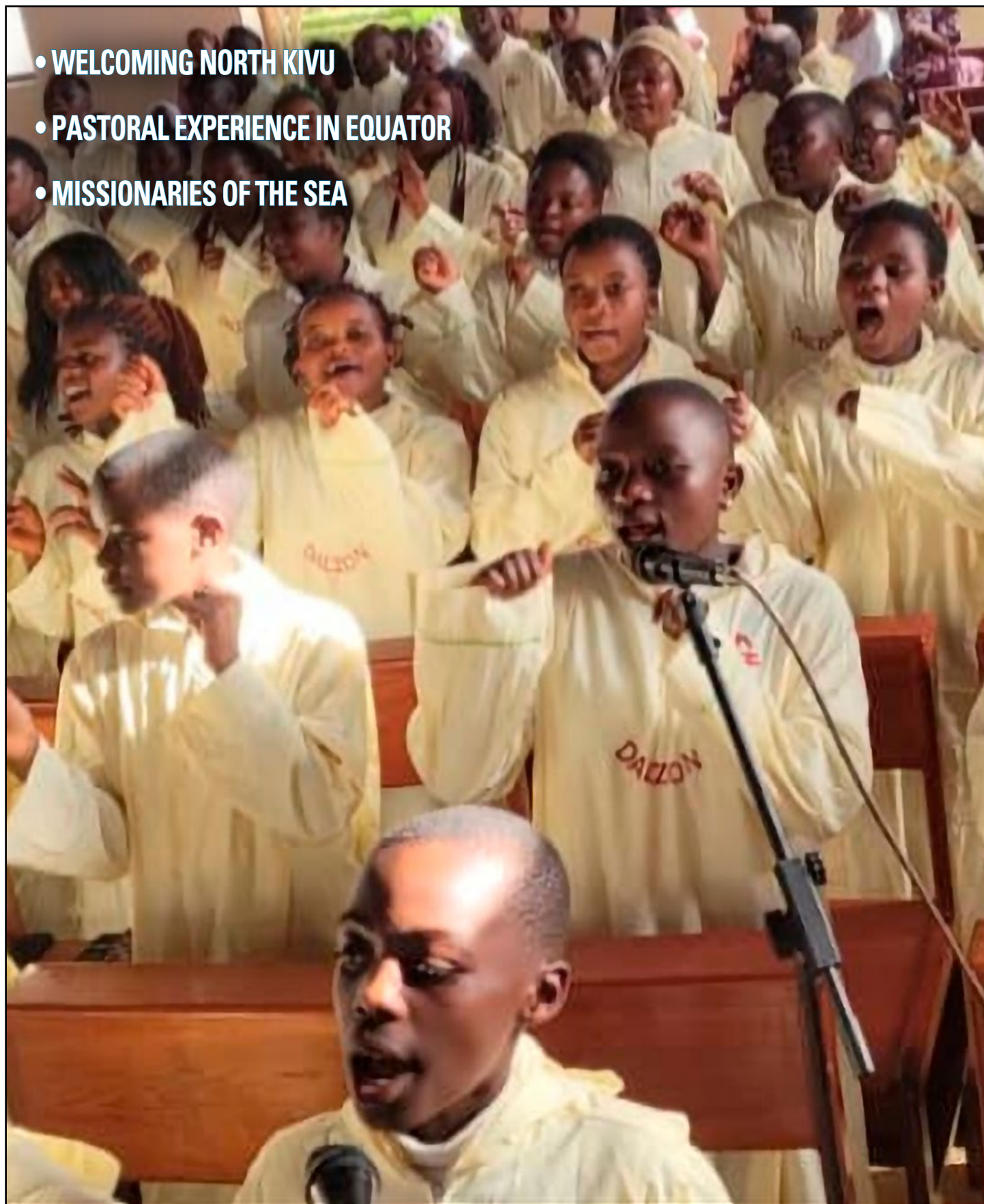


AA News of the Assumption



- WELCOMING NORTH KIVU
- PASTORAL EXPERIENCE IN EQUATOR
- MISSIONARIES OF THE SEA



Agenda

Plenary General Council

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

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

Ordinary General Council

n° 11 : **October 28-November 1.**

n° 12 : **December 12-13.**

n° 13 : **February 24-28, 2025.**

Fr. Ngoa

- **September 26-October 25:** Florence (Italian course).
- **November 20-22:** Meeting of General Superiors.
- **December 27-February 15:** East Africa (canonical visit).

Fr. Benoît

- **December 27-January 26:** East Africa (canonical visit).
- **February 3-15:** West Africa (session).

Fr. João

- **January 17-19:** Paris (meetings of JPIC).

Fr. Thierry

- **November 16-30:** Madagascar.

Fr. Étienne

- in Rome.

On the cover

One of Father General's strongest impressions during his recent visit to the Province of Africa was the large number of people, groups and institutions bearing the name of our Founder (see his editorial, opposite). For example, the "Fraternity of the D'Alzon Missionary Children" (known as "Little D'Alzon"), founded more than 25 years ago by Fr. Protais Kabila, supports hundreds of children throughout the diocese of Butembo-Beni who are not part of Catholic action movements.

Journal of « Due Pini »



There are fewer changes at the General House during the second year of the mandate than there were during the year following the General Chapter. The beginning of 2024 confirms that, without fanfare but nonetheless with noteworthy differences.

The numbers of religious at Due Pini reflect some changes this year:

-Fr. Fabrice-Marie returned to Togo at the end of his studies in clinical psychology, after brilliantly defending his dissertation "Promoting emotional intelligence in the family: from the case study of the 'Ewe' family of southern Togo"

-Prior to the summer, another religious from the General House community received numerous academic accolades: Fr. Ignace Aïssah, with a dissertation on "The imaginary representation of the Other in Arab-Muslim thought", which was defended at the Pontifical Institute of Arab and Islamological Studies.

-Fr. Zéphyrin Kasereka Mumbere, of the African Province, rejoined the house to prepare for his doctorate in canon law, following an apprenticeship in languages.

-Arriving in February will be Frs. Julien Razanajatovo (Madagascar) and Freddy Lukala Buru (Africa) to study Italian in light of specialized classes.

At the beginning of this academic year, our community consists of 13 religious but will increase to 15 in 2025: the year will be "holy" in Rome, which will undoubtedly contribute to many of our brothers coming to celebrate the Jubilee in Rome and staying at Due Pini! They will be welcomed as all brothers are who pass through, especially those coming to celebrate reunions of the congregation, which will certainly be scheduled soon!

This photo shows the 13 religious who are together for this year. From left to right:

(1st row) Fr. Zéphyrin Kasereka Mumbere (DR-Congo), Br. Paul Trinh Ngoc Lâm (Vietnam), Fr. João da Silva (Brazil) and Fr. Etienne Ratalata Rafanambinantsoa (Madagascar).

(2nd row) Fr. Alex Castro (Philippines-USA), Fr. Thierry Kambale Kahongya (DR-Cong), Fr. Ignace Akoule Aïssah (Togo), Very Rev. Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba (DR-Congo), Fr. Benoît Bigard (France) and Br. Dominique Nguyen Van Tho (Vietnam) who will be ordained a priest on November 1st!

(3rd row) Fr. Michel Kubler (France), Fr. Vincent Leclercq (France), Br. Gilles Allard (Canada).

It is good that he is known!

The first question you ask yourself when reading this title is certainly: who is it about?

Yes, it is about our founder, Venerable Father Emmanuel d'Alzon. The 34th General Chapter of our Congregation reiterated this wish by giving some ideas such as: "- organize a competition for the best essay on Father d'Alzon; - organize an eloquence prize around Father d'Alzon; - develop "On the path of Father d'Alzon" tours in Rome, Nîmes, Paris... in audio and by QR code; - write, translate and distribute a popular biography of Father d'Alzon; - accompany the prayer of Vespers or Lauds with the reading of a short text by Father d'Alzon; - continue the renewal of the iconography of Father d'Alzon. » (Acts of the 34th Chapter, n. 227)



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

During my recent canonical visit to the Province of Africa, more specifically in the diocese of Butembo-Beni (D. R. Congo), I was very positively struck by the multitude of movements and works that bear the name of our founder. Schools, works, choirs, youth and children's groups and others, proudly bear the name of our founder. Delegations from these groups passed through the Provincial House where I was staying. Almost all of them expressed the desire to know more about this man, this founder, this father whom they call Emmanuel d'Alzon.

This situation reminded me of another experience, lived in 2019. I was leaving Beni for Butembo. The young man who had transported me in his taxi was called Dalzon. Arriving in Butembo I had recounted the event with amazement. But the reaction of the brother to whom I told it was: "He is not the only one." It is true that schools, health centers, people bear the name of Fr. d'Alzon. But many still do not know who D'Alzon is. My meeting with certain groups reminded me of the story between Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. To Philip's question "Do you understand what you are reading?", the eunuch had replied: "And how can I if there is no one to guide me?" (Acts 8:30-31). Thank you to those who have committed themselves to this apostolate in the Provinces. This year, the D'Alzon missionary children of Butembo (DRC) celebrated 25 years of existence. This group alone brings together around 1,200 young people in the diocese.

Making our founder known around us, by speaking not only of his personality and his charism but

also of his cause for beatification, is already an opportunity for our own spiritual progress on the path to holiness. This stimulates us to think and act for our own holiness: "The Chapter wished that the Assumption mobilize for the cause of beatification of Fr. d'Alzon. The recognition of his holiness is not an end in itself, but a path to make us love holiness, to increase our own holiness as well as that of our brothers and sisters." (Acts of the 34th Chapter, n. 16).

At the level of the ordinary General Council, we have just initiated the reflection concerning a new biography of Fr. d'Alzon, thus responding to a wish of the General Chapter. This biography will be able to serve precisely those who are in contact with people who want or need to discover more about our Founder.

Emmanuel d'Alzon has a word for current generations. He also has some answers to the questions of today's man. But how can we discover him and make him known? How can we let ourselves be guided or propose to others as a guide the one we don't know well enough? I know that in some Provinces, the months of September and October are dedicated to local chapters. So don't forget to come back to these questions. Our General Chapter had as its theme: "*The Kingdom of God is at hand*" (Mk 1:15) *Living and proclaiming the hope of the Gospel*": it asked us to be witnesses to this hope by continuing to hope that one day the Church will recognize the holiness of our Founder, Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon. Perhaps you have already met a religious or a lay person of the Alliance who tells you something like this: "We have been praying for the beatification of our founder for a long time and nothing is moving forward." My dear brothers, to respond to such remarks, I simply repeat these words of Pope Francis, in the Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee of 2025: "*Hope does not disappoint*". » Let us therefore continue our prayer and our action to make this cause known in faith and hope, because it is noble.

"Each community will specify how the charism enables it to bear witness to the life and holiness of the whole Church." (Acts of the 34th Chapter, n. 224) How can we do this without speaking of the one who bequeathed this charism to us? We are his heirs. It is good that he is known. ■

Calls, nominations, agreements...

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

■ TO PERPETUAL PROFESSION

- 1) **Christian Rejano DEL MUNDO**
(Europe) (09/09/2024)
- 2) **Roberto KIM Tae Sik**
(Europe) (09/09/2024)
- 3) **Pierre LÊ VAN Hân**
(Europe) (09/09/2024)
- 4) **Jean-Olivier NEGUE**
(Europe) (09/09/2024)
- 5) **Antoine NGUYEN TRUNG Nien**
(Europe) (09/09/2024)
- 6) **Ethiel ROXAS**
(Europe) (09/10/2024)
- 7) **Pierre TRAN VAN Nhan**
(Europe) (09/10/2024)
- 8) **Vincent VU QUANG Thinh**
(Europe) (09/10/2024)
- 9) **Pierre NGUYEN VAN Chung**
(Europe) (09/10/2024)
- 10) **KAMBALE BALEWA Mutumishi**
(Madagascar) (09/10/2024)
- 11) **KASEREKA MBAGA Muhungamuvi**
(Madagascar) (09/11/2024)

■ TO ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE

- 12) **François-Xavier CAO MINH Toàn**
(Europe) (09/11/2024)
- 13) **Clément LÖBEL**
(Europe) (09/11/2024)
- 14) **Jean-Baptiste NGUYEN VAN Thé**
(Europe) (09/11/2024)
- 15) **Yan PIRES DA SILVA**
(Brazil) (09/11/2024)
- 16) **Denis Geraldo MARTINS RAMALHO**
(Brazil) (09/12/2024)
- 17) **Daniel MAGIN SAMBONY**
(Andean Prov.) (09/12/2024)

■ TO PRIESTLY ORDINATION

- 18) **Dominique NGUYEN VAN Tho**
(Europe) (09/12/2024)
- 19) **KATEMBO MASIMENGO Frédéric**
(Africa) (09/12/2024)

- 20) **Nathanaël TOKINOMENJANAHARY**
(Madagascar) (09/12/2024)
- 21) **Simon Jean Richard RAFANOMEZANTSOA**
(Madagascar) (09/13/2024)
- 22) **Tojo Jean Pierrot RAKOTOARISOA**
(Madagascar) (09/13/2024)
- 23) **Claude Orlando RAVELONIRINA**
(Madagascar) (09/13/2024)
- 24) **Denis RAHARISONINA**
(Madagascar) (09/13/2024)
- 25) **Felix KERIGA ATUNGA**
(East Africa) (09/13/2024)

■ EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY VOWS

Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, Superior General, with the consent of his Ordinary General Council, has agreed to an extension of his temporary vows, for the period of one year, to Br. **Pierre LÊ MINH Thong**, of the Province of Europe.

Karibuni, the Assumption of North Kivu

Last July, Fr. Etienne Ratalata Rafanambinantsoa, Assistant General, accompanied the Superior General on his 1st canonical visit to Africa. Here are his impressions on the Assumption in this region.



Father General and Father Etienne, welcomed at the Bulengera scholasticate in Butembo.

« Karibuni » : visitors read this word at the entrance of the Quenard House, before even meeting a member of the community. The word means: we look forward to seeing you! A warm welcome. A few steps beyond, visitors see the sign ART and a picture of the Very Rev. Fr. Gervais Quenard. Below the picture is a map of the African continent with the inscription: "The Assumption in Africa". Several countries within the continent are colored to indicate where the Assumptionists are present. Along with updates, the map shows the Assumptionist presence throughout the continent. This depiction is

found in the Provincial House of the African Province on one of Butembo's beautiful hills. It expresses the welcome given to visitors who come to the community. Yes, you are welcomed: the Augustinians of the Assumption of the Quenard House open their doors to you.

A welcome of almost one hundred years

These pictures recall a welcome given to the Assumptionists on the African continent at a given time in its history. On October 14, 1929, the first Assumptionist missionaries arrived on African soil, specifically at Beni ▶

in the Congo (DR-C), after a long voyage by ship. This first group consisted of six religious from the Province of Belgium-Holland: Frs. Conrad Groenen, Henri Piérard, Marie-Jules Celis, and Baudouin Ponsaerts (Belgian), and Frs. Ignace Nelissen and Antoine Sanders (Dutch).

This event, under the Very Rev. Fr. Gervais Quenard, is a cherished memory. The decor of the current provincial community of the African Province of the Augustinians of the Assumption is a reminder of this. This beautiful house is dedicated to the former Superior General of the Augustinians of the Assumption.

Well established in Africa, the Assumption receives many vocations. The Province of Africa has 260 members spread throughout 29 communities, not to mention the religious from this Province who have been sent on mission *ad extra* (outside of the Province).

An abundance of vocations

Recent numbers show an abundance of vocations to the Assumptionists from the Democratic Republic of Congo: 14 newly professed pronounced their first vows on August 28th, 17 novices succeeded them in the community Bienheureux-Kamen in Kyondo, and five others in the community of Bibwa, in the Kinshasa Vicariate.

The different establishments and the many parishes run by the Assumptionists in the Province are generally the sources of recruitment for these vocations. Many of the religious speak of the fraternal welcome and its simplicity that drew them to the Augustinians of the Assumption.



Father General at the Generalate of the Petites Sœurs de la Présentation, in front of the portrait of Mgr. Piérard, first bishop of Butembo-Beni.

The Assumption prospers in Africa with its many branches. The Oblates of the Assumption were the first to join the Augustinians of the Assumption in the Congo in 1936. The Orantes of the Assumption, the Little Sisters of the Assumption, and the Religious of the Assumption followed to expand the Assumption family in the Congolese territory. Two branches of the family were born in the diocese of Butembo-Beni, created by the Augustinians of the Assumption. It was Mgr. Henri Piérard (1893-1975), an Assumptionist bishop, who

founded the Brothers of the Assumption in 1951. This young branch of the Assumption continues to recruit in Congo, with 19 novices in two groups for 2023-2024. Mgr. Piérard also founded the Little Sisters of the Presentation of Our Lady, in 1952. This congregation is working in four dioceses in Congo and is also present in Uganda and in mission in Southern Italy. It prospers especially in Congo with 29 novices in two groups for 2023-2024.

Butembo, a center of welcome

"Karibuni" to Butembo! One might say that coming to Butembo is to come to the heart of the Assumption in Africa. It is here that the Assumption is concentrated. Many communities of Augustinians of the Assumption are in Butembo, among them are --- the postulate of Katendere, the novitiate St. Charles Lwanga, the scholasticate of St. Augustine of Bulengera, and the Provincial House. Our brothers work in many parishes and have other works dedicated to the congregation.

On the only hill of Kambali is the Kambali Institute, the radio and television station Moto. Beyond the hill, our religious animate the various mobilizing works of the congregation in the Province: Assumption University of the Congo (UAC). Not far from Kambali is the Technical Institute of Mahamba.

Similarly, the Provincial House, the Novitiate, and several other communities of the Oblates of the Assumption are in Butembo. The Orantes of the Assumption also have a Regional House, one of two novitiates of their congregation, and other communities. The General House and the novitiate of the Brothers of the Assumption are also in Butembo. The Little Sisters of the Presentation of Our Lady have their General House in Butembo surrounded by other communities. When you come to Butembo you find five branches of the Assumption family, and we must not forget the lay who share in the charism of each congregation.

Welcoming Father General

Last July and August, the Very Rev. Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba Baudouin, came to the Province of Africa, the home of his birth, for his first canonical visit as Superior General. For this first visit, he devoted time to meet with the Assumptionists at Butembo-Beni and with the bishop of the diocese, Mgr. Paluku Sikuli Melchisédech.

It is certain that the entire Assumption family of Butembo gathered to celebrate this visit. An evening reception was organized at Quenard House which was attended by many delegates from each branch of the Assumption family including the members of the Lay Alliance. It was a solemn evening filled with conviviality and fraternity for the successor of Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon. The Assumption of Butembo did not limit themselves solely to this event. Fr. Ngoa accepted invitations from the sisters and brothers of the other branches of the congregation. Welcoming the Superior General of the Augustinians of the Assumption was an opportunity to show fraternity and solidarity with all the members of this large family of the Assumption.

To show this welcome, a song was sung, a speech delivered, and flowers were presented. The joy of this meeting was evident in the sharing of a meal. According to tradition, a piece of meat was on the plate of the guest of honor. Many gifts were presented as well. Father could have put together a small herd of goats by the end of his visit. . . This time of conversation made it clear

that Father General's message was most appreciated and was benefited by all during his visit. The message echoed his first letter: "The jar of flour will not run out, the jug of oil will not empty."

An asset for the mission

The Very Rev. Fr. Ngoa was welcomed as the Superior General. The Little Sisters of the Presentation of Our Lady, for example, see in him the actual successor of their founder: "*Mgr. Piérard is not dead, he is among us, today*", they said.

For his part, Fr. Ngoa explained his canonical visit. He came as a brother among his brothers and sisters of the Assumption. In his simplicity, he clearly shows the leadership of our Founder: authority in fraternity, paternity without clericalism.

A spirit of welcome, solidarity, and fraternity truly marked his meetings throughout last July and August in Butembo. The richness of the spirit of family is an aspect of the mission of the Assumption in this part of the world, where the question of insecurity and the challenge of peace loom largely for society and for the Church. The Assumption is actively present, accompanying and supporting a population that continues to live with Hope.

**Fr. Etienne Ratalata
RAFANAMBINANTSOA,
(Rome)
Assistant General**

Madagascar on retreat with its former Father General

This year, Fr. Benoît Grière was invited to preach the annual retreat of his former Province of Madagascar. It was a return to its source, for the preacher as well as the retreatants.



essary, because it teaches us to rid ourselves of that which is unnecessary to return to what is essential. The Hebrews in the desert received manna each day to help them move forward to the Promised Land. They were lacking nothing and there was nothing around them: no villages, no wells, no food. Everything was given to them day after day. We are

It is with immense joy that I share the spiritual ambiance that was experienced during our annual retreat, this past July 22 to July 27, in the community of Belemboaka/Tuléar. The retreat was animated by our former Superior General, Fr. Benoît Grière. The Province was delighted to welcome Fr. Benoît, as a former missionary to this great island of Madagascar. This spiritual exercise included the participation of 48 Assumptionists---some religious in initial stages of formation, some engaged in Formation and education, and others engaged in pastoral work and various apostolates.

Getting away from it

The theme that Fr. Benoît introduced on the night of July 22nd was the following: “Strengthen in yourselves the interior man” (Ephesians, 3:16). “Listen to the Word and to the words of Saint Augustine.” Stressing this theme, Fr. Benoît underlined the impor-

tance of getting away from it all to refresh oneself. He embellished this concept of getting away from it all by demonstrating all that this implies. For example, knowing when to step away from daily tasks: the parish, our pastoral activities, and our relationships.

Of equal importance is distancing oneself from social media. Take the time to “fast” from WhatsApp, Twitter, or X. Leave, for a while, the dependence of the world that surrounds us. Learn to place oneself in the presence of God. Social media networks are not bad in themselves, but they cause us to be dependent, and they often separate us from the principal preoccupations of a religious: to search for God with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our strength.

Pass through the desert

Additionally, our retreat master showed us the importance of retiring to a desert-like space. This passage through the desert is nec-

called to live the same experience. It is a time of pausing and of poverty in which we can experience the gifts God is giving us---the gift of his Word in Scripture, the meditations from the Bible, but also the gift of Eucharistic nourishment.

Lastly, this retreat taught us the importance of resting, as in the message given by Jesus: “Rest a while.” The rest that we are called to is surely a rest in God. It is a rest that is found because we are searchers of God. We are not civil servants, but men who have chosen to follow Jesus Christ to discover the Kingdom. Rest, that which St. Augustine called “otium”, “retreat”, is setting aside time to search for God.

At the end of this retreat, which unfolded in the most fraternal atmosphere, we thank God, and we thank Fr. Benoît for this special time we had together in the Province of Madagascar.

Fr. Dalmon KAMERA
(Antananarivo)

A week in the shadow of the Letter of the Superior General

The Assumption of the Philippines organized its biannual assembly around the challenge of current crises in the Church and in the world.

Since the Covid epidemic, the religious of the Philippines have been in the habit of meeting twice a year, in January and in summer, for an "Assumptionist week". It is an opportunity for them to meet, to take stock of their apostolic activities and the experience of their religious life. It is also a time for common formation.

This year, the meeting took place from August 1 to 6 at Adveniat House, in the shadow of the first Letter of the Superior General to the Congregation. Because this letter calls us to confront reality: the crisis that affects our societies, the Church, the Assumption in the Philippines too... without letting ourselves be paralyzed by situations, without becoming discouraged, without falling into resignation... quoting Saint Augustine: *"Times are bad, times are difficult, people say. Let us live well and times will be good."*

Practical arrangements and challenges

Writing to us in this way, Fr. Ngoa shares with us very practical arrangements for living this week of meeting and exchange, such as: "Let us not neglect the small efforts that we can make", "accept the reality of fragility", "take care of our vocation", "redouble our efforts to live the Alliance with the laity", "not remain eternally in our pious vows", "put Christ at the centre of our life", "be men of hope"... Our Superior also indicates to us four major challenges: the relevance and coherence of our Assumptionist life, leadership, mission-oriented formation and passion for the mission: "How can we awaken, train and accompany a new generation of passionate missionaries?"

All this, while insisting on a synodal state of mind filled with humility, listening and discernment, trust and on the very approach of the 34th General Chapter which always began by contemplating first the



Brother Jean-Thomas de La Roche and Father Bernard Holzer at the assembly.

signs of the Kingdom among us. The spirit of this "Assumptionist week" was given!

Change of format

Brother Jean-Thomas de la Roche, on an international internship at Bayard Philippines, sums up our exchanges as follows:

"One of the characteristics of this week is a change in format: fewer themes, more deliberations and more inclusion of the ideas of each of the brothers through online surveys.

The week began with an evaluation of the last two "AA Weeks" of the past year, based on a survey sent to each of the brothers.

Then we worked on the Acts of the Provincial Chapter, individually, in groups, in assembly to grasp the spirit of the Chapter through its Acts, and to try to adapt their orientations for the Philippines.

For nearly two days, we worked on the challenges of formation by taking up the numerous orientations defined in the last chapters, General Chapter and Provincial Chapter. We talked about vocations and the Lay-Religious Alliance: the participation of all religious in the promotion of vocations, the reception of young people leaving college, the reception of vocations from Indonesia; the clarification of the status of member of the Alliance and the collaborations in apostolic activities.

The last major topic was the organization of the communities in the Philippines (as well as the priorities and proposals for the Year in the Philippine territory).

History of the foundation in the Philippines – from a Region of the Province of North America to the Vicariate of Asia-Oceania of the Province of Europe – and preparation of the Commissions and apostolates. »

Fr. Bernard HOLZER (Manila - Philippines)

Riobamba, fertile ground for the Kingdom



Bro Daniel Magin and various parts of his apostolate



In some Provinces, the diversity of establishments allows for true inculturation. Br. Daniel, a Colombian religious, shares his pastoral experience in Riobamba.

I arrived at the community of Notre-Dame of Chimborazo in Riobamba (Ecuador) on January 17, 2024. I had a very positive experience personally and spiritually as well as religiously. I learned a great deal about the culture of Riobamba, of its traditions, of its food, and of its popular religiosity found in the region. I took part in feasts, dances, and celebrations. The people are very loving, welcoming, and humble.

We receive more than we give

My mission in the communities of the parish of San Pedro of Licán consisted of

visiting, listening, and helping in whatever way possible. I worked primarily with the sick and the aged. It is a beautiful, gratifying, comforting and exciting mission---since we receive much more than we give. You realize that in the sick you are serving Christ himself. And you know that in the patient it's Jesus himself you're caring for. You are moved and filled with gratitude toward God.

To see the joy and tenderness in the eyes of those you are visiting is a gift from God. As Saint Augustine said, « it is the Christ in us that visits the Christ in others.” Faith,

hope and internal consolation help these people to deal with their suffering and pain. I was often moved when I heard them say before receiving the Eucharist: "Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and my soul will be healed." It is then that I knew that the love of God reigns in their hearts.

This is a task that I perform with my Lay Assumptionist brothers, who are also devoted to this beautiful pastoral work.

Working with the youth: a challenge

I found that working with the youth was a challenge. Young people are often reluctant to deal with religion and the Eucharist. They are more receptive toward social themes, politics, and sports. What often attracts them, however, is the idea of visiting the sick and the elderly in the community. It is important to work with them in a quiet manner, to bring them closer to the concept of service and an encounter with Jesus, who they know from their ancestors who planted seeds of faith in them.

Collaboration with other communities

I attach great importance to the work I do with other religious communities, who have offered me the opportunity to go to their colleges to help out on children's and young people's days. The aim is to strengthen them through catechetical sessions and fraternal meetings. I find this very enriching not only for my personal and intellectual life but also for my spiritual life and for ecumenical dialogue.

We don't just work in this type of activity. We also work with large gatherings of youth called "Expocarisma". These are monthly meetings given by the Conference of Religious of Chimborazo (CERCH), as well as other development activities that reinforce community and fraternal life among religious.

In service of families

On some Saturdays, I work with Fr. Bolívar helping families. I engage in conversations with couples preparing for marriage.

This is an opportunity to reinforce links of friendship and to share fraternity with families.

Catechesis at all stages

Helping with different activities in the parish, whether it is meeting with parents, with children or youth at different levels of formation has helped me to strengthen my pedagogical understanding and to put it into practice. It is very satisfying working with different groups on different topics and helping them prepare for the sacraments---in fact, all aspects of catechesis are satisfying. I find it very enriching to work with the catechists and with children to form them in faith. We work hand in hand so that what they achieve will always be for the better.

Months filled with joy

These have been months filled with joy, hope, discernment, and faith. The most important is the sharing with a religious community, where I draw the strength to go out and meet God's people. From this strength I can bring spiritual nourishment to them through the Eucharist and through the Word. These moments inspire me to continue to work for the Kingdom of God, through a love of the Church, of the Virgin Mary, and of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I am convinced that it is worth giving all without counting the cost. Devotion and service are the configuration with Christ.

Riobamba is a fertile land where we can sow good seed and harvest good fruit for the Kingdom. The people of Riobamba have a strong belief and a living faith. They give what they can---whether it be great or small---they share in the fruits of their land and welcome with gratitude the message of the Good News. For this reason, my experience has been, and will continue to be, a way to give glory to God.

Br. Daniel MAGIN SAMBONY
(Riobamba, Ecuador)

The Assumption is rejuvenated in the Netherlands

There were only three Assumptionists of varying ages in the country. Therefore, the arrival of a Belgian and two Congolese opens many unexpected possibilities.

Little by little, a community is taking shape in the Netherlands, following my appointment as rector of the francophone parish in the capital of the country. Attached to the community of the Netherlands with our three Dutch brothers from Boxtel, we try to join them as often as possible. We feel a sense of joy in seeing a sort of burgeoning there where everything seemed to be ending.

Finally reunited

Yes, life is full of amusing surprises. Fr. Pierre Kasereka Kisanгани of Kinshasa was named ten years ago to come to the Netherlands. This has finally become a reality. I arrived on August 28, 2023, and Fr. Justin Kaserka Mwendakulala, after an intermittent time for administrative reasons, arrived from London on October 11, 2023. Despite all the hassles, we are finally reunited. Pierre and Justin occupy the two rooms in the rectory, and I live in an apartment within a five-minute walking distance.

A cosmopolitan parish

We are in charge of the Parish of All Saints: a French-speaking community that is very young and fervent¹. The rectory is the main focus: daily Mass, offices of lauds and vespers, meetings and catechesis, youth group (about thirty youth), and a place for all those wishing to see a priest.



Fr Marc and Fr Pierre Kisangani surround their three confreres from Boxtel: Frs. Piet Wouters, Leo van der Klaauw and Jan Zuiker.

We welcome many parishioners for dinner. In a parish of expatriates, it is important to maintain brotherly connections: for many, it is like family. On Sundays, we celebrate in a church near the Hague with nearly 250 faithful, many of whom work in international institutions: International Criminal Court, Arbitration and Ancillary Courts, diplomats of all French-speaking countries, not to mention the European institutions (Patent Office and Space Agency. . .). It is so gratifying to see these individuals engaged in their faith!

Present in the local church

We have a growing involvement in the Dutch Church: Mass on Monday in a parish downtown

and sometimes at Wassenaar... Thanks to excellent contacts with our neighbors, Pierre and Justin are courageously studying Dutch, which is required to obtain residence permits.

We are always reflecting on our apostolate, knowing that the Hague is a place where many students are looking for a place to live, and who often knock on our door looking for a place to stay.

There are many other things I could say. . . come and see. The Hague is a beautiful city in addition to being our budding community. Spending a weekend with us would only do you good and would encourage us!

Fr. Marc LEROY
(the Hague, Netherlands)

¹ Site : <https://paroissetslahaye>.

The "Abuse and good treatment" diploma

Back from Rome, our former Superior General spent a year training to prevent abuse in the Church and support victims.

On May 13, 2024, the Salle des Actes of the Catholic Institute of Paris welcomed around sixty people. Among them, Jean-Marc Sauvé, president of the CIASE (Independent Commission of Inquiry into sexual abuse committed within the Catholic Church) and Mgr Jordy (Tours), vice-president of the Conference of Bishops of France. All participated in the presentation of the university diploma "Abuse and good treatment. Listen, support, prevent" to the thirty students of the 2023-2024 year. This was the 2nd promotion of this training which *"allows professionals, actors involved in the Church, to acquire a better understanding of the phenomenon of sexual abuse and other forms of abuse, and to develop the skills to support victims and prevent this abuse"*.

After my second term as Superior General, I had considered a sabbatical year in agreement with the leaders of the Province of Europe. Father Benoît Bigard told me about this training at the Catholic Institute of Paris. I hesitated to register, thinking of following a course in spiritual theology, but after thinking about it, I saw that this training was necessary to help train the youngest and to raise awareness among all religious about prevention.

The courses total 112 hours over the year, or two full days per month. The public is very varied, with a majority of wom-

en and lay people. In the group of students, there was also Sr. Lenuța, an Oblate of the Assumption sent by Bayard, a Little Sister of the Poor and a Brother of the Beatitudes; the others came on behalf of a social work, a diocese or a congregation. A beautiful diversity, even if sometimes I felt a little alone as a priest. But the fraternal atmosphere, the spontaneous exchanges allowed us to overcome this feeling of sometimes being regarded as the "representative" of the ecclesiastical Institution.

The training is very rich: canon and civil law, psychology, spiritual theology and ecclesiology, case study workshops, etc. Each session hosted a speaker: members of the Commission for Recognition and Reparation (Conference of Religious Men and Women of France) or of the body for abuse committed by diocesan priests, but also victims, members of prevention associations or civil society stakeholders. A very great wealth of testimonies, which confronts us with the horror of the atrocities committed, but also with the laborious possibility of opening a path of reparation and restoration.

I first remember the need to listen respectfully to victims. The delicacy to receive them and not to rush with them, to let them express their suffering. Help them to move from "victims" to "witnesses" (Sauvé Report). But there is also the work of pre-

vention within the Church. To do this, we must overcome the ambient clericalism and train for a responsible emotional life. I remember the courses of Fr. Xavier Thévenot, a Salesian, that I followed 30 years ago on chastity. Why are many people today unaware of the teaching of this moral theologian and his successors? The Assumption is not immune to abuses. We know this and we are, in one way or another, responsible if we do not act to make our congregation "a safe house". The General and Provincial Chapters have stressed the need to move forward on training and prevention. Sessions have already been organized for the brothers of Africa, Madagascar and Asia. Others will have to be scheduled to continue to help us to live fidelity to Christ.

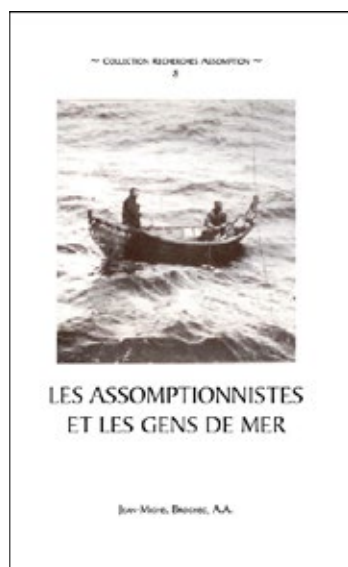
"Whoever causes a scandal or a stumbling block to one of these little ones who believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the deep sea." (Mt 18:6) I am leaving this training with a strong hope: to be able to testify that faith in Christ lifts up victims and that following the Lord is possible despite our lame humanity.

Fr. Benoît GRIÈRE (Lyon)

(article taken from the ATLPE bulletin No. 43, July-September 2024)

The Sea, a Prophetic Apostolate of the Assumption

A monograph gives us back a glorious page of our history, which saw a cohort of religious people embark on the adventure of the fishermen for spiritual help but also psychological and practical.



Who among us has heard of the Assumptionist Mission of the Sea? Few, no doubt...

It is difficult to imagine today what the extremely harsh life was like for the 15,000 men who embarked, in the last century, for long months of fishing campaigns thousands of kilometers from their land. And it is perhaps even more difficult to imagine that Assumptionists chose to set off with them, on a long journey, to share their fate!

It is the merit of Brother Jean-Michel Brochec to restore this impressive and even moving part of Assumptionist history, in a story that reads like a novel and is recommended for reading by any religious today! The book, in French, is currently being distributed to all communities (1).

The story begins in 1894, at the initiative of... our Bonne Presse and Father François Picard, Superior General. The Assumptionists of the time were in fact haunted by the desire to reach all sectors of society, even those far removed from the Church. They thus created the Society of Sea Works, mobilizing Catholics in favor of sailors who worked in almost inhuman conditions, and published for them *La Croix des marins*.

But the Congregation did not limit itself to raising awareness of the cause of seafarers and collecting funds to support them. She went much further in her

pastoral care for them, sending religious people to share their fate, chartering hospital ships for them and welcoming them to the ports where they stopped, far from the trying storms and the devastating alcohol: one of these leading figures was a lay brother, Eugène Bergé, who created the “Maison de famille”, a haven of comfort for sailors in Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, at the north-western end of the Atlantic Ocean (see pages 15 to 17).

Jean-Michel Brochec brings to life here the very harsh daily life of these “sea convicts” and then, alongside them, the spiritual and human help of the Assumptionists who became their apostles. The pioneers were Fr. Yves Hamon in 1895 and Fr. Bergé the following year. About ten other religious left after them on missions as noble as they were improbable, accompanied by diocesan priests and supported from France by an army of lay people and naval officers. The adventure ended in 1934, when the Assumption withdrew from the Society of Works of the Sea, even if a few religious continued this apostolate, such as Fr. Bernard Durier in Chile or André Pivette in France. However, it can still be relevant today, through the courage and creativity that our Congregation has shown in the face of an emergency of the time. May the young Assumptionists, but also their leaders, show the same audacity in the face of today’s apostolic challenges!

Fr. Michel KUBLER (Rome)

¹ *Les assumptionnistes et les gens de mer*, by Jean-Michel Brochec. Collection “Recherches Assomption” no. 8, 117 p.

Brother Eugène and the Family House of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon

In its 2022 bulletin, the Society of Works of the Sea, founded by the Assumptionists in 1894, paid a fine tribute to one of the finest figures among the religious engaged in the Mission of the Sea: Brother Eugène Bergé (1869-1948), repeating the tribute that had been paid to him at the time of his retirement in 1921.



The crew of the Saint-Pierre 2 at the start of the 1897 campaign. In the front row, Father Yves Hamon, Brother Eugène Bergé. In the second row Father Crémillon

“For 26 years, Brother Eugène Bergé followed the destiny of the Family House of the Society of Works of the Sea of Saint-Pierre. He witnessed its construction, he presided over its organization and its successive improvements. He knew, during all these years, thanks to his tact, his finesse and his knowledge of people and things, how to maintain good order in this House, while attracting the sailors who adored him. »

These are the terms in which the Board of Directors presented Brother Eugène, on the occasion of his last campaign in 1921. In his last report published in Bulletin No. 22 of January 1, 1922, he offered the reader a visit to the Maison des Œuvres de Mer

in Saint Pierre, which we invite you to follow a hundred years later.

A fairly good crossing on the *Sainte-Jeanne d'Arc*, the hospital ship of the Société des Œuvres de Mer, earned us the good fortune of arriving in Saint-Pierre-Miquelon on the same day that the whole of France was celebrating the Saint of the Fatherland. The large shelter which, for 26 years, has received so many generations of sailors, was all decked out, all ready to continue its old and faithful traditions of fraternal hospitality, it had even been enlarged, improved and the great projects studied, developed but delayed by the last war had finally been realized; the need for it was felt more and more.



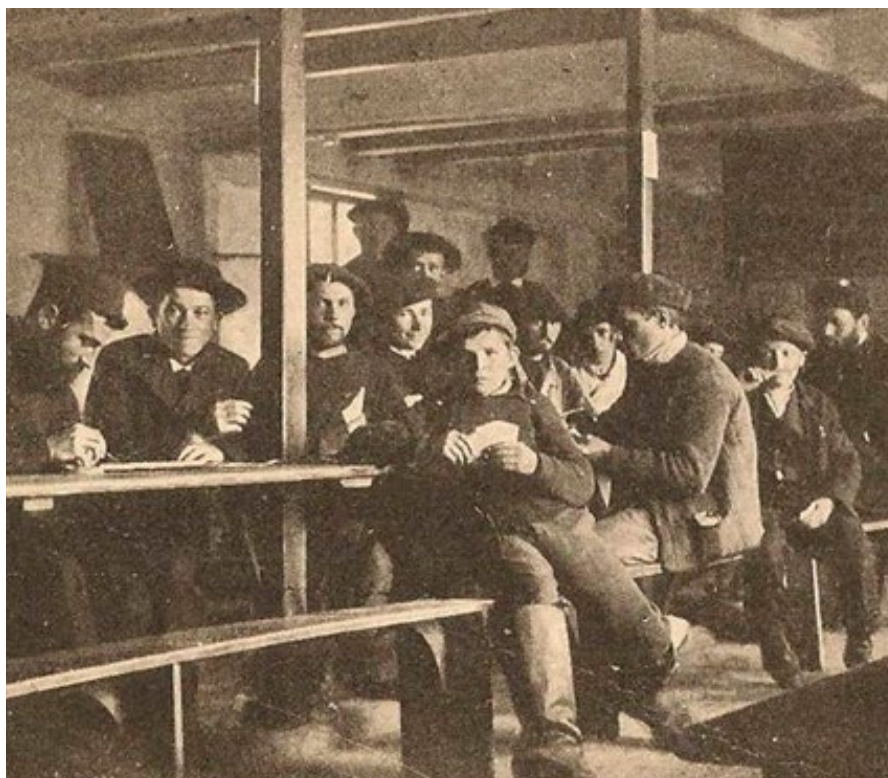
Brother Eugène Bergé

Everything that can help the sailor, encourage him, protect him

Indeed, when on the threshold of the vast Maison de Famille, one reads in large gold letters "Œuvres de Mer", it seems that there, in this family home, one must find everything that can help the sailor, encourage him, protect him, safeguard him, and above all raise him, so that he remains or becomes this tireless worker of the open sea, this bold worker whom nothing makes weaken and whose household far away over there on some cliff in Brittany or Normandy, impatiently awaits daily bread.

The people of Saint-Pierre, wise people who do not waste themselves in dithyrambic phrases, designate the Maison de Famille by this simple word "l'Œuvre", and when the groups of cod fishermen, shod in their heavy boots, wake up the silent streets to come to us, one hears whispers from all sides: "These are the people of France who go to l'Œuvre". Read; "They go home and they will find everything they need there." (...)

With these compact groups of cabin boys, gravel boys, bankers and long-haul passengers that the struggle for life has thrown



Fishermen reading or writing their letters at the Family House.

onto our arid, icy and foggy island and who, from morning to night, follow one another there, let us also enter the large vestibule covered with photographs of blue-collar workers, former members of the Work, anti-alcohol posters and others. On one of them, we read: "What you will find here." It is as informative as can be and will serve as our guide.

Harmless syrups, rather than the horrible alcohol that degrades

You are in the square and you have a guide. This is how you go straight to the counter of the large correspondence room. You will find everything you need to write there, you will receive all your letters there with newspapers from France and your little country, illustrated magazines, books, various games. You will only have to return them when you are tired of playing or reading.

You will also find, right next door, a refreshment bar where

Normandy cider will remind you of the land, you will find harmless syrups there, making you forget the horrible alcohol that stupefies and degrades! This refreshment bar where the crowd rushes has sold 4,000 liters of apple juice, a quantity of good cups of coffee and chocolate and succulent cakes that young people are so fond of, it has thus kept away from the counters where adulterated aperitifs and digestives abound, all youth, the future.

After having refreshed and balasted ourselves, we can continue the tour of the store, which, at moderate prices, is able to rig, from head to toe, any brave sailor or in whom the concern for the purse and the economy still remains. (...)

The quiet and restful shelter

Let us then go up to the first floor, where a large well-appointed room, equipped with a nice billiard table, a library, and vari-



2 -- Dans la cour de la Maison de Famille des Œuvres de Mer à St.-PIERRE-MIQUELON

Cliché des Œuvres de Mer, 18, Rue de La Trémoille, Paris

In the courtyard of the Maison de Famille des Œuvres de Mer in Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon.

gymnastics apparatus, a football field, a giant step, outdoor games so sought after by our zealous sportsmen.

“Never was a work more fruitful...”

And now, we can leave “the Work”, this home that French Charity has built on the misty island beaten by storms and whose benevolent action, we hope, the charitable and moralizing action will only increase. Never has a house of refuge, of aid to sailors, been better in its place. (...) Never has a work been more fruitful than this Family House with its charitable traditions, its benevolent welcome and its anti-alcohol campaigns pursued without respite. Young and old sea dogs frequent it with eagerness; they find there everything necessary to live and fight, as is fitting for men who are aware of their duties!

Statistics are fashionable and we admit that we have not thought about them at all, in the presence of the crowds of sailors who presented themselves every day. Whoever wants to come, during the hours of rest, provided that there is not too much “wind in the sails” and that the good man who presents himself is in “legal condition”, that is to say that he is not on duty. So it is all the sailors landing at Saint-Pierre who come to the Maison de Famille. They return with happy hearts, having escaped a thousand dangerous temptations, and full of courage to continue the hard work of the next day...

Saint-Pierre,
October 8, 1921

ous games awaits the skippers and captains. This place is specially reserved for them, it is the quiet place for their meetings.

A few more steps and we are in the printing room, where the *Terre-Neuva* is published every month, a popular newspaper that any self-respecting fisherman will ask for three times rather than once: one copy for himself, one for his shipmates and the other to send, in his letter, to his family.

Further on, in a large dormitory, about thirty beds await the convalescents, the shipwrecked crews or those having to leave their ship, for whatever reason. They find the quiet and restful shelter there.

Cinema, sports and chapel

And here we are finally in the large theater room which also serves - separated by an ingenious partition - as a chapel. This room is always full, especially on Sundays, when the cinema projects its most varied films on the screen, while a large raffle closes these interesting and entertaining evenings; after that in the pious and pretty little chapel the religious services have taken place, which every good Breton and Norman never misses.

Let's not forget to cross the large courtyard that runs along the inside of the shelter. We will see a most practical washhouse there with abundant and hot water, it is most frequented by lovers of white washing. Then here is a large portico with multiple

The call to holiness of Fr. d'Alzon

Serving God in the smallest things, transforming the world, loving the Church, becoming a missionary of the Gospel: so many traits of holiness according to our Founder (*)

Father d'Alzon
and Mr
Germer-Durand,
surrounded by
students from
the College of
Nîmes, circa
1852-1853
(photo Disdéri).



The whole challenge of a postulation consists in connecting the holiness of Fr. d'Alzon to what we live and to our own call to holiness. Defending the cause of the beatification of the founder of the Augustinians of the Assumption and then of the Oblates means wanting to share his model of holiness.

Believing that holiness is contagious

To Fr. d'Alzon, the Lord gave an extraordinary grace: that of believing that holiness was contagious. Indeed, Fr. d'Alzon was not a man only attentive to his own holiness. He was also passionate about the holiness of others. And he let himself be guided by this conviction. He made it the goal of his life: *"God still wants saints and we must prepare some for him."* (ES p. 470)

According to him, we must not only cultivate the desire for holiness, but holiness itself. *"Let us not remain vulgar men,"* he

said. *"Graces are treasures, for which we must give an account... The goal for which God gives us his graces is our sanctification... If we are not saints after that, we are monsters."* (ES p. 863)

For D'Alzon, holiness consisted essentially in loving Christ Jesus and loving all that Jesus loved most during his life: the Church and the Virgin Mary. Our Founder thought that everyone could love in turn through this "triple love": in a college among teachers and with students; on a pilgrimage; in the missions, whether in the Orient or in Australia where he sent his first religious men and women; in the commitment to the common good in society... and of course in the community of Assumptionist brothers or Oblate sisters. With Fr. d'Alzon, holiness is not a complicated or inaccessible thing. It is enough to let the love of God reign within oneself, then to transform this love into concrete acts.

The Church's procedure for beatification or canonization

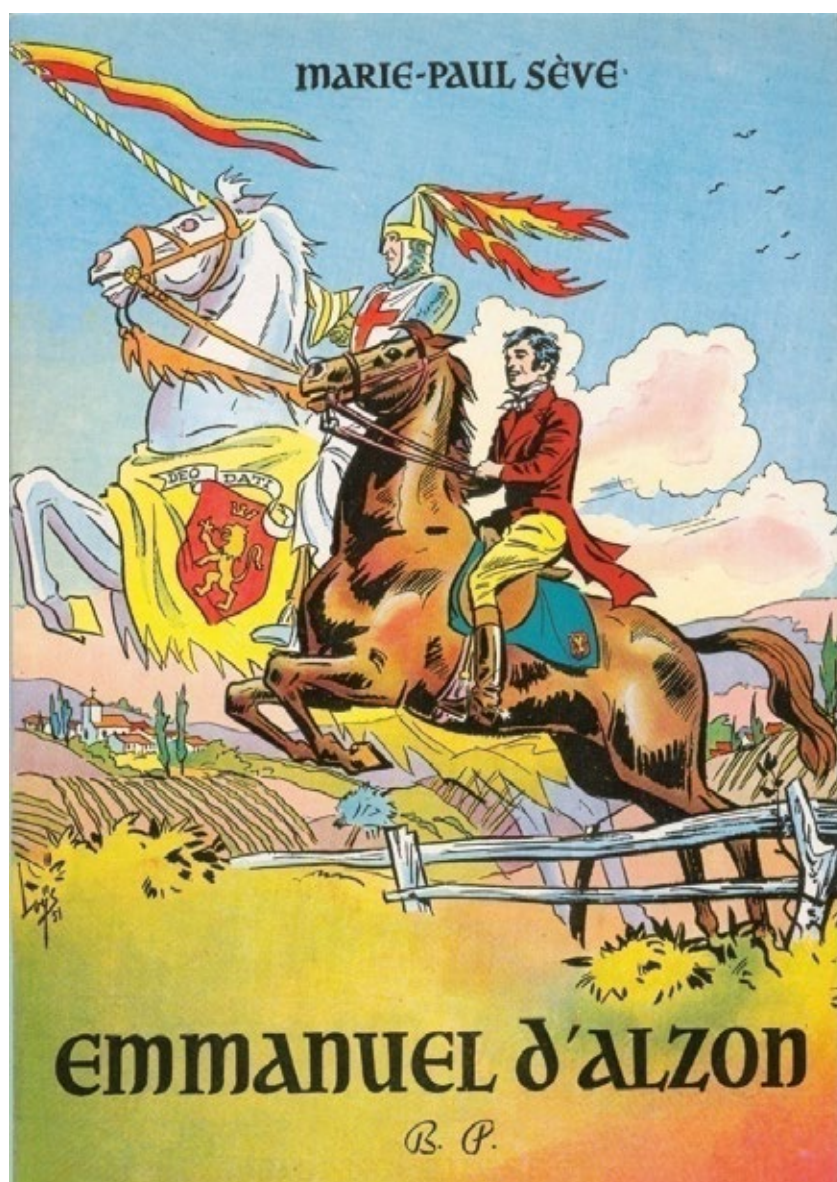
Before proposing a model of holiness, the Church is very cautious. It engages in a long and meticulous procedure. First, it is the diocese that instructs the "cause" of a candidate for sainthood. It collects the accounts of direct witnesses (personal testimonies), or what the person has written, or what has been written about him or her (documentary testimonies).

This "diocesan trial" describes as precisely as possible what the person has experienced or achieved during his or her life: he or she founded a religious community, he or she has launched a work to educate young people, to care for the sick, to help the most vulnerable... The saint has done good in the Church and in the service of his or her contemporaries. On his or her scale, he or she has transformed the Church and the society of his or her time. Because the purpose of holiness is to change the world.

A time for man and a time for God

The holiness or heroic nature of Christian virtues refers to the time of History: the time of our human lives and that of our watches (in Greek: *chronos*). On the other hand, the miracle required for beatification or canonization introduces us straight away into the mystery of God, who intervenes in our lives at the moment (*kairos*) he deems appropriate. The miracle is as God wants and also when he wants. And this can sometimes wait several centuries.

For example, the canonization of Blessed César de Bus, priest and founder of the Congregation of the Fathers of Christian Doctrine and the Ursulines (1544-1607), was celebrated in Rome on May 15, 2022, the same day as Charles de Foucauld. However, César de Bus



Hero or saint? Cover of the comic strip *Le lion des Cévennes*, by P. André (religious name: Marie-Paul) Sève, published in 1950 by Bonne Presse.

lived in the 16th century. And he had been "venerable" since 1821! However, his first recognized miracle dates back much later (1911). And he was finally beatified only in 1974, by Pope Paul VI. His second miracle, the healing of a young man suffering from a cerebral hemorrhage in 2016, was very quickly recognized by Pope Francis in 2020, who canonized him two years later.

Evidence of a "continuous love"

The heroic nature of virtues allows a "servant of God" to be declared "venerable". But in fact, ho-

liness has little to do with heroism: let us not confuse holiness and heroism. Moreover, a saint is rarely a hero. Heroism is an act of surpassing oneself that occurs in exceptional circumstances. The "hero of the day" occasionally performs an extraordinary feat: on a battlefield or in the field of sport (including the Olympic Games...), he saves a person at the scene of an accident or disaster... Conversely, holiness touches our daily lives and is experienced over time. The writer Charles Péguy said that holiness consisted of doing very ordinary things extraordinarily. For example: ►

preparing a course, organizing a meeting, a prayer or a catechesis session, providing the service that has been asked of me, visiting a friend or a sick person, celebrating a birthday... All sorts of banal and everyday things that the Lord calls us to do with love, for him and with him; and therefore in an “extraordinary” way.

The Jesuit François Varillon illustrated this point by contemplating the holiness of Jesus himself: “Out of 33 years of life, Jesus spent 30 doing nothing, except doing what he had to do from morning to night.” For Father de Lubac, another Jesuit, holiness is the Christian virtues but practiced in high doses and in the daily life of our lives. We know these virtues: charity, faith, hope, but sometimes it is also courage, trust, patience, mercy, temperance or fidelity...

Little people, little stories, little occasions...

Father Sertillanges, a Dominican, said that “a canonization process [...] is a parade of little people who tell little stories”. Regarding Father d’Alzon, Father Emmanuel Bailly left us the example of this testimony of a “good old woman, a long-time reseller” at the Nîmes market:

“Ah! that one, he looked at the poor. We have lost our best friend. He never refused. He was cheated worse than the good Lord. But it doesn’t matter, there was no heart like him, nor a head either. What a head! With that, he was not proud. Ah, how good he was, how charitable he was. When we performed plays at his young people’s houses, he asked us for our animals, donkeys, dogs, which we could not refuse him. When I have a sorrow, a grief, I pray to him, I say a rosary while thinking of him, and my good Mr. d’Alzon helps me and protects me.” (1) »



Engraving from 1896 based on the painting ‘L’enfant à l’oiseau’ by Marie-Pauline Lebrun (1824).

Holiness is made up of unforeseen events, small occasions that come back at any time:

- accepting to be disturbed on the phone or at the door,
- welcoming someone at the worst possible time,
- doing a favor to the person we dislike the most...

It is in these repetitive and very banal occasions in our lives that holiness is at stake. It is at stake against our pride, our laziness, our desire for tranquility, our mood swings that are more or less good depending on the day.

No time to rest!

Holiness is lived like this, in fidelity to small things. Very often, we would like to do great things for the Lord, even if it means following our own tastes and habits in the details of our lives. But holiness is not precisely that. It is a life lived with God, for him and with him in “the grace of a true love that is maintained”. Saint Thomas speaks of holiness as a “dependence.” It is not a one-off feat but an “act of continuous charity.”

Father d’Alzon noted this in his Spiritual Writings: we must let



The sanctuary of the Consolata in Turin (Italy), where Fr d'Alzon took a vow of priestly humility in 1834.

God reign over us, in everything, and live "the most absolute dependence of our whole being, of all our faculties on the intimate action of God" (ES p. 152).

The holiness of Father d'Alzon: what profile, concretely?

Emmanuel d'Alzon was a particularly brilliant man. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts on August 8, 1828 (that year, fewer than 1,000 candidates were accepted in France!). He then enrolled in the first year of law at the Faculty of Paris. But he was not a man to be

content with just taking courses at the university, as prestigious as it was.

He could have joined the army like some of his ancestors and joined the great school of Saint-Cyr, but his parents dissuaded him. He could have sought a political career and become a member of the Chamber like his father... But in the end, he chose Christ and he would not do it half-heartedly. He chose Christ because he understood that he alone could give his life its true nobility. And because he wanted Christ, and he alone, to occupy first place in his life.

The first place for Christ through the education of the young

Father d'Alzon had a passion for the education of the youngest. When he spoke to them, he insisted on the feeling of duty, on loyalty and self-giving to the point of disinterest. He thus attracted to him men and women with generous hearts, frank, ready to give themselves without counting. In particular, lay teachers as brilliant as they were generous, Monnier or Germer Durand, both agrégés.

For our Founder, self-giving was not a moral duty, but a principle that came to him from faith. The great choices of our lives are not deduced from the gaze of others, nor even from the obligations of conscience or discipline. Everything must be decided before God and for God, the only master. D'Alzon wants a free youth, and free from everything ... except to follow the Lord. Because he is the only Master.

Belonging to the French aristocracy, D'Alzon assimilated all of its codes but also all its values. Throughout his life, he knew how to combine the nobility of his origins with the grandeur of his feelings. He often repeated to his religious: *"Let us be distinguished because the Church is the homeland of great souls and noble hearts."* (2) Let us be different after all... If there is a college like yours, it is because it is different, it is to be different. ►

Transforming the world through study and prayer

Emmanuel d'Alzon had a love of work and especially intellectual work. At the age of 20, he had resolved never to waste a single minute, in order to prioritize study, to preserve time for reading and correspondence. He only rested when he was sick. It was his way of living his vow of poverty, through work, but also of living his ministry as a priest and educator.

For him, the Church is a gathering of intelligences that are nourished by the truth: *"There is therefore a serious obligation for us to study," he insists. We must study the natural truths and especially the supernatural ones that were brought to the world by Jesus Christ.* » (ES p. 862)

Father d'Alzon also left us his taste for liturgy and prayer. He demanded that the Assumptionist religious recite the office together. And his prayer was as broad as his heart. It asked for his own conversion, but also that of others: the fidelity of the Church, the return to God of the institutions of his time and of society as a whole.

A faithful and sometimes painful love for the Church

His love for the Church was always clear-sighted, but sometimes also painful because Father d'Alzon was disappointed by the Church on several occasions.

Living in Rome – he was then training for his ordination – he attended religious services *"among people who considered them spectacles"*. He also deplored the presence of schemers and ambitious people among the clergy. Hence the vow of priestly humility that he made before the miraculous image of the Blessed Virgin at the Consolata sanctuary in Turin on June 23, 1834.

He was especially affected by the Lamennais affair. In August 1834, D'Alzon wrote to his father about his conviction: *"I could say that I submitted, but with a roar."*

» In December of the same year, following a denunciation, he was forced to sign a form adhering to the encyclical *Singulari vos* condemning Lamennais' errors. This document was immediately brought to Pope Gregory XVI. D'Alzon's simple comment: *"It is rather boring to attract the pope's satisfaction in such a way."*

Developing a missionary spirit

For D'Alzon, holiness is necessarily missionary – and contagious! He recognizes a missionary spirit through charity and self-giving to the point of disinterestedness: *"Let us be less concerned with ourselves and a little more with souls,"* he exhorts. And he adds: *"By loving ourselves too much, we no longer find time to take care of others."*

His model of missionary is Saint Paul, whom in the Spiritual Writings he always calls "the Apostle." There is no doubt that he recognizes himself in the evangelist of the Gentiles: the elitist character of his education, his fiery temperament and above all his missionary zeal as soon as Paul understood that Christ had come for all and not just for an elite. For D'Alzon, love for others is inseparable from his love for Christ and for the Church:

"No, I became a priest, at least it seems to me, for others as much as for myself. It was the desire to glorify God, by bringing to Him as many lost people as I could: it was the desire to pour a little balm on the wounds of this poor humanity, which pushed me to the altar where I thought I had found a remedy. But I only went up to the altar on the condition of coming down to mingle with society and

haveover it the little influence of which I am capable." (3)

His personality and his path of conversion

A man of natural authority, particularly favored by his social background, recognized by his peers in the aristocracy and naturally admitted among the elite of the 19th century, Emmanuel d'Alzon nevertheless welcomed brothers and sisters, religious and lay, from very different social backgrounds. He opened up to men and women of diverse origins and put himself concretely at the service of each and every one.

A man who had received a rather classical education, he innovated in educational methods. He analyzed his era and perceived all its novelty to the point of understanding its aspirations and needs. The college of Nîmes became like a laboratory for him. He also allowed novelty to emerge in the communities, sometimes located far from Nîmes: in Paris for the press, in Lourdes for pilgrimages, in the Châteaux for the alumnats. He opened himself up to what Father Pernet (with the Little Sisters of the Assumption), Father Vincent de Paul Bailly (with *Le Pèlerin* and *La Croix*) and other Assumptionists proposed and undertook.

Promised to personal success, he does not let himself be defeated by any difficulty or failure. He perseveres in his intuitions even when they are thwarted, postponed or contested, taking care to adjust his plans to the will of God. The Bible would say of him that he was "a just man". His justice is expressed above all in his passion for unity in a world and a deeply divided 19th century.

Prayer through the intercession of Fr. D'Alzon

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have called Emmanuel
d'Alzon at the service of your
Kingdom.

In order that the Church
recognizes the holiness of
Father d'Alzon, grant us
through his intercession the
grace that we are requesting...
You who live and reign forever
and ever. Amen.

A man of the Eucharist, for himself and for the congregations that he founded or that the first Assumptionists would found: Father Etienne Pernet for the Little Sisters of the Assumption, Father François Picard for the Orantes of the Assumption.

A capacity to question oneself

The revolution of 1848 made P. d'Alzon realize that faith was in sharp decline among the working masses (the workers). He was then concerned about the growing inequalities between the rich and the poor. At the college in Nîmes, during the prize-giving, he returned to it several times (1851, 1858 and 1861), wondering about the catastrophic consequences of a conflict that would end up opposing "those who lack the necessities" and "those who have more".

His interventions in favor of the working classes are undertaken in the name of the Gospel. For Father d'Alzon, all charitable work is first and foremost an apostolic work:

"Material alms must go with the spiritual alms of the proclama-



Project for a souvenir image for the 50th anniversary of the House of Nîmes.

tion of the faith." Attentive to the cry of the poor of Nîmes, he had the idea of "the work of newspapers." This consisted of placing free subscriptions and posters in places frequented by the disinherited populations, particularly at the exit of factories. He also encouraged the creation of popular libraries in prisons, hospitals, barracks or factory workshops. Thus, even before the Bonne Presse, there was what was called at the time "good works." But without this concern for the

smallest, there would probably not have been the Bonne Presse, which has become Bayard today.

P. Vincent LECLERCQ
Postulator General

(*) This article mainly takes up a conference given in June 2024 for the Oblates of the Assumption at the Institution of the Sacred Heart of La Ville du Bois (Essonne, France).

¹ S. Vailhé, *Vie du Père d'Alzon*, T.1, p. 112

² Ibid.

³ Lettres of Fr. d'Alzon, t. A, p. 778 to d'Esgrigny, January 18, 1835. In Jean-Paul Périer-Muzet, *Nouvelle chronologie du Père d'Alzon, de sa vie, de ses écrits et de ses principales biographies*, Cahiers du Bicentenaire D'Alzon 2010 no. 10, p. 60.

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... and the help of DeepL

Model and laid out

Loredana Giannetti

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- It is good that he is known!

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Our deceased brothers



† Fr. **KOMBI NGWESE Floribert**, of the Goma community---Our Lady of Peace (African Province), died on July 28, 2024, in Goma (DR-Congo). His funeral was celebrated on July 31, in the church of Kitatumba, followed by burial in the cemetery of Mahamba, in Butembo. He was 65.

† Br. **Antoine MISS**, of the Albertville community (Province of Europe), died on September 28, 2024, in Albertville (France). His funeral was celebrated on October 4, in the chapel of Our Lady of Vignes, followed by burial in the cemetery of Chiriach. He was 86.

† Father **Cornie NELISSEN**, of the Leuven community (Province of Europe), died on October 10, 2024 in Leuven (Belgium). His funeral was celebrated on October 15 in the Sint-Geertrui church in Leuven, followed by burial in the Abdij van Park cemetery in Heverlee. He was 85 years old.