

I have been asked to write something about my impressions as one newly arrived in the US Region. Impressions may not be accurate perceptions; they are just impressions.

I am Mulumba KAMBALE MATSONGANI, an Assumptionist priest, from the Democratic Republic of Congo. I joined the Assumptions in 1994. Two years later (1996), I made my first religious profession. Then, I did philosophical studies in Butembo/DRC, pastoral experience in Arusha/Tanzania and theological studies in Nairobi/Kenya. After my theological studies in 2004, I was assigned in DRC to work in the Administration and Finance office of our College and in Vocation ministry. Since September 2008, I have been master of postulants until recently when I was appointed to Emmanuel House in the USA for business studies at Assumption College, Worcester, MA.

Since August 9, 2010, I have been living at Emmanuel House, on the Assumption College campus. I have the impression that I am living in a beautiful park, given the surrounding trees everywhere and so many squirrels and chipmunks. I find it an unpolluted and calm environment favorable for studies and prayer.

I have been warmly welcomed by my Assumptionist confreres and their collaborators in Brighton, at Assumption College and at Saint Anne and Saint Patrick Parish. On my arrival, I was very pleased to join and meet most of the Assumptionists of the US Region on retreat. My mission has been launched in a prayerful and fraternal climate. This is not just an impression. It is a matter of fact. My impression at this point is that the Assumptionists in the US Region highly value the annual retreat and fraternal life. I will also do my best to be fraternal and to feel at home among my brothers, rather than a stranger.



Though a certain “lost” feeling may seem inevitable for anyone in a new context or situation, I am convinced that these feelings can be dealt with, by avoiding stereotypes about other people, and then being open to them, to their culture and tradition, to a new environment and context of life, briefly: openness to new experiences, but, of course, this process cannot occur without cultural shocks or conflicts.

I was also impressed by the big group of lay people who joined us the last day of our retreat for the “Assumption Family Bicentennial Event”, where Father General presented our shared spirituality with the Laity all over the world. The many lay people who attended this meeting gave me not merely an impression, but hope that in the US Region we will attract Lay Assumptionists, from Assumption College, from our Parish and from Brighton. I am shocked by the considerable decrease of religious and priestly vocations, and by seeing closed parish churches due to lack of committed Christians. However I am even more moved by the active faith of some faithful Christians committed to Sunday and daily mass, prayer and pastoral activities in some parishes, and at Assumption College.

As for Assumption College, I am also deeply impressed by its administration or management, and by the great variety of activities on campus. I also have the impression that both Staff and Students know or are eager to know about Emmanuel d’Alzon and the Assumption Family. In most official speeches they refer to Emmanuel d’Alzon, to what he said about education and, especially to the motto of the College: “…Until Christ be formed in you”.

It was summer when I arrived. I experienced my longest day. I could feel the jet lag. The weather was good for me. Now it is getting colder and colder. I have never lived in weather colder than fifty degrees Fahrenheit. I heard about winter, now I have to experience it. I hope I will be able to put up with it. The trees were covered with green leaves, then with multicolored leaves, but they are now losing their beautiful leaves. The changing seasons may certainly have an impact on people's behavior, as I can notice it already.

I also have the impression that everybody over here is busy and in a hurry. "Time is money", but it is running too fast. This is just my impression, maybe because I have a lot of assigned readings and homework to submit very soon, in due time. And I feel that my time is running away!

I am enjoying my classes at Assumption College. So far, there is no major difficulty, except that I am not fluent in English. I positively appreciate my professors. They are well committed and anxious to help students in their learning. I am confident I will get the relevant knowledge and skills I need in Accounting and Management, for my future work in our Religious Family, in particular the African Assumptionist Province.

I am very grateful to the North America Province, and especially the US Region, for meeting the cost of my living and studies in USA, and for the concrete solidarity with the African Province.

Fr. Mulumba K.M., A.A.
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