



An Interview With Fr. Edouard Shatov, A.A.

– How did the center at Montmartre come into being?

Fr. Edouard – Montmartre is an international Assumptionist community that was formed ten years ago by Frs. Christian Blanc and Benoit Bigard to renew community life, to give witness to one's Christian commitment and to render pastoral service to God's people.

– How has it fulfilled that goal and continued to grow?

Fr. Edouard – Today, the life of the core community, which is comprised of two full time Assumptionists, that is, myself and Fr. Sebastien Bangandu Mwanza who is one of three Congolese members – Gaston and Joseph, a Vietnamese brother Ai Chi, a Canadian postulant Etienne and two laymen. It truly does represent a very diverse religious presence. Our life of service flows from our life of prayer lived out in community. This daily call to renewal and conversion begins with communal prayer and our shared life together. Each member is a treasured gift and collectively we comprise an international mosaic which requires attention to differences in culture and where each is aware of the possible dangers of stereotyping and false presumptions. Also part of our life together is the experience of fraternal correction, which is

never easy.

– What are some of the ways that your community impacts the life, work and ministries of the center?

Fr. Edouard – Perhaps our biggest and ongoing task at the center is to impart and nourish the life and spirit of all those people who come to experience our vision of a faith based community. Through the various works among its members, including study for those in formation, it is the life of the center which is the priority of all. First of all, it is the community's spirit of welcoming that reaches out to the wider community. Then many are touched through courses in adult faith formation and opportunities of spiritual formation and growth, such as retreats. In addition, the community supports and fosters the Lay-Religious Alliance for those who wish to deepen their own vocation as lay or religious in the spirit of the Augustinians of the Assumption as partners.

– How does the community nourish its own spiritual growth?

Fr. Edouard – The center's community meets once a month to: examine the spiritual dimension of one's life, be formed in the spirit of Fr. d'Alzon and St. Augustine and to apply the tools of discernment to spiritual growth. The ultimate goal is to live the gospel each and every day in the spirit of Assumption.

– What are some of the other opportunities offered to the wider community?

Fr. Edouard – Over the years, the community has found that people who come to the center are searching for God. They soon discover that it is in becoming "Church" that they are welcomed and are free to grow in their relationship with God and others. Several times a year we gather from different backgrounds and educational experiences on a Saturday from 9 AM – 1 PM. There are three basic ways in which growth take place: through communal celebrations of beautiful, meaningful and logical (heart and intelligence) liturgies; by way of formation courses in scripture, Christian philosophies, faith sharing and four retreats a year at Christmas, Easter, Feasts of the Sacred Heart and the Assumption and social gatherings. Another way that the community animates the center is in designating a day once a year as "Day of the Assumption" when, on a Saturday in November, the spirit and charism is shared through a general and wide spread invitation to those interested in coming together and work for the common good. Seven

other times a year, lectures are given on various social issues. Monthly, discussions take place on Church documents, followed by witness talks on faith and charitable works. Another monthly event takes place on Friday nights from 5 PM – 7 PM, when the community welcomes the whole center community for discussions on faith and society.

– What are some of the other pastoral, social, liturgical and cultural offerings of the center?

Fr. Edouard – The “Committee on Animation” is made up of lay and religious, but not necessarily Alliance folks, who look at and make decisions for the pastoral life of the center. We also have a liturgy committee which attends to the careful planning of our celebrations, including music, readers, ambiance etc. Socially we reach out by way of a Montmartre bar-b-cue for our friends, sponsors and benefactors whereby everyone is welcome. We also have a newsletter and webpage at: info@lemontmartre.net . Once a year we sponsor a trip to experience the cultural opportunities of Quebec.

– What is your biggest concern or challenge in moving forward?

Fr. Edouard – Our biggest concern and challenge, as we look into the future, is in regard to our youth. We need to be creative and maybe innovative in reaching out to them as the young Church of today.