

PROMINENT ASSUMPTIONIST Fr. Daniel Olivier, A.A. (1927-2005) Reformation scholar, distinguished professor, ecumenist

Daniel-Albert Olivier was born into a working-class family, one of four children, in the French town of Villabé, twenty miles southeast of Paris. Afflicted with a bone disease that would affect his walking throughout life, Daniel had to undergo extensive medical treatment that delayed his entry into the Assumptionist novitiate until 1947; he made his first vows the following year. After his studies in philosophy and theology, he was ordained in 1954 and was immediately assigned as a professor of English, Church history, and theology.

Impressed by his intelligence and application, his superiors encouraged him to begin a long period of higher studies in theology in 1956 which eventually led him to the field of his greatest passion, Reformation studies. He had the exceptional opportunity to spend two years studying Luther and his thought at the Institute of European History in Mainz (Germany) before returning to France where he earned a licentiate at the Catholic Institute of Strasbourg and his doctorate at the Catholic Institute of Paris in 1965.

Then would begin his long and distinguished career as professor, expert in the thought of Martin Luther, ecumenist, author, and internationally renowned speaker. Fluent in English and German in addition to his native French, he taught at institutions of higher education in Paris, Strasbourg, and Lyon (France), as well as in the United States, Italy, Germany, and Sweden. He delivered lectures worldwide and holds the distinction of having received an honorary doctorate from the Faculté théologique protestante of Paris, where he also taught.

He wrote voluminously as well --- books and articles in reviews, dictionaries, and collected essays. Among his works several stand out: *La réforme de Luther*, 3 volumes (1970-1); *Le procès de Luther*
(1971), translated into six languages;
La foi de Luther
(1978);
le Magnificat de Luther, Luther et la Réforme
(1997).

Fr. Pierre Gallay, an Assumptionist journalist, remarked in the homily that he delivered at Fr. Daniel's funeral, "I believe that Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, owe you much for you have been a tireless artisan of renewed unity among us."