

On a crisp October afternoon, some three hundred people gathered outside the Emmanuel d'Alzon Library on the campus of Assumption College to dedicate a stunningly beautiful bronze statue of Emmanuel d'Alzon, the founder of the Augustinians of the Assumption (Assumptionists), the sponsors of the school. The long-awaited sculpture, a year in the making, was unveiled on Fall Homecoming and Family Weekend.

The dedication ceremony featured opening remarks by Fr. Dennis Gallagher, A.A., Regional Superior of the Assumptionists and Vice President for Mission, and Dr. Francesco Cesareo, president of the College.



Sr. Margaret Beaudette, a Sister of Charity, stationed at Mt. St. Vincent College in New York, was also present for the occasion. For more than 30 years, Sister Margaret has devoted her

talents to art, teaching and creating original liturgical and religious sculptures in bronze, bonded bronze and fiberglass. Her work includes sculptures of Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Augustine, St. Bernadette, St. Paul the Apostle, St. Peter the Fisherman, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Joan of Arc, St. Joseph and many others. Sr. Margaret's work is found in churches, hospitals and other venues across the USA as well as in South Korea, Bermuda, Haiti, Canada, and Lourdes, France. As an artist, working from her studio in the Bronx, New York, Sister Margaret's style is uniquely her own, emphasizing traditional figurative work with clarity of line and form.

Dr. Christian Gobel , professor of philosophy and one of the organizers of a pilgrimage in the footsteps of Fr. d'Alzon that was held last May, offered some reflections on Fr. d'Alzon and education. In his remarks, he said, "true Catholicism cannot have anything to do with narrow-mindedness and obstacles to academic freedom (that would be a perversion of the word and idea of 'Catholicism' itself). Christian creation and salvation theology as well as any missionary work in fulfillment of Jesus' command in Mt 28:19 aim at fearlessly universal and truly ecumenical openness towards any school of thought that seeks wisdom and truth. It is in this same spirit that d'Alzon emphasized the need for "critical thinking" and identified the "strengthening of the intellectual capacity" of his students as one of his main academic goals. It is, therefore, an essential part of the 'missionary' charism of Catholic education that students develop a sense of appreciation for the Catholic intellectual tradition as well as its intrinsic critical (and socio-critical) potential. They need to discover, as St. Augustine did when he heard St. Ambrose preach in Milan, that 'the Catholic faith is, in fact, intellectually respectable' (*Confessions*
V 14,24). To promote this awareness is an indispensable – as well as promising – task for any Catholic educator, especially in present-day America, in an academic landscape which is so much characterized by religious pluralism."



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