

The seven schools run by the Oblate Sisters of the Assumption in France spent the last year preparing a colorful spectacle to mark the bicentennial of the birth of their founder, Emmanuel d'Alzon. The show includes two parts, the first a dramatic presentation of the life of Emmanuel d'Alzon in five acts and the second a musical tour of the countries where the sisters are located. The entire presentation is entitled, "Emmanuel d'Alzon: A Man with a heart on fire."



In the first part, the actors, both students and faculty from the various schools, undertake the challenge of trying to convey the life of the founder, from that of a mischievous child to the Churchman whose convictions led him to fight for freedom of education in 19th century France, the one would say, "Where freedom of thought reigns, there also should reign freedom of education" and "One must address hearts as well as minds, form the souls of students as well as their minds. Without such influence, our mission is incomplete;



we would remain teachers only and there is more at stake." The second part consists of musical pieces from the Congo, Brazil, and Korea. Each institution contributed to the composition of the text and the costume and scene design. Seven-four students in all participate in this delightful venture which will be presented in three different locales including Paris and Nîmes.

Here is what one spectator wrote about the production:

"The '74' certainly brought a youthful contribution to the bicentennial celebrations. I am speaking of the



74 students from the schools sponsored by the Oblate Sisters of the Assumption who presented, for the first time, in Nîmes, on October 8, their production entitled, *Emmanuel d'Alzon: A Man with a Heart on fire*
. These young troubadours conquered the hearts of the audience by their spontaneity and savoir-faire, gained from long hours of rehearsal. The joyful band of boys and girls from seven institutions spared no efforts during the two-hour performance, assisted by personnel from the various schools, all of them carried away in the whirl of a fervent and dynamic recreation of the life of the founder of the Assumptionists and the Oblates of the Assumption. The first part, a play in five acts, recalling the major episodes in the life of

Fr. d'Alzon, mixed classical theatrical techniques and music, dance, and video. In the second part, the 74, dressed in varied and splendidly designed costumes, invited us to travel beyond local frontiers to the lands to which Fr. d'Alzon beckoned the Sisters as missionaries. It culminated in a colorful, rhythmic finale which left us all amazed and grateful for the efforts of

these young people. It was a fitting testimonial to the Man with a Heart on Fire!"

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