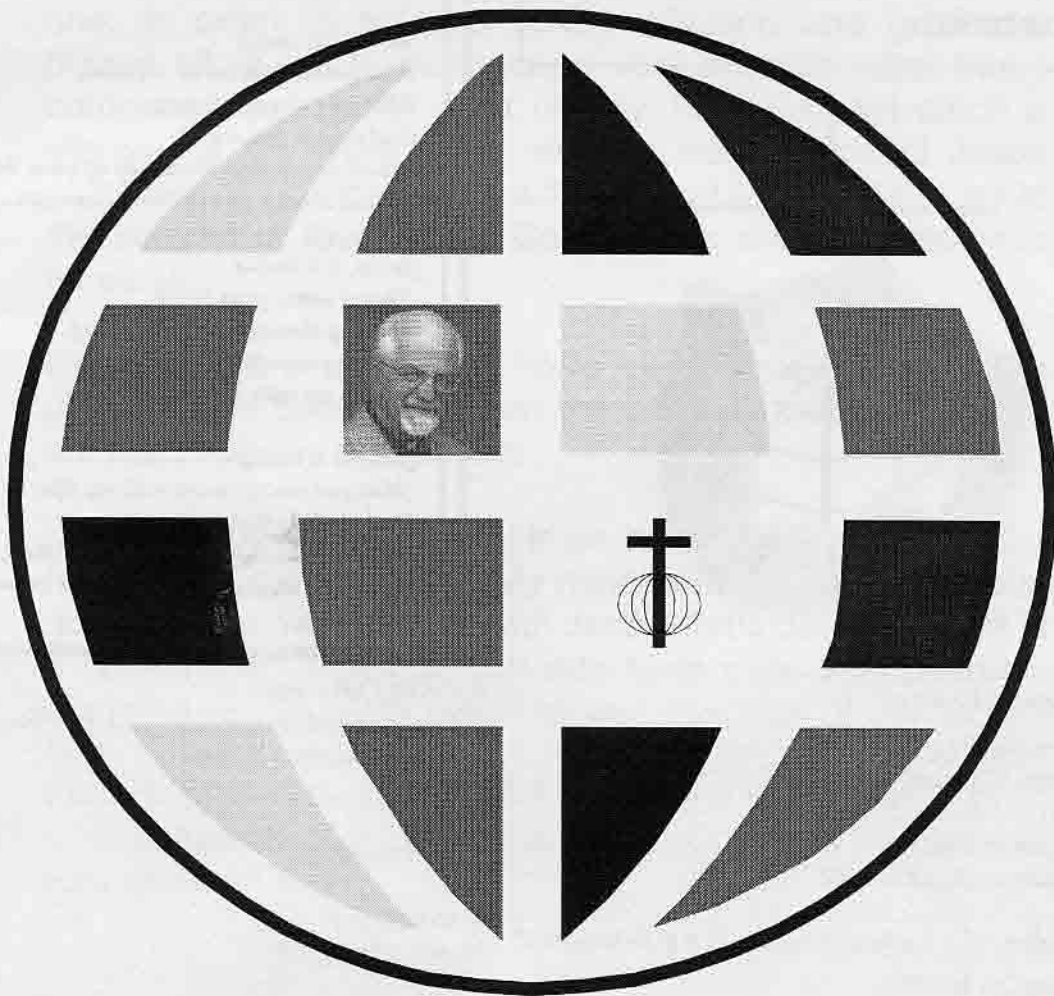


Volume 2 - 2001 - number 1

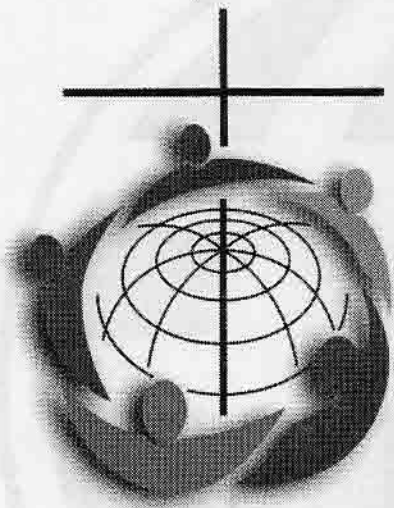
The Present Moment



Voluntas Dei Institute

Summary

From Father Parent's Writings	3
From the Director General	5
News From Home and Abroad	6
Meeting 2000 of Voluntas and Oblates	9
A brotherhood with limits	9
The world congress of Secular Intitutes	11
Sylver Jubilee celebrations	11
In memoriam 2000	13
Boulevard Parent: Irate Residents	14
From the beginning	15
Witness to the Present	16
Have you read?	18



My today

*Jesus, it is today
That I unite myself to you,
So that you may pour into me
Enough wisdom to enable me
To savour your will.*

*Jesus, it is today
That you lend me your heart,
So that I may discover
Your presence in my neighbour.*

*Jesus, it is today
That you envelop me with your Spirit,
So that I may see your cross,
And accept my own
Without complaint.*

*Jesus, it is today
That you receive me as a friend,
That you give me courage
And a taste for service
Which put me into the hands of your Father,
So that I may please Him in everything.*

*Jesus, it is today
That I sense your Spirit
Flowing through my whole being,
Bathing me with peace,
Filling me with joy.*

*Jesus it is today
That you are the essence of my life,
And the love that animates me;
That you invite me to learn from Mary. Amen.
(Louis-Marie Parent, *The present moment*)*

The Present Moment

7385, boulevard Parent
Trois-Rivières (Québec) Canada - G9A 5E1
Phone : (819) 375-7933
Fax : (819) 691-1841
E-Mail : ivd.cent@cgocable.ca

The newsletter *The Present Moment* is a publication of
the Voluntas Dei Institute

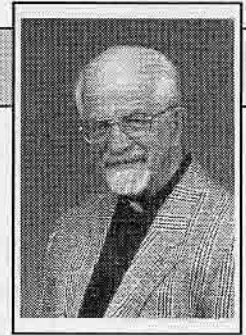
Director and Editor :
Cécile Corneau

Editorial Committee :
Cécile Corneau, Roger Corneau, Léo Grégoire, François
Hamel et Jacques Harvey

Layout :
Stéphane Abran

Impression :
Modoc photocopie

Translation Committee :
Léo Grégoire, Andrew P. Mayer, Guillermo Perez
and Pierre Marois



**"It is no longer I who live,
but it is Christ who lives in me."**

Father Louis-Marie Parent, o.m.i.

Dear Friend,

On the occasion of my 90th birthday, I received at least 300 letters. I'm really not strong enough to thank you all one by one. In order to tell you of my affection and gratitude, please allow me to send you a very intimate letter that I composed during the night of July 12th, you will catch a glimpse of my relationship with the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Your letters form a flower-bed upon which I lay in the heaven of love where God creates eternal happiness for us all.

I am 90 years old now. I have been honoured in many places. I am overjoyed. I am the happiest human being, I am filled with joy and peace.

My whole being is wrapped in an indescribable sweetness, I savour God's presence. My mind is eager for God's wisdom. My goodwill is filled with Jesus' fortitude. God's will is a nourishment that I devour with taste even with passion. My heart is filled with God's tenderness, that of Jesus and Mary's Holy Hearts. I can feel the grace of God flow through my whole being. I'd like to be the loudspeaker of all loud speakers of the world to praise God with all the love He put within me.



I'm enjoying the promised hundredfold. I am the worthless pottery that contains the Lord, the tenderness of the Trinity. For me, death will be a run to throw myself in Jesus' arms under the resting gaze of the Virgin who formed me to the present moment.

I almost do not agree with the prophet Isaiah who wrote, under the Holy Spirit's inspiration "My thoughts", says the Lord, "are not like yours, and my ways are different from yours. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways and thoughts above yours." (Is 55,8-9). As Saint Paul said, I dare say: "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2,20). It is impossible to feel more in peace and to be happier than I am now. The Lord, the good Lord's Spirit flows throughout my being. My weaknesses do not repel him, on the contrary, they accentuate his merciful look. He knows that He is the instigator, the Maker of this happiness.

Thank you, Mary ! Your work in my heart is so visible that I feel I am the docile tool of the Spirit's thoughts which you have transmitted me.

Louis-Marie Parent, o.m.i.
Trois-Rivières, 12 July 2000





To find new ways of witnessing to our faith in the risen Jesus

François Hamel

Last summer, in company with Leo Grégoire, our Secretary General, I attended the World Congress of Secular Institutes in Rome. The topic under study was the challenges to formation at the beginning of the new millennium in the context of globalization. My concern for being well-prepared for this conference was an incentive for me to seriously study the documents which had been sent beforehand, and to become better acquainted with the question of globalization. What a labyrinth to go through! It is not easy to find one's way through this maze.

I must nevertheless admit that the work entailed reminded me of a basic element of secular consecration: incarnation. Incarnation is first and foremost a happening of some two thousand years ago when God became present to us in the birth of a son to a virgin of Israel. Still, this incarnation continues to this very day, and its effects have repercussions in my personal life since I acknowledge that God is still present in the year 2001. When I joined the Voluntas Dei Institute I accepted to be truly incarnated in the world, to live every day with the newspaper in one hand and a Bible in the other, because incarnation means to be fully a person of one's time and era, of one's particular milieu and condition, with a truly lively faith. Hence I can share my spiritual experience with those around me, and in this way God continues His incarnation through my own personal relationship with Him. However, before I can show this picture of the man with both the newspaper and the Bible, I must be connected to God. I must listen to the Bible, listen to what God is saying. I must also use the newspaper to get to know what is happening around me. On one hand, I hear God call-

"However, before I can show this picture of the man with both the newspaper and the Bible, I must be connected to God"

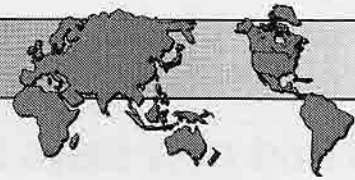
ing me to proclaim the Good News; on the other hand, I hear the world crying out its hunger for spirituality.

One must be close to the world in order to proclaim God in today's language. This is a major challenge to secular consecration. In the Bible as in the newspaper, the world is seen as both good and bad. This is very much a picture of each and everyone of us. One must take all the good, and try to change the bad by introducing it to the message of God.

You are wondering what can be the link between globalization and incarnation. Well, it seems to me that globalization is a universal phenomenon connecting all people throughout the four corners of the earth. I do not believe that we can bypass this phenomenon with its globalization of the economy, of communications, of commercial exchanges: this is not all bad, nor is it all good. I think that as consecrated secular people, it behoves us to find new areas of evangelisation. One day, Saint Paul was walking along the streets of Athens when he came across a statue "to the unknown god." He saw this as a good omen, and he set about proclaiming the Good News to the Athenians. Rather than deplore the many gods and goddesses in whom the people of Athens placed their trust, Paul introduced them to the dead and risen Christ. This is part of our mission as a secular institute: to find new ways of witnessing to our faith in the risen Jesus. It would perhaps be timely to listen together as a team to the Word of God and to question ourselves regarding the realities around us and discuss together new ways of witnessing to our mission of being a leaven to the world.



New From Home an Abroad



Things are moving in the world-wide *Voluntas Dei* Institute! The following short notices give you an idea of recent developments in those countries where we are present. We may have missed some news of general interest: if so, please do not hesitate to let us know. We are always open to your suggestions.

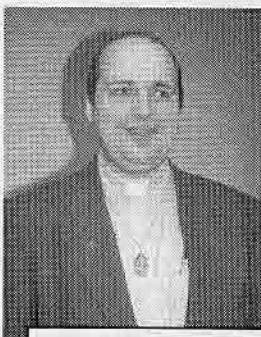
Central Council

There are new members on the council: Fathers Yves Sévère (Haiti) and Guillermo Perez (Colombia), replacing Fathers Eddy Julien and Michel Larroche. Fr. Jacques Harvey, a councillor, has been appointed Director of Formation.



Guillermo Perez

Prospects are good for the establishment of the Institute in Great Britain and Ireland, and there are already two new candidates, one each from Scotland and Italy.



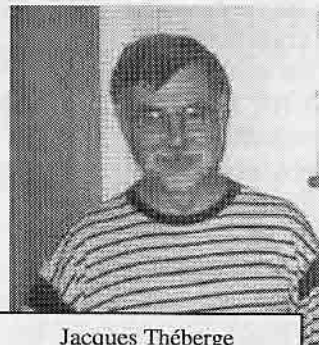
Jacques Harvey

The Central Council is planning an intermediate assembly for 2002 which will be limited to the District and the Region Directors only. A few ad hoc committees have already been formed, one of which, chaired by Jacques Harvey, will shortly decide on the assembly's venue, duration, and topics of deliberation. Another committee (chair: Jean Lebrun) will determine the procedure to be followed.

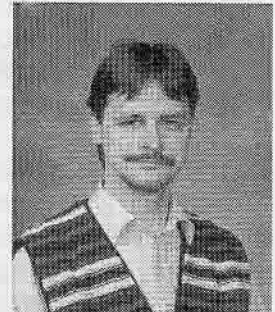
Early this year the Director General, Fr. François Hamel, made a canonical visitation of Laos, Sri Lanka, and India; more details will follow. In August, Father Hamel and Fr. Leo Grégoire, the secretary general, attended the World Congress

of Secular Institutes in Rome. The Congress theme was *The formation of members of secular institutes: welcoming the initiatives of God and espousing the sentiments of Christ Jesus in order to respond with discernment to the cultural challenges of the Third Millennium.* On this occasion, François Hamel has been elected on the Executive Committee of the World Congress of Secular Institutes. Congratulations, François!

The Vocation and Mission Office extends grateful thanks to Jacques Théberge for his work and enthusiasm in the two years he expended in the cause of vocations and missions, and as liaison with our benefactors. Our best wishes go with him in his new apostolate. Stéphane Abran has temporarily replaced Jacques since November.



Jacques Théberge



Stéphane Abran

The new Aspirant's Guide, in French, English, and Spanish, will be available to every district and region of the Institute by June, 2001. Our hope is that it will be a springboard to formation and a useful tool for all teams making use of it.

You have probably heard that our Director General has had acute appendicitis! This unsched-



uled trouble caused serious inconvenience which, besides a forced convalescence, has kept him from undertaking the visit in Colombia, Ecuador, and Chile. Game postponed! Get well soon!

To end on a brighter note, we extend a warm welcome to the new secretary of the Central Administration, at Trois-Rivières: the energetic Mrs. Renée Bastien.

Canadien District

District life continues with its ups and downs, with arrivals to and departures from the Institute. The district has a total of 135 members in 19 teams and 6 sectors; one of these sectors is for district-wide Anglophone members.

Following a district assembly decision, district headquarters offices were opened, independent of the director's living quarters.

The district has several active committees: finance, member formation, and ordained ministries formation, for example. Regular meetings are held with candidates to ministries. The finance committee is looking into the possibility of using accounting software for its operations.

A married couple, members of the Institute, represent the Institute at the Canadian Conference of Secular Institutes.

André Morin, a member of the district, was ordained a permanent deacon, lately.

The district plans an in-depth study on the meaning of our mission as a secular institute in the world today, and the meaning of consecration of married members confronted with the challenges of today's society.



André Morin

Haiti District-in-Formation

The financial question deeply affects this country so sorely afflicted by globalization which impoverishes the people more and more. The Haiti district has been working long and hard to become financially independent. Despite this problem, the Institute is alive and well, with membership divided into three sectors. They are concerned with member formation. The student exchange agreement with the Dominican Republic is a good sign of their initiative.

There was joyous celebration at the ordination of five new priests, and in the anticipation of four others being ordained shortly.

A special effort is also being made for the formation of several married couples who joined us in the last few years.

Altagracia District-in-Formation, Dominican Republic.

The *Bulletin*, official organ of the district, has news of everyone, and is a good fellowship-building tool. It also reported on the meaning and the different activities relating to the Year 2000 Jubilee. According to this newsletter, there are several requests to join the Institute.

Two seminarians from India were welcomed to continue their priestly formation in the Republic.

Two district members, Hector J. Sanchez Diaz and Robert Dingman, have been ordained to the priesthood.

The district regrets the departure of Fr. Michel Laroche who had to return to Canada for health reasons.



Sri Lanka Region

There is movement, there also. Several single men have requested to join the Institute. A member has undertaken his theology courses, another has been received acolyte, and Fr. Anthony Philip has been incardinated in the Institute.

Members of the region are divided into three sectors. Their great concern is the further formation of members who have been dispersed far and wide due to the country's internal conflicts. Fr. Anthony Philip is to be commended for his translation of the Constitutions into the Tamil tongue.

As you can read in an article in this newsletter, the war is a constant worry and causes many communication problems between the sectors. One of their houses, "Thiruvady" has had to be abandoned because of these troubles.

India Region

Our director general was very impressed by the warm welcome he received last spring, when he made his visitation. The region is concerned with the formation of members in its two sectors; the formation tool employed is the *Aspirant's Guide* which all plan to study in depth, during the year.

South America Region

Fr. Pierre Marois returned to Canada in January, 2000 after 21 years as a missionary in Colombia. He is now doing parish ministry in the Ottawa-Hull region of Canada in 4 parishes.



Pierre Marois

The visit to South America which was being planned by Fr. François Hamel had to be cancelled because of his illness. The visit would have been an occasion to welcome new members from Bolivia and Venezuela. Manuel Hernan Cornejo Garate will be ordained as a new priest for this region, January 13th.

United States Region

This new region is quite active. Distance between members has been cause for the setting up of several teams.

Two of their members have been incardinated to the Institute: George F. Hazler and Malachy J. Higgiston.

Yvon Carpentier has represented the Institute for their Third Annual Congress, last August.

The above is a news summary garnered from the above-named districts and regions. We hope you enjoy reading about all this activity and our prayer is that we all carry in our hearts and daily prayer every member of the Institute.

Jacques Harvey

« Among our friends there are those who live in the past and those who live in the future; Very few live in the present. At times you hear people in their thirties saying, "In my time we didn't act as they do today." Is life so brief that we can believe it passes us by so quickly? »

Louis-Marie Parent, "The present moment"

Meeting 2000 of Voluntas and Oblates

The secular institutes, Voluntas Dei, Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate and their affiliated members, The Volunteers of God gathered together for the first time in order to celebrate in fellowship and joy during the Jubilee year.

Under the theme, *Let's Celebrate Our Roots*, more than 300 members came together with their founder, Father Louis Marie Parent, O.M.I. The meeting took on the flavour of our common spirituality, the three "5's": the presence of God, absence of criticism, absence of complaint, being of service and peacemaker.

Those responsible for each group, Father Francois Hamel of the Voluntas Dei Institute, Ms. Simone Huneault, Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate and Ms. Marie Martineau, Volunteers of God, stressed the importance in this holy year of discovering our mission of evangelization as prophets in the midst of the world by being through our lives and witness carriers of the Good News.

A prophet disturbs and that is what the members of each group expressed which becomes evident in the expression of love, unconditional acceptance, open-

ness to the Spirit and lived evangelical counsels in Christian contacts.



Louise Tardif, Father Louis-Marie Parent and Robert Drolet

This meeting took place at the Basilica of Notre-Dame-du-Cap at Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Quebec, on May 6th, 2000, and was crowned by the celebration of the Eucharist presided by Bishop Martin Veillette of Trois-Rivieres.

Louisette Simard-Tremblay, i.v.Dei

A BROTHERHOOD WITHOUT LIMITS

By Jacques Théberge

"The Institute participates in the mission of the Church, which is sent by Christ, to reveal and communicate God's love to the peoples of all nations". It is with these words that the third (3) chapter of our Constitutions begins. We are sent to all nations. Our vocation calls us to be men and women open to the world. Our brotherhood is to be without frontiers because we must go wherever Christ has his rights.

We have, in a very short time (42 years) accomplished some of our ideal for we are al-

ready present and active in twelve countries. Our concern however must go beyond the countries where we presently work. It is to the whole world that we are sent.

Our apostolic objective *to build peace and brotherhood in Christ Jesus* is essentially missionary. This missionary dimension is essential to the Institute and is part of the initial charism of its foundation. (Constitution art 13). As early as 1959, one year after its foundation, our Institute had already sent missionaries to Laos.



since then it has not stopped growing.

We must ask ourselves what it is that made our Institute grow so fast bringing to many countries the Good News of salvation. The answer could be this: we are people of service. To arrive concretely, we must continually develop our availability:

- available to the needs of the Institute so that it may function harmoniously;
- available to serve our churches, be they local or in other lands, so as to guarantee an equal distribution of the clergy for the good of the peoples who are in need of pastors;
- available to the demands that come from everywhere begging for solidarity with all persons especially with those who suffer and are less favored (art. 14)
- available to the authorities of the Institute who express to us the Will of God, and who make known to us the needs they have been made aware of.

This is what it means to be a missionary Institute. It comprises the greatness and the beauty of our vocation, for we are to be like the Virgin of the Annunciation a supple, docile simple instrument, attentive to the signs of the time.

This missionary dimension must be lived out on a daily basis. Our prayer must have no frontiers. Our preaching, our sharing, our choices must keep us free to live out our vocation. Our commitments, our formation to the different steps of incorporation into the Institute, as well as our permanent formation must develop this missionary dimension of our call.

There is, in our vocation as *Voluntas Dei* in the

midst of the world and according to the spirituality of secular institutes, a definite and demanding call that leads us to heroism. To be free and remain committed to the mission, one must discern the obstacles that could paralyse our missionary thrust and our availability. These obstacles often have beautiful names, but remain major obstacles to true availability. To identify them, one must respond to the following question: If someone asks me to go and help a diocese which has a shortage of priests, what would stop me from leaving in a few days? A house? Loved ones? Job security? Personal projects? Comfort???

Associated members live a different form of service in the Church and must concretely take different paths. For them, availability is directed towards family, team life, Christian education of their children, fostering vocations to the missionary life, witnessing gospel values in the midst of temporal realities. *Consecration does not change the exterior of persons, but creates an indispensable climate to live a deep relationship with God and to help others do the same, according to the different personal gifts each one has been given.* (L.-M. Parent). As we are present where Providence has brought us, we bring Christ there by enlightening our surroundings with our spirituality. It is not a menial call but a heroic mission. If we accused the *Voluntas Dei* couples who live a consecrated life in the midst of secular realities, could we find enough evidence to incriminate them?

Let us be proud of our calling as *Voluntas Dei* members. By looking at us live, might others start to question their values. Truly, the future is in the mission!

As we are present where Providence has brought us, we bring Christ there by enlightening our surroundings with our spirituality.



The World Congress of Secular Institutes

On August 28, 2000, Pope John Paul II received in audience the delegates to the World Congress of Secular Institutes. The following is a short excerpt from his address to the delegates:

«You are by vocation at the crossroad of the coming together of the initiative of God and the expectation of creation: the initiative of God which you bring forth to the world through love and a deeper union with Christ; and the expectation of creation which you share with the daily secular condition of those around you.»

Secular institutes join together baptized persons from throughout the world who, consecrated in celibacy, share the charism of living this consecration in the midst of society. The institutes have flourished in the Church since before Vatican Council II.»

Referring to his apostolic exhortation on lay Christians, he added the following: *«Formation is concerned in a global way with the whole of consecrated*

life. It also finds nourishment from the analyses and reflections of experts in sociology and the other human sciences, but it cannot neglect its vital centre as the criterion for a Christian evaluation of the historical phenomena, namely the spiritual, theological, and wisdom dimensions of the life of faith; these dimensions give the ultimate and decisive keys for a reading of today's human condition and for the choice of priorities and styles of an authentic witness.»

« You are by vocation at the crossroad of the coming together of the initiative of God and the expectation of creation: the initiative of God which you bring forth to the world through love and a deeper union with Christ»

«Do not let yourselves be misled by simplistic optimists, but remain faithful witnesses to a God who loves humankind and who offers it the necessary grace to work efficiently at the building of a better world, more just and respectful of the dignity of every human being.»

the Pope called on consecrated people to take on their personal responsibilities in society without waiting for things to come to them from *great institutions.*

SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS PARENT ILLAM

REMINISCENCE

By an agreement made between the late Bishop Jerome Emilianuspillai, o.m.i., the Bishop of Jaffna and Father Louis-Marie Parent, o.m.i., the founder of the Institute Voluntas Dei, and by the Decree of the same Bishop, the Institute Voluntas Dei was first started on January 16, 1970 in the Diocese of Jaffna. The pioneering members were Fathers Florentine Rajaratnam, Ratneiah and Marusalene a celibate layman-catechist, they started living in a small parish dedicated to St John the Baptist at Chundikuli, Jaffna.

Five years later, during the episcopate of Bishop Deogupillai, Bishop Emeritus of Jaffna, with the arrival of Fathers Guy F. Thurasingham and Patrick Gnanapragasam, a team of the Voluntas Dei members was started under the able leadership of Fr. Florentine Rajaratnam at Muhamalai. Marusalene too joined the team at Muhamalai. A small pilgrim center, dedicated to Our Lady of Good Health was entrusted by the Bishop to the care of the Voluntas Dei priests.

Mahamalai is a small village in the suburbs of the Jaffna Peninsula, about 22 miles away from the



town – and close to Elephantpass - the neck connecting Jaffna Peninsula and the mainland.

Florentine Rajaratnam recalls the day the foundation stone was laid for *Parent Illam* - the house named after the founder of the Institute. He writes in his message to the souvenir:

My thoughts go back to the day of the Foundation, when our Founder, Louis-Marie Parent, o.m.i.,



Maison Parent Illam

asked for a sign from heaven to ensure that it was the will of God and the endeavour to be a success. the sign appeared within a minute, in the form of pouring rain, which came out of nowhere breaking through the clear blue sky. God's hand was with us then and is with us now.

Our Heavenly Father has designed the foundation of *Parent Illam* in his plan for the Institute in Sri Lanka.

CELEBRATIONS

During the 25 years of its presence in Muhamalai, *Parent Illam* became the place of spiritual consolation and a vital centre in the Diocese of Jaffna. Priests, religious and the laity spent days in retreat under the guidance of Voluntas Dei priests. During the time of war, God protected *Parent Illam* from heavy bombing and artillery attacks in and around Muhamalai on several occasions. *Parent Illam* served as the transit camp for several thousands of refugees. the Bishop of Jaffna stayed at *Parent Illam* and it became a temporary Bishop's House. In addition to this, *Parent Illam* accommodated the contemplative nuns of the Congregation of the Rosarians for a couple of years when their two convents were bombed.

The Silver Jubilee of *Parent Illam* is a memorable experience, not only for the Voluntas but also for the entire local Church in Jaffna.

A special concelebrated Thanksgiving Mass was offered on Feb. 28, 2000 at Mulamalai presided by Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Savundaranayagam, the Bishop of Jaffna in the presence of a large number of priests, religious, laity and the members of the Institute. It is to be noted with much enthusiasm that Fr. François Hamel, i.v.Dei, the Director General and Fr. Florentine Rajaratnam, i.v.Dei, both from Canada, were present at this joyful celebration. they were generous enough to undergo the hardship and the ordeal of travelling to Jaffna.

After Eucharistic celebration, the members of Jaffna Sector organized a special programme. Fr. J. B. Selvarajah, the Vicar General of Jaffna, Fr. François Hamel, i.v.Dei, the Director General, Fr. A. R. Lloyd Shanthikumar, i.v.Dei, the Regional Director, Fr. A. Philip, i.v.Dei, the former Regional Director and Fr. Florentine Rajaratnam, i.v.Dei, the pioneers and founder-members of *Parent Illam* addressed the gathering with hearts full of past memories, gratitude and hopeful expectation for the development of the Institute in Sri Lanka. the Director General released a souvenir. Fr. Florentine Rajaratnam, i.v.Dei and Marusalene, i.v.Dei,



François Hamel, Director General at the silver Jubilee celebration

celibate layman, two great personalities who cannot be dissociated from *Parent Illam* were honoured in the traditional way. The children as the associate members staged the traditional dance, called *Bharata Natyam*. The minor seminarians in



Jaffna Sector performed a song-story recalling the Foundation of *Parent Illam* and the growth of the Institute on Sri Lanka. Lunch was served to all present.

POST-CELEBRATIONS

A couple of weeks after the Silver Jubilee celebrations, the war between the security forces and the militants erupted unexpectedly, this time at Muhamalai, which is in close proximity to the tight security base of the government forces at Elephant-pass.

Marusalene and the students residing at *Parent Illam* had to leave, as Muhamalai area became the target of war. Several thousands of civilians have become refugees; some of them have moved into Jaffna town. Marusalene and the students joined Fr. Dunstan and others at Thiruvady, in Columbuthurai - a

formation house in Jaffna town. Recently, Jaffna town also has become the war zone. Consequently, Dunstan, Marusalene and the students left Thiruvady too and are living as refugees in a place called Anai-kodddai, a small village, northwest of the town. All our associate members also have become refugees. It is with much concern that we mention that both our houses in the Diocese of Jaffna have suffered severe damage with the loss of furniture.

They are all living under difficult situation undergoing hardship, without sufficient food, shelter and medicine and without proper communication with us. We remember our suffering brethren in Jaffna and express our solidarity and concern, particularly at this time of need.

Fr. A. R. Lloyd Shanthikumar, ivDei.
Regional Director - Sri Lanka.

In memoriam 2000



Yves Cauchy, the husband of Marguerite Picard of Ottawa (Canada) passed away on October 21, 2000.

Otilio Gutierrez, the husband of Elvira Ramirez of San Pedro de Macoris Dominican Republic) passed away during the week of the 6th of October, 2000.

We take advantage of this opportunity to unite with Margot and Elvira and their families to ask God to welcome Yves and Otilio with kindness and to allow them to partake of their inheritance as children of God: eternal life.

PRAYER FOR OUR DECEASED FRIENDS

Prayer for Our Deceased Friends
We no longer see them with our eyes.
We have left them in Your hands
and we know, through Jesus, the Christ,
that you keep them
Help us to trust in you.
Strengthen our hope.
May you safeguard us
who are enclosed in our memories.
May you support us each day.
May you stress the announcement

of your victory upon those
for whom death creates despair.
Higher than our concern,
Our sufferings and our fragile happiness,
Lift our hearts toward the heavenly Kingdom
where your Son has gone to prepare
a place for us.

It is in His name that we pray to You.
Amen.

(Taken from the journal *Prayer*)



Boulevard Parent: Irate Residents

Opposed to a Change of Name for Their Street

In a letter dated March 29, 2000, the City of Trois-Rivières advised that the name of "Boulevard Parent" would be changed to "Côte Rosemont" effective July 1, 2000. It should be noted that the boulevard has been bearing Father Parent's name since 1960.

Opposition

As soon as the news came out, opposition to this name change was quickly organized. Several letters were sent to His Worship Mayor Guy Leblanc and his council on behalf of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate and the Voluntas Dei Institutes. Residents, business people and industries joined forces in voicing their strong opposition to such a change. Over two hundred signed the petition sent to the mayor.

Vocal Opposition at the April 17 and May 1 Council Meetings

Many Boulevard Parent residents turned up at the city council meetings. Mme Fernande St-Onge, O.M.M.I., and Fr. François Hamel, urged the council to carefully consider their action. Local business people also intervene: Mr. Albéo Mazerolle and Mr. Paul Tellier point out the huge cost which would be involved in changing the street name. In Trois-Rivières where poverty reigns supreme, should we not use our money more wisely in that direction rather than on a street name change? Council members were visibly embarrassed; they listened and considered the question. The citizens' intervention will make the headlines in *Le Nouvelliste*, the local newspaper, as well in both television and radio news broadcasts.

Council Reconsiders and Annuls Its Decision

Considering the opposition, the city council sends another letter stating that "Boulevard Parent" will be retained as the street name. DEO GRATIAS! The city elders came back on their decision.

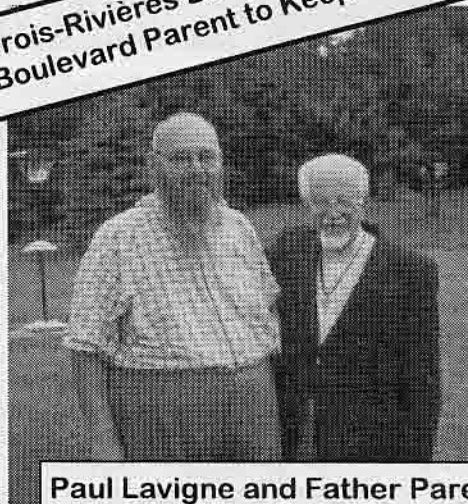
A Close Call!

Throughout this affair the citizens opposed to the city's arbitrary decision were inspired by the city's own motto: *Si Dieu est avec nous qui sera contre nous?* ("If God is for us, who can be against us?")

So, whenever people drive into Trois-Rivières, they will be greeted with the sign, "Trois-Rivières, City of History and Culture" ("Trois-Rivières, ville d'histoire et de culture"), and the words will ring true because Boulevard Parent will keep its name.

Paul-René Lavigne
Central House

Trois-Rivières Does an About-face:
Boulevard Parent to Keep Its Name



Paul Lavigne and Father Parent



From the beginning....

By Cécile Davidson-Corneau



Association of Perfection

On 31 May 1963 the Most Reverend Joseph-Roméo Gagnon, Bishop of Edmundston, raised our canonical status from that of a Pious Union to the rank of Association of Perfection under the name of *Voluntas Dei Institute*.

Major Seminary and International Outreach (1964-1970)

Since 1963 students come to us from mission lands to be initiated in the secular institute formula with the view of establishing the *Voluntas Dei Institute* in their own country. We thereupon decide to open a major seminary to replace the minor seminary in Arthurette, New Brunswick. In 1965, an impressive number arrives from Haiti, then others come from other Caribbean countries, from South America, Asia, etc. In 1964, a team from the Institute takes charge of a residence for Indian students in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. In 1965, the *Voluntas Dei Institute* establishes its presence in Haiti. The Institute then becomes present in Ecuador, is implanted in Sri Lanka and has its beginnings in India in 1969. In Canada itself, with the ordination of new priests we are soon to be found in ten dioceses

Secular Institute of Diocesan Right

On 2 July 1965 the *Voluntas Dei Institute* is canonically erected as a Secular Institute of Diocesan Right by Bishop Gagnon of Edmundston, after having received the *Nihil Obstat* from the Sacred Congregation for Religious.

Internal Organization

The Institute's first Assembly General, held in three

sessions from 1969 to 1971, consolidates our project and specifies its objective and apostolic thrust.

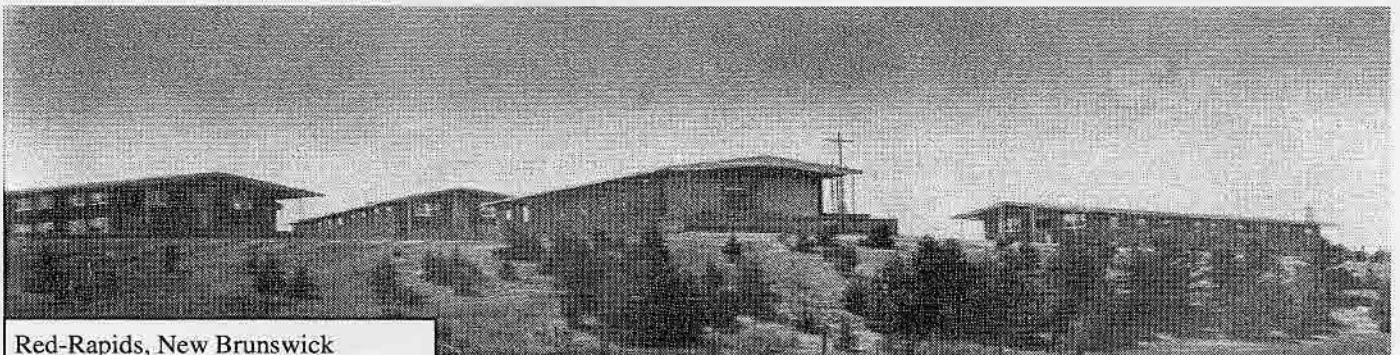
The first seminarians from mission countries return home as priests. Henceforth, formation will be available in one's own country, in each sufficiently organized district. As a consequence of this, members in training and seminarians become much less numerous in Canada, so in 1971 the major seminary at Red Rapids closes its doors and in 1972 the same happens to the philosophy seminary at Trois-Rivières. In Canada, students of the Institute are sent to diocesan institutions, colleges and universities.

New Foundations and VMO

During this ten-year period the Institute would be established in the Dominican Republic, the southern United States, Mexico and Columbia.. This amazing development of our young Institute forces us to appeal to our members and friends and to religious communities for their generosity. The Institute's Vocation and Mission Office accomplishes real miracles! This particular work has not ceased to expand through all these years until today..

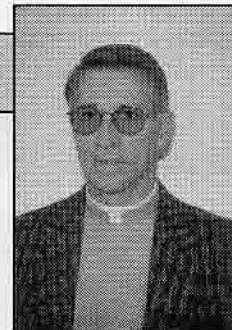
Presence of married couples in the Institute

Reflection upon the experience of married members in Laos helps us to better understand this particular type of vocation in the Institute and 'provides for this same possibility for other districts. In Canada and the Dominican Republic a number of married couples join the Institute to share the apostolic objective and the spirituality offered by the Institute.



Red-Rapids, New Brunswick





Called to Serve...

Marcel Forest

A priestly vocation, the religious life or a missionary vocation are born within a mother's heart and are nurtured in the midst of the family, the school and its educators, and the parish.

A native of Manitoba [Canada], I was blessed with good Christian parents, and grew up with six brothers and 4 sisters: this was already a good introduction to team life. Besides frequent contacts with the local priest I had uncles who were priests and missionaries, as well as aunts and one sister who were religious.

At the age of 12 I felt drawn to the priesthood and perhaps a missionary life. It was a long process of discernment, of difficult studies which I gave up after three years of classical studies with the Jesuit's at Saint Boniface, Manitoba.

In 1958, after working for two years on the family farm, I heard about the newly-founded Voluntas Dei Institute through Father Roland, a family friend. I in-

quired about the Institute and asked to join; Father Parent readily accepted me. On June 29, 1958 I came to Cap-de-la-Madeleine [Québec] and met Father

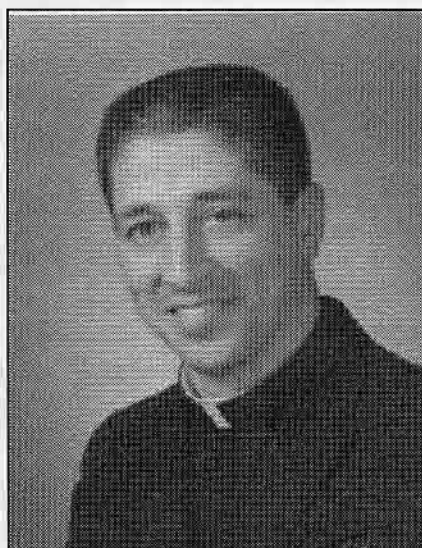


Photo prise à l'occasion de son ordination sacerdotale le 17 juin 1967

Parent. I told him about my desire to be lay missionary, since I had relatively little schooling. Father had other plans and he offered that I undertake studies for the priesthood.

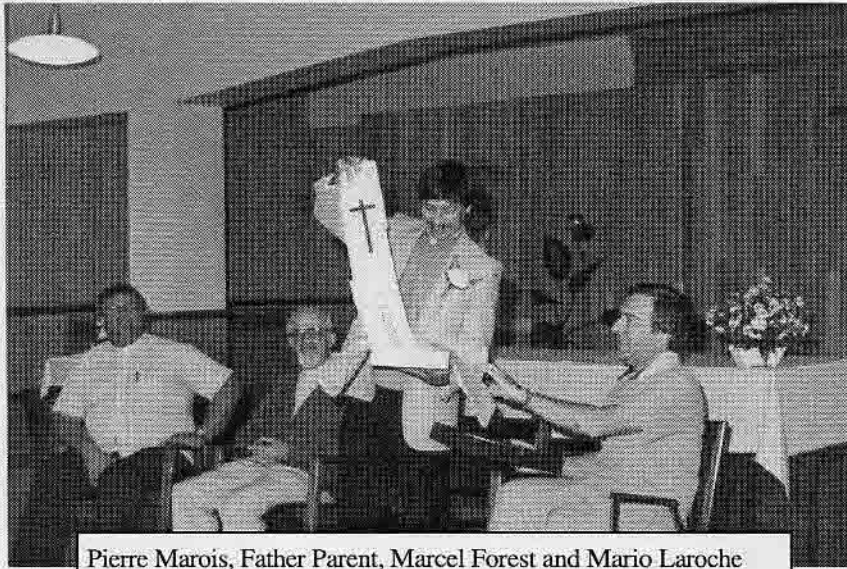
July 2, 1958 marks the day of the foundation of the Pious Union which was to become the Voluntas Dei Institute; the members met

together in the chapel of Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette in the suburb of Trois-Rivières. Along with Father Parent and Father Blais, we were nine seminarians and one lay missionary full of goodwill, enthusiasm, with a desire to discern the will of God and a willingness to place ourselves at His service within a team with a missionary vision.

For three weeks Father Parent gave conferences to initiate us in the practice of the Spirituality of the Three Fives (5 spiritual exercises, 5 Christian attitudes, 5 Christian contacts). Ours is a permanent formation, in the Institute. It is each individual's responsibility to internalise this training with the support of team members in bi-weekly meetings where we experience fellowship, sharing of experiences, joys and difficulties, and where we pray, deepen our spirituality, and celebrate together.

As far as living quarters were concerned, we could live above the chapel in an attic-like room which was





Pierre Marois, Father Parent, Marcel Forest and Mario Laroche

enclosed to form a kitchen, dining room, classrooms, and bedrooms. The work involved was mostly undertaken by the students themselves with the help of Jean-Claude Véronneau, our lay missionary, and Father Armand Aumont, a Trappist monk from Oka, who came to help the Institute with the formation of its members.

Fortunately we had help from the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate who had been founded in 1952. They gave us welcomed personnel: cooks, laundresses, seamstresses, secretaries, and teachers. They also help materially by donating furniture and financial aid. The students come with their goodwill, their talents and their desire to serve the Church, but as most come from poor fami-

lies, they are without financial resources. Father Parent, unwilling to keep the Voluntas family from growing for lack of money, did not refuse candidates to the priesthood or the consecrated life. So he would seek the generous help of these Oblates. These women were Providence itself, to us! And so, I want to thank the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, their directors and councils for having helped the Institute in so many ways, material and spiritual, and help in competent and generous personnel, Oblates who witnessed to the gift of self, to joy, prayer and charity, as well as to the living of the 5-5-5.

From the very beginning the members were builders of the Institute but also of buildings to shelter the new-

comers, of classrooms, etc... In order to compensate a bit for all the help given by the Oblates, during the summer holidays the Voluntas Dei worked at building several houses for the needs of the O.M.M.I.

It was in this atmosphere of rubbing shoulders that we learned to pray and to live the spirituality, and we received the academic training which allowed several of us to reach the priesthood or the missionary vocation. There was much happiness, and many memories rise to the surface, like the weekly begging expedition to the public market at Trois-Rivières. Every Friday after supper 6 or 8 of us would leave 2 by 2 with flower-print shopping bags cut from old curtains to go to the meat, fish, vegetable and pastry counters, in search of charity... *"Here come the Little Fathers from Salette!"* An obvious sign of Providence.

I must also point out the help received from the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate the Oblate Fathers in the founding of the Institute. We are grateful to them for allowing Father Parent to found the Institute and to lead us to maturity and self-government. Thanks also to the Oblate formators like



Fathers Lucien Pépin and Jean Pétrin surnamed "the good," and Father Roger Gauthier, all of whom had a valuable spiritual influence on the first generation of Voluntas Dei.

Following four years of study at La Salette I did two years of theology at St. Boniface, Manitoba, and two at the Voluntas Dei Seminary at Red Rapids, New Brunswick. I was ordained in 1967.

I thank Father Parent for having welcomed me in the Institute and directed me to-

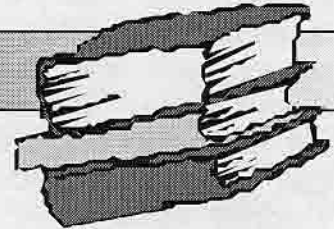


Marcel Forest, Guy Maillé, Father Louis-Marie Parent, Raymond Gendron and Laurette Richard

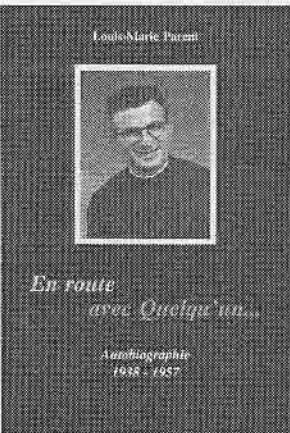
w
ar
d

S

Have you read?



Here are a few suggestions for readings in French. If you have suggestions for readings in French, English or Spanish, please send them to the Central Office in Trois-Rivieres.



On the Way with Someone: An autobiography, 1938-1957 of Father Louis-Marie parent, O.M.I., Trois-Rivieres, Quebec: Volunteers of God. circa 1999.

"To read the second book of his autobiography, *On the Way With Someone* it is necessary to place ourselves in the 40's and 50's, in a special environment where people breathed in the sense of being conquerors in a vast wilderness. As a missionary in the West, Father Louis-Marie Parent, distinguished himself for his bold personality, his methods of evangelization, and his fearlessness; the exercise of his ministry will often go beyond the established boundaries of his time.

His faithful memory, well oriented toward need through personal archives, could tell the story over and over again . . . But, I see myself saying, hoping to leave these years in the shadow of the past: *It is already more than enough . . . Let's turn the page . . . God knows and what is important is there.*"

Fernande St-Onge, o.m.m.l.



ordinations

République Dominicaine

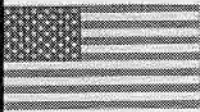


Robert Dingman



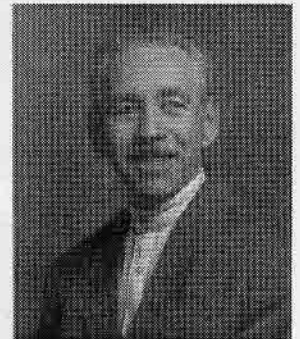
Hector Justo Sanchez

États-Unis



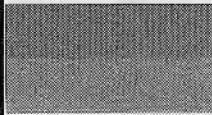
Arthur Candreva and John O'Neil

Canada



André Morin

Haïti



Evens Francis



Anthony Étienne



Yves-Gérald Richemond



Pierre-Célestin Cariès



And Paul Janvier



In these privileged times of history and of the Church,
The Lord calls upon you to live your consecration in the world,
From the world and for the world.
The world cannot tarnish nor decrease the wealth and fecundity of
consecration,
Neither can consecration wrest you from the commitment
and responsibility of the daily task.
Totally committed with Christ,
Your minds are open to what is eternal,
You are the witnesses of the Absolute,
But always within the sphere of temporal life.

Cardinal Eduardo F. Pironio,



The members of the Institute recognise in Mary Immaculate their mother and teacher in the faith
and the apostolic mission.

They also recognise in her their perfect model,
She whose life was one of total assent to the will of God.

That is why the Institute has chosen for its patronal feast the Annunciation,
The day on which the entire Church celebrates the mystery of the Virgin Mary's Fiat.



Episcopal Appointment

On January 3, 2001, the Holy Father, John Paul II, appointed Reverend Louis-Marie Ling Mangkhanek-houn i.v.Dei to the Apostolic Vicariate of Pakse. The new Bishop has been awarded the titular seat of *Acque nuove di Proconsolare*. At the time of his appointment he was the delegated Vicar of the Apostolic Vicariate of Vientiane and the Pastor of the Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in Paksane.

The ordination of the new Bishop took place in Laos on Sunday April 22nd. Bishop Ling has chosen as his motto "*Ut Unum Sint*" (Cf John 17:21) which means "Let them Be One."

Bishop Louis-Marie Ling has been a member of our Institute since 1963. He was ordained a priest in 1972. He is the first member of the Institute to attain the episcopacy. We take this opportunity to wish him "Our Fraternal Joy" and to assure him of our prayers and support for a productive episcopacy. "Ad multos annos."



Pope Jean-Paul II and Louis-Marie Ling, i.v.Dei

« *Ut unum sint* »