

From February 26 to March 6, members of the Assumption Family living and working in Eastern Europe (Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, and Russia) and Israel held their annual meeting in Jerusalem. At the end of their session, which included a retreat and various workshops, they issued a message to the members of the general chapter scheduled to be held in Rome this coming May.

Meeting at St. Peter-in-Gallicantu (Jerusalem) from February 26 to--March 6 for our annual retreat and working session of the Near Eastern Mission, we, the brothers present, wished to address a message to the General Chapter of the Congregation to be held the month of May in Rome.

Dear Brothers,



1. We are writing to you from Jerusalem, where we have just held our annual retreat and work session. Blessed this year with a retreat on the spirituality of Christian East and of a session on the current challenges facing ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, as well as a time of exchange on issues of the Congregation, not to mention the many visits in the footsteps of

Jesus and meetings that a stay in the Holy Land affords, we are keenly aware of the calendar of the Congregation.

Among upcoming events is the General Chapter: we wanted to make sure to write to you who will be there as delegates in order to speak to you about this Near Eastern Mission with which we have been entrusted and which the last General Chapter retained as one of three "apostolic priorities" of the Congregation (cf. Acts of the General Chapter of 2005, #46-62).



2. We wish to convey to you, first of all, the joy that has been ours inasmuch as the Near Eastern Mission was chosen in a special way to characterize the work of the Assumption these past six years.

Moreover, this preferential option was not limited to a simple chapter resolution, but subsequently took flesh in many concrete ways: retreats, international sessions and publications, personnel appointments of the Superior general, visits and twinning of communities, not to mention the re-foundation in Bucharest, a project which is now up and running and which received support beyond the Province of France that got it going.

3. At the same time (why should we hide it?), we haven't had enough yet!!!

Were our expectations too great?

Did we overestimate the impact of such decisions by the Chapter?

We thought that this option would make of the Near Eastern Mission the "in thing" of the entire Congregation, both at the level of policy as well as at the level of raising the consciousness of individuals and communities.

We are forced to observe that this has not been the case --- for the most part. But we aren't giving up: the proof is that we are committed to organize a whole series of events on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of this Mission in 2012... and to invite to this jubilee celebration all our brother Assumptionists and the Oblates Sisters with whom we are happy to collaborate in almost all of our apostolates here, not to mention all the lay-people who work side by side with us.







Le Père d'Alzon à son retour d'Orient