

Where should I begin to talk about my life as a Lay Assumptionist? How can I put some clarity into something that is so rich? It is like trying to describe the best dessert you have ever eaten! You can almost still taste it and yet you want to describe it clearly so that others can experience it vicariously---and want to try it, as well.

I have had the good fortune of being connected to the Assumption family for many years. However, I have only been a Lay Assumptionist for the last eight. My involvement has affected me as a Catholic woman, as a member of my parish and as a sister in Assumption. I have shared communally with my fellow Lay Assumptionists and Assumptionist religious alike.

One might say that as Lay Assumptionists we are co-partners with our religious counterparts on our journey to form the Kingdom of God. We continue living out the desire of Fr. d'Alzon that the laity should work side by side with their brothers---sharing in the d'Alzonian charism, growing the family of God and nurturing the belief that we are all travelers on this journey.

As part of the Provincial Tandem (along with Fr. Edward Shatov of Québec), I strive to maintain a link among the groups in the North American Province. I can see the groups of Lay Assumptionists evolving; I can see them working toward religious and societal goals in their respective communities. It might be to nurture the souls of a population of seniors seeking spiritual enrichment. It might be to fund the education of young Philippinos desiring an education. It might even be to offer retreats for young men in formation in Mexico. Whatever the cause, the essence of being a Lay Assumptionist is to deepen one's own spirituality and work

together for a common good.

In this 175th Jubilee year marking the founding of the Assumptionists, you can be sure that all Lay Assumptionists will be reflecting on the question: why am I a Lay Assumptionist? It will be a time for us to reflect personally, and as a group, on the role we play as part of the Assumption family. Where do we go from here? What do we do? How can we grow?

We can see growth in the establishment of another group in Worcester, Massachusetts. There is constancy in the group from Quebec. There is stability in the group from Sturbridge and resiliency from the group in Brighton. There is even a certain tenacity found in a unique group in Miami, Florida. The group in Mexico shares with us their exuberance and their compassion for those around them. We are truly blessed by the presence of these groups and their commitment to the Assumption and to the Church.

I am compelled to add that we can even feel the solidarity of those Lay Assumptionists throughout the world who share our same values and our same fervor for this way of life. Whether we marvel at the large numbers of Lay Assumptionists in Africa or admire the aspects of social service being provided by the Lay Assumptionists in Colombia, we are certain of one thing---we are all sisters and brothers of Emmanuel d'Alzon working toward the coming of the Kingdom.

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