

This past August 30, the Oblates and the Augustinians of the Assumption celebrated the bicentennial of the birth of Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon, who was born in Le Vigan (Gard) and died on November 21, 1880 in Nimes.

Founder of both orders, he spent much of his youth at the château of Lavagnac in the town of Montagnac. And during his priestly ministry he often returned here.



What's more, several spirited pilgrimages have taken place there this year where, in spite of the renovations that are underway, his memory has not been forgotten. As proof, his bedroom is still almost entirely intact.

Unfortunately, the chapel of the château is in ruins, but very soon will be restored to the state in which it was found in 1835 when Fr. d'Alzon celebrated his first mass there.

During this past year, no less than six pilgrimages have already taken place, bringing pilgrims from throughout the world who have come to pray and recollect on these premises where this holy man lived.

To date, a group of Americans came on May 23 from Worcester, Massachusetts where an Assumptionist university is located; on June 4 pilgrims from eight countries arrived under the direction of Fr. Claude Maréchal, former Superior General of the Assumptionists. On June 7 and August 5 there were groups of religious and lay-people from Alsace and Spain. On August 20 the members of the Fraternité d'Alzon held meetings during which numerous nationalities were present: Africans, Bulgarians, Chileans, Koreans, Romanians, Russians, Vietnamese, etc.; finally on August 24 a group of novices came.

But the year hasn't ended yet and October 9 will be a particularly important day because on that day there will occur the official pilgrimage of both congregations as the bicentennial celebration comes to an end.



These different visits have been conducted by Mr. Bernard Bals, a volunteer guide who was born at the château, who thoroughly knows its history and who has an enduring admiration for Fr. d'Alzon. His family had worked on the estate from the days that the d'Alzon family acquired it.

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