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By Andrew Mercado

Assumptionists: Men of today, passionate for God's Kingdom

BY ANDREW MERCADO

"What is essential is that we pray a lot and put all our confidence in God … Be courageous and always move forward!"

These simple yet passionate words for his fellow brothers offers a glimpse into the apostolic zeal of Father Emmanuel d'Alzon, founder of the Augustinians of the Assumption. He was a man of his time, with a clear understanding of the needs of the Church and human family, especially the most vulnerable. Given his passion, energy, and creativity, those around him referred to Father. d'Alzon as the "St. Paul of the 19th Century." Amid the immediate turmoil following the French Revolution, Father Emmanuel d'Alzon became an apostle of the "Rights of God," working assiduously to restore the place of God in human society. It is in this spirit that Assumptionists all around the world follow the call "to go wherever God is threatened in man and man threatened as the image of God."

The motto "Adveniat Regnum Tuum," derived from the Lord's Prayer itself, gives concrete expression to what d'Alzon had in mind for the religious community he envisioned. The words of Jesus in his prayer, "Thy Kingdom Come," would become the very raison d'etre of the Augustinians of the Assumption. The rhythm of communal life, a shared life of study, prayer, and action inspired by the spirit of St. Augustine, help to ground the apostolic zeal and works of the congregation in prayer and in the Word of God. In 31 countries and six continents, Assumptionists are known as men of faith, men of communion and men of solidarity, all for the kingdom of God.

If the kingdom of God is the password for the Assumption family, indelibly stamping its whole life, you may be asking, what is it that Assumptionists do? The answer is a bit of everything! Since its early days, the Assumptionists have been multi-faceted; after all, the founder himself was involved in multiple apostolic works, each different from the other. Therefore, he never limited the scope of involvement for the congregation. While education may have a central historical role in the apostolic works of the Assumptionists (as the congregation was founded and named after a Catholic school in Nimes, France, "College of the Assumption"), Assumptionists today, much like the first Assumptionists in France, are involved in an array of apostolates, addressing the various contempoeary needs of the Church and that of the human family.

Whether an Assumptionist devotes himself to education, parish ministry, solidarity with the marginalized, theological research, media, publishing,

See Assumptionists..., page 26



Renewal of temporary vows in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit at Assumption College in Worcester. Brother Daniele Caglioni, AA, embraces the provincial of the North American Province, Father Dennis Gallagher, AA.

Photo courtesy Brother Blair Nuyda, AA



Residents, Assumptionists, and guests gather at the Assumptionist Center in Brighton for "Conversation Sunday," a monthly get-together featuring a guest speaker and conversations around faith, the Church and culture.

Photo courtesy Brother Blair Nuyda, AA

Assumptionists: Men of today, passionate for God's Kingdom

Continued from page 6

nurturing vocations for the Church, or the promotion of Christian unity, all apostolic works are done in the spirit of truth, charity, and unity, all for the mission, to cultivate the kingdom of God within us and around us.

In the United States, the congregation traces its roots to the first arrival of Assumptionists to New York City in 1895. Soon after the first arrival, the Assumptionists set their sights on establishing Assumption College, a Catholic university in Worcester, Massachusetts. Since then, Assumptionists have involved themselves in different ministries throughout Massachusetts and around the U.S. Currently, the Assumptionists serve at St. Ann's Shrine in Fiskdale, (known for its St. Anne Novena in the summer) and staff the adjacent St. Anne-St. Patrick Parish.

Since its founding in 1904, Assumptionists continue their lively presence at Assumption College, ministering to students and sharing their charism as professors, campus ministers and administrators. Through its history of over 100 years, Emmanuel d'Alzon's view of education continues to nourish the intellectual and spiritual formation that students receive at Assumption College. For d'Alzon, the education of young people is not simply a task to be completed but rather a mission to be lived, "an ongoing Pentecost." Though the landscape of Catholic higher education in the United States is ever evolving, Assumption College continues to meet the needs of the times, while living its mission in forming the hearts, minds, and souls of young people "based on a vision of the human person rooted in Christian revelation."



Father Alex Castro, AA, presiding at an outdoor Mass during the St. Anne Novena at St. Anne Shrine in Fiskdale.

Photo courtesy/Brother Blair Nuyda, AA

The Assumptionists also have a significant presence here in the Archdiocese of Boston. The Assumptionist Center in Brighton houses the Provincial offices, which provide administrative services for the Assumptionists in Canada, Mexico, and the United States, while also serving as a formation community.

Given the central focus on communal and fraternal life, the Assumptionist Center also serves as the home of our Residency Program. For over 10 years, the Assumptionist Center has been a home for both Assumptionists and laymen, particularly graduate students studying at nearby universities, and young professionals. The center is a home for Christian living, prayer, and learning how to be Church. It serves as a space of encounter, where residents and Assumptionists share meals and journey together. This home has opened the doors of the Assumptionist mission, charism and spirituality to men from all over the country and the world, serving the Church and the needs of humanity. The "alums" of our center have become our "partners in mission," men who dedicate themselves to the kingdom of God through their everyday life. This home continues to be a palpable sign here in Boston of our communal journey "to become fully human, to recognize in Jesus Christ the perfect man, and to find in God the deepest motivation for our life and actions."

Historically, the Assumptionist presence in the U.S. has been concentrated in the Northeast. But today, the mission calls us onward! It is in this spirit of d'Alzon, who encouraged his brothers to "be courageous and always move forward!" that the Assumptionists of the North American Province are currently discerning an opportunity to establish a community in El Paso, Texas.

This upcoming fall, a small group of Assumptionists will spend a few months in El Paso. There, they will immerse themselves in the social reality and needs of the local church while discerning the possibility of establishing a new Assumptionist community. In response to the needs of our immigrant brothers and sisters in the southwest, the Assumptionists are actively exploring ways to live in solidarity with the vulnerable and marginalized. Assumptionists are men of their time and men who are passionate for the kingdom of God! At this time of discernment for our congregation, we count on your prayers, that we may grow in apostolic zeal, continue to nurture vocations for the service of the Church, and go wherever the people of God are in most need of His love and healing.

Assumptionists are men of their time, passionate for the kingdom of God!

We invite you to discover the Assumptionist passion for the kingdom of God, whether you are drawn to life as an Assumptionist religious or as a Lay Assumptionist. Together, we are all "partners in mission" living out the words of Jesus, "Thy Kingdom Come." Visit us at www.assumption.us or follow us on social media.

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