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**The Assumptionists and Their Eastern Apostolate  
(1863-1980)**

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To the Memory of

Fathers KAMEN VICEV, A.A., and PAVEL DJIDJOV, A.A.

executed November 12, 1952

“Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones”

(Ps. 116:15)

## **PREFACE**

Exactly twenty years ago, a few weeks before entering the novitiate of the English Province of the Assumptionists, I visited the late Father Severien Salaville in Athens. Over a cup of Turkish coffee, I told him of my desire for an intellectual commitment in view of the restoration of communion between Constantinople and Rome. A number of providential coincidences favored this commitment. One was that the English Provincial, Father Austin Tremer, had devoted a good part of his life to the Eastern apostolate. Consequently, he was ready to encourage an English Assumptionist to do the same. I express my gratitude to him and pay tribute to the devotion which has prompted him, at an age when most people are thinking of retirement, to return to the East.

For the last thirteen years, I have been working at the Byzantine Institute in Paris but frequently visiting the East. It is evident that our Eastern apostolate has been passing through a period of recession. I have often wondered why. I felt that I should like to look more closely into our origins in order to form a clearer notion of what we were trying to do there. Consequently, the request that I should produce a short account of Father d'Alzon and the East came as another providential coincidence. I have tried to respect the terms of the commission: a "non-scholarly" monograph written in the light of Vatican II and the contemporary situation. The time limit, however, was short. Accusations of superficiality should take this into account! My thanks go to Father Arno Burg who gave me many useful hints and put his own research at my disposal, to Father Pierre Touveneraud who gave me further useful hints and guided me through the archives while I enjoyed the hospitality of the Generalate community in June 1978, to Sister Leonie who let me consult the archives of the Oblates of the Assumption, who, of course, worked side by side with us in the East from 1868 onwards. I should also thank the "young" communities on three continents who told me what they would like to find in this monograph (but will they?). Father Louis-Armel Pelatre provided me with information about the Syrian community in Istanbul. The community of Belgrade, whom I helped as a curate during the

summer vacation, offered me the terrace of their house where these pages were written.

Others have written about our Eastern apostolate; naturally I have consulted their works, pilfering from them flagrantly. Since, however, my presentation is required to be non-scholarly, I give neither references nor bibliography.

People sometime speak of our Eastern apostolate as something which belongs to a glorious past. A closer look suggests that, behind the imposing facade of the “Oeuvre grecque”, itself ephemeral, our religious were unobtrusively obtaining their greatest successes by entering into the life of the peoples among whom they lived. Moreover, our failures were not normally due to a lack of competence and zeal. Two wars and the installation of regimes antipathetic to Christianity and to Catholics of the Eastern rites have been the major causes of recession, to which we must add, in the present generation, a falling-off in recruitment. On the other hand, an Eastern commitment, together with an apostolate of Christian Unity, are, if our Founder’s intentions are important for us, indelible characteristics of the Assumptionist congregation. Further, if he liked to take a broad view of a situation, he also defined with precision the field in which action was to be taken. Conservative, perhaps, as to ends, he was open and resourceful as to means. Moreover, as will be seen in these pages, the congregation did not wait until Vatican II before using the word evangelization.

Of course, if anyone is going to work in the East, he has to be “hooked” by it. He also needs to be, like Father d’Alzon, prepared to re-examine situations and, possibly, come back on his original judgment. He must, finally, like Father d’Alzon, have the gift of resourcefulness.

I drafted this text in English, my native tongue, but, since it is destined principally to readers in the United States, Father Robert Fortin has revised it according to the principles of American orthography.

Julian Walter, A.A.

Belgrade, July 1978

Worcester, Mass., May 1979.

### I. EMMANUEL D'ALZON AND PIUS IX

The story has often been told of Father Emmanuel d'Alzon's pilgrimage to Rome in 1862. Nevertheless, any account of his Eastern commitment must begin with it. At that time, churchmen and statesmen in Western Europe were preoccupied by the situation of Christian peoples living in the crumbling Ottoman Empire. Pius IX was on the lookout for religious congregations with manpower available to send to the East. He knew something of Father d'Alzon and the young congregation of Assumptionists. When he heard that Fr. d'Alzon was present in Saint Peter's with a group of pilgrims from Nîmes, he blessed the activities of the Assumptionists "East and West" and, in due course, summoned Father d'Alzon to a private audience. From this audience Father d'Alzon brought away (so he later told the pupils of Assumption College, Nîmes) "the right — I would almost say the mission — to study the return of these Eastern peoples to the true faith, and to seek out, with the help of a number of eminent people, the best means to use in order to attain this end."

Two questions arise at once: had Pius IX any specific reason for appealing to the Assumptionists? How was Father d'Alzon equipped to respond to the papal call?

The immediate predecessors of Pius IX had not, it seems, been obliged to pay much attention to Eastern Christians. Consequently, the Roman Curia was ill-equipped to advise Pius IX. In 1848 he addressed a tactless letter to the Greek Orthodox, *In suprema Petri sede*, which provoked a bout of polemical exchanges. However, it was particularly in his dealings with the Russian Tsars that Pius IX underwent his apprenticeship in the involved business of dealing with Eastern Christians. There were in the mid-19th century over a million Latin rite Catholics living in Western Russia. The Russians themselves were Orthodox Christians of the Byzantine rite. In common with other Eastern rite Christians — Catholic or not — they identified their nation with their church. Consequently, they treated Catholics as second class citizens. Those of the Latin rite were tolerated, but, in the case of a mixed marriage, this had to be celebrated in an Orthodox church. Difficulties were placed in the way of nominating Latin rite bishops, and the privileges of the Holy See were hardly recognized. It must be added that Latin rite Catholics themselves were not remarkable for their zeal. We find the Dominican Rector of the Catholic

Ecclesiastical Academy of Saint Petersburg ready to defend Catholic dogma, but not prepared to accept Roman intervention in matters of discipline and appointments — virtually a Gallican! As far as Eastern rite Catholics were concerned, there was no toleration whatever under the Russian Tsars. The Uniate Church in Russia had been suppressed in 1839. During Pius IX's pontificate, the Tsars pursued the same policy in Poland until, in 1875, there were no more Ruthenian or Ukrainian clergy of the Eastern rite officially exercising their ministry in the Russian Empire. Naturally, Pius IX did not accept these anti-Catholic measures passively. If he reacted as a statesman rather than as a churchman by breaking off diplomatic relations with Russia, he nevertheless did so in order to assert the universal prerogatives of the Vicar of Christ against the Gallican notion that the national church is virtually autonomous, and to maintain that churches of the Eastern rite are legitimate members of the family of the Roman communion.

Thus we find Pius IX, with his intuitive approach, grasping the realities of the Eastern churches, after his initial setbacks, much better than those who had the time and occasions to inform themselves more thoroughly. Equally, he was aware that in Rome, as elsewhere in the West, Catholics were singularly ignorant of the liturgy, canon law and specific traditions of the Eastern churches. It was he who brought a monk of Solesmes, a distinguished scholar and the future Cardinal Pitra, to Rome to organize the study of these subjects. It was he who created in 1862 a separate section of the Propaganda Fide to be responsible for the Catholics of the Eastern rite, particularly for those who lived in the crumbling Ottoman Empire under Turkish suzerainty. To these people, we must now turn our attention.

It had always been the policy of the Turks to delegate authority over the Christian peoples in their Empire to their own leaders. Thus, when they conquered Constantinople in 1453, the Orthodox patriarch was appointed head of the Slavic as well as the Greek peoples of the former Byzantine Empire. The Bulgarians and Serbs, however, found Greek domination at least as burdensome as that of the Turks. Within the Ottoman Empire there were, of course, also Catholic Christian groups: Maronites and Melkites, Armenians and Syrians of the Eastern rites, Latin rite indigenous peoples in Bosnia and Albania, "Levantine" (descendants of Italian traders) in the Greek islands, and converted Paulicians in Bulgaria. As Turkish authority weakened, foreign powers intervened: the Austrians and the French exercised a protectorate in favor of the Catholics, while the Russians, fired by Pan Slavism, particularly befriended the Bulgarians and Serbs but attempted to extend their Protectorate to all Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire. Further, the Turks were now opening up the country to foreigners; there was an influx of them from the West. Some went to make their fortune, others to found schools, hospitals and other charitable works. The Austrians were particularly active in the Balkans, while the French were more interested in the Levant. In 1856, the "Oeuvre des Ecoles d'Orient" was founded under the direction of the future Cardinal Lavigerie, who was also to found the congregation of the White Fathers and a seminary at Saint Anne's in Jerusalem of the Catholic Melkites.

Pius IX sought to direct and consolidate these various charitable movements in the interest of the Catholic Church particularly by means of Apostolic Vicars and Delegates residing in the East. However, a new problem arose when, in Bulgaria, a number of groups of Orthodox Christians manifested their desire to enter into communion with Rome. In 1859 a group from Kukus (Kilkis) near Salonika sent a representative to the Vicar Apostolic in Constantinople; in 1860 another group in Adrianople (Edirne) expressed a desire to enter into communion with Rome; in 1861 a third group, in Constantinople itself, approached the Armenian Primate. Pius IX was sufficiently impressed to consecrate as their bishop Joseph Sokolski. Not unnaturally, the Russian Orthodox looked askance on this movement of Slavs towards Rome. Joseph Sokolski disappeared in mysterious circumstances on a Russian ship to Odessa.

Nevertheless, certain points were clear. If groups of Bulgarian Orthodox turned towards Rome, it was not uniquely out of veneration for the Holy See. They wished also to be free from the suzerainty of the Greek patriarch of Constantinople. Also, while their adherence to the Byzantine rite was absolute, they were, through no fault of their own, hardly more knowledgeable as to its rich tradition than Westerners of the Latin rite. It was necessary that they should be schooled in their own allegiance by priests who were at once well versed in their tradition and untainted with Gallicanism or other separatist tendencies. Looking around for religious to undertake this work, Pius IX hit upon the Resurrectionists, a Polish congregation which had the advantage of sharing a common Slavic tradition, and the Assumptionists, whose founder ("my friend Father d'Alzon," Pius IX called him) was well known to be utterly devoted not only to the Roman See but also to its occupant as a person.

How was Father d'Alzon equipped — to pass to our second question — to respond to this call? He had committed his congregation from the beginning to work for Christian Unity. However, this commitment had been motivated by his concern for the Protestant population of the Cévennes and strengthened by the study of the Oxford Movement in England. He read widely in the abundant writings of the great English converts, and, if he expressed great admiration for Newman, he undoubtedly felt himself to be more in sympathy with the ultramontane Manning. He reflected upon the challenge which Protestantism presented to the Catholic Church, without — apparently — asking whether Protestantism had its positive and specific qualities. Protestantism was rather a diminution of true doctrine. Calvinism, with which he was directly familiar, lay at the origins of the Enlightenment and the Revolution. Protestants defended the esprit laïc and the exclusion of the Church from public life. In campaigning against them, Father d'Alzon uses virtually the same language as when campaigning against atheists. In order to win over the Protestants of the Cévennes, Father d'Alzon planned to edify them by charitable works and to instruct them by means of missions and study centers.

Further, Father d'Alzon's ecclesiology, strongly influenced by de Lamennais and Dom Guéranger, Abbot of Solesmes, tended to be monolithic. Like de Lamennais, he was haunted

by a Medieval notion of Christendom, a Church militant, in which the Roman Pontiff, sovereign of the Papal States as well as the Vicar of Christ, wielded both the temporal and the spiritual swords. The avowed enemy of Gallicanism and diocesan particularism, he followed Dom Guéranger in maintaining that there could only be One Church if there was one rite. It is well known that Father d'Alzon sought Dom Guéranger's advice for the liturgical practices of his congregation, and that he advocated the Roman breviary and the suppression of diocesan uses. However, it seems that Dom Guéranger's influence extended yet further. It is extraordinary that Cardinal Pitra and Dom Guéranger, contemporaries and both monks of Solesmes, should have evaluated so differently the Eastern rites. For Dom Guéranger, the Eastern rites were museum pieces; their liturgical books should be confined to libraries. A revolution was under way which would lead to their extinction: a time would come when "the language as well as the faith of Rome would be for the East, as for the West, the sole means of unity and renewal"! He even goes so far as to say that the Eastern liturgies are barriers which add to the difficulty of remaining united to the center of the Catholic communion.

If I quote Dom Guéranger, it is because, while Father d'Alzon's debt to de Lamennais is well known, less attention has been paid to his debt to the ultramontane Abbot of Solesmes. Further, these texts bear out the fact that Father d'Alzon, before the "call" of 1862, had given little personal thought to the Christian East, although the difficult situation of Catholics there had been borne in upon him, as upon other French people, by the presence in France of refugees.

Father d'Alzon was particularly aware of the sufferings of Polish Catholics of both Latin and Eastern rites. After the Polish revolt of 1830 had been suppressed by the Russians, many Poles took refuge in France. Some of those in Paris were in personal contact with Mother Eugénie and the Religious of the Assumption. Mother Macrina, a Polish Eastern rite nun, lived for some time in the community at Auteuil. Mother Eugénie recounted the sufferings of this nun in her letters to Father d'Alzon. A group of Polish seminarians, living in a house nearby, also made the acquaintance of the Auteuil community. Mother Eugénie put them in touch with Father d'Alzon. Several went to stay at the College at Nîmes. These Poles intended to take religious vows; in due course they became known as the Resurrectionists. Father Emmanuel and Vincent de Paul Bailly stayed in their house in Rome while studying theology. There was even a project of fusion between the Resurrectionists and the Assumptionists. However, as the former had already opted for the Rule of Saint Benedict, while Father d'Alzon favored that of Saint Augustine, this project had, in the long run, to be abandoned. Father d'Alzon also received at the College in Nîmes a number of boys of the Maronite rite from Syria, when envisaging the purchase of the Cenacle in Jerusalem, he planned to establish there a Maronite seminary.

Once the mission to study the return of Eastern peoples to the faith had been conferred upon him, Father d'Alzon displayed overwhelming enthusiasm. He was ready to take on the "Photian schism" (an expression which makes us feel ill at ease today!) in its entirety; with a prodigality

which horrified Father François Picard, he offered to put his whole personal fortune, about the size of which somewhat exaggerated rumors were circulating in Rome, at the disposal of the Oriental section of Propaganda Fide.

Actually some Roman prelates already had their ideas about the specific mission which should be entrusted to Father d'Alzon. On May 27th, 1862, while his bishop was in audience with Pio Nono, Father d'Alzon was addressed in the papal antechamber by Mgrs Howard and Talbot, together with Mgr Lavigerie, who was himself planning a foundation in Jerusalem, albeit for the Melkites, not for the Maronites. Mgr Howard told Father d'Alzon that it was to Bulgaria that the Assumptionists should go, not to Jerusalem. Father d'Alzon objected that, if he took the initiative of renouncing the Jerusalem project himself, no one would take him seriously.

“Cardinal Barnabo must tell me to do this”, he said.

“He won't tell you”, Mgr Howard replied.

“Then the Holy Father must tell me himself.”

So it was that Pio Nono received Father d'Alzon, eight days later, in private audience. He approved the plan of founding a seminary in the East, suggesting that Father d'Alzon himself should go there to select the site. He also made it clear that he wished the Assumptionists to work among the Bulgarians. Father d'Alzon demurred, because the Polish Resurrectionists had already been given this work. Pio Nono simply replied that the Poles were not always levelheaded.

It was, then, Father d'Alzon's levelheadedness that particularly recommended him to Pio Nono. Yet it cannot have escaped the Oriental section of Propaganda that, since the French ambassador at Constantinople had been active in obtaining a social status for the Bulgarian Eastern rite Catholics independent of the Greek Orthodox of the Phanar, a French religious congregation was particularly apt to work among the Bulgarians. Father d'Alzon loyally accepted the change of plans proposed by Pio Nono. He despatched Father Galabert to Constantinople to reconnoiter, planning to go there in person the following year.

The story of Father d'Alzon's visit to Constantinople has also frequently been told. While he conceived his mission as part of an overall plan to put an end to the entire "Photian schism" — so that a visit to Constantinople was essential — he was prudently aware that, with only limited forces available, he must select a smaller target for the first assault. Once he had himself visited the terrain, he was able to appreciate that the movement of Bulgarian Eastern rite Christians towards Rome was stimulated by nationalism as much as by reverence for the Roman Pontiff.

Nevertheless, as he wrote to Mother Eugénie, he was determined to do something for the Bulgarian people. The Lazarists of Salonica had already taken charge of the group at Kukus; the Resurrectionists were moving into Adrianople. His plan to acquire a property on which to construct a seminary in Constantinople itself fell through. Consequently Father d'Alzon accepted a proposition of a somewhat different kind. Our first foundation at Philippopolis (Plovdiv) was among Bulgarian Catholics of the latin rite, the converted Paulicians. Their Capuchin bishop, Mgr Canova, invited Father d'Alzon to run his primary school. Father Galabert, Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Canon Law, became director of a primary school, with two lay brothers as his staff. It was, at least, a foothold, accepted with the avowed intention of working in due course among Catholics of the Eastern rite. Father Galabert was, indeed, to find shortly greater scope for his erudition as the right hand man of Mgr Raphaël Popov, the new exarch for Bulgarians of the Eastern rite.

During his stay in Constantinople, Father d'Alzon preached a series of Lenten sermons in the Latin cathedral. He met many people, notably the Apostolic Vicar, Archbishop Brunoni. He crossed the Bosphorus to Chalcedon, sacred by reason of the Council held there in 451, where the assembled bishops had affirmed their loyalty to the Roman See by proclaiming, when the Papal Tome was read, that "it is Peter who speaks through Leo." Also, he discovered that the lingua franca of cultivated people there was French, and that the Eastern rite Christians were, to all appearances, ineluctably decadent. These impressions were to be committed to a report which Father d'Alzon submitted to the Holy Father on his return.

A copy of this report, which has never been published, exists in the Assumptionist archives in Rome. It is extremely revelatory as to the workings of Father d'Alzon's mind. It takes full account of the play of political as well as religious factors in the complex situation of Christian nations under Turkish rule. Russia, the political bulwark of the Photian schism, is presented as the archenemy. The Turks particularly feared Russian intervention. Out of fear, they would accept the establishment of a protective circle of Catholic nations around their tottering empire. If Rome provided the necessary leadership by re-establishing the Latin Patriarchate of Constantinople, numerous peoples (the Armenians and Bulgarians — even perhaps the Greek) would turn to Rome. On the more specifically religious aspect of the situation, Father d'Alzon seems to transcribe almost literally the ideas of Dom Guéranger. He accepts the notion of an inevitable disappearance of the Eastern rites, as Western ideas filter into the Ottoman Empire.

He compares them to the Mozarabic rite in Spain and the Ambrosian rite in Milan. Without being formally abolished, these rites would become venerable relics. To facilitate their disappearance, an inter-rite seminary should be founded.

How did Father d'Alzon come to submit a report which was directly opposed to the current policy of Pius IX? The Pope had unconditionally rejected the notion that the Eastern rites should be abolished. The possibility of restoring the Latin Patriarchate of Constantinople had been recently mooted and also rejected. Perhaps d'Alzon made himself too readily the spokesman of Archbishop Brunoni, the Apostolic Vicar, for whom the most pressing pastoral problem was certainly the influx of Latin rite Catholics into the Ottoman Empire from the West. It was rash of him to submit a report on so complex a situation after so short a stay in Constantinople. Further, it is evident that he was dominated by his preconceived notions of the political and religious situation in Western countries, notably in France. There, nationalist movements had been inspired by revolutionary trends to which he was utterly opposed. He feared that if Rome did not rally the nationalist movements in the Ottoman Empire, others would. Further, being familiar only with the Protestants and Anglicans, he had not as yet the necessary knowledge to judge the situation of Christians, who, whether or not in communion with Rome, had developed an entirely different religious culture. There are still no Anglican or Protestant rite Christians in communion with Rome!

Father d'Alzon was deeply wounded by the rejection of his report. It was as if the services of a loyal knight had been spurned by his feudal lord. He renewed his protestations of loyalty, recalled that he had not in any way solicited an Eastern mission, and proclaimed himself ready to undertake any task that Rome should entrust to him in the East. It does not seem that any such task was offered to him. This may have been partly because it soon became evident that there would be no general move among the Bulgarians to enter into communion with Rome. Once the Bulgarians had been granted their own exarch, independent of the Patriarch of Constantinople, by the Turkish Sultan in 1870, many broke with Rome. Nil Izvorov, the Bulgarian bishop who came into communion with Rome in 1873, renounced his allegiance in 1895. For those who remained faithful, the Vincentians in Salonika and the Resurrectionists in Edirne were largely sufficient. However, if Pius IX had lost interest in the Bulgarian Uniates, being more than fully occupied by the machinations of Garibaldi and Cavour as well as by the preparation of the First Vatican Council, Father d'Alzon was in no way inclined to forego his "mission" to study the return of Eastern peoples on the faith. We must now turn our attention to what was being discreetly carried out in the house of studies at Nîmes and "in the field."

Father d'Alzon maintained the religious community responsible for the primary school in Plovdiv. However, Father Galabert was now established in Adrianople as the Eastern rite exarch's Vicar General. The number of foreign residents in this town justified the foundation of a girl's school and a hospital. Father d'Alzon first appealed to the Religious of the Assumption to

go there. However, in spite of his pressing demand, Mother Eugénie refused. It is clear that this was a prudent decision on her part. The Resurrectionists, with whom, as we have seen, she was in close contact, were already established in Adrianople. Ever since the plan for fusion had been abandoned, there was a certain tension between the Assumptionists and the Resurrectionists. Obviously the situation for the Religious of the Assumption, with both congregations working in Adrianople, would have been extremely delicate.

Father d'Alzon then appealed to the newly founded congregation of Oblates of the Assumption. Mother Jeanne de Chantal Dugas, who was herself to join the Oblates in Adrianople in 1876, has bequeathed us a precious account of the early years of the Oblate apostolate in the city. In 1868 five Oblate Sisters embarked at Marseilles for Constantinople. On their arrival, they took a coach to Adrianople, where they were met at one o'clock in the morning by Father Galabert and the French consul, a former pupil of the College at Nîmes. Thus began the work of edification, which, in Father d'Alzon's mind, was the principal means for attracting people to the Catholic Church.

It is certain that they had chosen a fruitful field for edification where the medical degree of Father Galabert would prove invaluable and the nursing competence of the Oblate Sisters was fully employed. In 1875 and 1876, the Turks massacred 30,000 Bulgarians. In 1878 the Russians concluded with the Turks the Treaty of San Stefano, creating the state of Greater Bulgaria, and at the same time extending Russian influence to the Mediterranean. Four months later, the great powers, led by Disraeli, undid this work; the Congress of Berlin split the Bulgarian people into three parts. Russia no longer had access to the Mediterranean. On the other hand, there was a rapprochement between Russia and France; the rivals in Bulgaria and Turkey became Prussia and Austria-Hungary. Is it a coincidence that, contemporaneously with this diplomatic reshuffle, Father d'Alzon's conception of the Eastern mission of the Assumptionists undergoes a change?

Whereas in 1863 Russia had been the archenemy whose influence among the Christian peoples of the Ottoman Empire must be at all costs counteracted, in later years Father d'Alzon's strategy is rather to convert Russia, so that a Catholic Tsar may extend to Eastern rite Christians the same protection that France extends to those of the Latin rite. It would be naive to suggest that Father d'Alzon changed his ideas solely for political reasons. During the Vatican Council, he had the opportunity to meet bishops from slavic countries. He also read widely about Russia. He anticipated that improved diplomatic relations between France and Russia would make it easier for Catholic priests to enter the country. Thus, the foothold in Plovdiv is conceived rather as a point of departure for the apostolate of unity in Russia than as a center for the training of an Eastern rite clergy in Bulgaria.

We can exemplify this by referring to the texts which Father Gervais Quénard gathered together in Pages d'archives (December 1955). As early as 1870, Father d'Alzon enjoined Father Galabert to be hostile to the Russians. If they arrive in Plovdiv, Father Galabert is not to take fright. In 1876 he tells Father Alexis to speak to the alumnists (minor seminarians) at Nice of the missions in the East and Russia; it will make their mouths water! In 1879 he writes characteristically to Father Galabert that the Russian Colossus is about to enter into convulsions: "We shall go there and plant the True Cross. Leave the Bulgarians to their quarrels and look towards Russia." The same year he proposes to Father Galabert a convent of the Eastern rite in Bulgaria, whose members would prepare themselves for entry into Russia.

In the last year of his life, Father d'Alzon published under a pseudonym a series of articles in the newly founded La Croix Revue. In these articles he presented the history of Russia, to which he added a plan for the conversion of the country. He abandoned his earlier idea that the Tsar should be brought into communion with Rome, so that he could exercise the function of protector of Catholics of the Eastern rites living under the Turks. He now envisaged that the Nihilists would quickly liquidate the Tsarist regime. The Catholic powers would encircle Russia, thus facilitating the work of Catholic missionaries in the country. The strategy proposed closely resembles his plan of 1863 for ending the "Photian schism", for in that too the Catholic powers were attributed an active role: they were to encircle the Ottoman Empire in order to protect it from the Russians. So, to the end of his life, Father d'Alzon remained faithful to his ideal of a Christendom politically and religiously united under the hegemony of the Roman Pontiff.

He anticipated that Nihilism would spread fast. It would encounter little opposition in the upper classes, whose members had mainly lost the faith, or among the people, already prey either to Communism or to superstition. The Orthodox clergy would offer no resistance, for they were in the main State functionaries. If they had acquired any theology, it was that of German rationalists, and hardly worthy of being considered Christian. The Nihilists would restore religious liberty in Russia. True preaching could then penetrate into those vast regions. The work of missionaries would be slow but irresistible. The horrors of anarchy would push simple souls towards the only remaining refuge: the Catholic Church offering Truth in its entirety. However, Father d'Alzon added prudently, it would be as well to wait a while before presenting a more detailed development of what could be hoped.

On the other hand, even if Russia, in Father Picard's words, became a real obsession for Father d'Alzon from 1870 onwards, he did not neglect the wider aspects of the Eastern mission. While charity was the supreme means of ending the schism, science was not without its importance. Already in 1863, he was advocating the study of Eastern languages as well as the history of the Church, the Eastern rites and theology. At Nîmes, students were to be given the opportunity to acquire an Eastern culture (among them, Alfred Mariage, Félicien Vandenkoornuyse and Edmond Bouvy) which was to bear fruit when, in due course, the Assumptionists enjoyed again

the advantages of papal favor. Father Bouvy tells how, in September 1875, Father d'Alzon gave him the task of studying the cult of Saint Michael in the Greek Church. He had at his disposal at Nîmes the Greek Patrology of Migne as well as the Acta Sanctorum of the Bollandists. He prepared his essay and duly read it in the presence of his classmates. It lasted whole hour, and some members of his audience manifested their boredom, though not Father d'Alzon who listened attentively and afterwards called Father Edmond to his study on several occasions for further discussion.

During these years, Father d'Alzon did not cease to preach in favor of the works of others in the East. He also encouraged people to pray for the "reconciliation" of the Greeks, Bulgarians and Russians. Nevertheless, it is difficult to avoid thinking that the Assumptionists were, as far as the Eastern mission was concerned, "under a cloud" and that Father d'Alzon still felt this deeply. In 1879, the year before his death, he spoke of a new era beginning for our Eastern mission. To what was he referring? Pius IX was dead; Leo XIII was already manifesting a new interest in the East. That year Archbishop Vincenzo Vannutelli was appointed Apostolic Delegate in Constantinople. Possibly Father d'Alzon was referring to this. In any case, he was certainly correct. Archbishop Vannutelli, later the Cardinal Protector of our congregation, was to prove a true and powerful friend throughout his long life (he died in 1930 in his 94th year).

However, we must not anticipate what properly belongs to the following chapter. Before turning to the Eastern mission under Father d'Alzon's successors, we must try to set out coherently what were our founder's wishes for his congregation in the East. One difficulty in doing this is the fact that Father d'Alzon was not a man who attempted to transcend his epoch. A French patriot, he was at once utterly devoted to his country and abhorrent of certain tendencies which, to the foreigner, seem typically French. Thus, while his change of attitude towards Russia is closely linked to a change in French policy towards Russia, he remains the intransigent opponent of "laicization." God's rights on earth entailed the infiltration everywhere in society of Christian values. The Revolution, daughter of Protestantism, prevented God's children from asserting God's rights. At the end of his life, he knew that his work to counteract the Revolution in France was being progressively undone. He was overtly preparing to establish his religious elsewhere. Their experience in counteracting the Revolution in France would prove useful also in counteracting Nihilism in Russia. ! he turned his eyes towards Odessa on the Black Sea, it may have been because it was a city that already had many cultural links with France.

Father d'Alzon seems, however, to have been less alert than his contemporary Cardinal Lavigerie to the potential qualities of "schismatic" Eastern rite Christians, nor did his interest extend to Judaism and Islam. His contact with Eastern rite Catholics in Constantinople had hardly prepared him to look upon their churches as equal in dignity to those of the Latin rite. He was also inclined, in his militant ecclesiology, to close the ranks. Already in the Directory of 1855, he had insisted upon the living unity of discipline and doctrine in the Church, presented as

an absolute necessity. Given to planning on a grand scale, he thought in terms of a monolithic Orthodox Eastern Church — “the entire Photian schism.” The small scale tentatives towards union of the Bulgarians, in which expedience and nationalism seemed to be as important as the recognition that the Pope is Christ’s Vicar on earth, inspired him with mistrust. He would preferred to found a house of ecclesial studies in Constantinople itself, in which the papal prerogatives would have been the cornerstone of theological teaching. The presentation of the Roman case would have left no doubt about the superiority of the Latins over the Greeks nor about the Latins necessarily triumphing everywhere.

Preparing to affirm Latin superiority was the group of students acquiring an Oriental culture in Nîmes. They would shortly join the half dozen religious working in Bulgaria, who had been granted the status of a province by the Chapter of 1876, with Father Galabert as their major superior.

Father d’Alzon never returned to the East after his visit of 1863. Probably he was never really “hooked” by the project of an Eastern apostolate. If he became obsessed by Russia, it was partly because he supposed that, if Catholic missionaries arrived in time, they could avert the catastrophe which the Church in France underwent in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Moreover, in his last years, catastrophe was imminent in France anew. Menaced with expulsion, his religious had to be placed elsewhere. Father d’Alzon was negotiating foundations in England and America. Why not also in Russia?

His views on the means of undertaking an Eastern apostolate hardly modified with the passage of time, with the exception of the status of the Eastern rite. Indeed he went so far as to suggest that some of his religious should take the Eastern rite. Since he only survived Pio Nono by two years, it is not surprising that his attitude towards Eastern dissidents should have remained faithful to that Ultramontanism, whose triumph at the First Vatican Council was largely the personal triumph of Pio Nono himself. Probably he would have reacted himself like the ultramontanes at the Council, who called Bishop Strossmayer of Djakovo “Lucifer” and “a new Luther”, for pointing out that Protestants were generally Christians in good faith. If we wish to accept that Father d’Alzon was a man of his times, we must admit that it was virtually impossible for a 19th-century ultramontane to enter into the spirit of the cult and culture of Christians not in communion with Rome.

Father d’Alzon’s greatness transpires rather in his readiness to allow — and even actively to encourage — religious of his congregation to undertake apostolic work which for himself had no great appeal. Thus he gave his full support to Father Galabert, as the man on the spot, even when they were not in full agreement. In fact it was Father Galabert, rather than Father d’Alzon,

who gave an ethos to our Eastern apostolate. We cannot, alas, go deeply here into Father Galabert's ideas. He was unfavorable to Latin rite clergy changing their rite, for this might seem to imply a wish to take over the direction of the Eastern rite churches. He saw our task rather to aid their members to organise their church for themselves, particularly by providing them with the means to train good priests. He refused to allow that the Orthodox were, in general, obstinate heretics; they were rather to be considered as well-meaning people, with little doctrinal knowledge but Catholic at heart.

"The more I study the missions," wrote Father Galabert in 1869, "The more my objections against the Orientals seem unfounded. We foreigners remain for years among them without getting to know them. We delight in calling attention to their shortcomings, but these are rather the defects of the Orientals who associate with foreigners. The others we do not know. We do not really go among the people."

## II. FRANÇOIS PICARD, EMMANUEL BAILLY AND LEO XIII

"I have experienced this morning one of the greatest joys of my life" wrote Father Emmanuel Bailly from Rome to Father François Picard in Paris. It was New Year's Day 1897 Father Bailly had gone to Saint Peter's, along with everyone else, to present his greetings for the coming year to Pope Leo XIII, who had succeeded Pius IX as supreme pontiff nineteen years earlier in 1878. However, when everyone else left the basilica, Father Emmanuel was invited to remain behind. The twenty minutes of private conversation with Leo XIII which followed were, in Father Emmanuel's opinion, "a moment of grace for the Assumptionists and a revelation of the congregation's future, one of those moments which figure in the history of a religious family as a manifest sign of God's will."

The conversation between the Pope and Father Emmanuel, who was then superior of our house of studies in Rome and the congregation's Procurator General, was in part about the religious situation in France. It was a time when religious congregations were being obliged to limit their activities in France under pressure from anticlerical governments. However, the main topic was the work of the Assumptionists in the East, with special reference to the Greek rite church, school and seminary which had been established some years earlier in the heart of the old city of Stambul at Kum Kapi. This house was situated on the territory of the Dominican

parish, which had been ceded to our congregation by a rescript of Leo XIII in 1895, together with the church and the so-called Leonine seminary in Kadiköy. The Pope also asked about this mission. Father Emmanuel described the execution there of the liturgy of the Greek rite; he enlarged upon the familiarity of our religious with the Greek language and Greek culture. Leo XIII then observed:

Of my intentions for the East, you are well aware. Yes, it has been my desire to give new life to this work in view of the return to communion with Rome of the Eastern Churches. I have given it all my attention and zeal. I attach great importance to it, and my views have not changed. I have consistently given priority to this project. In my eyes, it is God's will; I have devoted to it all the resources of which I dispose. Nevertheless, I have not always found the necessary personnel and money. I expected help and support which was not given me as I would have wished. Then I thought of your congregation. It occurred to me that in you I would find the support and help which I sought from God in view of this great work. It seemed to me that I was being pushed to choose you; in you I have put my trust. To the Assumptionists I have given the special mission of reforming the Greek Church and bringing it back into communion with Rome. Do not forget this: I wanted a religious congregation with the necessary money and personnel to give new life to the Eastern mission, a congregation which, in a spirit of docility to my ideas, would devote itself sincerely to this work... I have told you: the Pope's will is God's will. Difficulties are not lacking; there will continue to be difficulties. But you must persist with confidence and courage.

Father Emmanuel took advantage of this opportunity to present some of the difficulties incurred by the Assumptionists in the East since Father d'Alzon's death. Religious orders already established there were not always welcoming to the newcomers. Moreover, those who had lived long years in the East saw the situation under a different light from the Pope. He told Leo XIII that the Apostolic Delegate in Constantinople, Archbishop Bonnetti, a Vincentian from Salonika, spoke of the Greek mission as a sublime dream, a beautiful reverie. In following the Holy Father's lead, the Assumptionists were courting humiliation and failure. Bishop Piavi in Jerusalem, along with his "latinizers", maintained that it was an error for the Assumptionists to enter into the Holy Father's Eastern plans. In Bulgaria, the new Capuchin bishop, Bishop Menini, was placing obstacles in the way of the development of our apostolate. "But," said Father Emmanuel, "your word is enough. We have confidence in you."

All this time, Father Emmanuel had remained on his knees. Pope Leo XIII now placed his left hand on Father Emmanuel's head and pressed it down hard; with his right hand he blessed the Assumptionists and their works. "What the Pope said so solemnly," Father Emmanuel told Father Picard in his report of the audience, "about the choice of the Assumptionists for the task of working for the restoration of Christian unity was profoundly moving and recalled the words of other Popes predicting the future of other religious orders and revealing what was God's will for them."

A month later, Father Emmanuel went again to Saint Peter's, this time to present a candle to the Holy Father for the Feast of the Purification. It was the occasion for a further conversation with Leo XIII who requested, for his personal use, a full report on all the activities of our congregation in the East. The next day Father Emmanuel wrote the first draft of a report. The final version, dated March 24, 1897, bears the signature of the Superior General, Father François Picard. However, since it corresponds closely to Father Emmanuel's draft, we may suppose that he actually drew it up. It helps us to evaluate what the congregation had achieved in the seventeen years since Father d'Alzon's death.

In 1880 there were less than a dozen priests and a slightly larger number of Oblate Sisters working in the two Bulgarian towns of Plovdiv and Edirne. In 1897 there were over 200 Assumptionists living in the East and some 130 Oblate Sisters. They were working not only in Bulgaria but also in and around Constantinople and in Jerusalem. Father Emmanuel lists 15 residences, 19 public churches (4 of the Byzantine rite), 7 parishes, 3 eastern seminaries, 2 study centers, 1 secondary school, 1 vast pilgrims' hostel in Jerusalem and 11 primary schools. The Oblate Sisters had 11 schools, 9 dispensaries, 1 hospital and 1 orphanage. What had happened to stimulate so great and so rapid a development? A number of factors, which we must now describe, favored this growth.

The most important was, undoubtedly, the personal favor of Leo XIII. A man whose mind worked quite differently from that of Pius IX, whose judgment was intuitive, pragmatic and rapid, he tended rather to systematize and to make his decisions "a priori." His only direct contact with the East, before being elected Pope, had been by his representation of the Holy See at the Congress of Berlin in 1878. He had looked on, while Western statesmen carved up Greater Bulgaria in order to prevent Russia from having direct access to the Mediterranean. In his consistorial speech of April 18, 1879, Leo XIII exclaimed: "Oh! quanto ci sono care le Chiese dell'Oriente." The attentive listener might have then grasped what would be one of the major preoccupations of Leo XIII's pontificate: to restore the Eastern rites to their pristine glory. Pius IX had already taken the first steps to renew the Eastern apostolate. It was now to be coordinated and extended. Its objectives were set out in a number of encyclical letters, of which, perhaps, the most important was *Christi nomen et regnum* (December 24, 1894). In this letter, the Pope maintained that nothing was more essential than to recruit a numerous clergy taken from among the Easterners themselves, a clergy capable of inspiring the Orthodox with a desire for union with Rome. Their training should be in harmony with the particular genius of each nation in order that the liturgy of each rite be executed with dignity. During his pontificate, Leo XIII reopened the Armenian, Maronite, Greek and Ruthenian colleges in Rome; he instigated the reform of the Greek rite Basilian monastery at Grottaferrata; and he authorized the White Fathers to open a Melchite seminary at Saint Anne's in Jerusalem.

Seen from afar, it was obviously most desirable that something more be done to prepare the way for the restoration of communion with the Greek Byzantine Church and notably with the patriarch of Constantinople. Leo XIII would have liked the Benedictines to found a Greek rite monastery in Athens. However, after carefully studying the situation, the Benedictines decided that the obstacles, both political and ecclesiastical, were too great. It was undoubtedly to this refusal that the Pope had alluded in his comment to Father Emmanuel that help and support had not always been given to him as he would have wished. Leo XIII also knocked on other doors before turning to the Assumptionists.

Meanwhile, Father Picard had been quick to catch the tone of the new pontificate. Father d'Alzon had clung to the notion that Pius IX had conferred an Eastern mission on the congregation; he had prepared men to undertake this mission. However, at the time of Father d'Alzon's death, the Congregation had no secure title to work in the East, and the religious, few in number, were at the disposal of the local bishops, *dum bene gesserint*. In 1882, after persistent negotiations, Father Picard and Galabert had succeeded in acquiring for the congregation the right to have its own foundations in the cities of Edirne and Plovdiv. The year before, in 1881, Father Picard had asked Leo XIII to erect for the Assumptionists a canonical mission for the Bulgarian Uniates with the status of an apostolic prefecture, independent of the jurisdiction of the local bishops. He proposed that the minor seminary in Edirne should accept children of both rites and be regarded as a branch of the College of the Propaganda Fide in Rome. The religious should, if necessary, pass to the Eastern rite, while remaining subject to the jurisdiction of their Superior General. This was a critical period in the Western Church's understanding of the Eastern rites. Consequently, all Father Picard's requests were not granted. The local bishops were unwilling that our congregation should have such freedom. On the other hand, Archbishop Vannutelli had been favorably impressed, when he toured Bulgaria in 1880, by what our religious were doing. He said that it was "*sanato se non approvato.*" Further, it must have been evident from his report that the Capuchin bishop of Plovdiv had little understanding of or sympathy for the Eastern rite.

Father Picard found that the concessions made in 1882 were not sufficient. He rightly foresaw that there would be difficulties with the local bishops and that they would find means of limiting our apostolic activity. In this he differed from Father Galabert who, despite his great knowledge of the situation in Bulgaria, considered we would henceforth be free to do what we wanted. But what, in fact, did we want to do?

In one of his circular letters, Father Picard invited his religious "to envisage (the Eastern mission) from another point of view than our predecessors and, while remaining in the spirit of the Institute, to enter into a new way." In another letter he wrote: "It is to enter into the spirit of the Holy See that we have taken, in going to the East, the firm resolution to respect the Eastern rites sincerely and to allow some of our religious to adopt the Eastern rite." Although it would be

wrong to insist too much on Father d'Alzon's premature recommendation that the Eastern rites be "phased out," it should be emphasized that, in proposing that Assumptionists adopt the Eastern rite, Father Picard had completely abandoned Father d'Alzon's first position!

An Eastern rite chapel was opened in Karagaç, a suburb of Edirne; it was attached to the school which now could be openly called a minor seminary. In 1884, aided by French diplomatic pressure, the college of Saint Augustine was opened at Plovdiv, with an Eastern rite chapel. The previous year Rome had authorized two of our religious to adopt the Slavonic rite. In 1888, the first Eastern rite church was opened in Plovdiv. Meanwhile, thanks to the support of Archbishop Vannutelli, we had opened a Latin rite chapel where we were joined by the Oblate Sisters at Kum Kapi in old Stambul in 1882.

The Eucharistic Congress of 1893 provided a further occasion for affirming our devotion to the Eastern rites. It was to be held in Jerusalem where the Assumptionists had been leading pilgrimages since 1882 and where, in 1887, under the direction of the erudite Father Joseph Germer-Durand (1845–1917), the pilgrim's hostel Notre-Dame de France was to be built. The pilgrimage of 1893 was timed to coincide with the Eucharistic Congress which was devoted, on the explicit request of Leo XIII, to making the Eastern rites better known. This did not prevent the notorious "latinizer" Bishop Piavi from pronouncing, through his secretary, an embarrassing diatribe against the Eastern rites. The Assumptionist press in Paris had published the preparatory texts for the congress and was later to publish the Acts. However, these had to be held up for a decade until Bishop Piavi was safely dead!

Pope Leo XIII had, consequently, every reason to believe that our congregation really was docile to his wishes. He gave ear to Father Picard's persistent complaints that the earlier agreement was inadequate. If he refused us an apostolic prefecture and was unable to do much to ameliorate our situation in Bulgaria, he nevertheless granted us what seemed, at the time, a far more important commitment. In 1895 Father Picard journeyed once more to Rome for the final negotiations. In July of that year, Leo XIII, in an autographed letter, *Adnitentibus nobis*, conferred on our congregation pastoral responsibility (*administratio spiritualis*) for both Greeks and Latins in the cities of Constantinople (Stambul) and Chalcedon (Kadiköy). Thus, the modest Latin rite chapel of the Resurrection (Anastasis) at Kum Kapi in the old city of Stambul passed to the Byzantine rite, while the "Leonine seminary" (after Leo I, but equally applicable to Leo XIII) was to become a seminary for training clergy of that same rite.

The second factor which favored rapid growth was, paradoxically, the pressure of anticlerical governments in France. The majority for our religious were still of French nationality. Since current legislation made it impossible for them to exercise their ministry in France, they had to

go abroad. Vocations, the fruit of the most part of our alumnae, were numerous. Further, by French law, those who had lived outside Europe for ten years were exempt from military service. Kadiköy, on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus, was outside Europe. Consequently, scholasticates were established there as well as in Jerusalem. “Thus” said Father Joseph Maubon (later Vicar General of the congregation between the generalates of Father Emmanuel Bailly and Gervais Quénard) in a fund-raising sermon delivered in 1892, “Church vocations are saved in the East — flowers of purity which the murderous climate of the barracks would certainly have caused to perish.” Five years later, according to the report drawn up for Pope Leo XIII, there were, in fact, over 100 Assumptionists of French origin preparing for the priesthood in the East,

There was no lack of work for these religious in the East when they had finished their studies. The Apostolic Delegates in Constantinople continued to insist that the most pressing need was the pastoral care of the Catholics from Western countries who flooded into the Ottoman Empire at this time, constructing railways and developing industry. In December 1890, our congregation was given the work of “evangelizing” all Asia Minor from Bursa to Ankara. Together with the Oblate Sisters, we followed the Berlin-Bagdad railway line across the Cappadocian plateau, founding parishes, dispensaries and primary schools.

However, docility to the wishes of Leo XIII implied investment above all in the work of bringing back the Greek Orthodox to communion with Rome by training a competent Catholic clergy of the Greek Byzantine rite. Father d’Alzon had trained a number of religious for this work, which, on paper, looked impressive. Father Picard and Father Emmanuel Bailly were not dissatisfied in having received for the young congregation so important a commitment directly from the Pope. It was, moreover, too early to realize that those who had lived all their lives in the East appreciated the difficulties involved better than Leo XIII, and that, as far as the Greek apostolate was concerned, the Assumptionists were indeed courting humiliation and failure.

One major difficulty was the lack of potential material for future priestly vocations. There were few Greek families who were Catholics of the Byzantine rite; and, generally, an Orthodox who became Catholic — an extremely rare occurrence — preferred to adopt the Latin rite. Civil difficulties arose too because the Greek Orthodox patriarch exercised civil jurisdiction, delegated by the Turkish authorities, over all Greeks. For those who had passed to the Roman alliance, this situation gave rise to unpleasantness. Outside Stambul and Kadiköy, problems of ecclesiastical jurisdiction arose also, for our work of evangelizing Asia Minor did not confer jurisdiction over Catholics of the Greek rite. This belonged to the Catholic Armenians who were loath to surrender it. Finally, there was a major anomaly: there was no Catholic bishop of the Greek rite. Our own religious who passed to the Greek rite were subject, through their major superiors, directly to the Propaganda Fide. If, however, we were to train secular priests of the Greek rite, was it not necessary that they should have their bishop of the same rite?

These difficulties were only discovered progressively. Meanwhile, a certain number of pupils were recruited for the Greek seminary at Kum Kapi, either among Orthodox families or among the Latin rite Greeks, descendants, in fact, of Venetian and Genoese traders, who agreed that their children should embrace the Greek rite. In 1897 they were 20 in number. In the church of the Anastasis at Kum Kapi, the Byzantine liturgy was celebrated in Greek. This church was also to become the sanctuary of Our Lady of the Assumption and the canonical headquarters of the Archconfraternity, dedicated to prayer for the return to Catholic unity of all separated Christians. On the other side of the Bosphorus at Kadiköy, there were several Catholic communities in 1895: Armenians, French Capuchins, Christian Brothers and Ladies of Sion as well as Assumptionists. Once the papal letter of 1895 had conferred jurisdiction over Catholics of the Greek rite on our congregation, the Leonine seminary for training missionaries to work among the Greeks and Slavs was founded. In 1897 there were 27 scholastics and 6 professors, three of whom held doctorates in theology. The curriculum included the Byzantine liturgy, apologetics, history of the Eastern Churches, Eastern pastoral theology and canon law, Bulgarian, Turkish and Modern Greek. The Leonine chapel in the church of Saint Euphemia was turned over to the Greek rite, where the Byzantine liturgy was celebrated regularly with the help of a secular priest of the Greek rite. A Greek Orthodox priest came several times a week to give lessons in Byzantine chant. Orthodox Greeks who frequented the chapel were edified, Father Emmanuel Bailly tells us, by the way the liturgy was celebrated.

The report of 1897 tells us also that three Assumptionists had recently passed to the Greek rite and that the faculty of the Leonine seminary was contributing regular articles to erudite reviews. Father d'Alzon had, indeed, maintained that our Eastern apostolate should be, at least in part, scientific. Already in Jerusalem Father Joseph Germer-Durand had distinguished himself by his archeological research. The congregation sponsored a number of reviews, some ephemeral, providing articles of general information about the East and intended, in varying proportions, to instruct or edify. In 1895 there came to Kadiköy Father Louis Petit. He was to remain there for thirteen years, directing the Leonine seminary, undertaking research into the history of the Byzantine Church and supervising the scholarly work of his Assumptionist colleagues. In October 1897, the first number of a review called *Echos d'Orient* was published by the Bonne Press in Paris but produced — and largely written — by members of the faculty of the Leonine seminary. Father Vincent de Paul Bailly signed the article in this first number presenting the purpose of the review. However, Father Siméon Vailhé, who was shortly to join the staff of the Leonine seminary, considers that the ideas set forth are rather those of Father Petit and of Father Edmond Bouvy, to whom we have already alluded. After presenting rapidly the Eastern mission conferred on the Assumptionists by Leo XIII, he insists upon the obligation consequent upon such a mission of undertaking specialized studies of the Eastern rites as well as the history, tradition, discipline and liturgy of these Churches before and after the “separation.”

This work of erudition has, in fact, proved to be the most durable aspect of our Eastern mission.

Its varying fortunes will concern us all along. Even in its beginnings it suffered, perhaps, from a lack of definition. Such, at least, is Father Vailhé's opinion. The first number of the *Echos d'Orient* speaks of an "Ecole pratique des hautes études." But this was probably because there existed in Paris an institute bearing that name which was far from being sympathetic to religious belief: in response, why not a Catholic *Ecole pratique* on the shores of the Bosphorus? At the time there was not, in fact, an autonomous research institute. Those who wrote for the review and undertook scholarly research also had teaching and ministerial work to carry out. In fact, thinks Father Vailhé, the idea of founding a learned review arose from the existence in Constantinople of a Greek learned society, known as the *Sylloge*, and of a Russian "Archaeological Institute." It was evidently desirable that means should exist for expressing a Catholic point-of-view on Eastern matters. Thus, the Assumptionists entered into the general renewal of scholarly interest in the Eastern Churches; the contributors to the review rapidly acquired an international reputation so that the demand for their collaboration extended far beyond their means.

The team which edited the review was young, enthusiastic and full of humor. Using pen names, they attacked their Orthodox colleagues who replied in kind, also under pen names. In this way, they were able to maintain friendly relations with the Orthodox, while indulging in lively polemics against them in print. Since they were few in number, each one had several pen names; one day they decided to "kill off one of these fictitious collaborators and to compose his obituary! Later in life, Father Vailhé expressed his regret that they had so often adopted an ironical, supercilious tone towards their Orthodox colleagues. It seems that even those Assumptionists who felt a particular attraction to the Eastern Churches found it difficult to enter into their spirit. Years earlier, Father Vailhé had written: "Upper or lower clergy, all alike are administrative officials; priests and monks dream only of their well-being or of the political grandeur of their nation." He saw here the principal obstacle to collaboration with Christians of Eastern rites, whether or not they were in communion with Rome

Both Leo XIII and Father Picard died in 1903. Under the new Pope, Saint Pius X, who had not his predecessor's particular interest in the Christian East, the work of restoring the Eastern rites to their pristine glory nevertheless continued. We have already seen that Father Emmanuel Bailly, as Procurator in Rome, had been an ardent advocate of our Eastern apostolate. When he succeeded as Superior General, he too continued along the same lines. He was also able to fulfill one of Father d'Alzon's ambitions by sending our first religious to Russia in October 1903. Father Lievin Baurain received a professorial chair at the Catholic Ecclesiastical Academy in Petrograd. He was accompanied by Father Evrard as his "gentleman's gentleman." Father Evrard was then a subdeacon, and every officially accredited foreign resident was entitled to bring his personal servant. Others went as chaplains to the French community, notably to look after governesses teaching the children of upper-class Russian families. Father Auguste Maniglier arrived in Odessa in November 1905, and Father Gervais Quénard, the future Superior General, also spent some time in Russia.

These religious were concerned with foreign residents; consequently, they had little direct contact with the Eastern rite. Only in Petrograd was there an ephemeral Catholic community of the Eastern rite. However, even before being disbanded by the Bolsheviks, this small community found itself caught up in antipathies of rite and nation, which made its continuation impossible.

Father d'Alzon's notion had been that Assumptionists should plant the True Cross in the midst of the Nihilists. Father Bailly referred more modestly to our religious in Russia as his "explorers."

In each Eastern country, our religious had to undergo a political apprenticeship. Although this was particularly long in Bulgaria, the issue was nevertheless to be fruitful. We have seen that, at the Congress of Berlin, Bulgaria had been divided into three parts in order to stop Russian access to the Mediterranean. Austria-Hungary was particularly interested in counteracting Russian influence among the Bulgarians. The Capuchins in Plovdiv had as their Latin rite bishop Roberto Menini from 1885 to 1916. Born at Split in Croatia, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he had relations in high places. Since France was at that time courting Russia and our congregation was referring to its Bulgarian foundations as a stepping-stone for entering Russia, it is not surprising that Bishop Menini looked upon our congregation with apprehension. At the Eucharistic Congress in Jerusalem in 1893, Bishop Menini referred to the "ardent sons of Father d'Alzon, my dear Augustinians of the Assumption," but this could have been because the Assumptionists had paid his traveling expenses. An interview — probably, in fact, an unguarded conversation, since Bishop Menini later repudiated it — given by him in Rome and reported in *Le Matin* on January 27, 1891, attributes to him the statements that the Pope was opposed to the French Protectorate, that the Bulgarian people did not desire it, that the French religious lived in complete isolation from the local population, while the Capuchins distinguished themselves by their inexhaustible bounty.

A case can, of course, be stated for Bishop Menini. Latin rite Catholics were few in number, so that the Capuchins were able to provide sufficient facilities for attending Mass. Consequently, Bishop Menini refused to allow public masses to be celebrated in our chapels. Equally, he professed to have reservations about Byzantine rite chapels which might draw away Latin rite Catholics from the Capuchin churches and encourage them to pass to Orthodoxy. Whether this was a reason or a pretext for limiting the influence of the Assumptionists, each reader must judge for himself. However, in the case of the secondary school of Saint Augustine, Bishop Menini's motives are clear. Although an excellent site had been acquired for the school in the town of Plovdiv, Bishop Menini refused permission to build there. He insisted that it be built outside the city in a suburb where there were virtually no Christians. Nevertheless, the school prospered: it was officially recognized by the French and Bulgarian authorities, and the number

of its pupils rose from 10 in 1884, to 120 in 1904, to 336 in 1914. Though the old accommodations were inadequate, Bishop Menini consistently refused permission to build on the new site. Moreover, our religious feared that, by invoking an Austro-Hungarian diplomatic intervention, he would succeed in having the school closed. On the contrary, the Austrians, in the end, recognized it officially. Bishop Menini then gave way to pressure from the Propaganda Fide and withdrew his objections. The Capuchin Provincial, himself a former pupil of the college, blessed the corner stone in April 1914. Because work had to be suspended during the Great War, the new college was only inaugurated in July 1921. It still stands, and the visitor to Plovdiv may easily discover it not far from the station, although, of course, it has long since passed out of our hands. Its role in our work for Christian unity was defined by Father Gervais Quénard, one time Director of the College and later Superior General: good teaching by Catholic religious would bring together members of the different religious groups among the Bulgarians; it would also break down the barriers that separate them and destroy the myth endemic among them that all priests are ignorant bigots.

These were not years of great development of our work among Bulgarians of the Byzantine rite. Consequently, it is best to leave this aspect of our Slavic apostolate to the next chapter. Since Pope Leo XIII had particularly entrusted us with the Greek apostolate, it was natural that our principal investment in money and men should be among the Greeks of Constantinople. How were these faring? In his report to the General Chapter of 1906, Father Félicien Vandenkoornhuysen states openly:

Our Eastern works have not produced results proportionate to our investment in personnel and money. Moreover, the future remains uncertain. The obstacles opposed to our Greek apostolate have proved insurmountable. We have failed to obtain legal status for it: the Phanar (Greek Orthodox patriarchate) has used all its influence against it; the Turks are hostile and the French ambassador refuses to support what he calls imprudent proselytism.

Father Louis Petit, as Superior of the Leonine seminary, was hardly more encouraging. He had only five pupils; he saw no future for the seminary until a Greek Uniate Church had been constituted. Recruitment for the minor seminary was hardly satisfactory. The main source of vocations was the Greek isles. But other religious orders were established there, and, naturally, they kept the most promising candidates for themselves. No progress was evident among the Orthodox. Many seemed to think that the principal activity of the minor seminary was to take charge of children whom their parents neglected, so that they did not run wild in the streets.

Six years later, in 1912, Father Severien Salaville, who had succeeded Father Petit at the Leonine seminary, wrote in his report for the next General Chapter:

If I speak of the Greek parish at Kadiköy, it is out of respect for Leo XIII. In fact, there are only three parishioners: two Melchites, who are hardly regular in the practice of their faith, and the house porter. As for the students, there are six of them at present, which means that they are equal in numbers to the members of the faculty.

Since Father Emmanuel Bailly had played so important a role in acquiring the Greek apostolate for our congregation, he must have felt particularly humiliated by these reports. It would have added to his humiliation, had he known that there was a movement afoot to oust our congregation entirely from this work. Greek Catholic priests of the Byzantine rite were applying directly to the Propaganda Fide for the nomination of a Greek bishop. They had their candidate, a certain Father Isaias Papadopoulos. In a report submitted in 1910, they blamed the failure of the Assumptionists not only upon the intractability of the Orthodox but also upon the mistrust of the Greeks for foreign Latin clergy who take their rite.

The Propaganda Fide now moved quickly. Father Papadopoulos was appointed Greek exarch and consecrated in 1911. He asserted his rights as an Eastern exarch to jurisdiction over all religious of his rite. Hitherto, our religious who had taken the Greek rite had nevertheless remained canonically subject to the Latin superiors in their congregation. Now they had to choose between the rite and the congregation. Some crossed the Bosphorus and joined Bishop Papadopoulos; others returned to the Latin rite or moved to Bulgaria where the Byzantine rite exarchs were more accommodating.

Thus, little more than a decade after its official establishment by Leo XIII in 1897, our Greek apostolate came to an end. At least not quite. The lack of pupils had not left the members of the faculty of the Leonine seminary without work. On the contrary, it liberated them to commit themselves more fully to research projects and to the editorial work of the *Echos d'Orient*. Father Petit moved to Rome in 1908, hoping to devote himself entirely to research; but in vain, for he was appointed Assistant General in 1911 and Latin Archbishop of Athens in 1912! The scholarly work which he had initiated at the Leonine seminary was to continue under the direction of Father Salaville. However, once the Greek apostolate was taken from our hands, the situation of the group of Byzantine scholars, whose activity now became known as the *Oeuvre des Echos d'Orient*, became equivocal. They kept the Latin rite, while continuing their work of publishing the Greek documentary sources which must necessarily be studied in order to understand the historical causes of the separation of the Byzantine and the Roman Churches. "It is doubtful," wrote Father Siméon Vailhé in his biography of Father Petit, "that a work of this kind can subsist on its own. The Jesuites did not think it possible, since they attached the Bollandists to Saint Michael's College in Brussels." The group of Byzantine scholars, with its achievements and problems, will concern us again in the next chapter.

Before passing on, we must attempt, nevertheless, to assess the achievements of our congregation during this period. Were Father d'Alzon's successors faithful to his will? Father d'Alzon gave three principal mandates: to tackle the "Photian schism" head on, to accept any specific papal mission and when possible, to enter Russia. With his Medieval conception inherited from de Lamennais of the Pope as the Head of Christendom, and with his notion of one Church one rite, he assessed the situation of the Eastern Churches in a way incompatible with Pius IX's notions and even less with those of Leo XIII. However, by intensive reading and by reflection on the reports received from Father Galabert in Bulgaria, he progressively modified his attitude. His religious became familiar with the Eastern rites. Leo XIII's suggestion that we should take over the Greek apostolate in Constantinople itself seemed, on paper, the ideal way of tackling head on the "Photian schism." Consequently, Father Bailly's opinion that Leo XIII had "revealed" to our congregation its mission was not unjustified. We must note too that everywhere there was exaggerated optimism as to the possibilities of restoring union with the separated Churches; in fact, there was no general move in the Anglican Church towards reconciliation any more than among the Slavic peoples, whether in Russian or in the Ottoman Empire.

We duly fell into line with Leo XIII's notion that union with the Orthodox must be brought about by Uniate Catholics sharing the same rite. This, indeed, remains the official line of the Catholic Church, and it was reaffirmed at the Second Vatican Council in the Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 24). On the other hand, as the Catholic bishops on the spot insisted, there was urgent pastoral work to be undertaken among the Latin rite faithful of various nationalities who were resident in the Ottoman Empire. The greater proportion of our religious were engaged in work among these people, whether in a direct parochial ministry or by teaching and nursing, in collaboration with the Oblate Sisters. Such works of edification contributed indirectly to the Apostolate of Union. They also provided employment for the numerous French religious, who, by reason of the anti-religious laws in France, were unable to exercise a ministry in their native country. In general, therefore, our work in the East was in conformity with the practices which then prevailed in every country: schools and dispensaries, parishes with their diverse sodalities, prayer groups and charitable activities, such as the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and the exceptional number of religious students being prepared in Jerusalem and Constantinople for their future ministry. But behind this conventional facade, can one detect something specific to the Assumptionists? Did our more perspicacious religious, as a result of their training, grasp the particular characteristics of the Greek and Slavic apostolate? There are signs that some did; they even committed their reflections to paper. This is a most important aspect of our study of the past because it is concerned with what is creative. In due course, we shall therefore give some examples of the profound understanding that some Assumptionists had of what our Eastern commitment ought to be.

### III. THE HALCYON YEARS?

When Father Emmanuel Bailly died in November 1917, the Great War had still a year to run. The Russian Revolution and the Treaty of Versailles were to modify substantially the structure of the Eastern countries in which we had commitments. These were also to be years of mutation for the Assumptionists because the General Chapter held under the aegis of the Congregation of Religious in 1921–1922 was to introduce a new system of government based on provinces. Both the changes in the European situation and in the congregation were to have far-reaching consequences for our Eastern apostolate. However, it is not easy to describe these consequences for several reasons. One is the lack of a masterful personality during these years. Both the new Superior General, Father Gervais Quénard, and Archbishop Roncalli, the future Pope John XXIII who was successively Apostolic Delegate in Bulgaria and Turkey, were good friends of our religious in the East. However, their intervention in our apostolate was discreet. Another is the troubled nature of the relations between the religious themselves, between the friends and the critics of the late Father Bailly. Finally, although we are still in the perspective of “history,” we are getting too near to our own times to be detached from the events which we are to describe.

Russia, which under the last Tsar had seemed to be opening up to the West, became, once again after the Revolution, a country which foreigners could only penetrate with great difficulty. The Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires were dismantled. A number of Slavic States were created and endowed with Liberal democratic institutions which functioned with varying degrees of success. Catholic Austria-Hungary was reduced to impotence, but the “lay” movement of Kemal Atatürk in Turkey attracted the sympathy of the Free-masons who figured among the peacemakers of Versailles. French statesmen readily abandoned the “protectorate,” and, with it, disappeared their principal motive for supporting Catholic schools and similar activities in Turkey. Turkey was to be for the Turks. The subsequent Treaty of Lausanne provided for exchanges of population, so that the Bulgarians were resettled in regions attributed to Bulgaria, while the Greeks who remained in Turkey were obliged to leave the uplands and establish themselves mainly on the Aegean coast, in Istanbul (for we must speak no more of Constantinople!) or in Izmir. We will consider in a moment what were the consequences of these political changes. First, we must look at what was happening in the congregation.

In an unsigned copy of a confidential report dated 1921, one of our religious writes:

For twelve years the congregation has been in a state of great suffering. The principal causes

are the absence of constitutions, recruitment by cooptation to the General Chapter, centralization of all decisions — even for the slightest matters — in the hands of the Superior General, extreme mistrust on his part for all initiative, on the pretext of fidelity to tradition, and ever-increasing exclusivism in the assigning of responsibility.

What does all this mean? An authoritative answer cannot be given because no full account of Father Emmanuel Bailly's generalate has so far been written, no doubt for reasons of discretion. It seems that, with the passage of time, he did become increasingly autocratic, yet, at the same time, hesitant in making decisions and hypersensitive to criticism. Like most men in authority with such a temperament, he was peculiarly allergic to intellectuals. He possibly suspected religious engaged in intellectual work of organizing opposition to him — and in this, he was not entirely wrong! At the same time, we must not forget that this was the period of Modernist witch-hunting. As an ultramontane, Father Bailly would have felt bound to extirpate any tendency to Modernism in the congregation: Whether this necessitated the suppression of the Center for Biblical Studies in Jerusalem and of the *Revue augustinienne* as well as the radical change in direction of the scholasticate in Louvain is another question.

This was also a period of rapid growth for the congregation. Our commitment extended from North to South America; we had houses in England, Belgium and Germany, and we were planning to found in Holland. It does not seem that a well-articulated policy existed for adjusting commitments to the manpower available. Here again, the strange notion that religious aflame with the sacred fire could undertake any commitment was not specific to the Assumptionists. Father d'Alzon had set out to train shock-troops to storm nihilist Russia. But, in Father Picard's time, our religious were no longer receiving a specialized training. We have only to contrast Father Galabert, taking charge of a primary school with two doctorates to his credit, and Father Louis Petit, a few generations later, who was never allowed to finish any course of studies before his appointment as superior of the Leonine seminary in Kadiköy.

There was also the practice, equally not peculiar to our congregation, of moving religious around like pawns on a chessboard. One day a religious might be teaching Turkish kiddies in the Anatolian uplands and a few weeks later find himself promoting devotion to the Virgin in an Argentinian shrine. One and the other, naturally, in the name of holy obedience in order to advance the Kingdom of God!

Were Father Bailly and his assistants unaware of this mounting discontent in the congregation, or did they deliberately ignore it? To judge by a sermon which he preached in the 1900's, Father Joseph Maubon, who governed the congregation during the interregnum that followed the death of Father Bailly, saw only the glorious aspect of our Eastern Apostolate:

Who will inherit the remains of this wormeaten Eastern empire, when the Moslems and schismatics who are disputing it at present will have eliminated each other? The Catholic Church, but as a gift offered by the Assumptionists. We have established ourselves in the principal cities of Islam. We intend first to endow them with moral standards and then convert them to the Catholic Church. We have established ourselves in the cities of the Ecumenical Councils, no doubt with God's special blessing, because we have a filial attachment to the Supreme Pontiff. We have established ourselves in the cities of the martyrs: what wonderful perspectives of hope this opens up, particularly once a number of our religious will have mingled their blood with that of the ancient martyrs...

The realities, alas, were different. Many of our religious would no doubt willingly have shed their blood if this would have healed the "Photian schism." However, they devoted themselves less easily to the monotonous teaching routine of primary schools, which was the principal work open to them. Unfortunately, those who had the privilege of teaching in the secondary school in Plovdiv were hardly happier and certainly no more qualified for their work. Father Gervais Quénard, who retained Father Bailly's confidence but without ever mincing his words, complained in 1911 that Saint Augustine's College, of which he was then the Director, was regarded by other religious as the "dustbin" of the congregation to which were sent those who had failed to find their "niche" elsewhere. Other school directors complained that they were expected to integrate into their teaching staff religious whose sole knowledge of their subject had been acquired at their aluminate. Those who were obliged, against their inclinations and bent, to work in the Eastern missions, took it out on their confreres who had been born in the country. Poor Father Ivan Pistic lamented that his French confreres called the Bulgarians "savages." Thus, what was intended to be a work of edification sometimes came close to being an occasion of scandal.

Although there was certainly a high proportion of chronic complainers among the discontented religious who would have found fault wherever they were assigned, others were genuinely concerned by the impossibility of obtaining redress within the congregation as long as power was concentrated in the hands of what Pope Benedict XV was to call a "camarilla." Father Bailly rightly suspected that the most intelligent group of his opponents was constituted by the faculty of the scholasticate in Louvain. In 1913, he dispersed the staff to the four corners of the world. The Superior, Father Pierre Fourier Merklen, was "exiled" to the parish of Newhaven in England. From his rectory, he could watch the Cross Channel steamers arriving from Dieppe, and fill in his empty hours by conducting a clandestine correspondence with his former colleagues of Louvain (it must not be forgotten that, in those days, all letters, both outgoing and incoming, were submitted to the approval of the Superior). All went well until one of these clandestine letters fell into wrong hands. By then, however, the die was already cast.

The Congregation of Religious had been following our affairs with uneasiness for a number of years before Father Bailly's death made a Chapter necessary in order to elect his successor. The structures of government at the beginning had been deliberately paternalistic, as became a small congregation. Projects for their modification in order to devolve responsibility as the congregation expanded were held up by our expulsion from France. Also, a project for a new Code of Canon Law was in hand; revision of our constitutions was postponed until it should be promulgated. When this finally occurred in 1917, a World War was in progress. However, once the war was over, the Congregation of Religious intervened. We were allowed to present a project for new constitutions, but the Congregation of Religious, after consulting all Assumptionists individually, appointed the new Superior General: the Regional Superior for the Eastern Missions, Father Gervais Quénard.

Were the new constitutions an unmixed blessing for our congregation? In recent years, the Code of 1917 has been under fire. Some have said that its effect on religious congregations was like that of a steamroller, eliminating traits specific to their character and reducing religious life to too uniform a pattern. Since Vatican II, many religious foundations have been attempting to rediscover their original charism under the generalized structures imposed by the Code. Our congregation is no exception. Maybe some of the "diehards" of Father Bailly's "camarilla" were not wrong about everything. Further, if anyone is unconvinced that the new Code did not provide a ready-made answer to all our problems, he has only to trace the history of our French oeuvres communes over the last fifty years. Nevertheless, in the 1920's, there was no escaping the Code. We must now see what were its consequences for our Eastern Apostolate.

The principal innovation imposed by the new Code was the division of the congregation into provinces. Indeed, this had already been envisaged in Father d'Alzon's lifetime. He had proposed three provinces: Nîmes, Paris and the East. A regional Chapter met at Kadiköy on October 31, 1921, under the presidency of Father Gervais Quénard, then Regional Superior, in order to frame a project. The members took up Father d'Alzon's idea of an Eastern province; our Eastern apostolate, consecrated by our Founder's intentions and Rome's various blessings, had right to the status of an autonomous province. Its major superior would reside at Istanbul. The new province would have attached to it a region of France where there would be an aluminate and a house for retired religious. It would, of course, have difficulties. Notably, the specific commitment in Turkey to foster the Eastern rites was hardly realizable. On the other hand, in 1921, the schools had not yet been submitted to Kemal Atatürk's policy of eliminating religion from education. In Bulgaria, relations with Eastern rite Bulgarians were easy; the Archconfraternity could be developed; so could the scholarly work of the *Echos d'Orient*.

The province which was erected in 1923 was centered, however, on Lyons not on Istanbul, although it had more houses in Turkey (11) than in France (10), plus 3 in Bulgaria and a recent foundation in Rumania. In the Great War, priests and religious had fought in the trenches

alongside their anticlerical compatriots to defend their homeland. The proper climate existed for a return of French religious to their native country; not unnaturally, they attributed more importance to the development of the congregation in France than elsewhere. Consequently, from its beginnings, the Province of Lyons was French-oriented. Though the Eastern apostolate was not neglected, it did not have a privileged status.

Perhaps it is paradoxical to suggest that, nevertheless, these were the halcyon years of our Eastern apostolate. Except in Turkey, where the recession provoked by Atatürk's policy of excluding foreigners from the country was inevitable, our congregation expanded everywhere in the East. Its activities were less pretentious than those carried on in Father Bailly's time—no one would speak of an epic period of heroic and sublime events — but its failures were less catastrophic. Looking back, one may detect signs of disintegration, provoked by the abrupt change of center from Istanbul to Lyons. On the other hand, among the Slavs and Rumanians, we seem to have discovered our Eastern "style": an overriding preoccupation with the Catholics of Eastern rites, accompanied by openness to dialogue with the Orthodox and concern for Latin rite Catholics, indigenous and foreign, residing in the cities where our houses were established. Sustaining these explicitly apostolic activities was the Archconfraternity of Prayer, while a number of reviews, popular and learned, of general interest or more closely linked to our specific commitments, informed and instructed their readers on the East. Since the division into provinces was also accompanied by a measure of local autonomy, perhaps it is best now, rather than attempt to generalize, to pass each country in review.

When Father Emmanuel Bailly drew up his report in 1897, there were some 200 Assumptionists in Turkey, as well as the Oblate Sisters. In 1925 there were only 28. Turkey was rent by war — between Turks and Greeks, between Kemalists and Turkish traditionalists. But, as the Kemalists progressively obtained the upper hand, the Greeks were obliged to withdraw towards the coast. Our religious were often at the center of fighting, where their principal work was caring for the wounded and aiding refugees. Indeed, the Greek Melchite Archbishop of Tripoli invested Father Antoine Herber with the title of honorary vicar general in recognition of his charitable work for Melchite refugees in Konya.

Since France had renounced the Protectorate, things would not be again as in the days of Father Marie-Xavier Martin. Expelled by chauvinistic Turks from his school in Ismidt, he was triumphantly reinstated by the dragoman of the French ambassador,

"Fathers," said the dragoman, "I am happy, in the name of France, to put you back into possession of the house from which you had been expelled."

“We thank God and the Virgin”, commented Father Marie-Xavier, “and we rejoice in the name of France: gesta Dei per Francos.”

Now the other wing of the French diptych was to be more in evidence. Certain “French” ideas, which Father d’Alzon had abhorred, were now to predominate. Kemal Atatürk took a page out of the book of Monsieur Combes; he imposed “lay” education. Only if they eliminated all religious elements could foreigners continue their schools. However, the religious resisted. They refused to take down the crucifixes in their classrooms. In 1924, 40 schools went on strike; 12,000 children were without teaching. The Turkish authorities were obliged to capitulate for the time being. Nevertheless, the Assumptionists were shortly to abandon all their schools in Turkey. In negotiating with the Turkish authorities, French diplomats applied “lay” criteria. I have already hinted that in general our religious had received no specialized training; the same was also true, unfortunately, of the Oblate Sisters. The French authorities sponsored schools with better qualified staff. The Oblate Sisters and the Assumptionists continued to teach in Turkey, but as employees of other religious congregations.

As the Christian population left the Anatolian uplands, so progressively the Assumptionists and the Oblates closed down churches and communities. For a time, we stayed on at Bursa at the request of Rome to look after the remaining 60 Catholic residents; in Konya we stayed on because there was still a small Armenian community. Otherwise, our sole remaining implantations were in and around Istanbul, at Zonguldak on the Black Sea, and in the new capital at Ankara. Atatürk deliberately moved the center of gravity away from the Mediterranean coast to the Anatolian uplands. The presence of foreign residents in the capital justified the establishment there of a Catholic church under diplomatic protection. From Ankara, Father Ludovic Marseille ranged over a “parish” 700 kilometers wide. There was still pastoral work to be done among the dwindling number of Catholic employees of foreign companies established in Turkey. One of the last priests in Bursa was Father Prosper Lamerand who undertook himself the redecoration of his church. He died in 1928 as a result of injuries incurred when he fell from the scaffolding.

The Chapters of 1925 and 1935 called attention to the general withdrawal and to the difficulties, notably that of isolation, which resulted from it. The proposal was made that no priest should live alone; if the pastoral work available was insufficient to justify the presence of a second priest, then one of them should devote himself to personal study. A knowledge of the Turkish language would permit him to establish contact with his Turkish neighbors, to be accepted and appreciated. The proposal was accepted. The Chapter of 1935 pointed out that, at the beginning, our mission had been to work for the restoration of communion with the Orthodox, at a time when all contact with Turks was difficult. Since then, however, the situation had changed

radically. It was recommended that some religious should be designated to learn the Turkish language and to become familiar with Turkish culture, for it was in that direction that the future of our Eastern mission lay.

Bulgaria had now been freed from the Turkish yoke, and the Bulgarian peoples united into a single State. Adrianople (Edirne) had become a Turkish city; its Bulgarian population was repatriated. Consequently, the Assumptionists and the Oblate Sisters closed their houses there. A minor seminary was established in Jamboli to accommodate children of repatriated Eastern rite Catholics. Bishop Roberto Menini, the Latin rite Capuchin bishop, had died in 1916, and the menace of an Austro-Hungarian diplomatic intervention had been neutralized by the treaty-makers of Versailles. Minor setbacks occurred, such as the earthquake of 1928 which partially destroyed the secondary school at Plovdiv, and, of course, the economic recession of the '30's. On the other hand, there was no longer the strained political situation of pre-World War I, with its inevitable repercussions among religious of different nationalities and rites. Moreover, the Assumptionists acquired two good friends.

One was the new Exarch for the Eastern rite in united Bulgaria; the other was the Apostolic Visitor in Sofia. The pupils of the secondary school at Plovdiv were now playing a role in the life of their country. Bishop Cyril Kurtev, the new Exarch, was one of these pupils. We meet him with the Apostolic Visitor, Archbishop Angelo Roncalli, lunching together at our Roman house of studies, still near the Ara Coeli, in April 1927. Archbishop Louis Petit, who had retired from the see of Athens, presided the meal. One of Bishop Kurtev's former professors, Father Martin Jugie, recalled the impression of seriousness, calm and kindness that his pupil had made on him. Archbishop Petit proposed a toast to Bulgaria, adding that, when Union came about, it would no doubt be from there. Archbishop Roncalli also made a speech a good orator, noted the reporter, affable and penetrating.

On another occasion, when attending a conference on Christian Unity at Kadiköy, Archbishop Roncalli remarked that, before going to Bulgaria and during his first months there, he had been put on his guard against the Assumptionists. He seems, however, to have found this warning superfluous; Indeed, it is evident that he quickly placed his entire confidence in our congregations. He would have liked us to found a seminary in Bulgaria, for the Lazarists had closed theirs in Salonika, as we had closed the Leonine seminary in Kadiköy (our Bulgarian students now went to Strasbourg where they impressed everyone by the fluency of their French).

Nevertheless, we were now fully integrated into the small Bulgarian community of Eastern rite Catholics; In 1929 the first congress of Eastern rite Catholics was held in our minor seminary at

Jamboli. In 1931 our Eastern rite church was consecrated at Plovdiv; it was the first proper church for Eastern rite Catholics in Bulgaria, and it was furnished with what had formerly been in our Eastern rite church at Edirne. On this occasion, Bishop Kurtev wrote a letter of thanks to our Superior General, Father Quénard, situating the construction of the church in the context of Assumption's history: "a point of arrival and a point of departure for your mission in Bulgaria; one of Father d'Alzon's wishes in favor of the Slavic peoples has been fulfilled." The church still stands beside our former college in Plovdiv; it is still discreetly served by Bulgarian Assumptionists of the Eastern rite.

Like other religious congregations, we had had to turn down Pope Leo XIII's invitation to found a house in Athens. Our first "foundation" there occurred when Father Louis Petit became Archbishop of Athens in 1912. His household consisted of an Assumptionist secretary and two brothers, one of whom was Archbishop Petit's distinguished Belgian collaborator, Brother Jules Pector, who copied Byzantine manuscripts with an accuracy that few erudites could rival. For a short period, students and professors, evacuated from Constantinople, took refuge at Heraclion and Kifissia during the first World War. When Archbishop Petit resigned from his see of Athens in 1925, two Greek Assumptionists of the Latin rite stayed on as chaplains to teaching Brothers and Sisters. After much hesitation, Archbishop Philipucci, Archbishop Petit's successor, allowed them canonical residence in his archdiocese. This was the beginning of the community of Saint Theresa at Heptanissou.

An account of our Eastern apostolate ought to include an assessment of Archbishop Louis Petit's contribution, for he was certainly the most distinguished worker in this field that we have produced. This is difficult because his range was so wide, much wider than that of the Assumptionist congregation. Having founded the review *Echos d'Orient* and trained a group of religious to undertake research into the Byzantine sources, he then detached himself from the group, asked to be moved to Rome and ceased to write for the review which he had created. Undoubtedly, he had a universal vision; he was behind the foundation of a Congregation for the Eastern rites independent of the Propaganda Fide and behind the promulgation of the Code of Oriental Canon Law. He advocated the foundation of an Oriental Institute in Rome, which, once again, would have been given to the Assumptionists had we had the necessary number of qualified religious available. Archbishop Petit, of course, appreciated the Eastern rites in quite a different way from Father d'Alzon; on the other hand, like Father d'Alzon, he was an out-and-out Roman. His total respect for Roman discipline does not seem to have diminished the esteem in which he was held by the Greek Orthodox.

The French and Serbian armies fought side by side on the Salonika front in the first World War. The Serbs still recall with gratitude the contribution of the French army to their liberation from the Turks. During this same period, a certain Monsieur Arbel, a French industrialist, lodged in his château at Cormeilles-en-Parisis the children of a number of Serbian officers and civil

servants. The Oblates of the Assumption had also had to take temporary refuge in France. Monsieur Arbel invited them to take charge of these Serbian children. The kindness of the Oblates was to bear fruit. In due course, the Serbs returned to their native country. Obligated, as we have seen, to close their schools in Turkey, the Oblate Sisters were seeking out a new foundation where, as in Turkey, they would find a mixed population of Catholics, Orthodox and Moslems. They were advised by the Comite des amities Françaises a Vetranger to go to Sarajevo; Bishop Ivan Saric sent them a pressing invitation. However, they had kept up relations with the Serbian refugees, whose children had been entrusted to their care. They were promised that everything would be done to facilitate a foundation in Belgrade. Father Saturnin Aube wrote to the Catholic Archbishop of Belgrade, explaining the goal of the Assumptionist congregations: to work for the reunion of the separated Churches and to bring back the Orthodox into the Catholic orbit. He was sufficiently unaware of the political and religious situation in the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to suppose that they could found a "Franco-Serbian Catholic College."

The first Oblates arrived in April 1925 from Istanbul. Their school had an immediate success. Indeed, one of their first pupils was the daughter of the Turkish consul in Belgrade! Furthermore, it was evident that there was plenty of work for Catholic priests in Belgrade. Practically speaking, it had been impossible for them to exercise any ministry before 1914. On the other hand, there were some 30,000 Catholics dispersed in a city with a population of a quarter of a million, mostly immigrants from the poorer districts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but with only one church. Consequently, the first Assumptionists who had come to accompany the Oblate Sisters found that their presence was appreciated. In 1927 a parish was canonically erected and granted to our congregation. It was decided to found an alumniate. Money, which was available from the sale of properties in Turkey, was invested in building the house in the Ulica Hadzi Milentijeva, on the terrace of which this text has been composed. Assumptionist priests were also asked to look after isolated groups of Catholics in South-East Serbia, notably at Bor where a large French mining company had built a church for its French and Italian employees. The railway journey from Belgrade to Bor — a distance of 250 kilometers — then took about fourteen hours. The church is still there, but the parish is now in the hands of diocesan priests.

Excellent relations were established with the Serbian population of Belgrade. The card of Franco-Serbian friendship was frequently played, notably when Archbishop Rodic of Belgrade blessed the statue of Saint Joseph in the courtyard of the Oblates' school, in the presence of Marshal Franchet d'Esperey, who happened to be in Belgrade for the tenth-anniversary celebration of the breakthrough on the Salonika front where he had been in command of the French troops. However, no specific work in favor of Christian Unity could as yet be envisaged, although the Orthodox clergy were not unfriendly. When Msgr. Grivec, the distinguished Slovene scholar, was consulted as to the possible transfer of the *Echos d'Orient* to Yugoslavia, he welcomed the suggestion but insisted that there was no question of the review *Unité de l'Eglise* being edited or published from Belgrade.

It was also understood, fairly rapidly, that Catholic religious orders could not hope to recruit extensively in Orthodox Serbia. The Oblate Sisters received five vocations from Novo Mesto in Catholic Slovenia. Plans were made for transferring the aluminate to Subotica in the Vojvodina, North of Belgrade. Hungarian religious had been there earlier, but they had departed when the Austro-Hungarian Empire was dismantled. The Dalmatian coast was also considered. However, the second World War began before any of these plans could be realized. They still remain in abeyance, as indeed the plan to build a lavish church as a permanent monument to Franco-Serbian friendship. The imposing but unfinished building stands beside the modest construction of the 1920's; it has long proved its qualities as a warehouse.

There had been some question of the congregation founding a house in Jasi in Rumania in 1902, when Father Picard was still Superior General. In a letter to the bishop, Father Picard did not refuse the invitation but hinted, nevertheless, that it would overstrain his resources of manpower to accept. But when a similar invitation was received from the Bishop of Blaj in 1923, it was accepted. Rumania presented a somewhat different situation from that of the other Eastern countries where we had foundations. The Greeks and Bulgarians of the Eastern rite in communion with Rome were tiny minorities compared with the Orthodox. By contrast, there were a million and a half Catholics of the Byzantine rite in Rumania, with one archbishop and three bishops.

The first religious in Blaj went there to teach French. The next invitation was to found an aluminate for the diocese. A similar invitation was received from the bishop of Lugoj. It was an encouraging field of activity, for the Eastern-rite bishops were anxious to renew religious life in their dioceses, and there were virtually no other religious orders at work there. We were joined by the Oblate Sisters, who founded a school in Beius in September 1925. A novitiate was opened and entrusted to the first British Assumptionist to work in the East, Father Austin Tremer. He is referred to in the sources as the hieromonachus Austin, for, along with other religious, he adopted the Eastern rite.

The Assumptionists invested all their enthusiasm in silent but absolute devotion to the Rumanian Uniate Church. They prepared for it apostles and priests; in due course, they hoped to recruit the necessary personnel for a powerful Rumanian branch of the congregation. There were not lacking, of course, occasions of rivalry with the Orthodox clergy. Father Alype Barral acquired an eighteenth-century chapel; he had it dismantled and reconstructed at the novitiate. Not to be outdone, the local Orthodox pope (priest) did the same. When the pope acquired a magnificent processional cross, the Assumptionists had one made on the same pattern!

The Chapter of 1935 envisaged the foundation at Bucharest of a hostel for students of the Eastern rite from Transylvania, for the congregation's only title to residence in the capital was the chaplaincy of the Sisters of Sion. Another foundation in Bucharest was also envisaged and, indeed, realized. The group of scholars responsible for publishing the *Echos d'Orient* was to go there and found the Institut français d'études byzantines.

As we have seen, this group of scholars had been left in an ambiguous situation when the Leonine seminary was closed. They were virtually the only religious of our congregation engaged in this kind of work, which, for reasons that escape this writer, is generally considered to be arid. Never very numerous, they were only three in 1935: Father Vitalien Laurent, who had succeeded Father Sévérien Salaville as Director, Father Raymond Janin, and Father Venance Grumel. Together, they continued the same basic work of research according to the program first formulated by Father Louis Petit: publishing fundamental documents on the history of the Greek Church, contributing articles on the same subject to encyclopedias, and publishing the review *Echos d'Orient*, which always included some news of the Greek Church. However, their principal — and vast — project was to do for the Patriarchate of Constantinople what other scholars had done for the Papacy: to publish the official correspondence of the Patriarchs from the beginnings to the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453.

The dwindling community in Turkey wished them to remain at Kadiköy because our title to residence in the Leonine seminary was our commitment to the Greek apostolate. However, for a number of reasons, the three religious working for what was then called the *Oeuvre des Echos d'Orient*, after the title of their review, were anxious to move elsewhere. One reason was that it was becoming ever more difficult for foreigners to work in Turkey. The Turkish customs made it difficult to import books, mail was uncertain, and there was the constant menace of an official inquiry into the nature of their work, leading-possibly-to the imposition of heavy taxes. Another reason was the excessive zeal of the new Vicar Apostolic. He was manifesting a desire to direct personally all the activities of religious communities in Turkey. Rumors circulated that he was considering a take-over of our Byzantine library which he would direct to other purposes. In order to prevent this, our religious considered having the library registered as the property of the French Embassy.

In the *Oeuvre des Echos d'Orient* moved elsewhere with its magnificent library, what country would be disposed to receive it? Father Laurent and his colleagues would have liked above all to establish themselves in Athens where they were on excellent terms with the *Ecole française*. Unfortunately, the Orthodox Archbishop vetoed the project. They considered Rome and Strasbourg. However, there existed a further possibility. The Rumanian statesman and man of letters Nicolas Jorga used his influence to make it possible for our Byzantine scholars to move to Bucharest. So to Bucharest they went-just on the eve of World War II.

In Rumania, in spite of the war, Father Laurent and his collaborators enjoyed a few halcyon years. They were all scholars of international reputation. Their work now took on the formal character of a research institute. It was lodged in its own house. In order to avoid accusations of proselytism, its members kept the Latin rite. Their impact on the intelligentsia of Bucharest was immediate. Students and research scholars found in the library books which were not readily available elsewhere. Some conservative elements among the Orthodox, it is true, regarded them with suspicion and would have preferred that the library be boycotted. Nevertheless, their theologians continued to frequent it. So it was possible for our Byzantinists to work modestly and undisturbed in Bucharest throughout World War II and even after it.

A few words should be added about our Russian apostolate. We have seen that Father Bailly had succeeded in realizing Father d'Alzon's dream by sending six religious to Russia as "explorers." It is unnecessary to dwell upon the difficulties which they had in their relations with the Superior General. Had it not been for pressure coming from many quarters, he would have closed the Russian mission in 1910. The Revolution, following on World War I, obliged most of these religious to leave the country. Father Auguste Maniglier insisted on remaining at Odessa at the church which he built. To this day, the church is still standing and in good condition, including the mosaic of Saint Peter over the door. Finally, he was evacuated forcibly by the French navy in 1920. The Russians used the church as a depot for the city archives, but, during World War II, when the Germans occupied Odessa, Father Judicael Nicolas was able to return there and reopen the church. In due course, the Russian authorities engaged him for another apostolate — a quasi martyrdom — which he has recounted in his book *Onze ans au paradis*.

Consequently, the only Assumptionist mission in Russia to survive the Revolution was at Makievka. In 1907, Father Maniglier went to Makievka to inspect the situation, for the French mining companies established there had asked for a French-speaking chaplain to minister to their employees. Father Pie Neveu duly took charge of the mission, aided by Brother David Mailland, who had previously been at Odessa. They were virtually lost from sight until the Western democratic countries established diplomatic relations with the Bolshevik regime. The story of Bishop Pie Neveu's episcopal ordination and of his activities in Moscow has been recounted elsewhere. However, a tribute should be paid to Brother David, whom Bishop Neveu ordained as priest so that he could take over the parish of Makievka. As Father David, he remained there until 1929. Bishop Neveu exercised his episcopal ministry until 1936. Meanwhile, the United States had re-established diplomatic relations with Russia. Father Leopold Braun was able to reside in Moscow as chaplain to the Catholic community. Since then, there has been an almost uninterrupted presence of an American Assumptionist in Moscow.

Our Eastern apostolate depended on the support of interested people in Western countries. This support consisted partly in prayer, partly in financial aid. By publications, sermons and lectures, we recruited for the Arch-confraternity which sponsored prayer for Christian Unity and raised the necessary funds to maintain our missions. We also did much to inform the general public about the Eastern Churches and their traditions. For this, Father d'Alzon had given the example. Some of his successors, like Father Joseph Maubon, seem to have been concerned mainly to edify. Others insisted, particularly in the review *Union des Eglises*, on the efficacy of prayer, particularly when Catholics and Orthodox were fired by the same desire for unity. In his lectures, Father Severien Salaville would explain the obstacles to a rapprochement. We find him recounting in a lecture given at Louvain in 1927, as Father Siméon Vailhé had done earlier, how important it was, for both Catholics and Orthodox of the Eastern rites, to maintain their specific national organization. Further, in countries which were massively Orthodox, Eastern rite Catholics might well be regarded as traitors. With time, the religious whom we had recruited and trained in Rumania and Bulgaria were to learn this through bitter experience. Their trials and steadfastness, which will be spoken of in the next chapter, testify that our Eastern apostolate has borne fruit.

#### IV. ASSUMPTION'S EASTERN APOSTOLATE TODAY

Although communications were difficult, World War II did not prevent our religious, in most cases, from continuing their work in the East. It was not until March 1947 that Father Vitalien Laurent, Director of the Byzantine Institute in Bucharest, was able at last to travel to Western Europe. He counted on recruiting religious for the East, with a view to development and expansion, notably in Rumania. He seems to have met with little encouragement in France where, according to him, the research undertaken by the Byzantine Institute was looked upon as a work of pure curiosity, while the intellectual effort involved was considered to be lost to souls. In Holland and Belgium, however, he was better received. Fathers Philip Liessens and Jerome Cornells were continuing and developing the spiritual and doctrinal work of the Archconfraternity and the review *Union des Eglises*. Father Laurent lectured at Louvain before moving to Holland where he was greeted with great enthusiasm. "All felt", he later wrote to the Superior General, Father Quénard, "particularly when I spoke of Russia, that I was renewing the message of Father d'Alzon. Had I been signing up recruits, the names would have been legion."

In this same letter, Father Laurent presented a plan for the foundation of a Byzantine Institute in Nijmegen, Holland, a plan which, as we shall see, was shortly to be realized. But Father Laurent looked still further afield: in due course, the Bucharest Institute would have departments in Istanbul, the Balkans, Moscow and Leningrad! Little did he know that, far from developing the Institute in Bucharest, he and his collaborators would be expelled from Rumania that very same year.

What renders the study of the last three decades at once fascinating and disconcerting is the unpredictability of events. Who foresaw the cataclysmic fall-off in vocations, together with the departure of so many religious during these years? Who foresaw Vatican II and its new apostolic orientations? This unpredictability makes it harder to describe our recent history. But there are other difficulties: no study exists of our congregation's recent history, so that the story has to be put together from papers in our archives and articles in our reviews. Further, a certain discretion is necessary since the religious about whom one is writing are in many cases alive, some in countries where the Church is oppressed by a Communist government.

The purpose here will be to present the Eastern apostolate of the Assumptionists as it is today, sketching in the background when necessary, then to attempt an assessment of our present activities in the light of Father d'Alzon's conception of our mission.

There is no stereotyped Communist policy for all governments towards the Catholic Church nor towards foreign residents. The Soviet Union still allows us to maintain a single priest as chaplain to the American citizens in Moscow. Father Eugene La Plante has returned for a second term, taking over from Father Philip Bonvouloir. The chaplain's activity is restricted to the community of foreign residents. He has not the possibilities of his predecessors like Father Jean-de-Matha Thomas who heard over 3,000 confessions in Moscow one Lent shortly after World War II.

In Bulgaria, the Eastern rite Catholic Church has not been suppressed. On the other hand, foreign priests may not reside in the country. When a Communist government was installed, the Oblate Sisters decided to evacuate all their religious including Bulgarian nationals. In October and November 1948, they closed their houses in Jamboli, Varna and Plovdiv, bringing the Sisters to France. By contrast, many of the Bulgarian Assumptionists remained. All underwent imprisonment. Two, Fathers Kamen Vicev and Pavel Djidjov, were condemned to death; this brief account of our Eastern apostolate is dedicated to their memory. Those who survived prison were set free in due course. I remember one of them telling me how he had been let out of prison on Christmas Eve. He described to me his joy as he walked up through the snow from the station in Plovdiv in time to join his fellow Assumptionists for Midnight Mass. Priests were eventually allowed to resume their ministry in parishes, although they were forbidden to

supplement their income by taking on a job. Thus they remain totally dependent on the generosity of the faithful. In the 1960's Father Methodius Stratiev was appointed Coadjutor to the elderly Exarch, Bishop Kurtev, whom we met in the previous chapter; with time, the civil authorities consented to his public episcopal ordination. Thus, witness is given by Assumptionists in Bulgaria that one can be a bishop of the Byzantine rite while remaining in communion with the See of Rome. Also, in 1979, another Assumptionist, Father Samuel Djoundrine, was ordained a bishop and appointed to the see of Nikopol.

There are still about ten religious working in Bulgaria. In order to make their situation easier, they are all subject to the Assumptionist Exarch, Bishop Stratiev. The only ministry permitted to them is a parochial one, and even this is circumscribed. Community life is only possible in a big city such as Plovdiv. It is the responsibility of Bishop Stratiev to place them where they are most needed. One such place is the town of Jamboli where, during the "halcyon years" our Bulgarian minor seminary was established.

In Rumania, the government decided to liquidate the Eastern rite Catholic Church. The same methods were used as had earlier proved effective in the Ukraine. The clergy was given the choice between destitution and integration into the Orthodox Church. All our Eastern rite Assumptionists opted for destitution. Many were imprisoned. When they were later released, they were allowed to work for a living but forbidden to exercise a priestly ministry. The Eastern rite Oblate Sisters could no longer live openly as members of a religious congregation. They too underwent imprisonment. They closed their house in Beius in 1949. Other Sisters who were nursing in Bucharest were allowed to continue to work but forbidden to wear the religious habit. Thirty years later, many of our Rumanian religious have reached the age of retirement and are living on small pensions. Father Stefan Berinde discreetly maintained contact between our dispersed religious. When he died in 1978, a Latin rite priest was at his bedside. He is buried in the Catholic cemetery of Bucharest. Father Vasile Cristea, who was not then living in Rumania, found himself transferred from the post of curate in Florence to that of Bishop and Visitor to Rumanian Eastern rite Catholics of the Diaspora. Thus again, Assumptionists witness to the authentic status of Eastern rite Christians in communion with Rome: silently in Rumania, but publicly abroad

In Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia and Israel, our religious, while restricted in their activities, nevertheless have more freedom than in Rumania or Bulgaria. This has made community renewal easier. It was above all at the house of studies of the Lyons Province at Valpre that a new style of "evangelical community" was created; a number of religious now working in the East studied at Valpre. They have adapted the style of life in our Eastern communities accordingly. Though many of the "works" are gone, this does not mean that the religious working in the East are merely "holding the fort." Outposts can be, as we shall see, an excellent starting point for evangelization.

With the exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece in the 1920's, a certain number of Greek Catholics of the Eastern rite came to live on Greek soil, particularly in Athens and at Janitza, Macedonia. An Exarch was appointed who, like his earlier colleague in Istanbul, made it clear that he did not require our collaboration in the Greek apostolate. Nevertheless, he and his successors have been obliged to do what they reproached the Assumptionists for doing: to recruit their clergy among the Latin rite Greeks of the isles!

Consequently, all our Greek priests have kept the Latin rite. In some respects, this facilitates their relations with the Orthodox. The community of Saint Theresa has three active members. One is concerned with Catholic Action movements throughout Greece; another is directly responsible for the local parish; the third, Father Augustine Roussos, organizes meetings at which Catholics and Orthodox may pray together — but discreetly, for Latin rite clergy are readily denounced for proselytism. He also tries gently to break down prejudice against the Orthodox among the dispersed members of the tiny Catholic minority in Athens. In recent years, two Latin rite Assumptionists, Archbishops Voutsinos and Varthalitis, were successively placed at the head of the Archdiocese of Corfu.

When the Latin rite bishops in Greece asked us to open a branch of the Byzantine Institute in Athens, Father Sévérien Salaville was chosen for this task. We have met him already as Director of the Leoninr seminary in Kadiköy; later he became Superior of the Assumptionist International College in Rome. The Institute which he founded was destined to supply Orthodox scholars with books about Western theology and to help them in their research. When Father Salaville died in 1965, many Orthodox scholars paid tribute to his irenic spirit. He had trained a Greek Assumptionist, Father Gregory Nowack to continue his work. Father Nowack died prematurely of a heart attack in 1977; his death gravely jeopardized the future of this institute.

Again and again, in reports made in the 1930's, it was suggested that Assumptionists in Turkey should specialize in Islamic studies, learn the language and establish contact with the Moslems. Today it seems strange to us that, in the Kadiköy community at that time, there was only one Turkish-speaking religious. However, we should not forget that, among Christians, French was commonly spoken, and it was chiefly with the Christian population that the Assumptionists were active. Now this situation has changed. The younger generation speaks Turkish, even among Christians. Father Xavier Nuss, sensing this change, began some years ago translating the liturgical texts into Turkish—no mean task, for there is no Christian cultural tradition in the Turkish language. The Catholic bishops in Turkey have adopted these texts. Father Nuss lives in Ankara with another Alsatian priest, Father Xavier Jacob. They have inherited the apostolate of Father Ludovic Marseille among foreign residents, but they also look after the Armenian population. Further, Father Jacob has become a specialist in Islamic studies.

In Istanbul, there are at present three Assumptionists and five Oblate Sisters. They all live at Kadiköy in the former Leonine seminary. The two priests Father Joseph Ract and Father Louis Pelatre, besides their work among their parishioners of the Latin rite, are actively engaged in the apostolate of Christian Unity. The third, Brother James Conlon, is the most recent arrival. A mathematician, he is studying Turkish and finding his way around the student milieu of Istanbul.

The congregation owns a number of properties in the Istanbul region, for example, the former scholasticate at Fenerbahce (now a hotel) in whose chapel Mass continues to be celebrated each Sunday, and the original church of the Greek mission at Kum Kapi in old Stambul. Since there are no Latin rite Catholics any longer in old Stambul, the church was put many years ago at the disposal of the Syrian Catholic community. However, more recently, the community of Syrian Jacobites (Old Syrians, as they prefer to be called), has been increasing in Istanbul. They number over a million in India and several hundred thousand in the rest of the world. Since the Turkish authorities do not allow new churches to be built, the Old Syrians have been seeking hospitality elsewhere. They have long been attending the liturgy in our church at Kum Kapi along with the Syrian Catholics. In 1974 their patriarchal vicar asked if his clergy could celebrate the liturgy in our Latin rite church of Saint Euphemia at Kadiköy. While there is separation of cult, on the social level the communities mingle. On Easter Sunday 1978, I had the pleasure of attending a party in our parish hall at Kadiköy organized jointly by the Catholic and Syrian youth of the district.

When they were obliged to close their schools in 1935, most of the Oblate Sisters of the Assumption left Turkey. Only one community remained; it took over at Kadiköy from the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. In 1945 the Oblates moved into the house next door to the Leonine seminary. In 1979 they took up an apartment in the Leonine seminary itself. They give private lessons and help in the parish. Two Sisters teach in Catholic schools in Istanbul; one of them is a specialist in Islamic ceramics. With their Rumanian Sisters, they are the last survivors of a once large sector of their congregation.

As in Istanbul, the number of Catholics in Belgrade is dwindling. The older generation, which came there in the 1920's and 1930's, is dying; younger members move away from the center into the suburbs, a demographic phenomenon which has parallels in other large cities. Father Peter Ljubas, whose parents moved to Belgrade from Herzegovina, looks after the parish.

After World War II, the Oblate Sisters closed their house in Belgrade and brought their five Slovenian Sisters to France. They are now exploring the possibilities of re opening a house in

Yugoslavia.

In Jerusalem, the Dutch Province maintained for a time a community dedicated to the study of Oriental matters at the Church of Saint Peter-at-the-Cock's Crow. At present the principal activity of the multinational community of Saint Peter's is guiding pilgrims in the Holy Land and more particularly around the site of the House of Caiaphas upon which the church is reputed to be built. "We receive many non-Catholic groups with their ministers." says Father Austin Treamer who returned to the Holy City in his seventies to look after English-speaking pilgrims. "When they visit the shrine, the accompanying minister reads the Scriptures to his pilgrims and gives a short homily. Then they sing a stanza or two of an appropriate hymn. This helps us to do away with anti-Catholic prejudice"

Father Jean-Roger Héné devoted his life to a rather different style of apostolate in the Holy Land. He worked for a better understanding at all levels between Jews and Christians. With other Catholic priests who constitute the Saint James Group, he provided spiritual direction and Mass for Hebrew-speaking Christians, notably at the Saint Abraham Center at Beersheba in the Negev district. He also lectured to Christians on Judaism at the Saint Joseph Center and at Notre-Dame de Sion in Jerusalem. Those who knew Father Jean-Roger well say that few people have done as much as he to break down barriers in Israel between those whose faith is focused on the Old Testament and those whose faith is focused on the New.

Although the Dutch Byzantine Institute was established in Holland, it was intended to have subsidiary commitments in the East. On the other hand, force of circumstances brought the French Byzantine Institute to Paris. Its situation in Bucharest became precarious once a Stalinist government took power in Rumania, for such a government would not tolerate an institute whose members were both Catholics and foreigners. A pretext for expelling our Assumptionist scholars from Bucharest presented itself with surprising rapidity.

An opponent of the regime had taken refuge at the Byzantine Institute, while arrangements were being made to organize his escape from the country. By torturing his elderly father, the police found out where he was hiding. At 7:00 A.M. on October 7, 1947, 110 police surrounded our house in the proximity of the French Embassy in Bucharest. They searched the house, duly found their victim, and carefully examined the mass of papers that research-workers invariably accumulate. They took away for further study a plan drawn up by Father Vitalien Laurent for a series of articles on the military organization of 10th-century Bulgaria. Father Laurent and his associates were imprisoned, pending trial for espionage and plotting against the regime. French diplomats obtained that the charges be quashed but, in exchange, had to agree to repatriate our Byzantine confreres. The library would eventually follow them. Father Emile Jean, who had not

been expelled, was able to pass the books over the wall into the garden of the French Embassy. They were then transported to Paris by the French diplomatic pouch which, in fact, took on the dimensions of a special train. The Byzantine Institute later became a clinic. On the occasion of a Byzantine Congress in Bucharest in 1971, I was able to enter clandestinely into the building. I saw that over the doors of the rooms were inscribed phrases from the Marxist classics. Had pious quotations from Germanus of Constantinople or Gregory Palamas previously figured there?

Thus, after nine halcyon years in Rumania, the members of the Byzantine Institute were uprooted and obliged to seek hospitality elsewhere. Father Venance Grumel was already in Paris, for, in the difficult post-war years, it was necessary that someone on the spot should supervise the production of the review which, in the mean time, had changed its name and become the *Revue des études byzantines*,

His collaborators joined him. Paris offered advantages. There was room in the house on rue François I<sup>er</sup>. Moreover, because of their high academic standing, the members of the Byzantine Institute were gladly accepted by the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (C.N.R.S.) as salaried researchers. Consequently, in the Director's words, "the Institute had never known such prosperity." All the difficulties of the Institute had not, however, been resolved. As long ago as 1921, when the *Echos d'Orient* was being produced at Kadiköy, it had been suggested that its editorial team should give more attention to the apostolic dimension of their activity and enter more readily into contact with Orthodox scholars. The answer of the religious concerned was that this was impossible as long as they were "boarders" in someone else's house. This difficulty had been removed in Bucharest, but, as a minority in the motley community of Notre-Dame de Salut, the difficulty returned. Father Laurent spoke in 1958 of "stagnation in a situation which permits no initiative." That year, he referred to the same "constraints which paralyzed their work at Kadiköy and prompted the Chapter of 1935 to move the Institute to Bucharest."

Loss of direct contact with the Orthodox, which they had had at Bucharest and Kadiköy, encouraged the members of the Institute to concentrate on the scientific rather than on the apostolic aspect of their work. Their situation as salaried workers at the C.N.R.S., which was not interested in financing work for Christian Unity, favored this attitude. A further difficulty arose through lack of recruitment. Father Vita lien Laurent, who had been for so long Director of the Byzantine Institute, was probably too exacting in his requirements and tended to limit excessively the possible commitments of his potential collaborators. There was also the permanent lack of religious with the necessary intellectual abilities to satisfy the demands of the scholasticates, the houses in the East and the secondary schools which were still being maintained. Father Laurent was happy when the Byzantine Institute, instead of remaining part of a single province which manifestly could not staff it, was made part of the "French General

Works" (Oeuvres Généralices Françaises [O.G.F.]), a separate vice-province which grouped major French endeavors of particular national importance. Unfortunately, this solution did not bring the hoped-for increase in personnel. Some future historians of research institutes belonging to religious orders must determine what makes them flourish and what makes them fail.

Dutch religious have long been associated with our Oriental apostolate. Indeed, the memory of Father Canisius Louis is still green at Kadiköy. Father Frans Wijnhoven and his successor Father Alexius van Beekvelt have established a tradition of Assumptionist collaboration in the Dutch "Eastern Apostolate." A new step forward was taken at the scholasticate of Bergeijk during the Second World War. Common resistance to the German occupying forces had broken down some of the antipathies between Catholics and Protestants. This ecumenical spirit extended to the Orthodox. A group met regularly there to study the Eastern Churches. Consequently, when Father Vitalien Laurent visited Bergeijk in 1947, he found an enthusiastic and well-informed audience. Since Eastern rite Christians in Holland are far from numerous, it was decided to study Eastern questions in the wider context of ecumenism, but with the special focus of trying to familiarize the Dutch public with the Eastern Churches. Thus Dutch Assumptionists regularly take part in celebrations of the Byzantine liturgy. Their review, *Het Christelijk Oosten*, published by the Byzantine Ecumenical Institute in Nijmegen, contains articles of good quality on Eastern matters, together with a news bulletin and book reviews. Consequently, it resembles *Echos d'Orient* more closely than the *Revue des études byzantines*

We have noted that from 1960 a branch of the Nijmegen Institute was established at Saint Peter-at-the-Cock's Crow, Jerusalem, under the name of Center for Christian Oriental Studies. Lack of personnel made it necessary to close this branch. For a few years, Dutch Assumptionists also taught at the Syrian Catholic seminary of Charfe in Lebanon. In 1893, at the Eucharistic Congress in Jerusalem, the then Syrian Patriarch had asked Father Picard to take charge of his seminary. This responsibility was, in fact, bestowed upon the Benedictines by Leo XIII in 1902. It was after they withdrew in 1950 that it was taken over by our Dutch religious. Although they found invaluable the experience of being directly in contact with an Eastern rite Church, they too decided that they must withdraw in 1958 when the number of seminarians had dropped to two.

The Institute at Nijmegen and its review have made their mark in Dutch ecumenical circles. Their future depends on the recruitment of new personnel. In order to compensate for the shortage of qualified Assumptionists, scholars who are not members of our congregation have been co-opted to the editorial board of the review.

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At the end of this brief presentation of our Eastern apostolate, it is well to add some remarks on the contemporary situation, notably with respect to our present fidelity to the spirit of Father d'Alzon. As far as simplicity is concerned, we are closer today to the time of our Founder than to that of his successors. The grandiose realizations of Fathers Picard and Bailly have come and gone. In all the countries in which we are still active, Catholics, whether nationals or foreigners, are only tolerated. Consequently, we are obliged to keep a low profile. Where we are better off now is in our ecclesiastical status. It is firmer everywhere. We now have the possibility of deciding ourselves, within the limits imposed by the local government, what activities we should favor.

It is much more difficult to decide whether we are faithful to Father d'Alzon's notions of churchmanship. His ultramontanist and his views on the political status of the Papacy fall into place in the context of the pontificate of Pius IX, whereas the views of the radical minority at the first Vatican Council, and notably of its leader Bishop Strossmayer of Djakovo, seem closer in spirit to Vatican II. We are obliged to look behind Father d'Alzon's interpretation of the ecclesial situation in his time and insist upon his deeper purpose; to found a congregation of churchmen and to work for Church Unity. In his time, these ideals seemed best realized — so Father d'Alzon thought — by total submission to a centralized Papacy. It seemed that to be a good churchman one had to be an ultramontane. In our times, one has to be an ecumenist! Had Father d'Alzon been present at the second Vatican Council, he would have made his own the Decree on Ecumenism and the Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches, and he would have invited his congregation to enter into a dialogue with the Jews and Moslems.

For Father d'Alzon, our Eastern apostolate was a mission conferred by the Vicar of Christ on a young congregation. Given our status as a congregation of church-men, the Eastern commitment is our principal characteristic; it belongs to the whole body of Assumptionists. This characteristic of our congregation was slightly obscured when we were divided up into provinces. To quote Father Touveneraud: "Little by little, the elements of the Eastern mission became dissociated, each evolving in its own particular direction". To counteract this danger, a movement began some years back in the wider field of ecumenism to bring together again the dispersed religious of our congregations. We began to meet regularly, every two years, in order to reflect on our status as churchmen and to discuss our specific difficulties in the countries where we work. The first international meeting took place at Les Essarts near Rouen in 1973. By taking as its theme Culture and Belief, it affirmed that religious belief is closely intertwined with the cultural tradition of those who profess it. This movement has enabled us to grasp just how the Assumptionists have maintained their ecclesial character and has led us to understand that our principal contribution to the contemporary intellectual life of the Church is in the field of ecclesiology.

Behind Father d'Alzon's global view of our Eastern apostolate, there was, as we have seen, a more specialized interest in precise fields of action. We have seen how he encouraged his students at Nîmes to familiarize themselves with Eastern religious culture, how he invested considerable sums of money in their intellectual training and how he himself devoted his last years to a study of contemporary Russia. Our rapid growth, combined with difficult political circumstances, meant that subsequent generations of religious went to the East without the necessary cultural and intellectual preparation for their apostolate. With Father d'Alzon, we now recognize once more that a familiarity with the language and way of life of a people is essential if we are to work among them. This kind of approach may determine the character of a later apostolate, whether among the Orthodox in Belgrade or Athens, or among the Moslems in Istanbul or Ankara, or among the peoples of so many nations and creeds in Jerusalem.

Even in Father d'Alzon's time, perhaps the religious who best succeeded were those who kept a low profile. Father Galabert, as we have seen, wondered whether we really met and knew authentic Bulgarians or only those who frequented foreign residents. Father Ivan Pistic, one of the Bulgarian recruits of the first generation, stressed the need, in a report dated 1892, "to establish contact with souls, to stimulate them, and to direct them in the way of truth. "It is absolutely necessary," said he, "to establish relations with the local inhabitants, to visit the sick, to enter houses and widen the horizon of our friends and friendships." Father Pistic even suggests "establishing centers in districts where no one has ever seen a Catholic priest and hardly knows what a Catholic is like. This is real evangelization..." (The date of the report should be noted: 1892!) Father Salaville was to go further. He was one of the first Assumptionists to grasp that the "conversion" of "dissidents" was not our primary task nor indeed a necessary one. In a report from Kadiköy dated 1912, he evaluates the instruction given to Greek children in our schools: "The good seed is sown. If our contribution will have been to make good Christians of them in the Orthodox Church, we shall not have wasted our time."

These lines of activity remain open and can be developed. We have the example of James Conlon, the English brother who recently joined the community in Istanbul in order to explore the university milieu of this city. Other Openings are there for the asking. In Israel, Father Jean-Roger's work for better relations between Christians and Jews might well be extended. Belgrade provides openings for work among the Orthodox Serbs and Catholics of the Latin and Eastern rites. The list is not exhaustive.

To conclude: we should not let apparent political obstacles prevent us from continuing to work in the Eastern mission with which Father d'Alzon endowed the Assumptionist congregation. It requires from those who commit themselves to it three principal qualities: to be a churchman; to be content with a permanently low profile; to be as passionately interested in acquiring the

culture of Eastern peoples as in communicating to them the Gospel message.