

Fr. Xavier, second from left with Fr. General, second from right, and the other members of the Istanbul community

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Source: ***La Croix***

Fr. Xavier Jacob, renowned specialist of Islam in Turkey, has died.

A pastor of Christians in Turkey, this Assumptionist distinguished himself by his studies of Islam in Turkey and by his translations of liturgical texts into Turkish.

Fr. Xavier Jacob, 89 years old, died on the afternoon of Tuesday, December 26, 2017, the same day as another apostle of the Christian-Muslim dialogue, Fr. Maurice Borrmans.

Born in Alsatia on January 15, 1927, Fr. Xavier was ordained an Assumptionist in 1953 and was described then as « a friendly and serviceable brother, whose intelligence is only equaled by his modesty.”

After spending some time at the headquarters for the *Revue des études byzantines* (today located at the Institut Catholique of Paris), he was assigned to the Assumptionist apostolate in Turkey. He would then spend 54 years there --- 40 years in Ankara and 14 in Kadikoy/Istanbul (formerly known as Chalcedon)--- where he ministered to Christians there and to the small remnant of Christians in Konya (formerly Iconium).

« Perfectly conversant in the Turkish language as well as in his knowledge of Christianity and Islam, he rendered, by his scholarly work, invaluable and much appreciated service to the Church in Turkey », commented Fr. Yves Plunian, another Assumptionist who knew Fr. Xavier well and lived with him in Istanbul. In addition to numerous articles and consultation requests concerning Islam in Turkey, together with his Assumptionist confrere, Fr. Xavier Nuss (d. 2013), he completed many translations of liturgical texts as well as a Christian lexicon in Turkish.

Respected by Turkish government and university authorities, he often worked closely with them on matters related to Christianity and Islam. He was also a frequent visitor to Rome where Vatican offices sought his expertise.

To the end he remained faithful to his earliest descriptions, "a friendly and serviceable brother, whose intelligence is only equaled by his modesty."