

I was born on July 18, 1988 in "the land of integrity," that is to say, Burkina Faso. I can trace my vocation back to the various organizations I joined at my home parish of Barsalogo: altar servers, vocation awareness group, Christian scouts know as CV-AV… After finishing grammar school, I entered St. Cyprian's minor seminary in the diocese of Kaya in 2001 and later, in 2006, transferred to St. Augustine Seminary in Koupéla. Afterward, as I was doing my humanities at St. Irenaeus Seminary, I discovered the Assumption, which attracted me by the simplicity of life of the religious, their ministry, especially their collaboration with lay people. So it was that I began my postulancy in October 2010 and was accepted to this year's novitiate. I have tried to make my own the prayer of the Dominican priest, Louis-Joseph Lebret, "O God, send us madmen who do more than just speak; who are authentic and are so for a lifetime. We need madmen of today, taken up with a simple life, lovers of peace, untouched by deceit, committed never to betray; mild and strong. O God, send us madmen." I want to be one of these!



Here is how I might describe the genesis of my vocation: One night, after saying my prayers, I turned out the lights so I could fall asleep. I happened to be alone at home that night and I began to think a little of what might happen to me during the night because the neighborhood I live in is one of the most dangerous in the capital. Suddenly a light shone in the darkness: it was

an angel. The angel said to me, "Michael, son of Augustine Efoégan and A m é g a y i b o r Anto, God is calling you to work as an Assumptionist in his vineyard when you grow up! I was only seven years old at the time". Actually, there's nothing true about what I just recounted. There is nothing mysterious or prophetic about my vocation. I made this up for all those who, when speaking about a religious or priestly vocation, kept asking, "Did God speak to you?" or "Was it revealed to you in a dream?" Let me introduce myself. I am Michel Atsou EFOEGAN, 24 years old, Togolese, a twin, from a mixed marriage between a Catholic father and a Presbyterian mother. I have three brothers and two sisters. Here's my story: up to age 7 I would always attend Sunday school with our Presbyterian friends and attend the children's Mass with the Catholics. But then something changed in my life. One of my father's friends, a diocesan priest, caught my attention and for the first time, after this encounter, I dreamed of becoming a priest, not yet knowing what religious life was all about. After these years of childhood, I stopped speaking for a few years about this desire to serve God and his people. My vocation was "frozen," if I can put it that way. When I was 17, something happened that rekindled this call: I came in contact for the first time with the Benedictine monks of Danyi Dzogbégan with whom I have stayed in touch right up to my joining the Assumption. It was by way of the monastic life that I discovered what religious life was all about. I was a very shy young man and I was told that the monastic life would suit me. But I was attracted mostly by the fraternal life and the Office recited in choir. That same year I joined the vocation reflection group in my parish to think about my own vocation and to receive spiritual direction. The one in charge of the group, Sister Veronica, answered all our questions; she was like a "mother" to us. She had us all visit various congregations to get to know their charism better. "That way," she said, "you'll be able to make a more informed decision, when the time comes." I had also heard of the Assumptionists from a young man I knew, Luc, who had been part of this same group and had become a religious. After getting my diploma and doing a program in information technology, I wanted to enter a congregation but couldn't make up my mind. I didn't want to be a diocesan priest, a monk, or a Combonian...but I felt deeply the call to religious life. So, with Sr. Veronica's advice, I decided to try the Assumptionists, just to see.....And I was taken completely by their simplicity and the warmth of the fraternal and community life characteristic of the Assumption. The Assumptionists offered me a beautiful life of prayer and apostolic work. In the Assumptionist charism, there was something else that touched my personal story: ecumenism. What I am referring to is the marriage of my parents (Catholic father and Presbyterian mother). So, on October 15, 2010 I became a candidate for the Assumptionists, a postulant this past August, and now I am at the novitiate, a time to nourish my love of Christ and to walk in his way, inspired by the example of Fr. d'Alzon. And every day, from the depths of my heart, I try to make my own the prayer of St. Augustine: "I tasted you, and now I hunger and thirst for you. You touched me, and I am inflamed with love of your peace" (Confessions X, 27).
United in prayer!





