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Our jubilee year will be, I hope, a time of joy and renewal as much personal as communal. The Assumptionist can be defined as a man who has confidence in the grace of God, a man who surrenders totally to the Holy Spirit. With him we can realize much more than we could hope.

The beginning of the year is traditionally marked by an exchange of wishes, but also by resolutions that we make for a better life, for better health or for a better self-image. I leave it to everyone to make these decisions in hopes that they will lead one to greater holiness. But without my insisting, during this jubilee year, on an elementary truth: the more we open ourselves to sanctity, the more will the holiness of Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon be clear and evident.

As for myself, I make my prayer the one said by the priest at the Eucharist: "That I may never be separated from you." I love this, because in its simplicity, it says much about the desire that animates the heart of the believer: that one never be separated from the love of the one who gave everything for us. Often, I allow myself to broaden my prayer and to include in my petitions the totality of the Assumption religious: young and not so young, in formation or immersed in pastoral work. I wish that each of us becomes totally a companion of the Lord throughout this New Year. May we be profoundly rooted in the life of God. To become a saint, is to be in the presence of the Lord all the days of one's life.

There is another prayer that I like that is in the Canon of the Mass, it says: "serve in your presence". We are servants and we work in the presence of the Lord. This resonates with the first prayer that I referred to above. But there is more: the invitation to serve. Pope Francis regularly insists on missionary work and he asks of the Church, that is of each of us, to resolutely engage in the new evangelization. Therefore we must serve and serve in the presence of the Lord.

The first place of our engagement is naturally the community to which we belong. It is there that the Assumptionist should make of himself a servant for all. The Rule of Life is a constant call that there are no elevated positions in community life, each is called to serve his brother according to his function. The second place of service touches upon ministry, that is to say all that we are asked to do for others. There is a social dimension to our religious lives. In my opinion, one must remember that social issues are a place where one must resonate the announcement of the Good News.

Pope Francis has clearly underlined in his apostolic exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, where he evokes the social dimension of evangelization: “To evangelize is to render present in the world the Kingdom of God.” The work for the Kingdom of God is made in a multitude of “services” that we render to others and to our brothers. The jubilee year of our foundation has called this to be a time of renewal and this calls for a doubling of our efforts for the Kingdom of God and the cause of the Gospel. I dream of an Assumption retrieving the dynamism of the early times and where each one of us would resolutely engage in carrying the Good News to the ends of the Earth. Let us never forget that we are in the presence of the Lord and it is he who acts in us.

Happy and holy 2020, good jubilee!