

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Assumption Family

We are celebrating the feast of Fr. d'Alzon as we do every year. Just about everywhere in the world, our communities and our lay friends are gathering to honor the memory of this man of God. Emmanuel d'Alzon remains a model for each of us and for all who desire to draw near to the God of Jesus Christ with a heart that is open and ready to serve. I believe, as I have said many times, in the holiness of our founder. He was a man given over to the cause of the Kingdom, a generous man who discovered that « for me, life is Christ ».

This year's celebration of Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon takes on a particularly special dimension because we have the joy of beginning the sesquicentennial commemoration (1865-2015) of the foundation of the Oblate Missionaries of the Assumption….. 150 years serving the Gospel by extending the Kingdom of God on earth. The Oblates were prepared to engage in a great adventure, taking them beyond the boundaries of home and friends. They responded generously to the many calls to work in the Near Eastern Mission, in Europe, in Africa, in Latin America, and Asia. Still today, they are crossing oceans in order to remain faithful to the promise made to Fr. d'Alzon. How can we not rejoice over their recent foundations like the one in Nairobi that I had the good fortune of blessing during my recent trip there? Today as yesterday the Oblates of the Assumption bear concrete witness to their desire to work for the extension of the Kingdom of God.

I would also like to say a word about lay members of the Alliance. I just returned from Africa

where I had the joy of meeting groups of lay associates in Kinshasa, Goma, Arusha, and Nairobi. Everywhere, men and women, the young and not so young want to join us. What do they discover when they knock at our door? I believe that our religious family is truly open to entering into a universal fraternity. We want to be men and women of communion and reconciliation. Our family allows persons who are very different to live in peace and joy. The Alliance is vital for religious. We have set out on the way and we are not going back. I invite all religious to gear up to make our charism known. We are still too timid. Lay and religious together, we can address so many challenges that we are facing in announcing the Lord Jesus Christ to our world.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Assumption has not spoken its last word. We are apostles and we must never roll down our sleeves. I assure you once again of my friendship as your brother and I assure you of my prayers.

Fr. Benoît GRIÈRE, AA.
Superior General of the Augustinians of the Assumption