



**AUGUSTINIANS
OF THE
ASSUMPTION**

Thy Kingdom Come
Charity No. 233428

Feast of the Assumption

Who is she ascends so high.
Next the heavenly King.
Round about whom angels fly
And her praises sing?

This is she in whose pure womb
Heaven's Prince remained:
Therefore in no earthly tomb
Can she be contained.

**August
2007**

Who is she adorned with light
Makes her sun her robe.
At whose feet the Queen of night
Lays her changing globe?

She that did so clearly shine
When our day begun.
See how bright her beams decline:
Now she sits with the Sun.



The Total Gift of Self

Fr Emmanuel d'Alzon, the founder of the Assumptionists, took charge of a school in Nimes named after the Assumption. It was to become a major motivation in his founding a religious congregation, the Augustinians of the Assumption, know as the Assumptionists. It was the total gift that Mary made of herself and that this feast confirms, that inspired Emmanuel to follow suit. When he speaks about the spirituality of the Assumption, the totality of self-giving, the complete trust, the all consuming desire are evident.. At the end of the General Chapter in 1868 Emmanuel wrote:

Our spirituality, the essence of our religious life, our raison d'etre as Augustinians of the Assumption is found in our motto: **Adveniat Regnum Tuum** (Thy Kingdom Come). The coming of the Kingdom of God within us through practicing the Christian virtues and the evangelical councils, in conformity with our vocation.: the coming of the kingdom of God in the world in our struggle against Satan and conquering the souls redeemed by our Saviour and yet lost in the darkness of error and sin: what could be more simple! What could be more rudimentary, dare I say, than this form of the love of God! If to this principle love you add the love of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the love of the Holy Virgin, his Mother, and the Church, his spouse, you will understand in its most concise form the spirit of the Assumption.

What is special or characteristic about this? Are not all Christians expected to accept this? What elements among these fundamentals distinguish us from other religious congregations? Do not all religious, all Christians repeat everyday these words of the Sunday Office, this cry that we regard as our call to arms: **Adveniat Regnum Tuum**. Are not all Christians and Religious duty bound to love Our Saviour, the Holy Virgin and the Church? So why make our own what is the patrimony of all?

Please remember the first cachet of our Institute: simplicity of means. One of the rarest things in the world is Common Sense. Is it not therefore a paradox to affirm that in the Catholic world the thing that is most rare is Catholic common sense? This is why we seek to make of this our own original cachet. We wish simply to be Catholic but as Catholic is ever it is possible to be; we are completely and utterly Catholic nothing more, nothing less ...

This is the first trait of our character as Augustinians of the Assumption.

Home News . . .

Fr. Mark Clifton a.a. Died peacefully in hospital



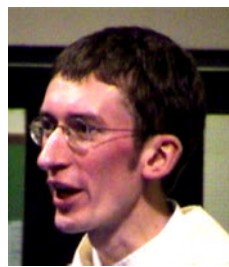
on Friday 13th July and was laid to rest with his brother Assumptionists in St Patrick's cemetery, Leytonstone on Tuesday 23rd July

Summer camp at Bethnal Green:

As in previous years, young people (14) from France Spain and Mexico spent 3 weeks with us; praying together, working with the homeless at the Passage Day Centre and visiting the great sites. They even saw the start of the Tour de France on Tower Bridge which started to the echoes of the Brass Band of the Grenadier Guards. Speakers came from different churches and the local community; visits included Westminster Abbey, Christ

Church in Oxford and the British Library. They brought life, energy and inspiration to the community

Fr Edward Chatov a.a. Said farewell



as he returned to Russia on 10th July after spending 6 years with us in England. He will be sorely missed.

TELCO (The East London

Community Organisation), of which the Bethnal Green community and Parish are members, has been very active. They were influential in obtaining an index linked £7.50/hr wage for the cleaning and service staff in all of Barclays Banks across London. Tom O'Brien a.a. was part of the delegation that helped bring this about. It makes Barclays Bank the best employer of service staff in London.

A number of Lithuanians, who attend the Lithuanian Chaplaincy in Bethnal Green Parish, working at a sandwich factory were working in sub standard conditions and for a minimum wage of £5.35. The parish supported a delegation to Food Partners to seek better working conditions and better wages for the workers. The first meeting attended by Fr Tom was very positive.

Telco joined other members of **London Citizens** in a demonstration for affordable housing in London where house prices are double that to other areas of England. The demonstration organised a Tent city (50 tents) outside

Mayor Ken Livingston's City Hall. The Mayor applauded the efforts of London Citizens in pressurising for affordable housing. London Citizens is proposing a Community Land Trust which effectively takes the price of the land out of the cost of the house and making it easier for people to buy first time houses. For more about this see: <http://www.londoncitizens.org.uk>. Bethnal Green Parish also supported this event.

In Deus Caritas Est, 28, Pope Benedict XVI wrote: The Church "cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice."

Lay Assumptionists: Throughout the world more and more groups of Lay people close to the Assumption want to know more about and live more closely the spirit of the Assumption which is something our founder Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon wanted from the very outset. Several countries viz France, Mexico, Chile already have groups of Lay Assumptionists functioning. International meetings have been held to prepare a structured form of a Lay Assumption Alliance. In response to this, the Assumptionist community in Bethnal Green together with the Hitchin Community organised a **Day on the Assumption on 23rd June**. Between 20 and 30 people attended including representatives from our Sister Congregations: the Religious of the Assumption, the Little Sisters of the Assumption and the Oblates of the Assumption. Fr Robert Henshaw gave the Keynote talk on the background to the spirit of the Assumption, followed by presentations from Fr Andrew, Fr Jean Marie and then by inputs from Sr Maureen R.A. Sr Josephine OA and Sr Winifred LSA. There was time for sharing and for Prayer including the Eucharist of the day. It was a great success and so a small working party set up and organised meetings on the following days.:

Bethnal Green	1st December 2007	10.30 - 15.30
Hitchin	23rd February 2008	10.30 - 15.30

Possible Retreat Week-end 18/19 April or 26/27 April 2008

For information: Fr Tom O'Brien a.a. 02089801968 or assumptionists@freeuk.com

Address: Assumption Priory, Victoria Park Square, Bethnal Green London E2 9PB

The making of a Saint – June 3rd 2007

In May 1866 Mother Marie-Eugenie of Jesus set out for Rome. Her intention was to seek official approval of the Constitutions of the Religious family which she had founded, dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption. No Ryanair in those days! It took Mari-Eugenie 3 full days to reach Rome by boat and train. And when she arrived she discovered that all the ecclesiastical officials were taking a week's holiday to celebrate the feast of Pentecost! So she had ample time to make a leisurely pilgrimage to all the sacred sites of the eternal city, starting with St Peter's Basilica.

She was taken aback by her first sight of this great, majestic, Basilica. She said she had never seen anything so beautiful! She would have been even more dumbfounded had someone told her that one day an iconic banner depicting herself would hang on the facade of St Peter's and thousands of pilgrims in the great Piazza would be cheering the mention of her name.

I was privileged to be among those pilgrims when on Sunday June 3rd Mother Marie-Eugenie was formally proclaimed a Saint by Pope Benedict XVI. I had joined a group of about 70 English pilgrims organised by the Sisters of the Assumption from Kensington. Although I was the only Assumptionist priest travelling with the group we were joined in Rome by Frs. Tom, Edward and Jean-Marie from the Bethnal Green community. We were amazed to discover that we were only a very small detachment of a huge army of devotees of Marie-Eugenie mobilized from all over the world. The largest contingent (well over a thousand) came from the Philippines. They were led by a whole posse of Bishops and by the President of the Philippines herself, Gloria Arroyo.

The celebrations in Rome were opened with a Solemn Mass on Saturday June 2nd in the Basilica of St John Lateran:- the Pope's Cathedral known as the "*Mother of all Churches*" The Mass was presided by Bishop Duthel, the postulator of the cause of Marie-Eugenie's canonisation. Those who are good at "bishop spotting" were happy to notice that Bishop Duthel was assisted at the altar by Bishop Jose Geraldo Da Cruz, an Assumptionist Bishop from Brazil. The great church was full. For the first time we had some indication of the number of pilgrims. During the rest of the day the different national groups visited other major shrines in Rome until they came together in the evening to prepare for the big day by a vigil of prayer in the spacious parish church of St Gregory VII, which is a stone's throw from St Peter's.

The "Big Day", June 3rd dawned not bright and sunny but grey and very wet. But that did not dampen the spirits of the hardy pilgrims who set out in the early hours to be sure of getting a good seat in St Peter's Square for the Canonisation Mass which began at 10 a.m. Only the Holy Father and his immediate entourage

at the altar had any real protection from the steady downpour. The rest, including presidents and princes, Cardinals and Bishops, Superior Generals and humble pilgrims sought whatever shelter was available under a vast sea of multi-coloured umbrellas. It must have been a beneficent, heavenly rain for although many in our group were soaked to the skin if not to the bone, there were no reported cases of pneumonia! Many of those present had waited at least 32 years for this occasion (M. Marie Eugenie was beatified in 1975) and the rain could not extinguish the joy and love they felt when they heard Pope Benedict solemnly declare: *“With the authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Apostles Peter and Paul and with our own authority . . . We declare Blessed George Preca, Simon Lipnicy, Charles Houben and Marie-Eugenie Milleret to be saints. We inscribe them in the canon of the saints and establish that throughout the whole Church they may be devoutly honoured among the saints. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”* Liturgically this official proclamation was greeted with the singing of a triple *“Alleluia”* but in reality a great cheer went up as 20,000 people released their feelings of thanksgiving and joy.

By the evening of that momentous day we had all dried out and shared enough good Italian pasta and vino to restore our stamina for another celebration but this time under cover in the vast hall used for Papal audiences). This was a musical concert prepared by groups of young people (religious and lay) from almost every country in the world where the Religious of the Assumption are present. It was a wonderful international experience and an expression of the spirit of the Order in a great variety of cultures and forms - song, dance, music and art. The audience was not slow or shy at showing their appreciation and the rapport between them and the different groups on the stage created a marvellously exuberant, heart-warming atmosphere with which to end a memorable day.

When Saint Marie-Eugenie visited Rome in 1866, she was particularly drawn to the tomb of St Peter in the heart of the Basilica. The young Italian-speaking sister who accompanied her recorded *“Mother Marie-Eugenie seemed unable to pull herself away from the tomb of St Peter. I saw her place on Peter’s tomb the Constitutions that she had brought to Rome to be approved in order to become a source of life to all of us.”*

So it was altogether appropriate that the final great event of our pilgrimage should be a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated at the altar of the Chair of St Peter (*the central altar in St Peter’s*). The chief celebrant was the archbishop of Paris Mgr Vingttrois whose predecessor Archbishop Affre had presided at the first clothing ceremony of the New Order in 1840. This mass was the last great organised event of our 3-day celebration. We came out of St Peter’s with Marie-Eugenie’s prayer (*sung at Communion*) echoing in our hearts.

*“It is for you alone, O my God, that I am here.
You are the all of my life.
My thoughts, my work, my affections are all for you.
You are the all of my life.”*

We came out into bright sunshine. It was a time for goodbyes as the groups of pilgrims from different countries began to disperse. But the group from England still had another 24 hours in Rome before their flight home on Tuesday afternoon. So there was time for some leisurely sightseeing and souvenir shopping and for one final spiritual treat: a guided visit of the Catacombs of Saint Sebastian and a Mass for the group in the Basilica of St Sebastian. There was something special about this Mass. We knew that, on her pilgrimage, Marie Eugenie had also visited the Catacombs. Now we were celebrating for the first time the mass of Saint Marie Eugenie in English. After all the excitement and emotion of the last three days, we were able to enjoy these tranquil moments in this ancient Church, sharing deeply in this Eucharist of Thanksgiving and storing up our joyful memories of this first Assumptionist Canonisation. The Assumptionist Priests among us were able to set out for home encouraged by the thought that our founder and Marie-Eugenie’s great friend, Emmanuel d’Alzon, would one day be similarly honoured by the Church. And of course we had learnt one or two lessons about how to organise such a magnificent event! We were deeply grateful to those whose organisational work had enabled us to share in it!

*Lord , you have renewed our commitment by
the grace of this Canonisation; that we may
follow the example of Saint Marie-Eugenie and
in company with all your people grow in the
knowledge and love of Christ. Amen.*

Cycle of Conferences 2007 - 2008

The new Cycle of Conferences will begin on

September 27th at 7.30

"Clash of civilisation or happiness together"

' Eternal joy in the violent world '

by Rev Sharon Gracen MD

Vicar of Faith Episcopal Church,

**Our Lady of the Assumption, Bethnal Green, Victoria
Park Square E2 9PB (02089801968)**

Fr Mark Clifton a.a. RIP

6 July 1921 - 13 July 2007: Ordained 26 June 1956

. . . Fr Mark came to Bethnal Green in 1975. He was assistant priest in the parish for several years before being appointed parish priest, which he fulfilled for 13 years before taking semi-retirement. Mark was someone you could rely on, always there and willingly undertook whatever he was asked. Perhaps his time in the Royal Air Force gave him this spirit of prompt obedience. He certainly knew how to use it well in the service of the Church. Mark was not one who enjoyed the limelight and never pushed himself forward unless the pastoral care of the parish called for it.

. . . Fr Mark had a great devotion to our Lord in the Eucharist and in his exhortations often mentioned the Blessed Sacrament as a source of strength or recommended that we bring our problems, worries and joys to the presence of Christ in the tabernacle. He not only recommended this to us but was himself the first to carry it out, sitting here in the choir stalls, he would spend time in prayer and reflection.

. . . Fr Mark had the knack of saying the right thing in confession. He would see this as the work of the Holy Spirit not his own doing. It certainly was a gift. He was not only a priest but also a member of a religious order, joining the Assumptionists in 1949. He was a good brother in community and his sense of humour was much appreciated. He did not push himself forward but accepted the work he was asked to do: bursar at St Michael's College, Hitchin, Assistant at Brockley or parish priest here. He was a true Assumptionist in his spirituality. Our Founder Fr Emmanuel d'Alzon was eager that his religious were fully of the Church. He did not recommend all sort of prayers and devotions other than those of the Church - the liturgy and the divine office. Father Mark was a true son of Fr d'Alzon in his fidelity to this ideal.

I can hear Fr Mark saying 'Why are you going on about me, you ought to be using this opportunity to speak about the meaning of life. Tell them that with death we enter into the full life of the resurrection which started at baptism. Point out that it is natural for us to grieve but St Paul tells us that we should not grieve like people without hope. Christ died and rose from the dead and in his resurrection we have the hope of eternal life. Remember that the liturgy teaches us that with death life is changed not ended. Point out that scripture tells us that with death we shall know God as he really is. Point out, too, that we pray for the dead. When a priest is ordained the bishop gives him the power to offer mass for the living and the dead. . . .

Mark would prefer that we reflect on the Faith rather than talk about him. St Paul says that none of us goes through life without influencing other people. Father Mark has influenced many in his apostolate. He has been a great brother and friend in community. In these and many other ways he has worked for the coming of the Kingdom. The motto Fr d'Alzon chose for his order, *Thy Kingdom Come*, was also for Mark a programme for life. May he now enjoy the fruits of his labour.

News snippets

During the summer months 6 Congolese Assumptionists were **ordained Priests** and one Tanzanian. While in France two Romanian Assumptionists were ordained to the Priesthood. 16 Other Assumptionists were **ordained Deacon** in the same period: 11 Congolese, 3 from Madagascar one Brazilian and one Russian

A New Logo for the Congregation

The New Logo has just been approved by Rome.



Meetings of Lay Assumptionists are taking place in Nairobi, in Butembo . The whole of Wednesday January 10 2007 was given over to the Lay Assumptionist Alliance in Mendoza, Argentina. In Worcester, Massachusetts, and in Quebec there were similar meetings with the laity. In Mexico city there are three groups of Lay Assumptionists one of which works full time promoting vocations.

Fr Bernard Le Leannec A.A. who has been in Moscow at St Louis des Français parish behind the Lubianca Prison and Fr Edward's new community, received the **Legion d'Honneur** in Paris at Easter.

Vocation Prayer Days

In collaboration with the Oblates of the Assumption the Bethnal Green community has organised the following days of Prayer for Vocations. Although organised especially for young people all are welcome to join us.

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| Sunday | 30th Sept.ember | 'Signposts on the way to Life' |
| Saturday | 27th October: | The harvest is plentiful! What are you afraid of? |
| Sunday | 18th November | 'Driven by Hope...' |
| Saturday | 8 December: | No room at the inn! So, do you have room for Jesus? |
| Sunday | 13th January | ' Peter Pan and Tinkerbelle' - Our relationships & commitments - where they take us |
| Saturday | 9th February: | A new age is dawning! What role will you play in it? |

Sundays @ Oblates: in 20 Higham Station Avenue, Chingford, E4 9AZ
Saturdays @ Assumption Priory, Victoria Park Square, Bethnal Green, E2 9PB

Wishing our friends and readers a Happy Feast of the Assumption

Don't forget to visit our web site @ www.assumptionist.org.uk

We thank all our benefactors and friends for their continued support and help. You are remembered in our community prayers. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to
"Our lady of the Assumption Vocations Fund".

Correspondence: **The Assumptionist, 16 Nightingale Road, Hitchin, Herts. SG5 1QS**