



EDITOR'S DESK

The whole Assumption Family is excited to hear about the New Community in the Philippines. Now, that the community has settled in and opened its doors we want to share with you some stories of Fathers Bernard, Gilles, and Chuvi, and Brothers Alex and Clemente.

In this issue you will read some historical facts about the beginnings of our Assumption Family. We have focused on the links between the Religious of the Assumption and the Augustinians of the Assumption during the early days. We are happy that this relationship, which begun in France in the mid 19th century, continues today in different parts of the world - with a special focus on the United States and the Philippines.

We would like to bring closer to you the life of the Assumptionists - whom you know very well - by telling you about their new posts and responsibilities.

In the previous issue of our newsletter, you were asked to pray for Father Donald Espinosa. Your prayers must have been heard because Father Donald is back after a long and difficult few months. Although there are still months of rehabilitation and recovery ahead of him, he is as excited to work as ever.

Once again, thank you for your support and encouragement of our newsletter. We are interested in hearing from you too, so please - send us info, pictures, or questions.

You can contact our team by email at: [newsletter@assumptio.org](mailto:newsletter@assumptio.org)

Please do not forget to visit us on line at [www.assumption.us](http://www.assumption.us) and visit the website of Assumption Guild - our Mass Association at [www.guldaa.com](http://www.guldaa.com).

A DREAM COME TRUE!

On January 18th the "founding members" of our first local Assumptionist community finally landed in the Philippines. Very quickly we took possession of a rented house in Quezon City, close to the Ateneo, a Jesuit University, where the Assumptionist brothers will continue their studies. As soon as we arrived, with



Grand opening of the Adveniat House, February 2nd 2006

the precious help of the Religious of the Assumption, we wandered around in the stores in order to equip the house: a washing machine for the laundry, a gas stove for the kitchen, an air conditioner for the computer room, a drinking water dispenser, etc. We moved into our house on January 25, 2006. Since then, we have been polishing it up nicely. It seems solid (though a little old) and it would need some basic repairs if we were to buy it: electricity, plumbing, toilets, windows and window screens. The garden would need also some investment of time and work but it does offer some possibilities.

On February 2nd (the feast of the Presentation and of Consecrated Life), we had our Grand Opening - as Adveniat House - and our home was officially blessed and inaugurated, with the help of the rest of the family of the Assumption in the Philippines: the Religious of the Assumption and their novices, and the Little Sisters of the Assumption.

Little by little, we discover our "village": our parish, our neighbours as well as the capital, its malls and super markets...the way things are done in this country, the means of transportation: tricycles, "jeepnies," bus and metro. Some words in Tagalog (native language) have become familiar: mabuhay (welcome, long life), taho (soy juice) sold in the streets early morning and balut (aborted duck eggs) at night, but also Ama Namin (Our Father). Even the music of the ice cream man rings to our ear by now.



We are getting used to texting, a national sport here, which allows us to communicate with each other and with the people we meet, by cell phone at low price.

Our purpose is to build an international, inter-Asian and Christ-centered Assumptionist community,

*continued from page 1* sharing our charism with the Filipino people, attentive to their needs, especially those of the poor. We are a founding community that needs to be constructed day-by-day. We want to insist on vocation ministry for the future and the solid initial and continuing formation of our brothers. We are building this community through a gradual involvement with and insertion into the local, Filipino context. We want it to be inter-Asian to foster unity among all Asian Assumptionists and to open ourselves to the broader mission of the Church in Asia.

Lent, here, coincides with the summer holidays and the school year recess. For two weeks, every morning, the whole community followed a seminar on valuing cultural diversities and conflict resolution. We were a group of 23 religious, men and women, coming from all continents. There is a lot of progress to be done here for each one of us... But living this together should help us to grow in our understanding of culture shock and to turn to common sets of references in solving possible difficulties ahead.



Moving in (from left to right: Brother Clemente, Fathers Bernard and Gilles, and Brother Ronald)

As a community, we decided to live the numerous celebrations of the Holy Week in our own parish and learn more about the faith and traditions of the local people. Progressively, all through the week, everything will close down. Be assured that from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday, even the subway will be at complete rest. All the TV channels will compete in presenting Jesus stories or staging religious events....

On Good Friday we went to the Cathedral of Pampanga, an hour long drive from home, north of Manila. Men self-flagellating, their backs with blood, others carrying a cross bare foot, all these people meet in front of the Cathedral. They are dozens parading up the streets and splashing around their blood (their whips are made out of ropes ending with wooden blades). The spectacle is unbearable. The flagellants walk bare foot on a torrid concrete road, no T-shirts but head covered with a black cloth and crowned with some local weeds. Many have large tattoos. Their jeans are stained with blood; it spurts on the nearby cars...

On both Easter Sunday and Easter Monday the locals rush to the beaches and picnic or invade the malls since business can resume after such a long recess. During these two days, we received the Little Sisters of the Assumption as well as some friends. We took the opportunity to share what we have lived during this Holy Week and to hear about what is happening in the poor neighbourhood where they work and about their discovery of the Filipino people.

*Father Bernard Holzer (France), Father Gilles Blouin (Canada) Father Jean-Marie Chuvi Aduabango (Democratic Republic of Congo), and Brothers Clemente Boleche and Alex Castro (Philippines) - Adveniat House, Manilla, Philippines - February-April 2006*

∴To read more about please visit our website [www.assumption.us](http://www.assumption.us)

## DEVELOPMENT OFFICE CORNER

We all want to make the world a better place. One way to ensure that good works will continue is by enabling others to go on doing good works.

By including a bequest in your will for the Augustinians of the Assumption, you become part of our mission and allow us to extend the Kingdom of God, by focusing on three primary areas: education in all its forms, building a community within the Church and working with the poor.

A bequest is a gift written in your will that establishes a legacy for those you honor. This gift allows you to respect the memory of a person or organization that meant so much to you and influenced your life. Bequests are written into your will by specifying a dollar amount or other asset, or listing a percentage of your estate. You can also make a bequest by specifying the remainder of your estate be given as a gift.

Because your will clearly spells out your wishes and leaves nothing to chance, the directions you supply in your will can save your family members and heirs the frustration of second-guessing your intentions. Essentially, that is the best reason for writing a will: it explicitly details how you want your estate to be distributed. In addition to being one of the simplest ways to distribute your estate, a bequest in your will can also be a creative vehicle to make a considerate gift.



For more information please contact me at 617-783-0400, by email: [tkierul@assumptio.org](mailto:tkierul@assumptio.org) or write to me:  
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### *the assumptionist...*

a quarterly newsletter of the US Region of the Augustinians of the Assumption

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**ASSUMPTIONIST HISTORY CORNER -- Assumptionist Founders**

The Assumption Family owes its beginnings to three individuals, Father Theodore Combalot, Mother Marie-Eugénie de Jésus, and Father Emmanuel d'Alzon. All of the subsequent founders inspired themselves more or less directly from their thoughts, intuitions, and actions.



The friendship and exemplary mutual support between Blessed Mother Marie-Eugénie de Jésus and Father d'Alzon were the human and spiritual basis upon which two

new religious families were founded in the 19th century. The Religious of the Assumption (R.A.), were founded in Paris in 1839, where they still have their General House. The Assumption sisters first came to the United States in 1919. That year they opened a boarding school for girls in Philadelphia: Ravenhill Academy. They no longer have any institutions of their own in the US but they continue their mission of education in different venues in the four communities of the United States Province.

The Augustinians of the Assumption (A.A.), were founded in Nîmes, France in 1845. Since 1880 the General House of the congregation is in Rome, Italy. Currently the Assumptionists have four community houses in the US Region, a part of the North American Province.

Both Blessed Mother Marie Eugenie Milleret and Emmanuel d'Alzon believed that they understood the critical situation of their nation and the church. They identified with many of the

noble aspirations and projects of generous men and women inside and outside the church. They aimed to found religious congregations which would respond to the urgent needs of their time. They believed that recognizing God as God, unique and sovereign and Jesus Christ as sole Mediator was essential. In Jesus Christ they understood that the world found its unity and its meaning. They believed that God's Kingdom is the goal of this world bringing with it liberation and salvation for all humankind. They strove to ally the "nova et vetera, the new and the old": to be rooted in the wealth of Christian tradition and to welcome the newness and progress of history.

Like all the saints, both Blessed Mother Marie Eugenie and Emmanuel d'Alzon were driven by the desire that individuals would find personal salvation --would "save their souls" -- as well as bring about a change in society through their apostolic endeavors. They saw that through education they could form strong characters--Christians who would not only practice their faith by prayer and church-going, but who would think, judge, and see all things in the light of the mystery of Christ and the Kingdom.

St. Augustine is the principal patron of both religious congregations because of his love of divine truth and his desire to understand himself and his world in the light of that truth. Augustine's title as Doctor of Charity gave supreme importance to the love of God and neighbor--this insight and his understanding and love of the church were very attractive to the young founders as well as the importance Augustine gave to friendship and community.

Mother Marie Eugenie Milleret was beatified in 1975. Her Feast Day is celebrated on March 10.

**BROTHER RICHARD GAGNON, A.A.**

As of the first week of January 2006, Brother Richard Gagnon,



A.A. joined the staff of the Office of Admissions at Assumption College, where he works as an Admissions Counselor. Brother Richard is also Treasurer for his Assumptionist community at 50 Old English Road in Worcester.

Recently Brother Richard worked as Director of Life House, a drop-in center for people living with HIV and AIDS, located in downtown Worcester, MA.

**FATHER JOHN FRANCK, A.A.**

After a short sabbatical, our previous Provincial, Fr. John Franck



assumed his new duties as Director of Vocations at the beginning of February. He moved from our community house in Brighton, MA back to Emmanuel House on the campus of Assumption College in Worcester, MA where he had spent nearly eleven years (1985-1996).

In his brief time as Director of Vocations he has been meeting with candidates, organizing a monthly discussion group, planning summer retreats, collaborating with the Religious Sisters of the Assumption in the AMA program, and working closely with our Development Office on many new promotional projects.

By the way, if you or anyone you know would be interested in such a group, or who would like to go for a retreat this summer in New Hampshire please contact Fr. John directly at [jlfranck@aol.com](mailto:jlfranck@aol.com) or 1-508-767-7517 or visit the Vocations Section of our website at [www.assumption.us](http://www.assumption.us)

**By being faithful to the Gospel in the choices we make, in our daily work, in our openness to others and our availability in times of need, our whole life, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, becomes an encounter with God.**

**SR. MARIA EMMANUEL MELOCOTON, R.A.**

Sr. Maria Emmanuel Melocoton, R.A., Provincial of the Philippine-Thai Province of the Religious of the Assumption, writes of her feelings about having her Brothers close by,

"For some three years the possibility of having a third member of the Assumption family in the Philippines has kept us, The Religious of the Assumption, quite excited. Now the Foundation of the Assumptionists has become a reality. In our Filipino tradition, the arrival of a family member is an important event. So we welcomed our brothers with joy and tried to facilitate their initial adjustment to the country. There were a thousand and one things to attend to and it was quite amazing how they were quickly able to create a home. Since then we have had several encounters and the work of collaboration has started. We were there in full force for the blessing of their house. They have come to celebrate the Eucharist for the anniversary of Mere Marie Eugenie's Beatification as well as the end of the Provincial Chapter. They will be in the school of San Simon and San Lorenzo to celebrate the feast of M. Marie Eugenie. These encounters help us to understand our roots, our Assumption spirituality and values. It is delightful to hear someone who is not an RA speak about the things that matter to us... the centrality of Christ, the importance of community, the work of the Kingdom. Gradually we will be clearer about our areas of collaboration in the mission, in this great work for the extension of the Kingdom."



Sister Maria Emmanuel Melocoton, R.A. (seated, far right) with Sr. Mary Ann Azanza, R.A., and members of the Assumptionist Community in Brighton, MA in August 2005. From left to right: Assumptionist Brothers Stephen Goguen, Carlos Melocoton, Ronald Sibugan, Ricky Montanez, and Alex Castro.

**ASSUMPTION TOGETHER**

The Religious of the Assumption Sisters and the Assumptionists have a long and rich history of collaboration. The Religious of the Assumption were founded in France in 1839 by Mother Marie Eugenie Milleret, who, like Father Emmanuel d'Alzon, was driven by the desire that individuals come to know and love Jesus Christ and His Church and commit themselves to the extension of His Kingdom. They both saw that through education they could form strong characters - Christians who would live their faith and who would think, judge, and see all things in the light of the mystery of Christ and the Kingdom.



AMA Volunteers with Religious of the Assumption and the Assumptionists

This shared vision has continued for close to 200 years and is what has drawn many young Filipino men to the Assumptionists. Many of the present young candidates had relationships with the Religious of the Assumption Sisters in the Philippines and wanted more of what Marie Eugenie and Emmanuel d'Alzon had to offer. This quest eventually brought them to the United States, where the young candidates continued their discernment and found more of the Religious of the Assumption that they had come to love in the Philippines. Sisters Mary Ann, Cecilia, Loreto, and Sister Clemencia - who are from the Philippines and currently work in the United States - offered a home away from home for the young men, as they embodied not only Marie Eugenie's way of thinking, but the Filipino culture as well.

This year, the Associate Missionaries of the Assumption (AMA) program ([www.assumptionvolunteers.org](http://www.assumptionvolunteers.org)), the lay volunteer branch of the Assumption family, has sent their first volunteer - Jason Bonifazi - to the Philippines, to work in youth ministry in the Diocese of Cabanatuan, where Brother Clemente served as an AMA years ago. And so, the story continues as the collaboration finds a new place to grow and prosper today. The Philippines, although a new foundation for the Assumptionists, draws upon the long and rich relationship between the Sisters and Brothers of the Assumption. And so, the important work that was undertaken almost two hundred years ago goes on, with a fresh face but rooted in the collaborative tradition of Mother Marie Eugenie and Emmanuel d'Alzon.