

(Fr. Daniel, a 51 year old Frenchman, arrived in the Near East 20 years ago. He has spent the entire time in the Assumptionist parish in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, where he had to learn how to speak a new language and how to celebrate Mass in a new rite. The Assumptionists founded their first mission in the Near East in Bulgaria. Fr. Victorin Galabert, an extraordinary missionary, who held doctorates both in medicine and theology, arrived in 1863 in Plovdiv which became the launch site for more than 30 Assumptionist communities in the Near East. The Assumptionists are still present in Bulgaria as well as in Romania, Greece, Turkey, Israel, and Russia. The following interview was conducted by Sr. Laurence Levisse, an Oblate Sister of the Assumption living in Lille, France. It appeared in the November/December 2012 issue of L'Assomption et ses oeuvres.)



- What has your experience been living in two different rites, the Latin and the Byzantine?

- I experience the two traditions/rites in different places and, first of all, in the celebration of the Eucharist in both rites. Since our community is at the service of the Catholic Exarchate of Sofia, I celebrate the Eucharist daily in the Byzantine rite (sometimes called the Rite of Constantinople). On Saturdays, Sundays and feast days I am in charge of the small Byzantine-rite parish some 12 miles from Plovdiv in Kuklen. However, I also have a regular opportunity to say mass in the Latin rite as well; on Wednesdays, I go to say Mass for Mother Teresa's sisters and once a month for the French-speaking community in Sofia.

Our community usually says the Divine Office according to the Byzantine rite, but when I'm alone I tend to use the Latin breviary since it has more variety and is shorter. Besides, since my formation was in the Latin rite, my personal prayer is markedly shaped by it, but I do like to use, especially when I am out walking, the prayer of the heart, so typical of the Eastern tradition.

I try to take advantage of both traditions in my spiritual reading. On the one hand, I read important Church documents, the writings of St. Augustine and our founder, Emmanuel d'Alzon as well as other authors of the Latin tradition. On the other hand, in order to understand the Byzantine tradition better or in order to be more prepared to foster Church unity, I read works by orthodox writers.





