

Director General's Newsletter

Volume 2 ♦ 2011-2012

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Director General's Newsletter

Volume 2 ♦ Number 1

July 2011

5-5-5

July of 2011 is special in the history of the world. It has 5 Fridays, 5 Saturdays, and 5 Sundays. This is quite an event because it happens only every 823 years! In talking about this with a friend, it brought to my mind its connection with the spirituality of the 5-5-5. This spirituality bequeathed to us by Father Parent arouses our sense of wonder, because of its utmost simplicity and richness. This was acknowledged by Rome on two occasions, seeing in this a path to holiness, in their recognition of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate and the Vountas Deis as secular institutes of pontifical right. July, month of foundation of these two institutes and month of the birth of their Founder, seems to me to be an appropriate time to reflect a bit on the spirituality of the 5-5-5. This is what I suggest we do during the second year of my mandate, and it will be a good challenge for all of us!

In June we talked about the call of Jesus to walk in His footsteps, and about what this invitation implies. The first years of our response to Christ's call are always characterised with much fervour and enthusiasm that helps us to affect the interior changes needed. The upheaval caused by this personal encounter with Jesus directs our entire being to the radicalness of our choice and commitment. However, through the years, the flame of the beginnings dies down to embers and ashes. We must therefore react so as not to fall into mediocrity. This is an everyday challenge and struggle. In order to overcome this, we need to have control of our daily life and our spiritual life. The one cannot go without the other. We need our daily life as the locus for applying our spirituality, and we need our spiritual life in order to give sense and direction to all that daily life brings us, whether good or bad, and living this life as Jesus taught us.

All who are baptised in Jesus Christ are consecrated to God. Unfortunately, though, for several years now we have noticed that many do not or no longer have a profound sense of what is meant by being baptised in Jesus Christ, and its implications. Consecrated life adds nothing to one's baptismal vocation, but it should be lived as a deepening of one's baptism. We have chosen consecrated secularity. We have chosen to live according to the evangelical values, to achieve evangelical perfection, and we have chosen, for this, a particular spirituality to take us there. After a number of years on this path, how far along are we? Do we live out our consecration as a habit, without thinking too much about it, without letting it challenge us? We are consecrated persons living in the world, but is ours a tendency to follow the "world culture" rather than risk living a life that is different and that corresponds to the teaching of Christ? When we have a choice to make, do we take the time to evaluate its impact on the welfare of the poor, or do we rather enjoy the "advantages" offered by society, by accepting everything without question? If my choices are the same as everybody else's in general, in what way am I salt of the earth, light of the world, and leaven in the dough?

Our daily “fiats,” like our initial one are loving responses to the Great Love that will always overwhelm us. Still, what is the quality of our love, today? Is it fire, embers, or ashes? We have a whole year to think about this and to revive the flame. We shall meditate together on the five elements of our spirituality. We shall look at the challenges that are part of our having opted for the Voluntas Dei Institute, and we shall revive our desire to pick up these challenges. May our “fiat” preserve or revive the earnestness in working at building the Church for the glory of God and the salvation of the world!

News

The next meeting of the central council is scheduled for July 26-28. Your prayers are requested for the success of the meeting.

A Thought for the Month

Live by the spirit of faith. In the light of faith you see things quite differently. The miracles of God’s Providence take place every day. (Nicholas Hutchinson, FSC)

Happy Birthday

Marcos Alejandro Guerra Romero has his birthday on July 4. He is the director of the Chile district-in-formation. May God bless him and keep him in health so that he may pursue his priestly ministry.

Manuel Cornejo Gárate, a member of the central council, also has his birthday on July 4. May God bless him and keep him in health for his continued priestly ministry.

Father Louis-Marie Parent would have been 101 years old on July 12. I do not need to ask you to pray for him on that day, because he is present in our hearts!

Rénauld Tremblay, the Institute’s director of administrative services, has his birthday on July 22. He is a fine example of a person of service. He is of the greatest help to the central administration and he is totally dedicated to his responsibilities. May God bless and keep him in health, so that he may continue his ministry of service.

Paul-René Lavigne, a long-time friend of the Institute, also has his birthday on July 22. Paul-René is always available to render service, he gives generously of his time to render different services to the central house and the Institute. I ask you to keep him in your prayers, and may God bless him!

S. James Dunstan: I shall be having my birthday on July 25, and I count on your prayers, on that day.

S. James Dunstan, I.V. Dei
Director General

Director General's Newsletter

Volume 2 ♦ Number 2

August 2011

The Word of God

Sacred Scripture, « from these you can learn the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be holy. » (2 Tim 3, 15b-16).

This citation from Saint Paul tells us about the importance of the Word of God in our lives. All that has been written in Sacred Scripture has been inspired by the Holy Spirit through human authors, that God, himself, had chosen to speak to us on his behalf. God is then the author of the biblical texts (CEC 105), and through them, he says a unique Word: his eternal Word in whom we find the spiritual nourishment and strength to walk on the pathway of the Kingdom of God.

Reading the Word of God is therefore the means for deepening our knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is for our Institute the first of the spiritual exercises and merits to be done with respect and piety. In order for the message of the Bible to be well integrated into our lives, it is best to approach the reading with a method. I am proposing to you five points in this approach:

- 1) Read the Word of God (Ap 1,3)
- 2) Listen to the Word (Rm 10,17)
- 3) Study the Word (Ac 17,11)
- 4) Memorize the Word (Ps 119, 9-11)
- 5) Meditate on the Word (Ps 1, 2-3)

It is important, through the reading and listening, to allow the Word of God to descend into our heart in order that it transforms us from within. Further, to well understand the message, it is necessary to know the meaning of the words, the historical and cultural context and to take into account the literary genre. The commentaries of exegetes contained in the Bible are a source of information that can help in the study of the Word. Finally, memorization and meditation of the Word permit it to live within us. In this way, a deepened knowledge of the Word of God will allow us always to find the responses to our questions and doubts and to find the solutions to our problems. We will find there the support and the comfort that we need and above all the total will of God that should orient our days.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer that forgets but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing. (James 1, 22-25)

The seventy-three (73) books of the Bible give us God's plan of salvation. The Bible shows us that from nothing, with a word, the Father brought forth creation. Then his Word, made flesh in Jesus Christ, brought us salvation. Finally, the Holy Spirit was given to us in order that the Word might live in us and sanctify us. It is always the same Word, the Only Son, who intervenes in the history of humanity. Likewise, the multitude of believers forms the one and only Church, the Church of Christ. This faith, that unites us, is the strongest witness of the power of the Word of God.

For all Christians, in particular, we as consecrated persons, the Word of God is our life. It is a personal encounter with Christ. God is incarnated and because he shares in our humanity we can participate in his divinity. Regular and frequent participation in the Word of God is always a source of very deep communion with Christ so that we might become also the word of God. It is there we find the meaning of the incarnation.

News

I thank all of you for having prayed for the success of the plenary session of the **Central Council** that took place July 26-28. I am happy to share with you some information:

- A number of members from different districts and regions received their stability in the Institute.
- The financial statements and the budget projections of the districts and regions were approved.
- André Côté has agreed to become the new Director of Administrative Services. He will commence this function in January 2012.
- The new design of the page of welcome of the web site of the Institute has been approved by the Council. We are awaiting that which the directors will send us regularly from now on in regard to news from their district or region.
- The next meeting of the Council will take place December 6-8, 2011.

The **District Assembly of Altagracia** took place July 19-22. I am happy to inform you of the new Director and his Council:

Director:	Father Dionisio REYES GONZALEZ
Assistant Director:	Father Ramón Antonio ARAÚJO TEJADA
Councillors:	Father Vicente SÁNCHEZ-BURGOS
	Mrs. Mercedes ANTIGUA HERNANDEZ
	Mr. Primitivo ANTIGUA HERNANDEZ

I wish the very best to the Director and his Council, and I pray that God will bless them abundantly in order that they will fulfill with success their service of authority. I thank sincerely Ramón Antonio Araújo Tejada who has served these last four years for the growth of the Institute in the Dominican Republic. I also thank all of the Councillors who have collaborated during these years with the Director. May God bless all of you.

Andrew Peter Mayer, of the Canadian District, will be ordained to the priesthood on August 6th. Congratulations to Andrew and his District. Let us rejoice in this new priest and be united in prayer with him on his day of ordination.

A precious collaborator of the Central Administration, **Léo Grégoire**, is at present ill. Leo is one of the translators of the Institute and has served two mandates as Secretary General (1998-2010). I ask you to pray for him in a special way.

Thoughts for the Month

« Throughout all of the words of Sacred Scripture, God only spoke one Word, his only Word, in whom he said everything. » (cf. Heb. 1,1-3) (CEC 102)

« To ignore Sacred Scripture, is to ignore Christ. » (Saint Jérôme)

Happy Birthday

August 5th is the birthday of **Yvon Carpentier**. He was the Director General from 1992 to 1998. May God bless him and keep him in good health so that he may continue his priestly ministry.

August 6th is the birthday of **Fernand Turgeon** and August 9th that of **Raymonde Jetté**, his spouse. Raymonde and Fernand are in their second mandate as members of the Central Council. For four years they have been the editors of the annual journal, The Present Moment.

Anthony Sahayanathan celebrates his birthday on August 24th. For a year, he has been the Director of the Sri Lanka District in Formation. May God bless him and keep him in good health so that he may continue his priestly ministry.

August 26th is the birthday of **François Hamel**, Director General of the Institute from 1998 to 2010. May God bless him and keep him in good health so that he may continue his priestly ministry.

S. James Dunstan, I.V.Dei
Director General

Director General's Newsletter

Volume 2 ♦ Number 3

September 2011

The Meditation

What is meditation? The term exists already in Sacred Scripture. One can then go back to the source in order to define it. In the Bible, we find two main definitions. In Hebrew, the term (aiyach) indicates to reflect or converse with someone. In Greek, the term “meletao” signifies to take care of or sort out in one’s spirit. Meditation is the form *par excellence* of prayer as it supposes listening to God who speaks to us and our response to His word. The expression « to listen to the word of God » in its Hebraic sense is not only to give an attentive ear to it but to open one’s heart to it and to put it into practice (Vocabulary of Biblical Theology, p. 310). In this way, meditation favors the understanding and interiorization of the divine will in order to put it into practice in one’s daily life in order to remain in union with God.

During the first 100 years of our era, Christians used the method known under the name of *lectio divina* to read the word of God and to allow it to transform them. The Desert Fathers and the Fathers of the Church soon added silence and solitude (isolation from the world) as a condition to arrive at union of the being with God. This had as a consequence that *lectio divina* became the privilege of monks. It was during the XII century that the four steps of the method were established as we know them today: reading, meditation, prayer, contemplation. They were also followed in the monastic life. According to their author, Guiges II le Chartreux : reading seeks the gentleness of the blessed life, meditation finds it, prayer requests it and contemplation tastes it. That is what Jesus, Himself, teaches us « Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened for you. » (Matt. 7 :7)

For a longtime, lay Christians did not have access to the Bible. It was then impossible for them to apply the method of *lectio divina*. Happily, Vatican II gave back Sacred Scripture to the people of God inviting each one to reappropriate the texts of revelation. The Fathers of the Council also promoted spiritual reading of the Word of God. Forty years after the publication of the Council’s constitution « Dei Verbum » on divine revelation, Benedict XVI recommended *lectio divina* describing it as « the applied reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer. » In this perspective, we can put forward that, if meditation was one of the steps of *lectio divina*, it can now be considered as one of the forms of meditation leading to union with God.

In the XXI century, the forms of meditation are multiple: transcendental meditation, oriental, Buddhist, Ignatian, Christian, to name just a few. Some aim through practice for better health, greater concentration, deeper awareness, relaxation and a better management of stress. As a spiritual exercise, meditation disposes the spirit to assimilate the mystery of faith and for the Christian it is a means of personally adhering to the mystery of God in the person of Christ.

Each person must discover his/her own way of meditating. Some need silence while others achieve meditation in the midst of action. Some meditate on the Word of God or texts of spiritual authors; others join meditation groups; others are guided by a spiritual mentor and meditate on the events of their daily life.

For us, as consecrated persons, the primary purpose of meditation remains discerning the will of God and our response through prayer and putting it into practice. We should therefore make meditation a life discipline in order that it become an integral part of our life. By devoting time to it daily, we will be more and more deeply in relationship with God journeying toward a permanent union of our being with Him.

Is this not the very prayer of our Lord, Jesus Christ? : « Like you, Father, you are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us so that the world might know that you have sent me. » (John 17 :21)

News

September is a special month for the Office of Vocations and Missions. This is the month in which we ask our benefactors to give financial support for the studies of the Institute's seminarians. Likewise, I invite you to help them financially and to pray for the success of their studies. We can also take the time to thank God for the gift to the Institute of sixty candidates to Orders who will soon bring to the world new ministers of evangelization. Let's continue to pray also for future vocations.

Thought for the Month

When it seems that God, secretly, makes us understand that he is listening to us, it is good then for us to be silent. (Theresa of Avila – Interior Castle)

Birthday

1 September, **Mary Josephine and Joseph Keerthapongalam**, of the District in Formation of Sri Lanka, celebrate their 25th anniversary of marriage. I invite you to pray for them on this occasion.

Innasi Mudyappan, member of the Central Council, celebrates his birthday on September 1st. May God bless and keep him in good health so that he may continue his priestly ministry.

20 September, **Palmina Cogliandro and Ernest Chaplin**, of the District in Formation of the United States, celebrate their 25th anniversary of marriage. I invite you to pray for them on this occasion.

26 September, **Maria Edita Garcia Ramirez and Faustine de Jésus Taveras Pichardo**, of the District of Altagracia, celebrate their 25th anniversary of marriage. I invite you to pray for them on this occasion.

27 September, **Lalite and Gérard Lundi**, of the District of Haiti, celebrate their 25th anniversary of marriage. I invite you to pray for them on this occasion.

Michel Beauchamp celebrates his birthday on September 29th. He is the new Director of the Canadian District. May God bless him and keep him in good health so that he can continue his priestly ministry.

S. James Dunstan, I.V.Dei
Director General

Director General's Newsletter

Volume 2 ♦ Number 4

October 2011

The Eucharist

The Eucharist is the memorial of the death and resurrection of Christ. On the eve of his passion, to those who will form his Church, Jesus gave a sacrament and memorial of His sacrifice, His gift of self to God in absolute love and total trust. In the history of salvation, God always took the initiative. He made a Covenant with His people by giving them the Law. The more the people of God wanted to be faithful, the more they failed. Each time, God awaited their return through repentance. In the First Covenant, God wanted a sign of repentance. It was through the sacrifice of a lamb or another animal that the people of God witnessed to it. Further, the sinners were sprinkled with the blood of the animal for purification. In the New Covenant, it is Christ, who is the New Lamb, that is offered up. It is through His death and resurrection that Jesus establishes the New Covenant between God and humanity. Through His unique and perfect sacrifice, He has saved definitively the human race from slavery to sin and death and He has purified all through His blood.

Each time that we participate in the Eucharist, we are reminded of the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ, His passage from death to life for the salvation of the world. Each time, it is given to us to be in the presence of His spiritual offering and to be transformed through receiving a new life, that of God, that calls us to live with our brothers and sisters in the Church. As consecrated persons, we must know the Eucharist in a profound way. We must celebrate it, participate in it while being fully aware of what it is and what it involves. It is important to prepare our heart before each celebration in order to avoid that it does not become for us a routine ritual. That is why I propose to you this month to meditate on the meaning of the celebration of the Eucharist.

All begins with the invitation of God to come to celebrate and our response that asks us to place to the side our activities or whatever in order to go and meet Him. Once there, we recollect ourselves in order to that our heart might be free of all concerns. At the entrance of the priest, who shares in the priesthood of Christ, we rise, signifying by this that we are a resurrected people. From the opening of the celebration, we put ourselves in the presence of the Triune God that reminds us that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. Then, we enter into the penitential rite and we confess that we are sinners. The more we acknowledge that we are sinners, the more we experience the infinite mercy of the Father and come closer to God. We give thanks and then sing the Gloria.

The liturgy of the Word celebrates the Revelation of God who has revealed Himself in the history of salvation culminating in the Gospel. The Good News is the Word of the Father made flesh, Jesus, who has taken upon Himself our humanity in order to show the face of the Father. The life of Jesus reveals in the greatest, most powerful and enlightening way a merciful God. That is why we stand up and sing an acclamation before the reading of the Gospel. When the priest proclaims the Gospel, the Word made flesh, there are two thousand years to be updated: Jesus is in the midst of us! The efficacy of His Word is for us, here and now. The homily helps us however to understand the deep meaning of the Gospel for today. By his commentary, the priest helps each one of us to commit to a process of conversion, to take the route of holiness and to be witnesses of Christ. Nourished by the Word of God, we stand up and profess our faith in proclaiming the « Credo » in union with Christians throughout the world. Then we conclude the celebration of the Word with the universal prayer. We pray to God for the Church, its pastors and the faithful and for the world and for particular needs.

We now enter into the liturgy of the Eucharist through praying over the offerings, the bread and the wine that represent our labour, joys, pains and our lives. In lifting them up to God, the priest offers to God all that we are and are not. Then the priest using the actions and words of Jesus consecrates the bread and the wine. These words have the same power as those said by Jesus. The bread becomes the body of the resurrected Christ, the blood all of His life, all His being, “do this in memory of” Him. This is more than doing some actions or pronouncing some words. It is to do it with a desire similar to Christ. It is to do it with the ardent desire to give oneself to the point of death in love and total freedom! For us, what death is demanded? It is not asked of us to sacrifice ourselves but rather to die to ourselves in order to put on Christ as we did at our baptism.

Then the communion rite. We enter into it through the prayer that Jesus taught us “ the Our Father”.” This prayers speaks about our relationship with God. For us, God is Father. He is “our” Father. Since He is our Father, a new relationship exists among us: we are brothers and sisters. After the “Our Father” we ask Christ to give us peace, His peace, that which comes from heaven. This peace, we place in communion with Him. Afterwards, the priest and faithful share with one another the peace of the Lord that has been given to us freely. Then, the bread is brokened to show that the Body of Jesus is shared among us, that all of us are nourished by the same bread and the same life. This action reminds us also that nourished by the same bread we are one body, the mystical Body of Christ. At communion, Christ comes to us. He unites us to Himself in order that we become one with Him having the same ideal and walking the same path while remaining ourselves. The grandeur of this event calls for silence in order to allow us to remain in intimacy with the One we have welcomed into ourselves. Christ has kept his promise: we are not alone! That is the Good News that we must bring to the world. The celebration ends when we are sent out into mission: Go in the peace of Christ to love and serve the world in the manner of Christ!

News

My canonical visit of the Canadian District is now completed. I will now begin my visits to other countries. I depart, then, on October 14 to visit Sri Lanka and India and I will return on November 27. Thank you for praying for the success of this voyage to mission countries.

October is the month of the Rosary. I invite you to practice the 5th of our spiritual exercises with a particular devotion. Let us be deeply united to our Holy Mother, the Virgin Mary.

Beginning October 15, the new design of the web page will be ready. You will find there, as promised, the news that the different districts have sent to us. For those who have an account on Face Book, Twitter or You Tube, you can, from now on, access there directly our page of welcome and begin this way an internet mission. We foresee, also in the coming future, to offer the possibility to each district or region, as well as to each member who would desire, an e-mail with a Voluntas Dei account. Those who are interested will be able, at that time, to obtain one through the Central Administration. Further details will be provided to you in time and place.

Thought for the Month

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life... For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ Himself... By the Eucharistic celebration we already unite ourselves with the heavenly liturgy and anticipate eternal life... In brief, the Eucharist is the sum and summary of our faith. (CCC # 1324-1327)

Birthdays

Dionicio Reyes Gonzalez celebrates his birthday on 9 October. He is the new Director of the Altigracia District (Dominican Republic).

Anthony J. Ciorra, Director of the District in Formation, United States, celebrates his birthday on 11 October.

Andrew Sioleti, member of the Central Council, celebrates his birthday on 25 October.

May God bless them and keep them in good health so they may continue their priestly ministry!

S. James Dunstan, I.V.Dei
Director General

Director General's Newsletter

Volume 2 ♦ Number 5

November 2011

Visits to the Blessed Sacrament

What a magnificent and great mystery is that of the God who loves us so profoundly that He became incarnated in the person of Jesus to make Himself close to us! God became man that we might know his face, be the witnesses of his immeasurable love and thereby help our faith. God lowered Himself in order to take upon Himself unconditionally our human nature and show us the way to take in order to meet Him. And if that wasn't enough, he gave us His presence in the Eucharist! There is our faith: we believe in the real and sacramental presence of Jesus Christ in the consecrated host. This faith in His real presence the Church deepened as it became more and more aware of it through its evolution, and that is why today, visits to the Blessed Sacrament have become the primary devotion of the Catholic Church.

In the host Jesus is present, the person whom we love the most in this world. He is our friend. It is He who tells us through the words addressed to his disciples: I call you friends because I have made known to you everything I have learned from my Father, » (John 15, 15). Jesus' friendship is free. He leaves us free to respond to it. However, it is important for us to look after that relationship in order to be at ease in it. The best way to communicate with Jesus is to visit Him in the Blessed Sacrament. Before the tabernacle, we can speak to Him about what is worrying or thrilling us. We can give thanks to Him or just simply relax in His presence, and in the calm and silence. It is not necessary to speak. He will do it.

John-Paul II said that if we want to receive graces, we only have to visit the Blessed Sacrament for less than five minutes each day. It is true that the more we do it the more graces will be received. But we must firstly and before all else go there simply out of love, the most freely given possible. Also, in gratitude for all of the love that we receive from Him. Before the tabernacle, it is good to remind ourselves of the marvel that God has done for us: we visit Jesus Christ with Him in us! His Spirit was given to us at the time of our Baptism and His life in each communion. That is the same Jesus that is there before us in the tabernacle. We are in His presence at the very moment we visit Him. All of this is only to elevate and delight us!

When we take the time to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, we can live this experience of seeing our pains, ordeals and difficulties of life lightened. We can also experience there the finding of rest, peace and joy. In the silence we can hear God

speaking to us who responds to our deep questions or makes them known to us. The visit to the Blessed Sacrament is a spiritual exercise, a great practice of the faith that we have received as a gift from God. How am I going to take care of this gift? What is the quality of my visits to the Blessed Sacrament? What kind of relationship do Jesus and I have?

As secularly consecrated persons, it is not always possible to visit the Blessed Sacrament as often as we wish. However, we should go there as often as possible. When circumstances prevent us, we can encounter Jesus otherwise. We can do so by visiting a person who is suffering or people in need. We can see Him in the persons with whom we live since they also receive Jesus in the Eucharist. When we are passing before a Church, we can have a thought about Christ who is present there, simply but attentively, like greeting a friend who crosses our path. We can also isolate ourselves for a few minutes and take the time to recollect in silence and place ourselves in the presence of Jesus where we are. In doing this, we reinforce our faith through the experience of being in the presence of Christ and we arouse the desire for the next visit to the Blessed Sacrament and the Eucharist. This is all good but it cannot replace our visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

May Jesus renew in us the deep desire to meet Him in silence before the tabernacle in order to show Him our gratitude and love!

Let us Remember

In November, the Church invites us to pray particularly for the deceased. Let us pray for Father Parent and for the members of the Institute who have died. I recommend especially to your prayers those who have left us this year:

- **André Morin**, Permanent Deacon, deceased in Canada, February 6;
- **Anastacio Reyes Gonzalez**, spouse of Marina Santana, deceased in the Dominican Republic, March 9;
- **Jean-Luc Hurtubise**, spouse of Louise Bernier, deceased in Canada, May 11;
- **Marina Santana**, widow, deceased in the Dominican Republic, June 11.

Let us also pray for the deceased members of our family, benefactors, friends and all those who are in need of our prayers.

May their souls rest in the peace and mercy of God.

News

I have just completed my canonical visit to Sri Lanka where I was able to meet most of the members. I am leaving now for India where I will make my canonical visit in November. I ask you to continue to pray for the success of this trip.

Thought for the Month

[Before the tabernacle when I visit Jesus,] « I say nothing to Him, I love Him. » (Thérèse de Lisieux)

Birthdays

Andrés Solano Sosa, member of the Central Council celebrates his birthday, November 10.

Anne Penelle, celebrates her birthday November 20. She is the secretary at the Central Administration.

Mary Gilda and **Amal Arochia Raj** celebrate their 25th anniversary of marriage, November 21.

François Hamel celebrates his 25th anniversary of priesthood on November 22.

May God bless all of you!

S. James Dunstan, I.V.Dei
Director General

Director General's Newsletter

Volume 2 ♦ Number 6

December 2011

Praying the Rosary

The contents of the rosary summarizes all of the Gospel: it introduces us to the whole mystery of Jesus Christ, presented in four groups of mysteries: 1) the incarnation and the hidden life of Jesus (Joyful mysteries); 2) the public life and mission of Jesus: (Luminous mysteries) ; 3) the Passion and death of Jesus (Sorrowful mysteries) ; and 4) the triumph of the Resurrection and the Ascension (Glorious mysteries). By praying the rosary, all Christians can contemplate Christ. To enter into this pilgrimage we have the best guide: the Virgin Mary. All her life, Mary walked with God, with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. She adhered to the divine will and meditated upon the words, actions and events of the Son of God, her own Son. We can therefore ask her, in all confidence, to help us to pray.

Mary was chosen by the Father to be the mother of God's Son. She is a model for those who want to do the will of God. Mother of Jesus, she followed Him all her life long. Spouse of the Holy Spirit, she allowed herself to be instructed and guided by Him. All of the Trinity is therefore with Mary and in her. In the image of the Virgin Mary, we begin the rosary by placing ourselves in the presence of the Holy Trinity through the sign of the cross. Then we profess our faith in communion with all of the members of the Church. The first prayer begins with an « Our Father », a favourite prayer that Jesus taught us. Afterwards, comes three « Hail Mary's » by which we ask that the values of the Kingdom be renewed in us, especially the three cardinal virtues: faith, hope and love. We meditate then on the mysteries of Christ. For each, according to the tradition, we say an « Our Father », ten « Hail Mary's » and a Glory Be. This chain of repetitive prayers can easily become routine if we do not adopt an attentive and contemplative attitude. That is why I am proposing a reflection on the prayer that we address to the Virgin.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. The Angel Gabriel greeted her this way. The One who is full of God's grace, preferred and chosen. Just as God sent to Mary the Angel Gabriel to reveal to her His plan for her, He sends to us also his angels to help us in our prayer. By saying the words of the Angel Gabriel, let us realize that the same greeting is given to us: God is also with each one of us and He calls us, just like He called Mary. You are blessed among all women. Mary is the blessed among women since she has been chosen in a special way to be the mother of God. We, also, have been chosen among others to be consecrated to God through Baptism. Be aware of the greatness of this fact. And blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Since she said « yes, » the divine will was conceived, the Word became flesh. God became incarnated in the person of Jesus. Since He was born of a woman, Jesus became a human and he became one of us (Galatians 4,4).

Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Jesus was completely a human person. At the wedding feast at Cana, He acted like a human person. Mary, his mother, reminded Him that He was also divine and she told the attendants to do whatever He said. We are reminded of the same thing. Later, at the foot of the Cross, Mary was present during what Her Son experienced. Seeing the disciple that He loved close to His mother, Jesus gave him to His mother as a guide. Jesus knew that Mary would know how to guide this disciple as she had guided Him during His life as a human person. This disciple represents all of us who follow Christ in love. He represents His Church. That is how Mary became the mother of the disciples, the apostles and the early Church and all of the Church. In times of distress, Mary has been the one to say: « Why be worried? He has promised that the Holy Spirit will come. Let us pray! » They prayed together. The Holy Spirit came upon them and the Church was born. Yes, Mary is very much the mother of the Church and the mother of us all. She is a marvelous guide for us. We are sinners. We have need of the grace, blessings of God and the redemption given to us in Jesus. This is why we pray to the Virgin Mary: For at the moment of our death, we receive the mercy, forgiveness, love and compassion of Jesus who died for us and for our salvation. How can we not give glory to God!

As Christians, we are called to walk each day with Mary. To pray the rosary is to walk with her and thereby participate in the mysteries of redemption. Just as the Virgin guided Jesus and His disciples, she guides us now. We find in this, the hope, that like her, we will be one day in paradise.

As consecrated persons, we are invited to pray the rosary each day in order to enter more deeply into the plan of salvation in which we are implicated. It is necessary to pray, to submit ourselves to the divine will, to forgive others, to be forgiven and to receive the blessings of God. It is in this way that we go toward eternal life, the Kingdom that has been promised to us that is attained in the person of Jesus.

Wishes

We are in the season of Advent. During this time of awaiting, let us unite ourselves with the Virgin Mary who knew how to live it in faith. I take this occasion to wish you and your family members and friends a Holy Christmas filled with peace and love!

News

Central Council

The Central Council will meet December 6-8, 2011. I ask you to pray for the success of this meeting.

Canonical Visit

I have just returned from my trip to Asia. I am at the office now and I feel that I am home all over again. The canonical visit was excellent. Despite a busy schedule, I was able to meet the bishops of the dioceses in which the members of the Institute work. Further, I visited each member personally and this was a very good learning experience for them and for me. I hope to be able to do the same in the other districts/regions that I will visit. I came back assured of much hope in the future of the Institute in Asia.

Deceased

Father **Malachy J. Higgiston**, professed member with stability in the American District died November 15 of this year. I offer my sympathies to the members of his family as well as to the members of the American District. I invite all of the members of the Institute to pray for the repose of his soul.

Thought for the Month

“The Rosary is the most excellent form of prayer and the most efficacious means of attaining eternal life. It is the remedy for all our evils, the root of all our blessings. There is no more excellent way of praying.” - Pope Leo XIII

Birthdays

Napoleon Gomez, Director of the District in Formation in India will celebrate his birthday on December 13.

Pierre Marois, Secretary General and the Director of the Office of Vocations and Mission will celebrate his birthday on December 23.

Jean-Paul Chiasson, Assistant Director General will celebrate his birthday on December 28.

May God bless all of you!

S. James Dunstan, I.V.Dei
Director General

Director General's Newsletter

Volume 2 ♦ Number 7

January 2012

Presence of God

We are entering into a new year, a new month and a new day. It is also something new to think about the presence of God since it is something that we feel the effects of and that renews us each day, each and every moment. For each of us, like Father Parent has written, it happens that « God is in my presence) and (I am in the presence of God.)

P God is omnipresent, that is, he is present everywhere and at all times. We cannot
r escape His presence. Psalm 139 (138) expresses this very well: « Where could I go
e to escape your spirit? Where could I flee from your presence? If I climb the heavens,
s you are there, there too, if I lie in Sheol. » (Ps 139 (138), 7-8). We cannot escape His
n presence or forget it for at the moment of our creation God made us in His image
c and likeness! Thus, whether we like it or not, the divine presence is in us. The
e problem is to recognize it. Too often we forget that we are in the image of God and
we do not see His presence at the depths of our being. King David sang: « Do not banish
me from your presence, do not deprive me of your holy spirit. » (Ps 51) (50),11) What a
great gift we have received at our baptism : The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God that comes
to dwell within us ! Throughout our life if we collaborate with Him, He will teach us and
transform us so that we might become true witnesses of Christ.

L Our great mission, as baptized persons, is to seek to imitate Christ while
O remembering that we have need of His Salvation. We are in the image of God; we are
V not God. It is a human tendency to forget this. We are sinners. And who are sinners?
E That's us when we distance ourselves from God who dwells deep within our being.
Saint Paul expresses this truth in another way. He asks: « Who is holy? » The holy one is
the person who recognizes that he/she is a sinner and knows that he/she is in need of
Salvation. All of the books of the Bible, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, tell us the story
of our holy history, i.e., our history of love with God. God always takes the initiative in
our relationship with Him. His desire is to be there with us. He has created us in His
image and He has always given all to us. And the whole holy history shows us that the
human person forgets that he/she is not God and often alienates him/herself from his/her
Creator. However, endlessly and without forcing human freedom, God shows Himself to
the human person and extends His hand to bring him/her back to Him. The greatest
manifestation of His presence most assuredly be His incarnation in the person of Jesus.
He not only came to live among us but he became human!

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g** Jesus Christ gave us the real presence of God and brought us Salvation. Now, according to our personality and the gifts that we have received, we have the responsibility to be each one of us an icon of Christ, offering to the world the face of the love of God for all human beings. To live the presence of God is to imitate Christ and follow Him. Jesus was both a human and divine person. Throughout His life he showed clearly His humanity. Let's take the example of the wedding feast at Cana. Jesus was there with His disciples and took pleasure in the celebration. When Mary told Him that there was no more wine, his reaction was very human. He thought that there must be an hour for each thing: an hour for the things of terrestrial life and an hour for the things divine. But no, Jesus was human and divine and that is what his mother Mary reminded Him of.

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t** Why was Mary able to recognize the presence of God in her life? What did she have within her to be able to do this? She had abandonment. We should develop within ourselves the abandonment of the child who knows that he/she is unconditionally loved and awaits all from the one who gives him/her this love while placing his/her full trust in this person. But as Paul expresses it wonderfully: « Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (...) No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. » (Rom 8,35-39) Only faith gives us this conviction and when our faith is firm we realize that nothing is impossible to God when we do His will.

In summary, the presence of God in my life is defined by the intimate relationship that I have developed with Him. This relationship is founded on three qualities. The quality of being : By recognizing the riches of my personality as gifts from God and by believing in them and living them, I develop within myself the being that God desires for me and by doing so, I walk the way that He has traced for me to go and meet Him. The quality of love: That is to love God for what He has given me and to love God for Who He is. When one know that he/she is loved, one has the desire to love the other in the same way and to share that same love with those who love us and with those who surround us. The quality of presence: It is the attitude of abandonment to God who pulls me away from what is not of Him in order to keep me attentive to His will and love.

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s** We are Voluntas Dei. The second « 5 » of our spirituality are the attitudes that we must develop and the first of the five attitudes is the presence of God. This certainly defines clearly our being Voluntas Dei. The more we live in the presence of God, the more we will live something essential: the negative will disappear more and more and will give way to the positive.

We are entering into a new year, a new month and a new day. May God grant us to enter into this new time with the qualities of being, love and a renewed quality of presence. May this beginning of the year be the occasion to place us in the presence of God in our lives in order that our being Voluntas frees us and bears fruit.

Happy 2012!

To each and everyone of you I extend to you my best wishes for a Happy and Good 2012! May you have health, success and happiness!

News

From 10-24 January 2012, I will be in canonical visit to Haiti. Pierre Marois, Secretary General, will accompany me during this visit. I ask for your prayers for the success of this mission.

At the time of publishing these lines, we are finishing the sending to the Directors of the districts/regions the celebrets for the priests incardinated in the Institute.

Thought for the Month

To live in the presence of God is to be attentive to God, his wisdom, power, goodness and mercy. It is to believe in Him to the point of folly, to pray by looking at someone with the eyes of the heart. It is to wait, to believe, and to receive with thanksgiving the gift of faith. (Father Louis-Marie Parent, In the Footsteps of Jesus, pp. 14-15)

S. James Dunstan, I.V.Dei
Director General

Director General's Newsletter

Volume 2 ♦ Number 8

February 2012

An Attitude of Love

« You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matt 22: 37-39) These few words of Jesus summarize the total message of the Bible for us: God wants that we love. It is His divine plan for us. He created us in His image and likeness for this very purpose: may we love as He loves.

According to Father Parent: « The great risk that can stop us from attaining this love is destructive criticism which makes us destroyers. Destroyers are incapable of profound love; they lose sight of God's plan and seek imitations of love wherever they see it, be it in emotivity or in the dissoluteness of their passions... » (In the Footsteps of Jesus, p.p. 34-35) That is why the absence of criticism is the second spiritual attitude that we need to develop as *Voluntas Dei*.

The absence of criticism is not possible if we do not love ourselves. If we do not have self-esteem, we will be incapable of loving others, and at that same time incapable of loving God. It is then important to evaluate ourselves on this point: Do I appreciate the fact that I am created in the image of God with the potential of developing and giving love? Do I recognize the qualities, the abilities and the interior richness that God has given me? What is the depth of my awareness that I am a child of God and that I am loved unconditionally? The one who knows that he/she is loved can accept oneself with his/her strengths, with his/her weaknesses, with his/her dark and light side, with his/her successes, with his/her failures, and with his/her capacity to love and lack of love. And, such a person is capable of being responsible for his/her life and his/her happiness. To be responsible is to cease placing the blame on others and to know how to recognize one's part, one's involvement in the events and in the interrelationships lived daily. It is also, sometimes, to accept simply that the person may not be able to accept the situation as it is.

Our ability to be responsible for ourselves and our life allows us to detach ourselves from that which impedes us daily. It allows us to make relative things and events, not giving them a greater importance than they should have and especially not to judge what we are living through the filter of our emotions, personal wounds or pride. When we are responsible for ourselves, we can speak about ourselves instead of destroying the other by gossiping, calumny

or rash judgements. To the contrary, when we are irresponsible toward ourself, we employ destructive criticism to give the responsibility to the other. Destructive criticism attacks directly the reputation of the one who has become the object of it. Very little serves to protect us or free us from our frustrations. It is a poison that affects not only our life but also that of others and « it diminishes or takes away the desire, the attraction of placing oneself in the presence of God » (Ibid., p. 44).

We can combat destructive criticism by developing in ourself love of neighbor. This is the commandment that Jesus left us: « As I have loved you, love one another. » (John 13 : 34b) Jesus showed us the way of loving those we meet without partiality in a manner very personal, tangible and with empathy. He loved them unconditionally. Even if he had sometimes to say the truth about them, He did it in a positive way, i.e., a constructive manner, in order that they might grow and move forward in their way of the perfection of love.

Absence of criticism is then a primordial attitude for all *Voluntas Dei* to develop. We must apply ourself each day to this spiritual exercise and that, certainly, until the end of our life. The more we cultivate the absence of criticism, the more we will be able to be attentive to positive things in our life and the more we will be able to remain in the presence of God. « True love is God within us welcoming or visiting God in the other. » (In the Footsteps of Jesus, p. 33). Let us be witnesses of it in our daily life and thereby call forth those with whom we interact.

News

Day of Consecrated Life

A special day for us is February 2 since it is the day of consecrated life. Let us take advantage of this day to thank God for having called us to a consecrated secular life. Let us live this day in prayer and reflection.

Voyage to Haiti

Pierre and myself have returned from our canonical visit to the District Haiti. The trip unfolded well. We were happy to be among the people and to meet the members of the District. This visit gave us also the opportunity to see the real situation of this mission country. The Haitian members were also happy to have visitors from the Central Administration, especially, since we arrived at the time of the commemoration of the earthquake of January 2010. On the anniversary day of this tragedy, Pierre and I participated in a Mass of remembrance of the dead of this earthquake. People from outside of the Institute joined us in this occasion. It was a special experience to share this moment with them.

During our visit, we had the opportunity to meet the authorities of the Haitian Church in the persons of the Apostolic Nuncio and the President of the Conference of Bishops of

Haiti and several other Bishops. In particular, I had a chance to speak with the Archbishop of Port-au-Prince and the Bishops of Jacmel, Jérémie and Nippes.

Just as in each of my canonical visits, I had the opportunity to address members gathered together in sectors and teams. I also met a number of members individually.

Pierre and I could feel all of the energy which emanates from the daily lived life of the spirituality of the 5-5-5 in this corner of the world and the love of the members for the Institute. In spite of the poverty and difficulties of each day that the members live, a positive spirit and a strength of commitment emerge from the group. This is certainly what will assure growth.

Visit of the Director of the Canadian District

At the time he was visiting the members of the Trois-Rivières Sector, Michel Beauchamp, Director of the Canadian District, visited the Central Administration on January 25-26. His visit gave an opportunity to fraternize and create a relationship of friendship. Michel departed happy about his visit.

Voyage to Rome

From February 3-14, I will be in Rome accompanied by François Hamel, advisor on Canon Law to the Institute. We will participate in the International Symposium on the theme of pedophiles in the midst of the clergy, a symposium organized by the Pontifical Gregorian University. Further, we will meet with Archbishop João Bráz de Aviz, Prefect of the Congregation of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

Deceased

On January 16 Asirvatham Anthonipillai, associate member with stability of the district in formation Sri Lanka, passed away. He was the spouse of Kanikaimuthu Anthonipillai. I offer my sympathies to his spouse, members of his family as well as to the Director and members of the district in formation Sri Lanka. I invite all of the members of the Institute to pray for the repose of his soul.

Directory of Members and the Annual Journal

The 2012 Directory of Members of the Institute is now available in the members section of the web site. The 2012 edition of "The Present Moment," whose principal theme is team life, is at last ready. You can already consult it in the welcome page of the web site.

Institute's Web Page

We are still going through a period of getting up to speed with the procedure of updating the welcome page of the Web site. However, in 2012, we aim to supply it regularly with new information. I extend my gratitude to those who have sent materials until now and in a particular way I underline the participation of the Dominican Republic in this project. Indeed, our colleagues, Vicente Sánchez-Burgos and Wander Vladimir Polanco Sánchez

have sent to us each month information about the life of the Institute in their District. Thank you to all for your involvement in this common project.

2011 Statistics

As of January 31, the Institute comprised 870 members who are present in 22 countries. The distribution of members is as follows:

Priests incardinated in the Institute:	156
Priests incardinated in a diocese:	30
Cleric members incardinated in the Institute:	3
Laymen with temporary incorporation:	39
Laymen with definitive incorporation:	12
Candidates to the priesthood:	84
Associate members in the Institute:	546

Thought for the Month

The presence of God and destructive criticism «are like light and darkness. As the light approaches, darkness moves away. As destructive criticism approaches, the presence of God leaves, » (Louis-Marie Parent, In the Footsteps of Jesus, p. 45).

Anniversaries

On February 6th, **Father Guillermo Pérez**, Director of the Region Colombia and an indispensable translator for the texts into Spanish, will celebrate his birthday. May God bless him and keep him in good health in his ministry as a priest.

S. James Dunstan, I.V.Dei
Director General

Director General's Newsletter

Volume 2 ♦ Number 9

March 2012

Temperance

« Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. » (1 Thess 5,16-17) These very beautiful words of God show us that we must be grateful and have a positive attitude in regard to events, things and nature. The absence of complaint develops in us the sense of amazement. It is beneficial to take time to admire nature, the things that surround us and the events that mark our life even when they appear to us as negative at first inspection. In the story of Creation, God, Himself, had this attitude: « God made . . . and God saw that it was good. » This leitmotif permeates the first chapter of Genesis. God took the time to cast a positive look, a look of love on each event of Creation and on the created nature. It is what He wants us to do in our turn. Look at nature, things and events with the heart.

Unfortunately, for us, this is often difficult. Even in the little things of life, we have the tendency to dwell on a negative aspect that has happened to us or that we have. This happens because we look with the head rather than with the heart. This occurs, also, because in daily life, we are surrounded by people who complain. « *Life is difficult* » wrote Scott Peck. That is true, however, we are not obligated to render it more difficult by moaning about it.

Let's look again at the story in the Gospel according to Saint Luke concerning Martha and Mary (Luke 10,38-42). Martha lives in a house that she manages probably greatly with love. One day, she learns that Jesus has entered her village. What an event! The One that everyone is talking about is there. We can imagine that it is with eagerness that she invites Him to eat with them. She busies herself to prepare everything and to be the best host as possible. But she wants so much to do well that she becomes nervous and agitated so much so that her heart is no longer fitted to the event. Rather than savoring the presence of the Lord in her midst, she only sees Mary seated at the feet of the Lord and she is not helping her prepare the meal. Martha loses the meaning of the event that she is living since her look passes from the heart to the head. She allows herself to be invaded by different feelings: jealousy ? injustice ? discontent ? By doing so, she loses the joy of serving, peace of heart, the appreciation of the moment to live and the recognition that is given to her at this very moment. Thus, Martha complains to Jesus in order that He may intervene on her behalf. In his reply, Jesus says to her: « *Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.* » What is the good portion? It is to be in the presence of God. For Mary, at that moment, is to listen attentively to the word of the

Lord. For Martha, that would be to provide the hosting in a spirit of serenity and the welcoming of the circumstances. In this way, Martha would remain in the presence of the Lord and would also have had the good portion!

In order to stop complaining, it is necessary to have control of oneself, to cease reacting with emotion according to one's character and to cease rejecting things and events. I give to you an example, concrete and personal! Like Father Parent, I lost my father at a young age. At that time, his death left me with unanswerable questions. Shortly after his death, I took steps with my diocese to enter the seminary. They refused me since my father had just died. This became another test to go through. Why did he die so young? And why was I prevented from entering the seminary on account of his death? Years later, I was able to see, with another view, these events. If the diocese had accepted my entry into the seminary, I probably would not have entered into contact with the Voluntas Dei Institute and thereby I would not have known for myself the spirituality of the 5-5-5-. At that time, the second five of the spirituality touched my heart. I found there the answers to a number of my questions. All made sense and that is why I chose to make the choice to become a Voluntas Dei priest. Further, if my father had not died at a young age, perhaps I would never have become a priest. All of the life of our family would have been different. I have a great deal of gratitude and admiration for my mother who worked hard to bring us up and to ensure that we lacked nothing. We know today that our mother is a woman extremely courageous and strong. Would we have been able to know her in this way if circumstances had not brought her to become the only parent and « head of the family? »

We cannot change the things and the events of our life, but we can welcome them with interior peace. Life consists of continual changes and each day is an opportunity to learn something from the reality of the world. When we adopt this attitude of the absence of complaint, there develops in us patience, faithfulness, perseverance and self-control. These faculties favor interior peace and keep us in joy and make us grateful in all circumstances of life. All this can only be a motivation to pray unceasingly and to be grateful in all circumstances. By doing this, it becomes possible for us to remain in the presence of God at each moment and to serve in serenity and joy.

News

I am back from Rome. The International Symposium, « Toward Healing and Renewal, » on the subject of sexual abuse of minors, unfolded well and was very interesting. I greatly appreciated my meeting with Archbishop João Bráz de Aviz, Prefect of the Congregation of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. The Prefect was elevated to the College of Cardinals on February 18, 2012.

We are now in the time of Lent, the time that the Church gives to each member to return to the essential: Jesus Christ. It is the time of prayer and conversion to the One Who gave His life out of love for us.

On March 24th, Juan Carlos Borrero Simon will be ordained to the priesthood. Juan Carlos is Cuban. He studied in Chile and will be ordained in this country. I invite you to join with him in prayer on this blessed day for him.

On March 26th, the Church will celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord. Let us ask the Virgin to intercede for us so that we may have the strength and the necessary perseverance to say « yes » every day.

The Central Council will meet March 27-29, 2012. I ask you to pray for the success of this meeting.

Thought of the Month

Absence of criticism favors the deepening of the presence of God, absence of complaint favors the quality of service that we wish to render. (Louis-Marie Parent, In the Footsteps of Jesus)

Anniversaries

Damian Collichio celebrates 50 years of priesthood on March 24, 2012. May God bless him and keep him in good health as he pursues his priestly ministry.

S. James Dunstan, I.V.Dei
Director General

Director General's Newsletter

Volume 2 ♦ Number 10

April 2012

Be Voluntas Dei

*« For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve,
and to give his life as a ransom for many. » (Mark 10,45)*

At the time of creation, God created the human person in his image and likeness. In this human person has been deposited the same qualities of being. Unfortunately, the human person wanted to act as God and completely decide on his/her own. The bad spirit that took place in the human being brought this creature to ask: « Why do we do the will of God? »

In the charism of our Institute, it states: « To be, like the Virgin of the Annunciation, the instrument of Christ living the will of the Father ». Let us pay attention to the words « living the will of the Father. » Jesus did not do just the will of God, He lived it fully and it was of his total being. This was possible for Him for the sole reason that He was totally under the direction of the Father.

To serve is not « to do » but « to be ». Service is part of our being. In fact, to serve is to consecrate oneself, to submit oneself, in total liberty and obedience to the divine will when this comes to our consciousness. Our conscience is the voice of God at the depth of our being. It is possible for us to hear, perceive or feel when we are in the presence of God, automatically and consequently to act accordingly.

We are the apostles of our times. But who is an apostle? The one who has been called to walk in the presence of Jesus in order to be a witness, to share and proclaim this experience. And the witness communicates this by the being of service that we are. In the time of Jesus, the apostles, that he chose, believed to follow him but in fact, they did not hear the specific call that was made to them. For them, the call that was given to them was to suffer with Christ and to give their life like him. Let us take the example of Peter. After confessing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, Peter refused to announce the Passion; he was not aware of Jesus' call and much less that which was made personally to him. We all know the history of Peter, great lover of God who allowed himself to be taken up by fear more than once. We are so like him!

In order « to be of service, » we must have personal discipline and self control. It is necessary in order to give service without expecting something in return, without wanting to receive back some benefit whatsoever. For the consecrated person, who lives in the midst of the world, the challenge is to fit into today. The society of the 21st century is a world of temptation (material possessions, money, power), a world of inequalities, a world of immediate gratification and throw away. The temptations going against this fourth spiritual attitude are very numerous. That is why we always need to return to the first attitude : the presence of God ; it is what gives us the

strength, the courage and the necessary perseverances. To remain in the presence of God there is only one way, that is of prayer.

The notion of prayer happens here to be far greater than that of devotion, mental prayer and visits to the Blessed Sacrament. In fact, it is the fruit of them. Prayer is our total interior life. Without prayer, service does not bear fruit.

In our charism, no precise mission is expressed. The mission of the Voluntas Dei is to « To be, like the Virgin of the Annunciation, the instrument of Christ living the will of the Father in the reality of the present moment, in the midst of the world, wherever Christ has His rights. » Our mission is great, varied and spontaneous; it responds to circumstances and to needs. Father Parent taught us to be who we are, where we are and in the present moment. Each moment must be lived as a moment that God gives us to transmit by our being the witness of the presence of God. Every moment in every circumstance that we live must be for us an occasion to discern the signs of the times in order to discover the divine will within for us.

Let us take a time of reflection and ask ourself: « As a Voluntas Dei, do I do the will of God and am I « a being of service ? » In this month of April, let us revisit the charism of our Institute and like the Virgin of the Annunciation and like Jesus, let us be the Will of God. Let us be Voluntas Dei!

News

We are entering into Holy Week. This is a beautiful time and a specific occasion to let the paschal mysteries of Jesus transform our lives. I invite you to unite your very being with that of Jesus in order that the past person in you may die and that you may enter into the new life offered to you. Let us celebrate the Resurrection with joy and happiness. I wish you a Happy Easter and a joyful Easter season!

The central council met on March 27 and 28. Thank you very much for your prayerful support for the success of the meeting. I would like to share with you few information discussed in the Council:

- Few members from different districts, regions and central have received their stability.
- Since 2006, Raymonde Jetté and Fernand Turgeon were the editors of the magazine: "The present moment." They have now completed their term. I want to thank them for their good work. Their commitment has helped not only to provide information to our members but also to introduce to the Voluntas Dei friends and to the bishops of the dioceses where the Institute is present. Renée Croteau and Richard Normandin take over this year. I thank them for accepting this responsibility and I wish them every success.
- The theme of our annual magazine "The present moment" for next year is: the Christian contact. I invite each of you to send us your testimonial on how you live Christian contact in your milieu as you are. You can either send them through your District/ Regional Director or directly to the Central House to the Address:

ivd.cent@cgocable.ca

or

Institut Voluntas Dei
Secrétariat (Le moment présent)
7385, boul. Parent
Trois-Rivières, Qc
Canada G9A 5E1

- The next council meeting will be held from July 3 – 5, 2012. The Directors of District and Region are requested send all the necessary documents to be discussed in the meeting before June 15 2012. All that we receive after June 15 will be presented at the next meeting, that is to say, the fall of 2012.

Our web site was under construction to have a different look. Welcome page was already over and is in use where we put different news items from districts and regions. The second step is just completed specifically with the member area and ready for use. This facilitates members to retrieve all the documents from member area with the username and password. While we thank all who started collaborating by sending articles with photos to share in the web page, we request the other district and regional directors to send your local events of the Institute to share with other members. Articles can be sent to the web committee to the following email address: ivdei555@gmail.com.

Thought of the Month

“I am a little pencil in the hand of a writing God who is sending a love letter to the world.”
Mother Teresa

Anniversaries

April 05, Bishop Louis-Marie Ling celebrates his Birthday. He is responsible for the Diocese of Pakse in Laos. May God bless him and keep him in good health in his ministry as a bishop.

April 22, Sylvie Ferland celebrates her Birthday. She is working at the central house of the Central House. May God bless her and keep her in good health.

Finally on April 26, André Coté celebrates his Birthday. He is the director of administrative services of the Institute from January 2012. May God bless him and keep him in good health in his ministry as a priest.

S. James Dunstan, I.V.Dei
Director General

Director General's Newsletter

Volume 2 ♦ Number 11

May 2012

Sowers of Peace

« Peace be with you! » That is the way the Resurrected One greeted his disciples after Easter morning. This is the peace that Jesus offers as a gift to help us pass through the exodus of the Kingdom of God until we arrive at eternal life. It is the same peace that the angels sang glorifying God at the time of the Incarnation. It is also the same peace that Father Parent wanted for each *Voluntas Dei* to carry to the surrounding world.

Peace is one of the most important tasks but, it must be said, not easy to achieve. Life comes always with its own share of concerns. For each one of us, daily life is a source of exterior and interior pressure that affects the peace of the soul. Today's world is a very busy one, very stimulated and in constant scientific, technological, economic, ecological, and social evolution. Our society creates a great deal of frustration, competition and depressive situations. Think about the world of work that is more and more demanding. Even during our personal time of leisure or when we are in a privileged environment such as with family or with friends, we must constantly adjust to the surrounding within which we are being confronted by the people with whom we interact.

This world is complex! And yet, living within these circumstances, we must find peace. We are invited to enjoy peace, internalize it and sow it around us not only as Christians, but also as *Voluntas Dei* persons committed to live secular consecration. Yes, this happens to be the most difficult attitude of our spiritual life: to live peace! In the 60's, Pope John XXIII also spoke about sowers of peace: It is the person who applies him/herself « to making simple the things complicated and especially not to complicate the simple things. »

The anxieties of today are upsetting and affect our quality of internalization and, on account of this, they are an obstacle to the one who wants to remain in peace. What then must we do? Let go! We must constantly relativize things and events and not give them more importance than they have. Father Parent said about the sower of peace: « He or she is someone who puts all their energies and ardor into avoiding useless emotional and sentimental problems and avoiding the idle confidences which ordinarily turn into criticisms and complaints, sowing uneasiness and remorse. » (*In the Footsteps of Jesus*, p.114) In all circumstances, it is necessary to try to remain in the presence of God and to internalize: « Is this so important? » Do I really want to be upset by this? What must I avoid in this moment? The sower of peace is the one who does not allow him/herself to be disturbed by the things of the current life nor by what others provoke in him/her. He/she gives priority to the improvement of his/her depth of being through the imitation of Jesus, the Christ.

Peace is a gift from God that finds its source in Jesus: « Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. » (John 14:27) This peace that Jesus gives us cost Him His human condition and His condition of « Suffering Servant » who gave His life for others; it also cost Him his resurrection and redemption. This peace that Jesus gives us is the fruit of his eternal and unconditional love for us, a love that nothing can shake or weaken. It is upon this Rock that our peace can rest and bear fruit. The one that knows that he/she is loved by God can in turn give the love of God to others.

Father Parent wanted the *Voluntas Dei* to carry peace and fellowship into the midst of the world. How many among us have interior peace? How many among us happen to remain in peace? As consecrated persons, we have a great responsibility! Living in the midst of the world, we must face this reality while keeping within ourselves the peace that God has given us to share with those with whom we interact each day. It is demanding since it asks of us to put forth a constant effort to face up to the spiritual battle that it provokes. We must have and deepen the spiritual attitude of being sowers of peace.

« My God, we live in a world that is complicated and very busy. Grant us peace, give us Your peace. Grant us at least the attitude of trying to live and share with others this peace that You give us. Keep us vigilant in order that we may not complicate the simple and that we may simplify the complicated. Amen. »

News

We are now in the month of May, the month of the Virgin Mary. Let us pray again, especially with our spiritual Mother during this month, particularly reciting and meditating upon the rosary each day.

May 17th will be the third year since Father Louis-Marie Parent left us. From heaven, he watches over us and prays for us. Have for him a particular thought on this day. I invite all of the priests of the Institute to celebrate a Mass for his intentions and the other members to participate in a Mass of thanksgiving for our beloved Founder.

From May 7-19, I will make a canonical visit to the District of the Dominican Republic. This District comprises the most members, more than 230 as of the end of 2011. It will also be an occasion for me to meet the members of the District of Haiti that reside in the Dominican territory. I ask you to pray for the success of my visit to this mission country.

The month of May closes the financial year for the Districts/Regions and for the Central Administration. I take advantage of this time to thank on my behalf and that of the Central Council the Directors of the American and Canadian District, their Councils and their members for their generous financial contribution. Your support greatly helped the Central Administration and the Districts and Regions of mission countries. I invite you to join with me and give thanks for all that they have done for the Institute.

I remind Directors of the Districts and Regions that their annual report is expected at the Central Administration by June 1st and that the financial statements and the projected budgets of the mission countries are expected by June 15, 2012. These documents will be presented and studied at the full Central Council meeting to take place July 3-5, 2012.

Lastly, those who have visited the site reserved to the members in the web page of the Institute will have noticed that a lot of documents have been added of which are the following:

- Documents for the formation of clerics;
- The proposals voted by the members of the 2010 Assembly General (workshops) ;
- The *Vade-mecum* of the Districts and Regions ;
- Leaflets of animation and reflection.

With these additions, the web page has become a tool of precious reference for all of the members who have at heart to perfect their knowledge of the Institute, its Constitutions, rules and policies and who wish to deepen the spirituality of the *Voluntas Dei* through the means of the formation guides and other documents placed at their disposal. I strongly encourage you to visit your web page.

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

« Forgive all of the evil that someone has done to you, and true peace will come upon you. »
Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, 1880.

ANNIVERSARIES

On May 18, Mario Laroche celebrates his birthday. Mario was the Director General from 1980-1992.

On May 24, Didi Horace, Director of the District of Haiti, celebrates his birthday.

On May 25, Leonardo Grullon Paulino and Dominga Cruz Gomez celebrate their 25th anniversary of marriage.

Mme Claire Lafrenière, accountant at the Central Administration, will celebrate her birthday on May 27th.

May God bless all of you and keep you in health and peace!

S. James Dunstan, I.V.Dei
Director General

Director General's Newsletter

Volume 2 ♦ Number 12

June 2012

A Mission in 5 Acts!

“I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me. “ (Mt. 25, 40)

We conclude the second year of the “Director General’s Newsletter”. From July 2011, we have reflected upon the two first sections of the 5-5-5 spirituality: the spiritual exercises and the spiritual attitudes. Let us finish this description by looking at the third “5”, the fraternal charity. Charity is a virtue for all the human beings. It shows itself by gestures done with love to others. For the Christians, it is one of the three theological virtues and is defined most precisely by the love of God and of the neighbour. And for the *Voluntas Dei*, what it is? Which place does it take so that Father Parent put it as a section of our spirituality?

It is our mission! According to the third “5” of our spirituality, “members of the Institute daily take advantage of five concrete occasions for exercising charity in order to develop positive contacts with others, in the manner of Christ.” (Const., no. 7.3) But this section of our spirituality can be lived only if the two other “5” are profoundly integrated in our lives. In effect, the spiritual exercises permit us to develop a life of intimacy with God and put us attentive to the presence of God in our daily life. Our heart being alive, we develop the necessary abandonment and the confidence so to let us be shaped by God. Then, our spiritual attitudes change and put effectively in our lives the fraternal charity.

Our mission is made by the mission of each member who defines it and lives it in his life every day, in his proper reality, in the midst of the world. Therefore, it is not specific as it is in other congregations who express their charism for example by teaching, by hospital cares, by evangelisation, etc... Our mission is defined according to the charism of the Institute: “To be, in the manner of the Virgin of the Annunciation, the instrument of Christ carrying out the will of the Father in the reality of the present moment, in the midst of the world, “wherever Christ has His rights”.” (Const., no. 2) As Christ, we should try to always do the will of the Father, in the present moment just like the Blessed Mary. Being a Jewish woman of her time, Mary was listening to the Father to know His will in every moment. She involved in her daily life, taking her responsibilities and accomplishing her tasks through the love of God and of her neighbour. She was unique in her whole life in reflecting the presence of God.

An act of charity can take many forms like: sacrificing few days of vacation to help the elderly parents, respecting the homeless, visit a sick person, keep the environment clean by taking care of even a small piece of paper, welcoming a stranger who knocks at the door for help. All these actions that are added to the gestures of others contribute towards changing the face of the world. Five acts every day, made for the love of God and of the neighbour, increase in us the fraternal charity. The more the Voluntas practice this, the more visible the occasions will be to our eyes. For sure, we are doing more than five acts of charity every day. But it is asked to the Voluntas to do at least five conscientiously offered to God in the name of the Institute. In this way, the mission of the Institute realises itself.

And for me, how do I apply the third “5” in my daily life? Am I really attentive to the occasions that are offered to me to do a gesture of fraternal charity? What is the quality of my answer to these calls from God?

Lord, give me the grace to practice the five spiritual exercises and let me transform so to live more and more the five attitudes of the Voluntas Dei spirituality. Give me also the spirit of love and of availability to do each day five acts of fraternal charity in the name of the mission of the Institute. Amen.

News

Canonical visit in Dominican Republic

Andrew Sioleti, General councillor, and myself are back from the canonical visit in the Dominican Republic district. Like the others, this visit was a success. I was handicap due to my lack of knowing the Spanish language, language over what repose our apostolic objective: love and fraternity! Fortunately, I was supported by Andrew, excellent translator and travel companion! The Dominican members are filled with energy, especially the associated members. The depth of their spirituality talks a lot about the engagement that they have for the Institute. I take the opportunity to thank the five first Canadian missionaries who have participated in the development of this District: Michel Laroche, Rolland Poitras, Paul Boulay, Jean Lacaille and René Désilets. I conclude telling you that we foresee a brilliant future in this District.

Plenary Central Council

The plenary Central Council will be held from next July 3 to 5. I remind to all the district/region’s Directors that all the requests and required documents should be at the Central Administration at the latest June 15. Everything that will arrive after June 15 will be presented at the next meeting, which means at the fall 2012 one.

The Present Moment

I do again to each one of you the invitation to send us your testimony over how you live the Christian contacts in your environment. You can give them to your district/region's Director who will forward them to the central administration. You can also send them directly to the central administration at the following e-mail address:

ivd.cent@cgocable.ca

or

Voluntas Dei Institute
Secretary Office (The Present Moment)
7385, boul. Parent
Trois-Rivières, Qc
Canada G9A 5E1

A nice month of May!

May has been really nice for the Voluntas Dei Institute. In fact, Paul Lang, from the United States District was ordained permanent married deacon. More, two of our Haitian brothers were ordained priests: **Angelot Étienne** and **Dady Albatre**. Congratulations to the three of you. May the Voluntas Dei family rejoice and give thanks for them!

June 30 2012

Next June 30, the Oblates Missionary of Mary Immaculate will celebrate their 60th anniversary of foundation. Congratulations to the President Madame Anita Plourde, the same to all the feminine members of this institute. The Oblates were present with us and with Father Parent in the first years of the Voluntas Dei and they are still a great support for us today. We owe them all our gratitude. I invite you to pray for them in this special day. Let us pray for their future mission so that new vocations fill their hope.

New on the web

New policy:

- Policy for accepting a person of good will desiring to work in a country as a lay missionary

Modified rules:

- 11 - Election of the Director General and the Councilors' General
- 16 - Moving and transfer from one district to another
- 17 - Persons Spiritually Affiliated

New rules:

- 20 - (ad experimentum) Members Residing Outside a District or Region
- 21 - Rule to Proceed to an I.V.D. Foundation

Reports of the canonical visits

- Sri Lanka, India and Haiti.

Thought of the month

“Through these close beings, at the office, in the family, on the street, it is the entire world that we have to love.” (Madeleine Delbr el, Pays pa iens et charit e)

Anniversaries

June 8, Andrew Mayer celebrates his birthday anniversary. Andrew is a member of the translator team of the Central Administration.

June 20, Saroja Gratian and Gratian Ayyapillai of the Indian District will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary.

June 23, Kathryn A. Montie and M. Joseph McGlynn of the United States District will recall their 50th wedding anniversary.

I invite you to pray for them on this occasion. May God bless them and keep them in good health!

S. James Dunstan, I.V.Dei
Director General