

"Emmanuel d'Alzon could very easily have become a spoiled brat and, later, a playboy. He was a rich, handsome, impulsive nobleman…" These are the opening words in Fr. Richard Richards', A.A. short biography of our founder written in 1974.

Shortly after Fr. d'Alzon's funeral, November 21, 1880, Fr. Etienne Pernet, A.A., who later founded the Little Sisters of the Assumption, had this to say: "Our late and revered Fr. d'Alzon, a man so great and yet so humble and simple at the same time, came to full light at the time of this death. From all over, his sons have received messages of sorrow and testimonies of his noble character. The number of works this athlete of the faith began is incalculable. He was a priest, a soldier, an apostle. People frequent his tomb. They come on pilgrimage. He is revered by all."

Fast forward to about the 1940's. Then about 10 years old, Fr. Bernard Fougeres, who later became the vicar of the diocese of Nimes, first heard of Fr.d'Alzon. We recall that Fr. d'Alzon had also been the vicar of the same diocese for over 40 years. Fr. Fougeres' parish priest described Fr. d'Alzon as a local apostle for the modern world. But it was years later, when he was pastor of the parish in Le Vigan, Fr. d'Alzon's birth place, that he truly began to know him and where people are still very much drawn to him. Fr. Fougeres writes: "It was in this setting that I truly grasped Fr. d'Alzon's attachment to Christ and the Church, his soul of an apostle and a missionary, zealous and impassioned."

Fr. d'Alzon wrote: "One cannot love Jesus Christ without wanting that all love him and this is what drives the life of an apostle, living the motto 'Thy Kingdom Come.'"

And what are they saying today? Fr. Julio, Postulator of the Cause, writes in the recent n.3

Issue of "Signs of God" and what is especially striking to us are the phrases such as: "I pray to Fr.d'Alzon every night;" "We address our prayers to him every day asking for his protection"; "I have received many graces through his intercession"; "I talk to him every day…"; "We love our Fr. d'Alzon very much."

Finally, these words from a couple in France, whose fourth child, Samuel, was born prematurely: "A prayer chain was organized and Sister Gianinna (Oblate of the Assumption) asked for the intercession of Fr.d'Alzon. We joined these prayers ourselves…Samuel is now two years old and doing very well .We are certain that the prayers of our friends, relatives and communities are responsible for this."

And just in case you did not know, Fr. Richards, who, by the way was a local boy, born in North Adams, MA, did not leave us in suspense long about the future of the little boy who could have turned out to be a playboy. In the very next sentence after the one quoted above, he writes: "Yet, by God's grace, he overcame drawbacks and temptations and became a fiery defender of God's rights to man's love and a tireless builder of Christ's body, the Church, in a France where Christian life had been destroyed or was dormant, partly as a result of the French Revolution."

As our awareness of the holiness of Fr.d'Alzon grows may we join these and many others praying for a healing miracle needed before Fr.d'Alzon can be beatified, something, I like to believe, that would be a blessing for the Church, for we Assumptionists and for all our friends.

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