

# Saint Benedict Center

*The Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*

## To Our Readers:

In presenting to you this issue of *From the Houseltops*, it is my intention to point out the timeliness of the principal items it contains. Our times are marked by discouragement. One could produce a long list of reasons to justify this statement. But to a true believer, one consideration restores confidence: God, in the darkest moments for the Faith, raises up saints, men like the Venerable Emmanuel d'Alzon, this issue's central figure. Certainly the times of this holy man were not unlike our own. The forces of Godless secularism ("the Revolution," with a capital R, as he collectively personified them) seemed to be in the ascendancy, and the Faith in decline. In bringing out his inspiring account of the life and achievements of this man of God, Gary Potter presents to us an exemplar for our day. Would to God that more like Venerable Emmanuel were to rise up in our own midst, men with zeal for the rights of God, courage and long-suffering in the face of resistance, and a fervor which would border on insanity were it not of God. And would to God that the authorities in the Church would bless their efforts.

Many of us associate the name "Douay" with the most accurate version of Holy Scripture in the English language. We English speakers are blessed in this respect, for very few nations are as fortunate to possess such a faithful version of the Word of God in their vernacular. Our Tertiary Brother David Mary, in his well researched article on the English College at Douay, extends the significance of Douay to an era in the history of the Church, involving the defense and the preservation of the Faith in very difficult times. William Cardinal Allen, next to God the driving force of that venture, should be a household name in every English-speaking Catholic home. He is another timely exemplar for us today. And so is Gregory Martin, another too-little-known hero. (Read the article if you want to know who he is.) Is it too much to ask God to give *us* the zeal to work for the conversion of our own America as they worked for their beloved England? Would to God that the Holy Ghost would now raise up such men as they, who wedded education to sanctity, proving that their tree was good because it produced that most excellent of all spiritual fruits: *martyrdom*.

Finally, we need not give apologies for the timeliness of the article on evangelizing Moslems. Brother André Marie offers some very helpful considerations, motivated by true Catholic charity, and inspired by the supreme duty of the Church to evangelize all the people of the world:

*omnes omnino gentes.*

In the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

*Bro. Francis, M.I.C.M.*



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**Cover:** Our Lord Jesus Christ the King, seated in glory and wearing the triple tiara. Underneath are the words of the Our Father in Latin, which Ven. Emmanuel used as his motto: *Thy Kingdom Come*. **Center:** Original black and white drawing of the Assumption by Lloyd Ostendorf (1971). Colorization and design by the Sisters of the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. **Special Thanks to:** Father Richard Richards, A.A. and Tomasz Jaster of the Assumptionist Archives in Brighton, MA for their generous help with graphics.

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# THY KINGDOM COME

By Gary Potter

As with some beautiful plants, ideas and beliefs often flower most gloriously after seeming to die. It was like that with the Christian idea of the social reign of Christ the King. As long as it was living healthily in the minds of most men — as long, that is, as there was no government anywhere in the West except Christian government, usually with a prince at the head — it could be taken more-or-less for granted. There was no real need to formulate it in a detailed way. The situation became different — the idea seemed to have died — when men began undertaking to govern society according to their own will instead of God's and started, in the process, dethroning the princes appointed by Him to serve as rulers. This was in the eighteenth century.

So it was that in the nineteenth, the idea of government with Christ as the ultimate Ruler of Society enjoyed a tremendous flowering and nowhere more, fittingly enough, than in France, the very land where the overthrow of Christian government first began in 1789. Beginning in 1809, when Joseph de Maistre wrote his *Essay on the Generative Principle of Political Constitutions and other Human Institutions*, no decade of the nineteenth century in France was without its champions of Christian government. Besides de Maistre, they included Louis de Bonald, François René de Chateaubriand, Louis Veuillot, Dom Prosper Guéranger, Edouard Cardinal Pie and, least known today even though the Church has recognized his holiness by declaring him to be among her *venerabili*, Fr. Emmanuel-Joseph-Marie-Maurice d'Alzon.

Of course, even as when the Church's teaching on the sanctity of the family and conjugal relations had come under such severe attack that Pope Paul VI felt obliged to defend it by publishing to the world his encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in 1968, by 1925, despite the exertions of its nineteenth-century French champions, the idea of Christ as Ruler of Society was so widely ignored or flat-out rejected that Pope Pius XI produced his encyclical, *Quas Primas*. Therein, His Holiness, knowing full well what was being said on every side, declared, "It would be a grave error to say that Christ has no authority whatever in civil affairs.... He is the author of happiness and true prosperity for every man and every nation.... If, therefore, the rulers of nations wish to preserve their authority, to promote and increase the prosperity of countries, they will not neglect the public duty of reverence and obedience to the rule of Christ."

That there is even less reverence and obedience paid today than in 1925, let alone during the nineteenth century, is not our subject here. Nor is the result. What interests us is the flowering in nineteenth-century France of the idea of Christ as the Ruler of Society. More specifically, we want to see how that flowering found expression in the thought, life, and work of Ven. Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon, and especially in the activities of the religious order he founded in 1847 (it was formally approved in 1864) and headed until his death in 1880, the Augustinians of the Assumption, commonly called the Assumptionists.

Before we turn to the consideration of our subject, there is an aspect of it that ought to be mentioned. Precisely because the idea of recognizing Christ as the Ruler of Society exists in the minds of so few today, and especially in a nation like the United States founded on the very principle of government according to the will of the people instead of God's, much that follows may seem not simply incredible to some readers, but may be unimaginable.

How unimaginable? He is here not speaking directly to the subject of Our Lord's social reign, but try to imagine this being said by the head of a religious order, or any other notable Churchman, today: "We love Christ with the same kind of love as did the early Christians,

because he still faces the same enemies he faced then. We love him with the love that made the Apostle say, 'If anyone does not love Jesus Christ, let him be cursed' (1 Cor. 16:22). This may not be very tolerant, but you know that those who love much tolerate little. Properly speaking, true love is revealed in the power of a noble and frank intolerance. In these days, with no energy left for either love or hate, men do

not see that their tolerance is just another form of weakness. We are intolerant, because we draw our strength from our love of Jesus Christ."

That was Ven. Fr. d'Alzon speaking to the members of his order at a General Chapter in 1868. If a reader finds it unimaginable that a Churchman would so speak today, he ought to remind himself that Ven. Fr.



Ven. Emmanuel d'Alzon in his Augustinian habit.