

Assumptionist student residence

One of the apostolic activities of the Augustinians of the Assumption in Vietnam is the pastoral work for the youth. This apostolic activity is rooted in the spirit of the founder, Father Emmanuel d'Alzon. Formed under the auspices of the Assumptionists in Vietnam, young Assumptionists are trained having in mind and heart three (3) dimensions: faith, human life, and deeply rooted knowledge and relationship with God and the Church. Be always open to the times but do not lose thyself In one's journey in life, young people face many difficulties in faith, social relations, understanding the different challenges brought about by mass communication. Bearing these challenges in formation, how are the young brothers in the congregation are called to live? «Be always open to the times but do not lose thyself». This is the topic shared by Bishop Joseph Tran Van Toan of the Diocese of Long Xuyen, during his meeting with young Assumptionists on January 8, 2019.

During the sharing, the Bishop spoke about the example of Pope John Paul II, who reminded the young that although they are men of their times, they ought not to lose themselves. The young should not forget that they are the bearer Christ's name, John Paul II said. He also added: «Opening up to the times is not for us to have a mockery, scorn for problems that occur in society but that respect, live responsibility, have more accurate judgments. And more than ever, let us recognize ourselves in it». In opening oneself to the times, the Board of the Youth Pastoral stressed that the young, particularly the students, should have an understanding of religion.

Cultivating life under the Buddhist vision During the meeting on April 1 with the Assumptionists, the participants listened to a talk of a Buddhist monk with the theme: «Cultivating life under the Buddhist vision». The speaker is Thich Nguyen Truong, a Buddhist professor at the Vietnam Buddhist Institute. During the presentation, he emphasized the importance of knowing oneself and true values. The young, according to him, should learn to correct themselves for the better to convert negative thoughts to positive, from dishonest to honest, and restrain from doing the wrong and act in accordance with the righteous dharma and truth. To correct oneself, one needs to learn and cultivate self-awareness. His talk also helped a lot of students understand some aspects of Buddhism.

To invite students to be open to the times does not mean that they need to worship the world and become materialistic. To be open is to understand the transformation of time. Each does not need to be eccentric and special. In challenges and difficulties, young people are invited to return to their identity and find it in God, perhaps through recollections and retreats. The world is noisy. It has not been giving a conducive opportunity for the young to repent and have a quiet moment with themselves and with God. One should therefore find a quiet moment and to be in prayer to think about what is happening in his life, to gain strength, to be more human than ever, but careful not to lose himself.

by Br. Peter Thanh Xuan, Saïgon - Scholasticate Emmanuel d'Alzon