishop explained, simply and briefly, how the process would unfold, that is, that each witness would be called separately and alone to be heard before the Tribunal. So we planned the order in which each of the witnesses would be called. And to add to the solemnity of the occasion, each of us, including the members of the Tribunal, were invited to swear, with our hand on the Bible, and to sign a paper, committing ourselves personally, to this process, thus marking its serious and official tone.

It was thus that during 3 days, the witnesses in turn, gave their testimony. Each half day, 3 or 4 of us went to the bishopric accompanied by Odile, who was an encouraging presence to help everyone in this solemn and demanding exercise. As each one

returned from the tribunal, their fear and intimidation was transformed into relief, then thanksgiving and a certain pride. As I was among the first to witness, I can say that the depth of the experience of the moment was extraordinary. Everything is in the transparency of one's being, to attempt to say, to proclaim, very humbly, the grandeur of the God of Life, and of the manifestation of His loving power in the life of Sidonie. The Spirit is really present there.

At the end of these 3 days, we had a little celebration, a moment of conviviality with all the witnesses, at the community of Sahalava, with Nathalie and Dominique, to give thanks together and to thank each other too, for the strength of these days. Nathalie too thanked each one for having accepted to witness; the witnesses too spoke of the power of the confidence accorded to them. These

days will remain in our memory as a great feast of Heaven, where the faith of the Malagasy people, and the grace of this miracle, are but one moment in a sacred history. The adventure doesn't stop here! We are only at the beginning! The members of the Tribunal will draw up their report, which will be sent to Rome.

Together we want to continue to proclaim our faith and to pray that this process could lead to the beatification, one day, of Etienne Pernet! With all the people of Sahalava, and the witnesses, we can say again: *"We believe in the intercession and intervention of all the Saints of heaven and of our ancestors Mary, Etienne Pernet, Antoinette Fage... they are already in the house of the Father, and their powers surpass ours."*

Sr Sabine PULH, Isa



◀ Sidonie in November 2022.

▼ Sidonie with her two children and her mother.



Who is Sidonie ?

Sidonie was born in 2001, the 4th of 7 children of a mother, poor and alone, her husband having died. The family lives in a neighborhood near the LSA community of Sahalava in Fianarantsoa. In March 2015, Sidonie felt severe pain in her left arm. After several consultations at the hospital and thorough examinations, the result falls: cancer at the end of the collarbone. Sidonie stopped her studies (she was in 5th grade at the time) to undergo two chemotherapies.

In June 2015, a social worker asked the PSA community to take her in and provide her with meals so that she could regain the strength to continue chemotherapy. Sidonie was then in an extremely fragile physical state. She had lost her shape and growth, moving very little and speaking almost nothing. Exhausted, she spends long moments without doing anything. This situation lasted for many weeks. In July, after her 3rd chemo, her condition worsened. She was at the “end of her rope”... Her body did not react anymore; her being wasted. It was then decided to stop the chemo and to give Sidonie a comfort treatment so that she could live her last days with the least possible suffering.

The Little Sisters then turned to Etienne Permet, asking him to intercede with the Father for Sidonie’s recovery. As the weeks passed, while all treatment was stopped, her hair began to grow again, her skin and nails regained their color, she regained the use of all her senses and especially her vitality... She participated in the life of the community, prepared the meal... Her whole being came back to life. In September 2016, Sidonie enters a sewing school, with pleasure and fulfillment. She will be forced to put an end to this training to give birth, only a few months after the end of her illness, to her daughter, Celine. She was then only 16 years old!

This healing came after three novenas lived by the Little Sisters of the Assumption throughout the world and by all those close to Sidonie. In the oratory of the community, the portrait of Etienne Permet remained next to the Blessed Sacrament, during the two and a half years that Sidonie lived with the sisters. ■

It has been 70 years since the deaths of our Bulgarian martyrs

Several events have marked 2022, including the 20th anniversary of the beatification of our three brothers.

The Assumptionist community of Plovdiv, the only true inheritor of the huge presence of the Assumption in Bulgaria, marked the 70th anniversary of the deaths of Frs. Kamen Vitchev, Pavel Djidjov and Josaphat Chichkov, shot in Sofia on November 11, 1952, along with the Passionist Bishop Eugen Bossilkov. A beautiful liturgy of commemoration, presided by the Apostolic Exarch of the Bulgarian Catholics of the Byzantine rite, Monsignor Christo Proykov, was celebrated in our Church of the Ascension on November 13, the day fixed by the Church's martyrology for their liturgical memory.

Fr. Benoît Grière compiled a letter for this anniversary, saying that "we have a duty to remember them. They are also our intercessors to the Father, for our 'little Mission in the Orient'". The Superior General noted in

this regard the recent gathering of brothers and sisters of this Mission in Bucharest: "*Today, like yesterday, we have need of faithful testimony, of men and women totally dedicated to the cause of the Gospel and ready to take risks to announce their faith in Jesus Christ. (. . .) beings of fire capable of announcing the coming of the Kingdom.*"

In Rome, in the Church of St. Barthelemey of Isola Tiberina, a Eucharist was organized on November 11th by the Embassy of Bulgaria to the Holy See for all the martyrs of the 20th century. Presided by Msgr. Antonio Menini, surrounded by our Superior General and that of the Passionists, there was assembled many religious from the two congregations, as well as several diplomats. In his homily, the former nuncio of Sofia noted: "In case we forget the message of the gospel---of love, of renuncia-

tion, of poverty, of substituting advantage and the comfort of disinterestedness, toward what is essential and in the austerity of the disciples of Jesus, we should exchange self-love with love for others. The sacrifice of such saintly figures as Msgr. Bossilkov and his companions should help us recall, day after day, the moral commitment of our baptisms, the seriousness of our Christian lives and of our service toward God."

On the occasion of this celebration, Ambassador Bogdan Patashev read a letter from the President of the Bulgarian Republic to Pope Francis, declaring that "*the Bulgarian people honor the heroism of their brave sons who defended their eternal and unending beliefs of dignity and liberty*": "*In proclaiming these four clerics as blessed, the Catholic Church designates them as examples of preserving, to the extreme, high human and Christian ideals, with love, without hatred nor a spirit of revenge.*"

Rumen Radev solemnly expressed to the Pope "*the fervent hope of the Bulgarian people to see the four martyrs of Bulgaria elevated on the altars and joining the ranks of the Saints, so that their examples may enlighten all those who seek to cherish bravery and sacrifice for true liberty and unconditional human love*".

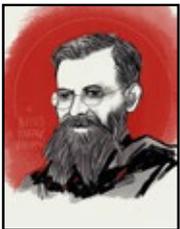
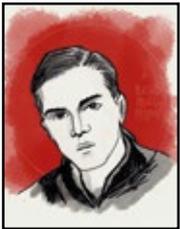
Fr. Michel KUBLER

The celebration on November 11, 2022 in Rome.



The Cause of Father d'Alzon: ask for the program!

Vincent Leclercq, Postulator General of the Congregation, presents here a new organization of the cause for the beatification of our Founder



After examining the archives of my predecessors, Fr. Julio Navarro (2008-2017) and Fr. Bernard Le Léanec (2017-2021), I share with you two feelings. First of all, a great gratitude for the work accomplished and also the joy of having to invent the continuation of this story. I also dare to confide in you a conviction in these pages: the cause of Fr. d'Alzon must take a new step. It can no longer concern such a small number of religious. It must become the common cause of all those who recognize themselves as heirs of Fr. d'Alzon. It is an adventure to be lived together and at the level of the entire congregation.

In the process of being beatified

On 21 December 1991, John Paul II declared the heroic virtues of our founder. By giving him the title of Venerable, the Church already attested to the personal holiness of the Servant of God Emmanuel d'Alzon. Our goal now is to be present at his beatification one day and thus to offer to the universal Church the treasure of spirituality and apostolic zeal that he represents for each of us.

The cause of Fr. d'Alzon is not limited to seeking an unexplained cure, which is necessary for the Dicastery of the Causes of Saints to recognize the miracle and then ask the Pope to declare our founder Blessed. Nor is the sanctity of Fr. d'Alzon the mission of a small group of religious, much less that of the Postulator General alone. The promotion of his cause today deserves the commitment of all our communities throughout the world and of each brother and sister in particular. It is already supported by all those who demonstrate throughout the world that the

charism of Fr. d'Alzon has been able to cross the borders of space and time, that it is being transmitted to the younger generations and that it is being implemented in new lands, well beyond Nîmes and the Church of the 19th century that D'Alzon knew, loved and served passionately.

The primary goal is not a miracle

Many of us pray every day that the Church will recognize the holiness of Fr. d'Alzon. We ask for his intercession so that the healing of this or that sick person may become the miracle that allows for his beatification. But above all, we pray for a brother or sister who is suffering, as Fr. d'Alzon would do himself if he were still among us. Finally, through prayer, we entrust ourselves to God who will act as he wills and when he wills.

If we want Fr. d'Alzon to become Blessed, it is not in order to praise our two congregations (OA and AA), nor to draw publicity to our works. It is because the holiness of our founder commits us personally to faith and collectively to action as a congregation. Our reasons are therefore both theological and pastoral. Fr. Benoît Grière, Superior General, reminded us of this in 2016: *“To believe in the holiness of the founder is to believe in our own personal holiness. The journey of Fr. d'Alzon is our journey today; and this through prayer life, education, ecumenism, pastoral ministry, recruitment. It is first and foremost our path to holiness. All of us must put ourselves in the novitiate of the founder; all of us receive a new call.”*

Fr. d'Alzon is a model of holiness, a formator for all times and a pillar for our churches today as well as in the past. ▶

Through his cause, we wish to pass on his zeal for evangelization, his insights into education, his love for the universal Church as well as his fidelity to the local Church, his taste for ecumenism and dialogue, his unique way of animating communities and bringing together brothers and sisters with such different vocations, his concern for the poor and the little ones as well as for the outskirts when he was concerned about the rural and isolated areas of the diocese of Nîmes.

None of this should be lost. What Fr. d'Alzon experienced personally in Nîmes is rich in uni-

versal and timeless values. Therefore, our first objective is not to find "the" miracle that would automatically lead to his beatification. Our priority is to return to his thought and his work so that he may speak to us today in our religious life and in the daily life of our communities or our works. The challenge is to better understand the foundations of his faith, the strength of his evangelical witness and the great intuitions for the mission, in order to make them our own today.

The beatification of Fr. d'Alzon is not an end in itself, it is a means of evangelization - especially if the Church would one day give universal scope to the model of holiness to which he gave witness during his life.

How is the postulation organized today?

The General Postulation operates with an international secretariat, which helps the postulator to maintain the link with the collaborators of the cause throughout the world. This secretariat meets regularly to examine cases of healing or favors obtained. It provides doctrinal and practical reflection for the promotion of the cause.

The first mission of this secretariat is to inform the congregation, beginning with Father General in his councils. It writes reports on the progress of the cause, archives and communicates testimonies of healings or graces received.

To collect these testimonies, the secretariat needs a network of collaborators in the field. These collaborators, often organized into committees, have ac-

cepted to promote the cause of Fr. d'Alzon by making his life and work known, by praying to him and having him prayed to, and by creating and animating teams responsible for accompanying the sick or those who are going through a time of trial. In the past, five letters have sought to re-launch this network of collaborators and encourage vocations. The response rate is rather low. Julio Navarro presented a list of 57 collaborators in 27 countries (20 O.A., 29 A.A. and 4 lay people). He added: "*We have sent them three letters so far. Unfortunately, we have received very few replies.*" Julio received only about ten responses in all. But we need a greater participation of religious and lay Assumptionists. For that, we need to reorganize ourselves a bit differently.

Another task of the Postulation is to study one by one the supposed cases of miracles. Among the graces received since Fr. d'Alzon's death, none constitutes a case of unexplained, sudden, total and lasting healing that we could submit to the Medical Consultation of the Dicastery of the Causes of Saints, except for the very surprising healing in 1995 of the young Pier Luigi Molinari, then two and a half years old: Fr. d'Alzon seems to have played a direct role. Unfortunately, we do not have sufficient data to launch a diocesan investigation. We hope to get in touch with Pier Luigi today, on the eve of his 30th birthday, as he is the great nephew of two Oblate Sisters of the Assumption and in Rome...

Through this concrete example, everyone understands the importance of working together and as a team, not only to report supposed cases of healing, but to

The news of the Postulation is also :

- The process of recognition of the healing of Sidonie Rasoanandrasana in 2015 in Madagascar, through the intercession of Fr. Etienne Pernet (read page ...).
- The cause of canonization of our three martyrs of Bulgaria (read page ...).
- The cause of Fr. Marie-Clement Staub (1876-1936), declared Venerable on April 3, 2014.
- A reflection currently being carried out in the Diocese of Buenos Aires regarding Brothers Carlos Antonio Felipe Di Petro and Raúl Eduardo Rodriguez, kidnapped on June 4, 1976 and disappeared during the military dictatorship in Argentina. Interviews with witnesses have been conducted in order to introduce their case.

accompany the families and gather objective medical information on the spot as soon as possible, at the time of the healing or shortly afterwards.

Everyone should ask themselves what they can contribute

Like any cause, Fr. d’Alzon’s postulation requires four types of expertise: historical, canonical, theological and pastoral. If we add medical science to the mix, in order to evaluate the natural or supernatural character of an extraordinary healing, we can understand that this versatility can frighten our brothers and sisters. Obviously, no one or no support committee has all these skills on its own. Therefore, many become discouraged. They conclude that the beatification of Fr. d’Alzon concerns them through their membership in the congregation but much less in terms of personal commitment. Yet each religious or lay person of the Alliance, where he or she is and in what he or she does, can already contribute to the postulation.

In spite of the limited number of direct collaborators, the cause has remained surprisingly active throughout the congregation. It has even intensified and spread throughout the world, on the side of religious men and women but especially with lay people in Alliance in Africa and Latin America. Coming back from Argentina, I can attest that Fr. d’Alzon is very present in our shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes (Santos Lugares) and is well known by the students and teachers in our two schools in Buenos Aires.

It is time to move to a new stage of postulation: more participatory, international and inclusive. For greater effective-

ness, it is advisable to involve a maximum of religious and lay brothers and sisters, and all of our provinces. From now on we will favor the linguistic zones and divide our contributions into three distinct sections, animated by the Postulator General with his team.

1) To spread and communicate

A first section will have to make the life and work of our founder better known and love his apostolic charism. Its mission will be to progressively build up a data platform accessible on the Internet, to ensure a thoughtful presence on social networks, and to monitor what is published about Fr. d’Alzon. This group will also report on the news of the cause around the world and will produce short videos, concise and attractive materials - in print or digital format - in the three languages of the congregation, plus Vietnamese.

This group will distribute the medals and images, the novena and the intercessory prayer, and may translate the brochure on Fr. d’Alzon. It could also elaborate a universal prayer to be used during the celebrations of the *Dies natalis* and on the occasion of congregational celebrations or our gatherings.

A person responsible for each country or province, or even for each linguistic zone, will help the postulator and his team to coordinate this work of diffusion. Every Assumptionist religious or lay person should feel concerned about this “Communication and Dissemination” pole and understand that the cause of Fr. d’Alzon needs him. The Catholic Church never canonizes unknown people. It cannot erect on the altars or give as an example of sanctity

a person who is not well known by the faithful or ignored by the general public. Our talents and know-how in communication and new media are expected. Finally, every religious has the capacity to invite his or her friends, religious or lay, in this adventure of postulation, especially those who master computers and multimedia, who know how to edit small videos, write or translate short texts, communicate with PowerPoint: all of these tools are necessary today to advance the cause of Fr. d’Alzon.

These new tools will be very useful for animating our community meetings, our houses of formation, our parishes, our works, our moments of prayer and celebration. They usually attract a wider audience and allow us to reach out to younger people. “*A video on Fr. d’Alzon seems necessary: those that exist are already too old and in an outdated technique,*” the international secretariat noted in 2010. If such videos already exist in our Provinces, so much the better! This group will be able to share them with everyone, translate them and distribute them to as many people as possible.

2) Updating the thought and work of Fr. d’Alzon

A second section will have to deepen the spirituality and mission of Fr. Emmanuel d’Alzon. The Assumptionists are the first to need to reappropriate their Alzonian heritage. Through a more inculturated and intercultural theological reflection, we need to reclaim his spirituality, especially from the *Spiritual Writings* or the *Examen of the Kingdom*, whose reading needs to be introduced and accompanied. We must also update his great apostolic orienta-

tions and propose to the greatest number of people to imitate his Christian virtues.

This work will demonstrate that Emmanuel d'Alzon's reputation for sanctity is alive and well today. The group will reflect on who we are and what we do. By providing a theological reflection on our practices, it will give a face and a voice to all those who claim to be followers of Fr. d'Alzon. Many people today are trying to follow his example of faith in their own lives, in community, in our parishes, our works, our schools... Many, but still insufficiently guided and sometimes listened to in their own experience of the Alzonian charism. Yet, all of them are indispensable to the promotion of the cause of Fr. d'Alzon.

A person responsible for each country or province, or even for each linguistic zone, will help the postulator and his team to coordinate this work. Every religious, lay Assumptionist, collaborator, or person familiar with our communities should feel concerned. Everyone has been challenged by the example of the Founder. In response to God's call, each one has chosen to follow Christ according to this model of holiness and has taken on the responsibility of passing it on. We need people who are willing to reflect on this in their own cultural and ecclesial context, to put themselves at the service of communities so that they may grow in creative fidelity to the charism of Fr. d'Alzon.

3) Asking for the grace to heal or to get through the ordeal with Fr. d'Alzon

The role of this third section will be to better integrate the cause of Fr. d'Alzon into the pastoral ministry of health and

the accompaniment of the sick, to have the sick and their loved ones pray the intercessory prayer of Fr. d'Alzon or the novena. In this way, it will be able to gather testimonies of healings or graces received and transmit them to the Postulator.

To do this, it would be best to designate a person responsible for each country or province, or even for each linguistic zone, to work in conjunction with the postulation team. Our communities are already close to those who have recourse to the intercession of Fr. d'Alzon or to the families who ask to pray for them. Nothing new: invoking Fr. d'Alzon on behalf of the most vulnerable is already part of our routine. But now we need to see how this pastoral accompaniment will contribute concretely to promoting the cause of Fr. d'Alzon. Almost all of the miracles recognized by the Vatican are cures. That is why this third group is so important. The miracle we hope for will come through it.

Three Elements for a Canonization

Such a program of action includes the three elements that the Church requires for a person to be beatified or canonized. It gives new vitality to the postulation. It calls upon each and every one of us to do what we already know and do.

Some religious or lay people no longer see the sense or sometimes the need to get personally involved in promoting the cause of Fr. d'Alzon. Our role is to convince them that everyone has something to contribute to the postulation. Each contribution can make a difference, whether it be in communication, reflection or pastoral care accompanying

the sick and their families who are going through the ordeal of praying to Fr. d'Alzon. Let us try to follow this model together: each one can make a contribution and participate in a common work according to his or her pastoral insertion, personal tastes, possibilities and skills.

Fr. d'Alzon is a treasure of spirituality, apostolic zeal and fraternity. Even before asking the Church to offer him to all as a model of holiness, our responsibility is to spread the life and work of our founder, to deepen his charism, to pray and have Fr. d'Alzon prayed for the sick. Each of us must share with others our reasons for asking the Church for his beatification.

I suggest that each one of us simply say what we are already doing, what we are ready to do, or what we are committed to doing to promote the cause of Fr. d'Alzon in one or another of these three areas: spreading, deepening, praying. (1)

P. Vincent LECLERCQ,
Postulator General

1) Write to the General Postulation:
postulazioneassunzionisti@assumption.org

An unexpected arrival in Nimes

The unique painting that occupied Fr. d'Alzon's apartments has been placed in the "place of memory" dedicated to him since 2009 on Rue Séguier.

The remembrances of Fr. d'Alzon that were preserved by the Oblates of the Assumption in Hulsberg, Netherlands, were transferred during the summer of 2022 to Paris and Nimes. A portrait of Fr. d'Alzon and a tableau of Magdalene weeping for her sins found its destination in the gallery of the chapel of the rue Séguier.

Not having been back to Nimes since 2010, I took the opportunity to go there from November 10 to 13. I was happy to see the good condition of the memorial site, and I took the opportunity to make some improvements. I was pleased to see again the two paintings discovered on May 8, 2010, in Hulsberg.

Having informed Brother Jean-Michel Brochec, who collaborated in the creation of the memorial site, he felt that the Magdalene had a place in the life of Fr. d'Alzon, because it was the only artifact that he kept in his apartments in Nimes before moving to the college. Once on site, I reflected on where to hang this painting, and surprisingly the perfect spot was unexpectedly waiting!

Upon returning to Albertville, I wrote a presentation of the picture (read below), placed in a frame and sent to Nîmes. Bro. Jean-Michel, who came for a meeting of the Postulation with Fr. Vincent Leclercq, was able to hang the painting with the presentation.

Fr. Jean-Daniel GULLUNG
(Albertville)



Magdalene weeping for her sins

A painting brought by Lavagnac, who accompanied Abbé d'Alzon to the apartments he occupied before moving to Assumption College.

Describing the apartment of the Vicar General, street of Arc-du-Gras no9, Fr. Emmanuel Bailly writes:

"All is simple, austere; the walls are bare; in moving forward, you see a large painting; it is the penance, when Mary Magdalene weeps over her sins. It is the only painting, the only decoration. In the hallway to his bedroom there is only one skull, and beyond that, there is nothing; the walls are completely bare. On his desk, is the large crucifix of Msgr. de Chaffoy."

When Abbot d'Alzon left Lombard Street to take a room at the college, he brought the skull that he placed on the desk in the room described by Abbot Galeran in his sketches: "To the right, at the foot and facing the bed, we saw a table of white wood with a crucifix, a statue of the Virgin and a skull."

However, where did the painting of Magdalene weeping for her sins go? Let us hypothesize that this painting had the same fate as the portrait

of Mother Marie-Eugénie that Fr. d'Alzon entrusted to Mrs. Germer-Durand, to avoid causing gossip... This painting could have been given to Mother Marie Correnson by Mrs. Germer-Durand who became an Oblate in 1882.

This painting, as well as other mementoes, was brought to the Netherlands when the Oblates were expelled from France. Some of the souvenirs were brought to Nimes in July 2022.

At the entrance of the chapel on Séguier Street, we notice that Mary Magdalene is represented in the scene of the Pieta which decorates the pediment of the entrance door to the hall, and that she is with John and Mary, at the foot of the cross, in the large central stained-glass window. The devotion of Fr. d'Alzon joined that of the foundress of the Oblates to whom he wrote: When you receive this letter, I will have said the Mass for you, the 22nd, the feast of Saint Magdalene, to whom you have such devotion."

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2 OFFICIAL

- ◆ Agenda
- ◆ Chronicle of "Due Pini"

3 EDITORIAL

- ◆ Get up and walk

4

- ◆ Callings, nominations, agreements...

5 PLENARY GENERAL CHAPTER

- ◆ A General Chapter, Provincial Chapters!
- ◆ An "old age pension" for certain religious
- ◆ Assumption University has a new president!
- ◆ "The Assumption is changing its face"

9 GENERAL CHAPTER

- ◆ The Chapter, a necessity that has become an obligation for every religious family (Part 2)

12 LIFE OF THE PROVINCES

- ◆ In Abidjan, opening of possibilities
- ◆ Miracle in Madagascar?

18 REMEMBRANCE

- ◆ It has been 70 years since the deaths of our Bulgarian martyrs

19 POSTULATION

- ◆ The Cause of Father d'Alzon: ask for the program!

23 MEMOIRS

- ◆ An unexpected arrival in Nimes

24 OUR DECEASED BROTHERS

Our Deceased Brothers



† **Fr. Jean-Francois LABRIÈRE**, of the European Province, passed away on July 27, 2022, in Argenteuil (France). His funeral was celebrated on August 2, in the church of Saint-Martin of Herblay, followed by interment in the cemetery of Montparnasse in Paris. He was 92.

† **Fr. Tini van HAAREN**, of the community of the Netherlands (European Province), died on July 28, 2022, in Boxtel (Netherlands). His funeral was celebrated on August 3, in the Chapel of Wereldhuis, followed by interment in the cemetery of the Park of Stapelen in Boxtel. He was 92.

† **Br. Emmanuel VANDAME**, of the community of Layrac (Province of Europe), died on October 13, 2022, at Agen (France). His funeral was celebrated on October 21, 2022, in the Chapel of Prieuré, followed by interment in the cemetery of Layrac. He was 88.

† **Fr. Adrien MASSON**, of the community of Layrac (European Province), died on December 14, 2022, in Toulouse (France). His funeral was celebrated on December 19, in the Chapel of Prieuré, followed by interment in the cemetery of Layrac. He was 84.

† **Fr. Arno BURG**, of the community of the Netherlands (European Province), died on December 14, 2022, in Boxtel (Netherlands). His funeral was celebrated on December 21, in the chapel of Wereldhuis, followed by interment in the cemetery of the Park of Stapelen in Boxtel. He was 100.