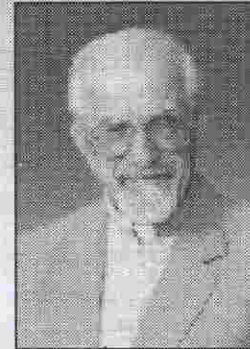


The Present Moment

Volume 3 ~ Number 1

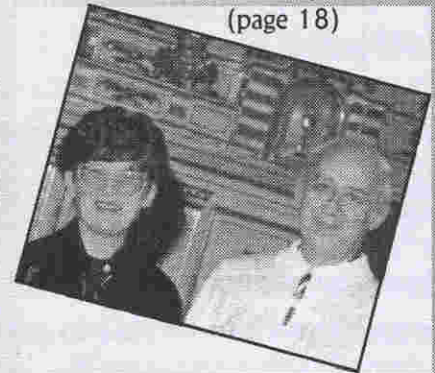
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WELCOME ...



Happy Year 2002!

by Marie Meunier, secretary

At the beginning of this year, we take advantage of this opportunity to wish you a 2002 filled with happiness and peace!

Do not forget when you visit your corner of the country, your team ... by means of the journal, it is up to you to send us your comments, articles or photos. It is through you and with you that life will burst forth!

As for me, since the end of September, it has been my pleasure to respond to your calls and requests. I only hope that during the course of this new year, I will have the pleasure of meeting a number of you. It is always pleasant to be able to get to know you.

May your reading be good and pleasurable in "the present moment." ❖

YOU ARE MY GUIDE

LORD,
You guide and direct me
in the paths of your Love;
You lighten my way
when I am in search of You;
You support me
when I am brought to doubting myself;
You restore my hope
when difficulties assail me;
You fill me with joy
at the moment when I do not expect
anything;
You inspire me in what must be said
to the one who seeks comfort;
You are my light, my rock, my support,
my only reason for living.
Thank you, Lord, for what You are. Amen

Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I.

The Present Moment

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Pierre Hubert, Jacques Harvey, Cécile Corneau

Translation :
Andrew P. Mayer – Guillermo Perez



The beautiful challenge of faith

by François Hamel

When I was young, I worked at the Basilica of Notre-Dame-du-Cap. During my years there, I mixed with the Oblates. Sometimes, it came to me to think about the Oblate missions in Northern Quebec, but it was not there that Christ awaited me. I had met some *Voluntas Dei* during my journey: Marcel Forest at the Basilica of Notre-Dame, Cap-de-la-Madeleine and Gaston Laroche at the minor seminary of Trois-Rivières. It was later, after my studies in theology, that Gaston invited me to the Institute. The Lord was there behind this invitation. Not for a single moment have I regretted saying yes. Even today, I recognize the subtle presence of Mary in my life. She also said YES to the Lord, then she followed her Son in a discrete manner but with an incredible presence. I also sense her subtlety and presence in my life, leaving to her Son the primary place in my heart.

With them, I have risked the wonderful challenges of faith. A faith that gives meaning to life.

When I professed my first vows, I risked secular consecration. I assure you that I asked myself whether this was truly my place within the Church. Nevertheless, I risked. When I was ordained as a priest, I was afraid also that I would not be up to the challenge of such a service within the Church, but I risked, convinced that the Spirit would be there. In 1998, when

"I have never taken a risk without first preparing myself for it through prayer."

I was elected Director General, I hesitated greatly. I again risked, convinced that my sisters and brothers supported me in this responsibility.

Today, when I look clearly upon my situation, I perceive that I took risks more than I dare to admit. I must acknowledge that I never took a

risk without first preparing myself for it through prayer. Each challenge that I undertook disclosed to me an extraordinary strength of life.

I would like to dwell on the challenge of the general direction of the Institute. People have told me that my preparation in canon law would be a major asset. That is a fact that I cannot deny. Several dossiers have a character of this type. I think here about the indult to call to Holy Orders which has yet to be supported by the Congregation for Consecrated Life. I think of my involvement in the World Conference of Secular Institutes, of the different documents prepared for the ordination of certain confreres, of the districts and regions in updating their status without counting the requests for changing the type of governance (region, district in formation and officially erected). This is what consumes my time and gives me great pleasure.

There is, however, a dimension that is more important than canonical aspects and that is human relationships. Since my entry into the Institute, I have met extraordinary men and women who share the same desire to live secular consecration in the reality of the present moment in the midst of the world. During the past three years, I have enlarged again the sphere of my acquaintances.

I was able to visit my brothers and sisters in the Dominican Republic (1999), in India, Sri Lanka and Laos (2000), the United States (2000-2001) and a part of Canada (1999-2001). A single expression describes my experience: there is enthusiasm at all levels. I believe the spiritual experience is that of Jeremiah: "You have charmed me Lord, I have let myself be charmed. by these wonderful things." (Jer 20, 7) How could it be otherwise?

The dynamism of the Dominicans, the peacefulness of those in India, the kindness of the Sri Lankans, the deep faith of the Laotians, the willingness to go forward of the Americans and the commitment of the Canadians, are so many instances of marvel. And it remains for me yet to experience the qualities of the Haitians, Ecuadorians, Colombians, Chileans and Bolivians.

Some other things are on the horizon. We have accepted someone from Scotland, another from Italy and another from Kinshasa who is getting ready to go to Haiti to complete there his theology and to enhance his spirituality of the three 5's. Requests are coming from Eritrea, Zaire, Australia and Singapore. It is necessary to be attentive to the movement of the Spirit.

In each member of the Institute, I see the way that God takes to approach the men and women of our time. Through our secular consecration, we make ourselves available to God. I talked about Mary previously. She risked a YES and God employed the body of a woman to enter into humanity. By risking our own YES, God will use us to pursue His presence within humanity.

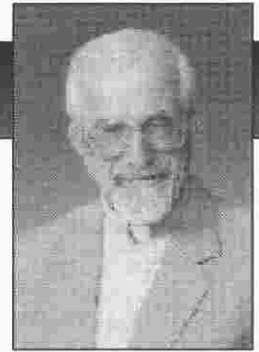
Part of the role of the Director General is to be a pilgrim. He must travel a lot of kilometers to meet the Voluntas Dei in thirteen countries where we are present. Airports become familiar places, sometimes very noisy and at other times very quiet. Each departure is a risk. Each return home is a marvel in view of the Lord's work initiated by Father Parent. ❖

50 years!

On July 2, 1952, our "big sisters", the Oblates, took root in Grand Falls, New Brunswick. They will emphasize throughout this year their half century of existence!

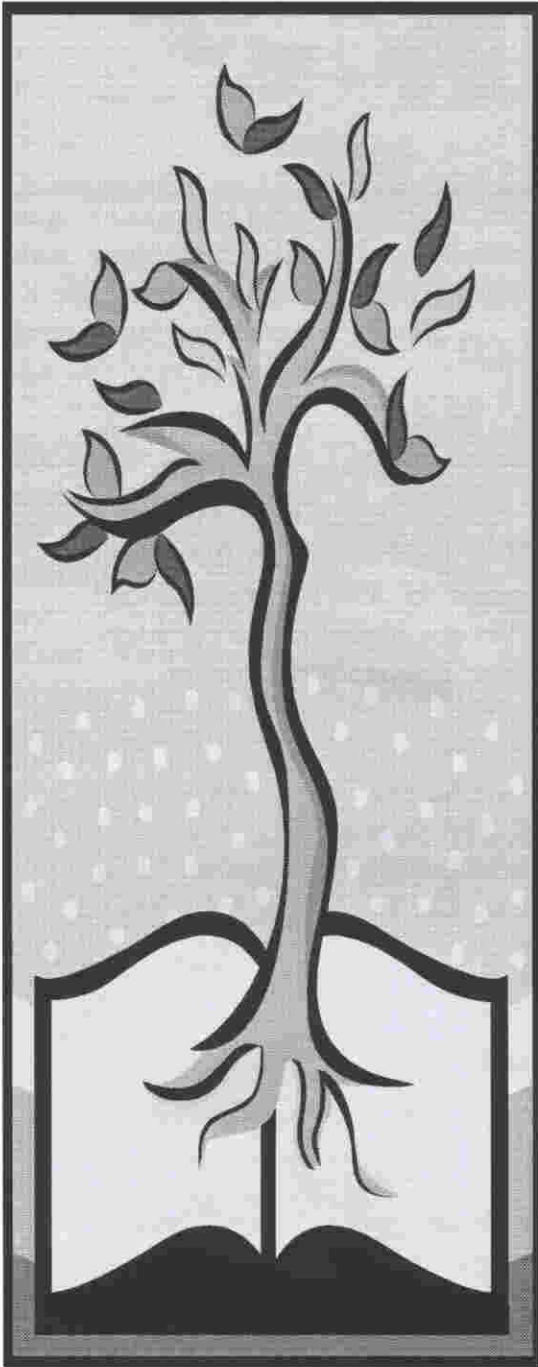
I invite all of the Directors of the districts and the regions to unite with them in prayer and to emphasize among yourselves this event.

Congratulations!



“ Lord, are You not the specialist of healing? ”

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



Lord, are You not the specialist of healing?

I will be 91 years old very soon,
I present myself to You,
You can heal whatever You want.

I offer to You my ears,
I have used them for a long time,
they have listened to so many things, heard so much noise
they no longer are worth a great deal,
I give them to You for healing.

I offer to You my eyes,
they have read, they have seen,
they have blinked, laughed and cried,
they have guided, directed and informed me,
Open, they have made me understand a great many things;
closed, they have shown me God,
in a magnificent dimension,
in a new and eternal world.

There is still a little sight, enough to guide me,
so that I have no need for a seeing-eye dog or a white cane,
enough also to see them waning bit by bit.
I give them to You for healing.

I offer to You my tongue,
it has yet a lot of power,
it seems not to be worn out,
it has a lot of effect upon people.
If it is positive, the faces radiate around me,
the smiles come on, the handshakes multiply,
the joy of living changes hearts,
as the tongues of fire transformed one day,
the apostles crowded around the Virgin
to welcome the Divine Spirit.

If my tongue is negative, my heart is ill and an epidemic of uneasiness puts off my friends, digs a hole of isolation for me, creates for me enemies, haggards my face, clouds my brain, paralyzes my heart. It is time that I give it to You for healing, Lord.

Lord, if You take my ears, my eyes, my tongue, You gather up all that I have, my soul, my spirit, my will, my heart, my strength... Say that You can heal them so that they might be useful for Your eternal glory.

Lord, You have my address, is it not the Holy Virgin which keeps it for You... Also, in gazing upon Your Mother, You see me, I hold her by the hand. It is She who picks me up, it is You Who refreshes me, it is You Who heals me, it is You Who revives me. ❖

Trois-Rivières, 7 July 2001

(Editorial note: Father Parent turned 91 on the 12th of July, 2001)

IN MEMORIAM

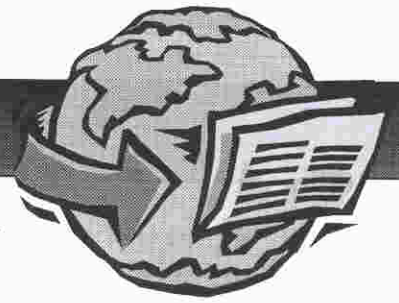


Olivier DALLAIRE (Canada) died on April 27, 2001, at the age of 66. He entered the Institute at its beginnings. In 1959, he was made part of the first group of missionaries to Laos. He was a layman. In 1975, he was driven out of the country by the arrival of the communists. Ordained a priest in 1981, he distanced himself from the Institute in 1989. He was buried in the cemetery of the Voluntas Dei at Sainte-Marthe du Cap-de-la-Madeleine.

Patrick LANNON (Canada) died on September 9, 2001 at the age of 62. He entered the Institute in 1981 and was ordained a priest in 1990. Patrick worked in Montreal. Throughout his life, he maintained a preference for the sick, especially for those in psychiatric care. He was also available for parish ministry. He was buried in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia where his family resides.

José Adolfo LLANOS ESPINOZA (Chile) passed away on October 31, 2001, at the age of 56. He was the husband of Lucia de Carmen Fuentes Amariles. He entered the Institute in 1993.

" There is no end, there is no beginning, only endless love "



By Jacques Harvey

CENTRAL COUNCIL

Francois Hamel, Director General, visited the members of the Abitibi area of the Canadian District during the last weeks of September. One of theirs, Yves Dionne, was ordained to the diaconate on October 28th by Bishop Jean-Guy Hamelin.

Serge Martel has been working as the accountant since September. He replaces Gertrude Garant, Oblate, who has fulfilled this task with excellence throughout several years. Thank you to Gertrude and welcome to Serge!

Since September, the Central Administration is happy to welcome Father Jean-Paul Chiasson as the Director of the Office of Vocations and Missions.

Marie Meunier occupies from now on the position of secretary-receptionist at the Central House. Welcome!



From left to right : Jean-Paul Chiasson, Marie Meunier, Paul-René Lavigne and Serge Martel

The Central Council of the Voluntas Dei Institute is pleased to announce the election of Fr. George Hazler, U.S. Region Director of the Voluntas Dei Institute, as vice president of the United States Conference of Secular Institutes.

We extend our best wishes for a happy and fruitful ministry in his new position!

CONSTITUTIONS – In 1999, we received authorization from Rome to change article 181 of the Constitutions which require that the functions of Secretary General and Director of Administrative Services be exercised by professed members.

The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life accept from now on that the Director of Administrative Services can be a committed member, but not the Secretary General. The article must be modified thus: " The Secretary General is chosen by the Director General and his council from among the professed members who may or not be members of the Council. The Director of Administrative Services is chosen by the Director General and his council from among the professed members or committed members of the Institute who may or not be members of the council."

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE (continued)

Aspirant's Guide: The Aspirant's Guide, 2nd Edition, was revised and published at the beginning of the summer of 2001. It should be distributed to ALL MEMBERS of the Institute to serve as a springboard for formation and sharing within the teams.

CHILE



The Institute is developing well in this part of the globe. On January 13, 2001, we were able to rejoice in the ordination to ministerial priesthood of *Manuel Cornejo Gárate*. Bishop Donoso acknowledged in the Institute a style of extraordinary life for couples and he is

happy to see them live and work with the priests in his diocese.

The teams meet every two weeks or once a month for a half day according to their needs.

COLOMBIA/ECUADOR

Despite the distance that makes gathering together difficult, the members continue to live the spirituality of the Institute in their respective milieus and try to meet as regularly as it is possible.

CANADA

The "bubbling of life," an expression dear to its Director, continues in the Canadian District with 22 teams spread out in six sectors. With new arrivals, withdrawals or deceased members, we

had an increase of 12 members for the year ending May 31, 2001.

To assist in the formation of its members, the District Council offers sessions of animation outside of the annual congress, or meetings of animation within the sector. Several documents have been produced or revised for information, formation or animation.

A poll, conducted by a professional firm along the lines of the opinions of Quebec society on the "values" surveyed, permitted the development of a chart of comparison of our own values as members of a secular institute.



The formation of candidates to ordained ministries remains a priority through the revision and adaptation of programs and the attentive accompaniment of candidates; certain of them have arrived at the point of ordination: *Guy Maille* was

ordained to the priesthood on August 26, 2001, in Val d'Or, Quebec.

In order to facilitate a better formation, the mandate of the Committee of Formation has been modified. The Committee in the future will see to the formation of members in their journey toward a new step of incorporation while still addressing the aspect of continuing formation in conjunction with those responsible for the sectors. The previous Committee of Formation becomes the Committee of Congress, having the responsibility of planning the animation of the congress as well as preparing the themes and leaflets of animation for the teams of the district.

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE (continued)

UNITED-STATES

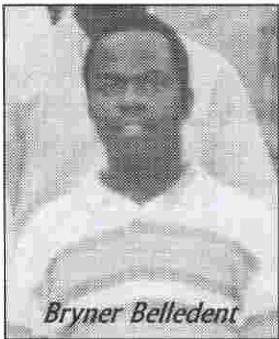
The Institute is in full development in this country. Despite the distances, the members have tried to be as faithful as possible to their team meetings. At the suggestion of the Director General, they will extend the meeting of their congress to expand this time of privileged formation.

On account of a request from a certain number of diocesan priests and priests coming from religious communities who desire to be a part of the Voluntas Dei Institute, we are examining the criteria for the transfer of a religious order member to a secular institute. We are also looking into the establishment of an office of vocation for this region as well as creating a web page.

HAÏTI

The development of the Institute continues in Haiti, so well, that its members have requested the Central Council to recognize them as an officially erected district. With the approval of the Council, the legal and ecclesiastical steps for a change in status will have to be followed. In this light, they will look into putting into place an "office of vocations and mission" for Haiti in order to address the financial issue.

Good relations continue with the Dominican Republic with which there is an exchange for the formation of members.

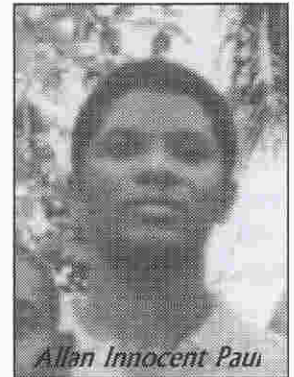


Bryner Belledent

We were able to rejoice again at the ordination of confreres this year: *Bryner Belledent, Allan Paul Innocent, Didi Horace and Jaccius Jean Pierre.*



Didi Horace



Allan Innocent Paul

At the request of the Director General, they have the intention of welcoming among themselves Guillaume Malibu from Kinshasa. He is a celibate layman who has been an aspirant for several years. He will go there to enhance his formation during his period of probation within the Institute.

They have received a visit from Father Nestor who would love to have the assistance of a priest in his country which is Cuba. The plan of translating the Constitutions into Creole has commenced and is in progress. The missionary vision is conveyed by them through the presence of Haitian priests in Guadeloupe, the United States (often for studies), Ecuador and possibly Cuba. The political and socio-economic crisis which has ruthlessly carried on in this country for fifteen years has been the source of many problems for them; extreme poverty gains a foothold daily. Happily, the positive dominates. ❖

Congratulations to each one of you and may you have a fruitful apostolate!

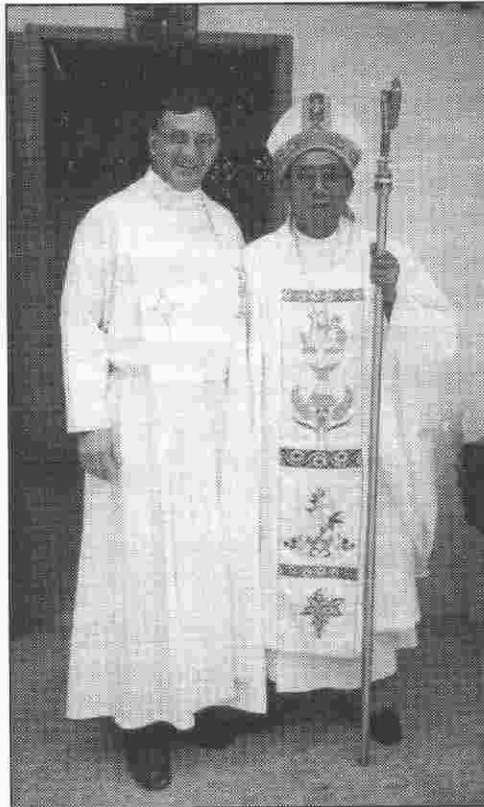
EPISCOPAL CONSECRATION

I went to Pakse, Laos, to be present at the April 22, 2001 episcopal consecration of our confrere, Louis-Marie Ling Mangkhanekhoun. When I arrived in Laos, Louis was completing his retreat in preparation for the ceremony of consecration. We were able to spend a couple of days together. I was also able to visit several parts of his diocese and had the good fortune of meeting the priests of Pakse.

On April 21, a night of prayers took place in the cathedral of Pakse. The intense heat of that time of year did not impede Christians from coming together to pray for the newly nominated bishop.

The celebration of the consecration was presided over by the bishop of Vientiane, Bishop Jean Khamse Vithavong, O.M.I. He is a bishop who knows well the *Voluntas Dei's* and who appreciates greatly all of the services that Louis had rendered in his diocese of Vientiane. Actually, Louis was the Vicar General at the time of his election. It was a moving celebration full of simplicity much like Louis. At the end of the celebration, some Buddhist monks proceeded to a blessing by aspersion. Then, the governor of the province of Champasak addressed the people gathered for the celebration.

I retain from these two events that Louis is and will remain a peace maker. At peace with men and women of other religions. At



peace also with the government officials of his magnificent country.

The episcopal consecration was followed by a festive meal. More than 1000 people were present. Closed circuit televisions televised the ceremony to those outside. One could almost feel the religious fervour of the people who participated. The heart was in the celebration. I was happy to see present French Oblate missionaries who came to Laos to accompany

Louis with their prayers and friendship. I think, among others, about Father Chevrolet and Father Gaillart, men happy to see their former student accept to serve the Church as a bishop. It was also touching to see all of the Laotian Oblates join in the joy of the Institute.

Louis succeeds Bishop Thomas Khamphan who was elected in 1975. His health had been very bad for a number of years and he was required to go regularly to Thailand for dialysis treatments. God gave him the opportunity to see his successor and to impose his hands upon him. Actually, Bishop Khamphan returned to the Father on July 26th of this year.

The election of Louis as a bishop is a great joy to the whole Institute. It is almost an explicit recognition of the excellent philosophical, theological and spiritual formation that the priests of the Institute received. It is an acknowledgement of the Church that the *Voluntas Dei* is always ready to serve *wherever Christ has his rights*.

I know that Louis prayed a great deal before receiving this episcopal responsibility. He continues to do so, I am convinced. But I would like each one of us to give thought to Louis in our daily prayers. ❖

*Francois Hamel,
Director General*

THE OBLATES

Since their last General Assembly held in July 2001, the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate have formulated the wording of their Institute's mission in the following manner:

Like Christ, to manifest the unconditional love of the Father to each person by revealing the signs of the presence of God in the midst of daily reality.

At the time of this gathering, there was the election of the President, Directress General, the Vice-President, Directress General and the members of the Council of Administration. The following are the elected members:

Simone HUNEAULT (Canada)	President, Directress General
Annette GRAND-MAISON (Canada)	Vice-President, Directress General
Winifred BURMAN (Canada)	Councillor
Annick FRANÇOIS (France)	Councillor
Marie-Paule MALENFANT (Canada)	Councillor
Claire NANTEL (Canada)	Councillor
Anita PLOURDE (United States)	Councillor
Odette RIVERIN (Canada)	Councillor
Madeline VAS (Maurice)	Councillor
Réjeanne VIDAL (Canada)	Councillor
Maria Eugenia R. YANEZ (Chile)	Councillor

**WARM CONGRATULATIONS
AND BEST WISHES FOR A FRUITFUL INFLUENCE!**

DIRECTORS AND COUNCILLORS OF THE DIFFERENT COUNCILS

Voluntas Dei Institute

Councils	Members		Term	
	Names	Title	Beginning	End
<i>Central</i>	HAMEL, François	D.G.	98-07-24	04-07-24
	MALTAIS, Réal	D.G.A.	98-07-25	
	CORNEAU, Roger	G.C.	98-07-25	
	DAVIDSON-CORNEAU, Cécile	G.C.	98-07-25	
	CRAIG, Michael	G.C.	98-07-25	
	GRÉGOIRE, Léo	G.C.	98-07-25	
	HARVEY, Jacques	G.C.	98-07-25	
	PEREZ, Guillermo	G.C.	99-10-23	
	SÉVÈRE, Yves	G.C.	99-10-23	
<i>Canadian District</i>	LAFRENIÈRE, Marc-André	D.D.	99-08-05	03-08-05
	CÔTÉ, André	D.D.A.	99-08-05	
	LEBEL, Robert	D.C.	01-05-26	
	LAROCHE, Marc	D.C.	99-08-05	
	MAYER, Andrew P.	D.C.	99-08-05	
	LEBRUN, Jean	D.C.	01-08-01	
	PERRIER-LEBRUN, Marcelle	D.C.	01-08-01	
<i>Atagracia District</i>	ARAUJO T., Ramon Antonio	D.D.	99-07-29	03-07-29
	SOLANO SOSA, Andrés	D.D.A.	99-07-29	
	DEL ROSARIO, Alejandro	D.C.	99-07-29	
	REYES GONZALEZ, Dionisio	D.C.	99-07-29	
	DE LA CRUZ, Frank Luis	D.C.	99-07-29	
	OZORIA, Inocencia	D.C.	99-07-29	
<i>District of South America</i>	HENAO ARROYAVE, Jaime A.	D.D.	99-12-20	03-12-20
	GONZALEZ MEDINA, Hernan (Chile)	D.D.A.	99-12-20	
	GARATE ROJAS, Maria Lucrecia (Chile)	D.C.	99-12-20	
	PEREZ, Guillermo	D.C.	99-12-20	
	POSADA ECHEVERY, Alonso	D.C.	99-12-20	
<i>District of Haïti</i>	JULIEN, Eddy	D.D.	99-04-26	03-04-26
	DÉSIRÉ, Philippe	D.D.A.	99-04-26	
	EUSTACHE, Madelon	D.C.	99-04-26	
	LAROQUE, Paul-Émile	D.C.	99-04-26	
	NÉMORIN, Bernard	D.C.	99-04-26	

Councils	Members		Term	
	Names	Title	Beginning	End
<i>Region of India</i>	WILFRED, Emilyas	R.D.	98-11-01	02-11-01
	THANNIKKOT, Joseph	R.D.A.	98-11-01	
	AROCKIASAMY, Anthony Samy	R.C.	98-11-01	
	RETNAMMA, Félicitta	R.C.	98-11-01	
	STANCILAUUS, Jonas	R.C.	98-11-01	
<i>Region of Sri Lanka</i>	SHANTHIKUMAR, A.R. Lloyd	R.D.	98-11-01	02-11-01
	SELVARATNAM, James Dunstan	R.D.A.	98-11-01	
	JOHNPILLAI, Joseph	R.C.	99-05-11	
	JOHNPILLAI, Ponnamma	R.C.	99-05-11	
	SOOSAIPILLAI, Annamalai	R.C.	98-11-01	
<i>Region of the United States</i>	HAZLER, George	R.D.	99-08-15	03-08-15
	O'NEIL, John	R.D.A.	99-08-15	
	CIORA, Tony	R.C.	99-08-15	
	BUCKMAN, John H.	R.C.	01-08-01	
	TOBIN-BUCKMAN, Mary	R.C.	01-08-01	

D.G.	Director General
D.D.	District Director
R.D.	Region Director
A.	Assistant
G.C.	General Councillor
D.C.	District Councillor
R.C.	Region Councillor



JUBILEES 2002

25 years of priesthood

James Richard Saginario
Jackson's Point, Ontario - Canada

50 years of marriage

Hubert Doucette and Lilian Christensen
Plaster Rock, New Brunswick - Canada

25 years of marriage :

Santiago Del Rosario and Severa Guzman

Hato Mayor del Rey, Dominican Republic

Robert Drolet and Louise Tardif

Saint-Eustache, Québec - Canada

Eleodoro Frias and Sonia Maria Santana

Hato Mayor del Rey, Dominican Republic

Richards Eduardo Leiva Muñoz and Catalina Rosa Gonzalez Menay

Viña del Mar, Chile

Elis Reyes de Leon and Justina Mercedes

Sabana de la Mar, Dominican Republic

Manickam Susai and Rosary Reethal

Tamil Nadu, India

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS ACHIEVED IN THE MONTH AUGUST, 2001,
THEIR STABILITY WITHIN THE INSTITUTE::

Michael Burman, Hull, Qc

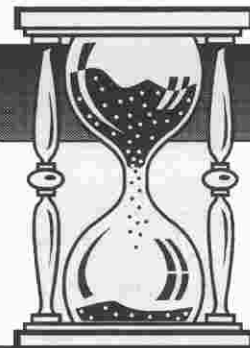
Yves Dionne, Ville-Marie, Qc

Denis Fortier and Michelle Ferron – Val d'Or, Qc

Gérard Hébert and Diane Petitclerc-Hébert, Notre-Dame-du-Mont-Carmel, Qc

Jean Lebrun and Marcelle Perrier-Lebrun, Hull, Qc

Congratulations!



THE VOLUNTAS DEI IN LAOS 1959-2001

The first Voluntas Dei members arrived in Laos in 1959 at the ardent request of Bishop Etienne Loosdregt, O.M.I., who was then Bishop of Vientiane and Luang Prabang. They were Daniel O'Rourke, a seminarian, Olivier Dallaire and Claude Verronneau, both celibate laymen. Daniel was ordained to the priesthood in 1960 by Bishop Etienne Loosdregt in the Cathedral of Vientiane and he worked with Olivier and Claude at the minor seminary of Paksane. It was there, for the first time, that Louis-Marie Ling met the two when Daniel was a teacher of Mathematics.

In 1960, Olivier and Claude were sent to Sam-Nua with the Oblate Fathers: Jean Subra, Yves Bertrais, Luc Bouchard, Jean Prix, Ernest Dumont and Rene Charrier to rebuild new missions abandoned by the Fathers of the Foreign Missions from Paris. During this same year, the new Apostolic Vicariate of Luang Prabang was formed and entrusted to the Italian Oblates. The first bishop of this Apostolic Vicariate was Bishop Lionello Berti who died in an plane crash in 1968. He was succeeded by Bishop Alessandro Stachioli.

In 1961, the threat of the arrival of the communists was imminent, that is the guerillas. Father Mario Borzaga of Luang Prabang disappeared with his catechist Khamse. All of the missionaries of Sam Nua, of which Olivier and Claude were a part, received orders to withdraw to Vientiane. The two Voluntas returned to that city with the other missionaries except for Father Jean Subra who hid out in the forest for eleven months. After Sam Nua, the three Voluntas Dei worked in the minor seminary of Paksane as they did initially.



In 1962, Daniel and Claude begged to return to Canada. Alone, Olivier continued to work in Laos. At first, he worked in Vientiane at the provincial house of the Oblates, then at the Center of Hmong where he remained until 1975.

In 1963, Bishop Etienne Loosdregt, Bishop of Vientiane, proposed to Louis-Marie to go and study as a seminarian either in France or Canada. Louis-Marie chose Canada. He spent two weeks in Paris and arrived in Canada in September of the same year.

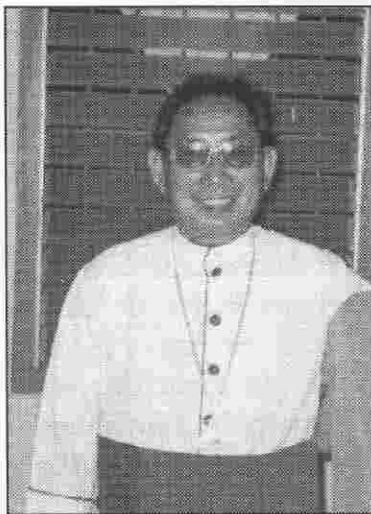
TIME LINE ... (continued)

In 1964, David Sy, the brother of Rose Sim, Oblate, after two years of study at Trois-Rivieres with the Voluntas Dei, returned to Laos by way of France.

Meanwhile, the exchanges between Laos and Canada intensified. Father Yves Bertrais, O.M.I., came to visit the Voluntas Dei Institute in Trois-Rivieres in order to orientate the Hmong Center according to the spirituality proposed by our Institute. A short time thereafter, the Kmhmu' Center was affiliated with the school of faith of Varenne in Belgium. Since the two centers trained catechists who were married, the Institute accepted for the first time in its history, members as married couples. About ten couples became members of the Institute.

In 1966, with his studies in Philosophy completed, Louis-Marie Ling left Trois-Rivieres for the Major Seminary in Red Rapids, New Brunswick where he remained until 1968.

In the summer of 1968, he returned to Laos for a two year pastoral training period. From the beginning of his arrival in Laos, he was appointed to form future Voluntas Dei members, married couples attached to Kmhmu' Center, being himself of the same ethnicity. Thus, from 1968 to 1970, he was a part of the team in charge of the Center with Fathers Jean Subra, Henri Delcros and Andre Hebting. In that year, at the request of Luc Sy,



his cousin, a catechist and the one in charge of the village of Na Phong 170 kilometers north of Vientiane, he agreed to preach a retreat. After the retreat, Luc Sy and Louis-Marie visited together another village with catechumens, and on the return trip they fell into an ambush where Luc Sy lost his life while Louis-Marie escaped with a few scratches.

In the summer of 1970, after two years of pastoral training, Louis-Marie returned to Canada to continue his studies in Theology at Red Rapids until the closure of the St. Joseph Major Seminary.

In 1971, during the summer, he completed his Theology at the University of Quebec in Trois-Rivieres. After his return to Laos, the following year, he was ordained to the priesthood. He dedicated himself from then on to the formation of married Voluntas Dei members at the Kmhmu' Center and also assumed responsibility for the mountainous region of the Kmhmu' ethnic group until the invasion of the communists in 1975.

With the arrival of the communists, communications were cut off with the capital and the roadways became dangerous on account of ambushes. Louis-Marie had to remain alone for four months in the northern region about 200 kilometers from Vientiane. Both centers, Hmong and Kmhmu' were taken over by the communist authorities. It was requested that some be allowed to pass in order to circulate in the country.

On December 8, 1975, with three religious of Charity, including Sister Françoise who, from her arrival, was exiled, Louis-Marie succeeded in

TIME LINE ... (continued)

leaving the north and returning to Vientiane. He was placed in charge of a Vietnamese parish in the city in addition to that of Saint Paul and an orphanage. For five years, he was prohibited from leaving the province of Vientiane. Moreover, he had to assist the bishop of that region owing to his advanced age.

In June of 1976, the Cathedral parish was commandeered as well as the orphanage. Louis-Marie had to withdraw from there. Bishop Thomas Nantha, bishop of Vientiane, sent him to Paksane to join Father Tito. In the meantime, Bishop Nantha was thrown out of his place, and his Cathedral, ransacked and looted, would be sold.

Fathers Tito, Thomas Khamphan and Jacques Bounliep having been arrested, spent from 1975 to 1979 in prison in Paksane or Pakse.

In November 1978, Bishop Nantha recalled Louis-Marie to Vientiane where he remained until the death of the bishop in 1984 and the installation of the new bishop, Bishop J. Khamse, in the same year.

In 1983, liberated from his responsibility at the Cathedral, Louis-Marie was free to travel throughout the country. He entered into contact again with the other bishops and priests who were either in re-education camps or in prison in the north and in the south of the country.

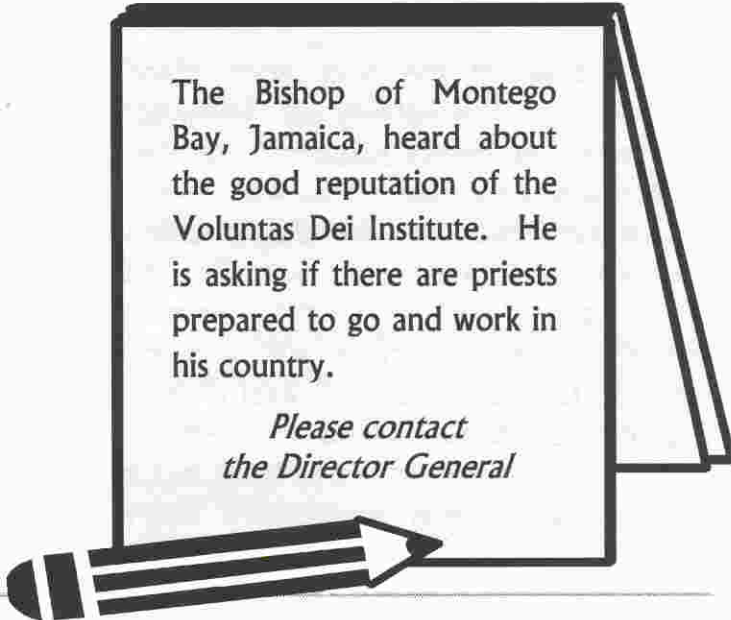
In November 1984, while visiting Father Tito in the region of Xieng Khouang, Louis-Marie was arrested and put into prison for three years. The formation of married Voluntas Dei couples became impossible to pursue since they were dispersed in the north of the country where the guerillas were entrenched and where Catholicism was persecuted.

After his liberation on August 24, 1987, Louis-Marie returned to Vientiane where he spent three months recuperating. Bishop Khamse entrusted to him, together with Fathers Khamphan and Hiem, the province of Borikham-Xay whose capital is Paksane. Thus, in the course of the following years, he settled into Paksane on a permanent basis.

Two or three times he came to Canada to visit his benefactors and the members of the Institute who were greatly fond of him. On April 22, 2001, he was consecrated a bishop and appointed to the Apostolic Vicariate of Pakse by His Holiness, John Paul II.

As for the married Voluntas Dei members, some immigrated to France and others to French Guyana with Father Yves Bertrais, O.M.I. During the years 1970 to 1993, thanks to the presence of this enthusiastic priest, the written accounts continued on until the dissolution of the group because of the lack of recruited clerics. At that time, it had become impossible to pursue regular contact. ❖

*By Bishop Louis-Marie Ling Mangkhanekhoun
Adaptation by Cecile Davidson-Corneau*



The Bishop of Montego Bay, Jamaica, heard about the good reputation of the Voluntas Dei Institute. He is asking if there are priests prepared to go and work in his country.

*Please contact
the Director General*

OUR FIRST TWENTY FIVE YEARS IN THE VOLUNTAS DEI INSTITUTE

Juliette and Guy Veer
Canadian District

In the autumn of 1974, we pursued in our parish some catechetical courses given by a member of the Voluntas Dei Institute, Father Arthur Beaulieu who had, at that time gone on a refresher course in catechesis at the University of Laval, Quebec. Yolaine and Ronald Chateauvert participated also in that formation.

One day, Arthur Beaulieu told us he was a member of the Voluntas Dei Institute. He described the Institute briefly and invited us to a meeting of the team. The relationship that he had established with us through his teaching inspired confidence in us and we responded to that call; it seemed appropriate to what we were already living and to what we wished to live.



Hull (Quebec) in 1976 and in the following years.

Having journeyed in other para-religious organizations, we decided at the time to join the Institute by becoming aspirants at the team meeting of February 1975. Our formation took place within the team through a systematic study of the Constitutions *ad experimentum*. Before making the first vows in 1978, we reviewed the meaning of them for a couple with the Director of the district, their length, since this first commitment in the Institute was meant to be permanent but renewable each year.

The year 1980 was a pivotal one for the Institute, since at that time commenced the process of revising the Constitutions to take into account the presence of couples. It was at the Assembly General of 1980 that the outline of a proposal for celibates and couples was elaborated: couples were admitted with the right to speak but also with obligations. Bishop Lacroix, protector of the Institute said: "If you admit couples, you must give them the right to be heard."

As members of the Central Council and Assembly Generals, we have participated in the writing of a number of drafts of the Constitutions

WITNESS OF THE PRESENT MOMENT (continued)

honoring the decisions of the assemblies of 1980 and 1983, but these drafts, although innovative in the Church, were refused by Rome. Then in 1986, the assembly opted for a secular institute and drew up a proposal of the Constitutions acceptable to the authorities in Rome. Celibates and married persons would find there their specific commitments, all in the same text. With its approval, Rome canonically recognized the commitments of married persons associated with the Institute.

Having been actors and witnesses of this whole journey since 1980, the step of 1986 was not easy for us and for other members well involved in the Institute. As for us, on that Tuesday, March 8, 1986, we reflected upon our membership in the Institute and on the fact of continuing to be present at the General Assembly in progress. We recalled the meaning of our first commitment in 1978, our real-life of ten years with the *Voluntas*, our six years on the Central Council where a good spirit reigned, our responsibility toward the other couples, etc. . .

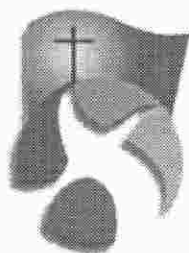
After this reflection, we decided to remain at the Assembly, to be a compelling part of the *Voluntas Dei* Institute and to participate positively in the drafting of the canonical Constitutions which would permit living according to the spirit of the proposal of 1980. We believe that this objective has been attained and that today we are living the spirit of the proposal. If we had only found there the way to live the canonical requirements, we would no longer be here to write these lines.

Within the Institute, we find that those in charge and the members consider couples as partners in the mission and apostolic objective of the Institute. We have experienced the joy of associating and working with Father Parent. We thank God for the precious moments spent with him and we assure him of our gratitude.

We have known and met within the Institute people from a number of continents and this universal dimension has allowed us to discover the cultural richness of the Institute. ❖

« *Voluntas Dei per Mariam Immaculatam* »

MISSION PRAYER

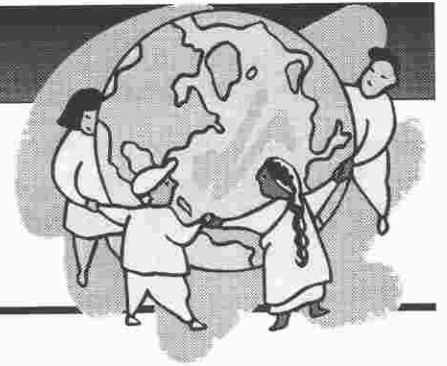


Lord, our God, help us to walk with you on the pathway of the beatitudes and to live out your mission in today's world.

Bind us to all men and women of our time so that together we may bring the Good News to the ends of the earth.

Open our hearts and our Christian communities to the needy, the afflicted, the oppressed. May we radiate the Living Christ and transform our lives in the hope of the Resurrection.

This prayer we make to you who are living God now and forever. Amen !



Do we dare the " New Evangelization " ?

I recall the last General Assembly of our Institute. It had as its theme: *Faithful to our secular mission within the Church, in the light of our 40 years of experience . . . let's dare the new evangelization as Voluntas Dei*. To prepare us for this Assembly, the documents *Evangelization in the Modern World* (Paul VI) and *The Mission of Christ the Redeemer* (John Paul II) were sent to us.

Since the beginning of his pontificate, Pope John Paul II has spoken to us about *the new evangelization*. He even specified that this is the challenge to be embarked upon in America (*The Church in America*, 1999). Our bishops arrived at the same conclusion (*To Proclaim the Gospel in the Present Culture in Quebec*, Editions Fides, 1999).

At the level of the Canadian District, it has already been an issue since our annual congress of the district during the summer of 1997. Our confrere, Michel Laroche, spoke to us about the experience of a project of new evangelization in the Arch-

diocese of Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) where he worked. He challenged us to put into place a similar project in our own milieu.

Michel Laroche, Marc Laroche and myself are working at present along this line in several parishes of our diocese (diocese of Amos, Quebec). Our project claims to be a missionary project where we go to the people in their homes to tell them about our hope. It gives us the opportunity to recall the fundamental points of the message of Jesus. We do not go to discuss religion. What we propose is an exchange, a sharing around the Word of God. We wish, together, to nourish our faith, to render it always more mature in order that being already believers we might be more so. It is the lay people in two's who visit the families to present to them the "first proclamation" of the Gospel (kerygma), like at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles. The priests, the pastoral agents, are involved also in this process. Thus, I am accompanied by a lay person during my visits.

For me, this experience has renewed my ministry and my life as a priest. It brought me closer to the lay people in the parish who accepted involvement in the project. We learned to carry forth the Mission in the Church. It drew us closer to the people in all situations. It brought us to discover the working presence of the Spirit among us. Yes, the Lord made us sometimes "blink" as indicated to me by Father Louis-Marie Parent to whom I recounted the surprises that we encountered on our visits or following them.

A team involved in the process, with Michel and me, have drawn up a document for the formation of evangelizers, another one as a guide for the 6 home visits and also a document which explains the process of the project. These documents are available from us and the diocese of Amos.

I wish you the grace of boldness to embark on a missionary project of evangelization. You will see that it is truly gratifying! ❖

Mario Laroche, I. V. Dei