

The Augustinians of the Assumption (AA) also known as the Assumptionists will celebrate its 15 years of presence here in the Philippines on January 25, 2021.

Join us as this page launches "ASSUMPTIONISTS 15x15" as we take a look into our journey in the past years. For 15 days before our 15th year, we will post interesting facts and historical bits about the beginnings and the early years of the Assumptionists here in the Philippines.

https://photos.app.goo.gl/yHjXZeN4hJ6jcqbh8

15 Years of Assumptionist Presence in the Philippines

January 25, 2006 - January 25, 2021

Today we continue to live our Assumptionist vocation here in the Philippines together with our Lay partners, collaborators, benefactors and friends of the Assumption.

At the moment, we thrive in three different communities (Postulancy at Project 4, Quezon City; Novitiate at San Juan Metro Manila and Theologate/Mother House at Loyola Heights Quezon City) but we live as ONE ASSUMPTIONIST faithful to the vision and mission of our congregation inspired and established fifteen years ago.

We look forward to another fifteen years and more of Assumptionist journey together with you, our Lay partners and friends here in the Philippines and abroad as we continue to help build the Kingdom of God here on earth. #AdveniatRegnumTuum !

We invite you to join us discover and live the Assumptionist Way of Life as Lay or as Religious. Follow us and send your message thru:

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DAY 1: It all Began Here!

In the summer of 1999, Fr. Peter Precourt, the director of Vocations (North America), received an unexpected email from a young man in the Philippines, Ricky Montanez, inquiring about the Assumptionists, wanting to know more about them. Fr. Peter told him that there were no Assumptionists in the Philippines and that there was no plan of founding it there in the foreseeable future. But Ricky was not easily daunted that he wrote back explaining he had come to know the Assumption family through the Religious of the Assumption (RA) and had been teaching in one of their schools for nearly eight years. He wanted information about the male branch of the family.

As time went on, Peter tried to direct him to other orders already in the Philippines. No way! No matter which obstacle Peter placed before him, he insisted that he had a vocation to the Assumption and that, even if it meant coming to the United States to pursue it, he would.

DAY 2: The Filipino Project

In the summer of 2000, what we have come to call "the Filipino Project" began to take shape. Ricky arrived in Worcester that summer to begin a candidacy program that included a residential experience with the Emmanuel House community and registration in the Assumption College's pre-theology philosophy program. That same summer Peter visited the Philippines to get a better appreciation of the situation and to speak personally with the Religious of the Assumption. No sooner had Ricky arrived in Worcester than other Filipino candidates began to knock on the door, all of them acquaintances of the Religious of the Assumption, either former students, AMA volunteers, or teachers in their schools. Peter spent some time interviewing them.

In the summer of 2001 four more candidates arrived."

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The picture below was taken during Ricky's (at the center in khaki jacket) 2nd year in the US, with Fr. Peter on his left wearing sunglasses.

DAY 3: AA-RA Collaboration

Probably even earlier than 2000, the RA sisters in the Philippines have been speaking to their lay collaborators about the Assumptionists and their founder, Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon. When young men who were thinking of a vocation to the priesthood or religious life approached the sisters, they have been encouraged to think about the Assumptionists. The only written material that the sisters had to share with these young men were two copies of the booklet put out by the general Fr. Claude Maréchal which Fr. Richard Lamoureux left during his visit. Yet with these meager materials and their own words the sisters were able to interest a number of young men

to explore the possibility of joining the Assumptionists.

DAY 4: Bonjour Cardinal!

Fr. Peter met Cardinal Sin, together with Archbishop Paciano Aniceto and Bishop Socrates Villegas to present the Assumptionists' philosophy of vocation among other documents. They all recognized that the Assumptionists have acted in accordance with their recommendations. Thanks to the RAs that they knew the Assunptionists well! The Filipino bishops have even encouraged the Assuptionists to found a community in the Philippines as soon as possible.

DAY 5: Pioneers: The Fearless Five

During the third visit of Fr. Peter in the Philippines, he met many people including the families of the young Filipino aspirants together with the Bishops of the Dioceses where the five original Assumptionist candidates came from. It was indeed a fruitful and grace-filled visit that will always be part of the foundation history of the Assumptionists in the Philippines.

DAY 6: New Arrivals from the PH!

In July 2003, Fr. Peter Precourt returned to the Philippines where once again he organized three weekends on vocation discernment in each of the three major regions of the country, interviewed over twenty candidates, consulted with the Religious of the Assumption (RAs) and visited various facilities that might be of use in their formation process.

From this gathering, new candidates arrived in the Worcester to begin their initial formation for two years, during which they had to take basic courses in the Humanities (languages, history, literature, music) and a rigorous introduction to Philosophy. These new candidates were very different from the young Filipinos who arrived in the US a few years ago--an indication of the great variety of candidates in the Philippines.

DAY 7: Finalizing the Blueprint

During the visit of Frs. Richard Lamoureux, Bernard Holzer and John Franck to the Philippines in 2003, they visited numerous formation houses, met several bishops including the new Archbishop of Manila, Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales. They also looked for possible housing sites, interviewed a dozen more candidates and discussed various matters with the Religious of the Assumption.

Deciding that the Jesuit School of Theology appeared to provide the most substantial formation for the candidates, they discovered a house nearby currently owned by the Good Shepherd Sisters that would be very convenient. They have begun the negotiations either to rent it or to buy it.

DAY 8: Seed of Hope

Their unexpected adventure with the Philippines, dating back to 1999, has brought the Assumptionists to the point of considering a foundation there as soon as possible. Not only have the initial candidates persevered and demonstrated exceptional talent and commitment, others have followed in their tracks.

With one candidate (Ricky Montanez) about to enter to the novitiate in Chile and four others who have been accepted to postulancy at Assumption College, it is clear that they need to begin serious planning for an eventual foundation.

And in one of the visits of the Assumptionist Fathers in the Philippines, they received the seed of hope and inspiration from the former President of the Philippines, Corazon C. Aquino.

DAY 9: Re-calibrating the Plans

Fathers John Franck, the Provincial of North America, and Fr. Andre Antoni, the Provincial of

France, accompanied by Fr. Benoit Griere and Sr. Marie-Francoise Phelippeau, the Provincial of France of the Little Sisters of the Assumption, went to the Philippines from January 21-26, 2004. This visit provided an opportunity to meet the Assumption present in the country: the Religious of the Assumption (RA) and the lay people with whom they collaborate.

The dossier on an Assumptionist future in the Philippines was currently in the hands of the Provincial of North America and the Commission of the Provincials of Asia.

DAY 10: A Call of the Spirit

A communal discernment was very important as the Foundation in Manila was progressing. On January 14, 2005, Fr. Richard Lamoureux, Fr. Bernard Holzer and Fr. John Franck met to lay down a roadmap for the establishment of Assumptionist community in the Philippines. Its objective is to form before all else, as its priority, a genuine Assumptionist apostolic community and to plant the charism in the Philippine and Asiatic soil.

DAY 11: No Turning Back

A calendar for the entire 2005 was prepared in preparation for the establishment of the Assumptionists in the Philippines. Among other things, by July it was proposed to have the nomination of the older religious who will form part of the foundation in Manila, to be followed by the necessary language and formation programs.

DAY 12: Almost there!

The plan to found a community in Manila in 2006 depends on the availability of four religious from various provinces.

After his fruitful visit, Fr. Richard Lamoureux met with the Asian Brothers in the US to speak of his recent visit in the Philippines, to share with them some of his questions regarding the future

foundation, as well as the suggestions that they plan to make to the Executive Committee. He asked them to discuss all of this among themselves, and then later with Fr. John Franck and Fr. Bernard Holzer.

DAY 13: The First Community in Manila

The foundation of the Assumptionist community in the Philippines was recorded upon the arrival of the first group of Assumptionist fathers to comprise the new community. Together with two other Filipino brothers who have finished their novititate in the United States, their first interaction as a new community happened on January 25, 2006, at Assumption San Lorenzo in Makati.

DAY 14: Assumptionists in Manila: Our Community Charter

Considering our purpose, by BUILD we mean we are a founding community that needs to be constructed day-by-day. We want to insist on vocation ministry for the future and the solid initial and continuing formation of our brothers, as our priorities at this time of founding. We are building this community through a gradual involvement with and insertion into the Filipino context.

We want our community to be INTERNATIONAL to express the Congregation’s commitment to the mission (General Chapter #68). We want it to be INTER-ASIAN to foster unity among all Asian Assumptionists and to open ourselves to the broader mission of the Church in Asia. We believe in the enrichment brought about by the encounter of diverse cultures and spiritual traditions as a sign of the communion that we are called to promote, especially in a globalizing world.

By CHRIST-CENTERED we want to say clearly that it is Christ who gathers us together (RL 2,4). We want to deepen our friendship with Jesus Christ, source of our communion and our mission. We want to be attentive to his calls today.

We insist on COMMUNITY because Saint Augustine, Venerable Fr. Emmanuel d’Alzon, our

founder, and our Rule of Life all remind us that community is at the heart of our vocation and our first apostolate.