

- EMMANUEL D'ALZON was born at Le Vigan (Gard) into an aristocratic family.

- HIS SECONDARY AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION TOOK PLACE IN PARIS from 1823 to 1828 at the Collèges Saint-Louis and Stanislas, and then at the School of Law of the Pantheon where he built relationships with leading Catholic intellectuals of the period: Lamennais, Montalembert, Ozanam... all of whom were concerned with reconciling the Church with the modern world in the wake of the French Revolution.

-HAVING REJECTED A LAW OR MILITARY CAREER, he chose to pursue the priesthood. Educated at first at the major seminary of Montpellier (1832-1833), he completed his studies independently in Rome. He was ordained a priest on December 26, 1834. He learned several life lessons from his former mentor Lamennais, especially the need for the Church to enter into the movement of democratization and freedom that was sweeping through Europe.

- AN ENERGETIC AND CREATIVE MAN, he launched any number of pastoral, educational, and social initiatives in the diocese of Nîmes where he served as vicar general for 39 years. Several times he refused to be named a bishop. A staunch activist in the drive for freedom of education, he was named to the State’s Higher Education Council where he was particularly interested in curricular matters. He began the Revue de l'Enseignement Chrétien (1851).

- HE FOUNDED THE CONGREGATION OF THE AUGUSTINIANS OF THE ASSUMPTION (Christmas 1845). He gave his religious several apostolic goals: the education of select Christian students capable of assuming roles of leadership in society; the work of Christian unity through dialogue with Protestants and Orthodox; pilgrimages of groups in view of giving witness and taking their place in the public square; reviews, magazines, and newspapers in view of forming Catholic public opinion and participating in political and social debates of the day; the

administration of minor seminaries to assure a quality education of the clergy; orphanages.

- TWENTY YEARS LATER HE FOUNDED THE CONGREGATION OF THE OBLATES OF THE ASSUMPTION, religious missionary nuns (1865), in view of the service of Christian unity and outreach to the neediest through various works and commitments, often in collaboration with the Assumptionists.

- HE CREATED La Croix Revue which in 1883 became the daily newspaper La Croix.

- HE DIED IN NÎMES, on November 21, 1880.

- HE WAS DECLARED «VENERABLE» BY POPE JOHN PAUL II, on December 21, 1991.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF FR. D'ALZON

Christ at the Heart of the World

- A MAN OF THE 19TH CENTURY, Emmanuel d'Alzon was a staunch opponent of the effects of the French Revolution. Declared unqualified and passé, Jesus Christ and his Father were excluded from the public square. In his mind, however, they play a role at the heart of the human adventure which, without them, is destined for failure.

Salvation can be found in the Good News, the Kingdom of God such as Jesus understood it and put into practice. It is God’s great plan for all of humanity, revealed in Christ and brought to life in his Church.

It is not some kind of straightjacket or imprisonment, but rather a way of fullness. As a source of revelation, the Kingdom of God, presented in the Gospel, brings to life, in the fullest light, so as

to combat and remedy it, what is unacceptable, inadmissible, that is to say, all that disfigures and dishonors God and Man.

- THE KINGDOM OF GOD: this is the key phrase in the spirituality and apostolic project of Emmanuel d'Alzon. It is a spirituality meant to widen horizons and to light fires, not one of comfortable hot water bottles. It is one that unveils the ambition of God in its full extent, an ambition born of his love. As it did for Jesus himself, passion for the Kingdom of God flows for Emmanuel d'Alzon from an overwhelming love of God the Father.

- ADVENIAT REGNUM TUUM (Thy Kingdom Come) is the motto of the Assumptionists and the explanation of its logo, A R T.

At the school of Christ, the Church and St. Augustine

ATTACHMENT TO CHRIST IS PARAMOUNT.

All comes from him so as to return to him. Our attitudes are to be modeled on his. With him, we love the Father and the Spirit but also his Mother, Mary, and the Church, his Spouse We act like him because the messenger must himself bear witness to the Kingdom that he announces. His prayer becomes ours but we also pray in him and through him. His Fidelity, his Hope, his Charity became the divine life in us.

Like him, contemplation, listening to the Word, action are three interlinked aspects of one and the same passion for the Kingdom of God, three activities undertaken that the Kingdom might come about in our day. Truth, Charity, and Unity or otherwise stated, Faith, Justice, Communion are three major notes of the Augustinian dimension of this spirituality. It shapes men of faith fully involved in their world. Like any river, a spirituality has its source. Beginning as a simple trickle, it grows over time. Source of life, it produces new flowers and is enriched with the contributions of new ages and new and unforeseen lands where it takes root. It has spread to Africa, Asia, and both the Americas. It profoundly watered the « Rule of Life » of the Assumptionists and the « Way of Life » of its lay members.