

*(The following article appeared in the Assumptionist magazine, L’Assomption et ses oeuvres, April/May/June 2013 issue.)*

I was born on a Saturday, December 15, 1984, in Adjudeni, a village located in northeast Romania, in the section of the country known as Moldavia. I was told that it was a bitter cold day, with heavy snow, typical of that time of year. Although Romania is basically a Christian Orthodox country, I grew up in a Catholic village, where the church, with its characteristic bell towers, symbolized by itself alone the pride of these peoples who were to maintain their Catholic faith in spite of fierce persecutions that lasted almost half a century. I was fortunate to be one of the first generations of “free” children, that is, those who grew up after the fall of Communism in 1989. My family never longed to return to those days even if the transition was painful.



Faith always played a·central role in my family. ·We went to Mass every Sunday, and since the Children’s Mass was at 8 AM, we had to get up pretty early in order to arrive on time and find a seat. The year of my First Communion was the occasion for huge celebrations, for my eldest brother was married that year as well. It was that year, right as I was receiving my First Communion actually, that I first began to think about the priesthood. But a week later I was

already thinking of other things! I would have to wait till my high school years for the question to arise again·in a must more pressing fashion.



Given the fact that one of my elder brothers had joined the Franciscans already, I naturally headed in the same direction. The seminary wasn’t far from my house, only 10 kilometers away, in the village of Roman. However, the discipline there was much too rigid and the huge dormitories and long, cold corridors turned me off. Still, I stayed for four years, telling myself that following Jesus meant sacrifice and renunciation.

*The Assumptionists*

After receiving my high school degree, I left the seminary with the hope that I might find another congregation more suited to what I was looking for. It was then that I discovered the Assumptionists, seduced first of all by their charism and then by their style of community life, which I really liked. It was during my first years as a candidate that I was able to read the *Confessions* of St. Augustine for the first time. Since then, there has always been a copy of the Confessions on my bookshelf, probably because anyone can recognize part of himself in the tortuous ways that Augustine experienced. The years I spent at Margineni (discernment house of the Assumptionists in Romania) gave me an opportunity as well to have a fresh look at Orthodox Christians and to set foot for the first time in one of their churches!



*All in the same boat*









The three Christian communities assigned to the Assumptionists in Montpellier (France): St. Thérèse, Holy Spirit, and Our Lady of Hope