Rehabilitation by the Bulgarian Parliament of those condemned during the trial of 1952.

Wednesday, the 28th of July 2010, will remain a historic date in the Bulgarian Catholic church and for our Assumptionist family. On this day, the Bulgarian Parliament passed a decree correcting and completing the law that rehabilitates politically and civically those victimized by the repression. This was the initiative of Lacezar Roshev, Catholic deputy of the north of Bulgaria, in the context of the parliamentary commission responsible for human rights, religious confessions, and the requests and complaints lodged by private citizens.

The decree officially rehabilitates “those condemned by the third correctional chamber of the Supreme Tribunal, in the 1952 trial, #452, against members of the Catholic Church in Bulgaria”, as well as those condemned in the two trials initiated in 1949 against the members of the Union of Evangelical Churches.
After his beatification in March 1998, Bishop Evgueni Bossilov was rehabilitated by the Bulgarian court in May of 1999. In 2002, after the beatification of the three blessed martyrs, Kamen Vitchev, Pavel Djidjov and Josaphat Chichkov, a similar process was initiated in view of their official rehabilitation, but this was never finalized. Eight years later, a new initiative, this time at the parliamentary level, has led to the rehabilitation not only of the blessed martyrs, but of all forty people condemned (eleven of whom were Assumptionists) during the trials against members of the Catholic Church in Bulgaria.

The reputation of those condemned ("accused of having founded, directed or abetted after the coup d'état of 9 September 1944 an organization whose goal was to overthrow, destabilize and weaken the popular democratic power in the popular Republic of Bulgaria by another coup d'état, a revolt, a riot, by means of terrorist acts and crimes constituting a danger for all of society and through foreign military intervention") is now washed clean fifty-eight years after their condemnation. Of course, the rehabilitation comes after all of these Bulgarian priests and men and women religious who were brought to trial are no longer living. For them, undoubtedly, such a rehabilitation has a very relative importance given the fact that they now know true justice after having met face to face the just and merciful Judge. Nonetheless, we can only rejoice at seeing justice restored.

We do well to note that by a happy coincidence, which divine Providence alone understands, the joy of this rehabilitation is joined to that occasioned by two other commemorations: that of the 150th anniversary of the union with Rome on the part of the Bulgarians of the Byzantine rite, which is at the origin of the apostolic Exarchate of Sofia, as well as that of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Emmanuel d'Alzon, whose spiritual sons paid a heavy price during the trial of 1952.