

Finding a moment in Elizabeth and Thierry's calendar is a real challenge. Little Adele is almost four. Elizabeth works as a social assistant in a large establishment for persons with multiple handicaps. Thierry is an engineer with the French branch of a Japanese company. Still, they manage a few evenings and some weekends for the numerous commitments for the Assumption. Recently, they accepted further responsibilities in the Religious-Lay Alliance in the Congregation.

The Assumption has been part of the life of this little family for some time. "I met my husband at the World Youth Day in Paris in 1997," says Elizabeth. "I played the oboe and Thierry was translating a skit prepared by the Assumption contingency for the Youth Festival." But Elizabeth is familiar with the Congregation since childhood. Her parents are members of the Assumptionist Parish in Montpellier and several of her summers were spent in camps and other activities organized by the Assumptionists in France. She even came to New York on one of those summer projects. "Little by little I became involved in the Liturgy where I met several Assumptionists. This was very enriching and engendered many precious friendships."

Thierry met the Assumptionists later while he was studying in Lille. His engineering mind soon got him interested in the organization of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He also got involved in the new community of St. Lawrence in the Fields, an ancient Benedictine priory the Assumptionists have renovated and made into a place for silent prayer and retreat.

So, it was only natural that this young couple would become involved with the three year

formation program for lay people organized in 2006. “It was an important moment for us especially since we participated as a couple, “says Elizabeth. “It was a great joy to live this experience together. We understood better the spirit of the Assumptionists, their manner of prayer, their Founder, their Rule of Life. We discovered many things. And especially we were able to share with other lay people on the meaning of our commitment and our presence in the Alliance. “ This formation bore results very quickly. “In the forum of 2008, we sensed that very strong bonds had been established among us. Sometimes people don’t realize that they already are Lay Assumptionists. For example, in my parents’ Parish there are many people who a very committed in the functioning of the Parish but are also very close to the Assumptionists.” Thierry adds, “We are hoping to create places where people can get in touch with the Assumption whatever their age or the level of commitment or their way of life.”

So how could we not respond positively to the Provincial’s request to find still other ways to make these relationships grow and develop them with the Religious?” For Elizabeth, one of the challenges is to seek out others who would like to find their place in the Alliance.



Along with Fr. Vincent Leclerc, the Assumptionist coordinator of the Alliance in France, they want to work in the tradition of the congregation where “Lay people were already present in the time of Fr. d’Alzon” says Elizabeth. They want to build on the work of the commission that has previously been in charge of this question. “We are completely committed in a spirit of continuity,” insists Thierry. “Many things have already been thought through and are in place.”

The couple sees their work with humility. “We realize that this is important work and that there are many expectations.” The new formula seems quite adequate. “An Alliance is not collaboration or accompaniment, or camaraderie, it’s more than that. The word in well chosen: Alliance, Covenant. The idea is to live it fully and help others to join us.”

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Translated by Fr. Claude Grenache, A.A.