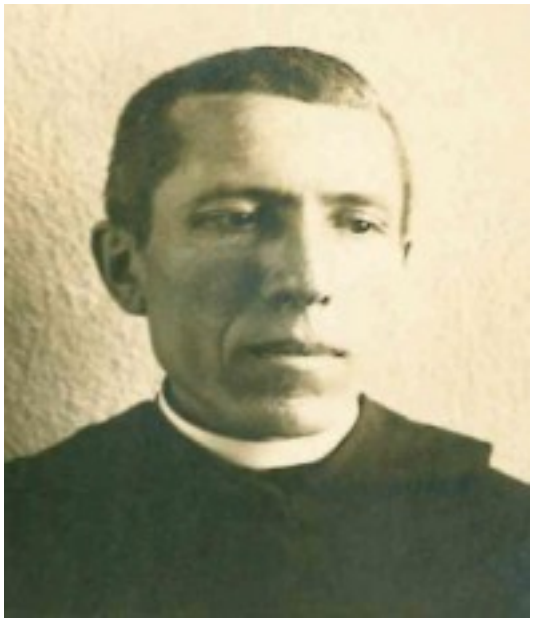


PROMINENT ASSUMPTIONIST MARTIN JUGIE, Byzantine Expert and Marian Scholar

He has been described as one of the leading Marian scholars of the 20th century and served as one of the major contributors to the definition of the Assumption by Pope Pius XII. His five-volume *Theologia dogmatica christianorum orientalium* (*Dogmatic Theology of Oriental Christians*) was considered to be the theological 'summa' of the religious thought of the Christian East, the culmination of an illustrious scholarly career.

Who was Martin Jugie? Etienne Jugie was born in the Limousin region of France on May 3, 1878. His early education took place at several Assumptionist minor seminaries until he entered the novitiate and made his first vows in 1895 taking the name Martin. He was sent to Jerusalem for his years of philosophy and theology (1896-1902) and already distinguished himself to the point that he was asked to teach Greek to younger brothers while he completed his own study of theology. In 1902, a year after his ordination, he was assigned to the Assumptionist house of studies in Phanaraki (part of Asian Istanbul), Turkey, where he taught Greek, dogmatic theology (his favorite subject), and Canon Law (1902-1914) and served for a time as director of the Greek minor seminary on site. He also contributed largely to a prestigious Assumptionist journal entitled *Echos d'Orient*.

After serving in the French army during World War I from 1915-1917, he left for Rome to pursue his scientific and teaching activities. In 1926, the future Cardinal Alfredo Ildefonso Schuster, O.S.B., selected by Pope Benedict XV as president of the recently created Pontifical Oriental Institute, appointed Fr. Jugie to its chair of theology. His renown was such during these years that he was asked to give courses as well at the Lateran Atheneum and the Catholic Institute of Lyon. In 1935, having just turned over his chair in Lyon to one of his best students, another Assumptionist, Fr. Antoine Wenger, he was asked to begin teaching at the Pontificio Collegio Urbano "De Propaganda Fidei (today known as the Pontificia Università Urbaniana).

Tenacious and austere, and by now a consultor to the Roman Congregations, Fr. Jugie continued to pursue with indefectible faithfulness the various historical and theological studies to which he had dedicated his entire existence. Recognized as a leading light in his field, he was called upon to contribute numerous articles to the great religious collections and theological dictionaries of the time. He developed a speciality in Eastern Mariology which included homiletics and devotional practices. It is recognized (even by Pope Pius XII and in scholarly circles) that this expertise paved the way and even hastened the dogmatic definition of Mary's Assumption in November 1950.

A bibliography of his writings, published in 1953, features more than 250 books and articles and indicates that this impressive list only includes his scientific work and not the many popular books and articles he wrote nor his innumerable book reviews.

A true son of Fr. d'Alzon, Fr. Jugie linked his scholarly work with what he considered a true service in favor of Christian unity. He was always filled with a concern for strictly objective research, although some later scholars have noted "a Catholic prejudice in favor of an integral Christianity...that did not ingratiate him with supporters of ecumenical dialogue and convergence."

A humble, timid, and even self-effacing man, he saw compliments, honors, and marks of gratitude pour in, particularly on the golden jubilee of his ordination (1951). The French government conferred on him the Cross of the Legion of Honor.

Suffering Parkinson's disease in 1953, he had to bring his teaching career to an end and abandon all intellectual work. He died on November 29, 1954, at the age of 77, appropriately as the Marian Year (the centenary of the declaration of the Immaculate Conception) was coming to a close. Those who knew him appreciated not only his remarkable work but also his

graciousness and deep reverence.

Fr. Jugie is counted as only one of a company of Assumptionist Byzantine scholars: Raymong Janin, Vitalien Laurent, Aurelio Palmieri, Louis Petit, Severin Salaville, Jean-Baptiste Thibaut, Christopher Walter, and Antoine Wenger. Their legacy is being continued by the Assumptionist St. Peter-St. Andrew Center in Bucharest, Romania, which also houses the impressive Byzantine library open to researchers and students.

