



On January 6th, 2018, Bro. Ryan Carlsen, A.A. professed his final vows as an Augustinian of the Assumption.

By Bro. Ryan Carlsen, A.A.

In the Augustinians of the Assumption, when a brother makes final vows the superior general of the congregation gives him his first assignment. After making final vows I was assigned to the “Eastern Mission.” We have communities in Moscow, Bucharest, Plovdiv, Constantinople (Istanbul), and elsewhere. One of the main concerns of the Eastern Mission is the work for unity with the Orthodox. This was close to Fr. d’Alzon’s heart and remains compelling for the Church at large. St. John Paul II spoke of his desire that the Church breathe with both lungs again, East and West. And recently, Pope Francis met with Patriarch Kirill of Russia. The desire for unity is felt on both sides.

One way of working for unity between East and West is by studying each other’s history and

theology and then talking together about it. There has already been a long official dialog in North America between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches going back to shortly following the Second Vatican Council. The world-wide dialog is a little newer and has been proceeding well. The more we understand where the other is coming from, the easier and more desirable it becomes to find the common ground. Being assigned to the "Mission to the East" means that I will start off with doctoral studies in Eastern Christianity in Rome this year. After that I will go to a community in Eastern Europe.

Our Lady of Fatima requested prayers for Russia. Christianity in the east is alive and well, and we have much to learn from each other. How great it would be---and what a witness---if we were one Church! It would glorify God and reveal the truth of Christianity to more people. It would answer Jesus' prayer "that they may be one."