

Who was Emmanuel d'Alzon and what was his vision as founder of the Augustinians of the Assumption? That was the theme of a Day of Recollection at St.Anne/St.Patrick Parish in Sturbridge, MA, on Saturday, September 24th. Fr. Richard Lamoureux A.A., former Superior General of the Congregation, led thirty-five spiritually curious lay and religious in a consideration of the charism and mission of the Assumption and its founder. The theme for the morning session was "The Kingdom for Emmanuel d'Alzon."

Fr. Richard began with a biographical sketch of d'Alzon starting with his birth about twenty years after the French Revolution. Secular forces had attempted to destroy the Catholic Church and left it a much weakened institution in serious disrepair. From an early age d'Alzon felt a calling to consecrate himself to the defense of religion. Reared in a devout family in the south of France, d'Alzon initially wanted to follow his father into politics as the means for bringing about a more just society. However, witnessing the violent revolution of 1848 across Europe, d'Alzon· became disgusted with politics and saw it as a dead end. ·St. Augustine's writings in *The City of God*
became for him a "second revelation," out of which grew his determination to work for the reign of God in the world, succinctly expressed in the Assumptionist motto, "Thy Kingdom Come."

Fr. Richard closely examined d'Alzon's spirit of detachment, which went beyond surrendering material possessions in a vow of poverty. For d'Alzon evangelical poverty included a detachment toward any particular mission. If someone can do the job more effectively, then deference should be given to them. If a particular mission is not leading to the reign of God on Earth, then it should be abandoned for one that is. Fr. d'Alzon experienced firsthand the challenges of detachment by running a school that was always on the verge of financial collapse. If it did fail, he believed that it was God's will and an opportunity to bring about the Kingdom in another way, as Jesus was always in charge.

The theme for the afternoon session was “The Kingdom for the Assumption Today.” Small group discussions were preceded by a lay speaker giving witness on an aspect of Assumptionist spirituality. Mr. Keith Caplette spoke about how to live the faith in my world today. Mrs. Cheryl Leary spoke about how to foster unity in my world today, and Mrs. Ruth Hamilton spoke about how to work for justice and care for the poor in my world today. All three speakers received raucous applause for their intense and compelling witness. This first of its kind Day of Recollection ended perfectly with a Mass concelebrated by Father Richard and his brother Assumptionist, Father Claude Grenache. Many thanks to Father Richard Lamoureux for taking the time to share his knowledge of Emmanuel d’Alzon, to the three lay witnesses, and to the folks who organized the day and cooked a delicious lunch!

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