



Nouvelles Salésiennes

Salesian News

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YEARLY SPIRITUAL RETREAT. This year the confreres of Canada made their spiritual retreat at the Benedictine Abbey of Westminster, in Mission, B.C., about an hour east of Vancouver. The idea was for the confreres to acquaint themselves with the wonderful Salesian work of Surrey, as well as to allow the 8 confreres of the West not to have to travel all the way out East (I think that very few of the Easterners were unhappy about that!). As you may know, our retreat program alternates, one year in an Anglophone environment, the following in French milieu.

The Abbot himself, the Rev. John Braganza, O.S.B., gave us the conferences, one in the morning, the other in the afternoon. Beside the morning and evening offices prayed together, those who wished could also attend the offices celebrated by the monks. Some were “courageous” enough to attend the 5h00 Morning Praise, (yes, in the morning!). As you know, an abbot is like a bishop (for his monks) and on solemn occasions, as was the case for the Eucharist and the offices of the feast of the Assumption, he presided with crosier and mitre. We were privileged to participate at these offices with the monks and to pray in Gregorian chant.

The Abbot, who is relatively new at the task- he was elected last year- and rather young, was very much appreciated. In a typical Benedictine way, he appealed to the daily liturgy to deliver his message, being attentive to confront the biblical word to religious life and the world of today. Those who follow the interesting and meaningful interventions of Pope Benedict will certainly find a similarity in the approach (perhaps to signify that he has more than the name Benedict!). I appreciated particularly the references to his private diary and to the events of his own life in order to deepen the Word of God.

Fr. Dumont, the guest master, gave us a tour of the Abbey, showing us sections of the monastery

that are usually not opened to guests. The 20 beautiful sculptures in the Abbey church, the work of a monk, carry almost a whole treatise on monastic life.

What about the site? It is an oasis of peace and tranquility. The first Abbot who chose the location for his monastery had a keen sense of the beauty of nature. It is conducive to peaceful contemplation and prayer. The Fraser River flows at its feet and wherever you look, there are high mountains, extension of the Rockies toward the Pacific. When the weather was clear, we could see Mount Baker, with its snow-capped peak, 55 km south east in the State of Washington.

I mention but two of the events during the retreat (beside the “radical conversion” of each one! – Jokes aside, we had everything to lead us to make a good retreat). On Wednesday afternoon, we went to Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Surrey, for a tour of the work. Each confrere of the community was very anxious to make our visit most agreeable, showing us around and introducing us to parishioners. After the reception and an excellent dinner in the school hall, meeting leaders of parish groups, Salesian Cooperators, etc, we celebrated the Eucharist. The church was filled. Parishioners commented after Mass that they had never seen so many priests concelebrating in their church. Fr. Luc presided, assisted by Fr. Richard Authier and Fr. Mario Villaraza, pastor of OLG. A very moving moment of the Mass was the renewal of the vows by our 3 young brothers, Robert Di Pede, Steven Aldorasi and James Zettel.

During the Mass at the Abbey the next day, Fr. Richard Authier was installed as the new Provincial of the Canadian Province, taking over from Fr. Luc Lantagne who ended his 6-year mandate. The principal act of this transition is the profession of faith. That evening there was an “open

forum”, animated jointly by Frs. Richard and Luc, on questions concerning the government and animation of the province. A basket of greeting cards was handed over to Fr. Luc; each confrere had the opportunity to thank him for his years of leadership and to express good wishes for the coming years.

This was followed by... guess what? Of course, the traditional “pizza”! Salesian traditions have to be observed... And during the retreat, we certainly understood more profoundly that this applies also to the Gospel and our Rule of Life...

RWANDA. Ce 15 août restera longtemps dans nos souvenirs, puisqu' on y a célébré la naissance de notre nouvelle Quasi-Province AGL (Afrique des Grands Lacs). Après avoir célébré la messe ici à 8h00, (l'Assomption est fête d'obligation au Rwanda), je suis allé rejoindre les autres confrères à Kimihurura où les festivités allaient commencer par une messe solennelle à 10h30.

Étaient présents pour cette fête Mgr J.P. Tafunga, évêque salésien d'Uvira, au Congo, le P. Alencherry, représentant le Recteur Majeur, le Provincial du Congo, le Vice-Provincial du Kenya (qui nous a laissé l'Ouganda en héritage), notre nouveau Provincial Burundais qui a été installé au courant de la messe, presque tous les Salésiens du Rwanda, Burundi et 5 de l'Ouganda. Les Soeurs salésiennes aussi- Sr. Candide Asselin présente- des Coopérateurs, anciens élèves, etc. Dans l'après-midi est arrivé Mgr G. Ruvezi, évêque salésien de Kipushi, Congo, dont l'avion avait été annulé la veille.

Au cours de la messe, 5 novices ont prononcé leurs voeux, tandis que 10 nouveaux les remplaçaient (9 Rwandais et 1 Burundais; un de l'Ouganda fera son noviciat au Kenya à cause de la langue). Dans son homélie, le P. Alencherry disait que nous n'étions qu'une petite entité de 69 confrères, mais qu'avec prière et courage nous grandirions. La fête vient de se terminer à 8h00. Demain les confrères se disperseront, chacun de son côté, pour reprendre leur travail.

Je te laisse en souhaitant que cette nouvelle année de vie t'apportera bien des joies et satisfactions. Merci encore une fois pour les services que tu me rends.

Jean-Paul Lebel (*extrait d'une lettre au P. Trottier*)

TORONTO-HAMILTON. Fr. Occhio participated in the annual gathering of the DB College Alumni in Columbus, Ohio, at the end of July. As for Fr. Kennedy, he has been finishing up his Master's degree in Sociology under the auspices of the U. of T. He spent the month of August in his home province of India.

Our community, also toward the end of July, welcomed Mrs Marlene Frederick, the representative of the English Region on the World Council of Salesian Cooperators. She presented to our SC centre an update on the work going on at the World Council in regard to the revision of the RAL (*Reg. of Apostolic Life*), as well as some of the changes envisaged in the structure of the Association.

From July 3rd to August 4th, 165 Summerdaze campers enjoyed the activities, outings and liturgies held in true Salesian fashion. In addition, over 40 teenagers and young adults took part in the formation retreat animated by the Camp director, Mr. Frankie Jacobazzi, and Bro. Bernie Dubé. And, ho! How can we forget our biggest camper, Fr. Dave Sajdak, who spent his 3-week vacation at camp?

Michel Jobin, our local SC coordinator, and his family hosted a Field Day for all the Cooperators at his farm near Orangeville on July 29th. We had a potluck meal followed by an outdoor evening Mass presided by Fr. George. A joyous time was had by all.

Our DB Residence underwent some well-needed improvements this summer: renovation of the kitchen area, baths and showers, as well as the construction of a shed in the back yard for storing various tools, garden equipment, etc.

In mid-August, 6 confreres from our Toronto-Hamilton community participated in the annual retreat at the Benedictine Monastery in Mission, B.C. The newly appointed 42-year old Abbot, Rev. John Braganza, preached the meditations in a most erudite, eloquent and deeply spiritual manner. Some highlights were the visit to our community in Surrey, thus becoming better acquainted with their apostolate and the people of the parish. We also bid farewell to

Fr. Jacob Trecek, who after a year in Canada, is called back to his native Slovenia. All in all the 28 confreres present thoroughly enjoyed the atmosphere and beauty of the surroundings. How about a repeat in 2009?

SHERBROOKE. Samedi le 5 août environ 150 anciens et anciennes se sont rencontrés au Camp Dominique Savio, Ste-Catherine-de-Hatley, sur le Lac Magog, pour le traditionnel pique-nique annuel. Retrouvailles, activités de plein air, activités nautiques, feu de camp, souper sur le « charcoal », consultation des albums souvenirs, etc. Une invitation particulière avait été lancée à la promotion 1981. Oui, déjà 25 ans! Une journée appréciée de tous les participants(es). Vous pouvez visionner quelques photos en visitant le site de la Fondation : fondationdusalesien.org (aller à *galerie de photos*).

L'année scolaire 2006-2007 est déjà bien lancée. En effet, tous les élèves commencent les cours lundi le 28 août; ils étaient venus par niveau la semaine précédente prendre ce dont ils avaient besoin pour la rentrée. Ils sont environ 720 répartis en 23 groupes. En 1^{ère} secondaire, 165, 33 par groupe. Du sang neuf aussi parmi le corps professoral.

Le 8 de ce mois, cinq des 6 membres de la communauté s'envolaient vers Vancouver (Bob G. devait nous rejoindre plus tard, retenu à Sherbrooke par le ministère). Cette année, c'est là que les confrères sdb du Canada tenaient leur retraite spirituelle annuelle. C'était par gentillesse (ha!) pour nos confrères d'Edmonton et de Surrey, leur évitant ainsi de faire le trajet vers l'est. Vraiment c'était aussi pour que tous les confrères puissent faire connaissance avec cette œuvre de la banlieue de Vancouver.

La retraite ne commençant que dimanche le 13, nous y sommes allés quelques jours plus tôt afin de passer quelques jours ensemble et de pouvoir visiter cette merveilleuse région du Canada. Cela nous a permis aussi de pratiquer une certaine « ascèse communautaire » et de céder quelque peu au désir de l'autre dans le choix des visites et tout ce que cela entraîne... Quitte à susciter votre jalousie, voici quelques sites visités : le Vancouver

Museum, le Space Centre et le planétarium, Stanley Park et ses arbres multi-centenaires, Capilano Park et son pont suspendu, Grouse Mountain, Lynn Park, le centre-ville, quelques plages, etc. Nous avons passé une journée à Seattle, WA, craignant un peu les tracasseries de la frontière, mais tout s'est bien passé ; nous devons avoir un air très « innocent »! Nous avons l'agréable compagnie de Jim Zettel, le plus jeune de nos confrères canadiens qui a passé l'été à notre paroisse OLG, mystifiant les enfants et les plus grands aussi avec tous ses trucs de magicien.

Samedi matin nous prenions le traversier (1h½) vers l'Île de Vancouver et Victoria. Ceux qui y sont allés déjà reconnaîtront ces sites : Butchart Gardens, km 0 (fin de la Transcanadienne), le monument à Terry Fox, le Parlement tout illuminé le soir, la maison natale d'Emily Carr, Empress Hotel, etc. Pour tous nos déplacements, à Victoria comme à Vancouver pour le temps du séjour, le P. Alain était notre vaillant chauffeur.

À Victoria, nous avons logé au centre diocésain, accueillis par Mgr. Lapierre, vicaire général, qui nous a introduits à l'évêque de Victoria, Mgr. Richard Gagnon, -deux hommes bien sympathiques- dans la chapelle privée duquel on a célébré l'eucharistie dimanche matin avant de repartir vers Swartz Bay, sur le chemin du retour, faisant quelques arrêts intéressants, parmi lesquels le dîner aux fruits de mer, au bout d'un petit quai d'où la vue du Mt Baker était magnifique. Alain a saisi cette occasion pour se mettre les pieds dans l'eau... du Pacifique. Sur le traversier, nous avons pu assister, avertis par le capitaine- le soleil était resplendissant- à un « spectacle » d'orcas (killer whales). En débarquant, on s'achemine directement vers Mission à environ une heure de la côte et nous arrivons au début de la soirée à l'Abbaye de Westminster où nous rejoignons les autres confrères du Canada pour notre retraite d'une semaine. Un grand merci à tous ceux qui ont rendu notre séjour agréable.

Quelques jours après notre retour à Sherbrooke, nous avons la joie d'accueillir à notre résidence le Provincial de N.Y. le P. Jim Heuser. Il était accompagné des 2 nouveaux salésiens de sa province, les Frs. Michael Eguino et Robert Malusa, qui avaient fait leur 1^{ère} profession à Mary Help of

Christians Church à Manhattan, NY, le 16 août dernier. Ils en ont profité pour visiter quelques lieux de Sherbrooke, et ont passé une journée à Québec, faisant un arrêt à N.D.-du-Cap en route vers Montréal où ils ont passé une journée avant de reprendre la route vers le sud. Le fait d'avoir rencontré ces jeunes salésiens, comme d'ailleurs les 3 canadiens qui étaient avec nous à Vancouver, nous incite à les inclure dans notre prière afin qu'ils soient dociles à la voix du Seigneur et persévérants dans leur vocation salésienne.

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SURREY, B.C. Aug. 5th saw the parish picnic celebrated at Hawthorn Park with the campers acting out skits to the amusement of the parishioners. That afternoon the Don Bosco Knights of Columbus held a golf fund raiser tournament followed by a dinner dance at the Youth Center.

Bro. Jerry attended the Religious Brothers' Convention in Dallas, TX. His flight was delayed 3 ½ hours, as were other flights to other countries, in wake of the security breach that began the next day in London. Upon returning, he discovered that the parish van's license plate had been stolen, and that a rectory intruder had stolen from some of the confreres' rooms.

On Aug. 8th began the pilgrimage of retreatants to Surrey, beginning with the Sherbrooke group followed by the Montreal and Toronto contingents. The day before the retreat, Fr. Jan returned from a week's visit with his sister in Calgary, AB. Aug. 13th thru 18th our Salesian retreat was held at Westminster Abbey in Mission, Wednesday of that week, all came to visit our parish complex enjoying a buffet supper following by a concelebrated Mass and renewal of vows by our three clerics. Various representatives from the parish organizations were present and the church was packed for the weekly Mother of Perpetual Help devotions. The mixed Youth Choir sang and had full accompaniment with the various musicians present, with a Knights of Columbus Honour Guard.

The retreat over, Bro. Jerry left for his 2 weeks vacation to Winnipeg, thus joining his sister in celebrating her birthday on the 24th. As Brother's

flight started its descent over Brandon, the passengers experienced turbulence, not realizing that they were arriving on the tail end of a tornado that had touched down earlier, just south of the city.

As for Bro. Jim Zettel, he returned to Toronto after a wonderful 2 months with us, while Fr. John Basso left for a month's visit to Italy. We are happy to welcome Bro. Steve Aldorasi who officially joins our community for this year, before entering theology.

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INTERVIEW: FR JOSEPH OCCHIO

Fr. Occhio is presently Associate Pastor in the parish of St. Benedict, Toronto. Much of his life has been spent in the formation of young Salesians. He holds degrees in philosophy and theology. He has some expertise in approaches to prayer East and West.

What can you tell us about your family?

It had an environment of deeply religious faith handed down in the continuous prayerful life of my parents and paternal grandfather who attended Mass daily, walking to church one km each way, rain or shine...or snow!. My brother Leo is a Xaverian missionary priest in Brazil. My sister Celeste joined the Daughters of Charity of St. Jeanne Antide Thouret. My other 8 brothers and sisters had numerous children: of late at our family reunions there are about 100 persons, some of whom now live in Switzerland.

About your childhood?

I passed the first ten years of my life at Cascina Primavera, the stately farmhouse where all of us 11 children were born, near Soncino* (Cremona, Lombardy). In 1933, Dad, 3 of my sisters and I moved to Borgosesia, an industrial town in Piedmont, where my sisters found some work. (*One of the symbols in my family's coat of arms is the Star of David. The reason is that the printing of the first Jewish bible ever printed took place in Soncino. The original "Printers House" is one of the town's tourist attractions where to date you can watch sample pages of the Bible being printed in Hebrew just as they were in 1488).

How did you get to know the Salesians and how did your vocation come about?

In the spring of 1934, I assisted at local celebrations of Don Bosco's canonization. A few months later, without asking me, my pastor decided that I should be interviewed by a Jesuit to get his opinion as to whether I should become a Jesuit. Somehow the Jesuit did not show up for the scheduled meeting, and the pastor simply told me: "Next week three boys will go to the Salesians. You might as well join them." I did, and I've been with the Salesians ever since. (As a Salesian aspirant I spent the summers of 1938 and 1939 at the foot of Mt. Blanc, not far from LesCombes where the Holy Father takes his vacation).

Where were you ordained and how did you spend your first years as a Salesian?

In the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin, on July 2nd of the Holy Year 1950. I spent my first 3 years as a priest studying philosophy and the following three decades teaching it in Newton, NJ.

What would you consider the most meaningful experiences of your Salesian priestly life?

The celebration of Holy Mass and the ministries of hearing Confessions and giving spiritual direction.

What message can you give to Salesians, as also to young people?

Of late I have been reading quite a bit on Mama Margaret because of the talks I am giving about her on HMWN Radio Maria. What impresses me most is how much Don Bosco imbibed his spirituality and educational system directly from her. Yes, DB is a most extraordinary saint, but his way to sanctity is very much like his mother's: living joyfully the grandeur of our constant union with God in the unassuming, self-sacrificing service we offer our neighbour in the day-to-day **heroism of the most ordinary life.**

As regards **chastity**, kudos to George Weigel for this appraisal of **John Paul II's Theology of the Body: "One of the boldest reconfigurations of Catholic theology in centuries... a kind of theological time bomb set to go off with dramatic consequences sometime in the third millennium of the Church."** Most certainly 100% "Bosconian"!

I'll conclude on a related line of thought with a quote from Eddie Doherty's *Lambs in Wolfskins*: "It would take men as pure as angels to guard the little ones and prevent them from offending God in any way. What purity [Don Bosco] must insist upon in his novices, [in his Brothers], in his scholastics, in his priests! The Lord would prosper the [Salesian] Society, so long as it exalted this virtue."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

CAMBODIA .Conclusion of the Meeting on the Salesian Lay Brother

The Meeting of the East Asia – Oceania Region on the theme of the Salesian Lay brother ended on the 25th August, having taken place near the Don Bosco Technical School in Phnom Penh. During the six days of work many Salesian Lay brothers, some Provincials and those responsible for Formation in the Region looked at ways of widening the range of pastoral activity, vocation promotion and formation of lay brothers and the long-term prospects. At the end of the Meeting, the participants had renewed their commitment to the promotion of new vocations to the Salesian Lay brothers in the Region and real collaboration across the different Provinces. During the course of the Meeting, use was made of a DVD, produced for the Region, on the model of a Salesian Lay brother. **The DVD, which has shown itself to be very effective for vocational promotion,** gives the history of the Lay Salesian vocation.

(ANS 28th August 2006)

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- 7/09: Ivan Dobrsek (95 years)
- 22: Joseph Ho
- 23: Georges Parent
- 23: Dave Sajdak
- 28: Robert Di Pede

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY OF PROFESSION!

- 1/09: Bernie Dubé – Luc Lantagne
Alain Léonard – Dave Sajdak
- 4 : Dominique Britschu
- 8 : Paul Cossette – Bob Gagné
Luciano Cortopassi - Marcel Gauthier
Jerry Harasym - Frank Kelly-Georges Parent
Gérard Richard -Roméo Trottier

14: Joseph Occhio

PTL!