

« It is necessary to open minds  
and hearts to the great cause of God,  
to expand the horizons  
of the short-sighted, to light a fire  
under those who would settle  
for having their feet warmed. »

Emmanuel d'Alzon

Pictures: Archives of the Assumptionnists and diocese of Nîmes.

### To learn more

● [www.assumptio.org](http://www.assumptio.org)  
The website of the Augustinians of the Assumption  
(Assumptionists).

● [www.assumption.org/fr](http://www.assumption.org/fr)  
The website of the Assumptionists in Europe.

● [www.soeursoblatesassomption.wordpress.com/](http://www.soeursoblatesassomption.wordpress.com/)  
The website of the Oblates of the Assumption.



 Croire : for more information concerning booklets  
and publications in this series, go to :  
[www.croire.com](http://www.croire.com)



## Emmanuel d'Alzon on fire with Christ

Les fiches  
 croire



## An international reach

Emmanuel d'Alzon (1810-1880) was born at Le Vigan, in the Cévennes Mountains, in southern France, on August 30, 1810, into an aristocratic family; his father served a number of terms in the Chamber of Deputies. His high school and university years took place in Paris. Turning his back both on a legal and a military career, he chose the priesthood instead.

Having completed his theology studies in Montpellier, France and Rome, he chose to serve the diocese where he was born, Nîmes. Four years

later, only 29 years old, he became vicar general of the diocese. He would hold this post for nearly forty years, under four successive bishops. Several times he himself refused to be named a bishop. His influence reached well beyond the frontiers of his diocese. He died in Nîmes on November 21, 1880, and was declared « Venerable » by Pope John Paul II on December 21, 1991.

His cause for beatification has been introduced in Rome. People pray to him on every continent. ●



## A man of energy...

Emmanuel d'Alzon was the driving force behind many initiatives in the diocese of Nîmes: parish visits, preaching series that attracted large crowds, schools for the working-class, adult education classes, an orphanage, a prep high school, chapters of the St. Vincent de Paul Society... Beyond his diocese, he was considered one of the great figures of French Catholicism of the 19th century because of the

influence he had on Church and society.

## ...of creativity

He founded two congregations, the Augustinians of the Assumption (Assumptionists), in 1845, and the Oblate Sisters of the Assumption, with Marie Correnson, in 1865. He gave them any number of apostolic goals: to educate the young that they might become Christians, characterized by understanding and

insight, capable of assuming leadership roles in society; to reach out to Orthodox Christians in the Near East and, from there, to enter Russia; to work for the unity of the Church; to undertake pilgrimages as means of rekindling the faith and making Catholics visible in the public square; to launch newspapers and magazines (*Le Pèlerin*, *La Croix*) in order to form Catholic public opinion and to encourage the participation of Christians in political and social conversation; to establish minor seminaries so that children from poor families could become priests; to found orphanages, hospitals, schools and dispensaries in Turkey and Bulgaria that would welcome Catholics, Orthodox, Muslims, and Jews alike.

**« We go wherever God is threatened in man and man is threatened as the image of God. »**

## Imitating Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ was at the center of Emmanuel d'Alzon's life. Like St. Paul, he would say: « Christ is my life ». A man of faith, of prayer, and of study, he would spend his life seeking to better know, love, and imitate Jesus Christ. Allowing Jesus Christ to be formed in him, putting on Jesus Christ, plumbing the depths of his mysteries, pondering his actions and gestures, coming to know him in order to love him, surrendering himself to him entirely, loving the Father, as Jesus did, and one's neighbor, the Virgin Mary his mother, and the Church: this is the

secret of the holiness of Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon.

## Man as the image of God

Already at 20 years of age, Emmanuel d'Alzon was obsessed with a desire to transform the society of his day where God was being eclipsed and, as a result, where human beings, especially the most vulnerable, were being oppressed. He

understood that nothing was more urgent in a society that clamored for the rights of man than to affirm the plan of God for man. Man was created in the image of God, but sin continually disfigures the divine likeness. By his death and resurrection, Christ wished to restore the divine seal to all humanity and all creation, to open the way to salvation. Acknowledging the rights of God is for all men and women the assurance that their dignity will be respected; it is the way of happiness and salvation.●



Youth diocese of Nîmes WYD Rio 2013

## A spiritual master

*The spirituality of Emmanuel d'Alzon, centered on Christ, is a way that many men and women today have discovered as deeply fulfilling and nourishing.*

### Allowing Christ to be formed in me

● « You want to imitate Christ? Let him take the initiative. He is the one who will conform you to his image in the way that he wants to do it. »

### Putting on Jésus Christ

● « Make your own his feelings, his words, his actions. Measure your life on this model. »

### Plumbing the mysteries of Christ, pondering his actions and gestures

● « The more one knows Christ, the more one loves him; the more one loves him, the more one wants to imitate him... »

### Surrendering oneself to him entirely

● « Jesus will truly reign in

us when everything within us belongs to him... in one act of trust and surrender. »

### Loving the Church and Mary

● « If I love Jesus, how much must I not love what he held the dearest: the Church and Mary? ». « The Church I must love as my homeland... I must love everything that gives it life ». « If all I can know of the virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary is what I can find in Scripture, that would be enough. »

### Hastening the coming of the Kingdom of God

● « Let us seek the Kingdom of God. Let us proclaim it in the fullness of our freedom and love, because God does not desire to rule over slaves, but over free men, over sons and daughters whom he can love with all his fatherly tenderness. »