



(The following article appeared in the Assumptionist magazine, L'Assomption et ses oeuvres, April/May/June 2013 issue.)

I was born on a Saturday, December 15, 1984, in Adjudeni, a village located in northeast Romania, in the section of the country known as Moldavia. I was told that it was a bitter cold day, with heavy snow, typical of that time of year. Although Romania is basically a Christian Orthodox country, I grew up in a Catholic village, where the church, with its characteristic bell towers, symbolized by itself alone the pride of these peoples who were to maintain their Catholic faith in spite of fierce persecutions that lasted almost half a century. I was fortunate to be one of the first generations of “free” children, that is, those who grew up after the fall of Communism in 1989. My family never longed to return to those days even if the transition was painful.



Faith always played a central role in my family. We went to Mass every Sunday, and since the Children’s Mass was at 8 AM, we had to get up pretty early in order to arrive on time and find a seat. The year of my First Communion was the occasion for huge celebrations, for my eldest brother was married that year as well. It was that year, right as I was receiving my First Communion actually, that I first began to think about the priesthood. But a week later I was

already thinking of other things! I would have to wait till my high school years for the question to arise again in a much more pressing fashion.



Given the fact that one of my elder brothers had joined the Franciscans already, I naturally headed in the same direction. The seminary wasn't far from my house, only 10 kilometers away, in the village of Roman. However, the discipline there was much too rigid and the huge dormitories and long, cold corridors turned me off. Still, I stayed for four years, telling myself that following Jesus meant sacrifice and renunciation.

The Assumptionists

After receiving my high school degree, I left the seminary with the hope that I might find another congregation more suited to what I was looking for. It was then that I discovered the Assumptionists, seduced first of all by their charism and then by their style of community life, which I really liked. It was during my first years as a candidate that I was able to read the *Confessions*

of St. Augustine for the first time. Since then, there has always been a copy of the Confessions on my bookshelf, probably because anyone can recognize part of himself in the tortuous ways that Augustine experienced. The years I spent at Margineni (discernment house of the Assumptionists in Romania) gave me an opportunity as well to have a fresh look at Orthodox Christians and to set foot for the first time in one of their churches!

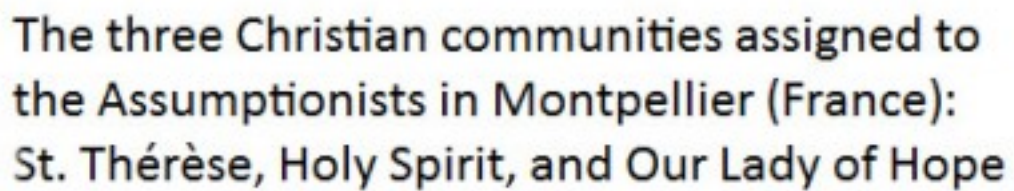


All in the same boat



ed 6000 10000 20000 30000 40000 50000 60000 70000 80000 90000 100000 110000 120000 130000 140000 150000 160000 170000 180000 190000 200000 210000 220000 230000 240000 250000 260000 270000 280000 290000 300000 310000 320000 330000 340000 350000 360000 370000 380000 390000 400000 410000 420000 430000 440000 450000 460000 470000 480000 490000 500000 510000 520000 530000 540000 550000 560000 570000 580000 590000 600000 610000 620000 630000 640000 650000 660000 670000 680000 690000 700000 710000 720000 730000 740000 750000 760000 770000 780000 790000 800000 810000 820000 830000 840000 850000 860000 870000 880000 890000 900000 910000 920000 930000 940000 950000 960000 970000 980000 990000 1000000





Free Niles Daily, 10¢ per copy. (Niles Daily, 10¢ per copy.)