

News of the Director General

Volume 5 ♦ 2014-2015

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News of the Director General

Volume 5 ♦ Number 1

July 2014

In the Footsteps of Jesus

The month of July marks two important events: the day of the foundation of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate and the Voluntas Dei Institute, a day consecrated to the commemoration of Our Founder (July 2), as well as the birthday of Father Parent (July 12). I have just finished reading his book « In the Footsteps of Jesus. » I find it interesting each time I read it. I am inspired by it to deepen my spiritual journey with our spirituality of the second five. I share with you my last reflection of this month.

There are three key words in the baptismal responsibility that are presented through three examples based upon the Gospel of John, 21:15-19, and that challenge me and my vocation. Priest vs to love Jesus; Shepherd vs to feed his sheep; and Prophet vs to follow Jesus.

As much in the common priesthood as in the ministerial priesthood, we have the experience of the love of Jesus who gave His life for us. He awaits from each one of us the same love. It is this love that unites all of us. Jesus is our first love. He is Love. He shows us how to live love. After having lived it in daily life, He poses the same question to us that He posed to Peter: « Do you love me? » « Do you love me more than those here? » What would I reply to Jesus? If I say yes, is there someone or something that moves me away from this love; do I have the qualities of love in my life (1 Cor. 13)?

The love of Jesus automatically orients toward an exemplary life. It allows a person to give meaning to his/her life through his/her actions. To be a shepherd is a leadership that attracts the attention of all the sheep. Jesus asks Peter to feed his sheep by being faithful to His love without fault. Father Parent presents it quite clearly in his book when he describes the being of service and peacemaker. Do I form myself in order to be a good shepherd with the true love toward Jesus by using the enriching spirituality of my beloved Founder?

It is only if we are rooted in the presence of God that we will be able to be prophetic in life, otherwise it will be very difficult. We are called to follow His experience and go forward. We must discern the signs of the times and interpret the Gospel in a positive manner with our lived life and prayer. The intimate relationship with God exhorts us to go forward without criticism and complaint. Father Parent wants all Voluntas to be prophetic in the midst of the world and to be witnesses challenging the secular realities.

Let's read, re-read and meditate again on « In the Footsteps of Jesus. » Let us allow ourselves to be inhabited by the ideas of Father Parent. Let us put firstly into practice the basic call of our baptismal vocation as members of the Voluntas Dei Institute.

May God bless you and may you have a wonderful month of July.

News

Deceased

On June 25, it was with great sadness, that I learned of the death of Leo Gregoire, a priest in New Brunswick, Canada. He was a member of the Institute since 1960 as well as Secretary General of the Institute from 1998 to 2010. My thoughts are with his loved ones and my prayers accompany him to our Creator.

Articles for the Present Moment

The next edition of the journal « The Present Moment » will have as its theme: **The Present Moment in the Midst of the World**. I invite each of you to send to us your witness on how you live the present moment in the midst of the world in your daily life. You can submit them to the director of your district or region who will send them to the Central Administration. You can also send them directly to the Central Administration at the following address :

ivd.cent@cgocable.ca

or

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

Thought of the Month

Christ, the guide of our love, loved in word and in act. (*L.-M. Parent, omi*)

Birthdays

On 2 July, **Marcos Alejandro Guerra Romero**, Director of the District in Formation of Chile, will celebrate his birthday.

Manuel Cornejo Garate will celebrate his birthday on July 4th. He is a member of the Central Council.

July 12th will mark the birthday of our Founder **Father Parent**. Let us remember him in our prayers.

Rénald Tremblay, Director of Administrative Services, will celebrate his birthday on July 20th. With his help and support, he is a person of service and devotes himself completely to the responsibilities entrusted to him.

On July 22nd, **Paul-René Lavigne**, long time friend and benefactor of the Institute, will celebrate his birthday.

I ask you to join me in prayer for all these special occasions. HAPPY BIRTHDAY! May God bless you and keep you in good health!

On July 25th, I will celebrate my birthday as well as my anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. Please pray for me.

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

News of the Director General

Volume 5 ♦ Number 12

August 2014

Mission impossible

God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus. She accepted the mission impossible of her maternity in the midst of the world. From the day of the Annunciation (Luke 1, 38) and until her Assumption, she humbly did the will of God and thereby assumed the risk of the reality of life. Her existence was filled with a multitude of challenges, and here are a number of them:

- Secret repudiation by Joseph « . . . an upright man, and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally... » (Matt. 1, 18-25)
- To give birth to the infant Saviour in a manger « ... there was no place for them in the inn » (Luke 2, 7)
- The prophecy of Simeon « ... a sword will pierce your own soul... » (Luke 2, 34-35)
- The disappearance and the response of Jesus to His mother « ... Why were you looking for me? » (Luke 2, 42-51)
- The wedding at Cana « Woman why turn to me ? My hour has not come yet. » (John 2, 1-12)
- The ironic response of Jesus, « Who is my mother . . . ? ... whoever does the will of God ... » (Matt 12, 46-50)
- The passion and death of Jesus (Matt. 26, 1-27, 66), and most especially, Jesus giving of His mother to John « ... here is your son... here is your mother. » (John 19, 25-27)

In spite of all of this, her mission was not ended. After the Pascal Mystery of Jesus, « All these joined in continuous prayer, together with several women, including Mary the mother of Jesus... » Acts 1, 14) Mary, trusting, knew how to convince the distressed apostles to receive the Holy Spirit.

Through her silent presence and acceptance, Mary became a model of the Will of God. In all situations of life. Holy Mary responded positively to God in the face of all impossible challenges and to a negative secular climate. She knew how to keep and accept at the depths of her heart all these affronts.

It is the call of a Voluntas ... « Voluntas Dei per Mariam Immaculatam »

Father Parent did not want to do the will of God, but be the will of God. Our very name « Voluntas Dei » is already for each of us an invitation to accomplish all that we can for the pleasure of God. To attach completely our actions to the will and pleasure of God is to become holy, to work for the salvation of souls, to bring glory to the Lord and to be ourselves the praises of glory. The « Voluntas Dei » must be holy and rapidly. The Church asks us and we must be ready. (L.M. Parent, omi)

August is the month to recall the Assumption and the Coronation of the Mother of God, the destiny of God that He had chosen for her. Her whole impossible mission is the reason that must motivate us, challenge us in each moment of our life, working in the midst of the world in order to distinguish, recognize, perceive and discern the will of God in the midst of the reality of our society. Can we be the living witnesses of the will of God? Are we truly ready and committed to this mission impossible in the image of Mary?

Let us follow the example of the Virgin Mary in respect to her impossible mission in order to accept in our soul the will of God and become witnesses for those that we are called to mingle with !

News

Ordination

On 18 July, Mariyathas Godwin Camillus was ordained a priest for the diocese of Jaffna, in Sri Lanka.

Congratulations to our newly ordained priest as well as to the District Sri Lanka. May God guide and accompany him along his route. Let us join ourselves in prayer for the success of his mission.

New Sri-Lanka District Council in formation

The district Assembly was held on July 14 to 17. I am pleased to announce the new director and his council:

Director:	Fr. Eustus S. Fernando
Assistant Director:	Fr. Philip Anthony
Councillors:	Mr. Allan Varapiragasam
	Mr. Swampillai Francis Savuntharam
	Mrs. Reeta Rohini Savuntharam

My best wishes to the director and his council. I pray God to bless them abundantly, so that they may successfully carry out their service of authority. I sincerely thank Father Anthony Sahayanathan for these years as director with concern for the growth of the Institute in Canada. I also thank all the councillors who collaborated with him during his years as director. May God bless them all.

Central Council

The next meeting of the Central Council will take place August 18-21 at the Central House. Your prayers are welcomed for the success of this meeting.

Thought of the Month

Let us ask Mary to accomplish in us her marvels of grace in order that we may love and serve God as she did. (*L. M. Parent, omi*)

Birthdays

On August 5, **Yvon Carpentier** will celebrate his birthday. He was the Director General from 1992 to 1998.

Fernand Turgeon will celebrate his birthday on August 6th and his spouse **Raymonde Jetté** will celebrate her birthday on August 9th. Thanks for their devotion to the Institute.

Anthony Sahayanathan celebrates his birthday on August 24th. He has been the Director of the District in Formation Sri Lanka for four years until now.

On August 26th, **François Hamel** will celebrate his birthday. He was the Director General of the Institute from 1998 to 2010, and is the advisor in canonical matters.

I invite you to join with me in prayer to mark these birthdays. May God bless them and keep them in good health!

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

News from the Director General

Volume 5 ♦ Number 3

September 2014

Be not afraid

« Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you... » (Jer. 1, 5). What does this really mean today in a computerized and automated world centred on the « Me », tending toward isolation with the new technologies? On each page of our life, new sciences are created, leaving behind that which we have had trust in. Days pass by without us having a moment to ask ourselves what God awaits from us. We live in fear of this or that, lack of money, or not being competitive enough!

We run so fast after what we believe to be important that we forget to pay attention to His call and we lose sometimes trust « . . . the other personage says to me: « human that God loves, be not afraid ! All goes well for you! Take courage, find your strength! » (Dn, 10,19). All changes so quickly!

God, Himself, does not change. He is Eternal. He knows us. He is always there for us and with us. He waits for us as a father does on a son or daughter so we should be listening for He has a plan for each one of us, « . . . I have graven you on the palms of my hands . . . » (Isaiah 49 ,16)

An important question has to be posed: Where am I going? Into the wind of the changing world or with God Eternal? God awaits the moment when we will be ready to listen to Him in order to follow the path and way that He has traced out for us.

« ... before you were born, I consecrated you . . . » (Jer 1, 5). Some obstacles can happen every day. In the face of such events, what does God expect from me?

Of course, collapse or grief in the face of adversity is normal and human. But what is the route that I want to follow afterwards? Who can help me to pursue my destiny? The Bible tells us, assures us and gives us confidence. Let's consult it often. It holds the words that we need to move forward. It is our strength and determination in order to pursue the goal to be achieved: « Rise, and have no fear . . . » (Mt 17, 7). A sign from God, a message, He supports me in my times of weakness; I am not alone, I am never alone.

Just as our Founder wrote us, Jesus came to do the will of His Father. The « Voluntas Dei » must accomplish the same will. « By myself, I cannot do anything, but with God I can do everything! »

Let us place ourselves in the hands of God in order to follow the pathway that He has marked out for us before even our birth.

Reminder for (The Present Moment)

We remind you to send us your articles for the above publication as soon as possible and before September 30, at:

ivd.cent@cgocable.ca

rirenormandin@videotron.ca

Canonical visit of Canada

I will undertake a canonical visit to Canada in September, October and the first week of November. I ask you to keep me in your prayers.

New Council of the United States District

The Assembly of the United States District took place August 4-7, 2014. I am happy to announce to you the new Director and his Council:

Director : M. Anthony J. Ciorra
Assistant Director : M. Julian Gonzales-Montenegro
Councillors : M. Timothy Sullivan
M. James P. Bono
M. Joel Livingston
Mme Carol Toth

I wish the best of success to the Director and his Council, and I pray to God for abundant blessings in order that they may fulfill with success their service of authority. I congratulate Father Anthony Ciorra and his new Councillors. I also thank all of the Councillors that are leaving that have collaborated with him. May God bless all of you!

Plenary Meeting of the Central Council

I am happy to inform you that the last plenary session of the Central Council took place at the Central House 18-21, August. I take this opportunity to thank you for your prayers. I wish to share with you some information:

- Few members have received their stability.
- The Preparatory Committee for the General Assembly 2016 is about to complete its consultation documents. They will be sent by January 2015. This consultation will be made as the workbook for delegates at the assembly. This workbook has to be ready by early 2016.
- The next meeting of the Central Council will take place from November 17 to 19, 2014.

Thought of the Month

Meditate on the fact that God has made you gardeners in order to pull out vices and plant virtue
(*St. Catherine of Siena*)

Anniversaries

On the 1st of September, **Innasi Mudyappan**, from India and a member of the Central Council, will celebrate his birthday.

Renée Croteau, the person responsible with her spouse Richard Normandin for the publication of the « Present Moment » and volunteer at the Central House, will celebrate her birthday on September 6th.

On September 29th, **Michel Beauchamp**, Director of the Canadian District will celebrate his birthday. Long continuity to an exceptional person!

Forgotten:

Guy Veer, the Director of Administrative Services of Voluntas Dei Institute celebrated his birthday on August 18. He is now one of the wise men of our Institute.

I invite you to pray for them on their special occasion, and may God accompany them in their life journey.

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

News of the Director General

Volume 5 ♦ Number 4

October 2014

Convocation

Dear brothers and sisters,

The Assembly General meets every six years to focus on its human, spiritual and financial situation in accordance with the *Constitutions* of the Voluntas Dei Institute. At the same time, the election of the Director General and the members of the Central Council occurs. This will be the 10th Assembly General of our Institute. After consulting with the Directors of the districts and regions, it was decided that the 2016 Assembly General will take place, July 11-24, 2016.

On the recommendation of the Central Council and after having made contact with each person designated, here are the names of the persons of the Preparatory Committee for the 2016 Assembly General:

Andrew Mayer (Chairperson),
Laurier Albert,
Fernand Turgeon
and Raymonde Jetté

Already, they are doing excellent work in order to prepare this Assembly and I wish to thank them personally and in the name of the Central Council as well as on behalf of the all of the members of the Institute for having accepted this responsibility.

Although only delegates of the districts and regions with right to this Assembly will come together, and afterwards also those who will be elected, I find it important to recall how important it is for all to bring with them their concerns, plans and hopes that they represent.

The theme of this Assembly is to be deeply:

« ROOTED IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD AS VOLUNTAS DEI »

This is the core of our existence, spirituality and charism. It is our responsibility to form and develop ourselves and to grow in this way. We are persons called to live in the world being witnesses of Jesus Christ and having the passion, love and the sense of belonging to our Institute.

Let us be constantly in union with the spirit of Father Parent. This is the essential of his teaching when he founded the Institute. Let us place all of our trust in the « Virgin of the Annunciation » praying each day to be a true Voluntas Dei and to pursue the realization of our Founder, Father Louis-Marie Parent.

Prayer for the 2016 Assembly General

Lord Jesus, we are preparing to live the 2016 Assembly General. We pray that you send upon the Voluntas Dei your Spirit of trust, enlightenment and discernment.

Holy Spirit, we pray that you keep us rooted in the presence of God. Arouse in us fraternal charity and render us more and more delighted to be witnesses of the Gospel.

Kindly Father, and through the intercession of the Virgin of the Annunciation, form us to be instruments of the incarnation of Christ in the circumstances of our lives.

Most Holy Trinity, like a fruitful vine, make the Assembly General bear fruits of your active presence in the midst of the world according to the spirit of our Founder, Father Parent

Rooted in the presence of God as Voluntas Dei. . .

Voluntas Dei per Mariam Immaculatam

Amen

News

October is the month of the rosary. I invite you to practice the 5th element of our spiritual exercises with great devotion. Let us be united with the Virgin Mary, the Holy Mother of God.

Thought of the Month

If you want to walk fast, Walk alone!
But, if you want to walk far, Walk together!
Ratan Tata

Birthdays

On October 9, **Nestor Fornaris**, Director of the Region of Cuba, will celebrate his birthday.

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

On October 11, **Anthony J. Ciorra**, Director of the United States District will celebrate his birthday.

Andrew Sioleti, member of the Central Council and member of the Committee for the Prevention of Harassment, will celebrate his birthday on October 29.

May God accompany them in their good and less good moments in order that they may continue their journey!

S. James Dunstan, I.V.Dei

Synod of Bishops on the Family

The Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod took place in Vatican from October 5 to 19, 2014. One of the participants of the Synod was Bishop Louis-Marie Ling, I.V.Dei. The theme of the Synod is "Pastoral challenges to the family in the context of evangelization". The Holy Father invites everyone to deepen the message of this extraordinary assembly in every local context by sharing the message to every family. I publish this message in my letter in order to study and discuss in the team meeting.

Official Message of the Synod

We, Synod Fathers, gathered in Rome together with Pope Francis in the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, greet all families of the different continents and in particular all who follow Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We admire and are grateful for the daily witness which you offer us and the world with your fidelity, faith, hope, and love.

Each of us, pastors of the Church, grew up in a family, and we come from a great variety of backgrounds and experiences. As priests and bishops we have lived alongside families who have spoken to us and shown us the saga of their joys and their difficulties.

The preparation for this synod assembly, beginning with the questionnaire sent to the Churches around the world, has given us the opportunity to listen to the experience of many families. Our dialogue during the Synod has been mutually enriching, helping us to look at the complex situations which face families today.

We offer you the words of Christ: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me" (*Rev 3:20*). On his journeys along the roads of the Holy Land, Jesus would enter village houses. He continues to pass even today along the streets of our cities. In your homes there are light and shadow. Challenges often present themselves and at times even great trials. The darkness can grow deep to the point of becoming a dense shadow when evil and sin work into the heart of the family.

We recognize the great challenge to remain faithful in conjugal love. Enfeebled faith and indifference to true values, individualism, impoverishment of relationships, and stress that excludes reflection leave their mark on family life. There are often crises in marriage, often confronted in haste and without the courage to have patience and reflect, to make sacrifices and to forgive one another. Failures give rise to new relationships, new couples, new civil unions, and new marriages, creating family situations which are complex and problematic, where the Christian choice is not obvious.

We think also of the burden imposed by life in the suffering that can arise with a child with special needs, with grave illness, in deterioration of old age, or in the death of a loved one. We admire the fidelity of so many families who endure these trials with courage, faith, and love. They see them not as a burden inflicted on them, but as something in which they themselves give, seeing the suffering Christ in the weakness of the flesh.

We recall the difficulties caused by economic systems, by the “the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose” (*Evangelii gaudium* 55) which weakens the dignity of people. We remember unemployed parents who are powerless to provide basic needs for their families, and youth who see before them days of empty expectation, who are prey to drugs and crime.

We think of so many poor families, of those who cling to boats in order to reach a shore of survival, of refugees wandering without hope in the desert, of those persecuted because of their faith and the human and spiritual values which they hold. These are stricken by the brutality of war and oppression. We remember the women who suffer violence and exploitation, victims of human trafficking, children abused by those who ought to have protected them and fostered their development, and the members of so many families who have been degraded and burdened with difficulties. “The culture of prosperity deadens us.... all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us” (*Evangelii gaudium* 54). We call on governments and international organizations to promote the rights of the family for the common good.

Christ wanted his Church to be a house with doors always open to welcome everyone. We warmly thank our pastors, lay faithful, and communities who accompany couples and families and care for their wounds.

There is also the evening light behind the windowpanes in the houses of the cities, in modest residences of suburbs and villages, and even in mere shacks, which shines out brightly, warming bodies and souls. This light—the light of a wedding story—shines from the encounter between spouses: it is a gift, a grace expressed, as the *Book of Genesis* says (2:18), when the two are “face to face” as equal and mutual helpers. The love of man and woman teaches us that each needs the other in order to be truly self. Each remains different from the other that opens self and is revealed in the reciprocal gift. It is this that the bride of the *Song of Songs* sings in her canticle: “My beloved is mine and I am his... I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine” (*Song of Songs* 2:16; 6:3).

This authentic encounter begins with courtship, a time of waiting and preparation. It is realized in the sacrament where God sets his seal, his presence, and grace. This path also includes sexual relationship, tenderness, intimacy, and beauty capable of lasting longer than the vigor and freshness of youth. Such love, of its nature, strives to be forever to the point of laying down one’s life for the beloved (cf *Jn* 15:13). In this light conjugal love, which is unique and indissoluble, endures despite many difficulties. It is one of the most beautiful of all miracles and the most common.

This love spreads through fertility and generativity, which involves not only the procreation of children but also the gift of divine life in baptism, their catechesis, and their education. It includes the capacity to offer life, affection, and values—an experience possible even for those who have not been able to bear children. Families who live this light-filled adventure become a sign for all, especially for young people.

This journey is sometimes a mountainous trek with hardships and falls. God is always there to accompany us. The family experiences his presence in affection and dialogue between husband and wife, parents and children, sisters and brothers. They embrace him in family prayer and listening to the Word of God—a small, daily oasis of the spirit. They discover him every day as they educate their children in the faith and in the beauty of a life lived according to the Gospel, a life of holiness. Grandparents also share in this task with great affection and dedication. The family is thus an authentic domestic Church that expands to become the family of families which is the ecclesial community. Christian spouses are called to become teachers of faith and of love for young couples as well.

Another expression of fraternal communion is charity, giving, nearness to those who are last, marginalized, poor, lonely, sick, strangers, and families in crisis, aware of the Lord's word, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (*Acts 20:35*). It is a gift of goods, of fellowship, of love and mercy, and also a witness to the truth, to light, and to the meaning of life.

The high point which sums up all the threads of communion with God and neighbor is the Sunday Eucharist when the family and the whole Church sits at table with the Lord. He gives himself to all of us, pilgrims through history towards the goal of the final encounter when "Christ is all and in all" (*Col 3:11*). In the first stage of our Synod itinerary, therefore, we have reflected on how to accompany those who have been divorced and remarried and on their participation in the sacraments.

We Synod Fathers ask you walk with us towards the next Synod. The presence of the family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in their modest home hovers over you. United to the Family of Nazareth, we raise to the Father of all our petition for the families of the world:

Father, grant to all families the presence of strong and wise spouses who may be the source of a free and united family.

Father, grant that parents may have a home in which to live in peace with their families.

Father, grant that children may be a sign of trust and hope and that young people may have the courage to forge life-long, faithful commitments.

Father, grant to all that they may be able to earn bread with their hands, that they may enjoy serenity of spirit and that they may keep aflame the torch of faith even in periods of darkness.

Father, grant that we may all see flourish a Church that is ever more faithful and credible, a just and humane city, a world that loves truth, justice and mercy.

News

Let us remember

During November, the Church invites us to pray particularly for the dead. Let us pray for Father Parent and for the members of the Institute who are deceased. I recommend to you especially those who have passed away this year :

Thomas Furlong, priest (United States), Eleanor Siehl, wife of Robert J. Surowec (United States), Paul Boulay, priest (Dominican Republic), Léo Grégoire, priest (Canada), John D. Bosco, priest (India).

Meeting of the Central Council

The next meeting of the Central Council will take place at the Central House in Trois-Rivières, November 17-19, 2014. We invite you to pray for the success of this meeting.

Thought of the Month

The family is where we are formed as people. Every family is a brick in the building of society.
Pope Francis

Birthdays

On November 2nd, **Richard Normandin**, member of the Institute, responsible for the publication of « The Present Moment » and volunteer at the Central House, will celebrate his birthday. We accompany him with our prayers.

Andrés Solano Sosa, member of the Central Council since 2010, will celebrate his birthday on November 10th. May God bless him and keep him in good health in order to pursue his life with the Lord!

On November 24th, **Laurier Albert** will celebrate his birthday. He is responsible for the Committee of Basic and On-Going Formation. He is also a member of the Preparatory Committee for the 2016 AG. May God accompany him along his pathway.

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

News of the Director General

Volume 5 ♦ Number 6

December 2014

The Year of Consecrated Life

The year of « Consecrated Life » begins on November 30, 2014, the first Sunday of Advent and runs until February 2016, the World Day for « Consecrated Life. »

It has almost become a tradition that the Pope proclaims at the beginning of the new year a theme of reflection and meditation that will nourish our prayer each day. For 2015, Pope Francis proposes to us « the Consecrated Life » and he tells us why : that men and women of consecrated life will become better aware of the richness of their consecration to the Lord lived through the three vows of obedience, poverty and chastity. This imposes upon us to take the time to deepen this interior richness that carries a lot of hope and trust in God through a life of prayer, especially during this time of crisis that traverses our Church. People have a need to discover and sense the joy of our consecrated life through our attachment and fidelity to our commitments. It is a life that we have chosen. Thus, a gift of God and not a yoke that we carry. We must not forget this beautiful reality. And for the Church and for all of the members of the Church, consecrated life is a true gift from heaven and a precious witness of the Gospel rich in graces and gifts of all sorts.

The Catholic Church comprises a number of forms of consecrated life : religious communities or orders, contemplative communities or secular institutes; in other words, consecrated persons are called to live their commitments in a whole variety of ways. There is a great difference between the Trappists, Jesuits and members of Secular Institutes, and yet these groups are constituted by consecrated persons. All of the members are committed through their vows of obedience, poverty and chastity. The great difference is found in the way of living these vows: in a monastery, in parish ministry or preaching or in the midst of the world. What unites them is the gift of themselves to God in service to the Church.

This New Year that approaches gives us therefore the opportunity to say thank you to the Lord for the gift that he has given us in calling us to work in his service in the midst of the world. Not to acquire the values of the world but to witness to Jesus in today's world. People have a need to find again Jesus, the Saviour, in their daily life. There is so much to do and witness to! For us, our team life is a precious means of assuring our faithfulness to our vocation as *Voluntas Dei* and doing the will of God in the circumstances of our life.

News

Meeting of the Central Council

I am happy to share with you some information from the last meeting of the Central Council that took place November 17-19. I thank you for your prayers. I wish to share with you this information:

- A member received his stability.
- The documents of consultation for the 2016 AG prepared by the committee were approved by the Central Council and will be shortly ready for sending to the District and Region Directors.
- The 2015 Present moment is in its last publication. The members of the Central Council have decided to put an end to this journal in light of the poor response of the members of the districts and regions.
- The next meeting of the Central Council will take place April 14-17, 2015.

Preparation for Advent

A new liturgical year is about to begin. Thus, the beginning of Advent. Let's take the time to recall the first coming of the Lord at the time of His incarnation and that invites us to prepare for His coming at Christmas 2014.

Merry Christmas

With this last letter for the year 2014, I extend to you and to your families and friends, my wishes for a blessed Christmas full of peace, respect, good health and love! May the Child Jesus bless you with support and guide you throughout your life.

Thought of the Month

Wake up the world! Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living! It is possible to live differently in this world. *Pope Francis*

Birthdays

On December 2, **Marc Laroche**, priest of Canada, will celebrate his 25th anniversary of priesthood.

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

On December 14, **Mathias Mariathas and Jenova Mariathas**, members of the District in Formation, Sri Lanka, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

On December 23, **Pierre Marois**, Secretary General of the Central Council and Director of the Office of Vocations and Missions, will celebrate his birthday.

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

May God grant them good health, peace and happiness!

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

News of the Director General

Volume 5 ♦ Number 7

January 2015

Welcome 2015

I am very happy to wish you a Happy New Year at the beginning of 2015. As we enter into the New Year full of joy and memories, let us take a moment to thank the Lord for all that the preceding year brought us. We have lived moments of great joy and consolation. We have done things that have made us grow. We have taken valuable stands and have made important decisions that have brought us satisfaction and comfort.

Nonetheless, it is also necessary to recognize that we have lived times more difficult, times when we have missed out by act or omission, things not completed or accomplished. Are we ready to begin 2015?

The first day of the year is always the World Day of Peace. Do we have peace within ourselves, the type of peace that soothes and satisfies our very being? « I wish to address to each man and woman my fervent wishes of peace that accompanies my prayer . . . » (*Pope Francis*). May this year be a favourable year to make « Peace » grow on this first day in a calm way fully imbued with serenity in total fraternity.

Indeed, fraternity is the fundamental way toward peace. Let us sow the seeds of fraternity that engender this peace that all desire ardently for this New Year. May 2015 be our motivation to create a good and solid fraternity and communion with all with whom we live each day and may we be the bridges that connect the shores of peace. With the presence of God, let us become the shepherds of peace to unite the peoples of the earth!

News

Celebrets

At the time of the publications of these lines, we have finished sending to the Directors of the districts/regions the celebrets for priests incardinated in the Institute.

Directory of Members

The 2015 Directory of Members will be very soon available on our Web site. We have also added the details of each member that you can consult at the same place as the directory.

Present Moment

Like last year, the *Present Moment* will not be sent as a paper copy. It will be available on the Web site very soon. All of the members are invited to print it out and share it with members of your team who do not have access to the Internet.

The Directors of the districts and regions can make copies to send to their members, bishops, rectors of seminaries or others that you deem appropriate. It will be placed shortly on the welcome page of the Institute.

Thought of the Month

The most advanced in the spiritual life are those who know how to begin again and set out a new toward God. (*L.M. Parent, o.m.i.*)

Birthdays

On January 4, **Lazar Sebastian Croos**, of Sri Lanka, will celebrate his 25th anniversary of priesthood.

Saturnino Parédes Clase and **Nila Maria Lopez Tineo**, of the Dominican Republic, will celebrate their 25th anniversary of marriage on January 6.

May God accompany them in their good and less good moments so that they may continue their journey with the Lord!

May God grant them good health, peace and happiness!

Happy 2015!!

May this New Year bring you health and peace! May it fill you with serenity!

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

News of the Director General

Volume 5 ♦ Number 8

February 2015

The Church Continues to Call us ...

Pope Francis announced that 2015 will be a year dedicated to the promotion of consecrated life and he invites all consecrated persons to « reawaken our world » through our witness of a life of faith, holiness and hope.

In the journey of life, each consecrated person is as gift of God for His people. His people have a great need of each consecrated person's presence and for us, a beautiful opportunity to strengthen and renew our commitment to spreading the Gospel. A consecrated person is a being of God, a prophet inhabited by the word of God, a human being with a particular mission, that of promoting justice and peace in society. He/she is the light of the world, the salt of the earth and the leaven in the dough. As *Voluntas Dei* and thus consecrated persons, disciples of Christ living in the world, we hear clearly this call to live in communion with others and to build communities of freedom, fraternity, truth and justice.

February 2 is the day of consecrated life. This year, we are called to reflect in a more intense way on the value of our participation in « reawakening the world.» We have to ask ourselves how we can better connect with orphans, the homeless, persons alone or elderly, the sick, the families of lost loved ones, the victims of discrimination, violence, abuse and exploitation of all kinds, non-Christians or even non-believers. These people are a part of our present society. We are called to go toward these people to bring them the light of Jesus, Jesus Who is the centre of our consecration and the cornerstone of the Church. Consecrated persons are the messengers of the Good News of Jesus and are sent not only to proclaim justice, truth and peace, but also to denounce injustices, inequalities and all that prevents peace and fraternity. (E.g. the message of the prophet Nathan to David; messages of Jesus to the Pharisees, etc.)

It is the responsibility of each consecrated person to transform his/her life in order to become a true disciple of Jesus to pull down the structures of injustice in a society that is often too dehumanizing. Am I then a living member of this Church? Have I found my place in this society that is mine as a member of the *Voluntas Dei* Institute?

News

Day of Consecrated Life

Within the universal Church, February 2 is the special day for consecrated life. Let us take advantage of this day to give thanks to God for consecrated life and more particularly for the call to secular consecration in this year of consecrated life in the Church today. Let us reflect on our vocation and commitment.

Directory of Members

The 2015 Directory of Members of the Institute is now available in the « members' space » of the Web site.

The Present Moment

The edition of this journal having as its theme « The Present Moment in the Midst of the World » is also available in the welcome page of the Web site.

Statistics for 2015

As of January 31, 2015, the Institute comprises 932 members, as well as 57 persons spiritually affiliated and is present in 22 countries.

The distribution of members and persons spiritually affiliated is as follows:

Priests incardinated in a diocese: 38
Priests incardinated in the Institute: 167
Clerical members incardinated in a diocese: 6
Clerical members incardinated in the Institute: 2
Celibate Laymen with temporary incorporation: 31
Celibate Laymen with definitive incorporation: 16
Candidates to the Priesthood: 82
Associate Members (Married): 590
Persons Spiritually Affiliated: 57

Here are the numbers by country. The district of belonging is in parenthesis:

Germany (U.S.A.)	2	France (Haïti)	12
England (U.S.A.)	1	Guadeloupe (Haïti)	3
Australia (India)	2	Haïti	64
Canada	139	India	115
Chile	32	Italy (Central)	1
Colombia	16	Japan (U.S.A.)	1
Cuba	9	Laos (Central)	2
Scotland (Central)	1	Rép. Dom	254
Ecuador (Central)	4	Sri Lanka	143
United States	77	Switzerland (Sri Lanka)	1
Ethiopia (U.S.A.)	47	Trinidad (U.S.A.)	6

Thought of the Month

The Church is called to draw near to every person, beginning with the poorest and those who suffer.
(*Pontifex, Pope Francis*)

Birthdays/Anniversaries

On February 3, **Timothy M. Sullivan**, priest of the United States will celebrate his 25th year of priesthood. He is a member of the U.S.A. District Council.

Guillermo Pérez, Director of the Region of Colombia will celebrate his birthday on February 6. He is our precious translator of texts into Spanish.

On February 8, **Sylvie Dagenais**, Secretary of the Central Administration will celebrate her birthday.

Jacob Bruno Dias and **Madona Dias**, of Sri Lanka, will celebrate their 25th anniversary of marriage on February 24.

May God bless all of them throughout their lives and keep them in good health.

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

News of the Director General

Volume 5 ♦ Number 10

April 2015

Sri Lanka

We are in Holy Week and we will be entering into the Pascal Triduum. This is a time particular to all Christians who want to live the Pascal mystery of Jesus in order to allow themselves to be transformed into a new life. I wish each one of you an excellent Pascal time.

I have just returned from a visit to Sri Lanka where I had the opportunity to meet all of the members of our institute there. Today, I am going to share with you the situation of this district. Later, I have the intention of communicating to you my lived experience in the other districts and regions.

Father Parent came to Sri Lanka in January 1963. Results: he returned to Canada with three women and five men in view of forming them to become members of the institutes of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Voluntas Dei. This was the beginning of secular institutes in Sri Lanka.

Since about 52 years, the Voluntas Dei Institute has been well established in Sri Lanka and comprises now 148 members (14 priests, 7 celibate laymen, 116 married members, 11 major seminarians, 11 minor seminarians and 7 persons spiritually affiliated.) We carry in our hearts the deceased members.

Sri Lanka possesses two houses of formation for the seminarians; one in Jaffna (North) for the minor seminarians and the other in Kandy (Centre) for students in philosophy and theology. The place founded by Father Parent in Muhamalai was in the war zone. At present, the government is in the process of mine clearing the land and it is very probable that the site may be returned to the Institute.

The Institute is present in 7 of the 12 dioceses. Being the only secular institute present in this country, our members are called to serve part-time in a number of parishes. What are our members doing? They are professors, spiritual directors, school teachers, formators, business people, hospital workers, employees of the government, accountants, farmers, fishermen, etc. The witnessing and secular consecration are truly attractive and a lively means for the new evangelization.

Throughout the war and since peace in 2009, **they have been living the present moment.**

News

Happy Easter

I wish all of you a Happy Easter. May the Risen Christ bring you faith and a renewal of heart and bless all of you.

Meeting of the Central Council

The Central Council will meet April 14-16. I invite you to pray for the success of this meeting.

Ordination

Ajin Albarnas, of the District in Formation, India, will be ordained to the priesthood on April 9, 2015 at Trivandrum by Bishop Soosa Pakiam. Let's accompany him in our prayers and give thanks to the Lord for this new priest in our Institute.

Deceased

Lilian Doucette, spouse of Hubert Doucette, member of the Canadian District since 1978, died in Grand Falls, New Brunswick on February 1, 2015. Our sympathies go out to Hubert and the family and our prayers are with them during this time of sorrow.

Father Anthony Sahayanathan died on March 10, 2015. He had been the Director of the District in Formation, Sri Lanka, from 2010 to 2014. We pray in support of his family, friends, members of Sri Lanka and especially for the repose of the soul of Father Anthony.

Father Raymond Lefebvre, member of the District United States, died on March 27, 2015. We pray in support of his family, friends, members of United States and especially for the repose of his soul.

Thought of the Month

Happiness is a disposition of the spirit that we create for ourselves with our way of accepting and using the present moment. (*Fr. Louis-Marie Parent*)

Birthdays and Anniversaries

On March 25, **Pierre-Antoine Douze**, priest of the District of Haiti, celebrated his 25th anniversary of priesthood.

On March 25, **Wilner Fils-Aimé**, priest of the District of Haiti, celebrated his 25th anniversary of priesthood.

On April 5, **Bishop Louis-Marie Ling** will celebrate his birthday. Bishop Ling is the Bishop responsible for the apostolic vicariat of Paksé.

April 22 will be the birthday of **Sylvie Ferland** who works at the Central House.

May God bless them and keep them in good health.

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

News of the Director General

Volume 5 ♦ Number 11

May 2015

Canada

The month of May is known for being traditionally the month dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The words of a song indicate that : « it is the month of Mary ; it is the most beautiful month, to the cherished Virgin, sing a new song . . . » Father Parent cherished Mary. She was very close to him. At the request of the Superior General of the Oblates, he elaborated and founded the institute that he baptized « Voluntas Dei. » In his love for the Virgin, Father Parent based this foundation on the same attitudes of Mary of the Annunciation.

After having recruited about ten young men, Father Parent began the Voluntas Dei Institute with them. This was the beginning not only of the Institute but also the district of Canada. Canada saw the birth of numerous missionaries, priests and laymen, to help establish the Institute in Canada and elsewhere in the world. The Canadian members not only lived the charism and spirituality of the Institute among themselves, but they shared them throughout the world; today, the Institute is established in 22 countries. Consequently, Canada contributed greatly and in a worthwhile way in handing down its experience to members of other countries. A certain observation causes us to admit that in our day people are more and more secularized and industrialized and have neglected their religious beliefs. This state of affairs affects sufficiently the vocations and missions of the Church as well as the Institute.

The rate of the aging of the members of the district has become a reality more noticeable without taking into account the deceased; recruitment of vocations is very weak. In the face of this phenomenon, the energy of the district seems affected.

However, hope can arise from among the immigrants that have arrived in Canada bringing the richness of their faith. The multicultural and multilingual presence can be an asset for the Institute and the district if we are open to this dimension. The contribution of these new members could have the result of giving a second breath and diversity to the district of Canada. It is the hope of a new evangelization.

The District Assembly will take place this month having the theme of « Green Light: Let's Move Forward ! » This was the same outlook that Father Parent had when he founded the Institute; the attitude of Mary of the Annunciation. « Nothing is impossible to God.» (Luke, 1:37)

I wish that this assembly, enlightened and guided by the Holy Spirit, gives vigor and strength to the district. May it be confident in the face of challenges raised and in its capacity to move forward into the deep.

Let us pray to the Lord and thank God for Father Parent and for all the members of the Canadian District in order that they may pursue with hope the same spirit, « **The Positive.** »

News

Here again is the month dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Let us pray with our spiritual Mother during this month while meditating on the rosary each day.

On May 17, 2009, it will be already 6 years since Father Louis-Marie Parent left us. From heaven, he watches over us and prays for us. Give a special thought on this day to the one who founded our Institute and who modeled who we are today.

I invite all of the priests of the Institute to celebrate a Mass in his intention and the other members to participate in the Eucharist in thanksgiving for our beloved Founder.

New Council of the District in Formation, Chile

I am happy to announce the new Director and his Council for the District in Formation Chile :

Director : M. Marcos Alejandro Guerra Romero
Assistant Director : M. Manuel Cornejo Gárate
Councillors : M. Manuel Alejandro Lizana Lizana
M. Pedro Juan Canales Tapia
Mrs. Elsa Andrea Sáael Jara

I wish good luck to the Director and his Council and I pray that God will bless them abundantly in order that they may fulfill with success their service of authority.

District Assembly

The Assembly of the Canadian District will take place from May 14 to 18, 2015.

Gratitude

The month of May closes the financial year in the districts/regions and at the Central Administration. I take this opportunity to thank on my behalf and the members of the Central Council, the directors of the American District, the Canadian District and the District of the Dominican Republic, their council and members for their generous financial contribution. Their support greatly helps the Central Administration.

I invite you to join with me in prayer for all that they have done and will continue to do for the Institute.

Meeting of the Central Council

The meeting of the Central Council took place April 14-16, 2015. I would like to communicate to you certain decisions that were made.

The Council admitted a number of members to stability.

Andres Solano Sosa submitted his resignation as a member of the Central Council. We thank him for his services.

The next meeting of the Council will take place July 14-17, 2015.

Annual Report and Budget Forecasts

I also remind the directors of districts and regions that their Annual Report must be sent to the Central Administration and that the financial statement and budget forecasts of mission countries are expected before June 30, 2015. These documents will be presented and studied at the plenary Council meeting that will take place in the month of July.

Thought of the Month

To discover the positive is to discover the road that leads to God. (*L.-M. Parent, o.m.i.*)

Birthdays

On May 18, **Mario Laroche**, priest of Canada, will celebrate his birthday. Mario was the Director General from 1980 to 1992.

On May 24, **Didi Horace**, director of the district Haiti, will celebrate his birthday.

On May 27, **Claire Lafrenière**, accountant at the Central Administration, will celebrate her birthday.

Let us unite in prayer with them on these special occasions. May God bless them and keep them in good health!

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

News of the Director General

Volume 5 ♦ Number 11

June 2015

Dominican Republic

In October 1971, several Canadian missionaries of the Voluntas Dei Institute with Michel Laroche as their head arrived in the Dominican Republic to establish the Institute in this country. This was the beginning of a great presence for our Institute and it continues to this very day. At the start, there were six priests and a deacon who consecrated their life to the evangelization of the poor by helping the Bishops in this ministry. They pursued their missionary activities while at the same time recruiting vocations. The Institute recognized and appreciated the contributions of these pioneers from Canada. Today, the seed that they planted has grown and has become an impressive tree as Jesus says in : « Mt 13, 31-32 ».

Now the Dominican Republic has 20 priests, 3 married permanent deacons, 10 candidates to Orders and 217 committed members for a total of 250 members. There are two houses of formation for candidates to Orders ; the house for the minor seminarians at Hato Mayor (Louis-Marie Parent) and the house for the major seminarians in Santo Domingo (El Buen Pastor). Eight minor seminarians and ten major seminarians are in the process of formation.

Evangelization is now pursued by the Voluntas Dei members coming from this country. They are unquestionably very devoted to the development of their district. Also, they are involved, each according to his/her capacities, to bring solutions to the problems of their country : poverty, prostitution, health, family, agriculture, etc. Team spirit and the particular qualities of the Voluntas Dei priests attract many Bishops to entrust to them parishes in their dioceses, very often those in development. They work in seven dioceses out of eleven in this country. The Altagracia District has signed contracts with each diocese where the priests minister. The Voluntas Dei priests come together every two months in a parish directed by the Institute.

The married couples of the Institute are in great number and play a major role in their city or village. They are an example for numerous couples who face certain difficulties : separations, divorces. These associated members give an example through their committed and spiritual life.

The District Altagracia will hold its District Assembly in the month of July of this year. I extend blessings and grace to all of the delegates to this assembly.

The members of the Voluntas Dei Institute of the Dominican Republic are true mutual supporters in making the mission « ad Intra ». They are witnesses of secular consecration through « **team life.** »

News

Reminder About the 2016 Assembly General

-Election of delegates to the 2016 Assembly General : Results of each district and region must be sent to the Central Administration before June 30, 2015.

-The questionnaire for the 2016 Assembly General : All of the members must fill out the questionnaire and send it to the director of the district or region before May 31, 2015. I hope this has been done.

-Results of the questionnaire for the 2016 Assembly General : It is the responsibility of the director of the district or region to send the compiled results of the questionnaires received for the 2016 Assembly General to the Central Administration no later than June 30, 2015.

-Prayer for the Assembly General : I invite you to recite the prayer for the 2016 Assembly General daily.

New Council for the Canadian District

I am happy to announce the new Director and his Council for the Canadian District :

Director : M. Robert Lebel
Assistant Director : M. André Côté
Councillors : Mme Odette Burelle-Dagenais
M. Alain Dagenais
M. Gilbert Doddatto
M. Philippe Désiré
M. Gabriel Lévesque

I take this opportunity to thank you for accepting to render this service of authority. You have my total appreciation and respect. I assure you of my fraternal prayers and I pray that God will bless you abundantly in order that you may fulfill with success your service of authority.

Thought of the Month

Each one of us has an extraordinary strength within ourself to influence others and to accept from others a constructive influence. (*L.-M. Parent, o.m.i.*)

Birthdays

On June 6, **René Désilets**, will celebrate his birthday. He was the Director General of the Institute from 1970 to 1980.

On June 8, **Andrew Mayer**, will celebrate his birthday. Andrew is the chairperson of the Preparatory Committee for the 2016 Assembly General. He is also a part of the team of translators for the Central Administration.

On June 12, **Erick Cadet** and **Christina Demevil**, of the District of Haiti will celebrate their 25th anniversary of marriage.

On June 24, **Jean-Claude Bouchard** and **Huguette Fortier**, of the Canadian District, will celebrate their 50th anniversary of marriage.

May God protect them and keep them in good health. I invite you to pray for them.

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