

AA News of the Assumption



**VISIT AND COUNCIL
IN ANDEAN
ASSUMPTION**

**LEO XIV,
AUGUSTINIAN AND
POPE**

**ASSUMPTIONIST
CAUSES IN ROME**



Agenda

Plenary General Council

n° 5 : **December 1-10** (Rome).

Ordinary General Council

n° 16 : **September 8-23.**

n° 17 : **November 3-7.**

n° 18 : **December 11-12.**

Session of Provincial Secretaries :

October 20-24.

Fr. Ngoa

- **August 10-17** : National Pilgrimage.
- **September 29-October 20** : Kinshasa (canonical visit).

Fr. Benoît

- **July 6-11** : St-Lambert des Bois (novitiate retreat).
- **July 12-August 12** : France.

Fr. João

- **July 7-11** : Paris (Meetings of the Assumption JPIC).
- **July 13-August 26** : Brazil

Fr. Thierry

- **July 28-August 17** : Council of the Orantes (France).

Fr. Étienne

- **July 2-August 30** : Madagascar.
- **September 29-October 20** : Kinshasa (canonical visit).

On the cover

During the time of the canonical visit to the Andean Province, in May (see pages 11-13), Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, Superior General, and Fr. João Gomes Da Silva, Assistant General, visited the College Emmanuel d'Alzon in Bogota, Columbia, on May 6. A traditional ceremony was held in their honor.

Rome has a new bishop!



Our previous chronicle of Due Pini spoke of a “strange atmosphere” that permeated Rome, a mixture of feasts for the Holy Year and uncertainty for the health of the Pope. . Three months later, the Jubilee is still in full swing. .but there is a new bishop in Rome who animates it. On May 8, he succeeded Francis, who died on Easter Monday. 2025 will be a historic year in so many ways!

Our General House lived through these events “in person”. The members of our community, who were able, went from one moving moment to yet another even more moving: from the announcement of the death of Francis on April 21 to the inauguration of Pope Leo XIV on May 18, going from the funeral of the former to the election of the latter—the famous “white smoke”. Four weeks of unheard of intensity, permeated, without a doubt, in all of our communities—in prayer, in following the media, and also through the privilege of being so close to all of the events.

The change in the pontificate had a direct impact on our house because of our hosting the journalists from Bayard who came to cover this worldwide event: six from La Croix and two from Pèlerin. And one of us, with his long experience of the media, commented on each step of this period, for French public television and for Vatican Radio.

The election of a new pope—a son of Saint Augustine, especially! (read pages 25-27)

This has had a direct effect on increasing the numbers of pilgrims during this holy year. Under the leadership of Pope Leo, the thematic jubilees have resumed where Francis had left off. Their presence reverberates under our roof: we have counted 900 overnight stays from January to June, with at least five people welcomed per day! Due Pini has never welcomed so many guests during such a period of time. It is true that the house left by our Oblate Sisters has increased our capacity for hosting, at least until September 1st, when the Ursuline Sisters will occupy it for their international novitiate.

Regarding the Oblates, our community experienced an emotional time on May 1, in “celebrating” the departure of the Sisters from Due Pini after 19 years of their service to the house: Sr. Rosalie and Sr. Angèle left at the end of June rejoining other communities in Italy or Congo. The emotion of that day was redoubled with our acknowledgement that Fr. Gilles Allard, the most famous Québécois in Rome, will leave us this summer for the community in Albertville. He is leaving after 20 years of loyal service to the community. Popes change, sisters and brothers leave, and others arrive, the mission continues. . .Thus goes life at Due Pini!

Fr. Michel KUBLER

“Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum: Habemus Papam!”



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

This expression, rich in history, tradition, and emotion, resonates today in a very special way for us, Augustinians of the Assumption. Yes, we have a Pope. In a letter addressed on May 29 to the great Augustinian family, Fr. Alejandro Moral Antón, Prior General of the Order of Saint Augustine, recalls an exceptional time of grace experienced within the Order and the entire Augustinian family. He emphasizes how the election of “our brother” Fr. Robert Francis Prevost to the ministry of Supreme Pontiff is, for all of us, a source of immense joy.

Just a few days after his election, the Holy Father visited the General Curia of the Order of Saint Augustine, where he had served as Prior General for twelve years, to celebrate the Eucharist. During the fraternal exchange with the members of the community, he confided: “All of a sudden, my life completely changed and I had to give up many things, but I will never give up being an Augustinian.” We all rejoice in the election of a pope from the Order of Saint Augustine. The connection with Saint Augustine is deeply meaningful to us. We call him “our patriarch.” The 34th General Chapter presented him as an asset we already possess:

“To be faithful to its mission, the Assumption has a solid foundation and many assets that are reasons for thanksgiving. A Founder, whose holiness it hopes the Church will recognize; a charism, which invites its members to be ‘men of faith, men of communion, in solidarity with the poor’ (...); a ‘Patriarch,’ Saint Augustine, who inspired a spirit of unity and charity through his Rule.” (Acts of the General Chapter #4)

The election of Cardinal Prevost as Pope was a surprise, certainly, but a happy one. One cannot control the Spirit of God: he passes, surprises, and renews in his own way. We have all undoubtedly followed his initial statements and interviews,

which suggest a continuity with the path traced by his predecessor, Pope Francis, which many already consider a reassuring sign. Moreover, the Augustinian influence is already being felt, and it is certain that he will also leave his own mark. On behalf of the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption and in my own name, I have already sent him a message to assure him of our prayers and our fraternal closeness (see page 5).

Fraternal life in community remains one of the essential foundations of the great Augustinian family. Without it, the unity and communion so desired would remain a dream. Our General Chapter strongly emphasized this, going so far as to propose this fraternity as a true path to holiness.

As Assumptionists, our way of supporting Pope Leo in his ministry will be expressed through our charism and the apostolates specific to our congregation in service to the universal Church. In the continuity of our founder, Fr. Emmanuel d’Alzon, and moved by the love of Christ, we will remain steadfast in the faith, committed to unity, and in solidarity with the poor.

“Habemus Papam” has a triple meaning for us, Augustinians of the Assumption. First, as members of the universal Church, we give thanks for the gift of a pastor, a sign of God’s faithful care for his people. Then, as members of the great Augustinian family, we are deeply happy to see one of our own called to carry out this mission that is both great and noble: to strengthen his brothers in the faith and to guide the Church on the paths of holiness. Finally, as Fr. Benoît Grière so aptly expressed in an article for the *Osservatore Romano* (see page 20), we rejoice to have as Pope “a profoundly augustinian Augustinian,” that is, a Pope rooted in the thought, spirituality and heart of Saint Augustine.



Calls, nominations, agreements...

Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, Superior General, with the approval of his Council, has called:

■ TO PERPETUAL PROFESSION

- 1) Pierre LE MINH Thống**
(Europe) (04/23/2025)
- 2) Kelvin ONGÁNYO OUMA**
(East Africa) (04/23/2025)
- 3) Bertrand Christian SAWADOGO**
(East Africa) (04/23/2025)
- 4) Simon NDUNG'U MAINA**
(East Africa) (04/23/2025)
- 5) KASEREKA MASTAKI Fiston**
(East Africa) (04/23/2025)
- 6) Euloge SIMLAWO**
(East Africa) (04/23/2025)
- 7) Joseph AYORA KEBASO**
(East Africa) (04/23/2025)
- 8) MUFUNIKO Roger**
(Africa) (04/04/2025)
- 9) MUHINDO MWENDAPEKE MUSAKIRWA Jean-Paul**
(Africa) (04/23/2025)
- 10) KAKULE KAMAVU Hilaire**
(Africa) (04/23/2025)
- 11) MBUSA KAMITSYE Gédéon**
(Africa) (04/23/2025)
- 12) MUHINDO MATINA Roland**
(Africa) (04/23/2025)
- 13) MUHINDO VARONDI Germain**
(Africa) (04/24/2025)
- 14) OUEDRAOGO Gérémie**
(Africa) (04/24/2025)
- 15) PATCHANA Emmanuel**
(Africa) (04/24/2025)
- 16) RAZAFIMAHATRADRAIBE André**
(Africa) (04/24/2025)
- 17) THASENYA SIKO Etienne**
(Africa) (04/24/2025)

■ TO ORDINATION TO THE DEACONATE

- 18) KAMBALE BALEWA Mutumishi**
(Madagascar) (04/24/2025)
- 19) KASEREKA MBAGA Muhungamuvi**
(Madagascar) (04/24/2025)
- 20) Mark Vincent MADRONERO**
(Europe) (04/24/2025)

- 21) Jean NGUYEN DUC Huyen**
(Europe) (04/24/2025)
- 22) KAKULE MBAFUMOJA Justin**
(East Africa) (04/24/2025)
- 23) Romaric ABLOUKA**
(East Africa) (04/25/2025)
- 24) Boniface John MUINDI**
(East Africa) (04/28/2025)
- 25) Francis Emile RAZAFIMANDIMBY**
(East Africa) (04/28/2025)
- 26) Videlis Mulandi MUSEMBI**
(East Africa) (04/28/2025)
- 27) KAKULE TASI Gabriel**
(Africa) (04/28/2025)
- 28) KAMBALE MUSONGORA Hervé**
(Africa) (04/28/2025)
- 29) KAMBERE MUSEYA Gervais**
(Africa) (04/28/2025)
- 30) KATEMBO KABWANA Charles**
(Africa) (04/28/2025)
- 31) KISI-KISI WOYITA Joël**
(Africa) (04/28/2025)
- 32) MUHINDO KAHAMBA Justin**
(Africa) (04/28/2025)
- 33) MUHINDO KISOMO Emmanuel**
(Africa) (04/28/2025)
- 34) MUMBERE MATANDA Wasingya**
(Africa) (04/28/2025)
- 35) NKOY BAKOLANA André-Teddy**
(Africa) (04/28/2025)
- 36) NZIAVAKE KATEKE Magloire**
(Africa) (04/29/2025)
- 37) PALUKU VATSURANA Grâce**
(Africa) (04/29/2025)

■ TO PRIESTLY ORDINATION

- 38) Christien Fabrice ANDRIAMALALARSON**
(Madagascar) (04/29/2025)
- 39) Clément LÖBEL**
(Europe) (04/29/2025)
- 40) Joseph NGUYỄN VAN Phúc**
(Europe) (04/29/2025)
- 41) Julius JAGEN**
(East Africa) (04/29/2025)

- 42) Vicent MUTEGEKI**
(East Africa) (04/29/2025)
- 43) KABAMBA MUKENDI Marcel**
(Africa) (04/29/2025)
- 44) KALINDA Bertin**
(Africa) (04/29/2025)
- 45) KAMBALE MUVAKULI Jean-Baptiste**
(Africa) (04/29/2025)
- 46) KAMBALE NDAMBUKO Gervais**
(Africa) (04/29/2025)
- 47) MALIDRALE MOKILI Crispin**
(Africa) (04/29/2025)
- 48) KAMBALE MBOGHA Georges**
(Africa) (04/30/2025)
- 49) MUHINDO ISUNGU Vianney**
(Africa) (04/30/2025)
- 50) MUHINDO LUTSUMBI Paulin**
(Africa) (04/30/2025)
- 51) MUHINDO MUHASA Angéhus**
(Africa) (04/30/2025)
- 52) MUMBERE NDAKASI Jérémie**
(Africa) (04/30/2025)
- 53) PALUKU KIHEMBO Dieu-Merci**
(Africa) (04/30/2025)

■ NOMINATION OF A PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR

Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, Superior General, with the consent of his Ordinary General Council, has named **Fr. Lucien Telolahy RAZAFIMANANTSOA, Provincial Superior of Madagascar**, for a second triennium, starting June 1, 2025.

■ AGREEMENT OF NOMINATION OF FORMATORS

Fr. Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, Superior General, with the unanimous consent of his Plenary General Council, has given his agreement for the nominations:

1) of **Fr. Jean-Pierre RADIMILAHY**,
Responsible for the Formation for
the Province of Madagascar,

2) of **Fr. KAHINDO KIHUGHO**
Emmanuel Responsible for the
Formation of the Vice-Province of
East Africa,

3) of **Fr. KAWA**
MUSWAHILI Joséphat, as Superior
of the CIFA of Buenos Aires (Andean
Province)

4) of **Fr. Nicolas**
TARRALLE as Superior of the
Scholasticate of Ouagadougou
(Province of Europe),

5) of **Fr. Fabrice-Marie ADZAKLI** as
Master of Novices at Sokode (Togo,
Province of Europe).

6) of **Fr. François NGUYEN DINH**
Hanh as Master of Novices at Ba Ria
(Vietnam, Province of Europe).

■ CONCLUSION OF AN EXCLAUSTRATION

On May 2, 2025, Fr. Ngoa Ya
Tshihemba, Superior General,
with the consent of his Ordinary
General Council, has conceded
to **Fr. Marco Aurélio FLORENTINO**
GONCALVEZ (Province of Brazil) the
termination of his exclaustation
granted him on October 29, 2024.

■ PROLONGATION OF TEMPORARY VOWS

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

- **JOSEPH Francis**, Province of Africa ;
- **Gervé LIOSA**, Province of
Madagascar ;
- **Hugo Fernando MORALES**
BALLESTEROS, Province of North
America.

"Our warmest congratulations on your election..."

While on a canonical visit to the Andean Province, Father Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, Superior General, sent a personal letter to Pope Leo XIV, who had just been elected to the See of Peter (see also pages 20-22). Here is the letter:

Santiago de Chile, May 15, 2025

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV
Vatican City

Most Holy Father,

On my own behalf and on behalf of the entire Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption, known as Assumptionists, I am deeply pleased to extend our warmest congratulations on your election to the See of Peter. We are filled with intense joy and great hope for having received you as our new Bishop of Rome and Pastor of the universal Church!

A few days before the inauguration of your pontificate, we wish to wholeheartedly thank you for accepting this responsibility, so burdensome yet so essential to the mission of the Church. And we wish to assure you of the prayers of all our brothers and sisters and our communities for your ministry, as well as of our readiness to support your ministry through the charism and apostolates specific to our Congregation.

Need I mention the particular happiness that is added to this joy, due to our common membership in the great Augustinian family? We are extremely grateful to you for having, from your first words as Pope, highlighted the living legacy of Saint Augustine. Seeing one of his spiritual sons take his place in the Seat of Peter inspires us to root ourselves even more deeply in his spirituality and to spread it among the People of God. I hope that your election will strengthen the bonds within our common religious family since, as you know, the Augustinians of the Assumption are affiliated with the Order of Saint Augustine.

From Latin America, so dear to your heart and where I am currently making a long canonical visit, I wish to assure you, Most Holy Father, of the fidelity and filial devotion of our entire religious family.

Fr. NGOA Ya Tshihemba
Superior General



Prospects in All Directions

The 4th session of the Plenary General Council, which recently took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, advanced several issues following the 34th General Chapter.



▲
PGC meeting in
Santos Lugares
(Buenos Aires)

For most of the CGP members who were new to the Andean Province, the first shock was the temperature: nearly 20°C cooler, at the beginning of winter in the Southern Hemisphere, compared to the summer temperatures many had just left! Fortunately, the fraternal warmth of the welcome from the brothers of Argentina, under the leadership of their brand-new Provincial, Fr. Bolivar Paluku Lukenzano, quickly warmed the atmosphere. This hospitality will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression on the participants, after having participated in the vibrant celebrations at our Nostra Señora de Lourdes shrine or tasted the legendary meats of the pampas!

Immediately following the canonical visit to the Province in May by Father General and Fr. João Gomes da Silva, the Assistant in charge of accompanying him,

this session naturally included an “Andean touch.” The CGP met with the two communities in Argentina and learned about their history—including its tragic side, since the session occurred on the 49th anniversary of the disappearance of Brothers Carlos Antonio di Pietro and Raul Rodriguez, victims of the military dictatorship. And an evening at the new CIFA location provided an opportunity to meet the three brothers—two Ecuadorians and one Colombian—who currently form it.

Formation was, in fact, one of the recurring themes of these ten days in Santos Lugares. Already present in the annual report presented by the Superior General, it was addressed this time from several angles, including a reflection on the International Assumptionist Formation Communities (CIFA). The overall results are very

positive, as they allow for the development of a sense of belonging to an international congregation, the daily experience of interculturality, the fostering of the learning of our languages, and the adaptation of formation to our Augustinian and Alzonian traditions. Challenges remain, however: strengthening and internationalizing the formation teams, working on interculturality, welcoming others, and mastering local languages.

It should be noted that a large number of new formation members also received the approval of the CGP during this session.

The “**mobilizing works**” are also a “must” of the CGP, but with a new approach: the form used to evaluate them has been revised, and they will no longer be studied every year, but according to their current status and needs. Thus, of the six currently recognized as such, only two have been taken into account this time: the Network of Bush Schools and the Mgr-Canonne College of Madagascar, and the St-Pierre – St-André Center of Bucharest (Romania) 1. For them, as for the others, the next step, desired by the General Chapter, will be to set up “Assumption Committees” to support them, and to better integrate them into the animation of the different apostolic sectors of the congregation: media, education, JPIC, pilgrimages, etc.

The chapter on **economic matters** was, as usual, well-delivered. The presentation by Fr. Alex Castro, General Treasurer, had been appropriately prepared with the CEC (Congregational Economic Council), but with one new feature: of the two annual meetings, only one will now be in person (in Rome, in November), and the other will be held

“Solidarity with the Assumption” Campaign 2026



At the suggestion of the CEC, the CGP examined two projects that could be included in this annual campaign for needs that could not otherwise be funded by charitable institutions.

The Council decided that the Assumption Solidarity Campaign will be held in 2026 to benefit Radio Moto Oicha (African Province) for its solar panel electrification. This project, which was already presented last year, is to be funded with USD 26,000, and

will also benefit from a local contribution of USD 3,000.

The CGP wanted to promote the very important role played by Radio Moto in Oicha in the context of the war.

It also thanks all those who have already submitted their contributions for the 2025 solidarity campaign, intended, as a reminder, to repair the roof of the Kambali Institute in Butembo (African Province).

by videoconference in May. This is a very young Council, as only one Provincial Treasurer is in his second term, while the other six have less than two years of experience.

In addition to reviewing the 2024 accounts and the status of financial investments, Fr. Alex provided an update on the 2023 and 2024 solidarity campaigns and presented proposals for 2026 (see box). Finally, presenting the cost of formation in the congregation, he noted that we currently have 386 young people in formation: 123 postulants or

novices, and 263 professed in initial, specialized, or diaconal formation. And if we compare this figure of professed in formation to the total of 923 religious, we see that 28.5% of Assumptionists are in formation, not including postulants and novices. Who can beat that?

Finally, the CGP reviewed two matters requested by the 34th General Chapter:

- It adopted the mission statement of the “Working Group on the Pooling of the Management of Our Funds,” which will improve their performance and re- ▶

duce management costs (cf. Acts, n. 272).

Following the proposal of the CGO, it considered that a working group on the relocation of the Generalate (cf. Acts, n. 273) had become obsolete. In fact, Due Pini's accounts have been improved by the availability of one of the three houses on the property and, according to budgetary projections, this should allow us to balance the budget, in addition to the brothers' involvement in the running of the house, the continued good control of expenses and the securing of income.

These highlights were, of course, accompanied by the "must-see" moments of each CGP meeting: the sharing of news from each Province and, where appropriate, the introduction of new Council members (two this time: Fr. Bolivar for the Andean Province and Fr. Benard for the Vice-Province of East Africa), an update on the international commissions established by the General Chapter and on the sessions, the first apostolic appointment of the brothers recently ordained deacons, etc.

In short, a very broad overview, which allows us each time to give thanks for what the Spirit can do through our "little congregation"... and for the gifts we must certainly never stop asking Him for!

Fr. Michel KUBLER (Rome)
with the support of Fr. Benoît
Bigard's daily "fil rouge"



Celebration at Our Lady of Lourdes sanctuary in Buenos Aires.

¹ https://www.assumption.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Madagascar_Ecole-de-brousse.pdf<https://www.centrulpetrusiandrei.ro/>

² For a daily summary of the CGP sessions, see the "fil rouge" posted on the Congregation's website: <https://www.assumption.org/fr/nouvelles>

“What is right and good for our Congregation”

On Wednesday, June 11, at the end of this 4th session of the Plenary General Council held in Buenos Aires, the Superior General delivered a closing address, the main points of which are as follows:

“My dear brothers,

(...) The Assumption has faced various challenges throughout its history. I firmly believe that for each moment in history, there have been brothers to respond to the challenges of that time. In this sense, I say to myself, today it is our turn.

We are coming to the end of this 4th Plenary General Council of our mandate. We have not hesitated to name the situations that could discourage us. But we have faced them with courage, in frank dialogue, combining clarity about reality and hope in the One who is the true master of the project, as I said on the first day.

The pursuit of good for our Congregation, our Provinces, and our works has been the driving force behind our preparations; it has nourished our discussions throughout these meetings, and it continues to inspire us as we prepare to return to our mission areas.

I say this sincerely: as I listened to you, I perceived the sincerity of this deep desire to do, or to propose, what is just and good for our Congregation. Thank you for doing so with charity. (...) Those who participated for the first time will leave, I believe, with a little more hope. The good news has outnumbered the bad,

and this is a comfort to us. To the members of the General Curia, a sincere thank you for this “working together” that continues to grow. This is truly the synodal spirit that we seek to live: when the burden is carried together, it always becomes a little lighter. (...)

These words of Father Emmanuel d'Alzon at the end of the 1868 General Chapter should awaken in us this sense of duty. He said: *“Now, my Brothers... let us bless God for having inspired in us these unanimous views, these energetic resolutions that we all promise to develop and maintain with fervor and intelligence. Let us always have for one another this affection of true religious, based on respect and the need to hold each other tightly together; let us form a single body in the sincerity of our souls and the loyal frankness of our relationships; may our indissoluble bond be Jesus Christ.”*

I return to these words to share a wish that lives deeply within me: that our next meeting be above all a sharing of good news, testifying that we have, as Father d'Alzon said, sought to develop and preserve with fervor and intelligence the fruits of our exchanges.

So, courage, my brothers! May God grant you the grace to be happy in your lives and your

respective missions. Thank you sincerely; it really makes me want to see you again as soon as possible.

I still remember the words of the hymn we sang last week:

May our unity be perfect. May our joy be perfect! So the world may know the works of God.

If these words seem like a dream or a simple wish, may they at least become, as Saint Augustine asks, our prayer.

It is with gratitude that I conclude these CGP meetings, which have been not only a space for reflection, but also for life, encounter, prayer, and, why not, a true place for learning. We have the privilege of experiencing this “little CAFI” twice a year.

May the fruits of our exchanges and meetings accompany us on the path of sharing, allow us to grow in faith and strengthen our bonds of shared responsibility. May what has been sown here flourish fully in our lives and our missions.

Thank you.

First apostolic nominations

The « first apostolic nomination » of all religious at the completion of their formation is set within the scope of the PGC and published at the time of their priestly ordination (for religious brothers: at their Perpetual Profession). Here are the nominations received by the religious ordained to the priesthood since one year:

• AFRICA

- **KAHUNGU TWABATWA Éphrem**: Kasando, for parish work with the young and teaching at the Institute of Itsu.
- **MUSAFIRI MUHITSYA Jean**: Beni Butsili, for school, the parish and the local economy.
- **KATEMBO MASIMENGO Frédéric**: Butembo-Mahamba, as a teacher of religion and responsible for a store.
- **LUKALA BURU Freddy**: Rome (February 2025), a language apprenticeship for six months followed by formation as a formator.

• EAST AFRICA

- **Boniface ANDABWA MAKOMBE**: Digodigo, for parish work occupied with the finances for the school of Peace and for pastoral care of missionary children. After 3 years studying in France for becoming a teacher.
- **Gregory KIMANI KURIA**: Eldoret, for parish work and self-financing (in agriculture and breeding), in collaboration with the economy of the vice-province.
- **Felix KERIGA ATUNGA**: the Kizito Novitiate of Arusha, for one year, as a member of the team working on a formation project for formators.
- **Julius JAGEN**: Murutunguru, for parish work and for the purpose of rebuilding that community.

- **Vicent MUTEGEKI**: in France, for a formation of formators.

• NORTH AMERICA

- **Dominic MBAEZE**: Brighton, for a canonical license in fundamental theology at Boston College, and periodic collaboration with Bayard.

• EUROPE

- **Joachim NGUYEN MANH Hung**: Jérusalem, to accompany pilgrims, to work in the local Church, with a focus on ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.
- **Augustin YAMBA**: Paris-Morère, for a formation on ecumenism at ISEO (Catholic Institute).
- **Rodrigue OUEDRAOGO**: Sokodé-Noviciate, to help with delegated duties, and to work in the parish at Komah ; in 2026, the possibility of studying Islamology.
- **Armél YONI**: Ouagadougou, to work for one year as a chaplain in the hospital, followed by two years of study in medical biology.
- **Dominique NGUYEN VAN Tho**: A Ba Ria, for social accompaniment (Restaurants of the heart, etc.)
- **Joseph PANAGUITON**: Digos, in the parish and working with youth and vocations in the Philippines.
- **Jovie KOUÉPOU KOUÉPOU**: Vincennes, to prepare for work as a journalist at Bayard.
- **Pavel TINYAKOV**: Montpellier, Parish work, particularly among children and youth.

- **Clément LÖBEL**: Strasbourg-Orangerie, to work with youth and for vocations.

• MADAGASCAR

- **Simon Jean Richard RAFANOMEZANTSOA**: Ejeda, engaged in education and in pastoral parish work.
- **Tojo Jean Pierrot RAKOTOARISOA**: Provincial House in Tulear, parish work in the Bas Fiherena district with emphasis on working with youth.
- **Claude Orlando RAVELONIRINA**: Belemboaka, for a chaplaincy in the university.
- **Julien RAZANAJATOVO**: (nomination has been amended): Rome (February 2025), for a six-month language apprenticeship followed by formation of a formator.

RELIGIOUS BROTHER HAVING MADE PERPETUAL PROFESSION AND NOT SEEKING ORDINATION:

- **Casimir KOUWAMA (Europe)**: Sokodé-Noviciate, for the service of finance for the Vicariate of West Africa.

Religious and laity facing the challenges of Latin America

From May 5 to May 30, Father General undertook his canonical visit of the Andean Province. Fr. João Gomez, who accompanied him, addresses the scope of the Assumption in these four countries.

The history of the Assumptionists in South America is marked by the extraordinary missionary adventure of the ten first religious (5 brothers and 5 priests), French in origin, who traveled the Atlantic and disembarked in the region of Rengo-Mendoza, in Chile, in 1890. The desire and creativity was not lacking from these pioneers who got involved from the start, with intuitions firmly rooted in the charism and spirituality of the Assumption. They quickly founded an apostolic school, and the celebrated Basilica of St. Anne in the center of Rengo.

We might say that the Assumption wrote its one-hundred-year history on the continent with much audacity and supernatural spirit. Today, we find exemplary figures in the memory of the Chileans, as well as the other countries that make up the Andean Province: Argentina, Colombia, and Ecuador, the last foundation at the occasion of the 100 year celebration of the presence of the Assumptionists on the continent. In addition to the happy living memory of countless lay people, statues, streets, and honorary plaques bear witness to a life dedicated to serving the Kingdom of God in the Andes.

The Andean Province, during its development, has always been linked to the history of the Brazilian Province by notable figures, of whom some are already in eternal life. The collaboration among the responsible brothers, whether it was for animation and the government or for the formation of new religious, has always been a constant and continues to bear fruit.

The communities

Today, the Province includes 35 religious spread through 8 communities: 5 in Chile (Rengo, Lota, Valparaíso, in the capital Santiago-El Golf and Lourdes), 2 in the capital of Argentina (Santos Lugares and Martín Coronado/CIFA), 1 in the capital of Colombia (Bogotá) and 1 in Ecuador (Riobamba). All of them are international. There persists an atmosphere of fraternity and welcome, a spirit of collaboration and sacrifice in the pastoral work. Some are very far from others, like Riobamba in Ecuador and Deo Dati in Colombia.

The Province has apostolic fields that are very different. Our brothers are engaged in pastoral work in parishes and sanctuaries, education in four schools, communication and social action.

The parishes

The community of *Riobamba*, composed of only three religious, is responsible for a vast pastoral area, essentially rural and characterized by a strong indigenous presence. It comprises the Parish of San Pedro de Licán, situated at the base of Chimborazo and composed of around twenty basic ecclesial communities (CEB). At the request of the bishop, our community collaborates in solidarity with a local church that has limited resources. Our brothers are challenged to give priority to their daily life of prayer and fraternity in the face of the many demands for help, for celebrations of the sacraments, for visits to the sick, for typical traditional feasts, toward animation and accompaniment of economic and pastoral councils, and participation of diocesan activities and toward their consecrated life.

The parishes of *Rengo* and *Valparaíso* are a hundred years old. Like in the other countries, our religious count on the engagement of a large number of laity in all aspects of the parish, the movements and the social works. Many are part of the Alliance and are proud to belong to the family for decades, having walked together through a number of crises and difficult situations. Their maturity and spirituality are remarkable, as well as their love for the Congregation.

The parishes in the big capitals, like *El Golf*, *Lourdes* at Santiago and *Lourdes* at Buenos Aires, live with the typical challenges of large metropolitan areas in Latin America: a notable disparity among the rich and the poor, the phenomenon of migration and the lack of employment, the devotions and popular piety, the disintegration of families, the reduction of marriages. . .

In sanctuaries in particular, the faithful see entire families of foreign origin are interested in religious practice, seeking spiritual support and the possibility of belonging to a group. Our brothers strive to educate the faithful to welcome and integrate all. Fortunately, many are already involved in various services and activities. Entire families of foreign origin are interested in religious practice, seeking spiritual support and the possibility of belonging to a group. Our brothers strive to educate the faithful to welcome and integrate all. Fortunately, many are already involved in various services and activities.

In apostolic works, one must underline the devotion to Notre-Dame de Lourdes, where the most popular expression is found in our two sanctuaries of Santiago (Chili) and of Buenos

Aires (Argentina). The popular devotion is an ecclesiastical richness in this land marked by much historical and political upheaval since the colonial period. With their local culture, composed of musical diversity, folk dancing and typical foods, the area offers a dynamism and beauty toward Catholicism.

Undoubtedly, in taking into account the different apostolic areas in the Province, we see a fragility of human resources due to the small number of religious. They are appreciated and supported, and they work to the limit of their possibilities and try to find time to think and act differently for a pastoral that is more missionary.

Youth and vocations

Contrary to what is often said in the media about an obvious secularism, with the absence of young people in the churches, we note the notable and participative presence of young people in almost all our sites. Some of them come with the desire to learn more about the Assumption proposal, even as a fundamental option.

In the case of the community of formation Deo Dati in Bogota, three religious accompany the discernment process of four postulants, and they bring some pastoral attention to the College Emmanuel d'Alzon and for the works of Mi Hogar Asuncionista. The large chapel of the school is open for Mass and daily devotions. The house in the region of Nisa, with its structure as a house of formation is actually empty at this time and could house a new community with a new apostolate.

The origins of our candidates make us wonder: two from Ecuador, one from Costa Rica (where we are not present), and

one of Venezuelan origin, who knew the Congregation while taking residence in Chili. He is now preparing in Columbia to go to the novitiate in Brazil. It's a vocation that reflects a migratory aspect. This is a great hope and a huge challenge for the formators.

In Riobamba, a young deacon, Daniel Magin, accompanies the awakening and the first discernment of candidates. His exposure to certain services of animation for the diocese will be a help. With the support of other brothers, these youth can be welcomed into activities and celebrations for an integration that can bring new fruits for the Province.

Lay Religious-Alliance

Each community of the Province is connected to a group of laity of the Alliance. With experiences, plans, different times and rhythm, each group assumes its Assumptionist identity, their love for Fr. d'Alzon and their engagement in different apostolates, developed by the Province. This sense of belonging extends to a wide range of liturgical, catechetical, pastoral, social and media services (magazines and social networks). Women are in the majority in the animation of ecclesial communities and in social and welfare organizations such as Caritas and Mi Hogar, present in Chile, Colombia and Argentina.

A particular focus is toward the pastoral care of migrants, already a reality at the sanctuary of Santos Lugares and also a dream for those in Santiago. Sadly, this was interrupted by the pandemic. The lay members of the Alliance feel challenged by this phenomenon, and are keen to find ways of showing greater solidarity with those



Meeting with lay people in Lota (Chile).

who need it most, and who find it most difficult to integrate into the Quinta Normal (Santiago) community.

This area, originally inhabited by pre-Hispanic populations, is now modernized with subways, parks, plazas, condominiums, avenues, banks, a variety of stores, health and educational facilities, and counts on the presence of many rural migrants and international immigrants, mainly from Venezuela, Peru and Colombia. Because of its international character, the Alliance could inspire a good proposal for welcoming this population.

Unfortunately, the Alliance proposal has not yet been taken up by all religious. By its very nature, it integrates two parties, laity and religious, and needs to gain in awareness. The Alliance is not a personal option for each religious, but a reality inherent in the charism of the Assumption. Some work with more conviction and openness than others, but fortunately all are committed to the needs that this dimension of Assumptionist life demands: planned and articulated formation between the parties, face-to-face meetings,

the desire to renew the mission, the challenge of strengthening and including young people in the composition of the groups.

Colleges

The Andean Province has four schools: College of Emmanuel d'Alzon at Bogota, Colegio Bicentenario Manuel d'Alzon in Lota, Colegio San Roman and Colegio Nuestra Señora de Lourdes in Buenos Aires. All are very well established and renowned in their domains. Teachers, students and all responsible demonstrate a real sense of belonging. They have a sense of family and fraternity in all their establishments, that goes beyond the workplace. Sometimes, the schools go from generation to generation. Today, some former students work in the institutions and enroll their children and grand-children.

Much reflection is needed and many strategies to face the challenges that are confronting them. The drop in the birth rate is making itself felt at enrolment time, although student numbers remain reasonable thanks to the tireless work of those in charge. Among the Assumptionists, Father Juan Carlos Marzolla has

been involved in this ministry for over 20 years. Faced with the temptations of competitiveness, the challenge is to maintain the Catholic and Assumptionist identity of the institution, attracting members on the basis of religious, community and social values.

The College of Lota distinguishes itself by the number of students who belong to other Christian denominations, in particular evangelical and Pentecostal. The city is populated by 80% Protestants, which creates a challenge for the direction of the school. The community that supports this work should find ways to integrate this situation with favorable strategies. What appeared to be a challenge can actually be an open door to a dimension of our charism somewhat less evident in the context of ecumenism.

That this missionary adventure, following in the steps of the venerable Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon, continue to be inspired and supported by Christ, our Hope. *Advenial Regnum Tuum!*

Fr. João GOMES DA SILVA
Assistant general (Rome)

Jubilee of Hope celebration in Mexico

The parish of Tlilapan has a double celebration in 2025, both the Holy Year of the whole Church and the 25-year jubilee of the Diocese of Orizaba.



The Assumptionist community of Casa Manuel, located in the parish of Santiago Apóstol de Tlilapan in the state of Veracruz and in the diocese of Orizaba, is participating in the Jubilee of Hope called for by Pope Francis last year. In fact, we have started the jubilee celebrations early, as our diocese is celebrating the 25th anniversary of its founding.

The parish in which we work belongs to the Deanery of Tequila and serves some of the indigenous communities of Nahuatl origin in the Sierra Zongolica. The eight

parishes that make up the Deanery have agreed, under the guidance of our dean, the Assumptionist priest Oswaldo García Sánchez, to celebrate the jubilee in our indigenous area.

We proposed the opening of a jubilee door in the indigenous area to facilitate the pilgrimage of our brothers and sisters belonging to the native peoples of the mountainous area of the State of Veracruz. Our proposal was accepted and on June 15th the jubilee door was opened in the Parish of San Pedro de Tequila, the



oldest in the deanery, as its foundation dates back to the colonial period in the 16th century.

Since we took over the parish of Santiago Apóstol we have tried to insist on respect for the indigenous Nahuatl culture of our area, the promotion of indigenous identity and language, the preservation and practice of their ancestral traditions, evangelization through their customs and traditions, that is to say an inculturated evangelization, so we take this opportunity to give an indigenous face to the celebration of the jubilee.

All the masses were celebrated with indigenous symbols such as the welcoming with incense, xochicoscatl, xochimani, sones and dance in the entrance procession, reading of the Word of God in Nahuatl, reception of the offerings with traditional sounds and music bands, altar service with acolytes dressed in indigenous costumes, incensation of the gospel, the altar, the ministers and the images by a lay person with incense and copal,



offerings of products originating from the indigenous communities, liturgical songs in Nahuatl and conviviality with music and ritual dances at the end.

All the activities of the indigenous jubilee were developed with the triple objective of the indigenous pastoral with which we carry out our pastoral task in the area:

1. to recover, appreciate and promote the religious identity of our peoples
2. to recognize, strengthen and spread the indigenous richness that is manifested in their faith, their festivals, their land and their culture
3. to reorganize the indigenous pastoral

This work responds to one of the calls of the Church today through Pope Francis, namely, to be a Church that goes forth to en-

counter our brothers and sisters who find themselves on the social and existential peripheries of our world. Indigenous people continue to be a vulnerable group that receives little attention from the Church. We have settled for a pastoral of conservation that only tries to attend to the communities with the celebration of the sacraments and without the accompaniment and human and social promotion that every evangelizing process is called to carry out. We cannot renounce the promotion of human dignity and the rights of individuals when we proclaim the gospel or work to extend the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Fr. Oswaldo GARCIA SANCHEZ
Dean of Tequila

*Article published in "News from the Province of North America",
10/04/2025*

The Assumption at Woluwe



The Woluwe community in Brussels: (from left to right) Bro. Anthony Farah, Fr. André Brombart, Fr. Jean-Marie Kambale Mwamba, Fr. Laurent Bodart, Bro. Pierre Nguyen Van Nam, Fr. David Binidi, Fr. Célestin Kasavolo Mutsamba.

Woluwe-Saint Lambert is a residential community of the greater Brussels area. A unique Assumptionist community is situated there for French-speaking Belgium. It consists of a rustic building connected to a Gothic chapel of the 14th century that houses seven religious from five different countries: the Belgians---Laurent and André, the Congolese---Jean-Marie and Célestin, from Togo---David, the Lebanese---Anthony, and the Vietnamese---Pierre Nam.

The situation of the community is interesting from a pastoral perspective. First, there is our chapel, “Marie-la-Misérable” (named for a young woman of the 14th century, unjustly condemned, who was a hermit), where our community celebrates daily prayer. Only 500 meters from there is the parish church, Notre Dame de l’Assomption (Our Lady of the Assumption), served by

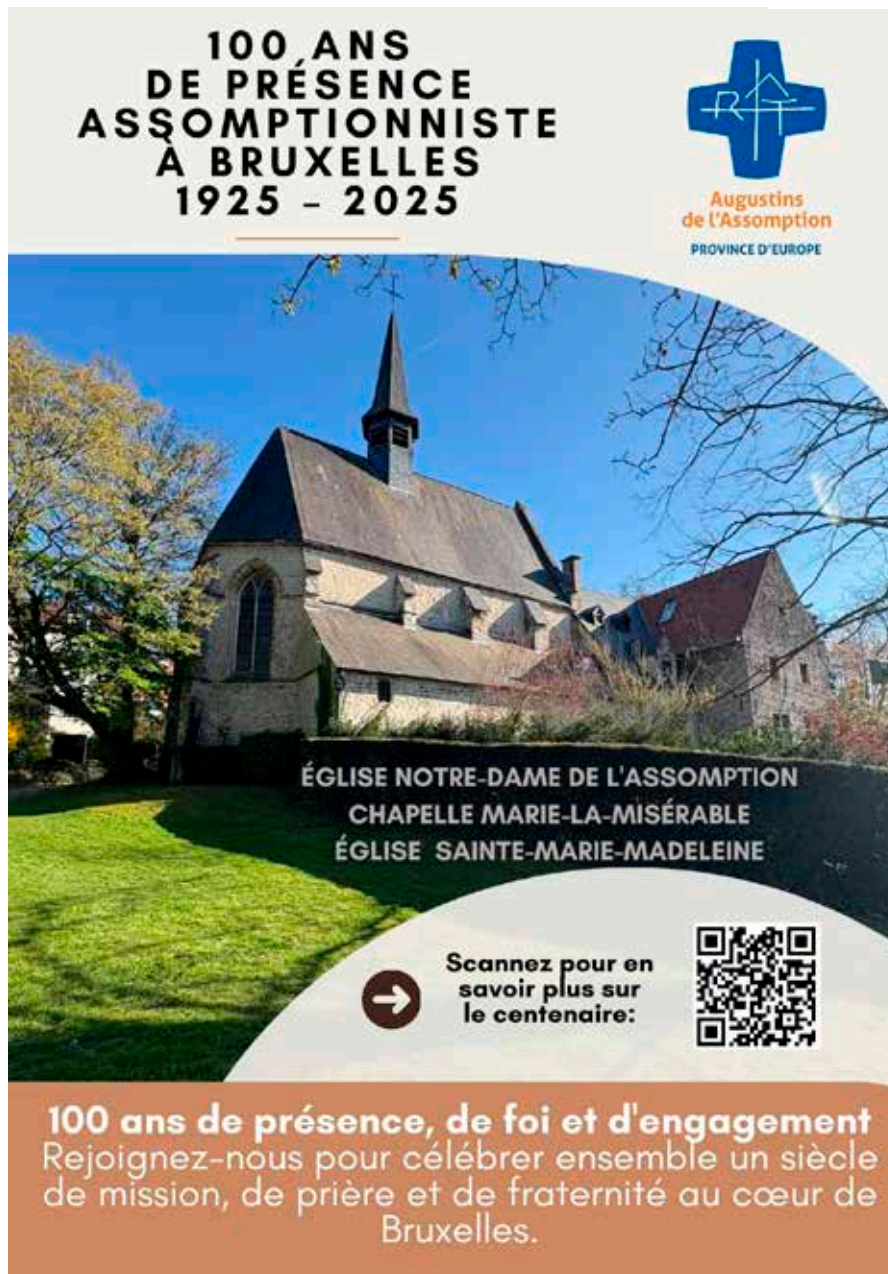
the community. On the other side of a large boulevard, about one hundred meters from the house, is a large university campus, home to the Faculty of Medicine of the Catholic University of Louvain and the Saint-Luc University Hospital. A religious from our community serves as the chaplain for the University. Close to the University is the University Chapel called the “Ecumenical Center” and relegated to the community. Lastly, a hostel (a “kot”, in Walloon) housing eight students was set up on community land, and which the community operates.

In its current form, the Woluwe community is recent. It was taken over by Flemish Assumptionists who began their pastoral work in Woluwe in 1925. Therefore, a centenary is being celebrated by the Assumption of Belgium.

It all started in 1924. It was then that the Assumptionists

arrived in Belgium, planning to establish themselves in the disused church of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine. At this time, Woluwe-Saint-Lambert was a rural area, but it was progressing toward urbanization. A new district was built on the Kapelleveld (literally, “the chapel field”), very close to the Marie-la-Misérable chapel, where the Assumption also wished to establish itself. The owner of this area, the Marquis of Boëssière Thiennes, was in favor of this installation.

In agreement with the diocese, the project was to establish a new parish. The chapel---was officially named “Notre-Dame des Sept Douleurs”---and would serve as the main building for parish worship. In December 1925, the congregation acquired the property of the chapel, of the adjacent house, and of the surrounding land. The chapel became too small very quickly and a wooden church was built in the surroundings, but it was de-



stroyed by fire. A new temporary church was built and inaugurated in 1929. The actual church Notre-Dame de l'Assomption was consecrated on March 17, 1955.

After a great deal of work, the house attached to the chapel of Marie-la-Misérable was converted to an Assumptionist convent in 1949. The religious, who served in the parish, performed various parish duties: publication, pilgrimages, religious instruction. When the province of

Belgium split into Dutch-speaking "North" and French-speaking "South" in June 1963, the Marie-la-Misérable premises (Lenneke Mare, in Dutch) became the home of the North Belgium provincial house, a position it held until 1978.

The Assumption religious had the responsibility of a bilingual parish until 1974, the date of the separation of pastoral care in the two languages in the Brussels region. The first was taken care of by a diocesan priest, while the

second remained the responsibility of the Assumptionists until 1979. The activities of the Woluwe community became independent from the parish, and in 2007, the provincial house was transferred to Leuven. The last two Flemish religious left Woluwe in 2015. Over the years, the house and the chapel have undergone many renovations and restorations, which have sought to maintain their authenticity.

Before the refoundation of a community at Marie-la-Misérable in 2016, the pastoral care of the parish Notre-Dame de l'Assomption was taken care of by an Assumptionist, Fr. Alain Thomasset from the Brussels-Braves community from 2005 to 2008.

Today, the Woluwe community consists of five priests and two young professed in formation. The main focus of the mission is the nearby site of the university, including the chaplaincy of the campus and the Ecumenical Center, where a Eucharist is celebrated every Wednesday for the students. In addition, the community animates the Notre-Dame de l'Assomption Parish, and the Church of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine in the center of Brussels. Two brothers are equally involved in the association of "Les Amis d'Accompagner". Lastly, a priest from the community, Fr. Jean-Marie Mwamba, assumes the responsibility for Sainte-Alix Parish in the neighboring community of Woluwe-Saint-Pierre.

Fr. Laurent BODART
(Woluwe)

Article published in ATLPE n° 46
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The Living Memory of the Council of Nicaea, 1700 Years after

At the initiative of the European Province, a pilgrimage session provided an opportunity to discover Istanbul and Iznik, in addition to updating the “Creed” formulated there for the first time.

On the occasion of the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, the European Province offered a week-long pilgrimage session, organized by the Istanbul-Kadiköy community, with the participation of eight religious and five lay people from across the Province and beyond. This stay, punctuated by visits and lectures, allowed them to engage in a historical and theological exchange on faith and Christianity in this land of Asia Minor.

Nicaea, in Christian memory, is above all the Creed, known as the Nicene-Constantinople Creed, established during the first council of the same name in 325 and completed by that of Constantinople in 381. Father Claudio Monge, an Italian Dominican living in Turkey for 24 years, described its historical, ecclesial, and political context during a conference on Nicaea and the humanization of God. In the midst of the Arian controversy questioning the divinity of Christ, this council, convened and presided over by Emperor Constantine, brought together 200 bishops in his summer palace in present-day Iznik – whose Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman ruins we visited, a two-hour drive from Istanbul. They drafted a synthesis of the twenty or

so professions of faith then existing in the Churches according to the various cultural and spiritual traditions. This first council in history was thus a tool in the struggle of orthodoxy against heresy to maintain the unity of the Empire by resolving a problem of public order as well as a theological one. (1) It also emphasized the importance of translating the Semitic and biblical revelations on Creation and the Incarnation into Hellenistic language.

Father Apollinaire, a Franciscan and theologian from the Democratic Republic of Congo, will extend this historical and theological journey by introducing us to the three following councils of the 4th and 5th centuries: Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon. After the 1st Council of Constantinople, completing Nicaea on the Holy Spirit, which took place in the Church of Saint Irene (or of Divine Peace) next to the Topkapi Palace in old Istanbul, that of Ephesus in 431 returned to the humanity of Christ in the midst of the Nestorian crisis and that of Chalcedon – the present-day Kadiköy, in the Asian part of Istanbul where Our Lady of the Assumption is located – in 451 to the two natures of Christ to fight against monophysitism.

Between these lectures, participants were able to explore Istanbul, using public transportation daily to cross the Bosphorus, which separates the European side from the Asian side, where they were welcomed both to the Assumptionist community and to the nearby Christian Brothers' High School. These excursions—on foot, by bus, by tram, on the Marmarai metro under the Bosphorus, and by public boat—allowed us to discover Istanbul life and the diversity of its population. We were able to tour the mosques (Hagia Sophia, Blue Mosque), enter the Grand Bazaar and the Egyptian market, visit the cathedral and the Catholic churches of Saint Mary, Saint Anthony, and Our Lady of Lourdes, and pay our respects there, as well as the Bulgarian and Ukrainian churches, and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Phanar. These visits illustrated a conference by Father Eleuthère, another Congolese Franciscan, who has been in Istanbul for 22 years, on Christians in Turkey today, presenting a minority, even ghetto, ecumenism. He deplored the lack of inculturation of the Churches present there (Armenian, Bulgarian, Chaldean, Evangelical, Greek Orthodox, Latin, Russian, Syriac, Ukrainian), apart from the Catholics' insistence on

¹ See the brochure *“At the Sources of Faith: The Council of Nicea-Iznik, May-June 325.” A brief presentation*, written by the Assumptionist Yves Plunian and published by Our Lady of the Assumption of Kadiköy.



the Turkish language as a link between its diverse members of different rites and origins, made up of transient populations in a process of migration. Christians are in fact only between 0.2 and 0.5% in a very diverse Muslim population, torn between a secular tendency and a very religious one. They are therefore called to a life of generosity based on the Gospel, especially since Christian institutions do not have legal status in Turkey, apart from the Greek Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic Patriarchates. In interreligious dialogue, they must prioritize a theology of friendship and service. Churches are the primary venues for this dialogue, as 80% of them are visited by Muslims.

The issue of human rights—visiting prisoners, welcoming migrants, etc.—is the primary area where Christians are expected to contribute. We confirmed this by visiting the local Caritas team, led by Fr. Milad Yacoub, who, along with his colleagues, presented to us their daily work with migrants—currently most-

ly Syrians and Africans—on issues of health, rent, legal status, and education. This last area of action is carried out in conjunction with the Salesians of Don Bosco, housed in the same premises of the bishopric, who carry out actions of schooling, education in non-violence, participation and co-responsibility, social mediation and reconciliation work, for 160 children of around thirty countries.

Milad, drawing on the work of religious from previous generations, including Father Xavier Jacob, presented us with a timeline of the Assumption in Turkey, with numerous photos allowing us to clearly visualize the evolution of the fifteen or so communities born in Ottoman lands, often accompanied by the establishment of Oblate Sisters of the Assumption. What is striking is the investment this represented, with the opening and then closing of houses, the construction of three churches, the offering of both the Latin and Byzantine rites, the training of many young locals, and more. Today,

the Assumptionist presence in Turkey consists of three brothers—Togolese, Congolese, and Egyptian—as well as a French bishop emeritus, Bishop Louis Pelâtre, Vicar Apostolic of Istanbul from 1992 to 2016, with whom we were able to celebrate at the Little Sisters of the Poor where he resides. There is also a Turkish brother in France, and Byzantine research centers are now established in France and Romania. The Kadiköy community runs a Latin parish in two places of worship, whose faithful we had the joy of meeting while celebrating Sunday Mass with these few Turkish members, migrants, or descendants of French Levantines. We were also able to visit the former Assumptionist church of Kumkapou, the former Latin and Greek seminary; we were welcomed by the Syrian Orthodox community and those from the Eritrean church now celebrating in our church in Kadiköy and our chapel in Fenerbahçe, located within a sports center, where the brothers still celebrate. Finally, we were able to pay our respects at the French cemetery of Pangalti in Feriköy, where many Assumptionists are buried. This program, alternating between lectures and visits, allowed us to experience a fraternal and convivial time in the spirit of the Assumption, while discovering the past and present of the Christian and Assumptionist presence in Turkey. Many thanks to the community that welcomed us so warmly, as well as to the French high school of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and to Viktors, assistant to the Provincial, who initiated this project.

Vincent Fauvel

*(layman of the Assumption,
Albertville)*

Leo XIV, a Profoundly Augustinian Augustine

When the new Pope XIV appeared on May 8 in the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica, there was emotion, but even more so was the joy of seeing a religious of the Order of Saint Augustine succeed the Apostle Peter.

I had the good fortune to meet Father Robert Prevost at the Union of Superiors General (USG) between 2011 and 2013. After being appointed Superior General of the Augustinians of the Assumption, during my first USG Semiannual Assembly, Father Prevost made a point of welcoming me as a member of the Augustinian family. The Assumptionists have been affiliated with the Order of Saint Augustine since the beginning of their congregation.

Father Prevost appeared to me as a delicate and humble man. He exudes both gentleness and inner strength. Discovering the assembly of superiors general, where there are more than 120 at each session, he insisted on receiving me as an Augustinian brother. I believe that one of the principal characteristics of Augustinian life is evangelical fraternity. The common life requested by Saint Augustine is contained in these few words from the Rule he wrote: *"Above all, live unanimously at home, having one mind and one heart turned toward God."* I believe that here we have one of the hallmarks of the Holy Father: the fraternal welcome of others.

Augustinian spirituality is present in his personality. Three words sum up quite well the main orientations of the Bishop of Hippo: Unity, Truth, Charity.



Fr. Robert Francis Prevost (center), then Prior General of the Order of Saint Augustine.

From the first speech of the new Pope, the call for Peace and Unity was evident. Augustine dedicated his entire life to the Church being one. He was a peacemaker in quarrels, particularly with the Donatists, who flouted the unity of the Church through their actions. Leo XIV's motto, *"In illo uno unum"* (in the one Christ we are one), recalls Augustine's commentary on Psalm 127.

Augustine always sought to reconcile the diverse sensitivities that existed within the Church. Father Prevost, particularly in Peru, was a bishop who worked to bring peace to his diocese. This is true, because Augustine was the "theologian of service" of the Church in North Africa, as Father

Goulven Madec, a great connoisseur of Augustinian work, put it. The truth is Christ. He is both the Homeland to which we are going and the Way by which we travel (*Sermon 123, 3, 3*). The new Pope is a man whose spirituality is Christocentric: the total Christ, head and body.

Finally, charity. The Prior General of the Order of Saint Augustine was an active missionary in Peru. He cares for the poor and for creation. It is no coincidence that he chose to take the name Leo to mark his attachment to the figure of Saint Leo the Great, but I also believe in that of Leo XIII, who was the pope of the Church's social doctrine. The principle of subsidiarity, derived from the en-



Leo XIV's pectoral cross, donated on his accession to the cardinalate, contains relics of St. Augustine, St. Monica and Blessed members of the Order.

cyclical *Rerum Novarum*, is also a call to synodality put forward by Pope Francis and which Pope Leo will take up in his footsteps. How can we not hear again what the Pope said, quoting Augustine: “With you I am a Christian, for you I am a bishop.” » (Sermon 340:1)

One day, while preaching at the Basilica of Peace in Hippo, Augustine became weary from the intense activity he was carrying out for the good of the Church. A weariness set in, and the Bishop of Hippo said these astonishing words to the faithful: “What use are my sermons? (...) What use is my life? The sole purpose is that we may finally come together to live the life of Christ!” (Sermon 17:2) Augustine was a pastor entirely dedicated to the service of the People of God. Let us hope that Leo XIV will follow his example.

Fr. Benoît GRIÈRE,
Lyon

(article published on May 14, 2025 in
L'Osservatore Romano,
weekly edition in French)

“In illo uno unum”: united in Christ

It was quite naturally in Saint Augustine that Pope Leo XIV found the motto of his pontificate, which he already used as bishop of Peru.

In the first days following Leo XIV's election, everyone was eager to scrutinize his first speeches in an attempt to discern the pope he would become. Predictions are always risky, but the motto he chose nevertheless sheds light on the spirit that animates him. In illo uno unum, which could be translated as “One in the one who is one.” Some would say that we haven't made much progress! This formula comes from a homily by Augustine, the *Commentary on the Psalm (Enarratio in Psalmum)* 127.3, which may shed some light on the pope's plan.

Commentary on Psalm 127

In his homily, Augustine comments on Psalm 127. He quickly encounters a difficulty. This psalm announces the happiness of those who fear the Lord: “Your wife will be like a fruitful vine in your house, and your children like olive plants around the table” (Ps 127:3). Does this mean that the Lord only gives an earthly reward? Has He rewarded wicked men who die rich with great descendants? Should we deduce that monks or virgins are cursed by the Lord, those who have neither?

As is often the case, faced with this difficulty, Augustine pulls

out his favorite tool for commenting on the psalms: the theology of Christ the Whole. The motto chosen by the Pope appears in this explanation:

“There is indeed a man who receives the blessing depicted in the Psalm; and no one fears the Lord unless he is one of the members of that man; so that there are many men and one man, just as there are many Christians and one Christ. All Christians, with their head placed in heaven, are one Christ. He is not one and we many, but we are many, forming one in him who is one (in illo uno unum). Christ is therefore one man, the head and the body. What is his body? his Church, the Apostle telling us that we are the members of his body (Eph 5:30) and again: You are the body and members of Christ (1 Cor 12:27). (Commentary on Psalm 127:3. Trans. Vivès, vol. 15, p. 114)

The man spoken of here is none other than Christ, the man blessed by God par excellence. He is the one who has had abundant descendants, through all the men and women who have come to faith. If we are inserted into Christ, we will also have a share in his happiness.

The Theology of Christ-Total

Augustine was fond of this theology, which he regularly returns to in his commentaries on the Psalms. As the Epistle to the Ephesians affirms, the Church is the body of Christ. This body has a head, Christ himself, and members, Christians. While the head has already ascended to heaven, the members toil on earth, but with the firm hope that one day they will be in heaven with the head, the risen Christ.

Through their baptism, Christians are thus grafted onto this body, the Church, which allows them to be in relationship with Christ. The bond is so strong that the head allows itself to speak in place of the members. Thus, when Saul, who has not yet become Paul, pursues the Christians, he is asked: *"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"* (Acts 9:4). The zealous Pharisee persecutes Christians, attacking their head, Christ (cf. *Commentary on Psalm 138:1*). Similarly, in the psalms, it is the voice of Christ that is heard, sometimes through Christ himself, sometimes through Christians. Augustine then speaks of the "Total Christ."

The Unity of the Church

In the midst of this development, the expression *"We are many, but one in the one"* illustrates the paradox with which Augustine plays to overcome the exegetical difficulties of the psalm. As Christians, we are therefore both multiple and one. Multiple, because we are numerous and very different, but fundamentally one, because we are incorporated into Christ, the only Son of God. We find the same idea in the prologue to the Rule of Saint Augustine: *"Above all, live in unum (united) at home."* » (*Rule of Saint Augustine* 1, 2)

Attachment to Christ

Leo XIV's motto also suggests a path to Church unity. Rather than starting with institutional agreements - which may one day happen - Augustin proposes a more spiritual path. Being firmly attached to Christ will enable to overcome existing divisions. We can imagine that this is undoubtedly the project of the new pope who, faithful to the Augustinian tradition, seeks above all to put Christ at the center, in order to

base all his action on him and overcome divisions. In Assumptionist language, this would translate as: "He who unites us is stronger than that which separates us" (RV 8)!

Fr. Nicolas POTTEAU
(Saint-Lambert-des-Bois, France)



The papal emblem of Leo XIV

The new pope's coat of arms is based on that of Bishop Robert Francis Prevost as Bishop of Chiclayo in Peru: a shield divided diagonally into two parts. The left part has a blue background and depicts a white lily. The lower part has a light background and depicts an image reminiscent of the Order of Saint Augustine: a closed book on which lies a heart pierced by an arrow. This image recalls Saint Augustine's conversion experience, which he explained with the words *"Vulnerasti cor meum verbo tuo"* ("You have pierced my heart with your Word").

Leo XIV also confirmed his episcopal motto, *"In Illo uno unum,"* which he himself had explained to the Vatican media in July 2023, after his appointment as Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops: *"As my episcopal motto shows, unity and communion are part of the charism of the Order of Saint Augustine and also of my way of acting and thinking. I think it is very important to promote communion in the Church, and we know very well that communion, participation, and mission are the three key words of the Synod. So, as an Augustinian, promoting unity and communion is fundamental for me. Saint Augustine speaks a lot about unity in the Church and the need to live it."*

Its episcopal coat of arms is now complemented by specifically pontifical insignia:

- the keys of Saint Peter, in reference to the power to bind and loose granted by Christ to the Apostle and his successors (Mt 16:19): the gold one represents the power of heaven, the silver one, power on earth;
- the miter of the Bishop of Rome, which replaces Cardinal Prevost's hat. In 2005, Benedict XVI refused to affix the pontifical tiara to his emblem; Francis and Leo XIV followed suit, preferring to inscribe the episcopal miter.

What is the status of the Assumptionist causes in Rome?

Several religious have files under consideration at the Vatican for their beatification, at varying stages.



Fr. Claude Etienne PERNET (1824-1899)

(Prot. No. 275: Positio on a supposed miracle that occurred in the diocese of Fianarantsoa)

The founder of the Little Sisters of the Assumption was declared Venerable on May 14, 1983, by Pope John Paul II. The Church thus recognizes that Fr. Pernet practiced the Christian virtues in an extraordinary manner: faith, charity, hope; courage, prudence, temperance, justice; chastity, poverty, obedience, and humility. To this end, historians have examined his biography and writings, including his lectures, the archives of our congregations, and everything written about him. They considered the documents gathered during the diocesan investigation in Paris to be complete, authentic, and sufficient to affirm the heroic nature of his virtues and the continuity of his reputation for holi-

ness. A commission of theologians then delivered its opinion on the merits. Their report was favorable: his life and work were deemed exemplary.

When a “Servant of God”—a term used to designate a candidate for canonizable sainthood—becomes “Venerable” by official decree signed by the Holy Father, it signifies to the Church that his or her sanctity is already more than probable. But this judgment is merely a human opinion. In her wisdom, the Church asks the Lord to confirm her discernment by performing a miracle. And as Thomas Aquinas reminds us, “*only God can perform a miracle.*” We have no control over this stage of the cause. God performs miracles when and how He wills.

Since 1983, we have been awaiting the miracle. In the past, many graces have been obtained through the intercession of Father Pernet. We have collected the “signs” of these blessings up to today. But we had no “miracle” to present to Rome. ►

In the majority of cases, the miracle concerns an unexplained healing. A person is cured of a serious illness, instantly or very quickly, completely and permanently, that is, without relapse. The miracle concerns the healing of a disease deemed serious or incurable, or the manner of the healing: extraordinarily rapid, in the absence of adequate treatment or without the usual after-effects. Deprived of scientific explanations, doctors can only remain silent in the face of this type of “supernatural” healing, and recognition of the miracle becomes possible.

Sidonie’s healing in 2015 in the diocese of Fianarantsoa (Madagascar) falls precisely within this framework. We therefore asked the bishop of the diocese to investigate the alleged miracle. The diocesan phase of the trial took place at the beginning of 2023. Its purpose was to collect documentary evidence (medical records, clinical records, para-clinical examinations, x-rays, treatments, etc.) and the opinion of two doctors from the inspection service to certify that the cure was complete. Other important evidence collected during the diocesan trial: the statements of witnesses, if possible in person, that is, eyewitnesses who knew, housed, or cared for Sidonie during her illness, to recount the events as they happened.

The acts and documents relating to this diocesan investigation were filed under seal with the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints in July 2023. We obtained their “public copy,” requested an examination of the validity of the investigation, and obtained the decree of legal validity. We are currently drafting the summary of the miracle to submit to two doctors from the Dicastery. For

Sidonie’s case to be presented before the Medical Consultation, at least one of them must be in favor. Composed of five or seven doctors, the latter will decide by majority vote whether the healing was “exceptional,” in other words, “outside the natural order.” The doctors exercise this responsibility after exchanging their opinions on the diagnosis, the prognosis of the illness, its treatment, and, of course, the cure.

All documents from the diocesan investigation must be translated into Italian and transcribed according to a very precise procedure that allows the doctors and then the theologians to express their opinions. Since this is an investigation into the miracle, the entire Roman procedure is entrusted to the Undersecretary of the Dicastery, Fr. Turek. Once the doctors’ report is submitted, the theologians’ opinion will be essential: they will be particularly interested in the chronology of events, that is, the link between the prayers of the faithful who publicly requested Fr. Pernet’s intercession and Sidonie’s initial healing. The latter should not precede the former. In summary, we must provide proof of the healing and establish, through the testimonies gathered, that it is linked to the prayers of the faithful and the intercession of Fr. Etienne Pernet.

We are hopeful that Sidonie’s healing, which received no adequate treatment and is now the happy mother of two healthy children, will be recognized as “miraculous.” God’s intervention here seems quite evident. Our current concern is how to present this healing to doctors due to the disappearance of certain documents from the medical file. If doctors question the illness, which was very serious

and advanced in Sidonie’s case, this could lead to a refusal to acknowledge the miracle of her healing. We must therefore carefully draft the Positio and forestall doubts by taking care to explain the socioeconomic context of Sidonie’s illness and that of the hospitals in Fianarantsoa.

The strength of this cause lies in the faith of the faithful who knew Sidonie and prayed for her. For them, Sidonie’s healing is truly the work of God and the fruit of the intercession of Father Etienne Pernet. This gift given to Sidonie must become Father Pernet’s gift of holiness to the universal Church.

To promote the cause of a saint,

it is essential to pray or have others pray (intercessory prayer or novena) publicly: in community, in parish, or in dedicated groups.

It is concretely about asking the Lord for his intercession to obtain healing, especially when a situation seems hopeless: the person is in intensive care, their life is at risk, the doctors have tried everything and no longer know what to do...

It is also about being close to the bereaved families to support them in hope and monitor the concrete progress of the illness; to earn their trust when we ask them.

to testify about the circumstances of the illness and its recovery. Finally, do not forget to write to the Postulator General the account of the grace received...

...at the following address:

postulazioneassunzionisti@assumption.org

Father Joseph Marie-Clément STAUB (1876-1936)

(Prot. No. 1403: Positio on Life, Virtues, and the Fame of Holiness)

Joseph Staub was born on June 2, 1876, in Kaysersberg (Haut-Rhin, a territory annexed by Germany at the time). He grew up in a modest and deeply Christian family. As a child, he felt called to become a priest. This calling was confirmed during his adolescence at the Assumptionist Minor Seminary in Mauville.

He entered the novitiate in Livry in 1896, where he took the name Marie-Clément. He professed his perpetual vows on September 6, 1898. After studying philosophy and theology in Rome and Louvain, he received priestly ordination on March 19, 1904, the feast of Saint Joseph. The congregation entrusted him with the formation of young people, preaching, and hearing confessions. He discovered the Archconfraternity of Prayer and Penance, centered on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, linked to the Basilica of Montmartre in Paris. With the permission of his superiors, he devoted himself to spreading this Archconfraternity.

In 1909, he was sent to Worcester (United States), where the Assumptionists had a “college” attended by the children of French-Canadian immigrants. In addition to his work with young people, he preached in numerous parishes. He then had the idea of founding a women’s religious institute which, under the protection of Saint Joan of Arc, would be dedicated to the service of priests. On Christmas night 1914, our brother founded the community of the Sisters of Saint Joan of Arc, dedicated to the Sacred Heart for priests. In



1917, the community emigrated to Quebec City, where Father Marie-Clément founded the Canadian Montmartre. In 1920, the institute received canonical diocesan status from the Archbishop of Quebec. It would eventually number up to 300 nuns serving in bishoprics, presbyteries, religious houses, or with future priests.

A man of action and prayer, his religious life was marked by apostolic zeal and humility, a spirit of sacrifice, and active and passive penance due to the humiliations he suffered at the hands of his superiors. Having spared no effort, he died prematurely on May 16, 1936, from heart failure at the age of 60. His reputation for holiness and signs was very strong during the diocesan trial (June 7, 1967 - January 13, 1981), but still remained in May 2001 during the supplementary trial. Testimonies recount the graces received, including healings that were borderline inexplicable.

For example, a man living in the United States was cured of a lung disease and then made a pilgrimage to Quebec City every year until his death. The wife of a diplomat, suffering from leukemia, gave birth to a child who was unharmed; unfortunately, the mother died two years later from the consequences of her illness. In the early 1970s, there were 4,000 healings or graces received - which may even seem a bit exaggerated. Pope Francis declared Joseph Staub Venerable on April 3, 2014. The Church has recognized the heroic virtues of his work, his continued reputation for holiness, and the graces he has received. To move forward with beatification, we must now present a miracle confirming the Church’s judgment. Indeed, without a miracle, there can be no beatification (except in the case of martyrdom). This reminds us of the importance of seeking the intercession of Fr. Marie-Clément. ▶

Fr. Matheus van HERKHUIZEN (1915-1973)

(Prot. No. 3440: *Positio* on Life, Virtues, and the Fame of Holiness)

Pierre Canisius van Herkhui-zen was born on July 5, 1915, in the Netherlands. After some hesitation, he took his first vows in 1934 and took the name Fr. Matheus. Over time, his religious vocation joyfully strengthened. He took final vows in October 1937 and received priestly ordination on May 31, 1942.

His dream of going on a mission was delayed by the war. He finally left for Brazil in 1946. In 1953, he was transferred to the Belgian Congo (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). In 1961, he returned to Belgium for a year, before joining his brother for a second time in Brazil. He then devoted himself to the formation of seminarians and parish ministry in Pinhal. His charisma shines through in the celebration of the sacraments, his attention to the poorest, and the vocational guidance of young people.

He died suddenly on April 15, 1973, of a massive heart attack. His reputation for holiness has grown to this day. His burial still attracts a large number of faithful. The diocesan process highlighted his dedication to the service of God and others; his influence came as much from the depth of his spiritual life as from his pastoral zeal.

The Acts of the diocesan investigation were filed under seal at the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints in the spring of 2023. We requested their opening and obtained the “public copy,” which is a duplicate of the diocesan investigation. This allows the Roman Postulator to draft the *Positio* on the merit, virtues, and continuity



of the reputation for holiness.

We then requested the legal validity of this diocesan investigation. The decree of validity, issued on January 8, 2025, means that the investigation of the Diocese of Pinhal is complete and in accordance with the rules of the Church. On April 9, 2025, the Dicastery appointed from among its members the Relatore (rapporteur) of the Cause: Mgr. Paul Pallath will be responsible for drafting the *Positio* with our collaborator, Alessandro Gerundino, a 41-year-old Italian, doctor of literature and philology, who has contributed to the drafting of multiple *positios* and has ten years of experience in this field. The *positio* is a summary of the diocesan investigation that allows theologians to judge its merit. This drafting work has already begun. The goal is to highlight the Christian virtues of Fr. Matheus and, above all, to show that he lived them in an extraordinary (“heroic”) way during his life. The *positio* must also demonstrate that Father Matheus still enjoys a reputation for holiness among the faithful today. Once submitted to the Dicastery, it will be examined by

the historical commission and the commission of theologians responsible for verifying the heroic virtues. Ultimately, if the Ordinary Council of the Dicastery, composed of cardinals and bishops, gives a favorable opinion, the Cardinal Prefect will present to the Pope the summary of the Cause’s progress (the *iter*) and the various opinions, asking him to declare Father Matheus *Venerable*.

Beatification will then be possible, but only after the recognition of a miracle obtained through the intercession of Father Matheus. Another miracle will then be necessary for his canonization. Since Benedict XVI, it has been customary to celebrate beatification in the diocese of origin. Canonization, which only the Pope can celebrate, usually takes place in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. Pope Francis has repeatedly canonized evangelizers and raised to the altars missionaries attentive to the poorest. Father Matheus falls into both categories, and we hope that his holiness will be recognized by Pope Leo XIV. He would then become a model of holiness for the entire Church.

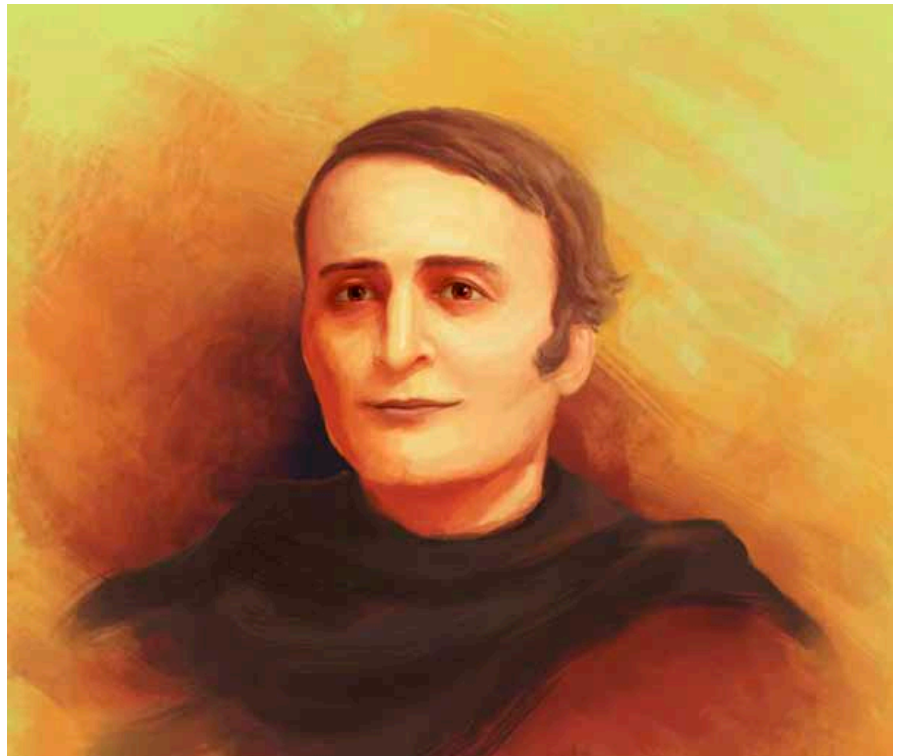
Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon (1810-1880)

(Prot. No. 253: **Positio on Life, Virtues, and the Fame of Holiness**)

Fr. d'Alzon's cause began with a delay, as tensions between France and the Holy See subsided: the expulsion of religious orders, the Combes ministry under Pius X, the modernism of Loisy, the First World War, the *Action Française* movement, and so on. Fifty years after his death, the diocesan trial could finally begin in Nîmes, on May 20, 1932, and continued until December 18, 1932, to which several rogatory sessions in Jerusalem, Paris, and Arras would be added.

The *iter* of the cause would experience a second delay, this time in its Roman phase, which was just as long but without explanation. The *Positio* was not published until 1986, in two volumes. Fr. Baudouin O.M.I., appointed *Relatore* within the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, adds a brief presentation of the Servant of God, along with a biographical profile, a *summarium* of testimonies, and a summary of documents. These are numerous: more than 7,800 letters from our Founder, his conferences, and no fewer than 40 volumes of Alzonian writings are included in the dicastery, to which are added archival documents and everything that has been written about him since his death in 1880.

The votes of the nine theologians charged with pronouncing on the virtues of Fr. d'Alzon on February 12, 1991, are highly laudatory. All speak favorably of the heroic nature of his virtues, the continuity of his reputation for holiness, and the graces received through his intercession. Some even hope that he will



soon be raised to the glory of the altars. The *Relatore* concludes the *Positio* by highlighting some weak points: few eyewitnesses (eyewitnesses were already rare in 1932), no real description of his daily pastoral activity; few details on his missionary work in the East and his role in promoting Christian unity.

We are now in the third phase of the cause and we are experiencing another delay. Let us hope this third delay does not last 50 years! After Pope John Paul II's decree declaring Emmanuel d'Alzon "Venerable" on December 21, 1991, the miracle of declaring him blessed and then saint has been slow in coming. Two explanations are possible: either the Lord is reluctant to recognize Father d'Alzon's sanctity, or the current times are not favorable to him, as has already happened twice in the past.

Each of us must reflect on this "delay" and pray that it does not last until December 21, 2041, the date on which we will cel-

brate the 50th anniversary of the decree of his heroic virtues. When was the last time I publicly requested the grace of healing through Father d'Alzon's intercession? Obtained a special grace through him? Reported an extraordinary healing to the postulator? The Postulator, the Dicastery, and Rome in general do not create saints. However, the prayers of the faithful and our confidence in the holiness of Fr. d'Alzon certainly do. They will one day allow the Church to propose our Founder as a model of holiness to the universal Church, even though his charism has already crossed the boundaries of time, space, and our cultures.

All of Fr. d'Alzon's virtues have been examined; "*he exercised them all in an extraordinary manner*," theologians repeat. Fortunately, patience is among his virtues, for his heirs seem in no hurry to see the Church finally recognize his holiness.

**Fr. Vincent Leclercq,
Postulator General**

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Our deceased brothers



† Father **Jan ZUIKER**, of the European Province, died on May 7, 2025, in Nimègue (Netherlands). His funeral was celebrated on May 15 in the chapel of Wereldhuis in Bostel. He was interred in the cemetery at the Stapelen Park. He was 93.

† Father **Maurice MÉTRAL**, of the Albertville community (European Province), died on May 11, 2025, in Albertville. His funeral was celebrated on May 15 in the chapel of Notre-Dame des Vignes, followed by a burial in the cemetery at Chiriac. He was 94.

† Father **Vincent THOMAS**, of the Layrac community (European Province), died on May 19, 2025, in Layrac. His funeral was celebrated on May 23 in the chapel of Prieuré. It was followed by a burial in the Layrac cemetery. He was 91.

† Father **François LE MAREC**, of the Rio de Janeiro community (Province of Brazil), died on June 22, 2025, in Rio. His funeral was celebrated on June 23 in the Church of St. Sebastian of Mata in Eugenopolis. He was buried in the local cemetery. He was 93.