

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, a Lay Assumption

Formation: Our life of apostolic service: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” (Mt.28,29) Our communities and groups are by their very nature apostolic as by the quality of their life and work they witness to the Good News. Chapter three of the Rule of Life speaks explicitly of apostolic service. Our motto, “Thy Kingdom Come”, urges us to work for the coming of Christ’s Reign in us and in the world. As the Father sent Him, so Christ sends us, with the promise of his Spirit, to serve our brothers and sisters by proclaiming the Gospel. Our apostolate inserts our communities and groups into the Church’s mission of gathering all men and women into the People of God.

Inspired by Vatican II, we will share the joys and the hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the men and women of our times, especially the poor and “those who hunger and thirst for justice” (Mt. 5, 6). In solidarity with their aspirations and struggles, we participate, through our prayer, our daily living and in whatever projects the Spirit might prompt us to engage in, in building a world which is more just and more fraternal. Indeed, the proclamation of Jesus Christ is inseparable from the promotion of the whole person in justice, love and unity. All our undertakings shall be imbued with a doctrinal, social and ecumenical spirit.

As we work to build up the Church by this proclamation of Christ, we are determined to remain faithful to the general directives of the Church, remaining in communion with the Pope, the College of Bishops, and the local Church as we foster a spirit of docile yet mature obedience toward Church authority.

Always, our apostolate has taken on various forms, in particular: teaching “understood in the broadest sense of the word,” studies, social communications, pilgrimages, ecumenism, parish ministry apostolic movements of lay people, social work, service to the younger Churches, etc. We give priority to education in faith, to training responsible lay people, and to awakening and supporting Christian vocations, particularly religious and priestly vocations.

Then our Rule of life tells us that we choose, within the possibilities of our resources, those commitments that effectively answer the needs of today and correspond to the spirit of Assumption. The Rule goes on to say that personal preferences and aptitudes will be taken into account, but they must always be weighed against the apostolic objectives and priorities of our communities as well as against the needs of the Institute. These directives, never easy to implement, require prudence, listening, initiative but also docility and humility. In addition the situation of Lay Assumptionists will be different. Hopefully, a Charter for all Lay Assumptionists, when written, will offer some guidelines in this area. Individual groups will have to think and pray about it too. In any case, there will have to be a wholesome balance between personal initiative and obedience to the group and to the Charism of Fr. D'Alzon, a true community spirit one that is realistic and doable for lay people today. Finally, Lay Assumptionists are to remain loyal to and in the service of their Local Church.

Our missionary vocation invites us to become "all things to all people." This availability requires especially: 1) an openness of mind and heart to the cultural, social, and religious values of people from various backgrounds; 2) a willingness to receive as well as to give, based on mutual esteem and respect; 3) a concern for formation, competence and adaptation; 4) a readiness to take initiatives and to be creative; 5) zeal, dedication to work, frankness and daring.

On a regular basis, we will evaluate the quality of our apostolic service, and we will study the choices and adaptations that might be needed. Healthy or ill, young or old, we share this apostolic mission with our brothers and sisters, each according to her/his vocation and situation.

Our personal and communal prayer welcomes and celebrates God's action in the lives of people. In that prayer, we beg forgiveness for our refusals to answer the promptings of the Spirit, and we rekindle our hope of becoming Christ's witnesses "until He comes."

Information: Fr. Richard Lamoureux, Superior General, writes of the preparation for the General Chapter of May, 2011. Its theme will be: "Faithful to Emmanuel d'Alzon...for the coming of the Kingdom". Here are two excerpts from the letter. "And now, together with lay Assumptionists, we are rediscovering him (Fr. d'Alzon) as a powerful presence in our life and mission and as a valuable companion on our road to holiness...There is still a good deal of thinking to do before the opening session of the Chapter in May of 2011, not the least of which is serious reflection on the role of lay Assumptionists in the Chapter. The Council of the Congregation reaffirmed our decision to invite a certain number of lay people and to involve them in the work of the Chapter in ways that would be appropriate."

Odds and Ends: One simple truth we must remember is that, in all vocations, in whatever

situations we might find ourselves in and surely as we attempt to create a Lay Alliance, the initiative for good always comes from God. We are to be aware of this and ask constantly for his assistance. Sometimes we find the Spirit in wind and fire, sometimes in a whisper or sheer silence. In the August issue of "God's Word Today" there is an exciting, "Prayer Starter": "Catch me up, O Holy Spirit, in the whirlwind and in the whisper of your Holy Presence!" May the Spirit hover constantly over the Lay Alliance gathering in Nimes this month. May our prayers accompany our delegates!