



Having arrived in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in December 1968, Fr. Joseph, an Assumptionist missionary, loves the media and keeping up with the latest technology. In spite of his advanced age, he's always getting involved in new projects.

Born in France in 1931, Fr. Joseph has lived the last 44 years in the Congo. Son of a blacksmith, he learned how to work hard and without complaint in order to earn a decent life. Already as a child, he showed an interest in religious life. "Next to our house there was a school run by the Sacred Heart brothers. They were filled with joy and worked as a team. I think my vocation took root in the admiration I had for them", he said. He took his first steps with the Assumptionists in an isolated château near Montreuil by the sea. At the time life was not easy. He slowly became haunted by the idea of working in Africa.

Military service first, then priesthood

In 1954, national law required military service and the young man complied. "I learned how to drive an armored reconnaissance carrier (ARC) not so that I could kill people but because I had to comply with the law. I also learned radiotelegraphy", he added. His regiment was then stationed in Algeria. After his military service, in 1959, he was studying in Rome where he met the young bishop-to-be Emmanuel Kataliko who invited him to come to work in the diocese of Butembo-Beni ----- an offer he welcomed with pleasure.

In Butembo, Fr. Joseph first settled in at the parish of Kitatumba where he set about learning the language. Filled with a missionary spirit, he visited villages roundabout and quickly realized that the people there were fervent believers. He braved the challenging mountain trails that led

to these villages, on foot or motorbike, where the faithful were eager to learn more about God and their faith. On plantations abandoned by Belgians years earlier, he fought with the aid of villagers, to build chapels. "This missionary contributed a lot to the growth of our diocese," claims Florent Kabila, a senior member of the parish Regina pacis of Mavoya on the Butembo-Beni road.

A passion for the media

Beginning with his formation in radiotelegraphy, Fr. Joseph has always demonstrated a love for the media, not to say a passion. He spends most of his time listening to the radio or staying connected to the Internet in his room next to the studio of radio Moto. From the moment of his arrival in the diocese, he got started in the media. "I launched a newspaper called Erithumo (The Spear) that sought to create a link between parishioners and priests". Later he would launch the first Catholic community radio station in the village of Mbau, several kilometers from the town of Beni. "This northern section of the province of North Kivu didn't have any means of communication at the time. This missionary's initiatives allowed us to understand the power of the media", claimed Fr. Baudouin Muhindo, director of the Assumption Training Center in Information Technology, which is another of the initiatives of Fr. Joseph where young people learn how to use computers.

Always wearing a blue sweater and his Assumptionist cross, never in a hurry, Fr. Joseph loves work well done. He hates jerry-rigging. A simple man, sporting a gray beard, he loves new information and media technology in spite of his advanced age. The cyber-cafe, which he started, even bears his name. "He has an obsession for order. He spends his time putting order in the CDs and in scribbling notes in magazines and newspapers. He hates noise and enjoys offering bits of wisdom", we are told by Neema Kake, one of the employees at the cybercafe Delvo. At the moment, Fr. Joseph is involved in a huge project of installing solar energy. It's been a dream of his for some time so that the recurring problem of a shortage of electrical current might be resolved in the area. "My sights are set on television next," says Fr. Joseph, with a big smile.

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