

It was with great jubilation that the Assumption Family of brothers, relatives and guests of Fr. Oliver, A.A. celebrated his 100th birthday on Saturday, March 12th, 2016. A Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit on the campus of Assumption College, with Rev. Jose Miguel Allon, A.A., Provincial as presider and Rev. Peter Precourt, A.A., Territorial Superior as homilist. Fr. Peter ended his homily by reading a letter of birthday greetings and gratitude from Fr. Benoit Griere, A.A. Superior General, who recognized Fr. Oliver's many years as a faithful Assumptionist and his tireless zeal in serving God's people near and far.

Before the final blessing, Fr. Oliver offered a few remarks wherein he focused on gratitude to God for His many blessings, asked forgiveness for having offended God and others in any way, thanked God for the opportunity of being His servant and being touched by so many people throughout his many assignments and lastly, expressed his gratitude for the fraternity of living among and being supported by his Assumptionist brothers .

Following the liturgy, Fr. Oliver, his family and guests shared a festive brunch in the Taylor Dining Hall of the college, complete with birthday cake and a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday!"

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Rev. Oliver Blanchette, A.A.
50 Old English Road, Worcester, MA 01609

February 15, 2016, Rome

Dear Fr. Oliver,

As a younger brother in the Assumption and as superior general I am writing to you not only to wish you a Happy 100th Birthday on behalf of the entire Congregation, but also, and more importantly, to thank you for your many years of selfless dedication and exemplary service as an Assumptionist. This year 2016 also marks the 76th anniversary of your first vows and the 72nd of your ordination to the priesthood. These are remarkable milestones.

You are living proof that the good don't die young!

Having met you just a few years ago at Old English Road, it is clear to me that you have not lost the fire and love of God that have characterized your many years of ministry. As I listened to people speak about you and as I recently looked over your curriculum vitae, what struck me was the way that you have constantly responded to the call for renewal in your life and always sought new ways to minister to the People of God. For many years you served as an educator and as a formator, both in Canada and the United States. You then spent nearly 30 years as a retreat director and assistant pastor trying to implement the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, which as a son of the Church you willingly took to heart. Most remarkably of all, perhaps, in your early 80s when most senior citizens are content to sit at a Bingo table or watch classic movies, you accepted a new challenge, one that would change your life once again and set an example for your brothers that an Assumptionist never loses his desire to extend the Kingdom of God however and wherever God may wish it so. In 1999, you chose to become a missionary in East Africa, where a generation of young Assumptionists, who fondly nicknamed you "Babu", still recall your patience, discipline, enthusiasm and fidelity. And I should add that this act of generosity set a trend that other Assumptionists would follow.

When you returned from this mission, deeply touched by the experience, you rallied friends, family, and everyone who would listen to you in an effort to raise awareness and funds for projects dear to you in Africa. So "FOFO" came to life, "The Friends of Fr. Oliver." To this very day that passion for the "dark continent" flows in your veins.

I would be remiss if I did not mention as well how, in your golden years, you took an active interest in what we now call the Lay-Religious Alliance, zealous to share with lay friends the love of the Assumption that has been the driving force of your own life.

Dear Oliver, as superior general, I wish to thank God for everything He has done for you over these 100 years. I wish to thank you for being such a brother to so many for so many years. As you and those dear to you celebrate this wonderful occasion, I want to assure you of my prayers and heartfelt best wishes.

Very Rev. Benoît GRIERE, A.A. Superior general