



Fr. Rafanambinantsoa Joseph Étienne Ratalata, 43 years old, is the sixth child of nine (four boys, five girls). Three of his sisters are religious sisters. His family is from Fandrandava, a village located some 30 miles from Fianarantsoa where his father is a teacher at the Catholic mission school. It was there, with his father, that he went to grammar school. Afterward, he did junior high school with the Jesuits at Collège Saint-François-Xavier in Fianarantsoa from 1983 to 1987, and high school at the inter-diocesan seminary from 1987 to 1991. He first came to know the Assumptionists when he met Fr. Maurice Laurent who later welcomed him as a candidate in October 1991. Two years later, in 1993, he entered the novitiate under the supervision of Fr. Daniel Carton, and made his first vows the following year. Then it was off to philosophy at the major seminary of Vohitsoa (1994 – 1996). In 1997 there was a break in his studies as he spent an internship at the Assumptionist-run parish in Ejeda, under the direction of Fr. René Le Bec. Once he completed his theology (1997-2000) and his diaconate year, he was ordained a priest at the parish of Notre-Dame de l'Assomption in the Sanfily section of Tuléar on August 15, 2001, by the local bishop, Most Rev. Fulgence Rabeony.

