

AA News of the Assumption



- YOUTH JUBILEE IN FLORENCE AND ROME
- COLLEGES IN BELGIUM
- THE HUMILITY OF FR. D'ALZON

Agenda

Plenary General Council

n° 5 : **December 1-10** (Rome).

Ordinary General Council

n° 17 : **November 3-7**.

n° 18 : **December 11-12**.

n° 19 : **February 23-27, 2026**.

Provincial Secretaries Sessions :

October 20-24.

Fr. Ngoa

- **September 29-October 20** : Kinshasa (canonical visit).
- **November 13** : With the General Superiors of the Assumption (Paris).
- **November 26-28** : Union of Superiors General.
- **December 25-January 31** : Philippines and Korea (canonical visit).

Fr. Benoît

- **October 1-6** : Jubilee of Elche (Spain).

Fr. João

- **October 8-12** : Jubilee of consecrated life.
- **January 23-25** : JPIC inter-Assumption (Paris).

Fr. Thierry

- **October 6-30** : Madagascar.
- **December 29-February 20** : Kivu.

Fr. Étienne

- **September 29-October 20** : Kinshasa (canonical visit).

On the cover

On Monday, September 1, the religious order of Saint-Augustine (OSA) opened their 188th General Chapter in Rome with a Eucharistic celebration in the basilica of the same name. Pope Leo XIV, who was their Prior General from 2001 to 2013, presided over this celebration, to which the Superiors General of the institutes affiliated with the OSA were also invited—including the Augustinians of the Assumption! That is how Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba had the honor and the joy to be presented to the new bishop of Rome, himself being very happy to make the acquaintance of Fr. Ngoa. (photo Osservatore Romano).

Fr. Fabien Lejeusne becomes Bishop of Namur



(photo Lucie Morel - La Croix)

Kinshasa, October 6, 2025.

To the Assumption family

Dear brothers and sisters,

On Monday, October 6, Pope Leo XIV appointed Fr. Fabien Lejeusne, until now Superior of our Province of Europe, as Bishop of Namur (Belgium). This is news of the utmost importance, not only for our brother Fabien and for the diocese entrusted to him, but also for our entire religious family.

Barely two years after the appointment of Fr. Benoît Gschwind to the see of Pamiers (France), another leading European Assumptionist has been called to the episcopate. Like you, I welcome this news with great joy, giving thanks to God for the trust that such a choice on the part of the Church shows in one of our brothers and, through him, in our entire Congregation. And with you, I pray for Fr. Fabien as he begins his new ministry, that God's grace may never fail him.

Born in Belgium in 1973, Fabien was baptized at the age of 18 and took his first vows seven years later. Ordained a priest in 2003, he devoted much of his ministry to youth ministry (school chaplaincy and scouting). From 2012 to 2017, he was director of the National Pilgrimage to Lourdes, before becoming Provincial Vicar of Europe. He had been Provincial since July 15, 2023.

Fr. Iulian Dancă, Provincial Vicar, will lead the Province of Europe until a new Provincial is appointed.

From the Vicariate of Kinshasa, where I am currently conducting my canonical visit, I assure you, my dear brothers and sisters, of my faithful devotion.

Fr. NGOA Ya Tshihemba
Superior General

The Spiritual Heirs of an Incomparable Man



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

Two successive editorials on the same theme? It's worth it. We must seize the moment. My first meeting with Pope Leo in the Basilica of Saint Augustine in Rome, where the remains of Saint Monica rest, is more than unforgettable. It was just across the street from this basilica (only 25 meters away) that our founder, Father Emmanuel d'Alzon, was ordained a priest on December 26, 1834, in the private oratory of Cardinal Odescalchi.

I actually spent three almost successive days in this place: August 27, for the feast of Saint Monica, August 28 for the feast of Saint Augustine, and September 1 for the opening Mass of the General Chapter of the Order of Saint Augustine. The invitation from the Prior General of the Order did not stop at the Eucharistic celebration. I was also invited, on September 1st, to share a meal with the Holy Father Leo. What a grace! At the end of Mass, before the meal, there was the *bacciamano* (literally, in Italian: the kiss on the hand—in fact, the opportunity to shake the Pope's hand). The cover photo of this issue clearly shows that this moment was pleasant, very pleasant indeed. The Prior General of the Order introduced me to the Pope, saying: "This is the Superior General of our Assumptionist brothers." The joy of authentic fraternity was expressed through shared smiles. A meeting with strong symbolic significance.

The place, the circumstances, and the people around me made me recall with joy the words of Saint John Paul II to the participants in the Symposium of the Augustinian Family, which I mentioned in my previous editorial (AA Info No. 9). Yes, we must be proud: we are the spiritual heirs of an incomparable man. The best way to honor the memory of this incomparable man is to "do everything with humility." He was thus making a suggestion that he hoped would be useful to his brothers who were beginning a general chapter. He told them in his homily (1): "Listening, humility, and unity: these are three pieces of advice, I hope useful, that the liturgy offers you for these coming days."

The desire for unity is within each of us. We must continue to strive toward it and achieve it. This is why Pope Leo exhorted the capitulars: "Let unity be an indispensable element of your efforts, but not only that: let it also be the criterion for verifying your action and your collaboration, for what unites comes from Him, but what divides cannot come from Him."

My dear brothers, Pope Leo spoke well of listening, humility, and unity in his homily. I wanted to see him live out these recommendations, even if only for a few minutes. The opportunity arose during the meal. I then understood why we had been forbidden to take photos during that moment, because Leo XIV had shown himself as he is: humble. He had dropped his papal mask to remain himself among his people. What a joy to live with such authentic people. At the beginning of this community year, many of you have already celebrated your local chapters. I hope that everything took place in a spirit of mutual listening, in humility, and with a single objective: the pursuit of unity. If you haven't done so yet, then this is the criterion to set for yourself when the time comes. It's not just the Pope who asks this of us: it's Augustinian and it's evangelical. Good luck to all for this new community year. There have been changes in communities, brothers who have received new responsibilities, and certainly there will be new projects in community life and in the various apostolates. In his Angelus on Sunday, August 24, 2025, the Pope said: "God does not appreciate sacrifices and prayers if they do not lead us to live love for our brothers and to practice justice." The best path that can lead us to this is mutual listening, in humility and the search for unity. May our communities be the first places where we experience this truth.

Homely of Pope Leo XIV at the Basilica of Saint Augustine on Champs de Mars (Rome), Monday September 1st 2025 during the opening Mass of the 188th General Chapter of the Order of Saint Augustine.

Calls, nominations, agreements...

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

■ TO PERPETUAL PROFESSION

Joseph BUI VAN Tien
(Europe) (09/09/2025)

Antoine DAU DINH Thang
(Europe) (09/09/2025)

Dominique LUONG THANH Cong
(Europe) (09/09/2025)

Pierre MAI CONG Anh
(Europe) (09/09/2025)

François-Xavier NGUYEN DINH Dung
(Europe) (09/10/2025)

Joseph NGUYEN DUC Huy
(Europe) (09/10/2025)

Pierre NGUYEN NGOC An
(Europe) (09/10/2025)

Antoine NGUYEN VAN Phuc
(Europe) (09/10/2025)

Joseph NGUYEN VAN Tien
(Europe) (09/10/2025)

Patrick RAKOTONIRINA
(Europe) (09/10/2025)

Aloysius MUSOKE
(North America) (09/10/2025)

■ TO ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE

Pascal GABIAM
(Europe) (09/11/2025)

Paul HOANG KIM Khoa
(Europe) (09/11/2025)

Pierre TRAN VAN Thanh
(Europe) (09/11/2025)

Pierre VU TIEN Dat
(Europe) (09/11/2025)

■ TO PRIESTLY ORDINATION

Yan PIRES DA SILVA
(Brazil) (06/12/2025)

Dênis Geraldo MARTINS RAMALHO
(Brazil) (06/12/2025)

François-Xavier CAO MINH Toan
(Europe) (09/09/2025)

Jean-Baptiste NGUYEN VAN The
(Europe) (09/10/2025)

Maurice Billy HONZOUNNON
(Europe) (09/11/2025)

■ EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY VOWS

Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, Superior General, with the consent of his Ordinary General Council, has agreed to an extension of temporary vows, for one year, to the following brothers:

- **Patrick RAKOTONIRINA**, from the Province of Europe ;
- **Pierre MAI CONG Ang**, from the Province of Europe;
- **Antoine NGUYEN VAN Phuc**, from the Province of Europe.

A NEW YEAR AT "DUE PINI"

It was noted in a previous edition of *AA Info* that the General House would see several changes beginning in autumn 2025. The permanent departure of the Oblates of the Assumption, saw their home being utilized (but not their service) by the International Novitiate of the Ursulines. As for the Assumptionists:

- two religious have been lost: Br. Gilles Allard, a Canadian, has been named to the community of Albertville (France) after spending almost 20 years at Due Pini; and Fr. Dominique Ngyen Van Tho, returned to Vietnam;
- it has already been noted that Frs. Julien Razanajatovo (Madagascar) and Freddy Lukala Buru (Africa), have come for specialized studies;
- we will also be welcoming two additional religious at the beginning of 2026, one for studies, and the other for service to the house and to the congregation.

The community numbers 13 religious as of the beginning of the academic year, but it will expand to 15 in February. The photo depicts those present since the local Chapter.

From left to right: (1st row) Bro. Paul Trinh Ngoc Lâm (Vietnam), Fr. Freddy Lukala Buru (Africa---DR Congo), Fr. Julien Razanajatovo (Madagascar), Fr. Ignace Akoule Aïssah (Togo), Fr. Zéphyrin Kasereka Mumbere (DR Congo) and Fr. Alex Castro (Philippines---USA).

(2nd row) Fr. Celeste Pianezze (invited Italian), Fr. Vincent Leclercq (France), Fr. Thierry Kambale Kahongya (DR Congo), Very Rev. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba (DR Congo), Fr. Etienne Ratalata Rafanambinantsoa (Madagascar), Fr. João Gomes da Silva (Brazil), Fr. Michel Kubler (France), and Fr. Benoît Bigard (France).



Youth on a pilgrimage of hope with the Assumption

The Jubilee of Youth, organized in Rome in the summer of 2025,



Pope Leo XIV at the grand celebration in Tor Vergata on August 3.

For several days last August, hundreds of youth, accompanied by religious brothers and sisters of the Assumption, lived a unique spiritual experience at the crossroads of faith, fraternity, and mission.

Daniel, a youth from El Paso (USA, Texas), said:

"My experience in Rome was very significant. I was exposed to the most complete expressions of the Christian faith. There were magnificent churches with moments of tranquil prayer, passing congested streets

going through the city, that were deeply imbued with Jesus Christ."

This event, which took place in the jubilee year and was called by Pope Francis and continued with Leo XIV, had as its theme: "Entrenched in Christ, bearer of hope." It resembled a cultural mosaic coming from the four corners of the world: France, Belgium, United Kingdom, Philippines, Japan, Mexico, the United States, and many other countries. It was a true universal fraternity, in the spirit of the Gospel.

In Florence, a stopover of beauty and prayer

Before rallying in Rome, the youth were welcomed in Florence by the Assumptionist brothers from the parish of San Donato and the community of Borgo Pinti, and also by the Oblates of the Assumption living on the same street. The visit began with an immersion in the spiritual and cultural richness of the Tuscan city.

The Eucharistic celebrations at the cathedral and at the church of Santa Croce profoundly touched the participants. Each morning a “red thread” (itinerary) outlined the day, and each night there was a fraternal time for sharing in joy, discovery and questioning. Adoration took place in the garden of the Florentine community which will be remembered for a long time.

Caroline, a young Parisian, recalls:

« Being able to chat, see, and even become friends with religious gave me a better understanding of many things, of finding answers to my many questions, and of elevating my faith to a degree much higher than I could have imagined. »

Rome, an encounter of the universal Church

Upon their arrival in Rome, the youth quickly understood that the pilgrimage took on a new dimension. The logistical challenges---sometimes complex---were overcome due to fraternity and reciprocal welcome.

Élodie, from Montpellier, quickly forgot the huge logistical obstacles from the beginning:



Young pilgrims from the Assumption welcomed in Florence.

« This didn't stop us. On the contrary: we had an exceptional night getting to know one another and creating connections in the process. We always had smiles on our faces, because God is great and he was saving something more special for the rest of the time. The proof: the next day the main house of the Assumption welcomed us in the center of Rome. No words can express how grateful we were to them. »

We discovered major basilicas---Saint John the Lateran, Saint Mary-Major, Saint Paul outside the walls and Saint Peter's---which nourished the souls of pilgrims. Each place we visited made us recall that the Church is one universal house, open to everyone.

Times filled with faith and communion

Among the most significant moments, the youth mentioned:

The **opening Mass**, enhanced by the unexpected visit of Pope

Leo XIV, who surprised the pilgrims with these words: “I see you here, coming from many nations, bearers of different languages, cultures, and history. Yet, you are one people, because you belong to Christ. Don't ever forget: your differences are not walls but bridges.”

The vocational evening was facilitated by the Father General of the Assumptionists, who gave testimony of the joy of the religious life and of the call to serve Christ. It was a fraternal time with Fr. Ngoa, who encouraged the youth to find the beauty and joy of their vocations. This was followed by a Eucharistic celebration in the brothers' garden and an evening of dancing, singing, and snacking.

The day of mercy, was marked by a directive from Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle and with a solemn Eucharistic celebration at San Pio V, the parish of the General House. This was followed by a time of fellowship. The Philippine cardinal, the pro-prefect for the Dicastery for Evangelization, gave us the



Meeting with the Superior General and the community of Due Pini in Rome.

opportunity to reflect in depth on the mercy of God, with his biblical references and personal anecdotes that captivated the youth.

A vigil of fire and hope at Tor Vergata

The culminating point of the Jubilee was, without a doubt, the night of prayer at Tor Vergata on the outskirts of Rome, followed by the closing Mass the next morning. Nearly one million youth, united by the same hope, were assembled.

Kylian, a young Frenchman, shared:

« *The evening of adoration touched me in a unique manner by giving me the opportunity to pray and reflect in a special way. The night at Tor Vergata, prior to the Pope's Mass, was an incredible time. To share this moment with so many youth in a spirit of fraternity and joy is something that I will never forget.* »

Pope Leo XIV, in a moving homily, challenged us with a clear message: *"To be free, we must start from a stable foundation, the rock that sustains our steps. This rock is a love that precedes us, surprises us, and surpasses us infinitely: the love of God. To live without faith, without a heritage to defend, without struggles for the Truth, that is not living, it is simply to gain a life. Dear young people, don't be spectators of history, but actors in the fraternity of justice and peace."*

These words resonated like a true call to mission.

Pierre, a participant from Nîmes, synthesized the experience:

« *There is only one word to describe the Jubilee: Joy! I remember all the exchanges that we had with people from all over the world, and that began at our arrival in Florence. Laughs shared, prayers for one another (and that continues even now), meetings with those from the other corner*

of the world, but also, with those close by. »

A pilgrimage that opens pathways

The jubilee of youth with the Assumption family was much more than a gathering. It constituted a pilgrimage of faith and hope, a real school of fraternity and a lively experience of the Universal Church.

As Pope Leo XIV said: *"Jesus is our hope. Travel with him throughout your life and permit him to enlighten you. Don't worry about dreaming big dreams: God will dream with you."* Returning to their countries, the youth will hold in their hearts, the belief of having been called---in their community and in society---to be joyful witnesses of Christian hope.

Br. Romel BAUTISTA
(Paris – François 1er)

**Coordinator of the Assumptionist
Jubilee for Youth**

Middle Schools, a Great Belgian Story

Four very dynamic schools, in both French-speaking and Dutch-speaking Belgium, illustrate the noble tradition of Assumptionist education.

In Wallonia

To speak of Assumptionist education in French-speaking Belgium is to speak of several transitions.

The first is the story of a refuge. Due to the anticlerical laws of the Combes government at the end of the 19th century, a large number of religious institutes were expelled from France. Many sought refuge in Belgium. In 1900, the Assumptionists settled in Belgium, first in Taintignies, then in October in Bure. Finally, in 1902, Father Eustache Prévost traveled through the Charleroi region in search of a place to establish a community. In June 1903, he acquired Sart-les-Moines, where a community was established on October 3.

Whether in Bure or Sart-les-Moines, it was an alumnat, with the aim of training young men and awakening vocations. By 1903, three vocations had emerged in Sart-les-Moine. In 50 years, this priory provided more than 300 priests to the diocesan clergy or to various congregations, as the Assumptionists did not conceive of alumnats as centers of priestly preparation for internal use only. Bure contributed more modestly, also training a number of vocations.

The alumnat in Sart-les-Moines operated for half a century. Around 1953, partial expropria-



tions, due to the widening of the Charleroi-Brussels canal, and the proximity of a rapidly expanding factory, forced the Assumptionists to move to Gosselies where, 50 years later, it was once again the Drion du Chapois family who welcomed them.

Second transition: in 1960, the General Curia noted that *"diocesan recruitment is organized in such a way that we are likely to find only second-rate vocations."*(1) Rome did not directly address the issue of education, but highlighted the crisis among young people and, by extension,

recruitment. The alumnat model was running out of steam, as the post-war period saw changes in school laws that did not favor this type of education.

In 1966, Bure, with Father Richard Maas, who became director in 1964, moved towards openness to the world. The following year, it became the Collège d'Alzon, symbolizing its transformation from an establishment for religious vocations to a place welcoming all young people. In Gosselies, Father Georges Lafontaine, as early as the 1950s, perceived the change in society. In 1955, he transformed the alumnat into a collège, which required a great deal of work and effort. Within a decade, from 1955 to 1966, the alumnat model was no more. A

1) General Curia of the Assumptionists, session of 3-5 June 1960, Rome ACR, IR n 15, p.2



The French-speaking colleges of Bure (top) and Gosselies.

new model was in place: collèges.

From then on, education became more complex, but the desire was to preserve the educational values of the Assumption: family spirit, seriousness of studies, openness to the public, and high standards. One point remained complicated: how to be-with. In the alumnat model, Fathers and students lived together, prayed together, almost like a monastic community. In the logic of the collège, it was no longer a question of living together but of providing a service: an education according to the law. In the crisis that Belgium would go through, this question would be difficult.

The third transition would therefore mark the end of the Assumptionists' presence. Providing a service with the required teaching skills and qualifications was a choice that was not that of the provincial chapters of French-speaking Belgium. The Assump-

tionists will also step away from pedagogy to remain involved in the governance of the colleges, particularly on the board of directors. Far from being anecdotal, this presence allows the religious involved to observe the development of youth and pedagogical innovations.

A fourth transition begins today with the reform of the "common core." The aim, which expires on September 1, 2026, is to offer students an innovative pedagogical approach: common subjects and practical subjects, teaching in pairs of teachers, new school schedules, and a desire to push each student to the limit. It is not only a matter of integrating this reform, but even more so of integrating these new challenges.

To better navigate this educational transition, the Gosselies middle school will draw inspiration from Canada with "explicit pedagogy": educating students by giving them a common culture

and behaviors: behaving in class, asking questions, eating cleanly and healthily, living with and being with others... Without using fancy words, the challenges are anthropological.

Faced with these challenges, Assumptionist values and brands represent an opportunity. More than ever, they are present and reflected in the schools' projects and performance contracts. More than a distinction for individual schools, the family spirit, the seriousness of study, the grassroots nature, and the high standards for all allow them to be anchored in a tradition, to integrate the reform of the core curriculum, and to meet the challenges of new behaviors.

Throughout these four transitions, one constant is observed: Assumptionist educational values. And a question arises: how to be present and "be with"? A challenge to be anchored in an educational tradition by being at the forefront of 21st century pedagogy, with one hope: the dedication, competence and generosity of the directors, teachers and all the stakeholders in our colleges.

Fr. Philippe Berrached
(Paris - François 1er)

Key figures:

Bure: 380 students, 51 teachers.
Véronique Petit, principal
Gosselies: 969 students, 100 teachers.
Jérôme Tonda, principal.

• In Flanders:

On March 27, 2025, the heads of the four Assumptionist middle schools in Belgium met at the Collège d'Alzon in Bure. This meeting, led by Jef de Lombaerde in the presence of Fr. Vivien Dokoui, Provincial Assistant, served as an opportunity to reiterate the importance of education in the spirit of the Assumption. The middle school administrators expressed the wish for Assumptionists to speak to the 5th grade students. Currently, the connection with the Assumption is through the Organizing Authority (PO) of each school, to which Fr. Philippe Berrached and Fr. Duy Nguyen belong. Only the Zepperen school still has two religious living on site.

HASP-O-Zepperen: a school with a history

The Zepperen school, now called HASP-O-Zepperen, has existed since 1901. Father Émile Gauthier arrived in Sint-Truiden with a group of students from modest families to help them discover their religious vocation. With the help of benefactors, such as the Jadoul van Bernissem family, the school grew and moved to Zepperen in 1905, into a former monastery.

The school fell on hard times. In 1914, the Carthusians reclaimed their building, but the First World War delayed the process. In 1920, the Assumptionists finally purchased the site. The school then evolved: new programs in the 1970s, coeducation in 1983, and mergers with other schools in 1996 and 2018-2019.

Today, HASP-O-Zepperen welcomes approximately 450 students aged 12 to 18 and remains faithful to the values of the As-



The Dutch-speaking colleges of Zepperen (top) and Kapelle-op-den-Bos.

sumption: discipline, family spirit, and social commitment. In March 2025, a group of nine students and five chaperones undertook a solidarity trip to Madagascar, in partnership with the Collège Mgr-Michel-Canonne run by the Assumptionists in Ejeda.

Sint-Theresia College: A School in the Making

Sint-Theresia College was founded in 1929 as the Sint-Theresia Institute. It began as a minor seminary run by the Assumptionist Fathers. In 1956, it became a full-fledged college, and in 1976, a coeducational school. In 2020, a merger with the Sint-Godelieve Institute gave rise to Kobos, which offers comprehensive secondary education.

Today, Kobos welcomes over 1,150 students and has over 130 teachers. The school emphasizes dynamic learning, encouraging

each student to discover their talents. It aims to provide a safe environment that respects each student's beliefs and values.

A commission to strengthen Assumptionist education

Since 2025, an education commission, appointed by the Provincial, has been tasked with developing the spirit of the Assumption in our four schools in Belgium. Its role is to help educators transmit the values of the congregation and to foster collaboration between schools. This initiative aims to strengthen the Assumptionist identity and ensure the continuity of its educational mission.

Fr. Duy NGUYEN KHUONG (Leuven)

(based on articles published in ATLPE No. 46, April-June 2025)

Reimagining hospitality at the border

The El Paso community, created to welcome migrants arriving in the United States from Mexico, had to rethink its mission following restrictions imposed by the Trump administration.

Our mission in El Paso, Texas, began in 2020. The North American Province founded a shelter at St. Francis Xavier Parish because the migrants' dignity was threatened as they tried to come in to the United States to start new lives. Over these last five years, our shelter had become a *rifugio*, a place where one can find rest, hope, and renewal.

Shortly after my arrival in December of 2024, Fr. Peter Pre-court, one of the founders, reminded me: *"Mission is not 'ours.' It is God's work; we are participating in it."* This reminder helped me to weather the changes that would soon come to the border, changes that are still developing...

Shortly after the election of Donald Trump and the inauguration of the new administration in the US, we closed the shelter in El Paso. I still remember the week with our last group of guests. Despite the delicate situation they were all facing, they remained joyful, grateful to have been given a chance at a new life when so many of their family and friends were trapped in horrible situations.

With the closing of the shelter, we started looking for new ways to serve our migrant brothers and sisters. This disinterestedness and initiative, Fr. Peter reminded us, was part of heritage: when a mission changes, we don't

sit around and wait for new door to open. We look for the doors, or we create them ourselves. A few weeks later, we started to support La Casa Del Migrante in Juarez, a Mexican city across El Paso. La Casa is Juarez's largest migrant shelter: at its peak of operation, upwards of 1 000 people came through its doors, but numbers hovered around seventy when we started our collaboration.

Our mission consisted of helping the staff organize donations and then to help improve offices and infrastructure. We even restored the original chapel on the grounds (which had been converted to a dormitory) in preparation for the 35th Anniversary celebration of La Casa. Most importantly, however, were the relationships we've formed through this apostolate. As an example, Sister Betty Racko, a Daughter of Charity, accompanied us to Juarez and began her own informal "classes" for migrant children, seeking to keep them engaged and learning, even in this difficult situation.

The past months have brought more changes to our ministry at the border. Due to Mexico's own new policies regarding migrants, we have seen a steady decline in numbers at La Casa del Migrante. This decline made us end our regular partnership with La Casa at the end of August, though Fr. Peter does still make occasional visits. We are grateful for the many ways we could collaborate



and share life with the staff and guests at La Casa. Our service always focused on helping the staff and guests encounter God in new ways, even in the suffering and adversity they experience.

Our focus and prayer now shifts to reimagining hospitality to migrants at the border. They are present, though many are in hiding. We are encouraged in this discernment in that we are not alone in this desire to serve them: many organizations, both religious and secular, are passionate about answering this call. Our hope is that together we can show our migrant brothers and sisters that it is still possible to rediscover their dignity here in the US. The Kingdom of God is still being built within them. There is always hope!

Bro. Daniele CAGLIONI
(El Paso, USA)

The Relaunch Mission in Romania

The foundation of Iași, in the Romanian province of Moldavia, opens the Assumptionist apostolate to youth ministry in this country. Brother Antoine Nguyen Trung Nien, a member of this new community, testifies to this.



The community of Iași welcoming the Provincial Council of Europe.

My discovery of Romania dates back to June 2024, during the centenary of the Assumptionist presence in the country. From the moment I arrived in Mărgineni, I sensed a special atmosphere: a deeply rooted community, a living faith passed down from generation to generation, and a strong Assumptionist presence, despite the trials of time.

A particularly memorable moment was the centenary celebration. In a small church packed with parishioners and religious men and women, we gave thanks for a century of Assumptionist presence. Through the testimonies, I perceived the extent to which the Assumption had marked the lives of the inhabitants. Yet,

a painful reality was becoming clear: the imminent closure of this community. The emotion of the parishioners, saddened by the loss of this precious presence, touched me deeply. That day, I understood that mission is not only about the actions we perform, but also about how we embody the presence of Christ among others.

A New Beginning

After my studies, I was assigned to the community of Iași, Romania's second largest city and a major university center. Everything was to be discovered: a new community, a new language, a new culture. We are four brothers of different nationalities: two Romanians, a Nigerian, and me, a Vietnamese. This multicul-

turalism is a richness, but also a challenge: how to build a strong brotherhood with such diverse backgrounds and sensibilities?

The first few days were marked by a feeling of strangeness. On the street, conversations in Romanian completely escaped me. At Mass, I recognized the prayers, but they resonated differently in this language that was still unknown to me. I had to learn to listen differently, to absorb gestures, glances, silences. Little by little, I began to understand words, then sentences, until I was able to engage in conversations, sometimes hesitant, but always welcomed with kindness. What strikes me here is the place of faith in daily life. At the parish of Saint Anthony, it is common to see the faithful spontaneously stop in front of a statue to make the sign of the cross or enter the church for a few moments of silent prayer before resuming their day. The devotion to Saint Anthony is impressive: every Tuesday, the church is packed for the prayer in his honor.

Another striking aspect is the hospitality of the Romanians. During my visits, I am touched by their warm welcome. Despite the language barrier, they do everything possible to put me at ease, sharing a traditional meal with me and telling me, with gestures and smiles, about their story and their commitment to faith. Through these encounters, I discover a generous humanity that teaches me to welcome others without fear and with an open heart.

A Concrete Commitment

Assumption has always had a strong educational vocation, and this mission takes on its

full meaning here. We support a student residence where twelve young people, both Catholic and Orthodox, meet every week. These meetings are precious moments of exchange and sharing, where each person brings their own vision, experiences, and questions. They allow me to better understand these young people's desire to deepen their faith and live it concretely, while facing the challenges of university life. Education is, in my eyes, a true journey of faith. God acts through encounters, as Jesus said: *"Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* (Mt 18:20)

Our mission to French medical students is not limited to spiritual discussions. We are also there to support them in their daily concerns. We take the time to share and reflect together on how their faith can be a source of strength in times of uncertainty. This accompaniment reminds me that the mission is not only to teach, but above all to be a presence: to be there, to listen, to walk alongside others.

A mission to build every day

After several months in Iași, I realize how much this experience is transforming me. Each day brings its share of challenges and wonders. I am learning to live my faith in a new context, to listen, to adapt, and to trust God in the unknown.

The Holy Year dedicated to hope takes on a particular resonance here. To hope is to move forward without understanding everything, without mastering everything, but with a deep belief that God is at work, even in the small things of everyday life. In this mission, I don't yet

know what the future holds for me. But one thing is certain: the Gospel still has so much to say to this world, and I am grateful to be able to be a humble witness to it, here in Romania.

Fr. Antoine NGUYEN TRUNG Nien
(Iași – Romania)

A Student City

The city of Iași (Jassy or lassy) is the second most populous city in the country after the capital, Bucharest. In 2021, the city had a population of 271,692. The metropolitan area encompasses 13 municipalities and is estimated to have a population of over 400,000. Iași is the cultural, economic, and academic center of the Romanian region of Moldavia. More than 60,000 students attend the city's universities, where the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, one of the most prestigious in the country, was founded. Since Romania joined the European Union in 2007, the city has welcomed many expatriate students, particularly in medicine: approximately 2,600 young French students study this discipline in Romania, which has established a French-speaking program for them.

In Lican, the youth help the elderly

The parish of San Pedro, near Riobamba (Ecuador), creates a pathway of hope among the generations.



Young people serving the elderly in the parish of San Pedro de Lican (Riobamba, Ecuador)

Pope Francis told us : « It is the elderly who pass on to us our membership to the holy people of God. The Church and society have a need for them. They hold, in the present, a necessary past to build on the future. Honor them, do not cut ourselves off from their company and don't deprive them of ours; let us not rid ourselves of them. Furthermore, "the Lord wishes that when the young encounter the elderly, that they accept the call to cherish their memories, the gift of belonging to a larger story. The friendship with an older person helps the young to understand not to reduce life to the present and to remember that everything does not depend on one's abilities. On the other hand, the presence of youth for the elderly assures them

that all that they lived will not be lost and that their dreams will be realized."¹

Below is the testimony of the coordinator for the youth group in Lican:

I want to tell you a little about us. At first, I didn't expect much from the group, but as time went on, I came to realize that it was just the opposite thanks to Fr. Daniel Magin, a.a. He is an amazing person, who brought me closer to God and his Word. He is a beautiful person who always tries to connect the youth and the elderly. He is always there when we need him.

The activities we carry out as a youth group are the following:

1) Message of Pope Francis for the Third World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly, July 23, 2023.



We visit our grand-parents in the parish of Lican and that is something very beautiful, yet sad, at the same time. It is beautiful because the elderly tell us their stories; they give us council on life that is full of wisdom and experience. We bring them communion and the hope of receiving Christ. They always smile when we visit, and it is so great to see them smiling. What makes it sad is that most of the elderly live alone and in poor conditions. This gives me motivation to be someone important in life so that I can eventually help them and not have them live alone.

At the end of each visit, we pray that God will bless our grand-parents and will watch over them, and we pray that our mother Mary, with her maternal love, will protect us so that we

can continue with this meaningful work.

We also participated in a camp, which was a wonderful experience, since it was the first time I had attended.

In the camp, we got to know one another better and to understand one another. We had activities that were both psychological and spiritual; we took walks; we had personal reflections that fostered a better understanding of our family history.

We also listened to Daniel, who was our light in the middle of the darkness and who guided us on the path to goodness, the path of God, who is always in our hearts. Finally, we tried to do things so that our dear Father Daniel would be proud of us, and so

that when he leaves the country, he will bring with him a positive feeling about all of us.

Our Assumptionist mission in the church of Lican is to accompany the youth and to reinforce the spiritual and pastoral life in them as well as the different pastoral ministries: catechism (Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist). We are to live in charity and friendship, and to work in schools, as well as conduct retreats and provide spiritual accompaniment.

Cristian LLANGA BARBA

Brothers and Sisters Seeking Collaboration

As they do every two years, the General Councils of the five Congregations of the Assumption met in June in Paris, setting up a very promising program of synergies between them.



At the Assumption, family gatherings are not just about words!

During two very fraternal days in Auteuil, on June 25 and 26, 2025, 23 members of the General Councils of the Religious, Oblate, Little Sister, Orant, and Augustinian Sisters of the Assumption set out a course for possible collaborations for the years to come.

A Three-Part Meeting

Our very convivial, prayerful, and fraternal meeting was organized in three parts:

- An updated presentation of each of our congregations, as well as the results and projects related to our recent General Chapters;
- Then a time of spiritual conversation focused on the contributions of the Assumption family to the world and the Church (already there and/or to be enriched),
- and finally, the discussion of common projects, experiences to share, and possible ways of helping each other.

The time of spiritual conversation allowed us to highlight very similar convictions. At its core, it is about nurturing our roots in Jesus Christ and the Word of God, as well as the contemplative dimension of our charisms, to be witnesses of joy, hope, and peace.

Furthermore, our religious family must increasingly be a sign of dialogue and complementarity (men, women, lay people) in the face of a divided and withdrawn world. Thus, our fraternity (international, intercultural, intergenerational, etc.) can happily be part of the construction of a universal fraternity. We are also convinced that our charisms are highly relevant to the challenges of our time (see the trilogy "Unity, Truth, Charity"). We must therefore reclaim them, but also embody them in an updated and inventive way, with our lay friends, with our riches



The General Councils, meeting at the Religious of the Assumption

and our fragilities, in response to the new realities of our time.

Collaborations to Develop

Finally, we wish to raise awareness of our interdependence in the Assumption and develop our collaborations. Some simply need to be continued (lay people, formation, JPIC, etc.), but other “places” remain to be invented (for greater missionary dynamism, for example).

A report summarizing the many concrete suggestions for collaboration will be shared elsewhere. Allow me to briefly mention the five major themes that caught our attention:

- How can we help each other move forward towards an ever more fruitful interculturality?
- Faced with the demographic and geographic changes in our congregations, what support is possible in adapting and transforming our modes of governance?
- But also, with a view to deepening, reinterpreting, and transmitting our charisms and our histories, what tools, what riches, what know-how can we share?

- Finally, what new spaces for collaboration can we suggest and encourage?
- What possible pooling of resources can support us in the face of our weaknesses (in the areas of training, stewardship, archives, secretarial services, etc.)?

Our meeting was therefore very fruitful in terms of mutual understanding and the avenues opened for possible collaborations. A twofold challenge now faces us: on the one hand, to better share this desire for collaboration and mutual assistance with all our brothers, sisters, and lay people of the Assumption family; and on the other hand, to make this desire effective by encouraging and fostering all possible initiatives to give substance to the avenues discussed during these meetings.

We have agreed to meet again on January 13 and 14, 2027, hoping to reap the benefits of this year’s discussions... and more !

**For the coordination team,
Fr. Benoît BIGARD (Rome)**

125 years ago, the Assumptionists “left” La Bonne Presse

Victims of their own success and an anticlerical climate, the religious publishers were forced to abandon the work they had created twenty-seven years earlier in 1900, entrusting it to lay people until their return in 1926.

After the defeat by Prussia in 1870, a new religious movement emerged in France, resulting in pilgrimages and acts of penance, the most famous of which was the national vow that led to the construction of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on Montmartre Hill.

In 1872, the Augustinians of the Assumption led the pilgrimage to La Salette, then to Lourdes in 1873, Jerusalem in 1882, and many others. With the Association of Our Lady of Salvation, they founded the annual National Pilgrimage to Lourdes. To accompany these pilgrimages and create connections among pilgrims, the Assumptionists created *Le Pèlerin*, a modest newsletter that would eventually become the weekly publication with a circulation of 93,000 today. The press adventure began...

In the secularizing context of the Third Republic, with its string of anti-religious publications, a few Assumptionists embarked on militant journalism: “good press” versus “bad press.” In 1883, upon returning from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Father Vincent-de-Paul Bailly decided to found a daily newspaper: *La Croix* (the one penny newspaper), whose first issue was dated June 16. The work flourished. Alongside *La Croix* and *Le Pèlerin*, other titles appeared, and the number of



publications increased year after year. Gradually, the enterprise supplants the original «work»...

But the Republican authorities take offense at the power of public opinion that La Bonne Presse is becoming. In January 1900, 12 Assumptionists are put on trial. The time for dispersal and exile has come. The religious leave La Bonne Presse: “*La Croix is going through a painful crisis. The Pope [Editor’s note: Leo XIII] asks me to remove all our religious from the newspaper. Obedience responds to this request, for in all things we are children who love their father and will bless him, for he knows better than we what is right, and his will is the will of God for us. One of our friends, Mr. Paul Féron-Vrau, is kind enough to take charge of the work of La Bonne Presse and becomes its supporter. Let us thank God for having granted us such precious devotion. Through these unforeseen measures, some leisure time is being provided for the four editors of La Croix...*” (1)

The Secular Period (2)

The Pope’s decision raised some difficulties. Indeed, while it removed the ability of religious figures to write for *La Croix*, it nevertheless allowed them “*the freedom to edit and direct, both materially and morally, all other publications and to retain material, financial, and moral responsibility for the entire work of La Bonne Presse.*”

Several solutions were then proposed to safeguard the mission of the organization and the jobs of its employees. The creation of a “*legal limited company with a lay director at the head of La Croix*” was strongly considered after lengthy deliberations. It was even on the verge of being finalized when Paul Féron-Vrau approached Father François Picard, then Superior General, pointing out that this type of company could harm the spirit and objective of the organization. “*The Council of the Congregation, after consultation, gratefully accepts to*

entrust Mr. Paul Féron-Vrau with the direction of La Croix and the fictitious ownership of the work of La Bonne Presse..."

Indeed, the General Chapter of 1898, in founding the Work of La Bonne Presse, had recognized its canonical existence, which deprived the congregation of the possibility of divesting itself of it. *"The congregation retained, in effect, the direction of the other existing publications and those that would be created subsequently. This solution had the advantage of safeguarding everything: the work itself along with the obligations and responsibilities of the congregation."*

Paul Féron-Vrau (1864-1955), a wealthy industrialist from the Nord department, was no stranger to the Augustinians of the Assumption. *"Devoted to the Croix de Paris out of sympathy for its founder, out of solidarity with the work of his parents, and out of personal conviction, Paul Féron-Vrau, one fine day in 1890, came to commit himself to almost daily collaboration in the administrative, editorial, and propaganda departments of the Croix du Nord. [...] Paul Féron-Vrau's devotion to the Lille newspaper was never to be denied."* (3)

It was to this devoted Catholic that the Assumptionists entrusted their press work. The agreement signed by both parties, however, recalls the spirit in which this transfer took place: *"1° The work of the Bonne Presse remains an apostolic work, a defense of the faith, and a Catholic, apostolic, and Roman propaganda. The desire of the Congregation, like that of Mr. Paul Féron-Vrau, is to bring glory to Our Lord and extend His reign. 5° With regard to the Holy See and to Mr. Féron-*

Paul Féron-Vrau (1864-1955).



Vrau, as well as to his heirs, the Congregation assumes the responsibility of maintaining the spirit and purpose of the work." Thus, in all things, the charism of the Assumption is safeguarded.

In July 1900, Paul Féron-Vrau wrote his gratitude to Father Vincent-de-Paul Bailly: *"I also want, by supporting with all my power the work you have created, to fulfill both an apostolic duty to God and a duty of gratitude to you for*

having entrusted me with the flag, and the most beautiful flag in existence: that of the Cross." I hope I can soon return it to you and resume my position as a loyal assistant." (4)

Under his influence, the company grew significantly. In 1905, he created La Société Civile du Personnel de la Maison de la Bonne Presse, whose purpose was to manage the built and unbuilt properties of La Bonne Presse and provide a life pension to employees who had served the company for 30 years and were 60 years old. (5) In March 1907, a dowry fund was set up for female staff. (6) Twenty-two new publications were published between 1900 and 1914. Newspapers, magazines, and, from 1911 onward, popular novels, carried the "good word" to all strata and ages of society. Father Ernest Baudouy, whose personal notebooks contain a wealth of information on the life of La Bonne Presse, provides data on the circulation of magazines and newspapers ►

The Assumptionists are well acquainted with the Vrau family. In the 1880s, Father Picard chaired a commission at the home of Mr. Philibert Vrau (Paul's uncle), which led to the founding of the Catholic University of Lille.

Mr. Philibert Vrau and his brother-in-law, Mr. Camille Féron-Vrau, are awaiting beatification. If the outcome of the process is successful, Philibert Vrau would be the first business executive to be ordained.

from 1900 to 1914; the growth of the newspapers *La Croix* and *Le Pèlerin* is very clear.

This fine momentum would, however, falter. On August 2, 1914, the order for general mobilization was issued. 3 million men from France went to war. Among them were 285 employees of La Bonne Presse. The company stopped part of its production. The human cost paid by the company was enormous: 51 soldiers lost their lives for their country, 22 were held captive in Germany, and Paul Féron-Vrau was held hostage in Poland and then in Germany for several months. (7)

After the war, the lack of intellectual and manual labor and the shortage of paper hampered the resumption of publications; some disappeared, others were merged to form *La Documentation Catholique*. (8) The offices and workshops shake off the dust accumulated during four years of war, and projects are brought back to life. The Assumptionists return to La Bonne Presse. They reform their religious community and seek to regain control of the company, which is part of the intense activity characteristic of the post-war period.

The Return of the Assumptionists

In 1895, the congregation had considered forming a commercial company. It was created in 1924 to end the governance of Paul Féron-Vrau. Father Gervais Quenard (photo), the new Superior General, recounts: "On November 8, 1923, the idea of a limited company was proposed for the operation of La Bonne Presse, a company to be founded by Mr. Féron-Vrau, with a few very close friends from within the company, and of which he himself would be president. This would be a way for him to avoid

heavy personal taxes and to settle the past by placing in good hands the work he had received in 1900. He finally accepted on December 5, declaring himself freed from a heavy burden." Three days later, he insisted that the society was indeed real and not fictitious; this was also our opinion [...] On January 16, 1924, the statutes of the Société anonyme Maison de la Bonne Presse were filed, and the final act was signed on January 30. (9)

The Société de la Bonne Presse began under the presidency of Paul Féron-Vrau and four advisors. (10) In 1926, he retired; (11) the Assumptionists regained control of the publications. The society entered an era of great prosperity. The Société de la Bonne Presse continued its path until 1969, when the corporate name became Bayard Presse.

Thus, from its founding and throughout the company's history, religious and lay people worked in close collaboration, albeit with complementary aspects. In this regard, Father Quenard noted: "*La Bonne Presse is both an apostolic work and a particularly complex undertaking. The work is primarily the business of the founding religious, who bear temporal responsibility for it. However, it is not up to them to run an industry themselves, much less a certain kind of business—two things that are essential to the work, but for which they lack the expertise and which remain outside the scope of their ordinary lives. They must therefore rely on the help of competent and dedicated lay people to run the enterprise normally, but these lay people must remain in full agreement with those who retain primary responsibility for it.*" (12)

Isabelle PLASSAIS

Documentary Center
of the Province of Europe



1) Letter from Father François Picard to Father Athanase Vanhove, April 4, 1900.

2) For this first part, I will rely on the "Draft Agreement between the Assumption and Féron-Vrau" written by Father André Jaujou - AA Archives in Rome, reference QB 64.

3) Beylard Hugues, "Paul Féron-Vrau at the Service of the Press," Edition du Centurion, 1961, pp. 12-13

4) Letter from Mr. Paul Féron-Vrau to Father Vincent-de-Paul Bailly, July 18, 1900.

5) Bonne Presse Archives: Minutes of the General Assembly of the Civil Society Personnel: Statutes of the Civil Society of the Personnel of the Maison de la Bonne Presse, articles 2 and 14.

6) AA Archives: Notebook of Father Baudouy, history of the BP - 1899-1918, pp. 39.

7) Le Noël, August 1918, p. 183

8) La Documentation Catholique No. 1, February 1919: Origin and Program

9) P. Quenard Gervais, The Miracle of the Good Press, Christmas 1953, p. 13.

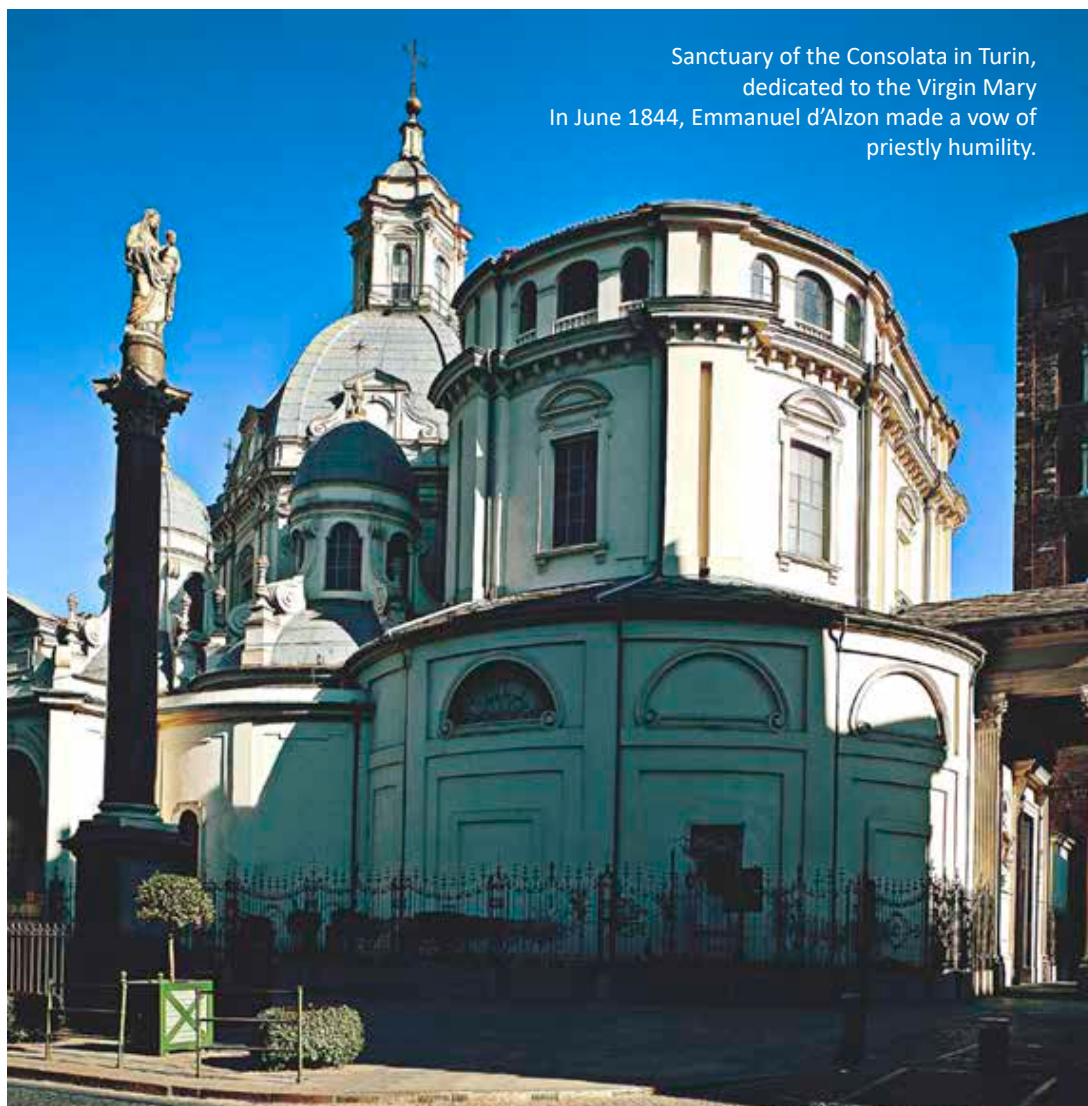
10) Minutes of the Constitutive General Assembly of the House of the Good Press, January 30, 1924.

11) Minutes of the Board of Directors Meetings of August 6 and 31, 1926.

12) P. Quenard Gervais, The Miracle of the Good Press, Christmas 1953, p. 20.

The Humility of Father d'Alzon, the Best Evidence of His Holiness

Opening the General Chapter of the Order of Saint Augustine, Pope Leo XIV exhorted his brothers to dialogue, humility, and unity. This was an opportunity to recall the humility of our Founder.



Sanctuary of the Consolata in Turin, dedicated to the Virgin Mary
In June 1844, Emmanuel d'Alzon made a vow of priestly humility.

In June 1844, at the Consolata Shrine in Turin, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, Emmanuel d'Alzon vowed to renounce ecclesiastical dignities. True to this vow, he refused the episcopate at least four times:

- In 1849, he was approached for the bishopric of Mende, which he declined.
- In October 1854, the nuncio, Mgr Carlo

Sacconi, placed him at the forefront of a list to succeed Bishop Cart in Nîmes, but D'Alzon evaded the proposal. (1)

- Two years later, his name appeared unwittingly for the seat of Aire-sur-Adour. (2)

- The last attempt came from the Prefect of Gard in 1871, who had taken the initiative of writing to the Minister of Religious Affairs. D'Alzon explained his refusal: "My ►

resolution having been made thirty years ago to be nothing..." (3)

A Way of Life

Father d'Alzon lived and ate soberly. He knew how to ask for forgiveness and readily acknowledged his wrongs: *"Even the most irritable and the least forgetful recognized his humility in immediately admitting his wrongs, as soon as his interlocutor felt offended; for if he was not always master of his nerves, he knew how to be master of his will."* (4) He dressed correctly but very simply and *"always retained the manners of a gentleman and a perfect distinction, which made him known to the people as: Monsieur d'Alzon. Without anything elaborate, his clothes and hands were impeccably clean."* (5)

Above all, he practiced discipline. Eyewitnesses testifying during his diocesan beatification process in Nîmes (May 20-December 18, 1932) recalled his practice of wearing a hair shirt: *"He often bound his body with an iron belt. The lining of his clothes bore the mark of a ribbon of blood that had set there all around his body; so he was very embarrassed when it came to giving them to be mended. He sometimes used iron bracelets and garters."* (6)

Such practices were common in the 19th century. Father d'Alzon observed them strictly for at least three reasons. First, he was aware of his own unworthiness. Second, he wanted to try all remedies before proposing them to penitents. To those who were surprised, he replied laughingly: *"A good doctor must experiment with remedies before prescribing them to his patients."* (7) Finally, discipline prepared him to better welcome the grace of God through self-control and control

of everything that could hinder him. As early as 1845, he confided to Mother Marie-Eugénie his desire to begin *"a kind of novitiate of the vow of perfection."* (8)

Self-Gift and Abandonment to God

Unwilling to issue himself a certificate of good conduct, his notes and correspondence often show him regretting not having mortified himself enough. On the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, remembering the Virgin at the foot of the cross, he asked for the grace *"to give birth to our little family as painfully as God pleases."* Later, he confided to Marie-Eugénie: *"It seemed to me that Our Lord took me to be humiliated, to suffer, and to die."* His humility is marked by self-giving and abandonment to God, a state of mind he wished to transmit to his religious: *"It matters little whether you accept contempt with a more or less humble air, if you do not despise yourselves."* » (9)

The humiliations he endures and the sufferings he imposes on himself are intended to offer all he has and all he is, for God and for the love of our congregation. One of his favorite mortifications is to deprive himself of sleep, which gives him time to lead the congregation without disturbing his mood in community. Concretely, he resolves *"not to sleep more than six hours"* (10):

"My mortifications will be governed by my very position as superior. They will relate above all to what will facilitate the fulfillment of my duties. Thus, sleep deprivation, which gives me time, will be preferred to others that could irritate my nerves and make me lose the equanimity of temper, which I have so little of and yet must work to acquire." (11)

Imitating Jesus While Aware of His Limitations

At the age of 20, d'Alzon decided to imitate Jesus. Such a project could have ended in failure or turned into pride if he had not been fully aware of his unworthiness and practiced humility. This became a central virtue for him, not out of a desire to depreciate himself, but to better follow Christ.

During his ordination retreat, he still saw himself as the prodigal son and trusted in God's mercy. Later, he opened his heart to Marie-Eugénie, regretting not having been a saint and not having sufficiently encouraged others to holiness: *"I am now 36 years old. I am horrified by the futility of my life, the time wasted, the graces that have remained sterile. I want there to be a renewal in me..."* (12)

To Marie Correnson, who became Mother Emmanuel-Marie of Compassion, he wrote: *"I would like to be a man of faith, of prayer, of true humility; a religious imbued with the spirit of sacrifice...; a superior concerned with the duty of developing and sanctifying his spiritual family [...] Well! my daughter, I am none of these things."* (13)

At the end of his life, during a speech given for the New Year of 1878, D'Alzon asked: *"What can I wish you for the year of grace 1878? Humility. We have less reason than ever to be proud; the best course to take is to be very humble in every way."* (14)

The Two Axes of Alzonian Humility

In *D'Alzon's Notebooks*, some passages of which appear in the *Spiritual Writings*, we find the two axes of Alzonian humility.



Portrait of Father d'Alzon

His humility did not diminish his natural authority. The simplicity of his being and his life had the ambition of the Kingdom.

First, it consists of knowing oneself well: *"No one must know me better than myself, since, if it is an obligation for me as a simple Christian, it is a much greater one as a superior."* (15)

Practiced as a virtue, this proper self-knowledge distances him from both pride and self-contempt. To the Religious of the Assumption, he reminds us that humility also consists of recognizing one's qualities and exercising one's talents. It has nothing

to do with mediocrity:

"Self-love must be tempered. But there is a certain feeling that is not self-seeking and that it is good to preserve [...], by dint of wanting to be too hot, one becomes lukewarm and negligent [...]. If you teach, you would do well to have the self-esteem that will make you prepare your class with the greatest care." (16)

1) Father d'Alzon wrote to him on 09/27/1854 to inform him of his bishop's state of health and to list possible successors that Bishop Cart had forwarded to him. Nuncio Sacconi replied on 7/10: *"If I had to add another person to the clergy you have named, I would place yours first and foremost..."*

2) Emmanuel d'Alzon, *Dossier on Life and Virtues*, Vol. II "Biographical Documentation," Volume II pp. 600-601.

3) Letter from Father d'Alzon to the Prefect of Gard, Baron de Champvans, May 24, 1871, Lavagnac.

4) Siméon Vailhé, *Emmanuel d'Alzon*, Vol. 1 p. 132.

5) Ibid. p. 133.

6) Ibid. p. 137.

7) Ibid.

8) Letter to Marie Eugénie de Jésus, October 21, 1845, written in Lavagnac in *Lettres du P. d'Alzon*, vol. B, page 334.

9) *Les Cahiers d'Alzon*, No. 11 entitled "My sisters, how old are you?", Retreat to the Religious, Auteuil, 1861, p. 56.

10) ES, p. 787.

11) ES, p. 783.

12) Emmanuel d'Alzon, *Dossier on Life and Virtues*. Flight. 1 p. 399.

13) Emmanuel d'Alzon, *Dossier on Life and Virtues*. Flight. II "Biographical Documentation," Volume II p. 724. He ends this letter dated January 1866 by adding: *"In the meantime, God seems to bless us with the little good we do for the poor." Imagine that Father Pernet founded an Association of a few poor girls, living entirely on charity, dedicating themselves to being Sisters caring for the poor, without receiving a penny in remuneration from them. These are the Little Sisters of the Poor, but at home."*

14) E. d'Alzon - *Writings Series c 2*, p. 12

15) ES p. 782.

16) *Les Cahiers d'Alzon*, n° 16 intitulé « Mes sœurs, sept colonnes de sainteté », Conférences de 1870-1871 aux Religieuses de l'Assomption, p. 176.

D'Alzon knows that every gift comes from God. His humility has a taste of gratitude. In his prayer or his sermon, he repeats that God is the source of all good. His humility thus allows him to recognize the qualities of his brothers and sisters and to simply thank those who compliment him or show him their esteem... without false modesty.

Knowing how to stay in one's place

Secondly, humility requires knowing how to stay in one's place and never encroaching on another's territory. To the Sisters of the Assumption, he said:

"Have the moderation to take your place, neither higher nor lower than you deserve; and if you must overstep the mark in anything, it is better to do so by placing yourself too low. This is the advice Our Lord gives to the guest at a wedding, and we must wait until He Himself encourages us to rise higher." (17)

Father d'Alzon never gave in to the temptation of power, neither as a spiritual director, nor as an educator, and even less as Superior General. From childhood, his parents had observed in him a dominant nature and sought to correct his authoritarian character. Through his spirit of penance and self-mortification, he continued their efforts to completely rid themselves of it. (18)

In spiritual guidance, he exerted no control and set a rule for both parties: they were free to suspend it at any time. In 1852, Marie-Eugénie offered him co-direction of her institute. Bishop Léon-François Sibour, cousin of the Archbishop of Paris, had become ecclesiastical superior in 1849. She sought to free

herself from his control, which she deemed too burdensome. D'Alzon politely declined the offer, preferring to maintain a friendly relationship rather than establish authority between their two institutes.

Humility, a sign of holiness in the service of unity

Practiced in charity, humility allowed D'Alzon to progress toward holiness. His goal: to offer his own life to the Lord so that He might fill it with His presence. (19) We often think that holiness consists of doing extraordinary things for God. For D'Alzon, it is rather a matter of letting Him do it: when the Lord seizes the human heart, He takes everything. Father d'Alzon's humility strove to remove every obstacle to God's action and offered Him constantly renewed trust.

His exemplary humility guided many on the path to holiness: *"Do not take up any other weapons than those of Jesus Christ. If He wanted to use humiliation, divine annihilation, how could you do otherwise! [...] Take the great principle of humility. [...] Satan is pride, you defeat him with humility."* (20)

She tempered his ardor, promoted unity within our Congregations, and overcame the difficulties of the beginnings. *"Fortitude is a virtue by which we carry ourselves to difficult things [...] so that it is not exaggerated, it must be tempered by humility. Humble fortitude is the strength of the saints."* (21) It developed in him the art of dialogue and of a just relationship with others. It helped him to love in the manner of Jesus by drawing close to all while bringing out the best in each one.

His humility did not prevent authority when it became necessary. Father Pernet, of a scrupulous nature, was assailed by doubts when it came to receiving minor orders. D'Alzon understood the danger and wrote to him, not *"to force a decision (...) or compel hesitation, but to pacify a delicate conscience by respecting God's graces"*:

"My dear child, Well! You will be a poor priest if you cannot be a holy priest. [...] You do not know all the miracles that God works for those incapable of good will. As for being frightened, it is a waste of time; humbly put yourself in joy. Be a good beast, joyful about what Our Lord wants to make of you His mount, and even better."

Giving others their due place

Father d'Alzon did not seek to impose his point of view on others. In the *Rules of Life* of December 1845, at the moment of beginning his own novitiate, everyone already noted his great humility:

"I must be absolutely ready to place myself at the rank of simple religious, as soon as the brothers show me their desire or as soon as I have evidence that another will do better." (23) *He would maintain this disposition throughout his life. He wrote to Sister Marie Eugénie: "I am not the man of the work [...] Yet I remain there to make room for the one who will be that man."* (24)

Father d'Alzon's humility allowed the first Assumptionists to participate in the development of the institute. In preparing for the General Chapter of 1876, he issued several circulars intended for the capitulars, presenting them as a basis for discussion and inviting everyone to



Saint Marie-Eugénie Milleret (1817-1898)

«The great secret of the saints: humility in prayer. Humble prayer gives birth to faith that moves mountains. The perpetual work of the saints to save the Church has been the effort of faith through humility and prayer.» (Excerpt from a homily by Fr. d'Alzon, Paris, August 9, 1879).

17) *Id.* p. 171.

18) A ce sujet, lire le « sommaire des vertus » du *Dossier sur la vie et les vertus* (p. 46-135), notamment les pages 111-124 sur la « tempérance ». Cet additif à la première rédaction de la *Positio* est signé des PP. Wilfrid Dufault, Postulateur ; Désiré Deraedt, collaborateur, et Yvon Baudoin, OMI, Rapporteur. Cette belle introduction a permis de faire admettre la suite du travail qui n'entraînait pas dans les normes de la Congrégation des Causes des Saints.

19) « En un mot, je dois être saint, et je ne le deviendrai qu'autant que je reproduirai en moi la vie de Jésus-Christ. » ES p. 787

20) *Les Cahiers d'Alzon* n° 14, « Le pivot de la vie religieuse : la Passion » p. 98.

21) *Les Cahiers d'Alzon* n° 8, « Mes sœurs, vos quatre vérités », p. 105. Une retraite assez décapante qu'il prêche aux Religieuses de l'Assomption à Auteuil en 1872.

22) E. d'Alzon - *Lettres 1857-1860* p. 361, décembre 1857

23) ES p. 782.

24) D'Alzon à M. Eugénie, le 5 décembre 1847.

25) *Les Cahiers d'Alzon*, n° 6 intitulé « Trente jours avec Marie » p. 74.

share their personal opinions or observations.

The Congregation Born of His Humility

Humility, which had become second nature to D'Alzon, manifested his trust in his brothers and revealed his hope in God, regardless of obstacles or difficulties. It seems incomprehensible to those who did not know him well enough, for it contained a paradox, given how ambitious his humility was. He himself was the opposite of ambitious, but his plan for the Institute was neces-

sarily so, since he had the Kingdom as his horizon. This paradox is only apparent, for, faced with the scope of the work to be accomplished, he never ceased to remain humble and knew how to maintain a sense of reality, looking lucidly at the human resources at his disposal: "What must above all be admired here is the divine power shining forth where human means are weakest. It seems that God constantly wants everything from nothing." (25)

A Renewed Humility in Prayer

His humility was nourished by prayer, where he loved to contemplate the humility of God in the mystery of the Incarnation: *"Realize to what extent Jesus Christ humbled himself. He enclosed himself for nine months in the womb of a Virgin."* (26)

Centered on the Incarnation, Assumptionist spirituality is necessarily a spirituality of humility. D'Alzon regularly insists on the humility of consecrated persons: *"God plays with us if we want to be something. Man wanted to become God by himself, and he was cast down from his dignity. But then a God became man so that man might become God."* » (27)

He contemplated the humility of God in the mysteries of the Passion: *"See the passer-by undergoing all the tortures of the Garden of Olives (sic), the praetorium, the Sanhedrin, the scourging. These are humiliations! And who will recognize a God, stricken like a slave, in the astonishing solitude in which he places himself when he wishes to be stretched out on a cross!"*

He even saw the humility of Jesus in the mysteries of the Resurrection: *"One must sacrifice everything that comes from the earth, in order to be able to rise to the beauty of the things of Heaven. If you commune in these dispositions, communion will be for you the beginning of union and the invasion of Jesus Christ within you. And you will understand that a new world will then open up for you; Jesus Christ will transform you into Him. You will remain in Him and He will remain in you."* » (28)

Fr. d'Alzon wanted to see these graces of God's humility reign in souls, communities, and even in society, too often still inhabited by pride: *"It is by immersing ourselves in these mysteries that we acquire humility; humility leads us to the truth and comes to know God. If you are a small person filled with good things, but possessing pride, God resists you..."* (29)

For our Founder, humility was a theological virtue before being a moral virtue. And if it constitutes a moral virtue—shaping human action and will—it is because it is the work of the Holy Spirit in each of us and characterizes God's love, His will, and His way of acting in us, among us, and around us. By fostering listening and trust, humility builds communities and places itself at the service of unity. In this, it builds the Church and strengthens our love for it: *"Humility is the good foundation on which every building built grows, as a holy temple to the Lord."* (30)

Conclusion

The humility of Fr. d'Alzon still allows the Assumption to gather in its diversity today. It inspires a fraternal spirit among religious and lay people in alliance. It commits to the service of others those who take Jesus as their model: *"Our Lord always spoke as a master and yet washed the feet of his apostles."* (31)

Humility can be ambitious if it works for the coming of the kingdom of God. It does not yield to mediocrity and takes nothing away from authority. Without authoritarianism, D'Alzon cultivated humility, lis-

tening, and dialogue, as well as unity, without fearing subsidiarity: *"I will not be jealous of my authority."* (32)

Fr. Vincent LECLERCQ
Postulator General



26) *Les Cahiers d'Alzon*, n° 8, op. cité, p. 116

27) *id.* La citation est extraite du Sermon 9 d'Augustin.

28) *Les Cahiers d'Alzon*, N ° 8, op. cité, p. 184.

29) *Id.* p. 121-122.

30) *Id.* p. 109-110.

31) *ES* p. 786.

32) *ES* p. 787.

Interculturality: A New Deal, Multifaceted

A professor of philosophy at the Catholic Institute of Paris, Father Jean-François Petit has published a veritable volume on this significant reality of our religious life, which also remains a challenge to be met.

Jean-François PETIT
Philosophy of Interculturality.
Figures and Concepts
 Editions Orizons,
 752 pp. € 49.

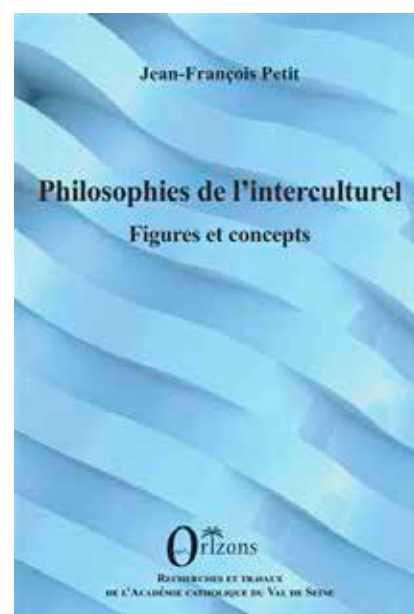
In the latest issue of the ATLPE bulletin of the Province of Europe, Jean-François Petit announced the release of a “very large work” on interculturality, a field of research in which his book would undoubtedly expand a bibliography that is still sparse and in its infancy. By the author’s own admission, this 750-page book, published in the “Research and Works of the Catholic Academy of Val de Seine” collection, attempts to cover a topic that requires mastery of a wide range of knowledge, in the socio-political, economic, legal, anthropological, and theological fields.

This broad curiosity will hardly surprise those who know our colleague. It is like the emanation of a lifestyle embraced to the point of “disorientation” and nourished by his many field experiences: working as a volunteer in Africa, living in an international community, ties with many “non-French” people, international chaplain of the ACI (Catholic Action of Independent Environments), etc.

Reflecting on this, one might wonder if we are not looking at a different way of exploring the existential peripheries of our humanity, and of thinking, in this way, about “*the world to come*.” A world not quite yet, and yet “already here,” if we look at the appearance of our communities, almost all of which are intercultural.

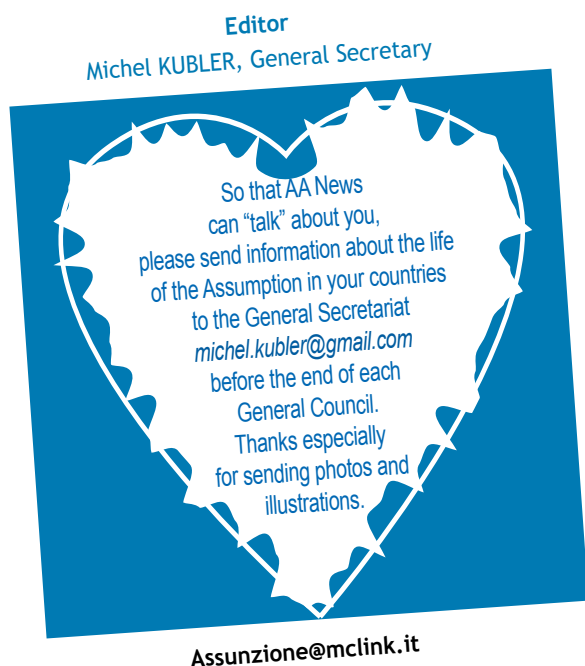
Hence the need to be able to think about this new situation, which will help everyone use their culture and identity wisely, while forcing them to take an interest in the culture of their neighbor. To use Jean-François’s words, it is, at its core, “*a refusal to accept an objectification that would only enslave humankind*.” Translated into my own words: objectification is this perilous undertaking that seeks to ensure the sustainability of one’s own certainties—my identity, my culture, my country, my customs, my way of doing things...

Hence the question: do we accept, once we live outside our countries and our cultural contexts, being sufficiently “disoriented” to open ourselves to a horizon much broader than our own representations? It’s not hard to see that this challenge has not yet been won, even in our communities.



For Jean-François Petit, it’s ultimately about “*building successful bridges*” that will take us from a fixed identity to an open one. The last General Chapter rightly spoke of “*mutual enrichment*” and, in a truly contemporary way, of bearing witness to “*the brotherhood of the Kingdom*” that is coming. All we have to do is read Jean-François’s book to be convinced!

Fr. Iulian DANCĂ
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Our deceased brothers

† Fr. **Petar LJUBAS**, of the Albertville community (Province of Europe), died on July 21, 2025, in Albertville. His funeral was celebrated on July 28, in the chapel of Notre-Dame des Vignes, followed by burial in the cemetery in Chiriac. He was 78.

† Fr. **Joseph MERMOZ**, of the Albertville community (Province of Europe), died on August 1, 2025, in Albertville. His funeral was celebrated on August 6, in the chapel of Notre-Dame des Vignes, followed by burial in the cemetery in Chiriac. He was 92.

† Br. **Francisco Maria CARRASCO DIEZ**, of the community of Our Lady of Lourdes in Santiago, Chile (Andean Province), died on August 13, 2025, in Rio. His funeral was celebrated on August 14, in the Our Lady of Lourdes Basilica, followed by burial in the crypt of the Basilica. He was 88.