

At our most recent Regional Council meeting (November 12, 2010) we set aside two hours for a discussion of the lay/religious alliance in the US region. Joining the Council for the discussion were a number of people who have been active in promoting this cause that was so close to the heart of Fr. d'Alzon and has been gaining momentum throughout the congregation: Sister Clare Bertero, Tomasz Kierul, Tomasz Jaster, Fr. Roger Corriveau, Joe Pagano, and Fr. Oliver Blanchette. The conversation was situated between two important events: the address of our Superior General, Fr. Richard Lamoureux, at the August gathering of lay friends in Worcester and the upcoming Provincial and General Chapters, both of which will again include the participation of lay associates.

It was an opportunity for an honest assessment of both the progress made in this area as well as some of the obstacles encountered along the way. Recognizing that the charism of the Assumptionists is a gift given to the whole Church and the desire on the part of an increasing number of lay people to share that charism more deeply, the conversation turned on the most promising and effective ways to build partnerships for the extension of God's kingdom in our time and place. The participants in the discussion had the benefit of drawing upon the observations, insights, and dreams of lay groups in Brighton, Worcester, and Fiskdale, whose love for the Assumptionist religious is evident and who are restless for the AA charism to radiate more widely.

This is truly an important movement, not only because it gives expression to the founder's vision but because it has the capacity to enliven our hope, even in the face of diminishing numbers of religious, that the wider Assumption family has a mission to fulfill in the world of today. One of the fruits of the celebration of this 200th birthday of Fr. d'Alzon has been a strengthened conviction that his "little family," bolstered by lay friends imbued with his spirit, can contribute much to the great causes of our time. Together, may our hearts be opened to this moment of grace.

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