
Blessed Pavel Djidjov, A.A.

Arrested at the same time as Father Kamen, on July 4, 1952, Pavel Djidjov was the youngest. He was only 33. Born July 19, 1919 at Plovdiv, in a Latin rite Catholic family, he was baptised on August 2 and given the name of Joseph. He took the name of Pavel (Paul) when he entered the Assumptionist novitiate of Nozeroy, in France, October 2, 1938.

From his youth, he had wanted to be a priest. He entered St. Augustine College in Plovdiv, where he was considered a good student, especially strong in mathematics. He was good in sports and was part of the team later known as the "Locomotive" in Plovdiv. After the novitiate, he studied theology at Lormoy, near Paris, during World War II. Life was hard and the students often went hungry. Pavel took the initiative of raising a few sheep in order to improve the menu.


Father Pavel's ordination by Bishop Ivan Romanov

An intrepid young priest
Then for reasons of health, he returned to Bulgaria in 1942. He completed his theology courses and was ordained priest in the Latin rite on January 26, 1945, at Plovdiv. He continued studies in economics and social sciences and taught at the College of Varna.There he was closely watched by the secret police because he had a great deal of influence on the students. In 1945, he was named Treasurer of St. Augustine College and served there until the College was closed by the Communists in 1948. As a result, the Bulgarian Assumptio-nists were totally without funds. The French Assumptionists tried to help them by sending money through the French delegation. In June, 1952, Fr. Pavel commented on the arrest and condemnation of several priests and wrote: "May God's will be done. We await our torn." He was arrested a month later. Everyone who knew him appreciated his piety, his sense of humor, his deep faith, his ecumenical spirit, his bravery against the Communists. He never hesitated to confront the Communist authorities in order to defend the rights of the Church. For example, he visited his Assumptionist brother Assen Tchonkov in the Sofia prison and asked the guards to make life easier for him.



The Bulgarian Assumptionist community surrounding Father Pavel on the day of his ordination

An excerpt from Father Pavel Djidjov's last letter to Father Remi Kokel, Procurator in Rome, January 26, 1952: *"We are distressed, having heard nothing of Father Josaphat for six months now. There will be three trials, within a week, against Catholic priests. The first one is already over: death penalty for a diocesan priest of the Latin rite. Tomorrow it wilt be the trial of a diocesan priest of the Slavonic rite, in Sofia; the day after tomorrow, that of a Capuchin and these will not be the last ones, surely. May God's will be done!. Religiously, your most devoted brother, P. Pavel"*