



In the late afternoon of November 17, 2013, after the usual line-up of Sunday masses, the last one having been in Lithuanian, St. Louis des Français parish filled with a wide assortment of international visitors --- from Vietnam, France, Russia, Africa, Italy, etc.. You could hear just about every language being spoken and even used during the ordination ceremony of Pierre Tran Duc Long. It was a wonderful and joyous occasion to celebrate his priestly ordination in the very place where his vocational journey with the Assumptionists had begun in 2004. Most Rev. Paolo Pezzi, archbishop of the diocese of the Mother of God in Moscow, presided at the celebration and was surrounded by a number of priests including three Assumptionists, (Celeste Pianezze and Slava Gorokhov of the Moscow community and Vincent Cabanac, representing the provincial, Fr. Benoît Gschwind). Two other Assumptionists were there, Brothers Pavel et Viktors, as well as two of Pierre's blood brothers from Viêtnam: one who is a Cistercian monk stationed in Dalat and the other, the Benjamin of the family, who works in Hué.

The joy of this occasion could be determined not only by the large crowd of faithful but also by their level of involvement in the liturgy, which was beautiful, prayerful, and multilingual. There were also Vietnamese, Russian, and French altar servers. Under the white and golden arch of the sanctuary, Archbishop Pezzi delivered a homily that was at once personal and direct, in Italian (with a French translation by Fr. Celeste). After a solemn chanting of the Litany of the Saints, the archbishop imposed his hands on Pierre's head, followed by the priests in attendance. The Offertory procession included a range of the nationalities present, a symbol of the Church's universality.

At the end of the ceremony, Pierre received his first apostolic appointment --- a three-year mandate to continue his work in Moscow, especially with Vietnamese and the French-speaking

community of Moscow. In his turn, Pierre thanked all those who had come to be with him on this momentous day in his life. Since his arrival last January Pierre has come to discover the great spiritual, material, and physical needs of his fellow countrymen living in Russia. Together with one or another of the priests of the community he was able to reach out to them. Now he will be solely responsible for them, taking up where Frs. Bernard Le Leannec and Slava G. had worked before. Already he has begun to reach out to the members of this community, many of whom (and they are numerous) work long hours during the course of the week in textile factories during their contracts of at least two years. They are often the victims of exploitation and discrimination, even at the hands of the police and state officials. There is no lack of work, Pierre has found out.

Not even the winter's cold, which had already arrived, could chill the hearts of this day's participants, whatever their age, who had been warmed by such an uplifting ceremony.

Fr. Vincent Cabanac, A.A.