

Would you share a bit about your background: family, childhood, early education etc.?

My name is Pacifique Kambale Tsongo. I was born in Oicha, Democratic Republic of Congo, February 7th 1990. My parents are Joseph Kambale (father) and Astrid Kyakimwa (mother). I have one younger sister, Louange Kahindo.

In my family, I learned to take care of my sister, to clean the house, do the dishes and look after the guinea pigs. On holidays we traveled to relax and visit other family members. I also learned to pray and participate with some Catholic groups: for example, Mass servers and aspirants in religious life. When I started school, my mother was courageous in teaching me how to read children's books. I was good at reading, but I didn't like the exercise because I preferred to play with friends.

I spent my first seventeen years with my family. During that period, I received my early education in our village called Mabuku. After primary school, I studied pedagogy in secondary school. Then I left my family to work as a teacher. I taught in a primary school called Mudoole. Even though I didn't earn enough money and the distance was so far, I really enjoyed the experience.

I'm sincerely grateful to my family, especially to my mother Astrid, who worked so hard for us. Her daily efforts were – and still are – for me an incarnation of love, heroism and sanctity.

Where/how did your Assumptionist roots begin? Did anyone in particular have a significant impact on your life?

The first time I heard about Assumptionists was during a meeting of the aspirants I talked about. The seminarian who told us about them was called Pacifique (today a diocesan priest). It was in 2006. Three elements attracted me in his presentation of the Assumption family: our motto, Thy Kingdom Come, fraternal life and the ways of bringing about the kingdom, especially through education. That seminarian encouraged me to continue learning about the congregation and to write to the vocational promotor. I finally met the first Assumptionists at the end of my secondary school, the same year I was teaching. They accompanied me very well. When I asked to become a pre-postulant I was accepted. That was a great joy for me. It was also my first step in becoming a member of the Assumption family.

Would you share some of your later education and formation memories?

At the end of the pre-postulancy period, I started formation as a postulant. This was my first experience of living in a community, the first time I'd experienced the fraternal life I had heard about and the first time of sharing the AA charism. During this year, I was also the vice-treasurer. Thanks to God and my brothers, everything went well.

As a novice, I continued doing the same work. But my principal activity was prayer, discernment, classes (AA history and spirituality), and manual work. I made my first vows august 14th 2011: I finally became an Assumptionist.

I studied philosophy for three years but my favorite areas of interest were reflections on the human condition and hermeneutics. On July 22nd, I pronounced my final vows in my community - Montmartre. It was truly an occasion of thanksgiving. I'm currently pursuing my Master's at Laval University, Quebec City.

Do you have any favorite scripture passages?

My favorite scripture passage is about service: Lk 4, 18: 'pour que la bonne nouvelle soit annoncée aux pauvres'. I hear in this passage a call to work so everybody receives the word of God. As an AA, I believe that this passage can be understood as an orientation: I'm an AA for announcing the word of God.

How have you experienced growth in the living out of your Assumptionist charism?

Our charism is to work for the Kingdom of God, in us and around us. The first way I live it is living in my community with my brothers, sharing joys and other matters. The grace of fraternal life, the effort, understanding, and harmony are, for me, very important in living our charism.

Fidelity to community and personal prayer, meditation, readings are also ways of incarnating our charism.

Availability for relationships with God and human beings, accepting and sharing of what we have, working hard with audacity and initiative, open to the love of God and to love human beings, availability for mission, service, are also ways of living our charism.

There are also apostolic works – singing at Mass, serving as editor in chief of *La vie au Montmartre* ,
visiting the elderly and the twinning of foreign students at the university – and meeting with friends are different ways of making present the Kingdom of God.

I'll finally say that our charism, the Word of God, education and formation work as a yeast or salt that gives a sweet taste to my life are also very important in my life as an Assumptionist.

What hobbies or other interests do you have?

Playing tennis, bicycling, and listing to music are some of my other interests.

What is your vision and or hope for the future of the congregation and/or the Church?

First, I'm convinced that the Word of God can be understood by everyone despite all kinds of labels that people might have. So, we need to stay hopeful and work joyfully for the Kingdom as well as we can in our world. We are apostles, with Jesus as our Master.

Is there anything about you that you would like to share or that would surprise others?

Yes. I believe that the Kingdom of God is already here and that it is surely coming. So, can working for it also mean 'discovering' it? Discovering where it is and the way that it is growing?