

As it is every year, the feast of our three Assumptionist Bulgarian martyrs is an opportunity to stop to reflect on the heritage that they have left not only to us who are called to work today in the Mission in Eastern Europe, but to every brother and sister of our Assumption Family and the Church at large.

Keeping alive their memory means rendering present among us these brothers whom the Church, by means of their beatification, considers to be a gift for all of Christianity. Praying to them, invoking their intercession, allows us to receive the spiritual support we need to make Christ alive in us and around us.

Kamen Vitchev, Pavel Djidjov, and Josaphat Chichkov call us to expand our horizons. We are part of a reality that is vastly greater than that accessible to our eyes. In fact, it is the invisible world which allows us to understand better the meaning of our daily actions.

What this means is that keeping alive within us the memory of our three martyrs helps us to understand better at once ourselves and the martyrdom (that is to say, witness) which the Lord calls us to give today as brothers and sisters of the Assumption.

A Russian priest, a philosopher, who died in a concentration camp during the Stalinistic era, Pavel Florensky, describes the invisible world in this way, « … the spiritual world, the invisible

one, is not very far from us: it envelops us as if we were on the bottom of an ocean and we were drowning in the luminous ocean of grace.

Nevertheless because of a lack of habit or of our immaturity, we are unable to perceive this kingdom of light» (P. Florensky, « La perspective inversée suivi de l'iconostase », Editions L'Age de l'homme, Lausanne, p.139 – in English, Iconstasis, St. Vladimir's Press, 1996).

May our three Assumptionist Bulgarian martyrs help us to enter this ocean of light and grace.

This year we, the brothers and sisters in Plovdiv, will celebrate our blessed martyrs with a triduum of prayer, Thursday the 10th, Friday the 11th, and Saturday the 12th….Thursday dedicated to the memory of Josaphat Chichkov, Friday to Pavel Djidjov, and Saturday to Kamen Vitchev. Sunday the 13th our Exarch, Most Rev. Christo Proykov, is scheduled to preside at a solemn celebration, featuring the participation of children from the parishes of Plovdiv and Kuklen.

May the succor of our three martyrs help all to hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God at the Assumption and throughout the world.

May all have a wonderful feast on November 13!

The Assumptionist Community of Plovdiv, Bulgaria