



catechists. The high ratio of returning catechists is a blessing; they bring much confidence, professionalism, and zeal to their lay apostolate.

At our English Masses on Saturday, Oct. 24, and Sunday, Oct. 25 were commissioned our various lay ministers at the beginning of our pastoral year. Between catechists, musicians, lectors, choir members, ministers of Holy Communion and altar servers, there were over 200 parishioners on hand. Hopefully this will stimulate others to get involved too.

We celebrated our last wedding of the year on Sat., Oct. 28, and on Sun., Oct. 29 we launched the new season of Marriage Preparation courses. A team of volunteers graciously prepared lunch for the couples. This helped to set the family tone for our courses, which are offered over 4 Sunday afternoons, from 2:00 to 5:30 pm.

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**SHERBROOKE.** Le 15 octobre, la paroisse Ste Claire de Montréal, remise au diocèse par les salésiens il y a plus de 2 ans, tenait l'une de ses principales manifestations de la célébration de son centenaire. Le Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte présidait l'eucharistie, accompagné de plusieurs prêtres concélébrants. Les salésiens étaient représentés par deux anciens curés, les PP. Trottier (1983-1995) et Parent (1995-2004), par le P. Cossette ancien vicaire (1984-1990) et les Frères Gérard Richard et Marcel Gauthier. Dans son homélie le Cardinal invita les paroissiens à s'impliquer dans leur communauté et à donner généreusement de leur temps et énergie afin qu'elle soit vivante, leur disant toute la confiance qu'il place en eux. Bravo à M. l'abbé François Baril, le curé actuel, résidant à St-François d'Assise, et à Mme Christiane P. Vanier, coordonnatrice des activités paroissiales, pour une célébration signifiante et bien préparée. Dans l'après-midi, la «délégation salésienne» venue de Sherbrooke se rendit visiter la très intéressante exposition sur l'histoire de la paroisse à la Maison de la Culture Mercier.

À la mi-octobre, la Corporation du Séminaire tint son assemblée annuelle, au terme de laquelle les membres du conseil d'administration furent élus. La communauté est représentée à la Corporation et au conseil par les PP. Léonard et Trottier. La clientèle étudiante s'annonce bien pour l'an prochain au Salésien: plus de 270 jeunes se présentèrent avec leur famille aux «*Portes Ouvertes*» le 22 octobre. Une autre «*P.O.*» se tiendra le 11 novembre. Les parents font noter l'esprit de famille qui règne dans les couloirs et locaux du Séminaire lors de ces rencontres.

Le 28 octobre, nous avons accueilli 90 finissants(es) accompagnés pour la plupart de leurs parents. Ce fut une très belle soirée de reconnaissance pour ces jeunes qui recevaient officiellement leur diplôme d'études secondaires. Le maître de cérémonie, M. Nicolas Duquette, a animé avec beaucoup de tact cette soirée. La remise de l'album- souvenirs (travail de Mme Julie-Andrée Turgeon) fut également un beau moment. Pendant cette soirée, David Brodeur a été le récipiendaire de la médaille de la Gouverneure Générale du Canada, ayant maintenu une moyenne générale de 95,5% en 4<sup>e</sup> et 5<sup>e</sup> secondaire. M. François Lessard ('76), docteur en mathématiques et ancien du Salésien, est le 1<sup>er</sup> récipiendaire du *Prix Périclès*. Il s'illustre sur le plan intellectuel et a été présenté comme modèle pour nos jeunes par Messieurs Jean Paré et Robert Lacroix. Un vin d'honneur clôtura le tout avec le dévoilement de la traditionnelle mosaïque des finissants (es) de la promotion 2005-2006. Mme Julie Tremblay, agente de développement et de communication, est le chef d'orchestre de ce nouvel événement qui deviendra assurément une autre belle tradition du Salésien.

Dans un tout autre ordre d'événements, quelque 350 «petits monstres» se présentèrent à la porte de notre résidence, rue du Québec, la soirée de l'Halloween pour recevoir leurs bonbons et un petit carnet confectionné par le Fr. Marcel.

Et maintenant, à vos tuques! L'hiver est proche...

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**TORONTO.** Our new Fr. Provincial, Richard Authier paid our Toronto-Hamilton community a friendly visit from Oct. 6 to 9. He met with the community as well as with several confreres individually.

Fr. Joseph Occhio successfully underwent his hip replacement operation on Oct. 11. He spent one week in the hospital and another week at a rehabilitation center. He recently returned to the parish rectory, now walking with the help of a cane. His courage and stamina have been admirable. He thanks everyone for their prayers and adds: "Keep them coming."

Fr. George and our young boarder David McConkey have been enjoying their Thursday night bowling league activities especially at their recent Halloween costume evening when they appeared respectively as Bozo the clown and as Mr. Incredible. We won't speak about scores!

The Salesian Sisters' Porterfield community welcomed all the Salesian confreres for Thanksgiving turkey and trimmings. Fr. Joe Ho entertained us all with his many riddles. -- Fr. Richard administered the Sacrament of the sick to Fr. Occhio at evening prayer. -- Fr. Kennedy participated in his first Toronto Marathon on Oct. 15. He finished the 42 km trek at his own pace...

Fr. Frank Kelly was invited to give the homily at Fr. Gerry Pellegrino's funeral Mass held at West Haverstraw. Many memorable stories were recounted about the dedication, courage and cheerfulness of this confrere. May he rest in peace! -- Bro. Bernie has initiated a bi-monthly Sunday evening prayer group composed of young adults and held at the Salesian Residence. In addition, he hosts the preparations for the upcoming Salesian Leadership Retreat on Nov. 24 to 26. -- Dave Dishart, a former graduate from Don Bosco Secondary school is the new part-time youth minister at St. Benedict's parish. He is mentored by Bro. Bernie.

The St. Dominic Savio Club has over 80 registered members who gather every Tuesday and Thursday in the church hall for after school activities. Fr. George's presence as a volunteer is much appreciated. -- The Salesian Cooperators meet once monthly at the Salesian Residence under the capable leadership of their council members: Michel Jobin, Mary Fay, Hazel Philadelphia and Fr. George. -- The bi-annual *Magnificat* breakfast for October welcomed over 350 women guests. Prayer, song, and joviality reigned. Katerina Mazi delivered a very powerful witness-talk.

The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Salesian Fund-raising dinner dance welcomed close to 250 guests for a fun-filled evening on Oct. 28 in St. Benedict's church hall. It proved to be a wonderful occasion for the gathering of the Salesian Family (sisters, brothers, priests, Cooperators, past-pupils and friends of Don Bosco). The proceeds of this event will be used for a poor mission in Haiti.

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**SURREY, BC.** The fall colors, especially the reds of our maple trees surrounding the Don Bosco Youth Center, here in Surrey, have ushered in the month of October with a beautiful display of the autumn season. -- Bro. Steve participated on Oct. 1 in the *Surrey-Delta Pro-Life Chain* where our parishioners by their presence stood in silent solidarity, witnessing to the sanctity and protection of all human life.

Recently Fr. Mario Villaraza spoke at all the Sunday Masses on our Vision – Mission statement, which reads as follows:

*"We, the Parish of Our Lady of Good Counsel, are a community of diverse groups and cultures, marked by respect and love for all cultures and by a special option for the poor and the young. We are a community empowered by the Holy Spirit, guided by the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. John Bosco and striving to be faithful to God and to serve the Lord Jesus. We are a community of families united among ourselves and with one another by the practice of our Catholic faith and caring for people of all races and beliefs. We are a community witnessing to all. We are a community journeying together towards the fullness of life in Christ Jesus. To achieve this vision, we commit ourselves to be welcoming and respectful at all times, to be faithful to the teaching of the Catholic Church, to seek conversion and nourishment in the Word*

*and the Sacraments as priests and religious, to be faithful to our priestly and religious vocation; as parish leaders, workers and members of mandate organizations, to be active collaborators in Saint John Bosco's mission as young people, to take active roles in the parish and community."*

Fr. Mario read a letter which he wrote, and it was given to all parishioners, young and old, explaining its contents. If they are in agreement with the Vision-Mission Statement, they were asked to sign the letter and return it with their Sunday envelope or just drop it in the collection basket over the next month. In turn, these signed slips will be burnt symbolically and mixed in with the Lenten ashes to be placed with the Sign of the Cross on their forehead as signs of their commitment to this parish endeavour. Developing plans with the more than 55 parish organizations are being implemented as to how to put words from paper into practical parish action and commitment.

Our community had its home-cooked Thanksgiving meal, plus the pumpkin pie, prepared and delivered by our Portuguese cook, Agostinha. On Thanksgiving Day we had three morning Masses for our parishioners, with gratitude for the various choirs that helped to make this occasion special. That afternoon and evening the community was invited out for two different meals: one Chinese and the other Iranian. Quite a different Thanksgiving mixture of tastes and cultures. -- The Salesian Cooperators met in mid-October in the Mary Help of Christians Hall with their monitor, Bro. Jerry. Their special guest for that monthly meeting was their pastor, Fr. Mario. Since Mrs. Carla Comin will be representing the English speaking region at the World Congress in Rome, Nov. 9-12, upon returning, Mrs. Comin will share her congress experience.

Oct. 14 and 15. was the annual Knights of Columbus Flea Market held in our Don Bosco Youth Center. The youth leaders, under the direction of Bro. Steve, spoke after all the Masses inviting the youth and young adults to participate in joining the Youth Choir, Movie Night, and to sign up as Lectors or Commentators for their Saturday evening Mass. On Oct. 16, Fr. Jan along with the Polish Community had a Pope John Paul II commemorative display and evening Mass commemorating his papal election. -- Bro. Jerry has initiated the series of workshops for our adult commentators/lectors, and all the beginners who would like to join in this apostolate. Some emerging ideas are that of bible study spiritual circles at the various homes of these participants, plus introducing our senior Knights of the Altar to be active in proclaiming the Psalm and Prayers of the Faithful on Saturday evening and Sundays, as a follow up to their gift of service. It is another way of becoming involved after they have outgrown serving.

Mid-morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> O.L.G.C. School students presented the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary in a dim lit auditorium that created an atmospheric setting. Each bead had a reflection given while different students from the various grades recited the prayers as vigil lights were lit forming a living rosary. Bro. Steve gave a wonderful summary afterwards: a very practical reflection and easy way for the children to understand and remember these decades. He explained the mysteries this way "B-MPTI" (Be-EMPTY) standing for Baptism in the Jordan; Marriage at Cana; Proclamation of the Gospel; Transfiguration, and Institution of the Eucharist (we empty ourselves to receive the Lord). Most of the Salesian Community were present as well as invited parents and guests. It was truly a worthwhile and prayerful time spent with the children.

On Oct. 19 Fr. Peter Zago, SDB, arrived from the Don Bosco Youth Center in Quetta, Pakistan, to speak on Mission Sunday at our neighbouring parish of the Good Shepherd in White Rock, on behalf of the special needs of the Afghani refugees. This Pakistan facility has taken under its wing not only the education of these refugees, but the distribution of food especially to Afghani children in Don Bosco Sch. (206 children), Millat Middle Sch. (308 children), Al- Barooni Sch. (250 children), and the Dannish Middle Schools (273 children). They also have a Don Bosco Clinic that serves both Christian and Afghani Muslim patients. An average of 40-45 patients daily visit the clinic. Fr. Peter was in time to join us for supper, and



be strong. I preferred to remain a widow. Oh! The occasions to contract a new marriage were there -- but I preferred to raise my children that way. I knew God would provide. We were very, very poor. That great famine affected the whole countryside of Piedmont. I hardly know how, but somehow, we managed to survive. Each one did his share. Work was important also for the children. At Francesco's death, they were 9, 4 and 2 years old, Giovanni being the youngest.

***Would you tell us a couple of things about how Giovanni was in his youth and as a young man?***

I loved the children equally well and tried to be a good mother and to be just toward each one, even, especially a few years later, toward Antonio who showed himself rebellious and disrespectful. He was a disturbed youngster and I accepted him as my own child. Giuseppe was mild-mannered, patient and a follower. Giovanni was lively, intelligent and imaginative, and a leader among his companions. He was a devout boy and had a great desire to learn. All 3 were so very different. As the years passed, Antonio became more difficult to handle, and it caused me very much pain to have to send Giovanni away to live with the Moglias on their farm so he would be spared Antonio's intimidation and fits of anger. Those were 2 long years away from home.

When he was about 9 years old, he had a dream. When he told us about it at table the next morning, somehow I knew that it was a sign from heaven and that it would guide his whole life. I felt it was something important.

***What were your feelings when your son decided to go to the seminary to become a priest?***

It was always my hope that he would go on with his studies; he wanted so much to learn! In my heart, I was praying that he become a priest. When he chose his way, let us say rather when he chose God's way, a mother could not have been happier. I told him not to worry about me; God would provide. I supported and encouraged him. The day he took on the priestly habit, I told him: "Giovanni, do not dishonour this habit. I would rather have a poor farmer for a son than a priest who neglects his duties." And the evening of his ordination in June 1841, I advised him: "You are a priest now and you celebrate Mass... Remember that to begin to say Mass is to begin to suffer. From now on, you must think only of saving souls, and you must not worry about me."

***How does it feel to be the mother of a great saint recognised by the Church?***

Oh! That was not my doing. God makes saints; we do not even make ourselves saints. However I did strive to be a good mother to my children. I can say that their religious upbringing was my constant care. I taught them catechism and how to say the Rosary and their prayers morning and night, brought them to church with me, prepared them for the sacraments. I tried to show them the sense of God's presence. Trust, honesty integrity, love of hard work, fidelity to duty, sensibility to other people's needs Christian joy and hope. You know that what we teach children in their youth is very important for their whole life. I was so happy the way Giovanni responded.

***Within the Salesian family -and outside too- you are known as "Mamma Margaret." How did that come about?***

You know that Don Giovanni got very sick sometime in the first years of his priesthood. In fact he came home to Becchi for some months and I took good care of him. When he got well enough, he returned to his boys in Valdocco and I went with him, knowing he would still have to be looked after for some time. Finally I decided to stay with him. I could not leave him alone; there was so much to do. He was a good father to his boys; I felt I could be a mother to them. For the last 10 years of my life, I stayed by his side, helping out with all kinds of little chores in that

