

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI is happy to join you in giving thanks for all that you have been able to accomplish in spreading the Gospel, especially all that you have done to promote unity, especially with Eastern Christians, and your pastoral ministry to so many Latin-rite Catholics. Ever since the first Assumptionist missionaries were sent to Bulgaria by Fr. d'Alzon, your mission has spread to other countries in the Near East where you have generously undertaken many responsibilities and have been able to keep abreast of changes in society and the Church.

The Holy Father invites the Assumptionists to strengthen this mission of dialogue in fidelity both to the intuitions of your Founder and to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, one of whose major objectives was the search for Christian unity. Therefore, he encourages you to continue both your pastoral and intellectual ministry which assists the Church in its march toward unity by fostering a better mutual understanding of all Christ's disciples, all the while respecting the various sensitivities which are evident in the countries where you serve.



The witness of unity and fraternal collaboration both within the Congregation itself and among the local Christian churches where it is present will be for all an eloquent sign of its ardent desire to respond to Christ's call, "That they may one in us so that the world may believe that you sent me" (Jn 17:21).

Entrusting the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption to the intercession of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Father grants each of its members a warm apostolic blessing as well as all who are connected to their work, especially in those countries in the Near East where you are present.

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone
Secretary of State for His Holiness
April 26, 2012