

For the Coming of the Kingdom of God, out of Love for Jesus Christ

A Newsletter offering formation and information to help us Create an Alliance between the Laity and Religious, Lay Assumption

1. Formation: Community Life: The first chapter of our Rule of Life is a summary of the Assumption Charism and a description of how the Assumptionist is called to live. The other chapters deal with different aspects of our life: Common Life, Apostolic Service, Religious Profession, Poverty, Chastity, Obedience and Prayer Life. Our Rule of Life is brief, light, insisting on the spirit rather than on the letter of the law. Our rule is for Life, reflecting Christ's words: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mk.2:27). This makes it easier to adapt our Rule for lay people. Some countries already have a rule or charter for their group or are working on one. This should help in the creation of one for all of us.

A word about our Common Life: Deeply rooted in words of Jesus as He prayed, on the eve of this death, to his Father that we might be one in him and his Father as he and the Father are one and on the example of the first Christians as they lived a communal life steeped in fraternal love and sharing, it should be no surprise that the first topic discussed in our Rule of Life after the general introduction is the common or community life. Also, the fact that Augustine dearly held to community life and that D'alzon wanted us, according to a long monastic tradition, to be men who lived in community, explains the importance for us of community life. Finally, there has recently been a gradual movement toward being men living in 'apostolic community', always poised toward an active, apostolic life but who work together for the Coming of the Kingdom. Indeed, community life is so important that we can say that our very effort to live together in fraternal charity is already a first realization of the Coming of the Reign of God. That community life is, however, a challenge, "to be built every day", one that requires "a daily conversion". We are to "accept one another with our differences" and learn to transcend them in order to "accept and forgive each other." If we put kindness and respect for persons before differences, "our differences become richness". This is true whether living in community or not; always we are called to live as brothers and sisters, to respect each other and live in fraternal charity. Charity begins at home. We cannot serve the great causes of God and man yet ignore those we live with daily, whether family, relatives, neighbors parishioners or co-workers. So while lay Assumptionists may not be called to live in community as such, they are called to grow in sincere fraternal charity for all their Assumptionist brothers and sisters, lay or religious, willing to work in harmony with them for the Coming of the Kingdom. "No one can experience the joy of this community life without committing himself to it totally".

2. Information: 1) The April issue of our International Newsletter, AA News, has three pages dedicated to the Lay Alliance. Find it at: Assumption.org 2) Fr. Julio NaValto, A.A., coordinator of the Lay Alliance project, assures us that despite the economic crisis the International Session of the Lay-Religious Alliance will take place in Nîmes, France, August 24-30. Fr. Julio writes "We are counting on the participation of 11 lay persons and 16 religious from 16 countries. The objectives of the session are well known: develop a sense of internationality between the participants, evaluate the progress made by each community or group within the alliance in terms of the priorities set by the General Chapter of 2005, and suggest a deepening of the Assumptionist spirituality." Fr. Julio will be in the Worcester area between June 20-30. Wouldn't it be wonderful if he could spend an hour with us!

3. Odds and Ends "The cherry tree was asked: "Speak to us of God," and the cherry tree blossomed!" Thus began an article in "The Tablet" by an English parish priest, Fr. Daniel O'Leary. He continues: "My life as a priest was transformed when I began to believe that God was a lover with a passion for the healing and blossoming of all people, of all creation." Fr. O'Leary tells us that he and his parishioners were often experts in humanity, familiar with their own emotions, able to share them with others, and who are, at the same time, contemplatives who have fallen in love with God. "Our Rule of Life", a rule for Life, insists on the Spirit of and not the letter of the law. Any Alliance Charter we draw up, while pointing us toward The Kingdom of God our of love for Jesus Christ, must also animate us with a sense of a loving God, who delights in us and all his creation, whose Son comes to save us and not judge us, who wants all to blossom!