

The Voice of the Central

Volume 7 ♦ Number 1

January 2008

Celebret

I have forwarded to every district and regional director the CELEBRET for their priests incardinated in the institute. As an explanation to the lay people in the institute, let me say that the celebret is a small card identifying its bearer as a priest in good standing. The card is used whenever a priest is outside his diocese. Though it is not used very often, some priests have told me that they have used it at one time or another. It identifies the priest and allows him to celebrate the sacraments in places where he is not known.

The Present Moment 2008

The 2008 edition of *The Present Moment* has already been sent to all the directors for distribution to members in their district or region. Every member or couple should have a copy of this review. This year the journal is published as a special edition on the occasion of our Institute's 50th anniversary. I thank especially councillors Raymonde Jetté and Fernand Turgeon for their involvement in the preparation of this issue. Preparing this edition has taken many months over the course of the year. THANK YOU!

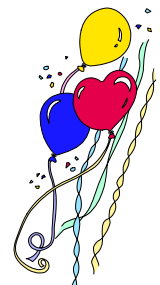
50th Anniversary Celebrations Committee

A committee has been formed to prepare the 50th anniversary celebration of our Institute. The committee is composed of Leo Grégoire, Pierre Marois, Gaétan Nelson, Juliette Roy-Veer, and Guy Veer. It is not the committee's mandate to prepare local events and celebrations; however, it is there to invite districts and regions of the Institute to do something. The Committee's mandate can be summed up in three words: CALL to celebration, SUGGEST a certain number of material and activities, and COLLECT what has been done, for a 2009 family album edition of *The Present Moment*.

Happy Birthday...

January 22, to George Hazler, director of the United States district-in-formation. George also serves as president of the United States Conference of Secular institutes.

January 26, to Michael Craig, a general councillor since 1998. Michael has been much involved with the Ethiopia foundation and, more recently, with a group of interested people in Uganda.



Visit to Asia

From January 10 to February 25, 2008, I shall be visiting our members in Sri Lanka, India, and Laos. This visit will give me the opportunity to proclaim the new status which passes from a region to a district in formation. Congratulations to the members but especially to the director Dunstan and his councillors who have prepared this change in status for quite some time. Congratulations to the previous director, Father Shantikumar, for having initiated the project.

Vows

2008 marks the 50th anniversary of our foundation. For fifty years, following in the footsteps of Father Parent, we have chosen to live the spirituality of the Three Fives. We joined the Institute to find there our path to holiness. Saints today are formed in the present moment. There are certainly many people like Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul II whom we consider saints, but there are also our fellow members in the Institute. They have not yet been canonised, but they are working at it! May the new year, with its celebration of our jubilee, be for each one of us an opportunity to deepen our faith, and commit ourselves even more to our spirituality, and to exercising charity.

François Hamel
Director General

The Voice of the Central...

Volume 7 ♦ Number 2

February 2008

Statistics

Each year the Vatican's Office of Vital Statistics asks us to submit data about the Institute. As of December 31, 2007, the Institute counted 841 members, compared to 882, the previous year. This shows a decrease of 4.6 %.

Bishop:	1
Priests incardinated in the Institute:	122
Priests incardinated in a diocese:	33
Deacons incardinated in the Institute:	3
Deacons incardinated in a diocese:	6
Single laymen;	52
Major seminarians:	94
Married people:	530

Distribution by country:

Canada:	159	India:	150
Chile:	37	Italy:	2
Colombia:	22	Japan:	1
Congo:	1	Laos:	1
Cuba:	4	Scotland:	1
Dominican Republic:	224	Sri Lanka:	96
Ecuador:	4	Trinidad:	6
Ethiopia:	13	Uganda:	6
Guadeloupe:	2	United States:	57
Haiti:	55		

Central Council

The central council meeting dates for the year are:

April 11 and 12

July 7 to 9

Fall: To be determined

I ask the district and regional directors to submit at least one month in advance whatever items they want to appear on the agenda: the councillors need time to study the documents prior to the meeting, for enlightened discussion.

François Hamel
Director General

The Voice of the Central...

Volume 7 ♦ Number 3

March 2008

Central Council

The central council will hold its next meeting on April 11, 12, and 13.

Patronal Feast

The patronal feast of the Institute is celebrated at the end of the month, this year, that is, on March 31. The Virgin is for us the great witness of availability. It seems to me that her feast gives us the opportunity to renew our commitment to doing the Will of God, and to recognise that this commitment is rooted in our baptism, our first consecration. Our spiritual growth does not end in our 20s or 30s, but continues our lifetime through. The present moment is welcomed by our YES, just as Mary did long before us. “This is the day that the Lord has made, let us be glad and rejoice.”

Our Sick Members

Our friend Jacques Harvey, who is director of the Vocation and Mission Office, was operated on in early January, and is slowly recuperating.

The director of Chile, Manuel Cornejo Garate is on sick leave... a consequence of overwork.

“The Institute considers it a duty of charity to give all its sick members material and spiritual aid. The Institute helps them deepen their understanding of the Christian meaning of suffering” (Constitutions, Art. 96).

François Hamel
Director General

The Voice of the Central...

Volume 7 ♦ Number 4

April 2008

Easter

A few days ago we celebrated Easter Sunday, the great feast of hope that lies at the heart of our faith. This faith of ours rests on the witness of men and women who saw Jesus alive after his death. This encounter of theirs with the risen Christ was so intensely experienced that the vast majority of them suffered martyrdom. The Jesus of history has become the Christ of our faith. Happy Easter!

Visit

I visited Asia, in January and February. The first object of my visit was to preside at the changing of canonical status of Sri Lanka, which passed from being a region to being a district in formation. The celebration was held February 9, in Colombo. Archbishop Mario Zanari, the apostolic nuncio, attended. Our thanks to Father Dunstan who organised the festivities. A thank you to him and to his council, too, who had been working on this since 2006. The Institute has confidence in the Sri Lanka members, and this is seen in the change of status, especially as the country is ravaged by a civil war with no prospective peace in sight. A special thank you to all the members for being “peacemakers” in accord with our own spirituality.

Father Parent

I visited Father Parent on March 13. He was fine. I had not seen him since early January, and I found that he had lost a bit of weight; however, his mind is very much present... He knows that we are about to celebrate the Institute’s 50th anniversary, and he repeated that the most beautiful graces of his life were the founding of the Missionary Recluses (1948), the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate (1952), and the Voluntas Deis (1958). He considers himself a happy and blessed man.

Central Council

The next meeting of the central council will take place from April 11 to 13. Please pray that the Holy Spirit enlighten the council members for the good of the Institute and that of all its members.

Ordinations

On March 27, five members of the India Region received ordination to the priesthood for service to the Church through living the spirituality of the 5-5-5. Let us thank God for this event where five young men readily answered – like Mary – the Lord’s call to their hearts. I ask you to pray for:

Shaiju Bhavan

Eugene Britto

Johny D. Puthenveetil

Victor Everystus

Martin Muttickal

2010 Assembly General

We are hardly into 2008, and we must already think about organising the 2010 Assembly General.. An assembly of this kind, with its international component, is not set up overnight. Following consultation with the central council at the November, 2007 meeting, I appoint Laurier Albert chairman of the Organisation Committee, with Cécile Davidson, Roger Corneau, Louisette Simard, and Rénaud Tremblay as committee members. I thank them all for their devotedness and their service in planning the assembly general. The Committee will be getting in touch with the district and regional directors shortly, to activate the process. Everyone shall be called upon to submit suggestions and recommendations. We must begin now to pray the Spirit to open our hearts.

Happy Birthday...

On April 10, to **Leo Grégoire**, secretary general of the Institute since 1998, a task he carries out in an exemplary fashion. He is also the English translator of the vast majority of documents of the Institute.

On April 14, to **Cécile Davidson**. Cécile is the archivist of the central administration. She expends much time and energy in sorting and processing everything of archival value. Hers is a formidable task, yet she still finds time to render other services to the Institute.

On April 22, to **Sylvie Ferland**, our cook and housekeeper at the central house. Those who come to the central house know of her willingness to answer all requests.

On April 26, to **André Côté**, director of the Canadian District. He is a good man to work with.

**Christ is now raised from the dead...
Death came through a man;
hence the resurrection of the dead
comes through a man also.
(1 Cor. 15:20-21)**

François Hamel
Director General

The Voice of the Central...

Volume 7 ♦ Number 5

May 2008

Central Council

The central Council was scheduled to meet April 11 and 12. However, Councillor Michael Craig had a knee operation and could not attend, and Paul-Alain Monpas was suffering from pneumonia preventing him from coming to Trois-Rivières. We therefore did not have quorum for the meeting, and it has been postponed to May 30 and 31. The other central council meeting will take place July 7-8-9. If any requests need to be made they must be sent early enough for us to receive them at least one month in advance, to allow the councillors to familiarise themselves with the contents.

Ordination

Christian Matuschek will be ordained to the priesthood on May 10. He is a member of the united States District in Formation, but will be incardinated in the Diocese of Baden Germany, his native country. Christian is a probationer in the Institute.


Father Parent


When I returned from Rome I stopped to see Father Parent. He has started using a wheelchair on and off. He had been walking with a cane, these past few years, but now the wheelchair is becoming part of his daily reality.


Decease

April 2008, 19, **Mr Juan Pablo Jimenez**, Dominican Republic, associate member with stability passed away. He was married to Saturnina Sosa.

Happy Birthday

 May 17, to **Jacques Harvey**, the director of the Vocation and Mission Office (VMO) of the Institute. Jacques visits the parishes in Québec, New Brunswick, and Ontario on a regular basis, where he preaches in order to raise funds to help districts and regions in the formation of members, especially candidates to the priesthood. He also writes a monthly letter to the Institute's benefactors and presents a monthly project submitted by the district and regional directors. Jacques' is a good example of "service." Thank you, Jacques, for what you do and who you are.

 May 18, to **Mario Laroche** who was director general from 1980 to 1992. It was during his mandate that our Constitutions were approved by Rome. We all know how it was a hard and not always easy task. We thank Mario and his team for all their energy, and especially for their openness to the Holy Spirit during this segment in the life of the Institute.

 May 27, to **Mrs. Claire Lafrenière**, who is well-known to the district and regional directors. She is the accounting technician of the central administration, and she works under the director of administrative services of the Institute, Mr. Régnald Tremblay. She converts the central council's decisions in this area into financial reality. A sincere thank you for her excellent work.

François Hamel
Director General

The Voice of the Central

Volume 7 ♦ Number 6

June 2008

50th Anniversary

I invite you to prepare for the Institute's 50th anniversary on July. Earlier this year I had written to all the directors asking them to celebrate July 2 in a special way through a team meeting, a fellowship meal, an evening of prayer, or other.

Here in Canada, the Canadian District is collaborating with the central administration to organise festivities on July 5: a solemn Mass presided y Bishop Martin Veillette of Trois-Rivières, followed with buffet lunch.

I know that several districts and regions have already started celebrating. Our next edition of *The Present Moment* (January 2009) will give a report on activities throughout the Institute. All directors are asked not to forget sending a report of these local and regional activities.

Happy Birthday

June 6, to **René Désilets**. René was director general of the Institute from 1970 to 1980. He is now a missionary in the Dominican Republic.

François Hamel
Director General

The Voice of the Central...

Volume 7 ♦ Number 7

July 2008

July 2, 1958 – July 2, 2008

Central Council

The central council of the Institute met May 30 and 31; the meeting had been postponed from April 11 and 12.

Were accepted to Stability:

Chile: **Myriam Ramirez and Carlos Enrique Ausensi Román**

Scotland: **John Flannigan**

United States: **Mary Tobin and John Buckman**

India: **Joosa Denson**

Arogyaswamy Xavier Ignacimuthu

Martin Jeremias

Rajan Sony Nelluvila

Anthony Sony Panackai

Thekkekalathungal Shymon

Dominican Republic: **Juan Fermin Castillo Rosario**

Guillermo Carrasco Soriano

Raúl Santos Peña Peguero

Wander Vladimir Polanco Sánchez

The council accepted two aspirants from Ethiopia. The Ethiopian group is developing and shows good signs of growth, a seed of hope. There is now one couple in first commitments and nine single laymen, three of whom are aspirants, five are probationers, and one is professed. We must support them with our fraternal prayer. There are some among the laymen who aspire to the priesthood.

The next meeting of the central council will take place July 6-7-8.

Happy Birthday

July 4, to **Manuel Cornejo Garate**, a member of the central council since 2004. He is also director of the Chile region, which has been growing since the region's change of status. Thank you for your involvement, Manuel, for your involvement in the central council, and for Chile.

To **Father Louis-Marie Parent**, July 12, his 98th birthday. We have here a beautiful opportunity to pray for the man who showed a way to holiness through the spirituality of the 5-5-5.

July 20, to **Rénald Tremblay**. Rénald is the Institute's director of administrative services, and is a conscientious manager whose heart is set on helping the missions.

July 23, to **Philippe Désiré**. Philippe is director of the Haiti District, and he carries out his office in a positive spirit, in a country where nothing comes easily.

July 25, to **James Dunstan Selvaratnam**, a member of the central council since 2004 and director of the Sri Lanka district in Formation. Dunstan is very involved in the Institute and takes every opportunity to serve the Institute. He made two visits to India on the request of the director general, to aid the region in its internal organisation. Thank you for everything, Dunstan.

HAPPY 50th ANNIVERSARY TO THE INSTITUTE!

François Hamel
Director General

The Voice of the Central

Volume 7 ♦ Number 8

August 2008

Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations

I remind all the directors that the Turgeon couple have asked you to submit an article with photos showing how you celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Institute. These will be part of the corpus of the coming edition of *The Present Moment* (January 2009). I had already asked the directors to invite their teams to celebrate July 2 locally.

On July 5 a Mass was celebrated by Bishop Martin Veillette of Trois-Rivières, at the shrine of Our Lady of the Cape. I gave the homily which you can read in the January 2009 edition of *The Present Moment*. There was a banquet following the eucharistic celebration with members of the Canadian district, the United States district in formation, and former members of the Institute.

Central Council

The central council held their meeting July 6 to 8. It was with regret that we accepted the resignation of Councillor Paul-Alain Monpas, for health reasons. For some time now Paul-Alain had a lot of pain from sitting down for any length of time, due to a back injury. After hearing the advice of the central council (Article 173 § 9-10) I appoint Andrew Sioletti, a priest involved in hospital ministry in New York City, to complete the mandate of Paul-Alain Monpas.

I THANK Paul-Alain for his four years on the council.

I THANK Andrew for accepting this new challenge.

The next meetings of the central council shall be:

November 7-8-9 2008

April 24-25-26 2009

July 28-29-30 2009

Father Parent

Following the July Central Council meeting, the members drove to Richelieu to visit Father Parent on the occasion of the fifty years of foundation of the institute, and to celebrate his birthday. At the onset of our gathering we felt that Father was a bit confused, though he recognised all present. By the end of the meal that we took together, however, he gave us a few gems that are so special to him. Here is one of them that I gathered, and I invite you to reflect on it: He said that in founding the Voluntas Dei Institute he was not looking for perfect individuals but people on the path to holiness. And he added: “It is not because your car has a flat tire that you must trade it in for another.”

Happy Birthday

August 5, to **Yvon Carpentier**, director general from 1992 to 1998. Yvon has just retired from pastoral ministry, and he resides at the central house. His good humour is a source of joy to those around him.

August 6, to **Fernand Turgeon**, and August 9 to **Raymonde Jetté**, both members of the central council since 2004. They are in charge in keep the membership list of the Institute updated. They are also the editors of *The Present Moment* which is published every January. We thank them for their dedication.

August 26, I invite you to pray for me on my birthday. Thank you.

François Hamel
Director General

The Voice of the Central

Volume 7 ♦ Number 9

September 2008

Beatification

On June 12 the beatification process of the Laotian Martyrs opened in Chartres, France. The Postulator is Father Roland Jacques, O.M.I., dean of the canon law faculty of St. Paul University in Ottawa (Canada). Among the martyrs was a young catechist, a probationer in the Institute, Luc Sy. He was born in 1938 and was killed in an ambush on March 7, 1970. Luc was a cousin of Bishop Louis Ling Mangkhanekhoun, of our Institute. A picture of the Laotian Martyrs and a prayer for their beatification will appear in the January 2009 issue of *The Present Moment*.

Councillors

In order to better reflect the new reality of the Sri Lanka District in Formation, Mr. Santhiogupillai Soosaipillai Annamalai, a professed member, has been appointed to the district's council.

Besides, to better reflect these same realities, Father Napoleon Gomez has been appointed councillor of the India Region. The director and his council are studying the possibility of the India Region being raised to the status of district in formation.

Death

It is not usual for me to announce deaths of people other than members of the Institute, but I think that it is important to mention that the father of Guillermo Perez Montoya (Colombia) died August 7 at the age of 92. I mention this because Guillermo is the Spanish translator of all documents from the central administration. I request your prayers for the eternal rest of his father, and prayers, too, for Guillermo himself.

Happy Birthday

September 1, to **Joseph Thannikkot Variath**, director of the India Region.

September 9, to **Ramon Antonio Araujo Tejada**, director of the Dominican Republic District.

François Hamel
Director General

The Voice of the Central

Volume 7 ♦ Number 10

October 2008

Synod on the Word of God

A Roman Synod on the Word of God will be held from October 5 to 26; its theme is “The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church.” Our confrere **Bishop Louis-Marie Ling Mangkhanekhoun**, Vicar Apostolic of Paksé, Laos, will be present at the Synod. This, I believe, is an opportunity for us to keep him in our prayers.

Ordinations to the Diaconate

Guillermo Carrasco Soriano and **Wander Vladimir Polanco Sánchez** of the Altgracia District in the Dominican Republic were ordained deacons on August 31. I have not as yet learned about the date of their priestly ordination. Congratulations to these new deacons!

Beatification

An error slipped into the September issue of this Newsletter: the beatification process of the Laotian Martyrs was inaugurated in NANTES, France, and not in Chartres. If anyone has any information regarding LUC SY who was a probationist in the institute at the time of his violent death in 1970, please communicate with me. At this time the process is in the historical documentation stage.

Happy Birthday

To **Andrew Sioleti**, October 29. Andrew is a member of the U.S.A. district in formation and was appointed to the central council of the Institute to replace Paul-Alain Monpas who was forced to resign for reasons of health. Andrew’s first experience as a councillor will be the November meeting. Thank you, Andrew, for accepting this service.

François Hamel
Director General

The Voice of the Central

Volume 7 ♦ Number 11

November 2008

World Conference of Secular Institutes

I shall be attending the World Conference of Secular institutes at Guadalajara, Mexico, on November 18. This conference is composed of all the directors of secular institutes in the world. There will be about 200 attending. I shall be completing my term of office on the WCSI executive council, after serving 8 years. I believe that my being on the executive council has helped the Institute be better known to other institutes as well as to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life.

In Memoriam

We have lost a few members of the Institute who have gone to the Father, since last November 1:

November 4, 2007, Father George B. Perera, stability, United States

January 25, 2008, Mr. Ronald Châteauvert, husband of Yolande Bernier, stability, Canada

February 13, 2008, Mrs. Lissy Correya, wife of Gasper Correya, committed member, India (She was also the mother of Xavier Glen Correya, celibate member)

April 19, 2008, Mr. Juan Pablo Jimenez, husband of Saturnina Sosa, stability, Dominican Republic

The will of him who sent me
is that I should lose nothing of what he has given me;
rather, that I should raise it up on the last day. (John 6:39)

Happy Birthday

November 20, to Anne Penelle, the central administration secretary. She replaced Ms. Marie Meunier at the end of last year when Marie took up another position in the Montréal region.

François Hamel
Director General

The Voice of the Central

Volume 7 ♦ Number 11

November 2008

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François Hamel
Director General

The Voice of the Central

Volume 7 ♦ Number 12

December 2008

Assembly General

I am convening an assembly general for 2010, according to the guidelines of our Constitutions (Art. 137). The assembly shall be held at Loretteville, Québec, Canada, from June 6 to 19.

Ex officio members (Art. 138) are the members of the central council and the district directors. The elected members may not be fewer in number than the ex officio members. At the end of the month I shall prepare the Institute's statistics for the Vatican Bureau of Statistics. In January I shall therefore be able to tell you the number of professed and committed delegates that districts can elect.

As soon as all the tasks relative to the assembly (officers) are filled, I shall publish the names.

Canon Law

In early November 2008, I attended the annual convention of the Canon Law Society of Canada. At that convention I was elected Francophone Vice President of the Society.

Happy Birthday

December 13, to Roger Corneau. Roger is the Institute's web master. Despite his failing health, he continues his work. Thank you, Roger, for your availability.

December 25, to Alonso de Jesus Posada, the director of the Colombia region.

December 28, to Jean-Paul Chiasson, member of the central council and assistant director general of the Institute. Jean-Paul has the charge of two parishes in New Brunswick, in the Diocese of Bathurst. Thank you for what you are and for your service to the central council.

Christmas Greetings from Father Parent

Dear Voluntas Deis,

On the occasion of our anniversary, I would like to share with you. I shall be 100 years old in two years if such is the will of God, otherwise I shall be celebrating this joy in heaven with Him.

God is so wonderful, to have set you on my path. Your example has not only been a daily support to me, but also a joy woven in heaven by God, and tailored to my capacity to welcome it. God and the most blessed Virgin have been pillars for me, foundations of an eternity of bliss.

With you and the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate I have dwelt hours as in paradise. Your example has stimulated me, your affection has taught me how to love, and your attitude has been one of my main securities.

I love you, and I have given myself to you because the Lord wanted us to journey together. He has given us a kind of holiness where He takes all the place in us, and His presence has been the texture of our love.

We shall have many surprises in heaven; we are so very human, here on earth, but in heaven everything will be divine. The great distributor of the Trinitarian God's gifts is the Blessed Virgin. Let us hasten to love her, to tell her that we love her, to imitate her, and to glorify her.

Without you, I would have been someone else altogether. Have you any idea of the joy that Jesus and Mary will give us, when we get to heaven...? We shall be there forever seeing for ourselves how the Holy Trinity love one another, and how love for us overflows from their hearts despite our weaknesses. Let us hasten to love by holding on to the Virgin's hand.

Perhaps a few more years... then it shall be everlasting happiness, assimilated by Jesus under the loving gaze of the Trinity. I love you.

Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I.
(Letter written at Richelieu, Québec, October 26, 2008)

My Christmas Greetings

On behalf of the members of the central council and in my name, extend to all the Voluntas Deis in the 15 countries where we are present, a Merry Christmas. May the festivities around the birth of God among us be an opportunity for us to rediscover the mystery of the Incarnation. Our spirituality urges us to experience the Incarnation by making Christ present in each of our milieus.

François Hamel
Director General