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20 YEARS FOUNDATION IN TOGO,
THE PHILIPPINES,
AND VIETNAM
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Augustins de l'Assomption
PROVINCE D'EUROPE

The Foundations, 20 Years Later



When I was a novice, I remember attending a celebration in Paris sending-off ceremony for three groups of founders, who were leaving to establish the congregation in the Philippines, Vietnam, and Togo. Throughout the

year, we had spoken at length about these foundations: it must be said that one of my fellow novices—he'll recognize himself when he reads this—was part of one of the three groups. That was 20 years ago already!

Since then, the seeds sown in the ground have grown well, becoming trees of varying sizes. I do not know if one can say that the seed gave rise to the largest tree in the garden, like the mustard seed in the Gospel (Mark 4:30–32). Nevertheless, the seed has borne fruit. Over the past twenty years, in each of these countries, young people have been welcomed into the congregation, communities have been founded, ministries have been established, and numerous initiatives have been undertaken. So much so that today, it would be hard to imagine the face of the Province without these brothers from Asia or West Africa.

To commemorate 20 years of Assumptionist ministry, celebrations have been or will be held in the Philippines (January 24), Vietnam (August 1), and Togo (August 30). This is also our intention in this issue of ATLPE, which will serve as a great expression of thanksgiving for what we have experienced.

Praise and thanksgiving, however, do not erase crises or difficult times. Brothers have left religious life or the Assumption; communities have had to be closed; projects have not been successful. We also remember the brothers who worked in Asia or West Africa and who have now passed away, such as Paul Dong, Jean-Marie Chuvi, and Jean-Chrysostome Tsiriogna.

After looking back at the past, we can now turn our gaze toward the future. The Vicariates of Asia-Oceania and West Africa are engaged in a process of autonomy that will lead to the creation of Vice-Provinces. Following the last General Chapter, a synodal process was established, involving religious who are on mission in the Vicariates or who originate from them. Still underway at the provincial and congregational levels, this discernment process will aim to determine whether the two entities are ready to make this transition now, or whether it would be better to wait a few more years to allow for the necessary consolidation. We should have a decision by late spring.

On this journey, we are invited to move forward with caution and confidence, remembering that it is God—and God alone—who brings his Kingdom to fruition:

“The kingdom of God is like a man who scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or rises, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the blade, then the ear, and finally the full grain in the ear.” (Mk 4:26–28) ■

Fr. Nicolas Potteau
Provincial of Europe

A New Vicar in West Africa

Appointed on February 11, 2026, Father Vivien Dokoui assumes the role of Vicar, succeeding Father Georges Houssou, who has joined the Provincial Council as an assistant.



A native of Togo, my name is Vivien Kodjo Dokoui. After completing my studies in Accounting and Business Management, I spent a year gaining professional experience at a company in Lomé (Togo) before seeking to deepen my discernment to follow Christ.

My encounter with the Assumption took place on a motorcycle during my college years. As a student, I took on odd jobs to remain financially independent from my parents. One of these jobs was driving a taxi on the motorcycle my father had given me when I passed my high school graduation exam. It was while doing this work that God reached out to me, through a nun, to tell me about the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption, which had just established itself in Sokodé. Invited to a discernment session on the theme "Master, where do you live?" led by the former Superior General, the Most Reverend Father Richard Lamoureux, I decided to come and discover the Lord's dwelling, just as the disciples did in John 1:39.

I completed my postulancy and novitiate in Sokodé before being sent to Ouagadougou to study philosophy. After earning my bachelor's degree in philosophy, I went to Kinshasa (DRC) to study theology. I was then assigned to the Saint-Augustine Novitiate in Sokodé to work on issues related to self-reliance in West Africa.

Ordained a priest in 2018, I was appointed assistant pastor at the Parish of Our Lady of the Assumption and in the community of Sokodé-Komah. There, in addition to the mission of seeking out self-sustaining initiatives, I was asked to oversee the construction of the parish complex (church, multipurpose hall, and community center) in collaboration with the Assumptionist delegate for West Africa. In 2020, with the elevation of the delegation to a vicariate, I

was appointed bursar of the West African Vicariate. I served in this role until August 2023.

When the new Provincial—now Bishop of the Diocese of Namur, Bishop Fabien Lejeusne—called me to serve on his Council as Assistant in charge of the communities of Northern Europe (Belgium, England, the Netherlands, Lille, Strasbourg) as well as the houses in Albertville and Layrac. The appointment of Bishop Fabien Lejeusne by Pope Leo XIV on October 6, 2025, led to the nomination of a new Provincial in the person of Father Nicolas Potteau, who appointed me Vicar of the Vicariate of West Africa on 02/06/2026, with February 11, 2026—the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes—as the date of my assumption of office.

It has been a joy for me to have served in this way so that the Kingdom of God may come within us and around us. During my missions, I have learned many things that will be an asset to me in my service to the Vicariate. I have received the support of four of my brothers from the Vicariate who have agreed to accompany me on this mission in the service of the West African Vicariate. They are Fathers Nicolas Tarralle, Jean-Paul Sagadou, Fabrice-Marie Adzakli, and Maurice Wombaraguema. I extend my heartfelt thanks to them, and I also express my gratitude to Father Georges and his team for the work they have accomplished in the service of the Vicariate.

The Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption is currently present in three countries in West Africa. Our goal is to extend the Kingdom of God, through the Assumption's missions, to other countries in West Africa by establishing new communities. To carry out the Assumption missions, we need financial resources. During our term as Vicar, we intend to work toward identifying and establishing self-sustaining ministries. The third priority of our term is to further cultivate the charism of the Assumption, to make it known, and to adapt it to local realities through studies in various fields.

May the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of the Assumption, and Our Lady of Salvation intercede for us. ■

Fr. Vivien Dokoui,
Vicar of West Africa

• Admission to the diaconate

Dominique Savio Trinh Viet Công	Ba Ria
Paul Nguyen Van Duc	Nhi Binh social community
Noël Tomfei	Lomé
Expedit N'dri Kouamé	Ouagadougou
Antoine Tran Van Hung	François 1
Gérémie Ouedraogo	Transfer to Kinshasa
Emmanuel Patchana	Transfer to Kinshasa

• Admission to priestly ordination

Paul Thai Van Thành	Long An
Romel Bautista	François 1

• Appointments

02/2026	From	To
Viktors Jermakovics	Paris-Denfert	Paris-Morère
Vivien Dokoui	Paris-Denfert	Lomé
04/2026		
Blaise Bonou-Yehouenou	Adveniat House (Manille)	Lyon-Debrousse
Bernard Holzer	Novice master at Adveniat House	
Ariel Vidanes	Supérieur of Adveniat House	

• Appointments for the Vicariate of West Africa

As of 11/02/2026	
Vivien Dokoui	Vicar of West Africa
As of 20/02/2026 - Vicarial council	
Nicolas Tarralle	1 st Councilor
Jean-Paul Sagadou	Councilor
Fabrice-Marie Adzakli	Councilor and vicarial secretary
Maurice Wombaraguema	et vicarial treasurer
As of 20/02/2026 - Formation	
Lucas Sezouhlon	Vicarial Formator



Vicarial Council of West Africa: Frs Maurice Wombaraguema, Nicolas Tarralle, Vivien Dokoui, Fabrice-Marie Adzakli, Jean-Paul Sagadou

JUBILEE 2026

MARCH

Patrick Zago	60 years of priesthood	06/03/1966
Alain Marchadour	60 years of priesthood	19/03/1966

APRIL

Michaël Kakule Tsongo	25 years of priesthood	05/04/2001
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AUGUST

Jean de Dieu Kasereka Laylay	25 years of religious life	24/08/2001
Germain Kasereka Salamu	25 years of religious life	24/08/2001

SEPTEMBER

Joseph Begoc	60 years of religious life	29/09/1966
Theo Borgermans	60 years of religious life	29/09/1966
Michel Carrière	60 years of religious life	29/09/1966
Guy Clerc	60 years of religious life	29/09/1966
Pedro Fuentes	60 years of religious life	29/09/1966
Juan Antonio Sanchez	25 years of priesthood	20/10/2001

OCTOBER

Marie-Bernard Kientz	70 years of religious life	03/10/1956
Anastasio Calle	70 years of religious life	16/10/1956
Miguel Iriarte	70 years of religious life	16/10/1956
Noël Le Bousse	70 years of religious life	16/10/1956
Joseph Delvordre	75 years of religious life	28/10/1951

NOVEMBER

Claudio Molteni	25 years of priesthood	26/11/2001
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DECEMBER

José Luis Huéscar	60 years of priesthood	17/12/1966
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• Provincial Council Oversight of the Territories

Nicolas Potteau	Vicariates of Asia-Oceania and West Africa
Iulian Danca	Eastern Mission
Vinh Cao Ba	Spain, Montpellier, Nîmes, and England
Benoît Grière	Paris, Lyon, Albertville, and Layrac
Georges Houssou	Belgium, the Netherlands, Lille, Strasbourg, and Florence



The photo of the Provincial Council is currently being sent to the communities of the European Province.

A Vietnamese in the Philippines

Having spent the past seven years in the Philippines, Father Jean-Baptiste Nguyen Van The shares his journey, his joy, and the challenges of being a missionary.



First of all, could you introduce yourself?

My name is Jean-Baptiste Nguyen Van The, and I was born in 1988. I come from a devout Catholic family in the Cat Tien parish, in the Diocese of Da Lat. Faith and prayer have always been at the heart of our family life. Growing up in this environment nurtured my desire to dedicate my life to serving God. I entered the congregation in 2012, completing the postulancy and novitiate, and participating in pastoral activities such as teaching catechism, serving in parishes, and working with children. I took my first vows in 2015 and continued my formation thereafter.

You have been in the Philippines since September 2018. Do you feel well integrated into your community and into this country?

I first came here to study English, and then I pursued theological studies at Saint Vincent School of Theology. I took my final vows in 2020 and was ordained a priest in 2025. Living in an international community for the first time was a new experience, with challenges such as adapting to a new culture and improving my English. However, the brothers welcomed me very warmly, which helped me feel at home. Little by little, I adapted to the culture, community life, and the language. Thanks to my experience in the Philippines, I also learned many wonderful values

from the Filipino people, such as patience, kindness, honesty, hospitality, deep religious devotion, optimism, and open-mindedness. Today, I feel well integrated and happy to serve in the Pavel community in Manila, participating in liturgical ministry, charitable activities, and accompanying the Vietnamese Catholic community, while continuing to foster fraternity within the community.

What are your ministries?

I serve as the marketing manager at ALC (Assumption Language College), where we strive to create not only a learning environment but also a family atmosphere for our residents. As a bridge between the community and the residents, I help organize programs and activities, which brings me joy and satisfaction by fostering connections and camaraderie. Another important part of my ministry is assisting with visa applications. This work requires patience, attention to detail, and strict time management, but it allows me to help international students, missionaries, and my fellow staff members. I also find great joy in teaching catechism online, particularly to catechumens and couples preparing for marriage. I teach two evening classes a week to participants from Vietnam, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, many of whom cannot attend in-person classes due to their work or studies. This ministry is both a responsibility and a blessing, as it allows me to accompany people who are sincerely seeking the faith. It can, however, be difficult when participants disagree with the Church's teachings on moral issues such as divorce, abortion, or marriage. I respond by listening patiently, explaining the Church's teachings, and inviting reflection and discernment. It is particularly encouraging to see couples who persevere in their faith and commitment before getting married, which makes me point out that ministry is as much about providing support as it is about teaching.

What difficulties and joys do you encounter?

These experiences remind me of my vocation to become a missionary disciple, as recommended by the General Chapter. The Vietnamese Church, though rich in vocations, still needs missionaries. Living in the Philippines, I have sometimes been tempted to return to my familiar culture in Vietnam. However, I realized that as a religious of the Assumption, I had to step out of my comfort zone, be ready for the missions

entrusted to me, and integrate myself into the environment, spirituality, and apostolate of the congregation wherever I am sent. Being open, respectful, and humble allows me to fully embrace these missions.

Does this experience strengthen your vocation?

The priestly vocation demands presence, sharing, empathy, and attentiveness to the suffering of humanity. As a priest, I strive to proclaim the truth of the Gospel and God's infinite mercy, responding to the call to be a missionary disciple in all the areas entrusted to me. Prayer, both personal and communal, is essential to sustaining this life of service, helping me to remain faithful, united to Christ, and committed to the mission. Through prayer, liturgy, and pastoral ministry, I seek to bring God's hope, peace, and love to others. Finally, as an Assumptionist, I live in a spirit of brotherhood and solidarity with my community. My apostolic work is always linked to my brothers, and I strive to embody unity, obedience, and service. Father d'Alzon taught that the priesthood is as much for others as it is for oneself. I take his words as spiritual encouragement and a reminder as a religious and a priest: "It is the great desire to glorify God by bringing Him as many



stray children as possible [...] that has drawn me to the altar" (ES, 712).

How do you encourage your brothers to go on mission to the Philippines or elsewhere?

The Philippines, with its young foundation and openness to cultural exchange, offers a unique mission field for serving, learning, and engaging in the Church's apostolate. I hope that many other brothers will have the courage to embrace this vocation and experience the Assumptionist charism that is taking root and flourishing here. ■

Fr. Jean-Baptiste Nguyen Văn The,
New Manila Community, Cubao

At Home in a Foreign Land

Brother Adan Louie, a 36-year-old Filipino, is completing his Pastoral Immersion in Vietnam, in the Dong Quang community, which oversees the Hoa Huê orphanage.

My name is Adan Louie Garcia Flores, and I am the eldest of two siblings. Raised in a family that was both religious and politically active, I grew up with a love for the arts: painting, music, and cooking. I attended the Union Schools of La Union and earned my BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) at Pines City Colleges in Baguio City. My professional career has led me to work as a catechist at St. Augustine Parish, a health educator, a private nurse, and a nursing assistant in a nursing home. In 2010, I enrolled in a Master's program in Nursing with a specialization in maternal and child health nursing. In 2017, I began my introductory visit with the Adveniat community, and in 2018, I entered the Assumption as a pre-postulant. I completed my novitiate under the guidance of Father Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, aa, and I took my first vows in 2020, during the pandemic, in the Sisters' chapel Augustines of Our Lady of Consolation. I studied philosophy at the Loyola School of Theology and am

currently completing a four-year theology program while pursuing a master's degree in family counseling at Ateneo de Manila University. I am currently residing in the Dong Quang community (social community) in Vietnam for a pastoral year.

New community, new environment

As a Filipino religious brother in Vietnam, adapting to a new culture has been an experience that has humbled and enriched me. Our small community of eight people carries out its ministry at the *Mái Am Hoa Huê* orphanage, in the parish, and through social action programs. The fraternal support and my lay friends have guided me: teaching and learning the language, cooking, singing Vietnamese songs... The mission here is communion, where culture and faith come together to transform the heart.



The day begins at 4 a.m. with prayer and the preparation of the Eucharist, and I encounter Christ in family altars, parish festivals, and the joy of Tet celebrations. Encounters with the Oblates and the Little Sisters of the Assumption have strengthened my bonds within the Assumption family. Learning the language remains a slow but joyful process; every effort strengthening my confidence. This mission has become a journey of grace, fraternity, and discovery - finding Christ in a new land and in new faces

My apostolate in Vietnam

At *Mái Ấm Hoa Huệ*, a shelter for orphaned children, those from broken homes, single-parent families, or living on the streets, I discovered that every act of kindness shines as a testament to love and hope. Behind their mischievousness lie generous hearts, ready to volunteer and accompany me on bike rides to school and to play soccer. My pastoral year was imperfect but transformative: mistakes became stepping stones toward patience and resilience. Moving into the new community, carrying wood, assembling cabinets, and working alongside the brothers revealed to me a fraternity lived out in love, prayer, and service. In the laughter, meals, and evening prayers, I saw the healing power of community. Mission is not just what we do, but what we become: in weakness, strength; in brotherhood, communion; and in the joy of children, Christ.

Serving the Christ among the poor

Together with the lay group *Gia đình Đức Mẹ Lên Trời* I participated in pilgrimages and outreach activities

from Dak Nông to Vũng Tàu via the Mekong, listening, sharing, and discovering a living faith in every face. The journey turned into an immersive experience: preparing pho, harvesting vegetables, tilling the fields alongside farmers, merchants, and fishermen. Our donation program — rice, canned goods, clothing — transformed compassion into action, ensuring dignity and hope. For two years, this bridge of generosity inspired others to share, and in serving, I encountered Christ in the smiles and struggles of the children, realizing that mission is a path of love, presence, and transformation.

The mystery of vocation

Emmanuel d'Alzon's call to "dare to do great things for God" has become my guiding principle, teaching me that mission is not about imposing oneself, but about entering into people's stories—by listening with love and allowing Christ to reveal himself. Faith is courage, risk, and generosity, lived out in simple acts of service. Even though language barriers and cultural differences put me to the test, joy came from visiting families, preparing meals, and watching the children laugh. Service became my joy, teaching me that the true mission lies in presence: listening, cooking, cleaning, making mistakes, and learning. Within the community, I encountered Christ anew, discovering that to serve is to be transformed. ■

Br. Adan Louie Garcia Flores,
Dong Quang Community (Social Community)

Manila, a school of faith and service

After completing his studies at Sciences Po, Jean decided to go to the Philippines for a year to volunteer with the Assumptionists. How is it going?

I arrived in the Philippines in September 2025 for a year of volunteer work and discovered a fascinating country. My mission is based at Assumption Language College (ALC), which primarily offers English courses to religious from Asia and Africa before they begin their university studies. Within the Philanthropic Development Office, I seek out sponsors to fund scholarships for congregations with limited resources: a concrete way to serve.

At ALC, I'm struck by the teachers' joy and kindness. They have lunch with the students every day, closely monitor their progress, and, during events, take the stage to perform shows they've prepared with enthusiasm. Their passionate dedication touches me; I wish I'd had teachers like that when I was learning English. The students, determined and confident, are also a source of inspiration.

Living alongside the Augustinians of the Assumption is a blessing. I share daily life with brothers from the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Korea, the Congo, and Burkina Faso, united in the love of Christ. Our interactions open me up to their cultures and strengthen my faith, even if I am not always as diligent as I would like to be in attending services. Their mission extends beyond ALC: managing the humanitarian association Kaloob as well as the local branch of the Bayard Group, and providing pastoral care in the slums and at the hospital. I am especially grateful to Brothers Ethiel and Peter, as well as to Fathers Jojo, JB, Chris, and Bernard, not to mention the laypeople involved with the Assumptionists who, with great generosity, are helping me discover Philippine culture.

Exploring Manila takes some getting used to. As one of the most densely populated cities in the world, plagued by underdeveloped transportation and constant traffic jams, it can be exhausting. Yet its cultural sites and the young, smiling people who bring it to life give it a charming character. My trips by motorcycle taxi give me a real sense of freedom. Visits to the slums also confront me with the harshness of living conditions and remind me of my privilege which is my own, as well as the call to serve the poorest. Beyond the capital, I discovered Palawan, the province of Bataan, Baguio, and the rice terraces

of Banaue. Despite natural and economic challenges, the Philippines remains a radiant country. This year has been a lesson in humility, faith, and gratitude for me. ■

Jean Plassart,
volunteer on mission in the Philippines



Above, at the ALC offices. Below, visiting with laypeople close to the Assumption



A look at the foundation in Sokodé

Beginning in 1999, the Assumptionists launched a missionary project marking the transition to the new millennium. After exploring several options in West Africa, Togo was chosen in response to a call from the Bishop of Sokodé.



At the 1999 General Chapter, which saw the election of Father Richard Lamoureux, the prospect of the Great Jubilee of the REDEMPTION (2000) sparked the idea that the Assumptionists could carry out one or more “prophetic gestures.” The task for each province was to devise a meaningful project that

would the transition to the new millennium in an original way and would mobilize the congregation.

The Province of France, under the leadership of Father André Antoni, began to reflect on this request by suggesting several concrete initiatives. Among them were doubling the number of candidates from Vietnam accepted into the community, founding an orphanage in Romania, and the Assumptionists’ return to West Africa.

Why West Africa? In 1999, the community on Rue François I, affiliated with Bayard, welcomed Cardinal Agré, Archbishop of Abidjan, Ivory Coast, for a brief visit. He suggested that the Assumptionists establish a presence in his country to assist the Ivorian Episcopal Conference in launching a Catholic newspaper. Father Pierre-Emmanuel Rospide heard the call and relayed it to the Provincial Council.

That is how the project took shape and developed. It was decided, first and foremost, to explore a few West African countries to gain a better understanding of the local situation. Starting in 2000, several trips were organized to visit Côte d’Ivoire, of course, but also Togo, Benin, and Burkina Faso. Pierre-Emmanuel Rospide and Benoît Grière met with bishops, leaders of religious congregations, and laypeople involved in the media. As the project took shape more clearly, it was decided to involve the African Province, represented by its Provincial, Father Jean-Marie Meso, and Father Emmanuel Kahindo, Assistant General in Rome. A fact-finding trip was organized to visit Togo and Burkina Faso, which had been selected as potential sites for a foundation.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that the security situation in Ivory Coast had deteriorated, and the sisters Religious of the Assumption had warned us of the difficulties involved in establishing a Catholic press in that context. Finally, we recalled that in 1994, Bishop Ambroise Djoliba of Sokodé had written to the French Province requesting an Assumptionist community. He, already pleased with the presence of the Religious and Orantes of the Assumption, wished to see a male congregation, of which his diocese lacked one, with the exception of the Marianist Brothers. In 1994, the Province of France, still reeling from its departure from Côte d’Ivoire in 1990, did not consider a return to West Africa due to a lack of resources. Ultimately, between Burkina Faso and Togo, we set our sights on Togo, thanks to Bishop Djoliba’s clear and determined willingness to welcome us. The bishop’s idea was that we could represent male religious life and respond to pastoral needs, such as taking charge of Radio Sainte-Thérèse, a branch of the cathedral parish (Komah), and maintaining a presence among young people.

Meanwhile, a young priest from Burkina Faso—who had been ordained in 2000 and had been taught by Jean-François Petit during his studies at the minor seminary—expressed his desire to join the Assumptionists. Originally from the Diocese of Fada N’Gourma in the eastern part of the country, his bishop was willing to let him try out religious life, though he hoped it would not come to anything... we all know how it turned out, and Jean-Paul Sagadou became the first West African to join the Assumptionists. In 2005, a working group was formed to prepare for the founding of Sokodé. Brother Bernard Jouanno, Brother Roger from Madagascar, Father René Mihigo, former Assistant General, and Father Jean-Paul were part of the founding team.

In 2006, the Sokodé community was officially launched; it had been designated from the outset as the gateway for our return to West Africa. Sokodé marks the beginning of a new missionary adventure. ■

Fr. Benoît Grière,
Lyon Debrousse Community

I was there 20 years ago! A Look Back at the Founding in West Africa

Father Jean-Paul Sagadou is part of the first team of founders and the first West African to become an Assumptionist: he recounts the history of the Vicariate and the challenges ahead.

It is, then, a time for anniversaries in Asia and West Africa! It is right to honor the memory of the past, while daring to face the unknown future in a creative way. The Burkinabe historian Joseph Ki-Zerbo wrote: "To feel concerned about the future, one must feel like an heir to the past." This look at the founding in West Africa highlights the major milestones, challenges, and opportunities that have presented themselves to the Augustinians of the Assumption. I will conclude by sharing my personal experience.

The Assumptionist "gesture" for the Jubilee of the Year 2000

To mark the Jubilee of the Year 2000, the Augustinians of the Assumption wished to make a "prophetic gesture" by launching a new foundation in West Africa. This project responded to an invitation from Bishop Ambroise Djoliba of Sokodé, Togo, who welcomed the congregation after discovering its charism during one of his visits to Strasbourg.

This establishment in Togo actually marked a "re-establishment" for the Assumptionists in the region. In fact, an initial mission had begun in Côte d'Ivoire as early as 1957 at the invitation of Bishop Boivin (Abidjan), notably with the founding of Notre-Dame d'Afrique College. Despite intense pastoral commitment—from the city center such as Port-Bouët to more outlying areas like Grand Bassam—various difficulties and complexities in local collaboration led to the religious order's permanent withdrawal in 1989. It was thus 17 years after leaving Ivorian soil that the Assumptionists returned to West Africa, choosing Togo this time as their new base.

Togo: Gateway

Before its official establishment, the Togo mission was the subject of numerous exploratory trips between 2000 and 2006. These trips were led primarily by the Provincial of France and the Provincial Treasurer, sometimes accompanied by representatives from partner provinces in Africa (DRC) and Madagascar. Between 2004 and 2005, a preparatory committee was established in Paris under the direction of Father Benoît Grière. This group, composed of Fathers René



September 2006: Fathers René Mihigo, Roger Randriarinala, and Jean-Baptiste Katembo left Paris for Sokodé

Mihigo, Jean-Baptiste Katembo, Jean-Paul, and Brother Bernard Jouanno, would later form the first team of the foundation.

The Founding of Sokodé: An International Adventure

The Assumptionists' journey in Togo began in September 2006 with the establishment of their first community in the Komah neighborhood of Sokodé. True to its charism, the congregation immediately focused on interculturality with a pioneering team composed of Father Jean-Paul Sagadou (from Burkina Faso), Fathers René Mihigo and Jean-Baptiste Katembo (from the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Brother Roger Randriarinala (from Madagascar), and, shortly thereafter, Brother Bernard Jouanno (French).

Key dates in the establishment

- ♦ November 3, 2006: The first local chapter was held, marking the official organization of community life in the presence of the provincials of France, Madagascar, and the Congo.
- ♦ November 5, 2006: A solemn and festive welcome for the community by the Diocese of Sokodé.

- ♦ October 21, 2007: Establishment of the Parish of Our Lady of the Assumption, the pastoral care of which is entrusted to the religious.

A mission in Motion

Over the years, the community has become a true melting pot of nationalities, marked by numerous departures and arrivals:

- ♦ 2008–2009: Fr. Jean-Baptiste returns to the DRC, while Brother Bernard returns to the France for health reasons. They were replaced in September 2009 by Brothers Jean-Raphaël (Madagascar) and Wilfried Malanda (Congo-Brazzaville).
- ♦ 2010: While Brother Roger left for training in France, the mission expanded with the arrival of Frs. Iosif Gal (Romania) and Aristide Kataliko (Congo).
- ♦ 2011: A new chapter begins with the departure of Fathers Wilfried and Jean-Paul to new horizons, and the arrival of Father Benoît Bigard in August of the same year.

The Opening of a Novitiate in Sokodé

On August 28, 2010, the feast of St. Augustine, seven (7) young Togolese men entered the Assumptionist novitiate in Sokodé. Under the direction of Father René Mihigo (novice master), the novitiate had chosen to place themselves under the protection of Saint Augustine by adopting the name "Saint Augustine Novitiate." Among the seven young men were: Jean-Claude, Roland, Lucas, Georges, Vivien, Yvon, and

Fabrice. History will record them as the first novices of the Assumptionist foundation in West Africa. They are also the novices of the bicentennial of Father d'Alzon's birth. At the opening of this novitiate, the Provincial, Father Benoît Grière, wrote: "With the opening of the novitiate, a new stage begins for our foundation in West Africa, but the work that remains to be done is immense." Initially housed in a rented building in the Zongo neighborhood near the cathedral parish, the novitiate will move into its own premises on January 24, 2012, in a new building east of the Assumption Sisters' school.

The Burkina Faso Adventure

On September 1, 2011, a community of ten (10) Assumptionist religious settled in Ouagadougou: Fr. Jean Paul Sagadou, the superior and a native of Burkina Faso, was the first to arrive, followed on September 12 by Fr. Nicolas Angello Randrianarison, a native of Madagascar, and then on September 20 by six young professed brothers from Togo (Fabrice Akelessim, Jean-Claude Diwediga, Kodjo Vivien Dokoui, Georges Demenya Houssou, Roland Mangbassim, and Kossi Lucas Sezouhlon). Fr. Paulin Kakule Vyakuno, a Congolese, joined the community a little later, as did Brother Antoine Miss (October 2011), followed by Fr. Nicolas Tarralle (September 2013), both of whom are French.

In agreement with the Archdiocese of Ouagadougou, the Assumptionists committed themselves to working specifically in three areas: the understanding of the faith, the media, and youth ministry. In practice, this



The first novices: Georges Houssou, Fabrice Akelessim, Jean-Claude Diwediga, Vivien Dokoui, Lucas Sezouhlon, Roland Mangbassim

took the form of teaching philosophy and theology at the White Fathers' Institute (Jean-Paul and Paulin Kakulé), and teaching theology at the Interdiocesan Major Seminary of Ouagadougou (Jean-Paul); and a commitment to youth ministry through the city's youth chaplaincy (in collaboration with a diocesan chaplain), pastoral ministry at level of the cathedral parish of Ouagadougou, collaboration with Bayard Afrique, and the annual organization of an inter-religious and intercultural journey of African integration across West Africa, an initiative already launched from Togo.



October 2013: Visit by the Provincial (Fr. Gschwind) to the second class of philosophy students in Ouagadougou

The Lomé Foundation

Twelve years after its first foundation, the Assumptionists decided to establish a new community in Lomé, the capital of Togo. Through this new foundation, the Assumptionists sought to commit themselves to establishing communities with a more distinctly apostolic character. The official installation of the community took place on September 1, 2019, in the Wognomè neighborhood. On October 29, 2019, Archbishop Denis Amuzu-Djakpah of Lomé blessed the community. Soon after, the community moved from the Wognomè neighborhood to that of Athiémé, where, at the request of the new Archbishop of Lomé (Bishop Nicodème Barrigah, of blessed memory), the Assumptionists were called to take charge of the quasi-parish of Our Lady of Peace. In September 2021, at the time of the canonical establishment of the quasi-parish of Notre-Dame de la Paix in Athiémé, another Assumptionist mission was opening in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

The Adventure in Ivory Coast

Thirty-two years after leaving Ivory Coast, the Assumptionists are returning, this time at the "call" of Bayard Afrique, which is consolidating its "publications" in Africa there. Arriving in Ivory Coast in September and October 2021 were Fathers Jean-Claude Diwediga (from Togo); Jean-Paul Sagadou (from Burkina Faso), and the deacon Yvon Akpabie (from Togo) will be part of the first the founding team of the revitalization effort. Initially housed at the Marianist scholasticate in the Riviera III neighborhood, the Assumptionist brothers will move into their

own house in the M'Pouto neighborhood of Riviera IV in December 2024.

Challenges et Opportunities

During the founding period, the challenges are immense and can be spiritual, human, institutional, and material in nature. In fact, for the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption, the first task was to find religious brothers available for the mission in West Africa. The fact that several provinces joined forces (France, Congo, and Madagascar) made things easier. Coming from the three provinces involved in this foundation, the pioneers of this mission faced multiple challenges. They had to balance fidelity to the founding charism with the demands of inculturation. Their mission consisted of building close-knit intercultural communities, integrating harmoniously into the local ecclesial and civil fabric—notably through agreements with bishops and governments—and laying the foundations for future growth by fostering vocations and developing a solid spiritual and apostolic life (establishment of the Our Lady of the Assumption parish, the creation of the Saint-Augustin Cultural Center in Sokodé, etc.)

Over the past twenty years, our mission has been marked by high turnover among missionaries. The example of the parish of Sokodé speaks volumes: with seven parish priests in less than two decades, the average tenure (2.5 years) has proven insufficient to build a solid pastoral project. This lack of continuity can be explained by various factors: health reasons, relational difficulties within the community, or a lack of commitment to religious vows.

Recognition Process

When I entered the Assumptionist religious life in 2006 by taking my religious vows and agreeing to go on mission to Togo, I understood that my choice to follow Christ was a constant call to conversion and commitment. In doing so, my effort to follow the one whom Father d'Alzon wanted to "form in human beings" required me to be available. In doing so, I have allowed myself to be guided, over the past 20 years, by events ("the event will be our inner teacher") at the heart of the missions entrusted to me. These have been the settings for my commitments: the new foundations whose history I have just mentioned, the formation of young people in the postulancy and scholasticate, the teaching of philosophy and theology in Togo and Burkina, the accompaniment of Catholic leaders in Burkina, the work at Bayard Afrique, the creation and leadership of the interreligious cultural center in Sokodé, youth ministry; and, in a somewhat more specialized way, the accompaniment of young Africans through African Integration Trips (V.I.A.), etc. Above all, one concern has always driven me: not merely to "apply," but to "invent"; not merely to "repeat," but to "create." I continue to believe that the challenges facing West Africa call for Assumptionist religious who are courageous, bold, inventive, and creative, with Father Emmanuel d'Alzon as their inspiring figure.

The Major Challenges Ahead

If I were asked to identify, as a priority, the areas that fall under our shared responsibility for the future, I would name: the formation of the brothers and the unity of the Assumptionist community in West Africa. And if I were pressed to choose between the two, I

would gladly echo the words of the ancient scholar Archimedes: "Give me a lever and I will move the world," translating them as follows: "Let's come together, and we'll make the Assumption take off in West Africa."

First of all, we must continue to form our members, and perhaps re-examine our methods and means of formation. Formation means equipping the young people who join us to create and envision a religious life on African soil that is a reinterpretation of our charism. To do this, young religious must take an interest in the history of the Assumption as an essential part of their personal and collective history, as a family history. It is disheartening to think that among the young people who joined us in the early years of the foundation, some—apart from what they learned in the novitiate—are doing little to make the charism their own. Yet an authentic Assumptionist religious life in West Africa is possible only on this condition. The inculturation of Assumptionist religious life presupposes knowledge of the entire history of the Assumption. For this, there must be African historians—and good ones—of the Assumption.

Next, we must, in the words of Frantz Fanon, "to work together in solidarity," by not allowing the fruitless distractions of nationality, ethnicity, and tribalism to take root among us. The Assumption leads us out of tribalism. And finally, before turning our grand "discussions" under the tree into concrete actions, we must take reflection—especially forward-looking reflection—seriously. ■

Fr. Jean-Paul Sagadou,
Abidjan Community



The Abidjan community today with Brothers Armand Fawie, Maketny Noël, Barnabé Agbodza, Jean-Paul Sagadou



Ouagadougou Scholasticate



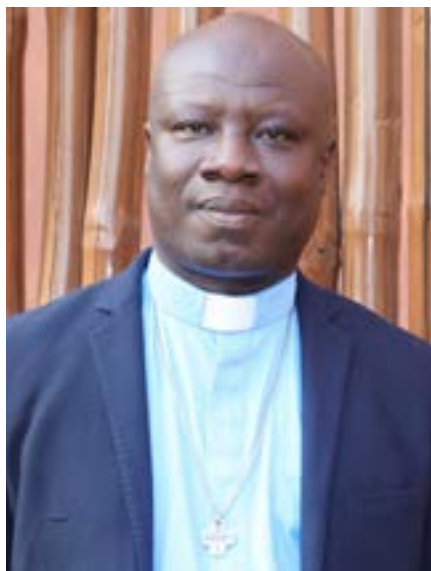
2025 Novitiate Intake



Church of Sokodé Komah

20 Years of Reform in West Africa: What Comes Next?

The future of the Assumption in West Africa depends on our present commitment—both personal and communal—lived with creative fidelity to the charism. Tomorrow’s fruitfulness is built through a fraternal, missionary life open to today’s challenges, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



The future of the Assumption in Togo and West Africa depends on what we do today! This is both a call to responsibility and an invitation to spiritual clarity: the future is not an abstract or distant reality; it is built in the present, through c o n c r e t e

choices, daily commitments, and a living fidelity to the charism we have received.

The Assumption in West Africa is a living reality in constant evolution. It is sustained not merely by heritage or tradition, but by the vitality of its members today. What we, Assumptionist religious, are currently experiencing in Togo and West Africa—our way of praying, living in fraternity, serving the people, and proclaiming the Gospel—is already shaping the face of the Congregation of tomorrow. A lack of commitment, consistency, or zeal today can undermine the future; conversely, a life lived with generosity and creativity opens up new horizons.

This calls us to personal and communal responsibility wherever we carry out our mission: in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, and Togo. Everyone is an active participant in the mission. It is not merely a matter of preserving a legacy, but of making it bear fruit. As in the parable of the talents, every religious is called to recognize the gifts received (human, spiritual, intellectual, pastoral) and to develop them for the good of the mission. To refuse to commit oneself or to settle

for the bare minimum would, in a sense, be burying these talents.

Remaining faithful to the founding vision of Venerable Father Emmanuel d’Alzon reinforces this imperative. And being faithful to his vision does not mean merely repeating the past, but embodying its spirit today: apostolic boldness, a passion for the Kingdom of God, and attentiveness to the needs of the Church and the world. In the context of West Africa, marked by instability, which in turn creates socio-economic fragility, this means responding to current challenges: youth, education, social justice, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, and human and spiritual formation. Fidelity is therefore dynamic: it involves adaptation, discernment, and creativity.

The future will not be built individually, but together. The quality of our fraternal life is essential to achieving this. A united, prayerful, and missionary community attracts people, inspires vocations, and bears witness to the Gospel. Conversely, divisions, mediocrity, and laziness—or a lack of coherence—weaken the credibility of the mission. Building the future, therefore, also means investing in authentic relationships, in dialogue, and in fidelity to the apostolic orientations of the entire congregation.

The future is not in jeopardy, but it lies in our hands, with God’s grace and through the work of the Holy Spirit. This calls for our fidelity to the charism of the Assumption, personal and communal responsibility, and concrete commitment to the mission today. All of this is lived out in interdependence, solidarity, fraternity, transversality, and subsidiarity, as our 34th General Chapter asks of us. It is in the quality of the present that the fruitfulness of tomorrow is prepared. ■

Fr. Georges Housso,
Paris-Denfert-Rochereau Community

“They left their boats and followed him” (Matthew 4:20)

Twenty years ago, the Assumptionists were founded in the Philippines. Just as in the Gospel, the idea and the possibility of such a foundation arose from a young man’s desire to respond to the call “Follow me” through the Augustinians of the Assumption... Excerpts from Father Alex Castro’s homily during the Mass celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Assumptionists’ presence in the Philippines, on January 24, 2026, at Adveniat House in Quezon City.

Here is how Fr. John Franck, AA, then Provincial of the North American Province, recounted the encounter with Ricky Montañez:

“In the summer of 1999, Father Peter Precourt, director of vocations, received an unexpected and unpromising email from a young man in the Philippines, Ricky Montañez Cañet, similar to so many other messages Peter receives throughout the year. Ricky was inquiring about the Assumptionists and wanted to learn more. Peter explained to him that there were no Assumptionists in the Philippines and that we had no intention of establishing a community there in the near future. But this young man was not easily discouraged. He replied by explaining that he had discovered the Assumption family through the Sisters of the Assumption and that he had been teaching at one of their schools for nearly eight years. He wanted information about the men’s branch of the family. Over time, Peter tried to steer him toward other religious

orders already present in the Philippines. No way! No matter what obstacles Peter put in his way, he insisted that he had a vocation to the Assumption and that, even if it meant coming to the United States to pursue it, he would do so. And so, in the summer of 2000, what we called “the Philippine project” began to take shape.

Ricky arrived in Worcester that summer to pursue a candidacy program that included a communityliving experience at Maison Emmanuel and enrollment in the pre-theological philosophy program at Assumption College. No sooner had Ricky arrived in Worcester than other Filipino candidates began knocking on the door. In the summer of 2001, four more candidates arrived.

In January 2003, Ricky Montañez began his novitiate in Chile. During the summer of 2003, three others began their novitiate in Massachusetts, while six



The first Filipinos: Fr. Alex Castro (1st from left, bottom row), Fr. Ricky Montañez (3rd from left, bottom row)



Exploring the city by motorcycle taxi with the Sisters of the Assumption

more candidates arrived from the Philippines—five Filipinos and one Vietnamese—to begin their formation at Assumption College.”¹

One thing stands out clearly from this account: it was not the Assumptionists who recruited the initial Filipino contacts and candidates, but rather those who came knocking on our door. This is one of the distinctive features of this foundation. The first contacts and candidates approached the Assumptionists on their own initiative and thanks to the encouragement of the Sisters of the Assumption. Ricky’s “persistent voice” opened the door for others who followed. He was the first to leave “his net” to learn more about the Assumptionists, and for the Assumptionists of the Province of North America, “it was an act of Providence that gave the Province new life and a new direction.”²

Another distinctive feature of this foundation is that we came to the Philippines not because we had been invited by a bishop, as is generally the case with new foundations. We came to the Philippines because “the Sisters of the Assumption persistently invited us to serve alongside them and to bring the masculine dimension of the Assumptionist charism to our country.” Over the years, several Assumptionists have traveled to the Philippines to lead retreats or

give talks to the sisters and their lay collaborators. During this time, young men came to see us to learn about the “congregation and, in some cases, to apply for admission.”³

The Sisters of the Assumption played a pivotal role in the founding of the Assumptionists in the Philippines. The regular visits by Father Peter Precourt following Ricky’s arrival in the United States, as well as subsequent visits by Father John Franck, Fathers Bernard Holzer, Roger Corriveau, Dennis Gallagher, and others, were for the most part organized and coordinated by the Sisters of the Assumption. The sisters arranged visits to the families of their contacts, visits to formation houses and theological schools, meetings with the major superiors of the congregations, meetings with the bishops of the dioceses where the sisters’ communities are located, and even with former presidents Corazon Aquino and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (both former students of the Assumption). “We were warmly welcomed into the sisters’ houses, visited several of their schools, met many of their students, spoke with their collaborators, and benefited from their extensive network of contacts,”⁴ said Fr. John.

The Sisters of the Assumption were our “first recruiters” for initial contacts and candidates. In fact,

1 Father John Franck, AA. History of the Philippine Project, September 16, 2023 (hereinafter referred to as “*The Philippine Project*”).

2 *The Philippine Project*

3 Father John Franck, AA, Letter addressed to the Archbishop of Manila, Cardinal Jaime Sin, dated January 2, 2002

4 *The Philippine Project*

all of them were connected to the Sisters of the Assumption, whether as alumni, AMA volunteers, or teachers at their schools: Father Ricky Montanez was a teacher at Assumption Iloilo, Father Alex Castro was an alumnus and later a teacher at Assumption San Simon, Father Carlos Melocoton was an alumnus of Assumption Antique, Clemente Boleche and Jonathan Malana were AMA volunteers, Fr. Eduardo Molina was a collaborator with the Sisters of the Assumption in Bangkok, Thailand, Br. Blair Nuyda was a teacher at Assumption San Lorenzo, and Fr. Rodel Cervantes was also an AMA volunteer, to name just a few of the initial contacts.

In his letter to Cardinal Sin, Father Richard Lamoureux, then Superior General, acknowledged the sisters' unwavering support in establishing the foundation in the Philippines: "The Sisters of the Assumption strongly encouraged us to come to your country. Their enthusiasm, their hospitality, and their generosity prompted us to respond to their call, within the limits of our current resources. I ask you, Your Eminence, to bless our desire to establish ourselves in the Archdiocese of Manila."⁵ Cardinal Sin responded

favorably: "I am pleased to formalize my willingness to allow you to establish a community in the Archdiocese of Manila.

You will find great inspiration in the faith of our people."⁶ Thus, the foundations for the mission in the Philippines were laid.

Finally, what had then been merely a possibility became a reality when the members of the 2005 General Chapter enthusiastically supported the establishment of the Assumptionists in the Philippines. The 2005 General Chapter recommended that the community be international and pan-Asian. It was, in fact, an international community composed of the following founding members:

Fr. Bernard Holzer (France), Fr. Gilles Blouin (Canada), Fr. Jean-Marie Chuvi Adubangho (+) (Democratic Republic of the Congo), and two Filipinos, Fr. Alex Castro and Clemente Boleche. We were living and experiencing internationality even before the term became a buzzword in the congregation.



Farewell Mass celebrated by Father Richard Lamoureux at Christmas 2005

5 Father Richard Lamoureux, letter addressed to the Archbishop of Manila, Cardinal Jaime Sin, dated February 25, 2003

6 Cardinal Jaime Sin, letter addressed to Father Richard Lamoureux, dated March 3, 2003.

We began our community life together in Brighton, in the United States, in during the 2005 Christmas season.⁷ Father Richard Lamoureux celebrated a beautiful farewell Mass for us on January 15, 2006, at the chapel of Assumption College, in the presence of friends and family, as well as Assumptionists from the United States and the Sisters of the Assumption. A few days later, we set out on our thousand-kilometer journey to the Philippines, where we were welcomed by the Sisters of the Assumption in San Lorenzo. As soon as we had settled in, we began moving our belongings and getting organized in our new home on B. Gonzales Street in Loyola Heights, Quezon City. Once settled in, we celebrated our first Mass together on the evening of January 25, 2026, on the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul. After Mass, Father Bernard placed the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, which is shaped like a typical Filipino house. With the lamp of vigil lit, the Master of the House now resides with us in his new home and reminds us of his call to follow him.

We have all left our comfort zones to build a new community that is taking root in the Philippines.

And today, 20 years later, we see the foundation flourishing: from five founding members to nearly 20

members today; from a single community in Adveniat to three communities today—Adveniat, Pavel, and Digos—as well as a rapidly expanding collaboration with the laity. What was sown 20 years ago is now bearing fruit in our ministries through Kaloob, Assumption Language College, Bayard, our parish in Digos, and our community immersion programs. We have become an active part of the local Church, contributing to the building up of the Kingdom of God.

Our path and our journey may not have been straightforward. We have faced trials and difficulties along the way. It's like driving down Katipunan Avenue toward the Adveniat House on C. Salvador Street: from Katipunan Avenue, you can almost see the main entrance to Varsity Hills. But you have to make a U-turn near the University of the Philippines to reach that main entrance to Varsity Hills; only then do you arrive at your destination. There is no straight path! Such has been our experience over the past twenty years. But we must remember: "God writes straight with crooked lines!" We must faithfully follow the voice that called us: "Do not be afraid; follow me, and I will make you fishers of men!" (Luke 5:10).■

Fr. Alex Castro
The General Community, Rome

⁷ Father Chuvi was unable to join us due to visa issues.



The first house located on B. Gonzales Street, in Loyola Heights, Quezon City

In response to the call of the Church in Asia

The foundation in the Philippines, sustained by local partnerships, is taking shape through works of formation, solidarity with the poor, and support for the Church.

These were teachers from the schools of the Assumption Sisters, drawn to their charism, who asked to join the Assumptionists. They were willing to pay for their own travel to the United States for their formation, without any promise of an immediate foundation in the Philippines. This call was then encouraged by Cardinal Sin through his secretary, Father Socrates Villegas, currently Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan and former President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines.

The Three Dreams of Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales

During one of his exploratory visits to the Philippines, the Archbishop of Manila, Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales, shared his dreams for this new religious congregation that was arriving in the Philippines. Twenty years ago, there were nearly 100 male congregations and more than 250 female ones!

"I have three dreams for you: help us form priests, religious, and laypeople to move from popular religiosity to a personal faith in Jesus Christ that transforms society; give us priests who are close to the poor; and help the Church in China, in accordance with the deep desire of all the popes I have met." These guidelines were encouraged by his successor, Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, now Pro-Prefect of the Dicastery for the Evangelization of Peoples in Rome.

An international preparation

The establishment of this community was a decision made by the General Government, and its implementation was entrusted to the Province of North America. From the very beginning, the founding team was international and interprovincial (North America, Europe, Africa, and Filipino brothers). As they were established, the communities all became international and intercontinental, leaving a lasting impression on those who encountered them through their fraternal spirit and vibrant prayer life.

The death in 2014, from malaria, of one of the five founders, Father Jean-Marie Adubangho Chuvi of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, after eight years of service in formation, definitively rooted the Assumptionists in this Asian land.



Fr. Alex Castro, Fr. Jean-Marie Chuvi Adubangho, Clemente Boleche, Fr. Gilles Blouin, and Fr. Bernard Holzer

The Fruit of Collaboration

Discovering and settling into a new country, a new culture, and new values requires—especially for foreigners—the support of people who are willing to share their experiences. For us, these were our Sisters, the Religious Sisters and the Little Sisters of the Assumption, our brothers of the Order of Saint Augustine—and their APAC (Asia Pacific Augustinian Conference) network—the Conference of Major Superiors, notably including the inter-novitiate "Exodus" and the inter-postulancy "Sojourn." And later, several other groups as well as the many formation centers in Manila.

Works that embody the charism

All while fulfilling the vision of Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales: Bayard for education, Kaloob for solidarity with the poor, Assumption Language College for support of the Church in China, and, today, for the entire missionary Church. ■

Fr. Bernard Holzer
Adveniat House Community

In memory of Father Jean-Marie Adubango Chuvi

Gone too soon, Father Chuvi was one of the first Assumptionists in Manila. Father Gilles Blouin pays tribute to him.

Among the founding members of our mission in the Philippines, I would not want to forget Chuvi, who was the first of us to arrive in Manila. Originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, he had been unable to obtain a visa to join the preparatory team, which spent two months in Worcester (USA) laying out the framework for our missionary project. It was the Religious of the Assumption who welcomed him at the airport in January 2006.



The entire community was at that time on a remote island for an intensive French language camp. The news hit us like a block of ice on the head. We took the boat back to Manila to arrange the funeral for the one among the Assumptionists who would be the first to return to the Father's house.

Since it was impossible for his parents to make the trip to Manila because they did not have passports, we decided to make a video for them of the wake, the funeral service at the

Chuvi was the life of our very first team; his infectious laughter energized us and let our neighbors know that a new community had arrived in the neighborhood. He quickly set about learning Tagalog, which he mastered in just a few months. He blended into the local population with ease and showed remarkable pastoral energy. He won the hearts of the poor in the slums through his simplicity and the goodness of his heart. Alas, he lived too short a time in this mission that he loved so much.

church with the appropriate rites and dances, and finally the burial in a plot at the cemetery that we had to purchase in a hurry. Chuvi had become the unifying leader for most Africans living in Manila. That means there were a lot of people at the funeral and, 40 days later, as tradition dictates, to observe the mourning period.

In fact, while he was back home to renew his passport, he contracted malaria, which he did not treat right away, believing it to be dengue fever, which is common in the Philippines. The return trip was grueling, and he fell into a coma the very day he arrived in Manila. Four days later, he died in the hospital following two cardiac arrests. It was May 20, 2014.

His untimely death left a void in the community but also served as a necessary seed for the future of this mission: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." Since then, every year on May 20, a pilgrimage is held at the cemetery of the Assumptionist religious in Manila in memory of Jean-Marie Chuvi. ■

Fr. Gilles Blouin
Montmartre Community, Quebec, Canada



Three of the pioneering members of the Manila community: Fr. Gilles Blouin (Canadian), Bernard Holzer (French), and Jean-Marie Adubango Chuvi (+) (Congolese)

COMMUNAUTÉS ET ŒUVRES ASSOMPTIONNISTES AUX PHILIPPINES



- **Communauté Adveniat House**
Quezon City
(région métropolitaine de Manille)
- **Communauté Cubao - Pavel House**
Quezon City
- **ALC - Assumption Language College**
Quezon City
École de langue
- **KALOOB**
Quezon City
ONG humanitaire
- **BAYARD PHILIPPINES**
Media



- **Communauté St Augustine House**
Digos
- **Sanctuaire de la Divine Miséricorde**

The Assumptionists in Vietnam: How Did It All Begin?

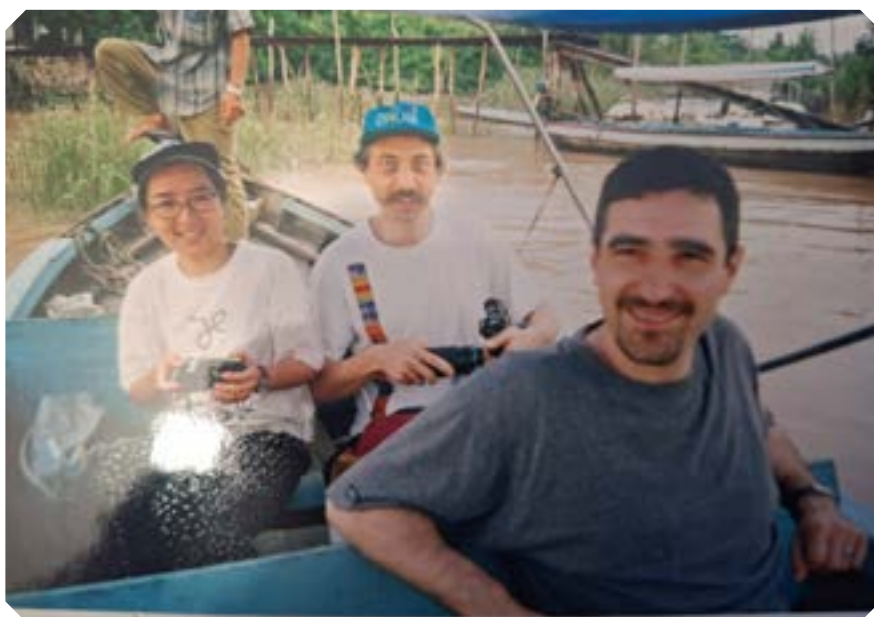
**"I have been asked to recount how the Congregation's presence in Vietnam began. I am known for not having a good memory, so I will try to recount what I do remember..."
Testimony of Brother Didier Remiot.**

In 1997, I was living in the Cachan community, which is now closed. It was a residential community for young people. I believe one of the young people there had met a young Vietnamese student at the Catholic University of Paris, François-Xavier Nguyễn Tiên Dung—whom we soon started calling "Fax"—and had invited him to live in the community. At the time, I had just left my job as an aeronautical engineer and was working at Bayard as general secretary of the group's international subsidiaries. So I had traveled a lot and was still doing so, racking up a large number of "miles"—those points from airline loyalty programs that can be redeemed for free trips. André Antoni was the superior of the Cachan community at the time. I suggested to him that we go on vacation somewhere in the world using my "miles." After hesitating a bit (Madagascar? Latin America?...), we opted for Vietnam at the invitation of Fax, who suggested we come with him to visit his country. We told him:

"Okay, but this is a vacation, not work!" The four of us set off: André, Fax, Marie-Paulette (of Vietnamese origin, who was also working at Bayard at the time—now an Oblate of the Assumption) and myself.

"Vacation," did we say? Once we arrived, Fax introduced us to nuns, priests, and even a bishop or two, to help us discover the reality of the Catholic Church in Vietnam. We were then at the end of the *Đổi mới* era, a time when, following the period of repression that had followed the country's reunification and the establishment of a harsh communist regime that had oppressed Catholics¹, the regime was seeking to open up the country—still very rural and poor—to the global economy. The Catholic Church

in Vietnam had thus been cut off from the rest of the world. For 20 years, he had not experienced Nguyễn Tiên Dung's implementation of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, and was gradually regaining a freedom that was still quite limited. During our stay, André had the idea of drafting a report to be sent to the Provincial Superior of the Province of France, Patrick Zago. In this report, we described what we had discovered about the Church in Vietnam, shared the great need for formation that we had sensed, and proposed to bring ten young Vietnamese men



Marie-Paulette Alaux, Didier Remiot, and André Antoni during their visit to Vietnam in 1997

to France to train them in theology, at the congregation's expense, before they returned to their country to serve the faithful and their Church. We were encouraged in this endeavor by Father Bosco, a Franciscan, who at the time ran several vocational centers in Saigon. André tells me that I was the one who went to defend the project before the Provincial Council. I don't remember that. In any case, on his advice, Patrick Zago accepted our proposal. The first

¹ The last president of the Republic of South Vietnam was Catholic and had tried to rely on Catholics to defend his regime. Catholics were therefore regarded as enemies of the communist regime in the north.

The young men arrived in France in 1998, I believe. Although the original idea was not at all to recruit vocations for the congregation—for reasons they are better able to explain than I am, since admission to seminaries in Vietnam was still severely limited at the time—almost all the young people who came to study in France wished to join the Assumptionists. Later, on the occasion of the transition to the 3, the congregation decided on a number of what it called “prophetic gestures.” For the Province of France, one of these consisted of agreeing to train 10 more young Vietnamese men. After that, we stopped counting... Throughout all those years, it was Father Bosco who selected the young men who were to come to France.

Although I visited Vietnam frequently between 1997 and 2012, from May to September 2002, during a sabbatical year, I went to live there for five months, staying in the house that now houses the Trần Văn Kỷ community and which at that time still belonged to the family from whom we later purchased it. That stay allowed me to have many exchanges with Father Bosco and to develop close ties with the student residence on Điện Biên Phủ Street. It was also around that time that the province acquired the building housing that residence, “A1,” on Điện Biên Phủ Street.

Of course, the question of establishing a presence in Vietnam arose fairly quickly. But we had to wait until

the first Vietnamese who had arrived in France had completed their training. My memories of this period are somewhat hazy. I recall that a preparatory committee was formed, consisting of the religious who would become the founders and myself. We tried to prepare as best we could for the opening in Saigon of the first Assumptionist community, which, given the visa restrictions imposed by the government, could only be established by young Vietnamese religious, without the participation of a French Assumptionist. It was during a trip taken from March 4 to 13, 2005, with Khuê that the house of Trần Văn Kỷ was purchased. There was another trip at the end of January 2006, this time with Benoît Grière and Marie-Françoise Phelippeau, then Provincial of the PSA. During the summer of 2006, I returned to Vietnam once again to prepare for the Assumptionists’ presence, and they opened their first community in Saigon in October 2006. The founding brothers were Khuê, Khai, and Huyền. Although I accompanied this foundation while serving as assistant and provincial treasurer—I recall the discussions regarding the construction of the novitiate in Ba Rịa—it would be necessary to review the minutes of the Provincial Council meetings from that time to recall the Assumption’s first steps in Vietnam. ■

**Br. Didier Remiot,
Écully-Valpré Community**



François-Xavier Nguyen Tien Dung (known as "Fax"), Marie-Paulette Alaux, and André Antoni

Between fidelity and boldness: the Assumptionist mission in Vietnam today

Twenty years after the founding of the first Vietnamese community, there are now seven of them, comprising about a hundred brothers engaged in numerous apostolates: a beautiful vitality that also includes a few deacons.

In October of this year, 2026, it will mark the 20th anniversary of the first Assumptionist community established in Vietnam, right in the heart of Saigon, during the time of Cardinal Jean-Baptiste Pham Minh Man, then Archbishop. It was he who came to bless our first house (the Tran Van Ky community) during the visit of the Asian coordination team in 2007, whose members included Fathers André Brombart, Benoît Grière, Bernard Holzer, and Frans Desmet.

Nine months after the sending-forth Mass at Auteuil with the Assumptionist Sisters (Paris) in January 2006, three Vietnamese Assumptionists carried out this great mission of the Assumption in Vietnam. They were Pierre Tran Van Khue (a young priest), Pierre Tran Van Huyen (deacon), and a perpetual brother (who later left the Assumption). Our house was located in the

Gia Dinh parish, under the direction of Father Ignace Ho Van Xuan, who is currently the Vicar General and pastor of the Cathedral parish.

The origins of the foundation in 2006

In fact, the Province of France did not initially intend to bring young Vietnamese people to train them and then establish an Assumptionist community in the country. Rather, its goal was to train certain Vietnamese individuals for the service of the Church in Vietnam. The foundation was thus a prophetic act at an opportune moment (kairos), inspired by the Spirit: for the sake of God and humanity, as indicated in our Rule of Life (§4), in promoting Christian formation (understanding of the faith), human dignity (solidarity with the poor), and service to the local Church (love for the Church), when there were already several



January 2007, Cardinal Jean-Baptiste Pham Minh Mân (center), Frs. Ignace Ho Van Xuan and Fr. Bosco Nguyen Van Dinh (to his left) and the Assumptionists Frs. Benoît Grière, Frans Desmet, Bernard Holzer, Pierre Tran Van Khue, and Pierre Tran Van Huyen

Vietnamese Assumptionists at the Assumption. This motivation was so strong and meaningful at a time when existential questions were being raised—and continue to be raised—such as poverty, inequalities in rights and human dignity, religious freedom, the role of the Church in society, social engagement, and education...

The founding Assumptionist religious then humbly began their work by supporting student dormitories, running the Hoa Hue orphanage, welcoming candidates for Assumptionist vocational discernment, and providing some educational instruction.

Communities and Their Current Missions

Vietnam currently has seven communities, with another set to open in September in Vinh, which will focus specifically on student ministry and health-care. There are currently about 100 Vietnamese religious; half work or are in formation within the country, and the other half are abroad (France, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Romania, Greece, Israel, Russia, Turkey, the United States, South Korea, and the Philippines).

Many apostolic activities and initiatives are rooted in the charism of the Assumption: teaching (theological institutes), Christian formation (catechism), education (orphanage), ministry to the people of God (parish), charitable works (projects for the poor, workers' home, soup kitchen), pilgrimages, youth and vocation ministry (7 homes), Bayard, healthcare ministry, scholarships...

Opportunities

- ♦ The Foundation in Vietnam was long prepared, accompanied, and supported by the Province of France from the very beginning
- ♦ Interactions and interdependence within the Province of Europe and the Vicariate
- ♦ Several formation centers for all stages: postulancy, novitiate, professed, post-formation initially, in Europe and Asia
- ♦ Sessions on the charism organized and led for twenty years by several brothers from Europe and elsewhere
- ♦ A generation of leaders trained abroad
- ♦ The availability of various institutes for intellectual and religious formation in Saigon today
- ♦ Formation and apostolic communities with several religious



Cardinal Jean-Baptiste Pham Minh Mân and Fr. Pierre Tran Van Khue

- ♦ Works and apostolates in line with the charism: solidarity with the poor, promoting faith and unity
- ♦ Vocations remain stable, despite a decline
- ♦ A certain vitality among the youth
- ♦ Access to the Province's formation programs: initial formation, TIP, post-theology
- ♦ The creation of the Vicariate provides religious with an opportunity to focus on French-speaking or English-speaking countries
- ♦ A number of Vietnamese clergy came to know the Assumption while their studies in France or elsewhere

The Challenges

- ♦ Internationality and interculturality in the communities
- ♦ Vietnamese is the only language used on a daily basis
- ♦ The congregation's proficiency in the official languages is insufficient
- ♦ No specialists yet on Augustine, Alzon, or the history of the congregation
- ♦ Lack of formators
- ♦ Few brothers are still advancing in specific fields: theological or secular education, education, interreligious dialogue, JPIC, Bayard, financial management
- ♦ Support for young priests in their mission
- ♦ Lack of in-depth reflection on the renewal of the apostolates

- ♦ Religious are not systematically trained to take on various missions

The vision for the future

Today, the Assumptionists in Vietnam operate within a broader context—both ecclesial and social in Vietnam, as well as within the Assumptionist community in Asia. What are their contributions to the Church, society, and its own growth? To answer this question, here are a few brief thoughts.

First, it must tirelessly seek to cultivate its own values of evangelical interculturality, Augustinian fraternity, and Alzonian apostolic boldness. The primary question for us is not what we must do, but how we do it, inspired by our spirituality and religious conviction. Furthermore, the concern is not how many religious are needed for our community organization, but how we can respond to the challenges of our time. Hence the importance of having “experts” capable of addressing the questions of our Church and society. Second, the brothers need to learn to become self-reliant. This is not just about financial independence, but also about the ability to take charge of the future with courage and apostolic creativity. Times are changing, and the world is changing as well. We must demonstrate maturity and become men of our time.

Events planned to mark this anniversary

- ♦ A collection of the history of the Assumption in Vietnam prepared by a group of Vietnamese brothers featuring testimonies from the founders and pioneers of the Assumption in Vietnam.
- ♦ The Asia Forum, which will take place from July 28 to 30.
- ♦ Training sessions: Assumptionist priests led by Bishop Benoît Gschwind (young priests and deacons); working with children and abuse prevention by Fr. Benoît Grière; Augustinian education by Fr. Iulian Danca.
- ♦ Thanksgiving celebration for the 20th anniversary of the foundation at the Church of Fatima (August 1).
- ♦ In addition, there will also be a very distinguished visit by Bishop Fabien Lejeusne, along with Fathers Patrick Zago, André Antoni, and Vincent Cabanac, who have witnessed the history over the years. ■

Fr. Pierre Tran Van Khue,
Vicar for Asia-Oceania



The brothers gathered for an annual session in Vung Tau in 2025.



**Augustines
de l'Assomption**
PROVINCE D'EUROPE
VICARIAT D'ASIE-OCCIDENTALE



“Being Catholic in France in 2026”: an evening of discussion at the Bar des Augustins

On Wednesday, February 11, about sixty people gathered at the Bar des Augustins, located within the Adveniat Youth Hostel, for an evening of discussion and reflection on the theme: “Being Catholic in France in 2026.”

The event was attended by Arnaud Bevilacqua, deputy head of the religion desk at the newspaper *La Croix*. Drawing on the results of a study conducted by *La Croix* and IFOP, he offered a journalistic perspective on the place and evolution of Catholicism in French society.

At his side, Father Philippe Berrached offered a theological perspective, allowing for a synthesis of sociological analysis and spiritual reflection. Together, the two speakers discussed the major trends revealed by the study, while answering questions from the audience.

The evening provided an opportunity for rich and in-depth discussion. Participants from diverse backgrounds spoke during a question-and-answer session, continuing the discussion on the challenges, practices, and future of Catholicism in France.

The program began with a Mass at 7:15 p.m., followed by the opening of the bar at 8:00 p.m. At 9:00 p.m., participants gathered for conversation and fellowship in a warm and welcoming atmosphere, true to the spirit of dialogue and hospitality that characterizes the youth hostel. ■

Marine Thominet,
youth ministry



Arnaud Bevilacqua, deputy head of the religion desk at the newspaper *La Croix*.



Time for conversation at the Bar des Augustins with Brother Louis Grivel

Students and young professionals exploring consecrated life in Lille

The Lille community is actively involved in fostering vocations in Lille. Religious and students from the Foyer participated in the diocesan evening dedicated to consecrated life in January. This gathering took on special significance as the World Day of Consecrated Life, celebrated on February 2, approached.

The event presented the formation process and the fundamentals of religious life to an audience of students and young professionals.

The round table brought together two sisters (a Salesian and a Franciscan Missionary of Mary) and two brothers (a Dominican and an Assumptionist). They discovered something they had in common: their discernment took root during a long period of cooperation abroad (Philippines, Jerusalem, Ivory Coast, etc.). They also emphasised the importance of spiritual guidance in their journey. Small sharing groups allowed for further exchanges of experiences.

This is an opportunity for us to show you this year's community: 7 religious and 9 students. A sign that our presence in the student world continues.■

Br. Jean-Olivier Negue,
Lille Community



Among the students at the residence are Brothers Hung, Thang, Cyril, Jean-Olivier, Jacques, and Hoc.

“Hail Mary, full of grace”

The 153rd National Pilgrimage to Lourdes will take place from August 12 to 17, 2026, presided over by the Cardinal of Algiers, Monsignor Jean-Paul Vesco.

Those who have already been there (and there are many among ATLPE’s readers) know it: there is something truly unique about those August days in Lourdes spent with the Family of the Assumption and our friends from the Notre-Dame de Salur Hospitality. It is our most beautiful legacy—and certainly our oldest! This year, for the 153rd time, the National Pilgrimage opens its doors from August 12 to 17; a few days later than usual due to SNCF constraints, but with the same intensity, the same warmth, and that family spirit we love so much.

A theme that touches the heart

For this first year of a three-year journey (which will lead up to the 170th anniversary of the apparitions in 2028), the sanctuary invites us to meditate on the Angel’s greeting to Mary: “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.” Returning to the Annunciation, to Mary’s “yes” in the face of the impossible, to her trust even in the midst of incomprehension, is an invitation for us, too, to ask ourselves where our own trust stands. Whether we are young religious or elder brothers, trust is never earned, but it is the secret of our “yes” to the Assumption, and it is what enables us to endure. Coming to the National this summer means anchoring it together, as brothers supporting one another.

Cardinal Jean-Paul Vesco, Archbishop of Algiers, will preside over this pilgrimage. His presence takes on special significance this year, as we will commemorate the 30th anniversary of the assassination of the monks of Tibhirine. They, too, said yes and... went all the way. Their witness of fidelity and dialogue resonates powerfully in a world that sorely needs it.

Days that do you good

You know the rhythm of the National. Morning Lauds led by the novitiates, Mass sung by the choirs and presided over by the presiding bishop, the Angelus at noon that now echoes throughout the sanctuary all year round (it was the National that introduced it two years ago with the musical arrangement of the Angelus broadcast from the Grotto... the idea caught on, and that is a source of great pride for me). Following



The pilgrimage poster features the Crowned Virgin, a statue familiar to pilgrims and a gathering place at the heart of the sanctuary.

the success of last year’s retreat offered as part of the Jubilee, a new retreat will be led once again by André Antoni, AA, and Véronique Thiebaut, RA.

The afternoons promise to be rich and varied: a lecture on artificial intelligence and faith, the premiere of a film by Simon de Cyrène on disability, a gathering centered on Sister Paule-Hélène, a martyr in Algeria, discussions with the Cardinal... Not to mention the offerings from Bayard and many others. Enough to nourish both catechumens who are just beginning their journey and those who wish to reflect on years of commitment to the Church.

And the evenings? The vigil with the Praise group for young people, a beautiful celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation with the Route Chantante and

adoration, the grand torchlight procession... The must-see events are all here.

Special care has been taken this year to create a vocational journey inspired by the Annunciation: organized not by state of life, but by age, with great biblical figures as guides. The illustrations are by Blair Paulus Nuyda, an Assumptionist brother and artist in the United States.

A place for everyone, truly

What makes the National Pilgrimage so strong is also its commitment to leaving no one behind. The Magnifi'café, launched last year, is expanding. An inclusion service is being established so that people with disabilities can not only be welcomed but also serve. Families will find new offerings with an urgent and welcome focus on couples and parents. The Mosaic Pilgrimage, for those whom life has left in material need, is also starting anew, and we are developing affordable housing to bring in even more families, notably thanks to the Domus Hoste group, which is setting up in Lourdes.

And then there is the Prairie of Consolation, a new addition this year, simple yet powerful. A discreet space, designed for those who have been wounded, who bear invisible wounds, victims of abuse, and people affected by mental illness. A place to come without having to explain yourself, just to feel welcomed.

So, shall we meet in Lourdes?

From start to finish, this 153rd pilgrimage is guided by a single conviction: the Lord is with us. In times of joy as well as in times that overwhelm us. In prayer as well as in encounter. Come and experience it, or relive it—there is room for you. I especially invite our elderly brothers to join us; everything has been arranged to ensure a warm welcome under the best conditions, whether at the Saint Frai and Notre Dame accommodations or at a hotel with the assistance of hospital staff and stretcher bearers.

Lourdes, a pilgrimage for everyone! Truly for everyone!

See you soon ■

P. Sébastien Antoni,
Director of the National Assumption Pilgrimage



Prayer and contemplation at the grotto

Photo @Vincent Fischer

Ordinations in the Province



Priestly ordination of Brother Ariel Vidanes and diaconal ordination of Brother Joseph Nguyen Quoc Son, Monday, January 26, 2026, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Cubao (Philippines).



Diaconal ordination of Brother Joseph Thai Dinh on March 15, 2026, in Valpré-Écully.

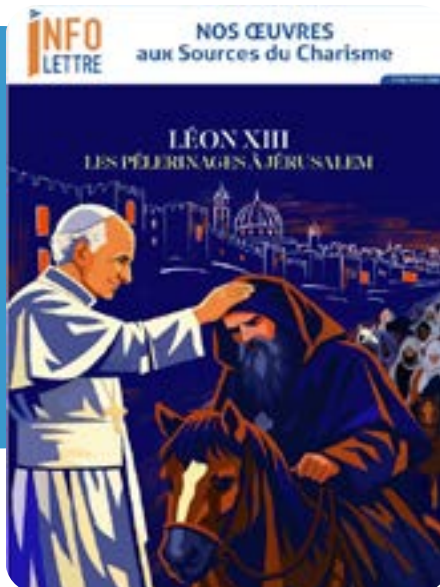


CHARISM & WORKS

The latest issue is dedicated to Leo XIII and the pilgrimages to Jerusalem. At the end of the 19th century, the congregation founded by the Father Emmanuel d'Alzon gave this form of devotion an unparalleled boost. Pope Leo XIII played a key role in revitalizing and supporting the initiative.

To learn more or subscribe:

charisme.oeuvres@assomption.org



CASSIACUM: AUGUSTINIAN SCHOOL OF LIFE FOR 18-35 YEAR-OLDS

With the Augustinians of the Assumption—August 18–23, at Notre-Dame des Châteaux (Beaufortain–Savoie).

For St. Augustine, Cassiacum was a special place, a retreat away from the hustle and bustle of the world where he withdrew at the age of 32 with his friends to discern, study, pray, and undergo an inner conversion. It was there that he had a formative experience of reflection, friendship, and the search for God.

Our Cassiacum embodies this spirit: to settle down, reflect, and grow; to discover Augustinian spirituality; to experience a week of study, prayer, and fellowship in a magnificent setting. Retreat led by Fr. Clément Löbel and Br. François-Xavier Duthoit.

Register by scanning the QR code on the poster or at assomption-jeunes.org



REOPENING OF THE VALPRÉ CHAPEL

After nearly two years of restoration work on the roof structure, the chapel reopened during Holy Week.

St. Augustine Symposium

A symposium celebrating the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Institute of Augustinian Studies was held in Paris from March 11–13. In his opening remarks, Bishop Philippe Curbelié, Undersecretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, traced the history of the Institute, paying fitting tribute to our brothers who founded it. Here is an excerpt from his speech; the full text will appear in the conference proceedings.

"The *Institute of Augustinian Studies* was founded in 1956 to promote 'the study of the history of the Late Roman Empire and the Early Middle Ages, more specifically of Christian writers, particularly Saint Augustine¹: we are therefore celebrating its 70th anniversary this year with this conference dedicated to 'Augustine as a Commentator on the Psalms.' This is an opportunity to recall the origins and development of the *Institute of Augustinian Studies*, to highlight the uniqueness of its operations, and to underscore its significant contribution to international research on Augustine.

I. – THE ORIGINS: FROM 1867 TO 1956

The Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption founded the Institute of Augustinian Studies. Although the University of Saint Augustine, which Father Emmanuel d'Alzon (founder of the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption) had envisioned as early as 1867, never came to fruition, the *Revue augustiniennne* was founded in March 1902 and appeared monthly until 1910: it was during this period that the first collection of works devoted to Saint Augustine was assembled.

After a hiatus caused by the Modernist crisis and the war, Father Fulbert Cayré was appointed to teach patristics at the seminary in Louvain. He was the one asked to direct the collection of studies and texts then known collectively as the *Bibliothèque augustiniennne*, the first volumes of which were published in 1933: among its contributors were renowned scholars such as G. Bardy, G. Combès, P. de Labriolle, G. Finaert, R. Jolivet, J. Rivièrre, B. Roland-Gosselin, and F.-J. Thonnard. In 1940, Father Cayré added a new journal to the collection, titled *L'année théologique augustiniennne*, which was published until 1954.

In 1943, Father Quénard, superior of the Assumptionists, founded in Lormoy, near Corbeil, the *Center for Augustinian Studies*, entrusting its direction

to Father Cayré, who was assisted by several religious brothers to ensure its operation. The expansion of publications and the creation of a specialized library provided opportunities for contact with scholars from many countries.

The major *International Augustinian Congress*, held at the Catholic Institute of Paris from September 21 to 24, 1954, to mark the 1,600th anniversary of Augustine's birth, brought into sharp relief the vitality and influence of the *Center for Augustinian Studies*: it featured over 110 papers presented by French and foreign scholars, as well as rich discussions that were published in 1954–1955 in the first three volumes of the *Collection des Études Augustiniennes*, titled *Augustinus Magister*. The wide range of topics covered is striking: literary history, philology and criticism, sources, monasticism, Platonism, philosophy, illumination, man, God, biblical themes, morality and asceticism, grace, Christ and the Church, the theology of history, and the Augustinian influence.

The scientific success of this conference led to the relocation of the *Center for Augustinian Studies* from Lormoy to Paris, on Rue François I^{er}, in 1955. The Center for Augustinian Studies became the *Association Institut d'études augustiniennes*, whose bylaws, in accordance with the 1901 law, were published in the *Journal Officiel* on September 13, 1956. Fr. Georges Folliet succeeded Fr. Fulbert Cayré and directed the *Institute of Augustinian Studies* from 1954 to 1990.

II. – THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTITUTE OF AUGUSTINIAN STUDIES FROM 1956 TO 1978

The new bylaws of the *Institut d'études augustiniennes* made it possible to bring together, alongside the Assumptionist religious, academics and researchers, as well as professors from the Institut Catholique de Paris; they also made it possible to seek the support of the CNRS and the CNL (National Book Center) for publications.

¹ According to Article 2 of the Association's bylaws

The publication of the Works of Saint Augustine in the *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* series was already well underway, since the 12 volumes of the first series devoted to the Opuscles—in accordance with the general plan for the complete edition, which can be found in the first volume of the series—had all been published at a rapid pace by 1952. [...*Presentation of the 24 volumes published between 1952 and 1977...*]



Orléans Media Library, 46 (043) p. 001-view 3 -Saint Augustine dictating

The *Collection des Études Augustiniennes* was also expanded with numerous volumes between 1955 and 1978: 78 volumes of the “Antiquity” Series; 7 volumes of the Series “The Middle Ages and Modern Times.” Many works are devoted to Augustine, but Hilary, Tertullian, and Ambrose are also featured; philosophy is well represented, with volumes dealing specifically with Neoplatonism; there are also works devoted to Manichaeism or Gnosticism, etc.

In 1955, the *Revue des études augustiniennes* succeeded the *Année théologique augustinienne*, “adopting a more specific focus on the literary and doctrinal history of Christian antiquity, in accordance with the Association’s bylaws²”: while continuing to publish annual articles on Augustine and the *Bulletin augustinien*—whose analytical and critical reviews (long provided by Goulven Madec) render a considerable service to researchers—it gradually began to include more articles devoted to the history of early Christianity and to Greek and Latin patristics. Starting in 1975, the *Chronica Tertulliana*, which has since been expanded to include Cyprian, was added to the *Bulletin augustinien*, under the leadership of J.-C. Fredouille, P. Petitmengin, and R. Braun. The publication of *Recherches augustiniennes* came to

supplement the journal starting in 1958, by allowing for the publication of longer or more specialized articles.

This research and these publications led to a considerable expansion of the library’s collection. As Goulven Madec and Pierre Petitmengin noted in 1978, this library, “of exceptional quality, has no equivalent in France, nor likely in Europe: it is a scientific and cultural treasure of unique value”; thanks to the tenacity of Father Folliet, who spared no effort in seeking out and purchasing ancient volumes and Although rare, these are important for the IEA, as they bring together “the nearly complete series of the *Opera omnia* S. Augustini, from 1489 to the present day³.” This “first-rate working tool” has made discoveries such as those of François Dolbeau possible.

III. – AGREEMENTS WITH THE CATHOLIC INSTITUTE AND THE MOVE TO THE ABBEY PALACE OF SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS IN 1978

The year 1978 marked a turning point: it signaled the culmination of numerous efforts undertaken by the Augustinians of the Assumption to ensure the development and long-term viability of the Institute of *Augustinian Studies*; the Congregation no longer had the means to secure its future. ■

Excerpt from the remarks of Bishop Philippe Curbelié
Compiled by Fr. Nicolas Potteau, Paris Denfert Community

2 See G. FOLLINET, “The Institute of Augustinian Studies: History, Achievements, and Prospects,” *Nouvelles de l’Institut Catholique de Paris*, No. 3, October 1978, p. 4.

3 G. MADEC, P. PETITMENGIN, “The Institute of Augustinian Studies: History, Achievements, and Future Prospects,” *Nouvelles de l’Institut Catholique de Paris*, No. 3, October 1978, p. 6.

Meeting of African and Malagasy Brothers in Europe: Training Educators at the Assumption

It was in Nîmes, the birthplace of the Assumption, that 27 African and Malagasy brothers from the European Province gathered from February 25 to 28, 2026, for their biannual session.

A time of fellowship and professional development, with this year's focus on the issues and challenges facing education within the Assumptionist community. The Emmanuel d'Alzon Institute, a school complex owned by the Oblate Sisters of the Assumption, opened its doors to welcome the brothers.

What does education in the Assumptionist tradition entail today? Sr. Anne Flore, R.A., head of school supervision for the R.A. schools, and Fr. Dominique Greiner, A.A., General Director of Bayard, addressed this question during a roundtable discussion. At its core, education must be understood as extending beyond the academic realm. Through its publications and activities, education is, for example, at the heart of Bayard. In this way, the company helps to nurture the charism of the Assumption. Faced with the challenge of Artificial Intelligence, Mr. Bruno Defay, an expert in the field, encouraged the brothers to educate themselves so they can effectively meet the needs of young people who use it every day.

What about education according to Father d'Alzon? Father Dominique Grenier answers: for d'Alzon,

education consists essentially in forming each person, in his or her own unique way, to journey toward the perfection of Christ. But to achieve this, one must first have Christ within oneself. Thus, each person is responsible for his or her own education, and "there is no education without love," he insists. For, as d'Alzon says, it is charity that purifies the roughest characters and sanctifies the most rebellious souls.

Furthermore, sharing concrete experiences of education in the congregation's flagship apostolates—the bush schools of Madagascar, the University of the Assumption in the Congo, and pastoral ministry in middle and high school chaplaincies—demonstrated the vitality of the Assumption's educational mission. In the same vein, the brothers shared their own missionary experiences: an opportunity to reflect on the General's request regarding how to prepare for sending brothers on mission. The session concluded with a joyful moment of fellowship. Plans were made to meet again in 2028. ■

Br. Théodore Elom Assigbley
Florence Community



Toward the Creation of a Museum

To ensure the transmission of a heritage, it is essential to understand its history and share it with future generations. This article aims to present a project to highlight the archival heritage of the Assumption.

The Archives Department plans to create a permanent exhibition featuring archival documents and artifacts selected for educational and documentary purposes. These artifacts tell the story of the Assumption and its charism across different eras, tracing a path of faith and communion in solidarity with the poor, attentive to the signs of the times.

Archiving is not just about sorting and classifying; it is also about ensuring the sharing, dissemination, promotion, and communication of documents. To put it simply, our project to highlight these materials can be summed up in three words:

- ♦ Learning about the history of each object helps us understand the lives of communities in different eras and in different places. For example, objects from mission countries show how religious figures lived and adapted to local cultures, while those related to La Bonne Presse illustrate newspaper production and content. Thus, each object becomes a precious witness to the history and life of the Assumptionists.
- ♦ Preserve: The identification and promotion of historical documents and objects contribute to their preservation by preventing their destruction or addressing their poor condition. For example, some books and paintings have been restored, and certain objects have been stored in secure locations. These preservation efforts contribute to the protection of our heritage and ensure its transmission to future generations.
- ♦ Raising Awareness: The purpose of the permanent exhibition we are working on is to pass on knowledge and raise visitors' awareness of the importance of heritage and its conservation, by making information accessible and tangible through the objects on display.



Medallion of the Cross of Saint Maur. Archives of the European Province of the Augustinians of the Assumption..

Does this project pique your interest? Do you have any valuable books or historical artifacts in your possession? Please don't hesitate to let us know. We'll work with you to figure out how to showcase items that are currently gathering dust in a closet. ■

Isabelle Plassais, Project Manager, "Documentary Center."
Fr. André Antoni, Provincial Delegate for Works and Charism

From Saint Benedict to Saint Augustine: 20 Years of Assumptionist Presence in St-Lambert-des-Bois

For more than half a century, the Saint-Lambert-des-Bois site has been marked by a religious presence attuned to the changing world. Founded by Benedictine monks in a spirit of prayer, reflection, and dialogue, it has gradually opened itself to new horizons. The arrival of the Augustinians of the Assumption is part of a living continuity, bringing renewal and hope. Augustinians of the Assumption: this is the name that Fr. d'Alzon gave to the members of his nascent congregation. A name that claims a spiritual heritage. *revendique un héritage spirituel.*

From the Benedictine project...

En In 1963, monks from Ligugé Abbey began searching the Paris region with a view to founding a new Benedictine convent. At the request of Bishop Renard of Versailles, three of them settled in Saint-Lambert-des-Bois. This place of calm and silence fosters a sense of inner peace.

The monks engage in intellectual and spiritual reflection projects with the scientific centers in Saclay and Orsay with the aim of "*Christianizing the scientists.*" They also establish a cultural center designed to host business seminars. Following the enactment of the Delors Act¹, which established vocational training for all employees, the monks opened a guesthouse for corporate seminars. They transformed this space into a place that embodies Christian values, fostering listening, reflection, and encounters with others—a space for dialogue that goes beyond mere vocational training.

...to the The Assumptionist Presence

a) The Port-Royal Center

The years passed, and the small community began to dwindle. In 2006, after 40 years of existence and with no prospects for new vocations, the Benedictines sought a successor. The Augustinians of the Assumption then proposed a project in keeping with both the original spirit and the charism they embody. Their intention is thus embodied in:

- ♦ A commitment to youth, exemplified by welcoming young Christians eager to spend a



Dom Dupeux, Géhard, and Doiteau, OSB, founders of the Port-Royal Center and the Saint-Benoît Priory

few days on retreat, scout camps, or chaplaincy groups,

- ♦ A foothold in the business world through hosting seminars as a continuation of the dialogue already underway with the Bayard and Valpré companies,

¹ The Act of July 16, 1971, known as the Delors Act, governs the organization of continuing vocational training in France. It allows employees to take paid training leave at their own initiative. It also requires companies with more than 10 employees to contribute to the funding of training programs. Website <https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/anniversaire-des-50-ans-de-la-loi-delors#main> accessed on February 13, 2026.

- ♦ An ecological focus aimed at transforming the Center into a place of renewal close to of nature, but also to promote a deep commitment to ecology in the broadest sense.

Through their approach, the Augustinians of the Assumption represent not so much a break with the past as a renewal faithful to their founding vision, while developing the charism that inspires them.

b) The Saint-Benoît Priory

On September 15, 2006, three Assumptionists settled at the Saint-Benoît Priory, retaining its Benedictine-sounding name, to continue bringing to life the place of prayer founded by their predecessors 43 years earlier. Religious life is sustained. A community dedicated to the formation of young brothers (the novitiate) also settles there a few years later, bringing with it a sense of the future and hope.

In this spirit of innovative continuity, the monks at the priory remain committed to engaging in dialogue with society. Their way of life serves both as a reminder of the Gospel's call to hospitality and as a witness to

their faith—a witness that is reflected in their involvement in the Port Royal parish, their welcoming chapel groups, catechism classes, associations serving children in the suburbs and people with disabilities, weekend retreats for families, local pastoral teams, and so on; and by offering numerous Scouting groups a large wooded area for camping throughout the year. In addition, discussions are underway to redefine the relationship between the Priory community and the Port Royal Center.

From its original vision to its current mission, the history of the Port-Royal Center and the Saint-Benoît Priory reveals a deep commitment to the Gospel and to serving the world. Hospitality, dialogue with society, and a focus on youth are essential guiding principles. Its ecological focus and connection to the professional world also demonstrate a commitment to staying relevant in the present. Successive transformations have not broken the initial momentum, so this place continues to be a space of silence, encounter, and discernment. It attests that a living tradition can reinvent itself without betraying its origins ■

Isabelle Plassais,
Project Manager, "Documentation Center."



Chapelle et prieuré



Pierre-Emmanuel Rospide

1935-2026

Pierre-Emmanuel Rospide was born on June 27, 1935, in Nabas, a small village in Béarn. As a child, P.E. attended the local school, and the parish had a resident priest serving only this small community. P.E. is the fifth of

six children. The family lived on a few small plots of land where they grew crops and raised a few animals. His earliest memory of his vocation dates back to when he was 10 years old. With his parents' consent, P.E. left for Cahuzac in October/November 1946, where he was taken in by Father Charles Lançaro. P.E. would later say that it was a particularly long period, as 20 years passed between his arrival in Cahuzac and his assignment to Pont-l'Abbé-d'Arnoult following his studies in Rome.

He entered the Saint-Antoine novitiate in Pont-l'Abbé-d'Arnoult (Charente-Maritime) on October 5, 1954, at the former Château de la Chaume, which Arthur Bonnet had donated to the Assumptionists in 1932. He took his first vows on October 6, 1955. He continued his studies in philosophy at the scholasticate in Layrac (Lot-et-Garonne) and in Valpré (Rhône).

His period of military service (in Algeria) interrupted his training. He returned to France and then left for Rome. This assignment was a matter of chance, as another brother who was supposed to go to our international college said he did not want to go to Rome for fear of losing his faith there. He lived in an international and multicultural community (13 nationalities) under Dutch and then Flemish superiors marked by a great spirit of openness. This was the era of the Council, when John XXIII handed over to Paul VI to bring it to a close. These events shaped him: openness to the world and to the Church. It was the time of the *aggiornamento*; he stayed in Rome from 1960 to 1966 to continue his theological studies at the International College of the Assumption (Tor di Nona) at the Dominican Faculty of the Angelicum. He defended his thesis, "The P. d'Alzon studied as an educator at the Pontifical University of Rome and earned a doctorate in theology. It was in Rome that he took his perpetual vows on November 21, 1961. He was ordained a priest on February 22, 1964, by the Vicar General of Rome, Cardinal Clemente Micara.

A memorial Mass will be held on Tuesday, June 16, at Notre-Dame des Anges (Paris 6)

After Rome, he dedicated himself to serving the congregation, a commitment that would last almost until his last breath.

He had expressed a desire to work with troubled children, but the Bordeaux Province assigned him to Pont-l'Abbé in September 1966. He joined the team of young teachers at the novitiate in Pont-l'Abbé-d'Arnoult, under the direction of the novice master, Father Raphaël le Gleuher, and also handled pastoral work in La Rochelle and served as chaplain at the Saint-Louis institution in Pont-l'Abbé.

He was asked by Father Henri Guillemin, the Provincial, to become his assistant. In 1972, he was appointed Provincial of Bordeaux on April 1. He would continue to hold important positions within the congregation.

For 11 years, Pierre-Emmanuel served as Provincial, first as the last Provincial of Bordeaux and then, following the unification of the French Provinces, as the first Provincial of France. In 1978, the French Provinces decided to merge into a single Province. Pierre-Emmanuel Rospide left Bordeaux for Paris to get this new Province off the ground.

In 1984, Father Claude Maréchal succeeded him as Provincial of France; from 1984 to 1999, he served as CEO of the Bayard media group, which is owned by the congregation. He discovered the corporate world and the joy of working with many lay colleagues, including media and publishing professionals.

Upon leaving Bayard, he returned to service at the request of Provincial Superiors André Antoni (1999–2005) and Benoit Grière (2005–2011). He did everything in his power to ensure that the congregation finally obtained legal status in France, which it had not had since the laws enacted at the turn of the century by "Little Father Combes." His work was rewarded shortly after he stepped down from his role as provincial treasurer, when a decree dated January 28, 2013 (Official Journal of January 30, 2013), officially recognized the Province of France. Following the election of the

As Superior General of the congregation, Fr. Benoit Grière moved to the General House in Rome. He celebrated his 50th anniversary of priestly ordination on February 22, 2014, in Rome. In 2021, he rejoined his brothers in the Layrac community. He agreed to serve as local superior. He then joked that at his age, he wasn't about to start a career as a dictator. Always smiling and open, his health gradually declined following a cancer diagnosis. He passed away on March 19, the feast day of St. Joseph. ■

Christine Lamolinerie, a psychologist by profession and notably Vice President of the DCC, a layperson close to the Assumptionists who stayed at and assisted our orphanage in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City), passed away on February 17, 2026.

April

- March 31–April 2: Visit to Belgian middle schools (Nicolas, Georges, and Vinh)
- 1–5: Visit to Layrac (Benoît)
- 3–5: Visit to Woluwe (Nicolas, Georges)
- 7: Port Royal Board of Directors (Vinh)
- 9: Bayard Supervisory Board (Nicolas)
- 10–12: session for the Oblates (Nicolas)
- 13–17: Provincial Council (Nicolas, Iulian, Vinh, Benoît, Georges)
- 18–22: Visit to Lille (Georges)
- 22–25: Charitable Company – England (Vinh)
- 23–24: Canonical visit to the Paris-François I community (Auberge Adveniat) (Nicolas, Benoît)
- 25: Augustinian Family gathering (Nicolas, Iulian)
- 27– May 3: Visit to Lyon (Nicolas)

May

- 4: Auberge Board Meeting (Vinh)
- 5: Assumption Committee (Nicolas, Iulian)
- 6: Formation Commission (Iulian, Nicolas)
- 6–11: Visit to Strasbourg (Georges)
- 8–11: Visit to The Hague (Nicolas)
- 11–17: Economic Council of the Congregation (Vinh)
- 13–17: Community outing to Denfert (Nicolas, Iulian, Vinh, Georges)
- 18–22: Provincial Council (Nicolas, Iulian, Vinh, Benoît, Georges)
- 19–20: Assumption Internovitiate (Benoît)
- 25: Northern Europe Zone Meeting (Georges)
- 26–28: Board of Directors Meeting for Real Estate Companies (Vinh)
- 29– June 10: General Chapter in Romania (Nicolas)

June

- 1: Board of Directors and Annual General Meeting of the Procuratorate (Vinh)
- 3: Executive Committee of the Adveniat Foundation (Vinh)
- 4–10: Visit to Florence (Georges)
- 12–13: Provincial Council (Nicolas, Iulian, Vinh, Benoît, Georges)
- 13: Gathering of the brothers from the Paris region - "Plancha" at Denfert
- 14-15: Preparation for perpetual vows (Paris-Denfert) (Benoît)
- 16–17: Visit to Montpellier (Iulian)
- 16–17: Assumption Internovitiate (Benoît)
- 16-19: Board of Directors and Annual General Meeting of the real estate companies (Vinh)
- 17-18: Formation Commission (Nicolas, Iulian)
- 19: Annual General Meeting of Saint-Loup (Nicolas)
- 19: IVOC (Iulian)
- 22–July 1: Provincial Council (Nicolas, Iulian, Vinh, Benoît, Georges)



Reproduction of the Statue of Our Lady of Salvation

Using a 3D scan, every detail of the existing model is captured to create the master mold, the first version of the statue from which the others will be made. Once the perfect master mold is obtained, a specific mold is created through overmolding. After molding, the finishing phase begins with sanding and deburring the mold. The statues are then ready to be displayed or given as gifts. If you are interested in purchasing a statue: send an email to assomption@assomption.org