

AA

News

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Assumption



Salt of the Earth and Light of the World

The Holy Father has very recently made public a letter in the form of a *Motu Proprio* in which he promulgates a year of faith which will begin on October 11, 2012. It begins with this phrase: "The 'door of faith' that introduces the life of communion with God and allows the entrance into his Church is always open for us". In reading this letter, I reflected that it had an Assumptionist accent such as we can find in the Acts of our last General Chapter. The Pope repeats the necessity to allow ourselves to be formed by the Word of God and by grace. He also insists on the joy and enthusiasm that must mark the believer. He pinpoints that the faith must also bring one to charity that gives the desire of conversion.

Our Chapter vigorously invited us to be men of faith. Already in the Acts of the Chapter of 2005, that request was well formulated, but it was in the Chapter of this year 2011 that it was made very precise. I suggest that you take the time to reread the passages in which the question of faith is evoked to see how we can go forward on this point.

It will be a way of preparing ourselves to live the year of faith and to put into practice that which was proposed by our successive chapters.

In the community of Rome for the Advent season we had a day of recollection preached by Fr. Julio Navarro Roman on the theme of Fr. d'Alzon's faith. It allowed me to deepen this theological virtue that was so strong in our Founder. As Fr. Athanase Sage said, "faith is, on the level of the virtues, the first characteristic of the spirit of the Assumption." For Emmanuel d'Alzon, "one must always go back to the first truth that is God" (*Ecrits spirituels*, p. 397). If for him faith is first of all a gift of God, it is also a virtue to be cultivated. We, his spiritual sons, must grow in the faith that alone will allow us to face the contemporary world without being afraid of drowning in the tempests. As the writer, André Sève, said in his book *'Ma vie, c'est le Christ'* Emmanuel d'Alzon, "the believer is not only someone who adheres to beliefs, it is a man thrown into a joyful love and in a hope that dares to take action."

Religious and laity



the same mission

We must be men of faith in a world that doubts and is subject to the challenges of indifference or of unbelief. But what is a man of faith? It is first of all a question of listening to the Word of God. It is good, such as the prophet indicates, to allow oneself to be awakened by it, allow oneself to be fashioned like the clay in the hands of the potter. Faith is lived in a community life that is the natural place for it to grow. Faith allows us to bear witness through our religious life that the Kingdom is a reality that we seek day after day. Faith is therefore also a testimony because it culminates in the charity that is its concrete application. In another recent pontifical document the post-synodal exhortation *Africae Munus*, the Pope constantly reiterates a leitmotiv: the necessity for Christians to be a light for the world and the salt of the earth. The entire text is punctuated by that quotation from Mathew (5: 13-14). I believe that faith makes of us men who

transform the universe by giving it the light that the Christ gave us, giving taste to earthly realities. To be men of faith is to be present to the world in a posture of good-will and fraternal listening. We are going to celebrate Christmas, the Light that came to brighten our darkness. Two thousand years after the birth of Christ, faith must be the light that illumines us. We are to bring it to the world around us with an attitude of generosity and modesty because we know that we are but a reflection of the true light. Let us prepare ourselves to live the year of faith. We have a few months to prepare ourselves; let us begin with the feast of Christmas. I wish you a holy and happy year. Let us enter "the door of faith" with Christ.

Rome, December 30, 2011
Benoît Grière
Superior General



The Doctorate of Fr. Kamate Kasyakulu Omer

The event deserves to be underscored. After four years of work, almost to the day, December 2, 2011, Fr. Omer KAMATE KASYAKULU defended his doctoral thesis in Social Communication Sciences at the Pontifical Salesian University. We could say that this work lies in the area of a constant preoccupation of the Assumption since it concerns a "society marked by mobility and fragility. In this context, indicates the General Chapter of 2011, the challenge of the Assumption is to contribute to opening an enduring vital space that makes possible for our contemporaries the search for meaning" The object of Fr. Omer's study is not without a link to this preoccupation. His imposing work is entitled "Radios communau-

taires et développement. Une étude empirico-exploratoire sur le rôle des Radios locales dans les territoires de Beni et Lubero en RD. Congo. » The object of the study is to put forward the essential role that community radio stations have in the process of development of the territory. The author shows concrete situations and analyzes their practices especially as a factor of development throughout the entire region. He reflects on the various but complementary relationships that these community radio stations have with the dynamics of development. Certainly, the establishment of networks allows, in this area as in others, a new more coherent and pertinent approach to development, but, one must admit, community radios are its timid voice. This study is

the first realized on the community radios of the Kivu region. It had notably as an objective to conduct a thorough grassroots inquiry of some 380 persons (those in charge of the stations, employees, collaborators and listeners) involved in this reality. Let us remember that this basic research work concerns a region filled with armed conflicts in an atmosphere of foreign economic and political annexation, in which the only recourse for the local inhabitants is to promote local associations thanks to these radio stations directly linked to the daily life and the primary preoccupations of the people. The original contribution of this research is to stimulate this dynamic and broaden the data in a practically unexplored domain.

Bernard Le Léannec

Fr. Benoît GRIÈRE, Superior General, with his Ordinary General Council has called

To ordination to the Diaconate

November 17, 2011
Pierre Duong PHAM VAN



Openings of Communities

Fr. Benoît GRIÈRE, with the Plenary General Council gave his assent to the opening of

- **The Assumptionist community of Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)**
- **The community of Kampala (Uganda)**
- **The community of Goma (RDC)**

Assignments

As the one responsible for Formation, Father Jean-Marie Vianney PALUKU THALIWATHEKA

(Community Emmanuel d'Alzon, Kinshasa RDC)



As Master of Novices, Father Benoît BIGARD
(Saint Augustine Novitiate, Sokodé (Togo).

As Master of Novices, Father Richard LAMOUREUX
(Emmanuel House/Augustine House, Worcester, USA



As Master of Novices, Fr. Simon KAMBULA SINDRIGHA (Maison Lwanga, Butembo, RDC).

Agenda

The Ordinary General Council

January 16-21, 2012
March 1-10 2012

Father Benoît Grière

Visit to Asia: The Commission on Asia, March 16-22
Assembly of the USG, May 23-25

Father Emmanuel Kahindo

January 4-12: Council of the Province in France (Valpré)
January 31-February 8: Council of Europe Brussels (Belgium)
March 29-April 10: Visit to Genoa (Italy)
May 12-19: Europe Encounter in Madrid (Spain)

Father Didier Remiot

February 12-28: Visit to Mexico and the USA

Father John Franck

After an accident in Piazza Carpegna, close to the Due Pini House, Fr. John Franck was brought to St. Charles Hospital on Via Aurelia. In December he had an operation on his knee at the Salvator Mundi Hospital. The accident immobilized him for some weeks and put a brake on his activities. He was not able to be present at the PGC and will need a period of convalescence and physical rehabilitation. We express to him our best wishes for a good and rapid healing.
Visit to South America, March 15-April 26.



Father Marcelo Marciel

January 26-March 1: in Paris (France)

Ordination of the First Two Filipino Assumptionists



Fathers Ricky Canet Montanez and Alex Apawan Castro were ordained priests on November 12 in the parish of Our Lady of the Pentecost in Quezon City by the new Archbishop of Manila Luis Antonio Tagle. The ceremony gathered 500 faithful. The Archbishop reminded Alex and Ricky that on the ships of their life, they would henceforth have to welcome unexpected guests and learn to be comfortable with it. For fishing, like Peter, they would have to go out to deep waters, be prepared to go to uncharted areas, always attentive to the call of God to go where he wants to send them.

The Provincial of North America-Philippines, Fr. José Miguel Diaz Ayllon, participated in the celebration with 45 priests and religious. Fr. Frans Desmet of the Korean community, Fr. Paul Nguyen Van Hung and Fr. François Xavier of the Vietnam community also participated in the celebration. This ordination further united the three Assumptionist communities of Asia.

Vietnam

The Tragic Death of Father Paul Dong

The Message of the Superior General:



I have just learned of the death of Fr. Paul Nguyen Van Dong in a traffic accident. This death is a great loss for us all. What can I say? Words are too weak to express our sadness and our pain.

Paul was a good religious. I still see his face illuminated by his beautiful smile. Paul had character and knew how to defend his positions. But Paul was also an obedient religious who accepted to follow the recommendations of his superiors.

I had the joy of asking Paul to become the first Master of Novices of Viêt Nam. Paul feared to accept this mission that he felt was too heavy for him, but after reflection and with faith and courage he accepted. Paul formed two groups of novices and had just begun his third year at Ba Ria. His mission ends today. He was a good servant of the Kingdom and a disciple of Jesus Christ. May the Lord welcome him in his House.

I offer my condolences to his family. It has been tried by deaths; once again it is confronted by pain and grieving. I assure them of my fervent prayer.

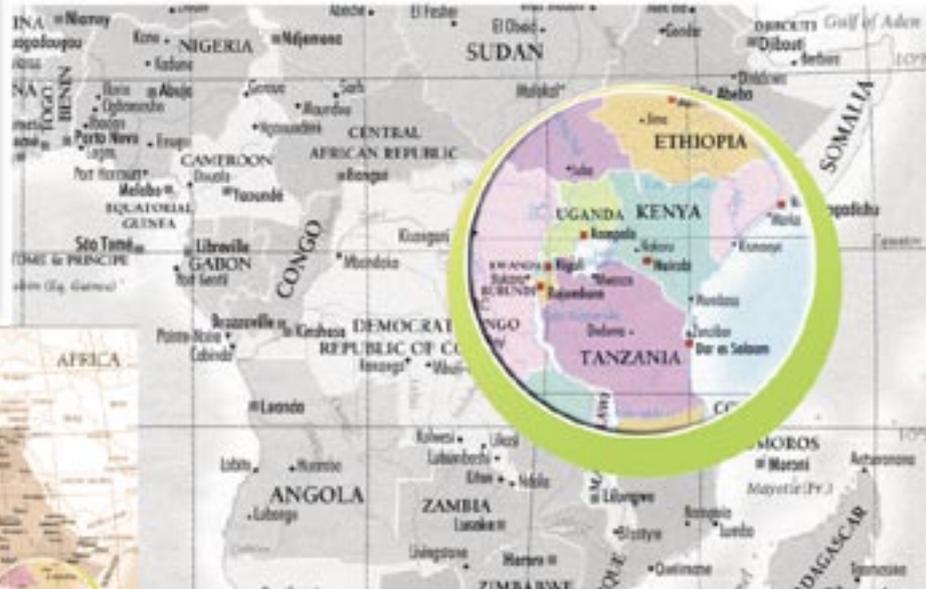
I also offer my condolences to all the Vietnamese Assumptionist religious. Paul belonged to the first generation of the young people that came to France to be formed as Assumptionist religious. His premature death reminds us of the importance of our consecration that make of us servants, *usque ad mortem*, until death. Despite his short life, Paul was a good religious. I pray that the “seed fallen in the soil” will bring forth fruit in abundance. I pray that the Vietnamese Assumption be faithful in serving the God of Jesus Christ, just as Paul was in his lifetime.

I express the wish that in this trial that befalls us, we find the strength and the faith necessary to continue to testify to the Kingdom. I assure you of my prayers and my fraternal friendship.

Father Benoît GRIÈRE, *Superior General*

A First Visit to Africa

During three weeks in four countries in the region of the Great Lakes, Fr. Benoît was able to judge the challenges but also the potential hopes of the Congregation and express his encouragement to the coming generation...



From October 24 to November 13, the Superior General, Father Benoît Grière and Brother Didier Remiot, Assistant and General Treasurer, traveled in East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Eastern Congo).

Their long journey was intense from the moment of their landing in the Kenyan capital. He had only a short time to discover the parish of Saint Monica, its beautiful and spacious church on the edge of the countryside, behind the airport, its elementary school and the site of the future construction of the regional house and of a secondary school, because Father Protais Kabila had already programmed a meeting with lay people and a visit to Emmanuel House, the house of formation near the university campus of Hekima College directed by the Jesuits. Father Benoît had a talk with Fr. Jean-Marie Hyacinthe Quenum, the Dean of the Theology Faculty from Bénin.

Then it was the departure for Tanzania. There again

there was a meeting with lay people that showed how much their dynamism promotes the rise of numerous projects of a very present Assumption in Arusha. In Kisenge Fr. Benoît visited the Orantes and the Oblates before participating in the religious professions of our brothers and the ordination of Bernard Musondoli Kambale and Antigone Bahati. Having arrived for the feast of All Saints in Kampala, where a meeting with the Archbishop had to be canceled, Fr. General had plenty of time to meet the Oblates and Fathers Pierre and Gilbert who had arrived for the new foundation in Uganda (Cf. infra, p. 12).

But in the region of the Great Lakes, if there is an area that is dear to the Assumption, it is certainly the ▶



city of Butembo. This leg of the journey would be the high point of this first visit of Fr. Benoît in East Africa. The Assumption is strong there. Parishes in the northern and southern districts of the province are in a situation of great insecurity with the presence of Rwandese troops and those of the Monuc. Assassinations and revenge killings are rife. There is little infrastructure and no security. It takes three hours to travel 55 kilometers by auto. There are only two European Assumptionists still present: Fr. Henri, 74 years-old, and Fr. Joseph, 80. Our African brothers have a heritage that is not easy to manage.

We must underscore the great diversity of our insertion there: parishes, schools, formation centers,

educational institutions, but its most notable accomplishments are the ISEAB (the Institut Supérieur Emmanuel d'Alzon) and Radio Moto. Today the Province places an emphasis on formation with its 25 novices (112 in the inter-novitiate of which more than half are of the Assumption family) and some fifty young people in formation at Bulengera. It disposes of great human and intellectual resources, but the material resources do not always follow.

In Béni, Father General and the Treasurer assisted at the inauguration of the Bishop Henri Pièrard Regional House. Everywhere the communities showed a warm and fraternal welcome. But the challenges are numerous and one must continually encourage them in a

life of prayer and meditation. Vocation ministry must become more intentional. Missionary requests are numerous: some ten dioceses have called on the Province, not counting the solicitations of countries where we are not yet present. This visit allowed Fr. Benoît and Br. Didier to measure the rapid development of the Province of Africa, the efforts of the Formators that reveal the true apostolic and missionary dynamism of the Assumption. Today 40 religious live outside of the Province.

We must also recall that this visit took place in the perturbed socio-political context of elections and a profound insecurity. The Kivu region is abandoned by the central government and marginalized as a poor relative. In this context, ▶



the Church fills the numerous deficiencies in sanitation and education, and also in the area of the media. The Congregation is an unquestionable force in this region despite certain weaknesses, especially economic.

Brother Didier was not in a strange land since he was born in Kolwezi in Katanga. His message was also awaited. While showing appreciation for the efforts towards self-sufficiency realized by many communities, he reminded them that “little brooks make great rivers”. Fr. Benoît reiterated this saying in the letter that he addressed to the brothers at the end of his trip. “When we find ourselves along the watershed of the Congo-Nile,” he wrote, “it is wonderful to imagine that the little brooks of the Kivu will contribute to the flow of these two prestigious African rivers. It works the same way for all the resources that we can have and for the savings that we achieve. They enrich the provincial community

and allow us to better attain our apostolic projects. The Palmba is a realization that for the moment is modest, but has real economic potential. We must be patient and resolutely commit ourselves to its development. There are competent brothers who can contribute to this project. Also one perspective to work on is the possibility to call upon Assumption volunteers who would come to collaborate in their projects and contribute to bringing useful talents.” In economics, there is no magic solution. Unceasingly we must redouble our attention: our properties could answer the needs of food for the communities if they were exploited. Why not direct the brothers in certain cases to remunerating activities? Brother Didier noted that the brothers had a simple lifestyle, but in any case higher than that of the general population and in certain cases specialized volunteers could be useful.

The challenges remain numerous:

the life of prayer and of fraternity, a true sharing of goods and the self-sufficiency of the communities, a renewed vocation ministry and an opening to internationality to an always more intense missionary life. The Assumptionist is a man of faith, of communion and in solidarity with the littlest ones. That must be spontaneously transparent in our personal lives and our communities. We are men of God, sons of the Church. Our love for Jesus Christ urges us to be ever more men of prayer. Joy is also a characteristic of the Assumptionist. May this never lack in you.

Fr. General’s venerable predecessor, the Very Reverend Father Gervais Quénard wrote a beautiful book titled: “The Miracle of the Black Churches”, after his trip to the Congo in 1935-1936. He felt the dynamism that would surge forth on this continent. With him let us hold to this certainty: “*de Africa nunquam satis*”, we never get tired of Africa... ■

The Foundation in Ouagadougou The Assumptionists In the Land of “The Honest Men”

The house of the Religious of the Assumption in the Saint Leon Quarter is in the heart of Ouagadougou. It is there that the Assumptionist foundation in Burkina Faso began. A few years ago, the Religious of the Assumption had helped the Fathers to install themselves in Togo by renting them one of their houses in Sokodé. One of the two Togolese communities still lives there. In Ouagadougou, it was again the Sisters who rented us one of their houses. They had left it on September 3, 2011 to live nearer to their school to the east of the city. The Assumptionists arrived three days later... Father Jean-Paul Sagadou arrived as a scout: *“It was understood that the Religious of the Assumption were leaving with all their material, including the tabernacle. For one week, therefore, I slept on the floor on a mat in a ground floor room.”* The house has 13 bedrooms and two small rooms, a storage room, a garage, a chapel and a refectory... Since the house was empty it was necessary to furnish it completely for a community to live there: beds, mattresses, tables, refrigerator, etc. That is what Jean-Paul tried to do.

On September 12, 2011, the second brother arrived: Fr. Nicolas Angello, a Malagasy national whose French visa had expired. Welcomed by Jean-Paul, he formed a two man community of Ouaga before the arrival on September 20 of the six young Togolese professed religious (Roland, Lucas, Georges, Fabrice, Jean-Claude, Vivien) and



Father Paulin Kakule of the RDC who arrived on September 21, 2011 after a very tumultuous trip during which he was victim of a robbery. The community of Ouaga waited for the last member, Brother Antoine Miss, the ‘Nassara’ of the group (It is thus that whites are called in Mooré, one of the languages of Burkina Faso) who arrived on October 7.

Like many others, the foundation of Ouagadougou had its trials and its surprises. For Father Jean-Paul *this painful birthing would pass through illness: “On the night of Wednesday September 20, I contracted a high fever. I was hospitalized at the Notre Dame de la Paix clinic with violent headaches, pains throughout my body and a heavy cough. I was bombarded with quinine. And on Saturday, September 24, I managed to accompany the brothers who in the interval had arrived one by one, to the inaugural conference at the*

Lavigerie Institute.

For Fr. Paulin the trip had not been a sinecure: *“From Kivu to Burkina Faso, I took a plane to Entebbe. But even before crossing the Congo-Uganda border, some 40 kilometers from Butembo, for those who know this route, between the Tabi River and the village of Malengayi, I fell into a group of highwaymen. Five men, dressed in civilian clothes, but armed to the teeth, robbed us. They took all the money I had for the trip, my well programmed computer that held all my courses and texts, my flash drive, my clippers and my wallet that held my driver’s license, my elector’s ID and my celebret. Fortunately they allowed us to live and thanks to the generosity of the Assumptionist Province of Africa, I received the money that allowed me to continue my journey to the mission. I am in Ouagadougou and community life is helping me to forget the unhappy experience!”* ▶

**Brother Jean-Claude DIWEDIGA:
"What I Was Looking For"**



For the student brothers the beginning of the academic year took place on September 24, 2011. *"The Bishop Lavigerie Institute forms numerous students from various congregations: the Don Orion, the Redemptorists, the Missionaries of Africa, the Frères Missionnaires des Campagnes...and this year the arrival of the Assumptionists. The courses have just begun with a seminar on research methodology."*

Fr. Paulin looking to the future underscored: *"One of the objectives of our implantation in Burkina Faso is the insertion in the life of the local Church. The first week of courses for the students coincided with the diocesan organizational meetings called "Presbyterium Diocésain pour l'Année Pastorale 2011-2012" Participation in these meetings was a must, an occasion we could not miss. Jean-Paul, Nicolas Angello and I did not waste our time in taking an active part in them.*

After that, there were successive visits: from the pastor of the Cathedral Parish, Fr. Patrice Kaboré, to Fr. Paul Yanoogo, in charge of communications in the diocese and Valéry Sakougri, in charge of youth ministry, who told us how things are organized in youth ministry. We also met other higher-ups in 'Burkinabaise' life.

What the new community awaited to officially mark the act of foundation was the local Chapter that took place in mid-October on the arrival of Brother Antoine Miss and Fr. Emmanuel Rospide... ■

This is Jean-Claude: a young Togolese, the eldest of 10 children with a school teacher father and housewife mother. After obtaining a Certificat d'Étude du Premier Degré, his father suggested he continue his studies at the minor seminary. He accepted. After his Licentiate in English at the University of Lomé, he taught near Sokodé. There he nourished the desire for religious life and heard about the Augustinians of the Assumption. "In my heart I prayed God that the charism and the spirituality of the Assumptionists would correspond to what I was looking for." That was in 2008.

On the occasion of a session of vocational discernment, he "manifests the desire to resemble them." "I was dazzled by the spirit that Fr. d'Alzon communicated to his sons. I felt that I was seized by Christ to the point that I could not resist the proposition that I try an experience of life. It was thus that the road with the Augustinians of the Assumption began for me with the pre-postulancy and then the postulancy. I rejoiced to have been accepted to have the experience of the Assumptionist novitiate. I believe I lived this time as an interior transformation of my being through a deeper knowledge of Fr. d'Alzon and of Saint Augustine." Fraternity, openness, sincerity, daring, and simplicity, these words found a face for him, that of the Augustinians of the Assumption: "Beyond their differences, the Assumptionist brothers make the effort of brotherly life. They are from different countries, different cultures, with different languages, and they meet to march together, hand in hand, in the following of Christ in the footsteps of Fr. d'Alzon. Sharing with others, learning from them, constitutes an unfathomable richness."

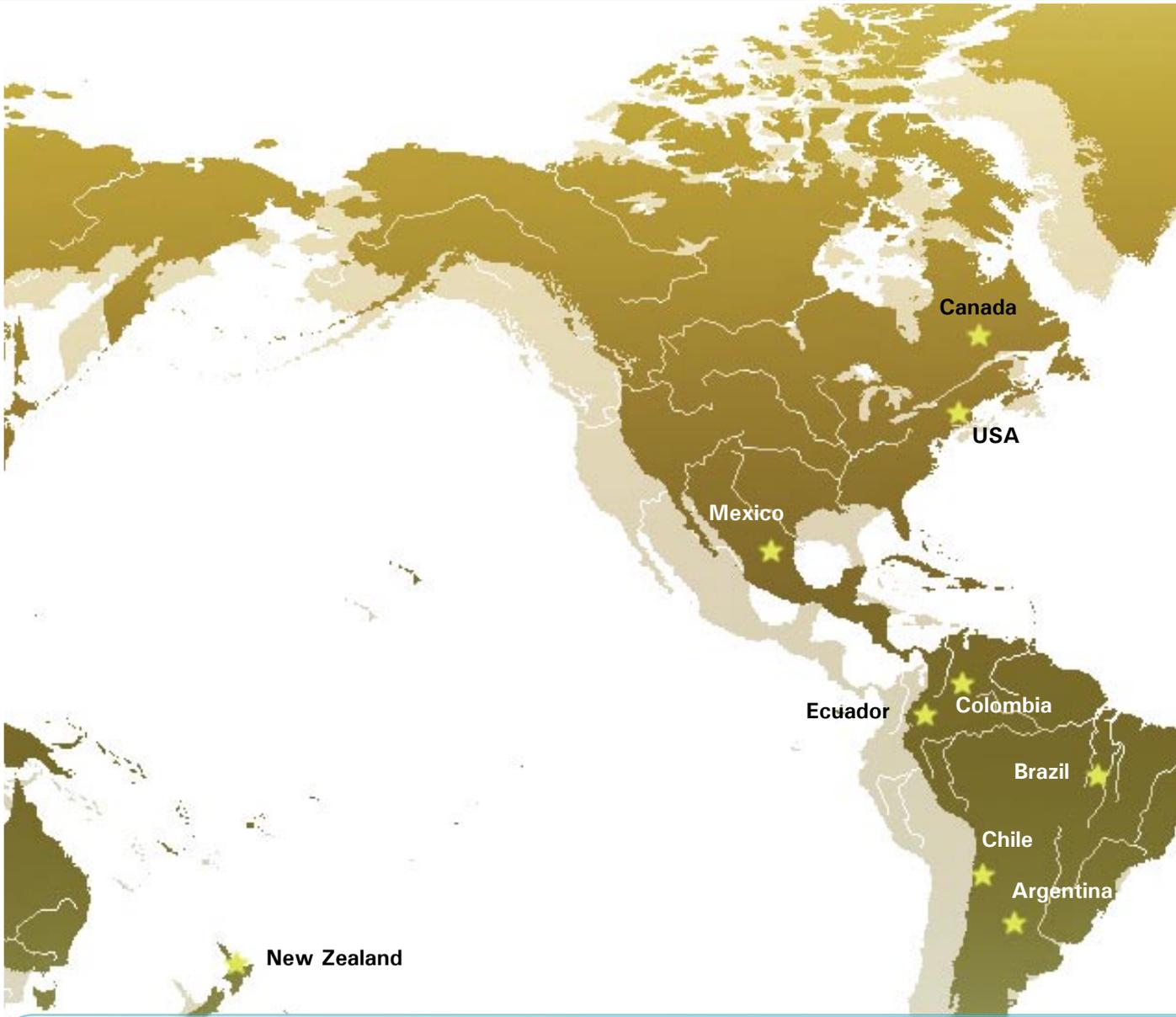
In the Assumption, prayer life is characterized by the triple love of Jesus, of Mary and of the Church: "Since my encounter with Christ, I have not ceased making prayer my warhorse and my weapon of combat."

That is what convinced him in his commitment, on August 28, 2011, at Sokodé in Togo, with five other Togolese brothers. "Today I am grateful for the opportunity the Lord has given me to live in the new community of Ouagadougou in the land of the honest men. I wait in the hope that the years will give me the grace to grow in the faith, to become more and more a man of communion in solidarity with the poor, and cultivating more the spirituality of Fr. d'Alzon and of Saint Augustine."

The Community of Ouagadougou

See the site: <http://aaouestafrique.frerebenoit.net>

The Assumptionists in the world



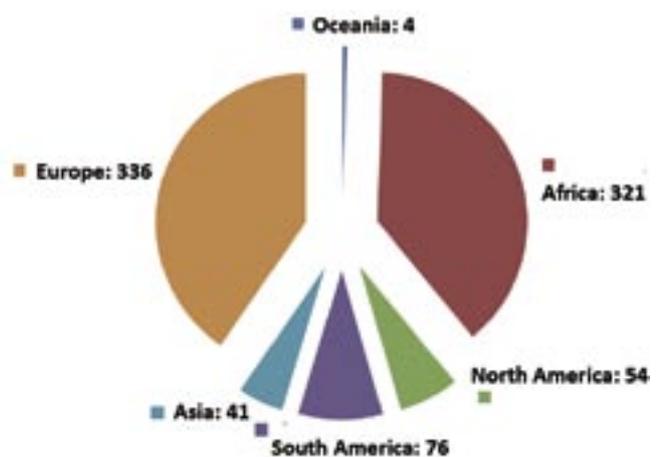
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		Chile	28	Madagascar	61	England	7
NORTH AMERICA		Colombia	13	RD Congo	194	France	176
		Ecuador	3	Tanzania	18	Germany	4
Canada	11			Togo	6	Greece	1
Mexico	13			Uganda	5	Italy	21
USA	30						

The Assumptionists in the world



ACROSS THE CONTINENTS



ASIA

Netherlands	28	Israel	4
Romania	11	Philippines	14
Russia	3	South Korea	5
Spain	23	Turkey	3
		Vietnam	15

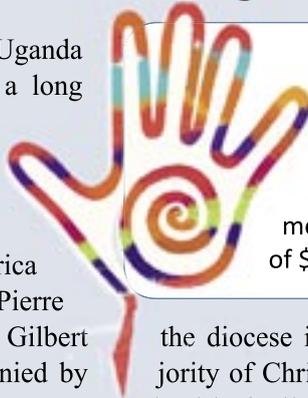
N.B. The Assumptionists belong to the Assumption Family which also includes four feminine branches: the Religious of the Assumption (founded in 1839, 1100 members); the Oblates of the Assumption (founded in 1865, 450 members); the Little Sisters of the Assumption (founded in 1865, 800 members); and the Orants of the Assumption (founded in 1896, 250 members).

In The Country of The Royal Stork

The Foundation in Uganda is launched

The idea of a mission in Uganda sprouted in 2002. It took a long discernment and a slow maturation before it would see the day. But on the night of January 15, 2011, the Province of Africa sent two religious, Fathers Pierre Kasereka Kisangani and Gilbert Paluku Maghesse accompanied by their Regional Superior, Fr. Protais Kabila. The adventure began for our two missionaries in the land of the royal stork, prolonging that of Fr. Siméon Lourdel and Brother Amans Delmas, the first White Fathers who arrived in the kingdom of Buganda, on February 17, 1879. For this adventure our brothers had as a destination the diocese of Lugazi. *"As soon as we arrived, we went to the chapel to thank the Lord and offer him our mission with the hymn: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who announce peace and salvation." (Is. 52:7). Bishop Matthias Sekamanya, the Bishop of Lugazi, was there. "His words were encouraging and reassuring. That gave us hope for the future," our two pioneers reported. Their first task was to learn Kiganda: "In order to learn it more quickly, the bishop placed us in two different parishes: Pierre was placed in the parish of St. Paul in Mukono and I was placed in St. Joseph Parish in Naggalama," says Fr. Gilbert.*

Lugazi, also called Kawolo, situated less than 50 km to the east of the capital on the road to Nairobi, became a See in 1996. The young diocese counts very much on the revenues of its parishes for its survival and its operation. Almost all



An APPEAL to the generosity of all the Assumptionist parishes throughout the world for a gesture of solidarity on the occasion of Lenten charity appeals for the foundation of the parish of Kyabakadde. Your offering should be sent to the General Treasurer with the clear mention "Uganda Foundation". Our needs are a minimum of \$30,000 US.

the diocese is rural and the majority of Christians are poor. The land is fertile, but the cultivation of bananas which constitute the basic food has been the victim of a virulent bacterial blight. That is not without consequences for nourishment.

In the parish we would need a power plant; the loss of power is frequent. In the village of Kyabakadde, there are no wells. Here everything remains to be done; the parish is to be created with various attached out-stations. Even if the rural roads are still just paths, the axis that links the village to Kampala is paved and facilitates transportation. The sanitary needs of the population are immense. The hospital is distant; the ideal would be to build a dispensary. *"The villagers expect much from us because we are an international congregation: how can we make them understand that we are working first of all for the Kingdom of God?"* our two brothers ask themselves.

In the land of Idi Amin Dada (in power until 1979), terror and rebellions have never ceased, bringing their share displacements of populations and their cortege of kidnappings of children and massacres. From the fall of the dictator till 2005, the country has had a one party regime. The situation has improved thanks to the adoption of a constitution in 2005, even if a mal-

aise persists between those in power and the opposition.

After a year of a hard apprenticeship of Kiganda, the progress of Pierre and Gilbert has been amazing. *"Now we can celebrate Masses in the local language without too much difficulty. We are well integrated in the population of Mukono and Naggalama."* In the diocese priests are not very numerous, thus Pierre and Gilbert note with humor that they are *"a work force that gives a hand to the diocese"* where they are the 3rd congregation of men.

For the moment, Fr. Gilbert is chaplain for the secondary schools of Naggalama while also in charge of youth ministry. Fr. Pierre is chaplain of a big high school of more than 2000 students, Seeta High School, and accompanies the choirs of St. Paul of Mukomo.

What prospects for the future do we see? It is difficult to say: *"Undoubtedly in giving life to a parish. But where do we start? There are multiple needs; a rectory needs to be built. Without such a house, it will be difficult to begin in Kyabakadde,"* opines Pierre.

The attention of the East Africa Regional Superior was a great encouragement, but the visit on All Saints Day of Father General and his Treasurer was a great stimulus for the kickoff of the mission in the land of the royal stork. ■

Message for the Coming Jubilee



Rome, December 13, 2011

To the Brothers of the Near-Eastern Mission

Dear Brothers,

The first Plenary General Council has just met in Rome from the 1st to the 10th of December. We had a full program, but we took the time to consecrate one day to our *Near-Eastern Mission*. Father Michel Kubler came to present to us the contrasting reality of your eight communities. We became very conscious of their strengths and weaknesses and we wish to encourage you to continue your mission in confidence and hope. This message is intended to be one of encouragement for you who carry the weight of the day and the worries of the mission.

As we prepare to begin the year of the 150th anniversary of the founda-

tion of the *Near-Eastern Mission*, I wish to inform you of certain decisions.

The *Near-Eastern Mission* has again been recognized as a priority for the entire Congregation. The members of the Plenary General Council have confirmed what had been said in 2005 by the General Chapter. To be a priority means that the entire body of the Congregation is concerned with the *Near-Eastern Mission*. It is not the preoccupation of the Province of France alone. All the religious throughout the world must be concerned.

The Saints Peter and Andrew Center in Bucharest is recognized as a "Mobilizing Work". With this recognition, it is again the *Near-Eastern Mission* that is honored. I invite you all to invest in it to make of this center a place of influence of the Congregation.

Finally, we have decided that Sun-

day June 3rd will be the date to mark the anniversary of the *Near-Eastern Mission* for the entire Congregation. We have begun taking steps with the Holy See so that the Pope would honor us with a particular gesture (audience or message). I invite you to note this date well to make of it an event at the level of your foundations.

Dear brothers, with our Oblate Sisters, 2012 will allow us to celebrate worthily the 150th anniversary of the *Near-Eastern Mission*. I wish that this year will be a time of grace and renewal. I invite you all to mobilize to accentuate the year by significant meetings with diverse celebrations and commemorations. As we near the holy feast of Christmas, I assure you of my fraternal prayers and friendship.

Father Benoît GRIÈRE, A.A.
Superior General

Madagascar Tonga Soa!

The visit of Father Marcelo Marciel, Assistant General, was a first for the Vice-Province of Madagascar. Since the foundation of the mission on October 25, 1953, it is undoubtedly the first time that an Assistant General completed a visit of the entire mission in full bloom. From October 27 to November 14, Father Marcelo traveled in bush-taxi over long distances that separate the communities, not sparing fatigue and devotion. He paid attention to all, to the brothers and sisters of the Assumption Family without forgetting the laity of the Alliance. He said himself: *"I would never have imagined that my first visit as Assistant General would take place in Madagascar; God wished it so and that remains for me a source of joy. One great joy was to participate in the life of the Vice-Province itself and get involved in its work."* Welcomed by the community in the capital, he found himself thrown into another world, that of the joyful and smiling Malagasy population without knowing the language or its particular customs. He did not have the time to accustom himself to a place, an environment, and faces, before he was on the road elsewhere. He lived the whirlwind of daily life of the young people in formation under the responsibility of Father Raymond at Fianarantsoa. Many wanted to communicate, share and fraternize with the young Assistant General. To live in contact with the daily realities, to feel himself a brother among brothers:



that was the accent placed on his first mission: *"I thank each one, in particular Michel and all the brothers who spent time with me during this visit."*

It was not always easy for him to give all the attention he wished to the works undertaken by the Assumption in the different parts of the country but his approach to the various realities opened his eyes and his heart: *"This task in the service of the Congregation appears essential to me: I see how it surpasses the cultural and linguistic limits that are mine."*

A Chilean Assistant who goes to Madagascar can really feel that he is in his family because the family spirit does not know borders. During his stay, Father Marcelo was able to participate in the priestly ordination of Aristide Hajanirina and the diaconal ordination of Brothers Joseph Velojana, Hervé Tianjara, and Georges Veloso by Bishop Fulgence Rabemony of Toliara, in the parish of Sanfily. The dances and the singing fired him with enthusiasm; the Vicar General was kind enough to be his translator: *"Thanks to this ▶*



celebration of faith, I acquired the certainty that the Lord never ceases to call us to live more and more in full communion with Him. I recognized the sign of his presence in the dynamism of the young people, as I attended the joyful inauguration of the new building for the Postulants in Mi-harisoa.” The deep commitment of the novices and the serious preparation of the aspirants under the direction of the formators as well as the maturity of the faith of the religious are guarantees of the future for the proclamation of the

Gospel in Madagascar. From his trip to the island of perfumes, he recalls the smiles of the children to whom he wants to say thank you. His thanks also go to all the brothers for their courageous commitment in the service of evangelization, their thirst for professional formation and a deeper knowledge of God. “All this contributes, I am convinced, to the development of the people. The education that the Assumption wants to develop in Madagascar, notably through the network of the bush-schools, which is one of the ‘mobilizing works’ of the Assumption, is inspired by the principle of love.” The Madagascar mission is certainly a gift of

God. It is inscribed in a context of joy and refuses to allow itself to be drowned by trials, its sufferings and the innumerable difficulties of daily life. “Our faith is conversion,” adds Father Marcelo, “and the first step in this conversion is to become conscious of our frailty, in helping each other to carry it.”

The developmental possibilities of the Madagascar Vice-Province are numerous. And Father Marcelo thinks, at the end of this visit that leaves him with unforgettable memories, that collaboration with the African Province augurs well for a great future. ■

Towards a Province of Europe

Following the General Chapter and the decisions made in May 2011 (Acts of the Chapter # 91-94) a first meeting of the Council of Europe was held in Paris on the 13th and 14th of October last. In a first communiqué published at the end of the meeting, the participants expressed their convictions, underscoring the four following points:

- We are already members of the Province of Europe.
- The Assumption is present in the large cities. It can participate in the new evangelization in them.
- France has an important heritage.
- The question of formation is of prime importance: the choice of internationality, the experience of centers to receive young students, the distribution of students in formation in university areas which allows strengthening communities, and the necessity to be open to the world of young people.

They chose Father Guy Leroy as President of the Council of Europe.

In application of # 95 of the Acts of the General Chapter they formed a Commission charged with preparing the statutes of the future province: Fathers André Brombart (North Europe), Patrick Zago (France), and José Antonio Echániz (Espagne).

1. Each member of the Commission will write a detailed description of the functioning of the Province and the organization of his Province. If necessary, he will draw up a memoir of the facts that brought about



The dates of the next meetings of the Council of Europe are as follows

- Brussels, January 31, and February 1 and 2, 2012
- Madrid, May 12, 13, 14, and 15, 2012
- Nîmes, 17, 18, and 19 October, 2012

such and such an orientation, to this or that choice.

2. Each member will prepare a succinct diagram of this functioning of the Province.

3. Each member will obtain the approval of the two documents by a brother or by an organism of the Province.

4. The President of the commission will convene the members in Paris so that each can learn the functioning of the other two Provinces.

This discussion aims to clarify things if necessary.

5. The commission will write in conclusion an evaluation of the functioning of each Province, underscoring the strengths, the weaknesses and the opportunities of each way of functioning.

6. If possible, the commission will add in an annex to its work the com-

munity organization of other Congregations, two or three at most, that could help further reflection.

7. For January 16, 2012, the commission will submit its report that will contain the detailed description and the outline along with the conclusions and the annexes to the President of the Council of Europe, Fr. Guy Leroy.

8. The members of the Commission will enter into their agendas the dates of the meetings of the Council of Europe so that they can all attend. On January 31, 2012, in Brussels, they will be invited to present their work.

For the Commission on "Finances" the following were named: Fathers Emmanuel Rospide (president), Arnold Castro (North Europe), Vincent Cabanac (France), and Anastasio Calle (Spain). ■

Latin-American Meeting of the Lay Religious Alliance



Lay Religious Alliance

On October 30, 2011, in the parish of Emperatriz de America, 34 lay people and Assumptionist religious were welcomed by the Provincial of North America and Philippines, Fr. José Miguel Díaz Aylón and Fathers Luis Ramón Rendon (Argentina), Tomás Gonzáles (Colombia), Francisco Huerta, Oswaldo García Sánchez and Ngoa Ya-Tshihemba (Mexico).

In the house of the Religious of the Assumption of Las Aguilas in Mexico City, the participants heard a message addressed to them by the Superior General of the Congregation encouraging them to

deepen the General Chapter and its study of the Lay-Religious Alliance. The theme of the meeting was: “Men and Women of faith, of communion, and in solidarity with the poor.”

The message of Fr. Marcelo Marciel, Assistant General in charge of the Lay-Religious Alliance, sought to invite them to live this Alliance in building on faith, community and solidarity with the poor.

There were other specific objectives for this meeting

1. A reflection on the Assumptionist lay-religious identity of the Alliance.

2. The search for concrete collaboration between Assumptionist Lay people in the various countries.

3. The implementation practice of the General Chapter of 2011 concerning the Alliance.

4. The proposal of various paths of action to reinforce the Lay-Religious Alliance for a Hispano-American Assumption.

Each was invited to bring his stone to the construction of the Lay-Religious Alliance; this meeting was an illustration of that.

Oswaldo García Sánchez, A.A.

A New Commentary on the Gospel of John By Alain Marchadour

*The mature fruit of ten years lived in the
Community of Saint Peter at the Cockcrow*

At the beginning of 1992, Alain Marchadour published a pastoral commentary on the fourth Gospel in the collection “*Commentaires*” with Le Centurion in collaboration with the Biblical Service Évangile et Vie. Twenty years later, the author, like a painter, placed his painting on the easel anew for more than a simple retouching. He gives us his new commentary¹ completely reorganized to which he gives a title that is an invitation to read: “Venez et vous verrez” (Jn 1:39), for this Gospel draws attention and fascinates as a painting in an exhibit that we never finish discovering. It deserves in this respect the title of “enigmatic” Gospel that the author gives it. The exegete certainly wants to be at the service of his reader and to be his guide in reading the “spiritual Gospel” according to the traditional term used by Clement of Alexandria. There is much more; in order to facilitate the access of



all readers, Alain Marchadour has chosen not to overload the presentation with his commentary notes but cites the authors to whom he refers in a bibliography at the end of the work. He also proposes his own translation of the Greek text, for, according to him: “to read the Gospel of John is to enter into an adventure that involves at the same time the intelligence and the heart of the reader”, and this reading adventure is “always begun anew”. Just as in his first commentary, we can see that the author had a concern for the illustration, not by images, but by “glimpses” and “intuitions” as so many precious lights for the text to “help everyone to read under the direction of the Holy Spirit”. “The Gospel of John,” he underscores, “has been for me through many years now a companion and a guide for each day.” He reminds us of the aim John proposes to his readers: “so that you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that in believing you have life in his Name” (Jn. 20:31). The book arrives just in time for the opening in 2012 for the whole Church of a “Year of Faith” and presents itself as a solid work to that end. “The reading of John is an act that calls for conversion, deepened faith, attachment to Jesus, and an entrance into eternal life in his footsteps.” It will not have escaped our attention that he offers us this new commentary “certainly born of a long companionship of the Gospel of John,” but also as the ripened fruit of ten years spent in the community of Saint-Peter at the Cockcrow on the hillside of Mount Zion for which we express to him all our gratitude.

Bernard Le Léanec

¹ Alain MARCHADOUR, « Venez et vous verrez », *L'Évangile de Jean*, Bayard, 536 pages.



The Little Sisters of the Assumption, with the discretion that characterizes them, published from October 2009 to February 2010, twelve volumes entitled: *Annales du journal de la Maison-mère des Petites Sœurs de l'Assomption*, a sort of chronicle of their life in Paris written day by day, that trace an historical outline of their community and missionary life for the years 1870 to 1892. We in some way enter into the intimate details of their step-by-step organization (Mother House on Violet Street on April 18, 1870; religious habit on December 8, 1872; first vows on July 3, 1875) and their implantation at the same time in the capital and its working class neighborhoods (Impasse Gaillard, de Monceau Street), and also the immediate suburbs that historians would soon call “red” (Creil, Thiais, Choisy-le-Roi) without forgetting a first international expansion (England 1880, U.S.A. 1891). This production is not destined for a large public distribution, but even restricted to the family circle of the Assumption, it allows the ►

Annals of the Journal of the Mother House of the Little Sisters of the Assumption

reader who is already informed to see and understand more what the particularity of this religious foundation was: sisters at the bedside of abandoned sick people in all its socio-medical forms, an incorporation in the workers' family milieu to fill the role of nurses and nurses-aides in the home, helpful services like running errands, the preparation of meals, housecleaning, child care, night watches, all that without any form of remuneration and any consideration of race, religion or opin-

ion. The spirit of the congregation and its social apostolate is integrated into lay circles thanks to associations and networks of fraternities recruited among past beneficiaries of their help. Fr. Pernet, (1824-1899) co-founder, outlived the foundress, Antoinette Fage (1824-1883) and for sixteen years found in Mother Mary of the Blessed Sacrament an intelligent and first class collaborator to assure the continuity of an exceptional ministry.

Father Jean-Paul Périer-Muzet



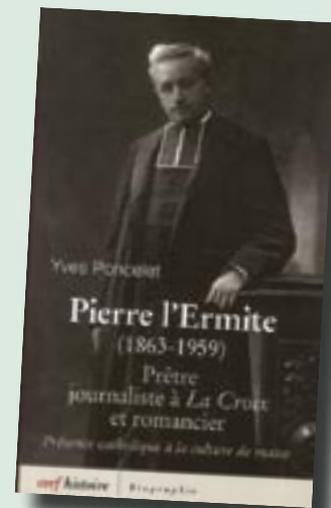
Pierre l'Ermite, The Eternal Chronicler

After the work published by Yves Pitette (Cf. AA News, October 2011, page 15), there appeared a monograph on an unavoidable personality whose name is closely tied to the development of the La Croix newspaper: that of the priest-publicist Edmond Loutil better known under his pseudonym of Pierre l'Ermite. This man from the Ardennes who spent his priestly life in Paris and collaborated with La Croix for nearly sixty years lives again under the pen of Yves Poncelet (1).

Closely allied to the Congregation of the Assumptionists, specialized in the media apostolate, he wrote for the La Croix daily newspaper a weekly article for sixty years and published at the Bonne Presse eleven collections of short stories and twenty-seven novels, sixteen

of which sold more than a hundred thousand copies. This work – whose success invites us to understand the mind-set of a part of French Catholicism – is presented with its content and its form. His notoriety allowed him to conduct campaigns that reveal the activities of Catholics (sending youth to summer camps, movies, or construction of new churches...); it allowed for the conservation of a part of his archives that provide materials that shed light on the daily life of parish ministry: parish bulletins, sermons, conferences, talks at congresses, and timely constitutions. These aspects of his activities are studied and placed in relation to the positions that structured French Catholicism. The French Academy honored him in 1950 with a prize established by Cardinal Grete for the whole of

his work. His social and charitable action is not forgotten, notably that which led him to support parishes. Saint Odile Parish in Paris owes its church to him.



(1) Yves Poncelet, *Pierre l'Ermite (1863-1959) Prêtre journaliste à La Croix et romancier*, Le Cerf Editions, 2011, 663 pages.

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bll719@gmail.com
before the end of each
General Council.
Thanks especially
for sending photos and
illustrations.

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Editorial	
Salt of the Earth and Light of the World	1
The Doctorate of Fr. Kamate Kasyakulu Omer	2
Official	3
Agenda	3
Asia	
Ordination of the First two Filipino Assumptionists	4
Vietnam: The Tragic Death of Father Paul Dong	4
The Africa File	
A First Visit to Africa	5
The Foundation in Ouagadougou	8
The Assumptionists in the world	10
East Africa	
The Foundation in Uganda Is Launched	12
The Near-Eastern Mission	
A Message for the Coming Jubilee	13
Madagascar	
Madagascar Tonga Soa	14
Europe	
Towards a Province of Europe	16
Lay-Religious Alliance	
Latin-American Meeting of the-Lay Religious Alliance	17
Publications	18
Our Deceased Brothers	20

Inserts:

- Plenary General Council no. 1, Rome, December, 2011.
- Signs of God, n. 1

Our Deceased Brothers

✠ Father Sylvère (Jean) Pirlot died at Mont-Godinne (Belgium) on December 9, 2011. The funeral ceremonies took place on December 13 in the chapel of the Sacred Heart Residence in Ciney. It was followed by the burial in the vault of the Assumptionists at Saint-Gérard. He was 92 years-old.

✠ Father Paul Dong Nguyen Van, Superior and Master of Novices of Saint Augustine House of Vung-Tau (Vietnam), died of his injuries after a traffic accident on December 2, 2011. The funeral took place on December 6. He was 37 years-old.

✠ Brother Luis Armando Valle Molina of the community of the Shrine of Lourdes (Santiago, Chile) died on December 28. His funeral took place on December 29 in the Basilica followed by his burial in the crypt of the Shrine. He was 85 years-old.

