

# **A** News of the **A**ssumption



**EDITORIAL**

## **Latin-American Impressions**

*We need to place our life under  
the merciful gaze of Jesus.*

## Agenda

### Ordinary General Council

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- May 13 to 21
- May 27 to June 1
- June 22
- September 9 to 21

### Plenary General Council

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- June 10 to 18
- December 1 to 9
- June 7 to 16, 2014

### Sessions in Rome

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- + June 24 to July 24: **Meeting of Formators**
- + August 26 to 31: **Meeting of the Provincial Treasurers**

### Father Benoît Grière

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- **April 13 to 22** Asia Commission in Korea
- **May 22 to 24** Meeting of the USG in Rome
- **July 26 to August 1** Retreat of the novices of France

### Father Emmanuel Kahindo

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- **April 20 to 27** Council of Europe in Valpré
- **July 27 to August 29** in Africa
- **September 2 to 6** Forum in Valpré

### Father John Franck

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- **June 18 to 21** Education Commission in Paris

### Brother Didier Remiot

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- **April 3 to 13** Meeting of the Treasurers of the Assumption Family in Paris
- **April 23 to May 5** Mexico and New York

### Father Marcelo Marciel

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- **June 30 to July 6** Meeting of the Near East Mission (Plovdiv)
- **July 7 to 25** Meeting of the RIAD IN Thailand

## Official

- Father Benoît Grière, Superior General with his Council has called  
**To perpetual profession**



Bro. **Ronald Limboy Sibugan**  
(Province of North America-  
Philippines) (02/12/2013)

## A LETTER TO ALL THE YOUNG RELIGIOUS IN FORMATION

Father General addressed a letter dated the 7th of February to all the young religious in formation. It concerns some 340 religious: "An impressive part of the Assumption that is today mobilized by the studies in preparation for apostolic life... it is the future of the Congregation that is in play."

Father General insists on the quality and seriousness of formation and of companioning in order to "be prepared to respond to the great missionary challenges...: form disciples, form brothers, form apostles or missionaries of Jesus Christ."

"In this Year of Faith, as the Church has just lived through a synod on the new evangelization, we want to contribute to its effort to proclaim the Kingdom of God in us and around us." It is especially to explain one of the measures taken at the last Chapter that Father General speaks directly to the young religious; it concerns the first apostolic nomination of the religious. This power has been given to the Superior General who explains the reasons, the consequences, and the manner in which it will proceed.

This letter which will appear integrally in the next issue of the "Documents Assumption" wants to be "an encouragement to live in joy, and peace their religious consecration and the missionary adventure. The Assumption is in the hands of God and we are workers of the Kingdom: humble, modest, fragile, but at the same time rich in faith, hope, and love."

## Latin-American impressions

Open this editorial while making the canonical visitation to the Province of Chile-Argentina. It was in Santiago, Chile that I learned of the election of Pope Francis. I shared in the joy of my South American brothers and more particularly that of the two religious from Argentina who were present at our meeting. I keep an emotional remembrance of the announcement of this first non-European Pope in the history of the Church. It is probable that we are entering a new era in the life of the Catholic community and we will have to take, we Assumptionists, our share in the commitment to proclaim the Kingdom of God. After Benedict, now we have Francis, but we remain in the service of the Church whatever Pope is in office. Pope Francis wants to give a new impulse to our Church. He wants it to be simpler, more fraternal, and closer to the poor. I sincerely believe that we must harness ourselves to the task and collaborate in this ambitious project. The Pope reminded us in a homily in the Sistine Chapel that without Christ we can do nothing. "When we do not confess Jesus Christ, we confess the worldliness of the devil", "when we confess a Christ without the Cross, we are not disciples of the Lord, we are worldly; we are bishops, priests, cardinals, popes, but not disciples of the Lord." I could add "we are religious but the essential is lacking."

I have just visited various communities of the Province of Chile-Argentina, and I believe that the call to re-center everything on Christ is primordial. We need to place our life under the merciful gaze of Jesus and not allow the values of the world to progressively invest the whole of our daily life. There is a rising of individualism everywhere and we are also concerned by this aspect of our civilization. We must at all cost pull ourselves together and struggle with all our might against this deadly tendency.

The Assumption, also, has been marked by the rise of behaviors that distance us from the Kingdom. We are apostles, but

we sometimes forget the duty of prayer and meditation that are incumbent on us. Each day we need to dedicate some time to God in serving our brothers, but also in silence and contemplation. Let us not be afraid of words and repeat with Emmanuel d'Alzon "that in the Assumption, action and contemplation are joined for the same end, the coming of the Kingdom of God."

Latin America is an engaging and warm land. The populations of Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina and Chile know how to welcome the stranger and spend time with him. Everywhere I went with Father Marcelo Marciel we were received as brothers. I was taken by the quality of the Assumptionist Laity and by their attachment to our religious family. In Bogota, in Buenos Aires, in Riobamba, in Valparaiso and elsewhere, I was able to discuss with the groups of the Alliance. The Lay Assumptionists carry us along in their wake. They are motivated by our spirituality, our "family spirit" and they expect much from us. Will we be able to fulfill their expectations?

The Assumption is internationalizing and I am happy to see how the Province of Africa contributes to the support of the local communities. It is probable that this phenomenon will be strengthened in the coming years.

And the vocations you will ask? Religious vocations are less frequent in Argentina or Chile than they were a few years ago. In Ecuador and in Columbia, there are still great possibilities for recruiting. But I am convinced that everywhere, it is possible to stir up in young people an attraction for the Assumption if we are faithful to the spirit of our Founder. If we are, as Pope Francis asks, faithful to Christ and to his Cross.

South America is a land rich in hope. We have a role to play in the evangelization of this continent despite our modest means. I believe that the Assumption has not finished its mission. ■



**P. Benoît Grière**  
General Superior  
of the  
Assumptionists of  
the Assumption

# Father d'Alzon and the new evangelization

By Bernard LE LEANNEC

## The context

The General Chapter of 2011 attempted to enumerate the specific traditional (16) means of evangelization of the Assumption, inviting us to renew them “to denounce with firmness and courage compromises and injustices in witnessing to Christ, at all times whether opportune or inopportune, even to risking our own life” (18) and returning to the vision of our Founder (cf. May 2, 2011 Letter of the Secretariat of State, quoted in the Acts of the 2011 Chapter, p. 89).

In seizing this preoccupation, we are now situated at the very heart of a major preoccupation of the Church at the beginning of this new millennium. On September 21, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI instituted a Council for the promotion of the new evangelization; in 2012, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Vatican Council II, the Synod of Bishops itself looked at “the new evangelization”.

## The d'Alzonian Application

In this Year of Faith, we need to find in Father d'Alzon the paths that can enlighten our reflection on the subject.



All through the whole of the d'Alzonian corpus, the word “evangelization” is used 40 times, “evangelizes” 12 times in the singular and 4 times in the plural, and in the infinitive 58 times, “evangelizer” once in the singular and 3 times in the plural. D'Alzon had therefore developed a proper vision of the proclamation of the Gospel that we will try to present.

All through his writings he gives a particularly illuminating historical presentation. Evangelization begins at the Pentecost “while the disciples were enflamed with love” (cf. *Instructions aux Tertiaires de l'Assomption*, Paris, 1930, p. 92-97; *Instructions du samedi*, p. 183-192). In a letter to Fr. Picard on May 21, 1958, he again refers to the origin of



## You are all called to help Our Lord to complete his Mystical Body.>>

Cahiers d'Alzon XI, p. 202



### The Content of Evangelization

This content is the evangelization of the truth, he says, because it is the “great law of history, the last word of events” (12<sup>th</sup> conference given on November 20, 1870 on the found foundations of the Church, *Prêtre et apôtre*, X, no. 116, p. 292-297).

According to him, “the power of evangelization cannot exist without suffering, in the joy such as Jesus and Mary his mother lived it. That is a principle of regeneration” that references “the Cross and Calvary” he states, in a conference to the nuns, on December 5, 1870, (*Prêtre et apôtre*, XI, n. 128, p. 302-306). It takes three forms, he indicates to the students of the Nîmes school, in speaking to them of Jesus the Evangelizer (1860-1865): “Public preaching, intimate preaching and interior preaching”. The evangelization that Jesus accomplished in his public life, indeed, had an intimate component that he illustrates in three passages of the Gospel: Nicodemus, the Samaritan Woman, and the Holy Supper when Jesus manifested his tenderness to his disciples: “I no longer call you servants but friends”. And lastly interior evangelization: “He who is the

author of faith, but also the author of grace wishes to speak to the hearts: the interior preaching that is everything”.

### Putting It into Practice

a. In his 10<sup>th</sup> meditation, he expresses the rule: “The work of evangelization is associated with the practice of the evangelical counsels.”

b. It is thus natural that it specifies how the religious of the Assumption should do it. “This evangelization entrusted to the religious of the Assumption implies:

1. The love of the Church, he says, for “we are the soldiers of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ and the Church has never been so attacked; it must be defended with the most ardent love...” Soldiers of faith, of truth, soldiers at the foot of the Cross...

2. Suitable preparation: “To rush headlong into the fray without the necessary arms would be a supreme imprudence. Thus we must prepare ourselves”. How: by an interior life, prayer, the constant habit of the presence of God. (*Meditations sur la Perfection Religieuse*, t. I, p. 266-269).

3. Action: “We are ready for the battle...” “But on this terrain, he specifies, “where contradiction and persecution await me,

evangelization: “The dispersion of the Apostles, at the time of the persecution of Herod, was the signal for the evangelization of the universe” (Letters of Fr. d’Alzon, t. II, p. 452). He also shows how, at certain times in history, some were relays of this evangelization. Such was the characteristic example of “the fruitful evangelization of the disciple of Saint Benedict”.

*I should never give in to discouragement in setbacks and remain humble in success”, “a humility of language, necessary in the evangelization of the poor,” (Méditations sur la Perfection Religieuse, t. II, p. 332-337). He ends with this beautiful prayer: “Lord, make me a man of prayer; a man of evangelization and that I sanctify myself in my work, I obtain the advancement of your Kingdom and the salvation of souls). (ES, p. 616-618).*

This man of evangelization is the one who goes to the very end. It supposes courage and an obedient abnegation. In a commentary on the miraculous catch and the *Duc in altum*, he writes in the *Pèlerin* of June 28, 1879, p. 405-406: “*The miraculous catch has taken place; the fishermen had obeyed. It is always thus, obedience in the work of evangelization is the essential condition. One must be sent by the one who has the right to send, one must have received the mission.*” Evangelization supposes the “*courage of charity*, he says in a sermon for Saint Stephen’s day: “*Such must be my courage also, if I want to give myself to good works, an admirable means for the evangelization for the Kingdom of God; if with an indomitable energy, by giving the gift of my body, I also seek to make the gift to souls. O Stephen, the model of men of good works, obtain for me your vigor that makes me look only to heaven and not only human charity; not what I give, but the One for the love of whom I give it,*

*and that, like you, I give myself completely!” (Méditations sur la perfection, t. I, p.12-14). He ties the call to religious life to being chosen by God. Noah was called to save humanity from the Flood; Jonah to save the city of Niniveh; Paul brought salvation to the nations. “Indeed, he says, I will not be Noah, or Jonah, or Saint Paul, but who knows if God by my religious vocation wants to save a certain number of souls?” (Méditations sur la Perfection Religieuse, t. I, p. 180-183).*

### Who are the recipients?

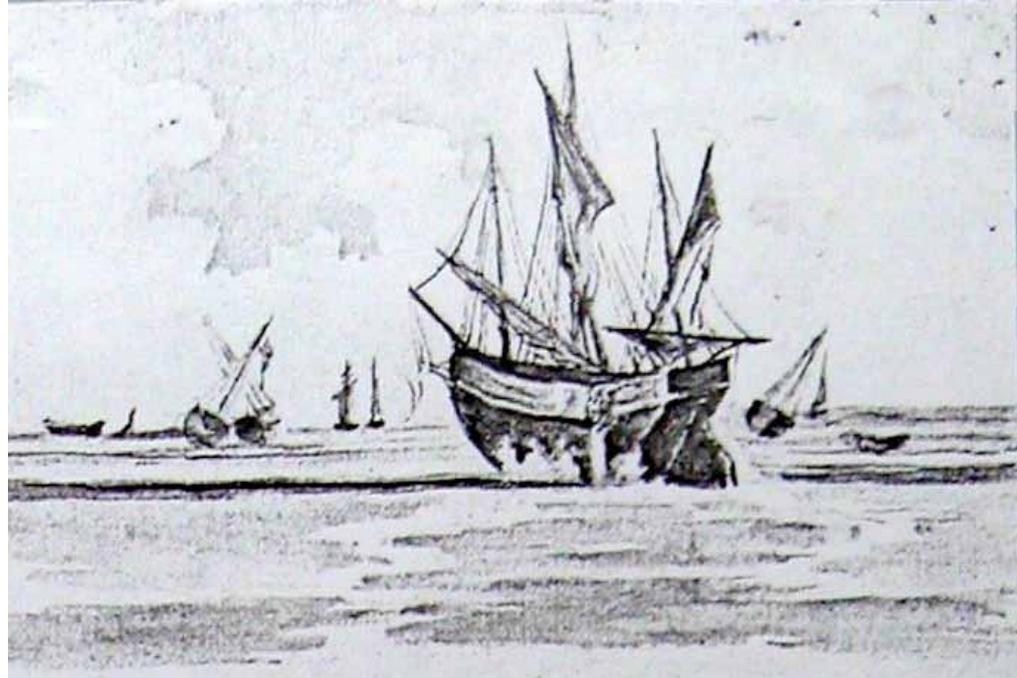
**I**n the 18<sup>th</sup> meditation on the remedies for the evils of the present times, he declares that evangelization begins with the poor: “*Well! We must still begin anew the evangelization of the poor. We must take care of them, go before them. If something can give some hope, it is the way some priests and courageous lay people take care of the poor, the workers. Certainly the works are numerous; the Conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul, the works of Saint Francis Regis, workers’ groups, youth works, the Saint Francis de Sales Association, the workers’ corporations are not, each one taken individually, the salvation of France, but all taken together form as humble and modest groups they might be, but which, unified in a chain of common charity, will bring without contest the preparation of a powerful army. We must take care of workers;*

*we must care for the abandoned, go to them, preach to them what they ignore, show them the path to reconciliation and pacification, give them the science of suffering, and you will be surprised how little by little peace will come to their souls, and how this peace, brought to lost souls, but made to be good, will bring the triumph of the Church and of Jesus Christ in the world.” (ES, 471) and he recalls that also in the closing remarks of the Chapter of 1868 (ES, 143). Why? It is because, according to him: “*It is by the evangelization of the poor that the evangelization of the world began.*” (Third Letter to the Master of Novices (E.S. 163), and that it is “*the characteristic of the coming of Christ*” he says in 1876. (*Les instructions du Samedi*, Paris, 1932, p. 59-64). In 18775, in a sermon he delivered on the first Monday of Lent, commenting on Mt. 25: 31-36, he reveals to us who the poor person is and he says: “*Inside these bodies, faith shows me souls. They also hunger for truth and thirst for justice. Who nourishes them? Who quenches their thirst? That is a terrible question. And when I see lay people, simple Christians occupy themselves with the evangelization of the working classes, I ask myself if all the works they found, whatever their success, are not an accusation against the priests and the religious who do not consume themselves in an apostolic work that would bring back the masses. But we do not have time for these poor abandoned people, and they ap-**

pear to be like the children of Jerusalem of whom the Prophet Jeremiah said: 'Parvuli petierunt panem et non erat qui frangereteis.' 'The little children asked for bread and there was no one to give them any.' (Lam. IV, 4.) (*Méditations sur la Perfection Religieuse*, t. I, p. 203-205).

In Father d'Alzon we cannot omit certain groups to whom he wishes to deploy his efforts of evangelization: the pagan world, the infidels, the people, the children, the nations that lie in the shadow of death, or again certain countries, but his ardor is directed especially towards the zeal for souls. The defense of the Church was, we know, for Fr. d'Alzon a priority. For him there were practical consequences: study for a better knowledge of the Truth, the practice of the virtues and popular evangelization in all its forms.

In 1870-1871, the statutes of a Third Order of the Augustinians of the Assumption that he is writing indicate that after "caring for their personal sanctification, the Third Order members will busy themselves with all the good works possible to bring back to Christ the lost souls" and notably by popular evangelization to raise up "workers and carry the harvest to the storehouse of the Father of the family." ES 1428). The evangelization of souls that he by-laws that he writes for the Third Order of the Assumption appears as one of the four means that the association gives



itself: "the manifestation of the Reign of Jesus Christ by the evangelization of souls" (Letters of Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon, t. B, p. 507).

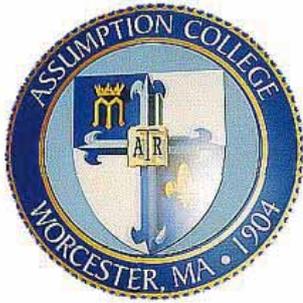
In the reflection on evangelization, we cannot omit his "Mémoire sur l'évangélisation en Russie" written in the summer of 1877, which here has a special place (Lettres du Père d'Alzon, t. XV, p. 297). This text generally covers another document with the title "Mémoire sur un essai d'évangélisation en Russie" (Lettres du Père d'Alzon, t. XII, p. 165) composed for the Congregation of the Propaganda August 14, 1877, which will be followed by another text addressed to the same Congregation on March 30, 1878 with the title of "Note sur un projet d'évangélisation en Russie" (Lettres du P. d'Alzon, t. XII, p. 411).

## In Conclusion

**I**n Father d'Alzon, evangelization has a Pauline coloration and is seen as an obligation: "This duty of evangelization is perhaps and the least known and the least practiced by the men of our times" he writes. "We defend an opinion, an interest, a party; the cause

*of truth is alone abandoned. I come to tell you that each Christian, in a certain measure, is obliged to evangelize: "Vaemih, si non evangelisavero. Why? For various reasons that will stand out from the two characteristics that I give to evangelization and that result from the double sentiment that the object of evangelization inspires. Truth (has) two characteristics: 1. Respect and 2. Love."* He then develops their practice.

For a conclusion, let us go back to what he said during a retreat to the Religious of the Assumption at Auteuil in August 1861, in speaking about the apostolate (13<sup>th</sup> instruction, *Cahiers d'Alzon*, t. XI, p. 199-214) when he concluded: "*The more Jesus Christ inhabits your heart, and he is there, the more you must make him live in the souls of the others; understand the grandeur of your vocation, of your mission... How can you contribute? It is by your evangelization, by your apostolic and Catholic spirit, especially Catholic. You must persuade yourselves that the Church is a great incarnation, a mystical incarnation of our Lord... You are all called to help Our Lord to complete his Mystical Body.*"



## The Blessing of the Villino Dufault

The archives building receives a new youth



In Rome on this February 17, 2013, it is not a Sunday like any other. Besides the fact that we celebrate the first Sunday of Lent 2013 and the next to the last for Pope Benedict XVI on the Chair of Peter, this day was chosen to welcome the first group of students from Worcester and take the occasion to proceed to the blessing of the new housing where they will be staying. The ‘villini’ of Due Pini exist, one since 1962 to house the community of our Sisters, and the other since 1963 to house the archives of the Congregation and contains some cells for religious. Thus a half century after the con-

struction of this ‘villino’ that at this time has been renovated to give it a new youth and a new function: the Roman campus for the Worcester College, henceforth baptized ‘Villino Dufault’ (the name of our former Superior General).

At the end of the Mass celebrated by Fr. John Franck, Assistant General, an early spring atmosphere was floating in the air when Fr. Benoît blessed the building in all its aspects...

The following took part in the ceremony: the members of the General Community, the first group of students from Worcester, Professor Lazarus, Vice

President of the College for Academic Affairs and Professor Bonanno and his family, as well as the architect Mr. Boudewijn Kaijser who supervised the evolution of the renovation since March 7, 2013, when the contract between the Superior General and the President of Assumption College to open this university campus was signed. The transformations and changes made included the entire building. Besides the creation of an apartment for the Dean of Students in the entresol, the basement has a classroom, a dining room, a kitchen, and a very functional laundry. On the other floors, the completely renovated rooms can house some twenty students. The student groups will follow one another in two semesters a year. The rest of the time, the building will be at the disposal and initiative of the General Curia, especially for international sessions in Rome.

In this way the preoccupation of our origins in the educational domain as formulated by Fr. d’Alzon, that is “the formation of Jesus Christ in souls” is maintained. We can bet once more that this stage will give new life and flesh to the formula! ■

B.L.L.

## All the way to the Middle Empire!

How do we see the Chinese reality today when we have the occasion to visit the Middle Empire for the 7th time? Ten days is short but nothing is to be neglected to see Peking again and the Great Wall, meetings with several priests in the capital, a visit to the National Seminary, the Olympic City and the University of Communications with its language center, take a crowd bath as in the Diocese of Changzhi, 600 kilometers south of Peking, on the occasion of the feast of the lanterns marking the end of the Chinese New Year celebrations, the Year of the Snake. How can we not think of what Father d'Alzon's words when he founded the Oblates that is to work everywhere his religious worked, and in the Near East, in Russia, and to have no borders for their good works except the Great Wall of China?

What is striking in the last two years is the impressive development of the infrastructures and the construction in the numerous cities: the construction of thousands of towers with hundreds of apartments follows a

“ I give you as the only limit...  
the Great Wall of China»

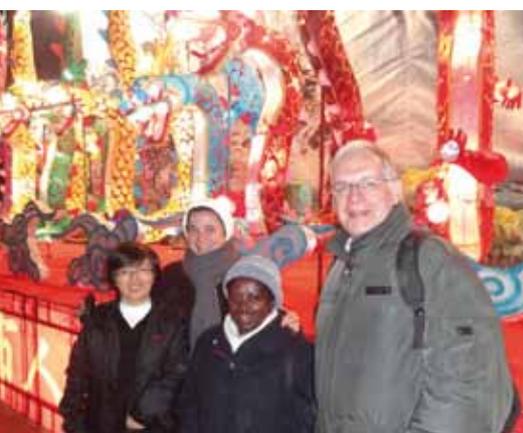
(Fr. d'Alzon to the Oblate novices, December 22, 1869)

certain increase of prosperity of the inhabitants; even in the rural areas that remain very poor, modernization makes its mark in the beautification of houses that we see all over... modernism now mixes in with the old traditions. In the two centers visited, the Official Catholic Church has launched renovations or the construction of new religious buildings and many buildings to house its works. “Now that the churches have been built, we must think about the formation of the priests, of the religious and the laity,” I heard in various places. This companioning is unanimously desired by those responsible for the Church for whom formation is a priority.

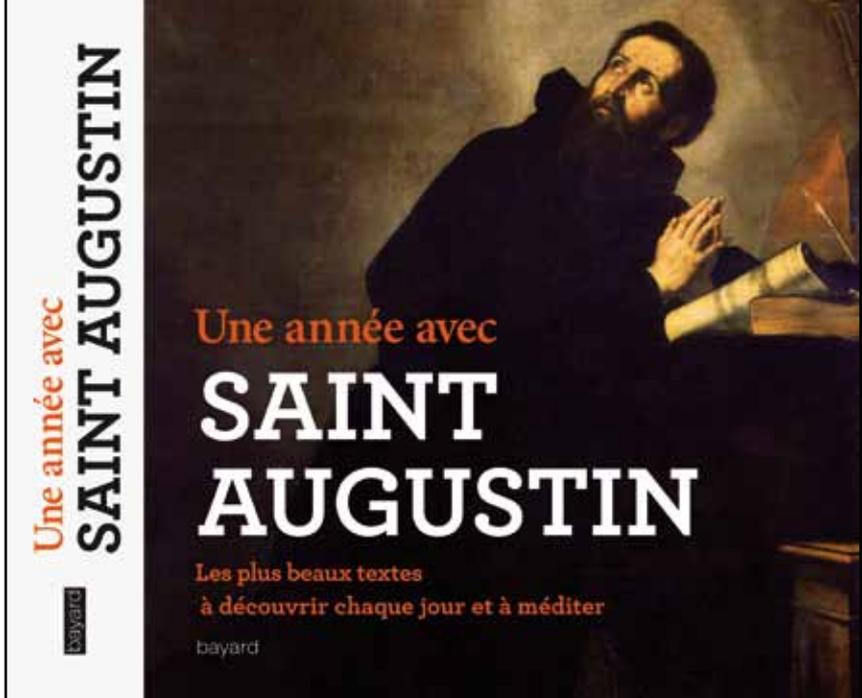
The resignation of Pope Benedict XVI raised many ques-

tions, and even some worries: “Will the Catholic Church be divided?” some ask. The Catholics I met retain a great esteem for Pope John Paul II who “showed himself strong and courageous,” but most hope for an open-minded Pope who would re-open dialogue with the authorities in place. Will the changes at the head of the Communist Party and the election of a new Pope with a revamped Curia allow this hoped-for dialogue? How can we contribute to it, if it is not by being open to what is going on in this immense country, in loving this dynamic Church, its catechumens, its young priests, its nuns and its laity who seek to find their proper place in both their Church and their country. ■

**Bernard Holzer**



A Year with Saint Augustine. It contains the most beautiful texts to discover and to meditate each day. This book has just been published under the direction of Sylvain Gasser with whom we have met. Here he presents the adventure of this work. (Bayard, 2013, 752 pages.)



## The Augustinian Lectionary

By Bernard LE LEANNEC

**This book is the fruit of an adventure; can you tell us about it?**

It is indeed a beautiful story. Seven years ago, as First Assistant to Father Benoît Grière, then Provincial of France, I received two nuns. I can still see them arrive in their voluminous Augustinian habits, carrying heavy plastic bags which contained apparently a precious treasure. These Augustinians of Saint Monica of Arnouville-les-Gonesses, near the airport of Roissy (Val-d'Oise) had to close their community and return to their Mother House in

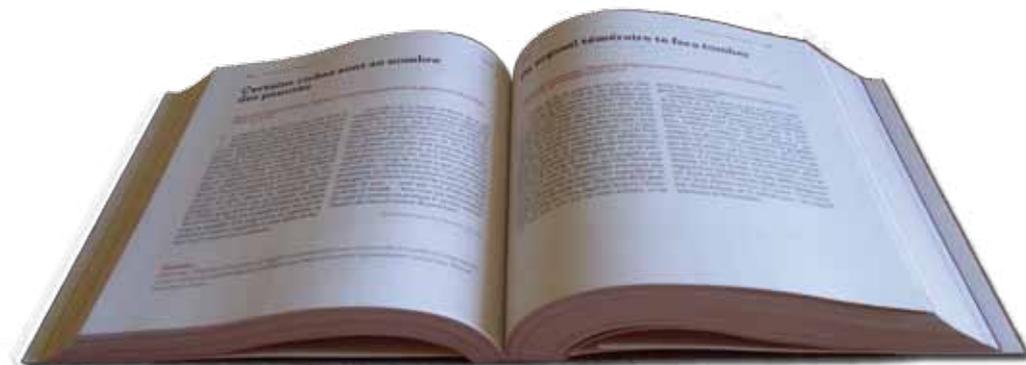
Hilversum (Netherlands). With a great love for Saint Augustine, they meditated daily on his writings. One of the Sisters, Yvonne Peyeresaubes, to whom I render homage, had over three years made a selection of more than 1,200 excerpts, each followed by a prayer. Since they knew the Augustinian tradition of the Assumptionists, they were bringing us this work, saying: "You will be able to make good use of this."

They left me there, at the same time astounded and skeptical. What would I be able to do with that? I saw immediately that it was a serious work, the outcome of a prayer truly committed in the life and social action that

they led. How could we make our communities benefit from this? Could this be the basis for a work useful to all? How could we make of this an instrument for the transmission of Augustinian spirituality for the greater number of people?

**This book is an anthology of the most beautiful texts of our Father; could you tell us how you came to present it and why? Its structure? The translation?**

Indeed the work of selection by the Sisters permitted the birth of this anthology that puts together all the most beautiful texts, the essentials of Augustine that form a true Augustinian spiritual lectionary for the liturgical year. I began the work in 2008 at the time that a new translation of the Confessions by Frédéric Boyer with the title of *Les Aveux*, at the P.O.L. Editions was published. It was to realize a work containing all the treasures of Augustine. I understood that the teachings of Augustine were done in the cadre of the liturgy which explains the





traditional pattern that we find beginning with the Advent and Christmas seasons, the beginning of Ordinary time followed by Lent and the Easter season and a return to Ordinary time followed by a sanctoral cycle where we find the major solemnities.

I also hoped that the contributions of great readers of Augustine might rhythmically follow this anthology. The translations also required a particular care and were made uniform by using those published by the Institute of Augustinian Studies.

**How can this book be useful to our religious life as Augustinians of the Assumption? How can each community use it?**

It is often said that Catholics, compared to Protestants, are poor reader of the Bible. Are we not also, with a few exceptions, poor disciples of Augustine who bear his name without really knowing him? With this book, I hope that my brothers might more easily enter in the immense work of Augustine, as Fr. Marcel Neusch invites us in his celebrated *Initiation à saint Augustin, un maître spiritual (Cerf, 1996)* or yet in *Un chemin de conversion, une introduction aux Confessions* (DDB, 1991). Our book presents itself as a lectionary that proposes daily nourishment to my brothers and sisters in the Assump-

tion. Certainly, the four hundred proposed texts will make each one a happy Augustinian.

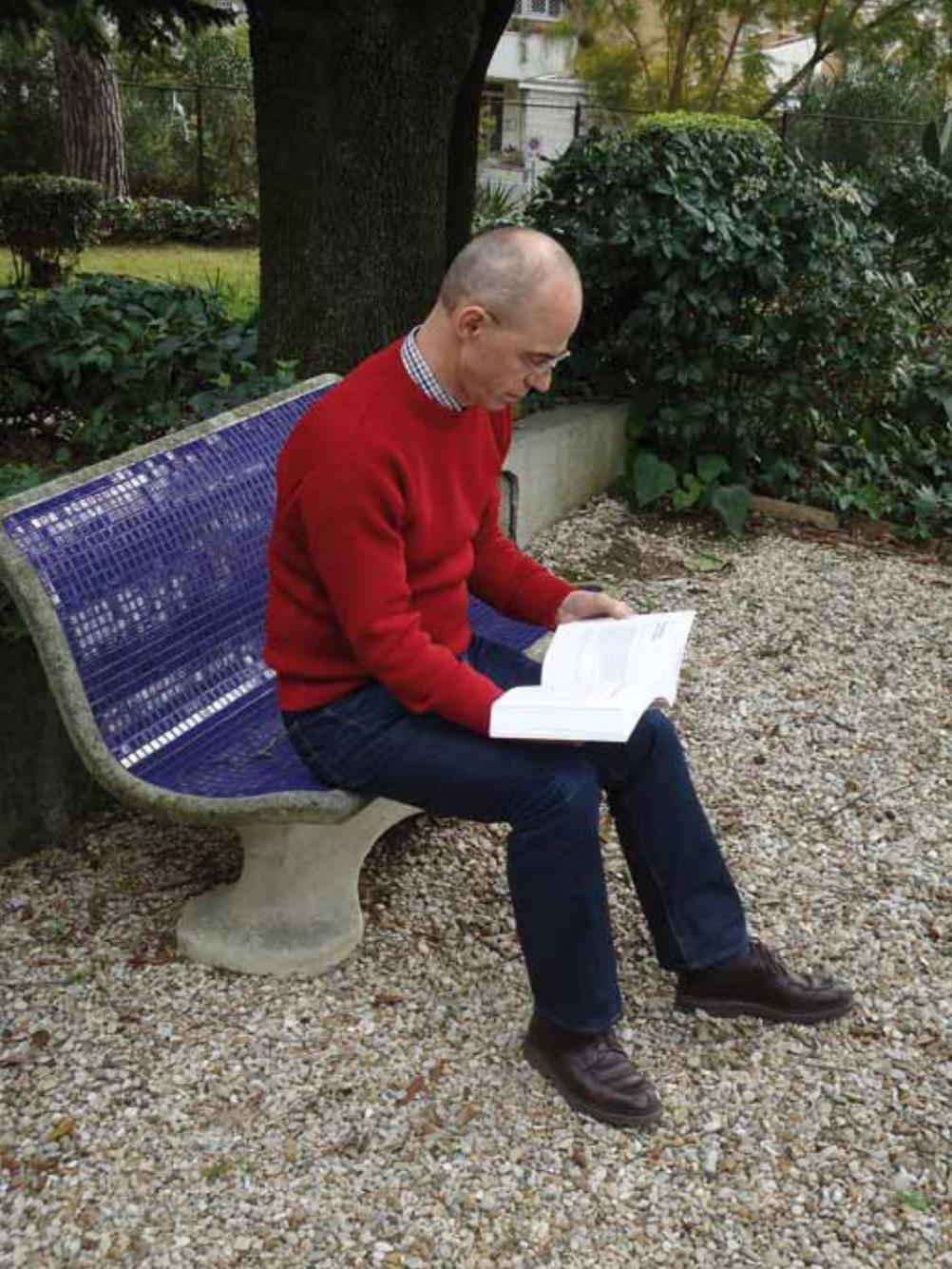
**Our last Chapter invites us to continue our Augustinian traditions and return to our sources (45-47) Is this book in our Augustinian tradition? Where do we find ourselves since the birth of the Centre d'Etudes Augustiniennes on January 20, 1943 at Lormoy, seventy years ago this year?**

I had not thought of this happy coincidence. But the convergence of these events should invite us to take up the task and uplift at the same time people filled with the ideas of Saint Augustine and animated by the Augustinian spirituality. We cannot remake history, but the Assumption remains always attached to its tradition and I hope that it will give birth to new vocations able to continue it for tomorrow.

Augustine is today a very contemporary thinker in so far as he was the witness to the fall of an empire which is not without analogy with what we are living. As proof of this present situation, I look at the *Prix Goncourt 2012*, given to Jérôme Ferrari for his novel *Le Sermon sur la chute de Rome* and the Claude Pujade-Renaud novel *Dans l'ombre de la lumière*. Faced with the collapse of civilization that we can feel to various degrees, we need to discover some hope as Augustine himself was in his time. His voice has not aged. ▶

**A Tribute to Goulven Madec**

The Acts of the International Colloquium in tribute to Goulven Madec held in Paris on September 8 and 9, 2011 with the title of Augustin Philosophe et Prédicateur (IEA, 2012, 590 pages, Collection des Etudes Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité, 195) has just been published in the Collection des Etudes Augustiniennes. This work presents certain aspects of his philosophical research from his readings of Cicero and Porphyry, but also of another aspect of the pastor of Hippo as a servant of the Word of God. The work publishes two unpublished texts of Goulven Madec: a translation of the *De regressu animae* of Porphyry and a detailed study on "Augustine and the Hortensius of Cicero".



◀ **This book has a dedication: what is its significance?**

I wanted to give homage to the one who helped me discover and love Saint Augustine, Fr. Goulven Madec.

In his classes, he made me understand that we had to first hear the voice of Augustine speak to us. I had the occasion to discover Augustine, that lover of God, when I was an adolescent and that remained in the background of what makes me a religious today. Goulven Madec, by his fully humble attitude, strengthened in me that sentiment and made me understand that we can only love Au-

gustine and transmit his love to as many as possible.

**This book is published at the moment when Benedict XVI ends his pontificate: his love for Saint Augustine led him to cross paths with the Assumption; did you know that?**

Indeed, the young Josef Ratzinger was in contact with our Institute in Paris in 1953 when he published his thesis on "*Le peuple et la maison de Dieu dans la doctrine ecclésiastique de saint Augustin.*" On a number of occasions he mentioned that when he met Assumptionists. The death of Father Georges

Folliet in 2011 gave him occasion to render homage to the one whom he recognized as a master and a great expert on the Bishop of Hippo. What Benedict XVI taught in his catechesis on Augustine is quite remarkable and one of them is in the book.

**The Superior General is fond of repeating that in the mission of the Church, the Assumption has not said its last word; is the publication of this book not a way of making heard his little refrain?**

To continue the metaphor, I would say that Augustine remains the bass resonance of our spiritual life. The book attests that in the Assumption, Augustine is very much alive and that we live him in all the generations. I got great pleasure in realizing this work that allowed me to verify once again this conviction, that I, to know that through the voice of Augustine, it is the voice of God that is heard and repeats to us: 'God always the same that I know myself, that I know him'. ■

Une année avec Saint Augustin. Les plus beaux textes à découvrir et à méditer. Bayard 2013, 520 pages, 29,90 euros.

# The correspondence of Fr. Victorin Galabert is published.

## 1854-1862: the youthful years<sup>(1)</sup>

The first volume of the correspondence of Father Victorin, founder of the Near East Mission, whose 150th Anniversary we celebrate, has been published. The major importance of this publication is that it replaces us in the atmosphere of the first moments of this important mission that characterizes and colors the life of the entire Assumption. It has given as much as it has received in the passion for unity and the knowledge of the Eastern Churches. Letter by letter, we follow the progressive penetration of Father Victorin Galabert in his apostolic mission, his knowledge of the terrain deepening all through his visits and his becoming gradually more familiar of the Bulgarian and Turkish languages. Let us recall that the publication of a large part of his journal had allowed us to discover the mission of this pioneer and the breadth of his action, but the letters show a more constructed aspect of the work he undertook. This correspondence develops the various themes in a more organized way. The epistolary style is that of a man steeped in the Latin culture and prepared for his mission by the acquisition of a doctorate in medicine and in canon law.

Father Galabert wants to be precise and careful in the details of the diverse information that he gives us all through his epistolary relations: cir-



cumstances, places, dates, names of persons and their functions. Though prudent, he does not hesitate to recount earthy anecdotes. Always of a charitable nature, he adorns his account with local color; his discourse reveals a man rich in sentiments and full of affection for his correspondents. The doctrine of this religious is sure and solid on the theological and canonical levels. He keeps his distance from inappropriate imaginations. He tackles the most varied subjects, speaks of his health with de-

tail and humor and of his friends with tact. His relationship with Father d'Alzon reveals to us a limitless veneration for the Founder and for the first Assumptionists with whom he entertains deep brotherly ties. We discover through this monumental ensemble how the Assumption is a big family where we

say what we do and do what we say. The work is illustrated with maps that show the first deployment of the Congregation.

In this first volume, we find in Victorin Galabert a missionary by temperament, dedicated once for all. This work is the first of an ensemble which should include some ten volumes whose editor, Father Jean-Paul Péri-er-Muzet, foresees the publication of two volumes a year. It is a happy coincidence that this publication unites the 150th anniversary of the Near East Mission and that of the foundation of the Oblates to take place in 2015.

**Bernard Le Léannec**

<sup>1)</sup> Lettres du P. Victorin Galabert. Tome Premier (1854-1862), Edited by Father Jean-Paul PÉRIER-MUZET, General House, 2013, 578 pages.





It would be erroneous to believe that only religious are the center of attention in this Year of Faith. The canonical visitation of Fr. Benoît Grière in South America will give a choice place to lay persons. The fact that Fr. Marcelo Marciel, Assistant in charge of the Lay-Religious Alliance accompanies The Superior General at each stage shows this particular attention. The most significant meeting of these last few months will have been the one that took place from September 21 to 23, 2012 in Buenos Aires (Argentina) with participation from four Latin American countries: Chile, Argentina, Colombia and Ecuador, presided over by Fr. Luis Ramon. In order to consolidate the work of the Alliance and to put into practice the orientations of the last General Chapter, this meeting is essential. It fosters reflection on the apostolic perspectives of the lay people of the Assumption. In each country the lay people organize according to their own realities and a common spirit is formed step by step. It will be concretized in the “way of life” that is being revised by the various groups. This meeting coincides with the arrival of the first Congolese Brother in Argentina, Father Médard Kahindo Vyangavo who declares: “As a missionary arriving in this part of the world,



## The Alliance In Latin America

In the heart of the Year of Faith, a few more steps

this meeting was for me the occasion of understanding better the different cultures on all the horizons of the continent.” Father Tomas Gonzales (Colombia) helped all the participants discover the person of Father Emmanuel d’Alzon, the Founder. Other events marked out the way of life that members of the Lay Alliance take today. In Rengo (Chile) from November 23 to 25, 2012 took place the last meeting of the lay members of the Assumptionist communities to renew the sense of fraternity and mutual support: in memory of Juan Gonzales, a lay Assumptionist, husband of Rosalba Moraga, who died in the interval. It was, however, a time of deepening for

the participants who desire to live more intensely this Year of Faith as a time to rediscover the mission of the lay person in the Assumption. They were helped by the conference of Fr. Martin Nace and a work in group discussions. Evaluations led to the establishment of new perspectives for the coming year. A new coordinating team was chosen. Jimena Garcia, as a member of the international coordinating team, was able to share her experience and give a broad view of the Rome meeting of July 2012. Some Chilean lay members shared the fruits of their pilgrimage to Nîmes and to Lourdes. The personal meeting afforded to them by this trip in the footsteps of Emmanuel d’Alzon and to the



Marian shrine was an experience full of promise. It is in the measure that, in the four corners of the Assumption, the lay members will share in the family spirit of the Assumption that the flame of the Founder will be transmitted.

In parallel, while in Bogota a group of lay people was making its commitment in the Assumption parish, in Ecuador, on November 21, took place a significant stage in the construction of the Alliance in this country where we have been implanted for already fifteen years. This last Latin-American implantation has revealed itself to be a terrain full of promise for the future. ■



**As a missionary arriving in this part of the world, this meeting was for me the occasion of understanding better the different cultures on all the horizons of the continent».**

**Fr. Médard Kahindo Vyangavo, Argentina**



# Our 2012 investments

By Didier Remiot

With these few lines, I would like to present simply 2012 from the point of view of the tracking of our financial investments by the General Treasurer's Office.

2011 was, for our investment fund, a very bad year. The value of the Solidarity Fund, whose profits help finance the houses of formation of the Provinces that cannot alone assume the burden, diminished by -6%.

2012 had a more positive stock market evolution: while the markets hoped for an economic recovery, the first trimester of 2012 was good and saw the stock market have a renewed vigor.

Unfortunately, partly due to the economic and political un-

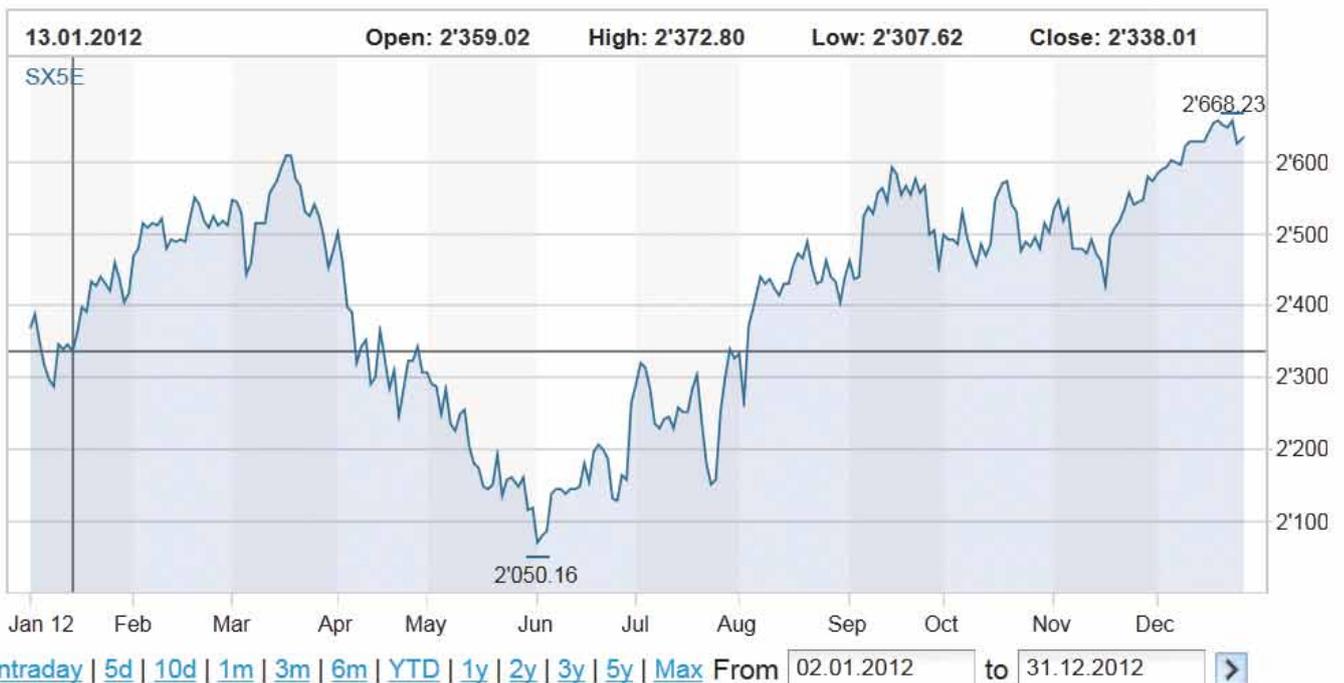
certainties of the Euro zone, the 2nd trimester of 2012 was very bad and at the end of June a very pronounced low point. Fortunately, the Central Bank of Europe was able to convince the markets of its strong intention to preserve the European currency, which led to a strong rally of the values during the second semester, a bit upset in October and November following the renewed uncertainties about the future of the Euro zone and the avoidance of the "fiscal cliff" in the USA. The following outline summarizes these evolutions for the European markets. The North American stock market and that of the emerging economies followed, more or less, the same movement.



Bro. Didier Remiot  
General Treasurer of the  
Congregation.

Thus the 2012 Solidarity Fund revenue, after taking into consideration and eliminating the impact of the contributions and withdrawals done during the year, is some +7% in US dollars, compared to the beginning of 2011, once the impact of the contributions as withdrawals have been considered and eliminated, the returns of the Solidarity Fund is in the order of +1%, in US dollars. We

## EUROSTOXX50







## In the Cosmopolitan and Working-Class East End of London Justin Mwendakulala in The Service of a Parish and of a Community

When one wants to be a disciple of Christ in the Assumption and give his love to Jesus, to what he loved the most, his Mother and his Church, one cannot but answer to the diverse missions of the religious family. Our three loves uprooted me from Africa to bring me to *Our Lady of the Assumption* of Bethnal Green in London.

Indeed after my formation at Emmanuel House, I was at our Saint Monica Parish in Nairobi. I hesitated to answer the request I received; I knew that it was not easy to obtain a visa for England. Obtaining the documents and the steps for the visa took a long time. In the meantime I dedicated myself to the construction of the rectory of the mission of Katua (Njiru Parish) and a high school.

When I received the invitation and the other documents to obtain the visa, it did not take

more than fifteen days to obtain the precious sesame at the Embassy of England for three years as was indicated in the letter of invitation.

I am in London to strengthen the pastoral team at *Our Lady of the Assumption Parish*. Our parish is cosmopolitan in the image of the British capital. We have Asians, Americans, Africans, Europeans and even Englishmen. There are some thirty nationalities in our parish. We are three priests and a brother in the community: Father Tom O'Brian (Superior and Pastor), Andrew O'Dell, Brother Damien Clemas and... me...

How did the Assumption arrive in this sector of London? Bethnal Green is situated in the east of the city, in an area considered poor. The involvement of the parish, in its social life is manifest. The Telco and the Citizen, two ASBL in which the English Assumption is in-

involved, have changed the lives of thousands of people. They are at the origin of numerous social projects: better salaries, job creation and rentals, etc. At the invitation of Father Tom, I also participate in many meetings of Telco and Citizen.





As Associate Pastor, I have little by little been integrated in the life of the community and of the parish in a typically Assumptionist climate: initiation, fraternity, humility, and fraternal correction. We serve Chest Hospital, and from time to time also London Hospital and Bart Hospital. I still have some difficulty in communicating because of my accent. Teaching catechism to the first communion class allows me to perfect my English and acquire a vocabulary adapted to the persons. What remains a challenge for me is that here the priest is the lead catechist. While the catechists are with the children, the priest is with the parents. They receive the same instruction but adapted to their level so as to

help their children at home. This is different from Africa where we rely entirely on the catechists. There is also a liturgy of the Word for the children under five years-old and the others. At each Mass, it is carefully prepared by the instructors and lasts from the Kyrie to the Prayer of the Faithful. The parents accompany their children and it is marvelous to see the children captivated by what the instructor tell them. How can we make the liturgy for the children a path that attracts to Christ and does not separated them necessarily from their parents during the Eucharist? The freedom that we have in Africa in our pastoral work with children is unthinkable here. The scandals that oc-

curred do not allow us to be alone with the children or vulnerable persons without the authorization of the police. For me it is a process to integrate! Words must be chosen carefully and attitudes thought through before children and vulnerable persons. Here they speak of harassment at every turn, unfortunately not always correctly... Father d'Alzon asks us to love the Church as our homeland. That is what I want to do during my service at *Our Lady of the Assumption*, serve as best I can the faithful of our parish and support our little religious community. It is in that that the apostle is formed in me. Even if I still have a lot to do, Father Tom is there to initiate me. ■  
Justin Mwendakulala



**The choice of a Pope was not always what it is today. The Bishop of Rome, successor of Peter is the one to whom the Lord Jesus entrusted his Church (Matt. 16:18).**

Historically he was often chosen as were the other bishops by the local clergy and the faithful. In the Middle-Ages, the choice of the Bishop of Rome was made by the Emperor. Later he was designated by the great families of Rome who in that way sought the favors of the new Pope. Rome was all the more desirable because since the Carolingians in the 8th century, the Papal States were attached to it.

In 1059, Nicolas II decreed that only the Cardinals could elect the Pope. This time, after the resignation of Benedict XVI, the first since Celestine V (1294), the Cardinals meeting in a conclave to choose the Bishop of Rome, successor of Peter, the one to whom Christ gave the power to bind and unbind and to confirm his brothers in the Faith (Matt. 16: 18-19| Luke 22:32) in this Year of the Faith, gave their vote to a Cardinal from Argentina who became Pope Francis.

# The Church in Movement Pope Francis, new Bishop of Rome

**Here are the stages that marked those days.**



## February 11

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To the surprise of all, during an ordinary consistory, Benedict XVI presented his resignation. His expressed motive: he did not have the necessary strength to govern the Catholic Church because of his “advanced age.”

## February 13

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The last High Mass takes place in Saint Peter’s Basilica. Benedict denounces the “blows against the unity of the Church” and “the divisions in the ecclesiastical body”.

## February 23

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The Cardinal Proto-Deacon Jean-Louis Tauran shares in the Eucharist and the community meal at Due Pini.

## February 24

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On the occasion of his last Angelus on Saint Peter’ Square, black with people, Benedict XVI declares that God asked him to “dedicate himself more to prayer and meditation.”



## February 27

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The Vatican announces that the report of the inquiry on the leaked confidential documents in Benedict's entourage will be given exclusively to the new Pope.

## February 28

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Benedict XVI promises "unconditional obedience" to his successor. "Place Christ at the center of your lives" he recommends. He travels to the summer residence of the Popes at Castel Gandolfo, south of Rome where he declares: "Tonight I become a pilgrim again." Indeed he becomes "His Holiness Benedict XVI, Pope Emeritus".

The period called "sede vacante" (Vacant See) begins during which the Camerlengo, Tarcisio Bertone is the interim "head" of the Vatican.

## From March 4 to March 11

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Ten General Congregations (a sort of "Pre-Conclave") take place during which the 115 electors, who are less than 80 years-old, of the Pope and the other Cardinals meet behind closed doors to debate about the future conclave.

## March 12

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The 115 Cardinal electors enter the conclave to elect the new Pope in the most absolute secrecy after the Mass "Pro Eligendo Pontifice" presided by Cardinal Sodano, Dean of the Sacred College. The doors of the Sistine Chapel are closed. No one is elected on the first ballot as the black smoke attests.

## March 13

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**18:07** white smoke rises at the end of the fifth ballot. A Pope has been elected.

**19:13 "Habemus Papam", announces the French Cardinal Protodeacon Jean-Louis Tauran from the loggia of Saint Peter's Basilica, the name of the 266th Sovereign Pontiff: The Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, from Argentina 76 years-old, who becomes Pope Francis, the Poverello of Assisi. He is the first Pope from the Americas and the first Jesuit Pope. "It seems that the cardinals came to get me from the end of the earth," he declares from the balcony.**



**While the conclave, that was to elect the Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos Aires as the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome, was taking place in Rome, Father Benoît, our Superior General was visiting us here in Argentina.**

The days he spent in our midst showed his ability to listen and his great availability to us. The meetings were personal with each religious manifesting in this way the attention for each person individually. At the same time, he was able to discover 'directly' the reality of the terrain and our apostolic works in full swing. It was a first for us as it was for him!

On March 11, at the Sanctuary of Lourdes, a day of great affluence of pilgrims, as is the case on each 11th of the month he participated in the ceremonies as the election of a new Pope was being pre-



## An Astounding and Providential Coincidence

pared in Rome. At the Lourdes School, he could measure the breadth of the renovation realized these past years thanks to the work accomplished and the record number of students that

exploded this year. The discussion with the administrators of the school stimulated their work and strengthened their attachment to the Congregation.

### Someone close to the Assumption

Did you know that Pope Francis began his life in the arms of a Little Sister of the Assumption who worked in his family at the time of his birth? The report comes to us from our Little Sisters in Argentina. Cardinal Bergoglio took pleasure to recall that from time to time. A Little Sister of the Assumption held him in her arms when he was born and gave him his first bath. She also took care of his mother. Jorge

Mario Bergoglio was born on December 17, 1936 in Buenos Aires in the Flores quarter, one of five children. His father Mario José arrived in Argentina from an Italian village called Portocomaro (Province of Asti) in the Piedmont region, and his mother Regina Maria Sivori, whose family was from northern Italy. The new Pope remains a friend of the PSA and the poor that they serve.

After that Father Benoît went to the San Román Institute, a school located on the territory of the Federal Capital and that has 1400 students. This stage was marked by a discussion with some 80 young people, students and alumni preparing to go on mission to different areas of the country.

At the end of this intense visit, Father Benoît took the time to meet with the laity of the Lay-Religious Alliance,



The Assumption is present in Argentina since 1910. The first Superior General in office to go to Argentina was Fr. Gervais Quénard to celebrate the warm Christmas feast in Buenos Aires in 1925 and inaugurate the crypt of Santos Lugares.

as well as with those of the community of Santos Lugares, as well as those of the San Román School. This meeting was enriched by the presence of Fr. Marcelo Marciel, Assistant General, who explained what the Congregation is putting into place in the context of the Lay-Religious Alliance.

How can we not see a cordial encouragement by the visit of Father General? Despite the small number of religious faced with the vast

works in Argentina, this moment was an oxygen blast, a breath of fresh air in the heart of the South American summer.

A detail and not the least: an unheard of coincidence! The new Pope, Francis, an Argentinian said in his first message that the Cardinals had gone ‘almost’ to the ends of the world. It is true that the Argentinian Assumption is almost at the end of the world, even if there are still some 3000 kilometers to reach the South Pole. But today the Assumption can feel at the heart of the Church, at the heart of our little Congregation!

P. Luis Ramón Rendón A.A



Father Médard Vyangavo is since 2012 member of the community of Our Lady of Lourdes of Santos Lugares, In Buenos Aires (Argentina). On this photo, taken at the occasion of the national meeting of Shrines, he is on the left of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, today Pope Francis.

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## Our Deceased Brothers



✠ Father André Wenger (Fr) died on December 24 in Albertville. His funeral took place on Thursday, December 27, 2012 in the Chapel of Notre-Dame des Vignes in Albertville. He was 88.

✠ Father Michel Kalumbiro Vake-Vavuhga (Africa) died on Saturday January 12, 2013 in Kyondo. The funeral Mass took place on Sunday

at Kyondo before the transfer of the body to Mahamba, the cemetery of the Augustinians of the Assumption in Butembo. He was 63.

✠ Father Jos Vandevelde (ENE) died on January 28, 2013 in Leuven (Belgium). His funeral took place in the church of Saint Gertrude in Leuven on February 2. He was 68.

✠ Brother Maurice Hex (ENE) died on February 13, 2013 in Anderlecht (Belgium). His funeral was held in Sint Brixierskerk of Schalhoven. He was 84.

✠ Father Richard Brunelle (USA) died on Wednesday February 20 at Saint Vincent Hospital of Worcester (USA). His funeral was celebrated on February 26 in the Holy Spirit

Chapel of Assumption College and was buried in Saint Anne's Cemetery in Fiskdale. He was 77.

✠ Father Petrus Moors (ENE) died in Zepperen (Belgium) on March 24, 2013. His funeral was held in Sint Genoveva of Zepperen. He was 83.