

It has become something of a tradition each year for the Superior General to be in contact with fellow Assumptionists on the 21st of November. This year, thanks to the wonders of technology and the initiative of the Congregation's web-master, Fr. Jean-Guillaume, I am able to be in touch with you more or less "live" by means of this video on our web-site.

This message will be accessible to many people, but in a special way it is addressed to all of our brothers and sisters in the Assumption family. I am also thinking in a special way of the twenty-one lay people who in Lyon, France, on Saturday, the 20th, will formally commit themselves as lay Assumptionists during the ceremony that will close the Provincial Chapter of the Province of France. I am thinking too of the lay friends of the Assumptionists whom I met just last week in Sokodé, Togo. They include Catholic men and women, as well as Protestant and Muslim friends who collaborate with us in the Saint Augustine Cultural Center. And I am thinking too of our new community in Bucharest, Rumania, which I will be visiting next week and the Orthodox clergy and lay people with whom they are in almost daily contact.

Yes, the Assumption family is big and diverse, but on the 21st of November all of us together will remember the one who was the source of it all, Emmanuel d'Alzon, for on this day we celebrate his "dies natalis" (literally birth day), a traditional Latin formula that refers to the day on which a believer dies and is born into heaven. In Father d'Alzon's case that took place 130 years ago, in Nîmes, France, on November 21st, 1880.

You know that this year we have been celebrating the 200th anniversary of Father d'Alzon's physical birth, in Le Vigan, France, on August 30th, 1810. It tells you something about the man, when you know that Emmanuel d'Alzon liked to celebrate the anniversary of his baptism day (September 2nd) even more than his actual birthday. Birth, baptism, death. Celebrating those important events in our earthly journey makes us wonder exactly what it means to be alive, to live one's life fully. For our founder, there was little doubt about the answer to that question. He liked to quote the passage from the 17th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles: "It is in Jesus Christ that we live and move and have our being." (See, for example, in the Directory, I, chapter 3) Emmanuel d'Alzon spent his whole life trying to grasp the implications of that statement. May his discoveries help each one of us in our own journey of faith and in our efforts to be of service to God's people in today's world.

Superior General's Message

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