

RATIO INSTITUTIONIS

Formation

For life and for mission

It's been 30 years that the Congregation has a *Ratio* for formation at its disposal. The first version was promulgated by Fr. Claude Maréchal in 1987. This work was the fruit of the *aggiornamento* requested by the Second Vatican Council. The objective was to form apostles for the world who would be fully committed to the common life and their religious consecration. But with the passage of time, it became necessary to take into account new guidelines of the Holy See and changes in the world. The profile of candidates to Assumptionist life changes quickly as well and our formation for them had to be adapted to new realities. A revised version was undertaken, and a new text was proposed at the 2005 general chapter. Fr. Richard Lamoureux wrote the preface of the second edition of this document that formed several generations of Assumptionists. « Formation for life and for mission » was the title chosen for this guide that presented its aims and indicated what it intended to accomplish.

As Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon used to say, the spirit of the Assumption is decidedly apostolic. It is a question of working for the Kingdom of God in us and around us. « It is up to you to broaden their intelligences and their hearts so that they may grasp the important question of God's cause (...) to have Jesus Christ reign everywhere! » (*Spiritual Writings*, p.693). The *Ratio* has this target in mind: contributing to the formation of apostles who are daring, generous, and selfless.

The 2017 chapter did not overturn the preceding version, that of 2005. It was content with undertaking a few modifications and included certain annexes it considered useful in view of an improved formation process. Internationality has expanded significantly over recent years. The creation of international houses of formation (CIFA) in Kinshasa, Nairobi, Ouagadougou and Buenos Aires contributes to strengthening our desire for an Assumptionist brotherhood that is built in spite of ethnic, linguistic, and national differences. The general chapter established a General Secretariat for Formation. This initiative will allow us to improve our accompaniment of the young and provide an effective support for formators. The first apostolic appointment by the Superior general, in effect since 2011, has allowed us to deepen a sense of belonging to the body of the Congregation.

It contributes to the strengthening of one's readiness and interest for priority works of the Assumption throughout the world.

The *Ratio Institutionis* of 2005 was well received by religious. Lots of work was done to familiarize everyone in the provinces with it and each religious received a copy. Formation lasts for a lifetime and it would be misguided to think that once initial formation has ended, there's no more room for improvement. The urgent need to hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God requires of us a constant search to find avenues for creative fidelity.

Academic studies do not exhaust the breadth of an Assumptionist formation. The *Ratio* does well to insist on the multiple facets of formation: human, spiritual, community, apostolic, etc. Neglecting one of these aspects would mean condemning oneself to mediocrity with regard to the ambitious vision that Emmanuel d'Alzon had for his religious.

The theme of the 33rd general chapter was: « New Wine in Fresh Wineskins. So that Jesus Christ may be proclaimed to Men and Women of Our Day. » It is a question of pursuing the way we began some years ago in order that our Congregation strengthen its apostolic relevance. The general chapter recalled three fundamental points for formation:

- A return to Jesus Christ
- A return to the sources of our founding
- A return to the fraternal life.

Jesus is the first Teacher and he is the model formator. It is on him that we must depend in order to come to the full maturity of our humanity and to fully become sons and daughters of God. We must also return to our founding sources, both Alzonian and Augustinian. Unfamiliarity with the charism, still too frequent, weakens us and undermines our very reason for being. Finally, the fraternal life must constantly be the reference point of our commitment for the Kingdom. It is from the community and with the community that we are capable of being fully missionary.

The way before us is demanding but exciting. I invite all the readers of this *Ratio* to allow themselves to be challenged by this attractive mission that is formation. Formation is everyone's business. Let us all be new wineskins for the Kingdom!

Fr. Benoît GRIÈRE, A.A.
Superior general
Rome, December 21, 2017

ABBREVIATIONS

- CT*: *First Constitutions of the Augustinians of the Assumption (1855-1865)*. Rome: 1966.
- CCL*: *Code of Canon Law*. 1983.
- ES*: *Spiritual Writings of the Servant of God, Emmanuel d'Alzon*. Rome: 1956.
- RL*: *Rule of Life of the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption*. 1983.
- VC*: John-Paul II. *Vita Consecrata: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father John-Paul II*. 1996.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. The *Ratio Institutionis*, our Assumptionist plan for formation, has a threefold purpose:
 - It is intended to be at the service of men who have heard God's call, to help them respond with awareness and in freedom to that call, to conform their lives to it, and to commit themselves progressively with their whole person within the Congregation;
 - It is intended to be at the service of those brothers who have received the mission to be formators, to guide them in their task.
 - It is intended to be at the service of the vocation of the entire Congregation. For, when it welcomes new members, it commits itself to convey to them the wealth of a religious life lived according to its particular spirit and to give them the means to pursue its special mission within the Church and in the world.

1. THE GOALS OF FORMATION

2. Forming a candidate or a religious in formation to the spirit of the Assumption means bringing him to live more and more intensely the threefold experience of intimacy with God, of self-renunciation, and of disinterested passion for the Reign of God in apostolic community. This helps him to discover his deepest identity, to realize himself in God at the personal and relational, human and spiritual levels.

To form is not simply to present the major themes of the charism; it means, especially, to bring to birth in the candidate or religious in formation a creative dynamism by which to reinterpret the charism faithfully. This is a pedagogy that leads one to appreciate the content of the charism and to seek to deploy its potential today in the context of the diversity of cultures.

3. God's call is addressed to men who are very different one from another, having their personal histories and their diverse gifts and aptitudes. Formation should allow each one to develop his gifts for service to the Church and to the Kingdom.

Out of faithfulness to its doctrinal, social and ecumenical tradition, the Congregation provides each candidate or brother in formation, whether he intends to pursue an ordained ministry or not, with a sound human and religious formation that is adapted to each one's abilities.

4. Assumptionist formation seeks to form men who in this world will be sons of Father d'Alzon, men of faith, brothers living in apostolic community, and apostles for the coming of the Kingdom.

Men of Faith

Convictions

5. Committing oneself to Assumptionist religious life calls for a certain number of basic qualities in order to be able to deal with the exigencies of apostolic religious life: a sufficiently balanced character, an aptitude for life in community, and those human virtues especially emphasized by Father d'Alzon: uprightness, frankness, human warmth, simplicity, initiative, boldness, generosity and disinterestedness.
6. The project of definitively committing the whole of one's person to follow Jesus Christ, poor, chaste and obedient, offering one's life for the world, with all the rifts as well as new solidarities that entails, cannot be pursued without a personal knowledge and love of him who is the very heart of Assumptionist life. Christ and his love are the object of our vocation and mission. In him God and man coalesce – divinity and humanity.
7. Formation helps the candidate or the brother in formation to establish and deepen his personal relationship with God. It spurs him on in the regular practice of personal and communal prayer. It calls him to

acknowledge God's gift in his life and in that of his contemporaries. Accordingly, he will grow in faith, hope and charity. In the footsteps of Christ, impelled by the Spirit and inspired by Mary's example, he will be able to learn how to risk his life on the paths of the Gospel.¹

Implementation

8. Formation should put the candidate or the brother in formation in contact with the sources of our spirituality, above all with the Word of God and with the great spiritual masters, especially Saint Augustine and Father d'Alzon.
9. It should help him to discern and to contemplate God's action and invitation in his life and in the life of the Church and of the world.
10. It should afford him an apprenticeship in faithfulness and steadfastness in the struggle of prayer.
11. It should have him discover, through the experience and practice of the vows, a path of life that allows him to give himself completely to God and to others.

Brothers Living in Apostolic Community

Convictions

12. Called by Christ, an Assumptionist chooses to live in community according to the Rule of Saint Augustine and the spirit of the Assumption. Our community is apostolic, and our apostolate is communal. The community is apostolic inasmuch as it witnesses to the coming of God's Reign. It gives proof of and reveals our love for God and others.
13. The community sustains the apostolic mission and the personal prayer life of each brother. In its common prayer, it welcomes and

¹ RL 24.

celebrates God's action in the lives of men.² A brother's whole life and action should witness to the coming of the Kingdom.

Implementation

14. Learning how to live in community, which requires continual conversion and going beyond oneself in order to discover its richness and joy, is one of the first concerns of formation.
15. We seek to foster simplicity, truth in our relations, the genuine sharing of our life, active participation in the community's common prayer, a sense of initiative, co-responsibility and solidarity.
16. By living in the local community, the candidate or the religious in formation opens himself gradually to the Provincial and international community, and also to the other Congregations of the Assumption family.
17. By integrating himself into the Congregation, he becomes part of a history and a tradition. Readings, workshops and retreats will help him to learn for himself the life and spirit of the Founder, the history of the Assumption and the international realities of the Congregation today.

Apostles for the coming of the Kingdom

Convictions

18. At the heart of our charism is the desire to bring about the Reign of God, that great plan He has for all humanity and which He revealed in Jesus Christ. Whether one is called to ordained ministries or not, "the spirit of the founder impels us to embrace the great causes of God and of man, to go wherever God is threatened in man and man threatened as image of God."³ This is how we participate in the life and mission of the Church. "Faithful to the will of Fr. d'Alzon, our

² *RL 22.*

³ *RL 4.*

communities are at the service of truth, of unity and of charity. Thus, they herald the Kingdom.”⁴

19. At the Assumption, the apostolate is fundamentally communal. And so long as it is not, we will not be true to ourselves. It is obvious, then, that we cannot form an Assumptionist apostle without integrating at all stages of formation this essential community dimension.

Implementation

20. During formation, however much study and interiorization tend to be preponderant, they are inseparable from one’s preparation for the apostolate in the Assumption.
21. As a man of his time, the candidate or religious in formation should learn to appreciate the values of different human milieux, especially those of the poor. He should open his eyes and his heart to the needs and the calls of the Church and of the world. His heart should be stirred by the desire to proclaim Jesus Christ and to take his place in building up a world that is more just and more fraternal.
22. There are certain attitudes to be cultivated: openness to the other, initiative in solidarity and co-responsibility, collaboration with lay people, and in particular a sense of service and love of the Church.
23. We should welcome the apostolic initiatives of the religious in formation, placing them in the context of the apostolic project and orientations of the Province and of the Congregation. This should provide them with special incentive to prepare themselves seriously and competently for their future ministry.

⁴ RL 5.

2. CONDITIONS FOR FORMATION

24. In this perspective, certain conditions are necessary for a good formation:

- *Mutual Respect*

On the part of the Congregation: respect for the candidate or religious in formation who has been called by God, respect for him as a person that the Congregation welcomes and helps to grow fully in his decision to follow Christ.

On the part of the candidate or religious in formation: respect for the spirit and mission of the Congregation of which he has chosen to become fully a part.

- *Collaboration*

The candidate or the religious in formation is primarily responsible for his formation. It cannot be fruitful if it is received passively. It requires active collaboration and a dialogue that is frank and trusting between the one in formation and his formator.

- *Progress*

The discernment of God's call, the gradual introduction to religious life, admission into the Congregation, diaconal and priestly ordination, are all decisive steps in the course of a person's life. To be assumed freely, each of these aspects requires time for growing and maturing humanly and spiritually. This process varies from one person to the other, which should be taken into account when determining the duration for each stage of formation.

Given certain psychological and affective difficulties that could arise, recourse to professional assistance is advisable.

- *Adaptability*

To be faithful to the orientations of Canon Law and to the spirit of the Assumption means that the modalities of formation will have to be adapted to the cultures and to the concrete situations of each country, and to the needs of the Church and of the Congregation.

3. THOSE PRINCIPALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR FORMATION⁵

The Commission and the Formation Director

- 25.** The Formation Commission is made up of the formators who have been named by the Provincial Superior with the consent of the Council of the Province⁶, and of the Provincial Superior himself or his delegate.

The Director of Formation is named from among the members of the Formation Commission, by the Provincial Superior with the consent of the Provincial Council.⁷ His chief responsibilities are:

- to help the various communities and those responsible for formation locally, by visiting them, by taking to heart their struggles, by organizing workshops and by encouraging collaboration with other formators;
- to organize and animate meetings of the Formation Commission;
- to follow closely the progress of the candidates and professed religious, as well as their intellectual and pastoral formation, at each stage of their formation;
- to reflect on those questions that are fundamental to formation and to suggest initiatives or new projects;
- to help the formators to carry out their mission more effectively.

The Formation Community

- 26.** Participation in the life of the community plays a major role in formation at the Assumption. All the communities of the Province are responsible together for the formation of the candidates and religious in formation. Nevertheless, it is important that those responsible for formation take special care in selecting the community that will accompany a candidate or religious in

⁵ *RL* 97f, 97h, 152, 193-195, 200.

⁶ *RL* 97f, 97h, 193.

⁷ *RL* 87, 95 b. *The appointment of the Provincial or Vice-provincial Director of formation, requires the approval of the Superior General in his PGC. Cf. RC 196, 200*

formation. They should be especially heedful that the community be able to provide the following:

- a fraternal life in which the candidate or religious in formation will feel welcome as he is and which will permit him to participate actively in the common life;
- a regular prayer life;
- a program of scheduled meetings at which the community members talk about and reflect on their lives, their faith and their apostolic activities;
- an openness to the realities of the Church and of the world and the possibility of taking part in the community’s apostolic project;
- a real closeness to and collaboration with lay persons, who can help the candidate or religious in formation to recognize the specificity of his own vocation.

The Novice Master

27. Given the important responsibility the Novice Master has, he should be named well enough in advance to assure him the time to prepare for his mission. It is crucial that he have an appropriate formation. He could complete his formation, living in other novitiates and participating in workshops for Novice Masters on specific themes (Christian spirituality, Assumptionist spirituality, the theology of religious life, psychology and pedagogy, general and cultural anthropology, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, the history of religious life and of the Assumption, life in an international community, spiritual direction and leadership.
28. The Novice Master is named by the Superior General in the Plenary General Council (PGC). The Provincial Superior will foresee a periodic evaluation.⁸

The Formator

29. All the religious of the Province are together responsible for formation. Religious life authentically lived out is formative in itself.

⁸ RL 140.

Nevertheless, the Provincial Superior shall designate a formator who will be responsible for following personally the candidate or religious in formation, both before and after his novitiate.

30. This formator's role is twofold:

- he is the primary interlocutor with the candidate or religious in formation. Through regular meetings, he provides him the opportunity to communicate his ambitions, his discoveries, his difficulties and whatever questions he may have concerning religious, communal and apostolic life. He tries to enlighten him at decisive times, as well as all along the way of his religious life.
- he represents the candidate or brother in formation before the Province. At evaluation meetings, he helps those responsible in the choices and decisions they have to make concerning him.

The Spiritual Director

31. The candidate or religious in formation has to choose an experienced spiritual guide who will help him in his spiritual life, to discern God's will at important and decisive moments and to discover what prayer and the interior life are about. He should choose his spiritual director, in so far as possible, from among the members of the religious family of the Assumption.

The choice of a spiritual guide is left to the freedom of each one. However, the candidate or brother in formation should discuss his choice with his formator.

The Religious Responsible for Ongoing Formation

32. Named by the provincial authorities, this religious should oversee the implementation of the Province's overall plan for Ongoing Formation.⁹

⁹ *RL* 160.

4. FORMATION AS GRADUAL

The Pre-Novitiate

- 33.** Pre-novitiate offers the candidate to Assumptionist religious life a special time of formation that prepares him for the novitiate. This stage focuses on discerning the motives and attitudes that form the basis of his desire for religious life.
- 34.** During the course of this period, the candidate should deepen the self-knowledge that he had already acquired, with the help of the one who accompanied him during the time that preceded his admission to the pre-novitiate. During this time of pre-novitiate, he should also ascertain the solidity of his desire to follow Christ.
- 35.** It is important to see whether he can live in community and see the community as the place and the way where he can grow humanly and as a Christian.
- 36.** His apostolate should confirm his desire to serve God and men and women in the Church.
- 37.** At the end of this stage, the candidate will, freely and responsibly, formulate his request for admission to the novitiate. The community in which he lived, as well as his designated formator, will give their opinion concerning his aptitudes for living the life of an Assumptionist.

The Novitiate

- 38.** The novitiate is that special time when the novice, by being attentive to the Spirit, has an opportunity to deepen, to discern and to confirm his calling to religious life at the Assumption.
- 39.** This time ought to afford the novice, through the accompaniment of his Novice Master, a more profound experience of God, the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, and the desire to follow him who was poor, chaste and obedient in order to witness to the Reign of

God. It should open him up to a more communal sense of his gift of self to Christ through his service to his brothers.

40. Through a better understanding of the reality of the Church and of today's world, the novice is initiated into apostolic life and the proclamation of the Kingdom.

The Post-Novitiate

41. The post-novitiate stage is not limited to academic formation; it is a time for the brother to sink roots and to draw on what he has acquired, which should make it possible for him to fully integrate into the life and mission of the Congregation, through his definitive commitment. This is a time to grow in fidelity, in perseverance and in patience.
42. This is also the stage when a brother examines more deeply the spirit and vocation of the apostolic community. Its main purpose is to see to it that the young religious is sufficiently prepared for a definitive commitment and in particular for his first apostolic nomination. His formation should also prepare him for his future mission, which he could exercise in an ordained ministry.

Formation for the Ordained Ministries

43. A deacon and a new priest are just as much ministers as their elders. Their formation, however, is not yet complete. Accompanied by an older religious, they need to allow themselves to be molded by their new mission, confided to them by Christ and the Church. Accordingly, a specific time and place for this should be foreseen.
44. It is essential that they learn to become pastors (a practical apprenticeship, the acquisition of pastoral attitudes), and to integrate this ecclesial ministry into their religious life, in such a way that their faith, their prayer and their apostolic sense is deeply marked. Then day by day they will become apostles according to the heart of Christ and the spirit of the Assumption.

Ongoing Formation

45. Neither perpetual profession nor ordination marks the end of formation. His different experiences and his pastoral practice will open new horizons for the religious. It is essential that he continue to form himself, as Father d'Alzon urged us.¹⁰
46. Ongoing formation is not a luxury but a necessity for faithfulness to the mission that the religious has accepted. Thus, little by little, he will become himself a formator for the generations that will follow.

¹⁰ *ES* 208-209; *Circular Letters - 1874-1875*, pp. 18-20: "Study is indispensable for the religious who does not work with his hands. It is the means by which he earns a living at the sweat of his brow. [...] let it be understood that if ever the religious stop studying, it will be the sign that the Congregation has outlived its usefulness and has been cursed by God. [...] But it is not sufficient to study; we must study for a goal. For us, everything must be related to God, to Jesus Christ and to his Church."

I – PRE-NOVITIATE

47. Pre-novitiate affords the candidate to Assumptionist religious life a period of formation designed for preparation to novitiate. This time is to be focused on the discernment of the motivations and dispositions that are at the origin of his desire for religious life. It is important that the candidate be able to live this time in an atmosphere of freedom and loyalty and in spirit of faith.
48. The time of pre-novitiate presupposes:
- on the part of the candidate, a keen desire to join the Congregation;
 - on the part of the Congregation, a positive judgment of the aptitudes the candidate has for living as an Assumptionist religious.
49. Account must be taken of the individual personality of each candidate, their level of human and Christian formation, the rhythm of their growth, and the diversity of their geographic, cultural and social backgrounds. A real flexibility is required. Accordingly, each Province will have to define the specifics of each stage, its content, its duration and the means needed to achieve the objectives listed in the *Rule of Life*.¹¹
50. Each province distinguishes two stages before the start of novitiate: pre-postulancy and postulancy. In harmony with the orientations provided by the PGC, each Province determines objective criteria for recruitment: age, health, level of studies, etc.

1. PRE-POSTULANCY

51. Considering the flexibility that is necessary for this stage of formation, as well as the legitimate diversity that may be needed to

¹¹ RL 137.

meet different situations and persons, we can nevertheless determine the goals proper to pre-postulancy and the means to realize them.

The Goals

52. Pre-postulancy is mainly a time to welcome, to get to know each other and to discern, all of which implies:
- for the candidate, a time to discover the human and evangelical values required for entering into Assumptionist religious life, to acquire at the same time a sufficient self-knowledge to enable him to respond to God’s call in a thoughtful manner and eventually to know whether or not to ask for postulancy;
 - for the Congregation, a time to acquire a sufficient knowledge of the personality of the candidate to be able to determine the solidity of his vocation and of his capacity to live in community.

Implementation

The means that favor the attainment of these objectives are:

An experience of the common life

53. A period of living in community during this stage is useful, if not indispensable. This provides the best means for favoring vocational discernment and for getting to know each other: for instance, praying together, sharing in daily tasks, participating in the apostolic life and hospitality of the community, etc.

Accompaniment by a formator

54. A religious living with the candidate should be designated to accompany him during this experience. In particular, he should see to:
- working out a program of formation with the candidate that will help him reach the goals of this stage of formation;
 - encouraging meetings between himself and the candidate to get to know him and to help him to understand himself and his personal development. Listening attentively to his personal story

- can prove useful and can provide the opportunity to challenge him with certain important questions.
- getting to know the socio-cultural background of the candidate. In fact, understanding his personality can be facilitated by learning about his family, the milieu in which he grew up, his relationships and the experiences that have marked his life;
 - helping the candidate to accept his personal story in order better to discern his vocation.

The candidate's active participation

55. For his part the candidate should seek to:

- integrate himself within the community receiving him;
- establish a trusting relationship with both his formator and spiritual director by means of regular and frequent meetings with them;
- become aware that he is the primary agent of his own formation and, in order to achieve that goal, to take as his own the formation program he has worked out with his formator.

The formation program

56. The formation program should include well-planned activities that can be evaluated periodically (for example, assigned readings, courses, workshops, sessions, practical tasks) and that will afford the candidate an initiation to:

- personal prayer;
- Assumptionist community living;
- better self-understanding;
- the international and intercultural dimension of the Congregation;
- reading and the development of a capacity for reflection.

Duration

57. Although it is impossible to determine the time needed for this stage, it is important, nonetheless, for the candidate as well as for the

religious responsible for his accompaniment, to have flexible target-dates for his human and Christian formation.

Also, respecting the need for flexibility, it is nonetheless good to set certain deadlines for coming to a decision.

2. POSTULANCY

58. To become a postulant is to take an official step. Although it entails no juridical commitment, neither on the part of the Congregation nor on the part of the candidate, it nevertheless implies a mutual acceptance freely consented to. This means...

- for the candidate, submission of a letter to the Provincial Superior that makes explicit both how he understands his decision to become a postulant and why he has taken it. This request must be accompanied by a report prepared by the religious who accompanied the candidate during his pre-postulancy;
- for the Congregation, the Provincial Superior's evaluation of the request and his acceptance of the candidate for a period of postulancy.¹²

59. Postulancy has to be lived in an Assumptionist community. This community could be dedicated exclusively to the reception of postulants. It is desirable that the postulant continue his studies or his work during this stage.

The Goals

60. Postulancy is a time for helping the candidate:

- to deepen his faith in Jesus Christ;
- to continue discerning his vocation;
- to clarify his motives so that he may eventually be able to make a free and responsible request to enter the novitiate.

¹² *RL* 136.

Implementation

The means that favor the fulfillment of these objectives are:

Living in an apostolic community

61. Living in community is the means most suited to formation during postulancy. It is important that a postulant have the experience of a prolonged stay in an Assumptionist community. He should be able to participate in community life as fully as possible. This being said, the community may find it useful to hold special meetings that would not include the postulant(s).

Accompaniment by the formator

62. The formator should make special efforts to:
 - establish an atmosphere of trust conducive to discernment and to the postulant’s growth in the midst of the community;
 - help the postulant to discern the signs of God’s call, to clarify and to deepen his motives and his motives for joining the Congregation, to discover the demands his vocation makes of him and to respond to them concretely in his own life;
 - encourage the postulant to formulate his own personal plan, which will also serve as a point of reference for evaluating his progress;
 - ascertain for the Congregation the candidate’s real capacity for committing himself to Assumptionist religious life: especially from the human, psychological and spiritual point of view, but also in terms of health (cf. CL 689, §2)¹³. To this end, before entering the novitiate, a medical examination will be required. The opinion of a psychologist could also be request.
 - determine the postulant’s level of intellectual curiosity, his taste for reading, etc.

¹³ Given the complexity of the health question, a form in appendix provides certain orientations to help in making a better discernment in each situation.

The formator needs to follow him in his development and to discern for himself if he should support, delay, or dissuade the candidate in the steps he is taking toward entry into the Congregation.

Spiritual accompaniment

63. The postulant freely chooses his spiritual guide and his confessor, discussing the matter with his formator. It is preferable that the spiritual guide belong to the religious family of the Assumption.

The formation program

64. The postulancy program focuses essentially on:
- an initiation to a life of prayer and to the sacramental life;
 - reading and meditating the Word of God;
 - an introduction to the history and spirituality of the Assumption;
 - a discovery of the local reality of the Assumptionists;
 - a practical discovery of the life of the Church and her mission;
 - a review of the apostolic activity one has received from his community;
 - self-knowledge and one's ability to relate to others.

The Duration of Postulancy

65. The duration of postulancy is determined according to the formation program of the Province. Nevertheless, it could vary according to the candidates¹⁴ depending on their maturity, their prior formation and their experience of community life.

¹⁴ RL 136.

II – NOVITIATE¹⁵

The Goals

66. “The novitiate is a time of transformation and the novice should have only one desire: to transform himself into Jesus Christ.”¹⁶ The purpose of novitiate is to introduce the candidate gradually to Assumptionist religious life, helping him to deepen an understanding of his own apostolic call and to relate that to the mission of the Assumption. ¹⁷ At the end of this stage, the novice ought to be able to commit himself generously through the vows, with full heart and without reservation, to live according to the demands of Assumptionist community life.
67. Hence, novitiate is a privileged time for human and spiritual growth, through prayer, study, meetings and exchanges. Its goal, for the novice, is to:
- intensify his love for Christ and grow in readiness to follow him radically, in keeping with the aim of Assumptionist religious life. This could require of him exterior and interior separations and renunciations that can be rather painful;
 - practice the evangelical counsels according to Saint Augustine’s *Rule* and the Assumptionist *Rule of Life*;
 - take as his own, Father d’Alzon’s spirit and passion for the Kingdom as well as of the life, charism and apostolic project of the Congregation.

Implementation

The Novitiate Community

68. The community makes it possible for the novices to have an experience of prayer, of fraternal life, of the vows and of apostolic life. In fact, the novices and the Novice Master share fully in the life

¹⁵ RV 139-146, 196-198.

¹⁶ ES, pp. 263-264; *Circular Letters - 1874-1875*, p. 77.

¹⁷ RL 142.

and mission of their community. The community, in turn, helps the Novice Master to carry out his mission.

69. The Provincial will see to the quality of the accompaniment provided to the novices, particularly in terms of the number of people providing this accompaniment.

The Novice Master's Guidance

70. "To put it simply, his model should be Jesus Christ living in the midst of his apostles and forming them to the evangelical life."¹⁸
Guiding the novices is the exclusive duty of the Novice Master, who exercises his responsibility under the authority of the Major Superiors.¹⁹

In accord with the Provincial Formation Commission, he determines the novitiate program, has it approved by the Superior General, and implements it. This program will include a presentation and study of the "Norms applicable in the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption regarding sexual abuse." The novice will also attest to having received this document when he addresses to the Provincial his request for first profession.

He helps the novices to discern and carry out the will of the Father. Accordingly, he meets regularly with each, in a frequency suitable to the individual need of each novice. He will thus be able to attest to their human and spiritual growth.

He interprets and is at the service of the spirit of the Assumption, that is, of a spiritual and apostolic tradition, recognized by the Church. He strives to know this tradition and keep it open to the Spirit today. He helps the novice find his place within this spiritual tradition and to see himself as responsible for the future of his religious family.

The Novice Master helps the novice to take upon himself the renunciations called for by the evangelical counsels and encourages him to cultivate those attitudes that follow from them.

¹⁸ *ES*, p. 260; *Circular Letters - 1874-1875*, p. 73.

¹⁹ *CCL* 650, § 2.

71. To ensure the success of his mission (as described in number 70), the Master of Novices should:
- consider this mission to be his priority
 - seek spiritual direction for himself
 - be surrounded by collaborators, whether religious or lay.

Spiritual direction

72. The Novice Master is the novice's principal spiritual director. In case of necessity, however, the latter may choose a different spiritual director, with the consent of his Novice Master. The novice will have to choose a confessor other than his Novice Master.

Fundamental Dimensions

73. The novitiate program should be designed in function of the novitiate's goals, the Province's resources and the international and multicultural dimension of the novitiate community. It should take into account the following fundamental dimensions:

A man of faith

74. "Jesus Christ is at the center of our life. We commit ourselves to following Him in faith, hope and charity. Like Him, witness of the Father's love and bound in solidarity with his fellow-men, the Assumptionist seeks to be a man of faith and a man of his time."²⁰ Above all, novitiate is a time for experiencing the God of Jesus Christ. The novice comes to discover Christ living in the Word of God, in his own personal history, in his relationships with his brothers and in his apostolic experiences. Thus, does he become aware of Christ's love for him and his brothers.
75. His experience of God should be centered in Christ, studied, contemplated, loved and imitated. Furthermore, his growth as a disciple, following in the footsteps of Christ, should be rooted in those characteristics proper to the Assumption:

²⁰ RL 2.

- the practice of the theological virtues;²¹
 - a doctrine grounded in its sources: The Bible, the Patristic tradition and the Church’s Magisterium;
 - a life structured by the Liturgy. The novice will find Christ when he enters into the prayer of the Church through his active participation in the community’s liturgical prayer. Thus, he will have the opportunity to live fully from the sacraments of the Eucharist and of Reconciliation.
- 76.** Personal prayer will always be the necessary path to this experience of God. It requires a gradual and continuous formation, based on doctrine, as Father d’Alzon always reminded us.²² It will be the novice’s first struggle, a difficult one at that. His Novice Master and his spiritual director should help him to establish discipline and steadiness in his prayer life.
- 77.** By meditating and listening to the Word of God, the novice will be led to a loving adoration of Christ, the center of his life. By loving Christ, whom he is given to know more deeply, the novice will also love those whom Christ has loved the most, his Mother and the Church.

A religious living in apostolic community

- 78.** “Yes, there is nothing better or more delightful than a religious community where everybody loves one another.”²³ Novitiate is a

²¹ *CT*, pp. 38-42; *Foundational Documents*, pp. 15-18: “The religious virtues we shall practice are: 1. Faith [...]. 2. Hope [...]. 3. Charity [...].”

²² *ES*, p. 241; *Circular Letters - 1874-1875*, p. 53: “The study of Jesus Christ is something good in itself, but admits of a certain dryness. On the other hand, meditation without formal study gets lost in a welter of false mysticism. Together, study and prayer provide fruitful results.. Sadly enough, experience shows that, if Christ is so poorly formed in the hearts of children, it is because their formation has been entrusted to teachers who do not pray, or who do not study, or who all too often neither pray nor study”

ES, p. 321; *Meditations*, p. 12: “But there are two dangers to avoid when we study God the Son made Man. The first is laziness. We think we have learned enough about him, so now all we have to do is love him. [. . .] Then there are those who, not taking the trouble to study Our Lord seriously, become victims to every kind of vague and senseless fantasy. No wonder there are so many false devotions, based on false notions and false statements. And they constitute a serious impediment to our religious perfection.”

²³ *ES*, p.571; *Meditations*, p. 193.

powerful moment for being initiated practically and theoretical to the common life. The normal and required setting for such an initiation is a living and real community.

- 79.** A postulant comes to novitiate, often with great hopes for the common life, part of which might be a kind of dream. Novitiate will be a time to purify these expectations and to deepen them through an experience of the Assumption's tradition of communal living.
- 80.** This tradition takes its inspiration from Saint Augustine. An education to the common life has then to integrate the thought of Saint Augustine and Father d'Alzon's specific contribution into an organic whole. The novice will have to discover and commit himself within:
- a human community of brothers with diverse personalities, different perspectives and cultures, from whom he will experience both the wealth and the difficulties of internationality;
 - a common life built made of simplicity, humility, joy, co-responsibility, and relationships characterized by frankness, cordiality, mutual respect and family spirit;
 - a community brought together by faith in Jesus Christ, who alone constitutes and rebuilds it day by day. Thus, it will be founded on the law of fraternal love, on mutual openness, on service to one another and on fraternal correction to which Christ invites us.
 - an apostolic community oriented to mission. While novitiate is not yet the time for full-time involvement in an external apostolate, it must nevertheless initiate the novice to the apostolic dimension of our life and invite him to let himself be evangelized by those to whom he is being sent;
 - a community open to the entire Assumption family, in his prayer, by visits to other communities, by participation in Assumptionist gatherings, by keeping up on the information provided by our bulletins and web sites.

Following Christ who was poor, chaste and obedient

- 81.** Committing oneself to religious life means living evangelical faith, hope and charity, following Christ, who was poor, chaste and

obedient. The practice of the evangelical counsels, the foundation of the three vows, roots religious profession in our humanity to the extent that doing so involves the mastery of one's emotions, one's use of goods, and one's exercise of power. Practicing these counsels also gives to our religious profession its radical character inasmuch as it seeks to show that, even here below, God can fully satisfy our human longings.

Religious Poverty

- 82.** Following in the footsteps of Christ who chose to be poor, a novice should deepen his spirit of sharing, learn to renounce personal goods, and place his hope in God alone, his only true good. In this way, he will be happy in community and available for the service of his brothers. A simple life, work and study are characteristic of the Assumptionist practice of evangelical poverty. “Evangelical poverty will be the external proof of our practice of hope.”²⁴

Chastity

- 83.** “Everyone should thus try to have for one another a love full of tenderness, esteem, respect, and seriousness.”²⁵ Following in the footsteps of Christ who lived chastely among his own, a novice should come to see that chastity is the road to freedom for the fraternal life and for the apostolate. Chastity reveals how radical God's call can be. It is to be lived out in love, as we read in the first chapter of Fr. d'Alzon's *Directory*, where he presents the three loves that he asks us to foster: love for Jesus Christ, for Mary and for the Church.

Religious obedience

- 84.** Religious obedience is “the daughter of faith,” “the recognition of the rights of God,” and “the expression of our love for him.”²⁶ Following in the footsteps of Christ who made himself obedient and a servant, a novice should become aware that the one who is sent must be attentive to and at the service of the One who sends him.

²⁴ CT, p. 39; *Foundational Documents*, p.16.

²⁵ CT, p. 70; *Foundational Documents*, p. 51.

²⁶ CT, p. 38; *Foundational Documents*, pp. 15-16, 35, 101-103, 173.

Religious obedience will become real for him through his relationship with the Novice Master and with the brothers living with him in community. Obedience lived in faith and love makes for relationships shaped by frankness, by freedom, and by a loyal and humble recognition of the service proper to each person in his search for God's will.

An apostle for the coming of the Kingdom

- 85.** “Before all else, we shall be apostles.”²⁷ The spirit of the Assumption is “one of zeal and of apostolate.”²⁸ Love for Christ opens onto the mission. The novice nurtures his love for the Church and his zeal for the Kingdom, according to the spirit of Fr. d’Alzon.²⁹
- 86.** Father d’Alzon, impassioned for the cause of God, remains for us the best teacher on the subject. If his apostolic activities are no longer ours, his spiritedness, his zeal and his love continue to be contagious and radiant. The same goes for his passion in the battle for God, for the Church and for human beings who, without Christ, are wounded and mutilated.³⁰ Hence the importance for the novice to allow himself to be gradually impacted by Father d’Alzon’s charism and to come to know the sources and fundamental attitudes of his apostolic soul.
- 87.** Already during his novitiate, the foundations of a truly apostolic soul should be laid, bearing in mind that the novitiate is a time for becoming aware of what is at stake apostolically and the conversion needed for a mission that will be undertaken especially after the novitiate.
- 88.** Being able to talk about his apostolic experiences, his weekly apostolate, and a more intense period of apostolic involvement provide a novice with a greater sensitivity to the real life and mission of the Church.

²⁷ *ES*, p. 157; *Foundational Documents*, p. 105.

²⁸ *ES*, p. 647.

²⁹ *ES*, p. 250; *Circular Letters - 1874-1875*, p. 63.

³⁰ *RL* 4.

An heir of the Assumptionist tradition

- 89.** “Your elders have given you the example; ...follow in their footsteps [and] ... outrun them.”³¹ The usual daily way by which the novices enter into the life and history of the Assumption is the Assumptionist community in which he has been received. It is there where they will learn to live as Assumptionists and acquire for themselves our particular way of being with God, in community and in the mission.
- 90.** A thorough knowledge of Father d’Alzon is indispensable. He alone is the Founder. Read objectively in the context of his historical setting, he should be a novice’s daily companion. His life, his writings, his work and his spirit should become familiar to him, so that he may be able to discern whether he should be his son and brother.
- 91.** A good knowledge of Father d’Alzon, on will make possible a better understanding of the charism of the Congregation and its adaptation in different continents and cultures.
- 92.** “By studying the dominant ideas which governed our beginnings, you will advance in the perfection to which you are called; . . .”³² If his entry into Assumptionist history is going to be personal, deliberate and enlightened, a novice has to study and know that history, from the time of the first community at Nîmes up to our time.
- 93.** Therefore, the novice should study the whole of the Assumption’s history with honesty and truth and situate it within the Augustinian tradition, which goes back to the early centuries of the Church. The novice should also be urged to broaden his perspective to include the Assumption today, with its complexity and international diversity, without limiting himself to the frontiers of one region.
- 94.** Novices do not reinvent the Assumption, but they give it a contemporary face, allowing it to renew itself. The novitiate is thus to be a place of mutual exchange between the Assumption and the novices.

³¹ *ES*, p. 190; *Foundational Documents*, p. 137.

³² *ES*, p. 17; *Directory*, p. ix.

III – POST-NOVITIATE³³

95. The time following novitiate prepares the religious, through the common life fully shared, for his definitive commitment before God and within the Congregation. This stage should allow the professed brother to perfect his knowledge of Father d’Alzon, of Saint Augustine and of the Assumption. It is a period of gradual assimilation into the life of the Province, of the Congregation and of the broader Assumption family.
96. Upon his entry into the Assumption, the young religious finds a guide for himself in Father d’Alzon. He chooses a Gospel path, the *Rule of Life*. He incorporates himself into a religious family that has a past, a spirit, a vocation recognized by the Church, and a real mission in the world. He commits himself with his whole life and his whole person within the family that he is learning to love.

The Goals

97. Post-novitiate, basically, should be a time for the religious:
- to interiorize and deepen both his trust in Jesus Christ, expressed through the commitment of vows and lived out in community, as well as his affective and relational life;
 - to assimilate and appropriate the charism and the mission of the Congregation;
 - to harmonize the different dimensions of his life. In sharing the communal and apostolic life of the Assumption, it is his whole person, his potential, and his plans that the brother is devoting to the Lord;
 - to open himself to the international and intercultural dimension of the Congregation.

³³ RV 147-158, 199-200.

Implementation

These goals, imply:

- 98.** - on the part of the professed religious,
- that he pursues the work of deepening his relationship with God;
 - that he lives the experience of perseverance and fidelity and of the complete gift of himself to the Lord in Assumptionist religious life;
 - that he deepens his understanding of the charism of the Congregation and the way in which it is lived out, by reading, by studying the foundational texts and the official documents of the Congregation, and by taking part in the various meetings planned for young religious;
 - that he meets regularly with his formator and his spiritual director;
 - that he learns to collaborate with lay people and especially with the members of the Assumptionist Alliance.

Each year the professed religious, with the help of his formator, shall prepare a program of readings and of efforts at synthesis, reflection or research aimed at furthering his knowledge of Father d'Alzon and of the spirituality and history of the Assumption.

- 99.** - on the part of the Congregation,
- that it provides the professed religious with conditions that promote his spiritual and human growth. It should strive specially to assure him:
 - a solid and vibrant community where he will be able to live his religious life fully, in an atmosphere of faith and prayer, of trust and freedom;
 - the possibility of doing some of his formation in an “International Community of Formation” (CIFA);
 - a formator, designated by the Provincial Superior, who will accompany him in all the areas of his formation;
 - a formation that is human, spiritual, doctrinal as well as pastoral, adapted to him, and dynamic, so that he may acquire a personal competence corresponding to his aptitudes and to the needs of the Congregation;

- During this period of temporary vows, the question of the religious' his first apostolic assignment, the issue of his future mission and of specialized studies for him will be discussed. Such studies are not a right, but in view of his mission. They should focus on the study of the faith, which henceforth will be one of the deciding criteria for the choice of his specialization.
100. Each time he comes to renew his vows, the professed religious will submit his self-evaluation to his formator and to his community. At this time, he shall also work out his plan for the following year.
 101. When his time for requesting final vows arrives, by reviewing all of his evaluations since his first profession, he will be enabled to make a mature decision and to tackle those issues that remain to be worked on.
 102. The Provincial and formators will assure the communication to the local formators of the elements of the dossier that are indispensable for proving the best accompaniment and formation possible of the brother.

Fundamental Dimensions

A man of faith

103. The life of the professed brother must be centered on Christ and nourished by faith and prayer. Following Christ implies a daily encounter with him, for there can be no other ground for his commitment than Christ and his Gospel. One cannot hope to find any other means of nourishment than through prayer.
104. The experience of God does not happen once and for all. It has to go deeper each day, otherwise it lacks roots and will remain superficial. During the time of post-novitiate, the professed religious needs to interiorize all that he has acquired before, by developing his appreciation for recollection and for creativity.

It is important that the professed religious take up the following for himself:

- a discipline and personal rhythm of prayer, of meditation on God’s Word, and on receiving forgiveness. There can be no experience of God without moments of gratuitous encounter with him.
- apostolic prayer that gathers together all the great intentions of the Church and of the world and that seeks to take part in the prayer of God’s People, namely by participating in the prayer of the local Church. Thus, he will take his prayer beyond his own needs and preferences, to join it to those of a larger Christian community.
- a review of all of this in spiritual direction. By manifesting his conscience to a spiritual director, he will be able to make a link between his prayer and his apostolic life and to review his own experience of God.

105. To a much greater extent than during his novitiate, the life of the recently professed religious is going to be touched by many preoccupations and threatened with dispersion. Prayer can unify all these moments and preoccupations that are now part of his life. To bring about this integration, he should make his the Prayer of the Church, even when it cannot be assured by his community, showing in this way that he considers it to be a matter of personal responsibility. He will bring his whole life to prayer, and prayer to his life. He should make it a point to review his studies, his apostolic experiences and his relationships in the light of the Gospel. For all that he is and all that he does should become his very experience of Jesus Christ, studied, contemplated, loved, imitated.³⁴

106. The post-novitiate years will bring their comforting joys and successes to the professed religious, but they will also bring him face to face with conflicts and inescapable trials, conditions for his growth in God. It will be important for him to be thankful for what the Lord is doing in his life and to keep constantly in mind the reasons why he perseveres in prayer. The call to identify himself with Jesus Christ

³⁴ *ES 28-31; Directory, pp. 22-25.*

implies a personal relationship with him, and the demands of the mission imply that one can give only what one has received.

- 107.** By his daily faithfulness, in the silence of his prayer, and through his listening to the Lord, the young professed religious will find the wherewithal to make a definitive commitment. By the quality of his experience of God, he will become little by little “a man of faith and a man of his time,” “witness of the Father’s love and bound in solidarity with fellow-men.”³⁵

A religious living in apostolic community

- 108.** Formation to the common life is progressive, slow and difficult. It needs to be pursued throughout one’s life. It requires a daily conversion of each one to overcome tensions and conflicts. Actively sharing in the life of the community is an essential element in the formation of a young professed religious. His community needs to be:
- a place of co-responsibility. A professed religious is called to participate actively and fully in the organization of the community’s prayer life, in its meetings, in its gatherings, in the chores, and in the economic dimensions of its life.
 - a place of prayer and of sharing. A community, one constituted of religious in formation or one that receives young professed religious, will have to give special attention to the following:
 - guaranteeing a daily rhythm of prayer that is centered on the Eucharist and being attentive to offer the professed monthly recollections and a yearly retreat;
 - affording times for conversation. Weekly meetings should be privileged times for exchange and reflection on the life of the community, on its faith and apostolic undertakings;
 - underlining the importance of the local Chapter. Accordingly, it would be important that at least once in the course of a year the community evaluate its local Chapter.
 - a place of freedom, of frankness and of cordiality. The community needs to be able to witness to a simple and fraternal life.

³⁵ *RL 2.*

Following Christ poor, chaste and obedient

- 109.** Post-novitiate is a time for furthering one's human and spiritual growth and for preparing the professed religious for a definitive commitment. This commitment consists of the following aspects:
- the decision to follow Christ radically implies that the professed religious is rooting himself ever more in faith, hope and love and that throughout the years of his temporary profession he is strengthening the conviction behind his first commitment;
 - his commitment to the brothers he was given when he entered the Assumption and with whom he wanted to share its spirit and way of life. His profession engages him fully in the adventure of religious life as proposed by the Assumption and approved by the Church as a concrete way of living the Gospel. The latter implies that he stand in solidarity with everything that makes up the life and history of a religious family.
 - the experience of fidelity, for commitment in religious life must be able to withstand the test of time, the impact of daily realities and all the vicissitudes of life's circumstances. During the time of post-novitiate, the professed religious will need to demonstrate his ability to withstand time's challenges and to measure up to them by his fidelity and perseverance. This requires personal discipline made up of renunciation, balance, self-mastery, simplicity, transparency, generosity and service. This discipline, which includes an acceptance that brothers will have an impact on one's life, will be practiced especially in living out the vows.

Religious Poverty

- 110.** We need to insist on the following:
- simple living, which excludes looking for comforts and implies learning to be free with respect to material goods;
 - a life of work, for the religious needs to earn his living, knowing that one has to work to live. He will need to be strict about his use of time and to assume his responsibility for the daily economic management of his community;

- openness to others, by being attentive to social injustices, interested in those communities engaged in the most disadvantaged areas and in real solidarity with the poor. This could mean actually living in their midst for a period of time. Furthermore, it would be concerned to become acquainted, through study, with the socio-economic realities of the world, as well as with the social teaching of the Church.

Chastity

111. “To love and to be loved,” this is humanity’s vocation. The capacity to love to stay focused on what is essential needs to be learned. It implies:

- detachment and discipline in relationships, in going out, in relaxing, in the use of media, and so forth. This asceticism should be lived out, not as a frustration, but with free consent;
- a capacity for relationships, which should express itself by a genuine insertion into one’s community, in brotherly affection, with a ready ear and openness to others and through the gift of oneself to the mission. This capacity for relating with others requires an integrated sexuality and living one’s human relations in truth.
- a capacity for embracing solitude, through which the professed religious will come to know whether he can be truly peaceful with the decision he made and whether he can serenely and joyfully follow the example of Christ.

Religious Obedience

112. By his vow of obedience, the professed brother disposes himself to listen (*ob + audire*) to the Spirit and to his brothers to whom he has bound himself. He should work at developing the following especially:

- inner freedom, the ability to take initiatives and the capacity to listen. Obedience excludes obsequiousness as well as systematic resistance to all authority;

- solidarity, which means an ability to accept the decision of another, to abide by decisions taken, and to submit to others the decisions that need to be taken;
- accounting for one’s actions before his Superior and his brothers;
- availability for the mission and for the broad orientations suggested by the Church and the Congregation, especially by one’s openness to the apostolic priorities of the Province;
- the capacity to assume responsibilities fully, to collaborate with others and to share with them.

An apostle for the coming of the Kingdom

- 113.** Post-novitiate is the time when the professed religious should participate in the Province’s project and apostolic orientations, and in those of the Congregation in all of its diversity. It is the time when, with the help of those responsible for his formation, he gradually defines the areas of his mission.
- 114.** The mission requires that the formation of the professed brother be adapted to him throughout the course of his post-novitiate. This formation should help him, thereby, to know his real capabilities for the apostolate. It should consist of the following:
- a knowledge of the world’s realities and the great causes of God and of humanity;
 - an integration of the personal project of the religious and that of the Congregation, which should remain receptive to the aspirations of the religious;
 - a concern for relating his apostolic concerns to his studies, his prayer, his use of his time, and in conversation with the community.

As important as it is to have a substantial apostolic engagement during this period, it is equally important to develop apostolic attitudes and to reflect on them through accompaniment.

- 115.** Our mission requires qualities like having a sense of the Church, the capacity to take initiatives and to work with a team, especially with lay persons, to talk about apostolic experiences in community, to be

available and adaptable, to talk about personal preferences in relation to the apostolic orientations of the Congregation and of the Church.³⁶

- 116.** Our mission also requires effective apostolic involvement, actual participation in the apostolic life of the community, apostolic experiences and training programs, all decided upon in agreement with the religious responsible for formation.

A professed religious sharing in the apostolic mission of the community ought to be able to find that his brothers live from:

- a communal prayer that includes the life and the broad concerns of the Church;
- community conversation about their apostolic activities, evaluated in the light of the Gospel and of the *Rule of Life*.
- a life that is balanced thanks to priorities and choices that have been well thought out.

Through different apostolic projects and training programs, to be experienced eventually in another community or in another country, the professed religious should be able to learn for himself what the apostolic priorities of the Assumption are, especially in terms of serving the needs of the poorest and of the younger Churches.

- 117.** Our mission requires mutual adjustment. It is not uncommon for a newly professed brother to feel himself pulled in one direction by his own desires and in another by the Province's apostolic project, especially if that project is not very diversified. The tension may be beneficial:

- for the young religious, this tension should lead him toward greater availability and real solidarity with the institution such as it is;
- for the Province, which will be pushed to work out an apostolic project that is clear, diversified, flexible, and open to initiative and creativity.

³⁶ RL 20.

- 118.** In order to become a man of his time, in touch with different worlds and cultures, a candidate or a brother in formation should have the opportunity of a lengthy stay in an Assumptionist community outside of his own country. International communities are a way to realize this goal.
- 119.** The Superior General, with the advice of the PGC, sees to the first apostolic nomination of those religious coming to the end of their initial formation. The purpose of these first appointments is:
- To favor, as a sign of unity within the Congregation, a greater mobility of the religious and to reinforce in this way the sense of belonging to a body and to an international missionary Congregation.
 - To help the religious in general and the Provincials in particular to look beyond their own Provinces and consider the needs of the Congregation.
 - To help the Provincials to be co-responsible and in solidarity with each other as they discern among the calls and needs of a Province and of the Congregation.
- 120.** The Superior General with his Ordinary General Council (OGC) begins this process of discernment when a religious is admitted to perpetual profession. Given the needs of the Congregation, but also the proposals from the Provincial, the General, the religious and the Provincial begin to dialogue in view of reaching a decision regarding the first apostolic appointment which will take effect at the time:
- of the perpetual profession of non-clerical religious,
 - of the priestly ordination for those called to priesthood.

IV – DOCTRINAL FORMATION

- 121.** “All our undertakings will be quickened by a doctrinal . . . spirit.”³⁷
Doctrinal formation concerns all the religious, whether they be preparing themselves for ordained ministries or not. It occurs at all the stages of an Assumptionist’s formation. For this, however, the post-novitiate period is especially opportune.

The Goals

- 122.** The reasons for the Assumption’s insistence on this kind of formation should be understood and embraced by all. It is necessary:
- to help brothers at different stages of their formation to root themselves in the charism that is proper to the Assumption;
 - to acquire a deeper understanding of the faith, to become more deeply rooted in God, to grow in love of Jesus Christ and of those to whom we have been sent. A faith that stays on the surface of things and that does not truly appropriate the Christian mystery remains fragile and uncommitted.
 - to know the heart of the Christian tradition and to deploy its wealth in encountering the cultures and questions of the day, to communicate in new terms its deepest content, and to continue in our day the endeavor of Augustine in his day: revealing Christ as the light of one’s heart and mind;
 - to give an accounting of the Good News, by showing its relevance in pluralist societies, by making it accessible to the greatest number possible, making our own an intuition dear to Father d’Alzon.
- 123.** Doctrinal formation should be adapted to each one, allowing him to realize the full extent of his possibilities and responding to the demands of the mission that the Assumption will have confided to him. Special care should be given to the following:

³⁷ *RL* 16.

- for the religious, a serious basic formation will be required of all, so that their Christian formation will be at the same level as their human formation.
- given the aptitudes of the person and the needs of the Assumption, specialized studies will be encouraged for those who have a taste for and the abilities to pursue such studies, favoring those disciplines traditionally honored at the Assumption: biblical exegesis, theology, philosophy, patristics, history of the 19th century, medias and communication, education, ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, etc.
- for future priests, a solid formation, complete and in accord with the requirements of the Church’s *Ratio studiorum*;

Implementation

Accompaniment

124. It is necessary to sustain and accompany the professed religious during his formation, in order:

- to discern with him his preferences and aptitudes and to suggest the doctrinal formation best adapted to who he is, as well as to the needs of the Church and of the Assumption;
- to assure that he is accompanied in his studies, to encourage him and to check the work already done, in a spirit of dialogue and fraternal assistance;
- to help him make those necessary choices during the course of his formation;
- to take stock of his work annually, comparing it with the requirements of his study program.

Personal requirements

125. In his studies the professed religious will:

- show that he is rigorous in the use of his time and is learning to manage his calendar in order to avoid either squandering his time or overloading it with extraneous occupations;

- find a balance between his studies and his life of faith, between his studies and his apostolic life.

The proper atmosphere for studies

126. It is important that:

- the professed brother have the time to study and that he live in a community whose style and rhythm favor studies;
- he be recognized and encouraged in his efforts;
- the stakes be clear to all and often repeated: doctrinal formation assures the future of the professed religious, as well as of the Assumption;
- the professed religious be initiated to ways of doing things that will then enable him to continue his formation all during his life.

A study program

127. Formators should be especially attentive to the following:

- to the choice of teaching institutions; these should follow the norms established by the Church;
- to the choice of programs, their content and their methodology, taking into account the aptitudes of the religious and his apostolic orientation;
- to the possible gaps in the program, in particular with regard to Assumption's and finding ways to fill them if necessary, so that doctrinal formation is truly inspired by our intellectual and spiritual patrimony;
- to the need for dealing with certain doctrinal aspects that are more specifically Assumptionist, in various study sessions and workshops organized for that purpose;
- to the duration of studies: doctrinal formation gains nothing from hastening its pace. Formators should see to it that each professed brother be allotted a sufficient and appropriate period of time for his studies and help him to avoid piling professional work onto his commitment to studies. It will also be important for the religious to meet his deadlines to avoid unjustified extensions.

- 128.** It could be useful to keep a record of the brother's properly Assumptionist formation, which keeps in mind the doctrinal, social and ecumenical identity of our religious family. This record would accompany the religious during his entire formation, especially when he moves from one formation setting to another so that his formation program remains coherent.
- 129.** The Congregation will see to the development of tools needed to transmit the charism of the Assumption and to assure the translation of these into the necessary languages.

V – ORDAINED MINISTRIES

- 130.** Before the diaconate ordination, the brother will be made lector and acolyte. He will minister as an acolyte for at least 6 months (CL 1035 § 2) The formators will see to it that this period is an opportunity for the brother to be initiated to the ministries and to grow in an understanding of the liturgy. When asking to receive these ministries, he will speak in particular of his relationship with the Word and with the Eucharist.
- 131.** The diaconate and the first years of priesthood (or of the permanent diaconate) are crucial moments in one's apostolic formation. These years warrant the careful attention of those responsible for formation. They are the time of practical initiation to the ordained ministries and for acquiring important pastoral attitudes.
- 132.** This being said, it is important to underscore the importance of the vocation of a lay brother at the Assumption. He should receive a doctrinal and professional formation adapted to his personal gifts and to the apostolic project of the Province.

It is likewise important that he be accompanied in his pastoral initiation. The Provincial Superior will delegate a religious to help him establish an apostolic program and review his pastoral work. He can also help to see him through whatever difficulties may arise.

The Goals

- 133.** The diaconate and the first years of his priestly ministry are the times when a religious really learns:
- to acquire the soul of a servant and the heart of a shepherd, in imitation of Jesus and according to the charism of the Assumption;
 - to enter into the Congregation's mission in a creative manner.

Ordained for the service of the Gospel

134. An essential dimension of the mission of the newly ordained religious is welcoming and announcing the Word of God.
135. He should adapt himself to the areas where he is sent to carry out his mission and to enter into cultures that are different from his own.
136. The religious who is a deacon or a newly ordained priest must further his intellectual, spiritual and pastoral formation. He should find regular times for personal reflection and work, beyond the time required for preparing homilies.

Ordained for the service of the Church

137. The religious who is a deacon or a newly ordained priest should nurture his missionary spirit. He is sent to people who should not be identified with the gathered Christian community, even in those areas where religious practice is very pronounced. His pastoral concern cannot restrict itself only to those Christians who participate in the life of the parish.
138. He has to appropriate the pastoral orientations of those who have sent him on mission (the Church, the diocese, the Congregation). He should collaborate with those responsible for the pastoral ministries of the local Church, while taking initiatives in announcing the Gospel and strengthening the Church. Thus, he will show his care and love for the Church.
139. The first apostolic appointment should afford him the opportunity to discover his apostolic aptitudes and to grow in his availability as a religious for the mission. Nevertheless, he should remain open to every ministry, attractive to him or not, always maintaining a desire to widen his competence and to exercise initiative.

Ordained for the coming of the Kingdom

140. His openness to the signs of the Kingdom should show itself in his ministry, by his availability to all men and women of good will and

by his openness of heart and mind to inter-cultural, ecumenical and interfaith dialogue.

141. He should demonstrate apostolic zeal, love for work, and concern for formation, competence and adaptation.³⁸ All his apostolic activities should be inspired by a doctrinal, social and ecumenical spirit.³⁹

Fundamental dimensions

A man of faith

142. The religious who is a deacon or a newly ordained priest should be asking himself how his life merges into his prayer and how his prayer affects his life and that of his community.⁴⁰ He should grow in his capacity to read events in faith, to hear God's call therein, both for himself and for others, to consider carefully the lives of people and of groups and to identify there the work of the Spirit as well as the traces of sin.
143. He will need to integrate the sacraments of the Eucharist and of Reconciliation into his own spiritual life and that of the ecclesial assembly.
144. He should push himself constantly to acknowledge and accept his qualities as well as his limitations, in order to grow into greater human, spiritual and apostolic maturity.
145. The solidity of his faith will also show itself by the way he accepts setbacks and failed apostolic ventures. These will allow him to exercise perseverance, to begin anew despite difficulties and to question himself.

A religious living in apostolic community

146. He should willingly confide his ministry to the scrutiny of his brothers in order to think it through, to purify it, to enrich it, and to avoid the temptation to the individualism, the possessiveness of the

³⁸ RL 20.

³⁹ RL 16.

⁴⁰ RL 50.

lone apostle who is too easily satisfied with himself or who runs from one urgency to the next. He should make it a point always to organize his apostolic life with his community and in a context of dialogue, mutual enquiry and shared prayer.

- 147.** He should welcome, with humility and availability, the mission confided to him by his community and his Superiors.

An apostle for the coming of the Kingdom

- 148.** The religious who is a deacon or a newly ordained priest should cultivate those apostolic attitudes dear to the Assumption: daring, initiative, and disinterestedness. It is crucial that he cultivate disinterestedness in his apostolic initiatives, to attract attention not to himself but to Jesus Christ, to be able to go from an attractive apostolate to one less attractive but more constructive, and to back off willingly, surrendering his place to others, even when they are less brilliant than he.
- 149.** As a man of his time and as an Assumptionist, a deacon or a newly ordained priest ought to be able to be attentive to today's world, to its evolution, to its greatest needs, to the concerns of the faithful, to the difficulties that touch them.
- 150.** Called to be a man of relationships, he needs to know how to establish bonds with persons and groups, of different cultures, ages and sex. He should respect the humblest and welcome the wounded, the suffering and the oppressed. In the midst of differences and inevitable tensions, he is called to be a man of communion, of forgiveness and of peace, in word and in deed.
- 151.** He should be eager to engage in teamwork with priests, sisters and lay persons.
- 152.** He should never forget that "the proclamation of Jesus Christ is inseparable from the promotion of the whole person in justice, love and unity."⁴¹

⁴¹ RL 16.

Implementation

The deacon or the newly ordained priest himself

- 153.** The call to ordained ministries is to be received by the Assumptionist religious as a gift from God and as an invitation to the service of the Church and of the Kingdom.
- 154.** An Assumptionist religious called to the ordained should accept to be reshaped by this new mission that the Church confides to him as her minister. He should integrate this ecclesial ministry into his religious life so that together they may comprise two facets of a single vocation in a way that his faith, his prayer and his apostolic soul be deeply marked.
- 155.** He should learn to listen and allow himself to be mentored in order to acquire the spiritual and pastoral attitudes proper to his life as a religious and as a priest.
- 156.** The religious who is a deacon or a newly ordained priest is to live his ministry at the heart of an apostolic community that is at the service of the Church and of the Kingdom. He is to be inspired by the charism of the Assumption, letting it impregnate all of his life and pastoral work.
- 157.** His pastoral commitment can take into account his previous formation, general and professional.

Apostolic community

- 158.** The local community that receives a religious during his diaconal service will accompany him in this service. To guarantee this support, it should schedule three meetings in addition to its usual ones: one to receive the deacon and settle all the questions that concern him, a second halfway through his training to evaluate it and suggest possible improvements, and a third at the end to produce the report that will accompany his request for priesthood.

- 159.** A similar kind of mentoring of the young priest during the first years of his priestly ministry should also be foreseen by the community. With this community, the young priest will do a periodic evaluation of his pastoral methods in light of what is essential.
- 160.** It is important to care for the communal and apostolic climate during these formation years, so decisive for the pastoral future of the religious. To that end, it would be good:
- to encourage scheduled, systematic study and reflection on the ministry of the religious priest;
 - to encourage the review of life in the light of the Scriptures;
 - to favor meaningful discussion about the apostolate and thereby to help build truly apostolic communities;
 - to invite the community to a prayer life that is nourished by its apostolate and to an apostolate enriched and sustained by personal and communal prayer.
- 161.** The first apostolic appointment is normally given for a period of three years, beginning with priestly ordination. This makes possible a certain stability in the apostolate during these first years.

Accompaniment

- 162.** Throughout his diaconal ministry, a deacon should be accompanied by one of the religious in his community, designated by the Provincial Superior.

The community that receives a deacon and the religious named to accompany him should be helped in their mission by the Province's Formation Director. He should be visiting them, "taking to heart their struggles and promoting sessions among them as well as other collaborative means."⁴²

- 163.** Accompaniment should not be relegated only to the more technical aspects of diaconal ministry. It is to be hoped that it would encourage

⁴² See *Ratio* 25.

the deacon to examine the way he lives, his spontaneous and studied attitudes and his relationships. It should prompt him untiringly to balance his religious life and his ministry and to be a loyal partner of the local Church.

164. A newly ordained priest should also be accompanied at the place of his initiation to priestly ministry by an older brother, named by the Provincial Superior, who will help him to evaluate his pastoral work and to overcome the difficulties that arise.
165. In the course of their first years of ministry, provincial or continental workshops for the newly ordained religious should be organized, under the direction of an experienced pastor and good teacher, for them to discuss their experiences and uncertainties and to accommodate theory to practice.

The diaconal program

166. The diaconal program should be worked out by the candidate and the religious who will accompany him. This program needs to be approved by the Provincial Superior and forwarded to the Superior General.
167. Neither the evaluation of his diaconal ministry nor his request for priestly ordination will not be initiated until the brother will have completed the canonical six months of diaconate.
168. The program will need to specify the place, the duration of the diaconal experience and the name of the religious who will accompany the future deacon. It must clearly state what is expected of the candidate: the goals to achieve, the means foreseen, the attitudes to develop, the apostolic responsibilities confided to the deacon and the evaluations to be made in the course of his diaconate experience.

The program for a newly ordained priest

169. The first 5 years of ministry are still part of a brother's formation. He prepares with his formator and with the community, a program of apostolic activities for the first years of his ministry.
170. This program has to be approved by the Provincial Superior. It needs to state clearly what apostolic responsibilities he will undertake, as well as what sorts of evaluations will be made during those first five years of his priestly ministry.
171. The Provincial Superior shall obtain the endorsement of the bishop of the region where the priest will exercise his ministry.

Congregation and Church requirements

For ordination to the diaconate

Admission

172. The Superior General is the one responsible for admitting a brother to the diaconate.⁴³ To help him in his judgment, the Provincial Superior must send him the file gathered together for that purpose.⁴⁴ In addition to submitting his recommendation and that of his council, the Provincial Superior will also supply the report he had requested of the local community and of the Formation Director of the Province. The latter must also have the recommendation of the Formation Commission.
173. Ordination to the diaconate shall take place after a brother has completed his course of studies in preparation for the ordained ministries and after his final profession. Those are two different and important commitments in the life of a brother. It should be foreseen, then, that a sufficient span of time separates his ordination to the diaconate from his final profession, to allow him to live fully and distinctly each of these commitments.

⁴³ *RL* 123 e.

⁴⁴ *RL* 159.

Canonical requirements

174. The candidate needs:

- to have reached his twenty-third birthday (*CCL* 1031 § 1);
- to have made his final profession (*CCL* 1037);
- to have received the ministries of lector and acolyte. A six-month span between the ministry of acolyte and ordination to the diaconate is required (*CCL* 1035 § 1-2);
- to have submitted a handwritten, dated and signed, formal statement to the effect that he is freely and spontaneously committing himself for life, fully aware of the obligations ordination will entail (*CCL* 1028 and 1036).

For ordination to the priesthood

Admission

175. As in the case of the diaconate, the Provincial Superior must forward to the Superior General the file gathered to help him in his judgment.⁴⁵ In addition to submitting his recommendation and that of his council, the Provincial Superior will also supply the report he had requested of the local community, of the religious he had designated to accompany the deacon and of the Formation Director of the Province, as well as the testimony of the priests and lay persons who know him.

Canonical requirements

176. The candidate needs:

- to have submitted a handwritten, dated and signed, request (*CCL* 1036);
- to have reached his twenty-fifth birthday (*CCL* 1031 § 1);
- to possess the required freedom (*CCL* 1026);
- to be fully aware of the obligations priesthood entails (*CCL* 1028);
- to have exercised the ministry of diaconate for at least six months (*CL* 1031 § 1 – 1032 § 2).

⁴⁵ *RL* 123 e, 159.

VI – CONTINUING FORMATION⁴⁶

Convictions

177. Continuing formation is the responsibility of each brother's and of each community. Everyone should, in a spirit of initiative, take pains to profit fully from the occasions for formation offered by the Assumption and the local Church.

Those who have provincial responsibilities should urge the brothers to continue their formation. They should consider the needs of the religious and those of the Province.

178. Continuing formation should touch upon all the dimensions of what it means to be an Assumptionist: a man, a religious living in apostolic community, an apostle for the coming of the Kingdom.

179. An Assumptionist should be a man of his time. He cannot live disconnected from those events that change the course of our human existence: globalization, communications explosion, the challenges of genetic science, new insight in the Church, growing individualism, to name but a few. It is in this world, changing at an accelerating rate, that he is called to be an apostle.

180. "... let it be understood that if ever the religious stop studying, it will be the sign that the Congregation has outlived its usefulness and been cursed by God."⁴⁷ The future of the Congregation depends in part on continuing formation. It is by no means a luxury; it is a duty. It will insure the quality of the formation we provide to the young people we receive; it is what shapes initial formation.

181. Life-review, conversation in community about the lives of each member, the reading of official Congregation documents are special moments of continuing education on a daily basis.

⁴⁶ VC 69: "It will be very important for every institute to provide, as part of its ratio institutionis, a precise and systematic description of its plan of continuing formation."

⁴⁷ ES, p. 208; *Circular Letters - 1875-1874*, p. 18.

The Goals

182. Continuing formation helps a religious to be aware of his own development and to bring a certain unity to his whole being. It fosters the daily conversion of the religious. It helps to actualize the charism of the Assumption that the Holy Spirit has given to the Church and to the world. It helps us to avoid idealizing the past and fosters growth in creative fidelity.⁴⁸

Implementation

Content

183. Continuing formation focuses on spirituality, the life of the Church, doctrinal and professional studies and the charism of the Congregation.

Spirituality

184. Among the means that promote a deepening of the spiritual life are the following: retreats (Assumptionist, annual, Augustinian, community), spiritual direction, *lectio divina*, the Prayer of Christians, the writing of Father d'Alzon.

The life of the Church

185. Our fidelity to the charism of the Founder calls us regularly to renew the methods and the content of our pastoral activities in order to respond better to the call of the Church's mission today. Serving on Assumptionist commissions, like the one for peace and justice, and participating in diocesan programs for formation are part of this effort at continuing formation.

⁴⁸ VC 37.

Doctrinal and professional formation

- 186.** Updating ourselves doctrinally and professionally calls for furthering our biblical and theological studies, studying the documents of the Magisterium, becoming better acquainted with the cultures and the places where we live and work, and seeking professional and technical re-qualification when necessary. Workshops and international meetings are also Assumptionist tools for ongoing formation.

Furthering our understanding of the Assumptionist charism

- 187.** “By studying the dominant ideas which governed our beginnings, you will advance in the perfection to which you are called;”⁴⁹ Assemblies, workshops and retreats are all gatherings that help us deepen our understanding of the Congregation’s charism. Reading the official documents of the Congregation also contribute to that end.

Defining moments of continuing formation

- 188.** These moments should be understood very broadly. Concretely, they should be combined with those that might promote an unexpected movement on the part of the Holy Spirit. We do well to draw attention to the following critical stages:⁵⁰
- the passage from initial formation to the first experience of a more independent life, when a brother has to discover a new way of being faithful to God;
 - the completion of about ten years after final profession when routine and the diminishment of zeal threaten to take over. It seems that this would be a good time for a religious to be given an extended period of time to distance himself from his everyday life in order to reread it in the light of the Gospel and the thought of the Founder;

⁴⁹ *ES*, p. 17; *Directory*, p. ix.

⁵⁰ *VC* 70.

- the years of full maturity when the danger of growing individualism looms large, especially for those brothers with active and effective temperaments;
- the call to accept new responsibilities is another occasion for further formation;
- those untimely times of crisis that can arise at any period of one’s life, from external factors, like a change of assignment or of work, a setback, being misunderstood, being made to feel marginal, as well as from more personal ones, like sickness, spiritual dryness, strong temptations, a faith crisis, falling in love, having to deal with both at the same time. These are the circumstances in which a religious needs help to overcome the crisis in faith;
- the stage of gradual retirement from an active life. These are moments that can be taken as a unique opportunity to allow oneself to be permeated by our Lord’s Paschal experience, even to desire dying to “be with Christ,” in conformity with one’s original commitment to live Assumptionist religious life.

VII – BECOMING A FORMATOR

A conviction

189. Assumption needs to form its formators. This duty arises from believing seriously that God continues to summon men to serve within the Assumption. The future of our communities and our continued fidelity to the charism of our Institute are grounded in the formation of our members and so, first of all, in the preparation of our formators. Formation is a mission, a ministry, rooted in our charism. Becoming a formator flows from who we are as Assumptionists: believers, apostles and disciples of Father d'Alzon and of Saint Augustine.

Forming oneself for the mission of formation

190. It is essential that one have the time to prepare himself for the mission of formation. It is to be hoped that the one who is called to this mission follow a structured formation program in spirituality, the theology of religious life, psychology, pedagogy, anthropology, and in the study of the culture of the brothers he will be accompanying, and finally in the various aspects of Assumptionist life and spirituality.

191. The formation of a formator calls for gradual introduction to his mission: nothing replaces experience.

192. The mission of a formator requires continual growth, for example, by means of reading, following workshops, talking with other formators and with the brothers in formation, participating in the formation activities organized by the Conferences for Religious, by spending time in other formation communities, etc.

Implementation

- 193.** A formator needs to have a clear vision of what God is calling the Assumption to be and to do, of what, in turn, the Assumption in the Province is trying to live out, and what the goal of Assumptionist formation is.
- 194.** A formator is called to share his vision in word and deed, especially in his accompaniment of the brothers entrusted to him. He should take very seriously the need to convey his convictions passionately and disinterestedly.
- 195.** If he is to fulfill his mission in formation, it will be important for him to know well the religious roots of that mission, to frequent Saint Augustine and Father d'Alzon, and to appropriate the history of the whole Assumption family, and that he become both heir and founder.
- 196.** To those ends he will have to:
- know and be close to those he is accompanying, taking the risk of loving them;
 - evaluate, adjust, and, if necessary, rework the formation plan;
 - try to complete his own formation, the better to respond to the demands of his mission.
 - ensure that he himself is accompanied and evaluated. His community, those who are being formed, the Formation Commission, his own spiritual guide, all can help him better to fulfill his mission.
- 197.** A formator should want to share his experience, his doubts, his conviction, and the formation methods he uses, with other persons responsible also for formation, at intra-continental meetings, and with the various teams set up by the Conference for Religious in his country.
- 198.** A formator should try to interest all the religious of the Province in what is being lived out in formation. He should invite some of them to collaborate with him, not only by teaching courses but also by

sharing their life experiences and by accompanying the religious in formation in their spiritual development.

- 199.** As a man of faith and of his time, a formator needs to find ways for those in formation to assess the situation in their country, the events in the life of the Church, and the general situation where their process of formation is being lived out. The contribution of lay persons will prove valuable in this area.

INFORMATION SHEETS

These information sheets are meant to be distributed to the candidates and to the brothers as they enter the successive levels of their formation.

PRE-NOVITIATE

- *Teacher, where are you staying?*
- *Come and see.*

(John 1.38-39)

You have just crossed the threshold of an Assumptionist community. A time for formation is opening before you which will help you to confirm the call to Assumptionist religious life that you have received. This time will also help to prepare you for the next stage, the novitiate.

During the course of this period, you will set out on a path to growth that will provide you with a better understanding of yourself, a road that you have already begun to walk with the religious who has accompanied you during the time before your admission to pre-novitiate formation.

This time preceding novitiate is focused on the discernment of your motives and dispositions that have shaped your desire for religious life. Before committing yourself to Assumptionist religious life, it is very important to examine the strength of your desire to follow Christ and to test your aptitude for Assumptionist community life. Living in community provides the best means and place for your formation. Your apostolic work should prove your desire to serve God and men and women in the Church.

At the end of this stage, you should be able, in all freedom and responsibility, to know whether or not to request admission to the novitiate. The community that receives you and the formator who accompanies you will be in a position to give their opinion concerning your aptitude for living Assumptionist religious life.

NOVITIATE

*The novitiate is a time of transformation
and the novice should have only one desire:
to transform himself into Jesus Christ.*

(Emmanuel d'Alzon, *Circular Letters - 1874-1875*, p. 77)

As a novice now, you are living a stage between the life you led before and the life of a religious. This situation involves a temporary loss of points of reference that may leave you feeling vulnerable. Take advantage of this privileged time to deepen, discern and confirm your calling to Assumptionist religious life. With the accompaniment of your Novice Master, you will be led to experience God more deeply, to experience and love Jesus Christ more intensely, and to follow in the footsteps of him who was poor, chaste and obedient for the sake of proclaiming the Reign of God. You will be called upon to give a more communal meaning to the gift of yourself to Christ in service to your brothers.

Gradually entering into religious life and specifically Assumptionist religious life, and by a greater awareness of the reality of the Church and of the world in which you live, you will be introduced to the apostolic life and to the proclamation of the Kingdom.

POST-NOVITIATE

... *God gives us ever greater freedom to the extent that we allow him to reign more perfectly over us . . .*
(Emmanuel d'Alzon, *Foundational Documents*, p. 102.)

After novitiate, you are being called now to enter into the stage of post-novitiate formation. It will be the time for putting down roots and for deploying all that you have already discovered about religious life. Through an ever-growing integration into the life and mission of the Congregation, it will prepare you for a definitive commitment to the Assumption.

Post-novitiate is a time to learn faithfulness, endurance and patience. It is also a time when you will be able to deepen the spirit and the vocation of the apostolic community.

This stage will prepare you likewise for your future mission which, if it be your case, you will assume within an ordained ministry.

FORMATION FOR THE ORDAINED MINISTRIES

May God bring to completion in you what he has begun.
(The Liturgy of Ordination)

On the night of your diaconate or priestly ordination, you found yourself on an equal footing with your elder brothers. And yet, it still remains for you to grow into that ministry. You will be supported along the way by one of those religious. It will be important for you to let yourself be reshaped by your new mission, entrusted to you by Christ and the Church. It will be indispensable for you to learn to become a shepherd through practical training and the acquisition of a pastoral sense. You are about to learn how to bring together your ecclesial ministry and your religious life, with the result that your faith, your prayer, and your apostolic concerns will become profoundly marked by their integration. And so, day after day, you will gradually become an apostle at one with the heart of Christ and in the spirit of the Assumption.

CONTINUING FORMATION

. . . let it be understood that if ever the religious stop studying, it will be the sign that the Congregation has outlived its usefulness . . .
(Emmanuel d'Alzon, *Circular Letters - 1874-1875*, p. 18.)

You have understood that final profession or ordination do not mark the completion of your formation. The different experiences of your life and of your pastoral work will have revealed new horizons to you. Now you will need to continue to form yourself, heedful of Father d'Alzon's recommendation. Continuing formation is hardly a luxury; it is indispensable to your being faithful to the mission you have received. Thus, little by little, will you also become a formator for the generations that will succeed you.

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES

The following questionnaires have been prepared as tools for evaluating the preparedness of the candidate or the brother in formation for the successive stages of his formation.

Their usefulness, however, can be greater than that. They can also be used as instruments for animation in helping candidates, brothers in formation, formators and Assumptionist communities to review their lives. The hope is that they will be referred to not only at the time of preparing reports but at the local Chapter or at the beginning of the year, to establish the program and the formation objectives of a candidate, a novice or a professed brother.

Each Province can adapt these questionnaires to its own actual situation.

1. EVALUATION OF A POSTULANT'S PREPAREDNESS FOR NOVITIATE

1. Discernment and accompaniment

- Has he met regularly with his formator and/or his spiritual director? In what way have these meetings been useful for his development?
- Has he drafted a kind of life plan for himself? Has this enabled him to review his progress?
- To what extent does he know the Assumption? What are the aspects of Assumptionist spirituality that helped him decide to move forward?
- Is he free and coherent in his decisions?

2. Human maturity and health

- Does he know and accept himself to a sufficient degree?
- How adaptable is he? Is he open to others?
- Does he appear to be balanced psychologically and affectively? Does he speak of his affectivity? Has he assumed his sexuality, in relation to himself and in relation to others? Is he able to love?
- Does he have sufficient common sense? Is he polite? Does he present himself properly? Is he organized?
- Do we see Assumptionist qualities in him, qualities like integrity, frankness, cordiality, simplicity, a sense of initiative, daring, generosity, disinterestedness)?
- What kind of relationship does he have with his family? Does he take care to maintain these ties? Is he sufficient free in this regard?
- Has he undergone a medical examination before entering into novitiate? Has he been under the care of a psychologist? If so, why?

3. His faith in Jesus Christ

- Does he have a sincere desire to discover, to love and to follow Jesus Christ?
- Does he participate in the life of the Church in a serene and happy manner?

- Does he have a life of prayer? Is he capable of living in silence? Does he love the Word of God? Does he meditate on the Word?
- Does he participate with conviction in common prayer, in the Eucharist?
- Does he frequent the sacrament of reconciliation?

4. His life in community

- How has he participated in the life of the community?
- Is he open to dialogue? Does he welcome others as brothers, attentive to culture, to background?
- Is he serviceable? Is he able to earn his own living? Does he contribute to the material upkeep of the community? Is he co-responsible in the use of goods? Does he render account of the gifts he receives?
- Does he invest himself in the projects of the community?

5. His love for the Church and his service to her

- Has the community helped him to insert himself into the life and the mission of the local Church?
- In what apostolic field has he most invested himself? Did he welcome the mission given to him? Was he faithful to his commitments?
- Does he allow himself to be touched by what others are living? Is he capable of openness, of compassion?

Conclusion

- Has the candidate's development during his postulancy been positive?
- -Is he ready to enter into the novitiate?
- In view of helping the candidate to progress, to what particular points would you draw his attention and that of his formators?

2. EVALUATION OF A NOVICE'S PREPAREDNESS FOR COMMITMENT TO RELIGIOUS LIFE

The process of evaluation should include a review of those remarks made at the conclusion of the candidate's postulancy.

What human growth has the novice shown in areas like psychological and affective maturity, interior freedom, family relationships, a sense of responsibility?

1. A man of faith

- Is Christ at the center of his life? Is he able to find him in his brothers, in the poor, in every person?
- Does he feed his faith with the Word of God, with the Eucharist, with the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
- Does he participate actively in the community's prayer? Does he talk about his faith?
- Has he taken initiatives and been creative in animating the liturgy?
- What have the quality and constancy of his personal prayer been like? Have they shown themselves in personal discipline, in a certain capacity for recollection, in an experience of God through gratuitous encounters with him?
- What is the quality of his love for Mary and for the Church? Does he read Father d'Alzon and Saint Augustine?

2. A religious living in apostolic community

- Is it obvious that he can live community life and embrace diversity in unity?
- Does he share in building up and animating his community?
- Is he a welcoming person, a man of dialogue, of communion, of service? Can he deny himself?
- Can he engage in team work? Is he considerate of other people's opinions?
Is he really aware of belonging to an international congregation and of what that means?

3. Following Christ who was poor, chaste and obedient

Religious poverty

- Does he live a simple life, free with regard to material goods?
- Does he render an account of the gifts and money he receives?
- How much time does he give to work in his daily program?
- Is he sensitive to social injustices? Is he in solidarity with the very poor?

Chastity

- Is he spontaneous, simple, transparent, yet discreet, in relating to his brothers and everyone he meets?
- Does he have a sense of humor to enable him to rise above tensions and frustrations?
- Is he balanced in his emotional life? Does he speak about his friendships, with men as well as with women?
- Is he aware of the consequences of his choice of consecrated celibacy?
- Can he embrace solitude with joy and inner peace?

Religious obedience

- How does he understand obedience and how does he live it? In submission? In domination?
- What place does he give to spiritual direction?
- Can he embrace community decisions and own them? Does he communicate his activities to his brothers?
- Is he available to accept the mission and the apostolic orientations of his community, of the Province and the Congregation?
- Is he able, through dialogue, to challenge his personal preferences with the apostolic priorities of the Province and of the Congregation?

4. An apostle for the coming of the Kingdom

- Is he concerned for the great causes of God and of man? Is he resolved to devote himself to the evangelization of the world? How does he show concretely his passion for the Reign of God?

- Does his apostolic work reveal attitudes of disinterestedness, initiative, availability?
- Does he know how to work in a team? Does he accept points of view and ways of doing things other than his own? Does he value the role of lay persons in the Church and in the world?
- How does he focus his studies, his prayer and his relationships so that they take on an apostolic dimension?

Conclusion

- Has this novice grown during his novitiate? In what areas?
- Is he ready to live by the vows?
- What things would you point out to him and to his formators, to help him grow further?

3. EVALUATION OF A RELIGIOUS IN VIEW OF PERPETUAL PROFESSION

Each year a brother in formation must submit a self-evaluation. His formators and his brothers living with him in community must also submit an evaluation of his progress along the way he has chosen to pursue.

The following are questions to help them all focus on specific issues that need to be examined.

1. A man of faith

- Is Christ at the center of his life? Is he able to find him in his brothers, in the poor, in every person?
- Does he nourish his faith with the Word of God, with the Eucharist, with the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
- Does he share actively in the community's prayer? Does he talk about his faith?
- Has he taken initiatives and been creative in animating the liturgy? Does he cultivate a taste for beauty and for the sacred in liturgy?
- What have the quality and constancy of his personal prayer been like? Do these qualities show themselves in personal discipline, in a certain capacity for recollection, in an experience of God through gratuitous encounters with him?

2. A brother living in apostolic community

- Is it obvious that he can live community life and embrace diversity in unity?
- Does he share in building up and animating his community?
- Is he a welcoming person, a man of dialogue, of communion, of service? Can he deny himself?
- Do the life and the mission of the Province find their place among his concerns?

- Is he really aware of belonging to an international Congregation and of what that means?

3. Following Christ who was poor, chaste and obedient

Religious poverty

- Does he live a simple life, free with regard to material goods?
- Does he render an account of the gifts and money he receives?
- How much time does he give to work in his daily activities?
- Is he sensitive to social injustices? Is he dedicated to the very poor?
- What means does he take to know about the social and economic realities of his country?

Chastity

- Is he spontaneous, simple, transparent, yet discreet, in relating to his brothers and everyone he meets?
- Does he have a sense of humor to enable him to rise above tensions and frustrations?
- Is he balanced in his emotional life? Does he relate well with people?
- Can he embrace solitude with joy and inner peace?
- Is he disciplined in his relationships, in going out, in his needs and in his use of the media?

Religious obedience

- How does he understand obedience and how does he live it? In submission? In domination?
- Can he embrace community decisions and own them? Does he communicate his activities to his brothers?
- Is he available to accept the mission and the apostolic orientations of his community, of the Province and the Congregation?
- Is he able, through dialogue, to challenge his personal preferences with the apostolic priorities of the Province and of the Congregation?

4. An apostle for the coming of the Kingdom

- Is he concerned for the great causes of God and of man? Is he resolved to devote himself to the evangelization of the world? How does he show concretely his passion for the Reign of God?
- Does his apostolic work reveal attitudes of selflessness, initiative, availability?
- Does he inform and consult his community in matters dealing with his apostolate? Does he evaluate with them the mission confided to him?
- Can he engage in team work? Does he accept points of view and ways of doing things other than his own? Does he value the role of lay persons in the Church and in the world?
- How does he focus his studies, his prayer and his relationships so that they take on an apostolic dimension?

Conclusion

- Has this brother grown during the past year? In what areas?
- Is he ready to continue along the way toward final profession of vows?
- What things would you point out to him and to his formators, to help him grow further?

4. EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN VIEW OF PERPETUAL PROFESSION

1. The letter of request

When the time comes, the religious will address to the Provincial a letter of request for admission to perpetual profession. In the letter, the brother will focus especially on the reasons and the profound motivation for wanting to commit himself definitively in the Congregation.

2. The self-evaluation

In conformity with RL 154, accompanying this letter is an evaluation by the religious of his development in the Assumption. The above questionnaire can help him to reread and to evaluate his life since coming to the Assumption.

This self-evaluation need not follow the order suggested in the questionnaire, which is only meant as a pedagogical tool to help the candidate provide as good as possible a sense of his personality, of his life in the Congregation, of his questions and of his deepest passions.

3. Reading of the self-evaluation by the formator

The formator, who is presenting the candidate for perpetual profession, should see to it that in his evaluation he covers the following essential elements:

- his vocation story
- the important aspects of Assumptionist religious life (life of faith, the vowed life, community life and apostolic life). He should explain how these aspects shape his life and what questions they raise for him.
- His spiritual substance (see the appended document “Accompaniment and spiritual substance”)
- His passion or his apostolic project in view of the first apostolic assignment.

- His aspirations in terms of formation and of specialization with reference to the missions of the Province or of the Congregation.

4. Reports and recommendations

A certain number of brothers will be asked to provide reports or opinions regarding the brother.

As for the reports, they should cover especially the following:

1. the candidate's life of faith
2. his life in apostolic community
3. his living of the vows
4. things he is attentive to or to work on
5. the apostolic orientation that seems most fitting

As for the opinions and recommendations, what is most important is not simply to repeat the opinions or thoughts of others, but rather to focus on those things that lead the person writing to support or not the candidate's request.

5. EVALUATION IN VIEW OF ORDAINED MINISTRIES¹

I. EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES

I.1. Questionnaire for the self-evaluation

Review of formation and of pastoral experience

The purpose of this questionnaire is to give the religious, as he prepares for the ordained ministry, an opportunity to review critically his pastoral formation and his apostolic experiences. In this self-evaluation, he will confirm (or not) the desires and personal plans for the future, formulated at the time of his perpetual profession or diaconate. He should address this self-evaluation to his Provincial Superior and include: 1) his projected program for diaconate ministry or, if he is a deacon requesting priesthood, his plan of apostolic activities foreseen for the initial years of priesthood and 2) a letter requesting ordination, in which he should indicate the motives that led him to seek ordination to the diaconate or to the priesthood.

- What have been the positive as well as the negative aspects of your pastoral formation and your apostolic experiences? During your formation prior to / during your diaconate, what initiatives did you take? What have you discovered? What were your setbacks?
- In terms of pastoral ministry, what are the strengths and qualities, the weaknesses and limitations that you have recognized in yourself?

The following questions could be useful for this review:

Ordained for the service of the Gospel

- Have you been finding the time to read the Word of God, to meditate on it, to understand it for yourself?

¹ (RL 166, 169)

- What ease / difficulty do you have in presenting God's Word in a personalized way that is accessible to persons different from you by age, attitude or culture?
- Does God's Word dialogue with real life in your preaching and in the group reflections you animate?
- Are you concerned about good liturgy and the quality of sacramental celebrations? Do you stay aware of their character as instruments of God's action and privileged means for the Church's catechesis?

Ordained for the service of Church

- Are you a man of communion, able to gather persons and groups into the unity of God's People while respecting their differences and taking into account the inevitable tensions that arise among them?
- To what extent are you capable of listening, of collaborating, and of engaging in teamwork with the brothers in your community and with the priests, religious women and lay people around you?
- Do you follow the pastoral orientations of your diocese?

Ordained for the coming of the Kingdom

- Do you pay attention to today's world, to its changes, to its deepest needs? Do you read the day's events in terms of faith in order to perceive therein the summons of God?
- Do you cultivate the pastoral attitudes required by the Assumption: disinterested generosity, initiative, availability, concern for your on-going formation?
- Are you attentive to the world of the poor, of unbelievers, of those distanced from the Church, of separated brothers and sisters?

**I.2. Evaluation questionnaires
to be used by the community and the formators**

A brother's local community and notably his Superior with his Council, those responsible for formation, the Provincial Council and the Provincial Superior himself are all asked to discern very carefully his aptitudes for Orders and to submit their opinion and the result of their vote.

This discernment and these opinions should deal with:

- The brother’s motivations for request ordination
- His overall development from the human, spiritual, communal and especially pastoral point of view
- His strengths, weaknesses, aptitudes, and limitations.

It is a good idea to look over his personal profile, to review the issues that called for special attention and that were noted at the time of his admission to Final Profession. If doubts persist, they should be clearly stated and the basis upon which they remain conscientiously explained.

This questionnaire should facilitate this scrutiny.

Ordained for the service of the Gospel

- Does he find the time to read the Word of God, to meditate on it, to see for himself what it is saying?
- Is he concerned about presenting God’s Word in a personalized way that is accessible to the various persons he addresses?
- Does God’s Word dialogue with real life in his preaching and in the group reflections he conducts?
- Is he concerned about good liturgy and the quality of sacramental celebrations? Does he show a concerted awareness that they are instruments of God’s action and privileged means for the Church’s catechesis?

Ordained for the service of the Church

- Is he a man of communion?
- Is he capable of listening? Of engaging in teamwork with the brothers in his community and with the priests, religious women and lay people around him?
- Does he follow the pastoral orientations of the diocese?

Ordained for the coming of the Kingdom

- Does he pay attention to today’s world and to its changes? Does he perceive the day’s events in the light of faith?
- Does he cultivate the pastoral attitudes required by the Assumption: disinterested generosity, initiative, availability, concern for his life-long formation?
- Does he tend to the very poor, to unbelievers, to those distanced from the Church, and to our separated sisters and brothers?

Conclusion

- Why do you think that this candidate could function well in the ordained ministry for which he has been preparing himself?
- To what issues in particular would you draw his attention and that of his formators in order to help him grow further?
- What in the brother's experience makes it possible to discern or to confirm an orientation and/or an apostolic mission?

The different reports should not simply repeat one another. Rather, they should complement, enrich, and shed light on each other.

What is important is to make evident those elements that would lead one to decide for or against the candidate's request.

I.3. Questionnaire to be used by lay people

These are some elements that can facilitate the contribution of lay people when we request their opinion as to an Assumptionist brother's suitability for ordination to the diaconate or to the priesthood.

These elements can provide them with a framework. Should they see fit, their attestation could broach other aspects of the candidate's personality.

1. A spirit of communion: Is he a man of communion? Is he concerned about the unity of a community? Is he able to accept persons and groups gladly, respecting their differences and taking into account the inevitable tensions that arise among them?
2. A capacity to live with others: Does he know how to listen? How to be of service to others? How to make himself available? How to engage in teamwork?
3. The Word of God: Does he present God's Word in a personalized way that is accessible to persons different from him by age, attitude or culture?
4. What other qualities or shortcomings would you want to note as our brother nears his ordination?

II. OTHER ELEMENTS of the DOSSIER in view of ORDINATION to the DIACONATE

1. The letter of request

The candidate should say formally that he is committing himself spontaneously, freely and definitively, fully aware of the obligations that ordination imposes.

He should also explain his motivations for asking for ordination and for exercising ministry:

- Why are you asking for the diaconate?
- What is the diaconate for you, in the context of your country and of your Church, and also for the world?

2. Review of the letter by the formator

The formator who presents the brother for ordination will re-read the brother's letter of request to assure that it is free and clearly presents his motivations.

He will also check to see whether or not, in his self-evaluation, the brother deals with the following points, in particular:

- the apostolic fields that marked him most especially during his formation;
- his discoveries;
- his limitations, his questions, his fears;
- his pastoral qualities;
- the apostolic fields in which he would like to invest his energies in the future for the coming of the Reign of God.

3. The diaconal program

The program will be elaborated by the brother with the person who will accompany him, taking into account the points to be worked on that the brother himself and his formators have identified. This program must be approved by the Provincial Superior and sent to the Superior General. (See *Ratio* 159-162).

- It should specify the place, the duration of the program and the name of the person who will accompany the brother

- It should clearly say what is expected of the brother during the program: the goals to be attained, the means foreseen, the attitudes to be developed, and the apostolic responsibilities given to the deacon.
- It should also say which evaluations must be done during the diaconal program.

III. OTHER ELEMENTS of the DOSSIER in view of PRIESTLY ORDINATION

1. The letter of request

- The brother should say formally that he will receive his ordination spontaneously and freely and will consecrate himself definitively to ecclesiastical ministry, fully aware of the obligations that ordination imposes.
- He should also explain his motivations for asking for ordination and for exercising ministry:

2. The evaluation of the diaconal program

The brother reviews critically his pastoral formation and the apostolic experiences he has had during his diaconal program, guided in this by the questionnaire proposed above for ordained ministries.

3. The review of the self-evaluation by the mentor

The person who accompanies the brother during, or the formator if that is impossible, will review the brother's self-evaluation to assure that the following points are covered:

- The positive and negative points of his pastoral experience; the initiatives, discovered, failures and even disappointments encountered during the exercise of the diaconate;
- The strong and weak points that the brother sees in himself; his qualities and his pastoral limitations, seen in light of priestly ordination;

- What the brother was most enthusiastic about and motivated by in his work and that he considers to be a call from the Lord, for the coming of his Reign;
- His point of view regarding the orientation of the first apostolic nomination put forward at the time of his perpetual profession or diaconate ordinate.

4. The program of the new priest

In conformity with the first apostolic nomination conferred by the Superior General, the new priest, with the person responsible for his accompaniment and with his community, will draw up a program of apostolic activities for the first years of his ministry. (*Ratio* 163)

This program, approved by the Provincial Superior, should clearly specify the apostolic responsibilities entrusted to the new priest, as well as the evaluations to be one during the first years of priestly ministry (*Ratio* 164). Finally, this will be sent to the Superior General for his information and eventual comment.

5. Evaluation of the program of the young priest

The self-evaluation of the young priest:

- The goals realized
- The difficulties encountered
- The strong and weak points of his personality
- The capacities and aptitudes acquired
- The spiritual progress
- The contribution of the community and the mentor
- The integration in the mission of the community and of the Congregation
- The plans and future perspectives

The evaluation of the mentor:

- The goals realized
- Spiritual, human and psychological balance
- The “Assumptionist character” of the mission of the young priest
- Relations with the mentor, with lay people, with the local and Provincial Superiors

- The pastoral abilities acquired
- The strengths and weaknesses of the young priest
- Things to be worked on

ANNEX I

“ACCOMPANIMENT & SPIRITUAL SUBSTANCE”

“Our spiritual life, our religious substance, our raison d’être as Augustinians of the Assumption, is to be found in our motto, ‘Thy Kingdom Come.’ The coming of the reign of God in our souls, by the practice of the Christian virtues and of the evangelical counsels, in keeping with our vocation...”
(Emmanuel d’Alzon, Closing Address to the General Chapter, September 17, 1868)

Goals

- to help the formator accompany the brother in deepening his “spiritual substance”;
- to help the brother in formation nourish dialogue with his formator.

Observations

In most cases, self-evaluations do not communicate the quality of the brother’s “spiritual substance”:

- What motivates and mobilizes him spiritually
- His passion for God and for men

They are most often a copying of texts from the *Ratio*, which in fact is meant to be only a guide.

Convictions

- The issue needs to be dealt with at two levels. We need to accompany the brother in the preparation of his self-evaluation, but more importantly we need to help the brother to deepen his life of faith and his living out of the three vows.
- Our religious family has the resources needed for the spiritual formation of young people in formation:
 - ✓ the Word of God
 - ✓ the Directory

- ✓ the Rule of Life
- ✓ the *Ratio*

Means

By way of example, the following are some suggestions to help the formator accompany the brother in deepening his “spiritual substance”.

1. Help the brother to set some goals for himself at the beginning of each year, goals that help him to deepen his spiritual life (the preparation of a life plan).
2. Talk with the brother about the relationship he has, in very concrete ways, with the Word of God (the Bible).
3. See with him what relationship he has with our Augustinian and d’Alzonian sources (e.g. the Sermons of Augustine, the letters of Fr. d’Alzon, etc.).
4. Help and accompany the brother in finding other Christian spiritual traditions that can nourish and structure his Assumptionist life.
5. Suggest to the brother to keep a journal for spiritual review and reflection, which could help him discern the man in which the Reign of God is advancing in his life.

Here are some questions that the brother in formation could ask himself in view of nourishing conversations with his formator:

1. What are the signs of God’s presence in my life, through events, encounters, the apostolate, the life of the Church and the world?
2. What are the scripture passages that most speak to me, that move me, to which I return most frequently? And why?
3. Besides Augustine and Fr. d’Alzon, are there other spiritual authors or schools of spirituality that are forming me as an Assumptionist religious?
4. Are there elements of my spiritual life that I talk about with greater difficulty with my formator?
5. What are the aspects of my spiritual life that I would like to talk about with others or that I would like to help them discover?

When the brother asks to renew vows or make perpetual profession or be ordained, the formator will accompany him in preparing his self-evaluation, in keeping with the Ratio and being sure that his “spiritual substance” is well presented.

ANNEX II

HEALTH AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

The Lord calls whomever he chooses to religious life. While the call is personal, it must also be discerned by the Church, which makes its own assessment of the candidate in all freedom. Vocations are diverse, and the criteria for entering an Institute vary according to the particularities of each of these Institutes. The requirements for a monastic vocation are not identical to those for an apostolic vocation. A missionary Institute *ad extra* might want to form candidates with precise physical abilities. Health is an important element in discernment, but taking health into consideration can only be done according to a whole list of criteria. It would be unfair to stop a candidate too quickly solely based on certain health criteria, without seriously considering his call and his other abilities. Religious life is not reserved to perfect individuals, and the presence of fragile persons can be a prophetic sign reminding us of Kingdom values.

I. Health: an attempt at a definition

What do we mean by health? The term health is often used in very imprecise ways. A first definition (according to the World Health Organization “WHO”) is as follows: *“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and does not simply consist of an absence of sickness or infirmity.”*

This definition from 1946 has not been modified since then. It sets the bar quite high, and it would seem difficult to satisfy it completely, especially since the definition speaks of a “state of complete...well-being.” This would seem excessive and probably inaccessible.

Canon Law does not define health in any explicit way. We suggest that we therefore rely on the following idea, one that can be perfected since it pretends in no way to be absolute or definitive: *“Health is the ability of a person to assume on his own and independently the different conditions of*

his life and to adapt himself without major difficulty to his environment, while enjoying a relative physical, psychological and social well-being.”

II. Canon Law and the health of candidates to religious life

Church Law provides some useful precisions for discerning the conditions for receiving a candidate into religious life. Canon 689 is most important in guiding those who are responsible for this discernment.

Canon 689, paragraph 2, stipulates:

“Physical or psychic illness, even contracted after profession, which in the judgment of experts renders the member mentioned in §1 unsuited to lead the life of the institute constitutes a cause for not admitting the member to renew profession or to make perpetual profession, unless the illness had been contracted through the negligence of the institute or through work performed in the institute.”

III. Health considerations at different stages of formation

1) Candidates to religious life (aspirants)

Vocation ministers should inform the candidates of the physical and psychological requirements for entering the Congregation. Candidates should be reminded that ours is an apostolic Institute, which means that it requires on the part of candidates a state of health compatible with the exercise of apostolic responsibilities.

A consultation with a professional should make it possible to evaluate the overall state of health of the person in question.

It would be wise to call upon “experts” in order to have an objective evaluation. By “experts,” we mean people professionally qualified to provide an authoritative opinion: medical doctors and psychologists or psychiatrists.

2) *Postulants*

During postulancy, formators will seek to evaluate the physical and psychological capacities of the candidates in order to assess their aptitudes for Assumptionist religious life.

A person with a clear handicap or a chronic illness (diabetes, hemoglobinopathies, etc.) should be treated with great care and respect. A fair appraisal of the independence of the person should be made with the help of experts so that the person responsible for vocations is in the best position to encourage or not the individual to pursue Assumptionist religious life.

The evaluation of the cost of any eventual permanent treatment should be done objectively, especially in Provinces where the State does not assure a system of free health insurance.

Before the beginning of novitiate, a health report will be requested to certify that the candidate has the health needed for responding to the demands of apostolic religious life.

It will be necessary to evaluate the psychological health of a person in order to avoid having someone with a severe personality problem be encouraged to pursue religious life.

A candidate who is HIV-positive will not be accepted (see the Decision of the PGC and the letter to Masters of Novices, *Documents Assomption* 2014, #30, page 230).

3) *Novitiate*

Novice candidates, before being accepted to the novitiate, will undergo a standard medical examination and be given a certificate of aptitude for religious life and declared to be in good physical health.

During the novitiate year, the Master of Novices will seek to evaluate the physical and psychological capacities of the novice and his aptitudes for apostolic work.

IV. Philosophical and theological formation

Formators will be attentive to provide accompaniment to those brothers who show evidence of physical or psychological health problems. The spirit of the Assumption invites formators to be respectful toward those persons who have a handicap or a chronic sickness.

The brother in formation, in a spirit of openness and candor, should learn to keep his Superiors informed regarding the state of his health.

Formators will evaluate the physical and psychological ability of the brothers to determine their aptitudes for Assumptionist life and the apostolate.

They need to remember that for the ministries, Canon Law specifies that it is necessary to have good physical and psychological health in order “dedicate themselves permanently to the sacred ministries.” (Canon 241, paragraph 1)

The Formation Commission will rule on the capacity of the candidate to request final vows. Consideration of the state of health of the candidate is an important criterion of discernment.

V. The aptitudes of formators regarding questions of health

The formators who are responsible for the different stages of formation are being asked to be attentive to the health of the young people in formation. They are urged to encourage habits that will contribute to good physical and mental health, in particular by objective information regarding certain risky behaviors (alcohol, tobacco, physical inactivity, excessive eating, sugar, etc.). Formators should provide instruction regarding health questions and encourage athletic activities.

It is desirable for formators to acquire an appropriate expertise in the accompaniment of people with health problems in order to avoid any behavior that would not be fraternal or would encourage discrimination.

VI. The role of the Major Superior

In the end, it is the Major Superior in his Council who accepts someone into religious life. He would do well to keep Canon Law in mind to guide all decisions.

Canon 642: *“With vigilant care, superiors are only to admit those who, besides the required age, have the health, suitable character, and sufficient qualities of maturity to embrace the proper life of the institute. This health, character, and maturity are to be verified even by using experts, if necessary, without prejudice to the prescript of canon 220.”*

The attitude that should prevail is made up of benevolence and prudence. A person with a chronic sickness or a permanent handicap can be accepted to the extent that he is able to adapt to the life of the Institute. But it is also important to keep in mind the possible evolution of the handicap or illness. To do so, it is often necessary to consult experts. It is important to avoid encouraging people with a fragile psyche to be candidates to Assumptionist life. Developments, often unforeseeable, can expose the Congregation to major difficulties and weaken the Institute.

VII. The role of the communities

Every community should be attentive to the physical, psychological and moral health of its members. On this point, the co-responsibility of each religious and the particular attentiveness of the local Superior have a role to play.

The community should encourage caring for one’s health and should be attentive to those of its members who are more fragile. We are reminded of the special responsibility to help and care for those brothers who are sick and elderly.

“The community, by the quality of its life and work, bears witness to the Good News. Healthy or ill, young or old, we share this apostolic mission with our brothers, each according to his vocation and situation.” (Rule of Life, #19)

“If we put kindness and respect for persons before differences of opinion and distinctions based on background, age, mentality or health, our diversity becomes richness.” (Rule of Life, #8)

Learning how to respect and support brothers who are fragile, ill, or elderly is an aptitude to be acquired during the years of formation and then cultivated during one’s entire religious life.

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FOR PRE-NOVITIATE

Readings in other areas should also be suggested to a candidate to help him:

- *deepen his self-understanding and establish sound interpersonal relationships;*
- *understand vocation in general and vocation to religious life in particular;*
- *appreciate community living;*
- *get started in his life of prayer and to learn to read and meditate on the Word of God;*
- *deepen his knowledge of Jesus Christ and to develop his faith:*
 - *by reading at least one “Life of Christ,”*
 - *by reading selections from the Catechism of the Catholic Church on the Sacraments, the virtues, faith, the Trinity, etc.*

Notes:

- *During the time of his accompaniment to discern his vocation, a candidate / postulant should already be reading within the noted areas.*
- *A candidate / postulant should establish a program of reading (books, articles, selected chapters) with his formator, who should be meeting with him to check on his progress and his grasp of these readings.*
- *This reading should be accompanied by some written work resulting from synthesis, reflection and research (by internet, for example).*

¹ •La numérotation des ouvrages ne suit pas un ordre chronologique mais pédagogique.

• • Il existe une *Banque de données de l'Assomption*. La dernière version du CD-Rom (v. 1.7) est parue en 2003.

The goal: getting to know the Founder and the history and spirituality of the Assumptionists.

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10. Touveneraud, Pierre, A.A. *Origines des familles religieuses de l'Assomption*. Rome: Padri Assunzionisti, 1972. 23 pages. Translated into Spanish.
11. Périer-Muzet, Jean-Paul, A.A., "Several branches of the same tree: the Assumption, a large family." Essay 12 in *The Assumptionist spirit according to Emmanuel d'Alzon*. Rome: 1993. pp. 89-96. Note Bibliography on pp. 95-96.
12. Périer-Muzet, Jean-Paul, A.A., *A Brief History of the Assumptionist*. Tr. into English by Robert J. Fortin, A.A. Rome: 2008.

* For the North American Province:

13. Moquin, Henry, A.A. and Richard Richards, A.A. *Assumptionists in the United States*. Worcester, Massachusetts: Assumption Communications, 1994. 118 pages, followed by several pages of photographs.
14. Périer-Muzet, Jean-Paul, *Windows II on Assumptionist history: Short biographies of Assumptionist religious of North America 1850-2000*.

Tr. and edited by Robert Fortin, A.A., Joseph Fredette, A.A. and Richard Richards, A.A. Brighton, Massachusetts: Assumptionist Center, 2003. 127 pages.

15. Moynihan, Kenneth J. *Assumption College: A centennial history*. Worcester Massachusetts: Assumption College, 2004. 333 pages.

Video

- Sauvageot, Claude and Marie-Ange Donzé. “The Balkans crucified – The Bulgarian church in the storm.” 56 minutes.

Assumptionist spirituality

1. Sève, André, A.A., *Christ is my life: The spiritual legacy of Emmanuel d’Alzon*. Tr. by M Angeline Bouchard. Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 1988. 175 pages.
2. *The Assumptionist spirit according to Emmanuel d’Alzon*. Twelve essays by several Assumptionists. Rome: 1993. 98 pages.
3. Le Gleuher, Raphael, A.A. *Recueil de pensées du P. Emmanuel d’Alzon (1810-1880)*. Pont l’Abbé-d’Arnoult: 1968. 476 *pensées*. Translated into Spanish.
4. Jean-Paul Périer-Muzet, A.A., (Editor) *Father D’Alzon Day by Day. Quotations from his writings*. Rome, 2008.

FOR NOVITIATE

The Novice Master will suggest a reading list to the novices to help them:

- understand Father d’Alzon and the historical context within which he lived;
- understand his spirituality and that of the Assumption;
- know the history of the Congregation;
- be acquainted with religious life and with the vows;
- know the thought and spirituality of Saint Augustine.

The goal: reading the Founder's fundamental texts, some studies on the spirituality of the Congregation and some works of and on Saint Augustine.

Father d'Alzon's foundational texts²

1. *Directory of the Augustinians of the Assumption*. Tr. by Patrick Croghan, A.A., Joseph Grenier, A.A. and Aimé Deschamps, A.A. New York: [Assumptionist Provincial House], 1969.
2. "Assumptionist Constitutions, 1855." In *Father Emmanuel d'Alzon: Foundational documents*. Tr. by Richard Richards, A.A. Milton, Massachusetts: The Assumptionists, n.d. pp. 5-71.
3. "Four letters to the Master of Novices." *Ibid.* pp. 95-119.
4. "Closing address to the General Chapter of 1868." *Ibid.* pp. 75-93. And "Closing address to the General Chapter of 1873." *Ibid.* pp. 121-137.
5. "Notes sur la fin et l'esprit de l'Ordre (1845-1850)." In *ES* 644-648.
6. "Circulaire sur les vœux (1876)," In *ES* 687-691.
7. Various texts on the Kingdom and on the spirit of the Assumption (1870-1877), found in *ES* 659-724.
8. *Circular letters addressed to the Members of the General Chapters May 1874 - September 1875*. Tr. by Robert J. Fortin, A.A. Worcester, Massachusetts: 1981. 103 pages.
9. On the Eucharist. In *ES* 947-987 and in *Les Cahiers d'Alzon*, 2 Translated into Spanish.
10. *Meditations by Emmanuel d'Alzon [for the use of the Augustinians of the Assumption]*. Tr. by Stephen John Raynor, A.A. [Brighton, Massachusetts: Assumptionist Center], n.d. 223 pages of photocopied typescript.
11. *Emmanuel d'Alzon. Dossier sur la Vie et les Vertus*. Rome: 1986. Vol. I: *Sommaire de la vie et des vertus*. 138 pages. Vol. II (Parts I and II): *Documentation biographique*. 1083 pages.
12. Tavard, Georges, A.A. *The Directory: analyzed by Geroges H. Tavard*, A.A. New York: Assumptionist Provincial House, 1982. 14 pages.

² See *Documents Assomption*, 9 (Rome: Agostiniani dell'Assunzione, 1984), pp. 614-616.

13. Tavad, Georges, A.A., *Le Père d'Alzon et la Croix de Jésus. Les lettres aux Adoratrices*. Rome: Maison généralice, 1992. 114 pages.
14. Tavad, Georges, A.A. *Emmanuel d'Alzon, textes spirituels*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2003. 217 pages.

The Congregation's spirituality

1. Périer-Muzet, Jean-Paul, A.A. *Father Emmanuel D'Alzon in his Own Words. Dalzonian Anthology*. Bayard Service Édition. Rome: Maison généralice des Augustins de l'Assomption, Vol. I, 2003. Vol II, 2008. Tr. into English by Eugène Laplante, A. A.
2. Sage, Athanase, A.A., *Un Maître spirituel du dix-neuvième siècle. Les étapes de la pensée du Père Emmanuel d'Alzon*. Rome: 1958. 228 pages. Translated into Spanish.
3. Sage, Athanase, A.A. *La spiritualité de l'Assomption*. Série Centenaire 1980, 10. Rome: 1986. 115 pages. A retreat given at Worcester in 1958.
4. Sage, Athanase, A.A.. "Présentation du Directoire." In *Mélanges Emmanuel d'Alzon*. Conférences de la "Semaine Alzonienne," Hal, 14-19 mai 1951. Saint-Gérard: 1952. pp. 101-133.
5. Sage, Athanase, A.A. "Notes sur l'histoire du Directoire." In *Pages d'Archives*, 2 (March 1955). pp. 21-31.
6. Sage, Athanase, A.A. "Commentaire du Directoire." In *Cahiers d'Alzon*, addendum with the title, *Commentaire du Guide Spirituel de Vie Intérieure*. Bar-Le-Duc, 1959. 173 pages.
7. Sage, Athanase, A.A. "Quatre essais sur notre vie assomptionniste." In *Approches et Recherches*. Rome: Maison Généralice, 1968. pp. 125-189.
8. Tavad, Georges, A.A., *The weight of God: The spiritual doctrine of Emmanuel d'Alzon*. Centennial Series 1980, 5. Rome: n.d. 113 pages.
9. Cayré, Fulbert, A.A., "L'originalité du Père d'Alzon en spiritualité." In *Mélanges Emmanuel d'Alzon*. Conférences de la "Semaine Alzonienne," Hal, 14-19 mai 1951. Saint-Gérard: 1952. pp. 83-99.
10. Cayré, Fulbert, A.A. *La spiritualité des religieux de l'Assomption*, Louvain and Paris: Assomption, 1931. 62 pages.

11. Touveneraud, Pierre, A.A. "Le critère de fidélité à l'esprit du fondateur." In *Approches et Recherches*. Rome: Maison Généraleice, 1968. pp. 191-255.
12. Dufault, Wilfrid J., A.A. *The spiritual legacy of Emmanuel d'Alzon*. Milton, Massachusetts: 1988. 209 pages.
13. Dufault, Wilfrid J., A.A. *Emmanuel d'Alzon Apostle for our time*. Worcester, Massachusetts: 1994. 57 pages.
14. Marechal, Claude, A.A. *El carisma de la Asunción*. Madrid (27-29 december), 1999. 54 pages.
15. Tavard, Georges, A.A. *La foi et le Royaume. Emmanuel d'Alzon et la spiritualité de l'Assomption*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf., 2003. 179 pages.

Works by and on Saint Augustine

1. Augustine, Saint. *Confessions*.
2. *The City of God*. Books XIII, XIV, XIX, XX, and XXII.
3. *Homilies on the Gospel of Saint John; Homilies on Saint John's Letter to the Parthians*.
4. *Homilies on the Lord's Prayer*.
5. *Homilies on the Sermon on the Mount*.
6. *Letters 139 (to Proba) and 187*.
7. *Sermons 23, 56, 135, 365, and 366*.
8. *Marriage and virginity*.
9. *The work of monks*.
10. Possidius of Calama, *The life of Augustine of Hippo*.
11. *The monastic rules of Saint Augustine*. With a foreword by George Lawless and a commentary by Gerald Bonner; translation and notes by Sister Agatha Mary and Gerald Bonner; edited by Boniface Ramsey. Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 2004. 149 pages.
12. Sage, Athanase, A.A. *La Règle de saint Augustin commentée par ses écrits*, Paris: La vie augustinienne, 1961. 280 pages.
13. Sage, Athanase, A.A. *The religious life according to Saint Augustine*. Tr. by Paul C. Thabault, O.S.A. Ed. by John E. Rotelle, O.S.A. Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 1990. 240 pages.
14. Cayré, Fulbert, A.A. *Vers l'action avec saint Augustin. La spiritualité du P. d'Alzon*, Paris: Lethielleux, 1950. 230 pages.
15. John-Paul II, *Augustinum Hipponensem*, 28 August 1986.

16. Supérieurs généraux des familles augustiniennes. *La conversion de saint Augustin. Lumière sur notre chemin*, Message pour le XVI^{ème} Centenaire de la Conversion et du Baptême de Saint Augustin, 24 avril 1986. 39 pages.
17. Neusch, Marcel, A.A. *Augustin, un chemin de conversion. Une introduction aux Confessions*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1986. 138 pages.
18. Neusch, Marcel, A.A. *Initiation à saint Augustin, maître spirituel*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2003. 281 pages.
19. Neusch, Marcel, A.A. *Saint Augustin. L'amour sans mesure*. Paris: Parole et Silence, 2001. 178 pages.
20. Bourque, Edgar, A.A., *La prière assomptionniste à la lumière de saint Augustin*, Conférences données aux Essarts en 1989. 143 pages photocopiées typescript.
21. Madec, Goulven, A.A. *Petites études augustiniennes*. Série Antiquité, 142. Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1994. 388 pages.
22. Madec, Goulven, A.A. *Lectures augustiniennes*. Série Antiquité, 168. Paris: Études Augustiniennes: 2001. 388 pages.
23. Madec, Goulven, A.A. *La Patrie et la Voie. Le Christ dans la vie et la pensée de saint Augustin*. Paris: Desclée, 1989. 346 pages.
24. Lancel, Serge. *Saint Augustin*. Paris: Fayard, 1999. 792 pages.
25. Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo: A biography*. A new edition with an epilogue. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000. 548 pages.

* See also the review, *Itinéraires Augustiniens*. Orantes de l'Assomption: Bonnelles, France:

- 7 (1992), focus on friendship: Périer-Muzet, Jean-Paul, A.A. "Le Père d'Alzon, un familier d'Augustin." pp. 25-32.
- 25 (2001): Monsch, Charles, A.A. "Emmanuel d'Alzon, lecteur assidu de saint Augustin." pp. 31-42.
- 28 (2002): Madec, Goulven, A.A. "Augustin (354-430), un saint comme un autre." A biography. pp. 5-46.

The history of France during the nineteenth century

1. Milza, Pierre et Serge Berstein. *Histoire du XIX^e siècle*. Paris: Hatier, 1994. 503 pages.
2. *Le XIX^e siècle*. “Collection Grand Amphi.” Bréal: 1995. 352 pages. Very clear and instructive.
3. Rémond, René. *Introduction à l'histoire de notre temps*. Vol. 2: *le XIX^e siècle 1815-1914*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1974. 248 pages.
4. Cholvy, Gérard and Yves-Marie Hilaire. *Histoire religieuse de la France*. Vol. 1: *1800-1880*. Vol. 2: *1880-1914*. Collection Hommes et Communautés. Toulouse: Privat, 2000. 287 and 207 pages.
5. Cholvy, Gérard. *Etre chrétien en France au XIX^e siècle: 1790-1914*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1997. 178 pages.

FOR POST-NOVITIATE AND LIFE-LONG FORMATION

A professed brother should continue to pursue his formation in order:

- to deepen his understanding of the Assumption’s spirituality;
- to know the actual life and mission of the Congregation.

He should do so by reading:

- the news bulletins put out by the Congregation and his Province;
- the Congregation’s official documents (General Chapter and Provincial Chapter Reports, Letters from the Major Superiors) dealing with:
- religious life;
- Saint Augustine and the Fathers of the Church.

The goal: reading to complete one’s familiarity with Father d’Alzon and with the spirituality and history of the Congregation.

1. Toujouse, Thérèse-Maylis, R.A. *Marie-Eugénie et le P. d’Alzon, intuitions communes, influence réciproque*. Études d’archives, 4. November 1988. 90 pages.

2. *Emmanuel d'Alzon dans la Société et l'Église du XIX^e siècle*. Colloque d'histoire. December 1980. Paris: Le Centurion, 1982. 334 pages.
3. *Identité religieuse et vie assomptionniste*. Session de Nîmes 1995. Rencontres assomptionnistes, 3. Paris: 1995. 151 pages.
4. *Deux siècles d'Assomption, le regard des historiens*, Rencontres assomptionnistes, 7. Paris, 2003. 237 pages.
5. *L'aventure missionnaire de l'Assomption*. Colloque à Lyon, 2000. Rome: 2005.
6. *Mémoire Assomptionniste, Écrits au fil des ans 1850-2000*. Le Bourget-du-Lac: Éditions du Bugey, 2000. 181 pages.
7. Vailhé, Siméon, A.A. *Vie du P. Emmanuel d'Alzon (1810-1880)*. Vol. I (1810-1851) and Vol. II (1851-1880). Paris: La Bonne Presse, 1927 and 1934. 602 and 792 pages.
8. Tavard, Georges, A.A. *Le Père d'Alzon au Premier Concile du Vatican*. Rome: 1996, 66 pages.
9. Colette, Aubain, A.A. "Le P. Emmanuel d'Alzon. Hommages à son œuvre apostolique. Témoignages sur sa sainteté." In *Pages d'Archives*, 8 (May 1958). pp. 205-319.
10. Colette, Aubain, A.A. "Le P. d'Alzon et le drame final de F. de Lamennais." In *Pages d'Archives*, 9 (August 1958). pp. 321-344.
11. Touveneraud, Pierre, A.A. "La participation du Père d'Alzon à la défense des États Pontificaux: 1859-1863." In *Pages d'Archives*, 12 (October 1960). pp. 385-410.
12. Touveneraud, Pierre, A.A. *L'humble grandeur de la mort du P. d'Alzon*. Série Centenaire 1980, 2. Rome: 1979. 104 pages.
13. Bugnard, Noël, A.A. *Le P. Emmanuel d'Alzon et les vocations*. Série Centenaire 1980, 3. Rome: 1979. 89 pages.
14. Walter, Julian, A.A. *Les Assomptionnistes au Proche-Orient (1863-1980)*. Série Centenaire 1980, 6. Paris: 1982, 84 pages. There is also an English version.
15. Olivier, Daniel, A.A. *Le Père d'Alzon et l'œcuménisme*. Série Centenaire 1980, 7. Rome: 1980. 79 pages.
16. Guissard, Lucien, A.A., Pierre Pierrard and Antoine Wenger, A.A. *Hier et aujourd'hui, d'Alzon et l'Assomption*. Série Centenaire 1980. Paris: 1982. 90 pages.
17. *Héritiers de l'Évangile. Prier trente jours avec les religieux de l'Assomption*. Paris: Bayard Éditions-Centurion, 1999. 193 pages.

18. Cleux, Angelome, A.A. *Emmanuel d'Alzon homme d'Eglise*. Saint-Gérard, Belgium: Éditions du Centre d'Alzon, 1961. 187 pages.
19. Monval, Jean, *Les Assomptionnistes*. Paris: Grasset, 1939. 256 pages.
20. Pépin, Adrien, A.A., *Les Religieux de l'Assomption*. Paris: La Bonne Presse, 1963. 252 pages.
21. Quénard, Gervais, A.A. *Les Augustins de l'Assomption, origines, esprit et organisation, œuvres*. Paris :La Bonne Presse,1928. 172 pages.
22. Girard-Reydet, Joseph, A.A. *Le Père Gervais Quénard, Supérieur général des Assomptionnistes (1875-1961)*. Paris: La Bonne Presse, 1967, 302 pages. Currently being translated in Spanish.

* To become acquainted with Father d'Alzon's first disciples, consult the bibliographies provided by Jean-Paul Périer-Muzet, A.A., in *Le Père Emmanuel d'Alzon par lui-même. Anthologie alzonienne. Contextes, thèmes et textes, données biographiques, indications bibliographiques et questionnaires*. Rome: Maison généralice des Augustins de l'Assomption, Bayard Service Édition, 2003.

- Father Étienne Pernet: p. 88.
- Father François Picard: p, 134. See also Jacqueline Decoux. François Picard, l'engagement d'un homme pour “faire en toute chose la volonté de Dieu.”, Éditions du Signe: Paris, 2003. 128 pages.
- Father Vincent de Paul Bailly: p. 160.
- Father Victorin Galabert: p, 130. See also his *Journal*. Vols. I and II. Éditions de l'Université Sv. Kliment Okhridski: Sofia, 1998 and 2000. 604 and 350 pages.

See also Jean-Paul Périer-Muzet, A.A. *Notices Biographiques des Religieux de l'Assomption*. Rome, 2000-2001. 5 vols.

- Holzer, Bernard, A.A. and Jean-Baptiste Michel. *Les rideaux rouges de Sofia. Trois simples prêtres martyrs, fusillés, bienheureux*. Paris: Bayard, 2003. 172 pages.
- Gallay, Pierre, A.A., *The martyrdom of the three Bulgarian Assumptionists*. Tr. by Richard Richards, A.A. Le Bourget-du-Lac: Bayard Service Éditions, 2002. 28 pages.

FOR THE ORDAINED MINISTRIES

Reading within the following areas will be especially helpful during the first years of one's ordained ministry:

1. The documents of the Magisterium:

- Vatican Council II. *Lumen gentium, Gaudium et spes, etc.*
- Papal Encyclicals:
 - *Mater et magistra* (1961)
 - *Evangelii nuntiandi* (1975)
 - *Redemptor hominis* (1979)
 - *Redemptoris Mater* (1987)
 - *Redemptoris missio* (1990)
 - *Pastores dabo vobis* (1992)
 - *Ut unum sint* (1995 - on ecumenism)
 - *Novo millennio ineunte* (2000)
- Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013)
- Documents for the local and the continental churches:
 - *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995)
 - *Ecclesia in America* (1999)
 - *Ecclesia in Asia* (1999)
 - *Ecclesia in Europa* (2003)

2. The actual life and mission of the Congregation.

3. The spirituality of the Assumption.

4. Ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue.

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