

The Present Moment

Volume 5 ~ Number 1

January 2004

- 
- 2 From the Redaction
 - 3 From the desk of the Director General
 - 4 From the pen of Father Parent
 - 5 News from here and there
 - 6 Decease
Ordination
 - 7 Prayer for the General Assembly 2004
 - 8 Tribute of the Missionary Recluses
Stability
 - 9 Tribute to Father Parent
 - 11 New councils
 - 12 Delegates and substitutes – 2004 A.G.
 - 13 Juridic Status – Chile – Colombia
 - 14 Time line – Colombia
 - 15 Jubilees
 - 16 Testimonies
 - 17 Le Boulevard Parent ...
 - 18 Witness of the Present Moment



by Pierre J. Hubert

To the Brothers and Sisters of the Voluntas Dei Institute


Three events have marked the year 2003 in our Institute:

The canonical erection of two new regions: Chile and Colombia. Then, several new councils were elected: Canada, Dominican Republic, and Haiti, and a number of councils were appointed: Chile, Colombia, and the United States. A third great event was the general consultation throughout the Institute as a preparation to the Assembly General.

In this issue of our newsletter we “hear directly from” Father Parent speaks who, so to speak, is chatting with us. Despite his 93 years, nothing has really changed as far as his quick mind and enthusiasm are concerned. The Director General, after having “made the round of the garden of the Institute throughout the world,” notes those characteristics which are common to Voluntas Dei worldwide, and sees, there, a spiritual unity in cultural diversity.

One of the articles tells the story of the establishment of the Institute in Colombia. Santiago Armijo Ortiz shares his spiritual journey with us. Finally, there is an article on the work of Maurice Roy in Ecuador, specifically the Casa Hogar.

Thanks go to all those who collaborated in writing the present edition. I subscribe to these words of Father Parent: “My vocation as a Voluntas Dei is not for its own sake, but for others.”

Enjoy this issue! 

The Present Moment

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Cultural Diversity, Spiritual Unity ...

by François Hamel

It will not be long before I have made the round of the garden of the Institute across the world. These visits have helped me experience the vitality of our Institute. We are firmly established in several countries and there are new blossoms budding in places like Italy, Scotland and Congo.

The Institute's birthplace is Canada. Very early on, Father Parent accepted people from other countries. In the early 70's the Institute was divided into districts, a recognition of the Institute's cultural diversity, yet this was done in a spirit of unity. As we begin the new millennium and are confronted with globalization, we must accept one another with our cultural differences, but realize nonetheless that we are deeply united, spiritually.


One is not a *Voluntas Dei* all by oneself. One becomes so through the Institute which is there to help us. We are all products of personal experience and of the work of particular formators who came before us. It all began with a call from God. We responded with all that we are and all that we have. We have our personality, and we are individuals. We have gifts and charisms. All of this we need to put at the service of our brothers and sisters in the Institute, and to the service of the Church. We ourselves are also a charism, and we must exercise it by becoming ourselves people of service to others. One is not a *Voluntas Dei* for oneself. One becomes so for the Church, and to be at the service of the Church in the world. I believe that we have here an essential property of secular consecration.

The primary apostolate of consecrated life is the witness of consecration (Canon 673). The *Voluntas Dei* Institute has no specific apostolic work, and one does not join the Institute to dedicate oneself to a specific task. One joins the Institute because of its spirituality which touches our innermost being. One becomes a *Voluntas Dei* member according to one's measure of grace, that is, under diverse forms, according to diverse modes of expression.

Our belonging to the Institute is not attached to working at a common task : it is dependent on our personality. That is why we must always

develop our spirituality of the 5-5-5. We are cultural diversity but spiritual unity!

What becomes for each of us the initial drive which has drawn us to the Institute. By living the present moment we discern the unfolding of God's initial project in our hearts. We must discern the will of God for us so as to better adapt to both Church and world. One must not view the Church and the world as a dichotomy : both are intertwined. We experience the full consecration of life through the evangelical counsels, and we assume full responsibility in the world through our being well integrated in our milieu.

Spiritual unity is lived in communion with one another. Team life must be very strong. There is no such person as a *Voluntas Dei* alone, isolated in one's little corner of the world. We are missionaries. The apostolic endeavour moves some of us to go to foreign lands or to other regions of our own countries where there is need, but in all of this the *Voluntas Dei* is in mission, and he is also in communication : communication with the local Church, communication with the Institute. 



Vocation and mission

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

My vocation as a *Voluntas Dei* is not for its own sake, but for others. Jesus invites me to journey with him in order to become more and more “*Voluntas Dei*” to the very depths of my being. He invites me to walk in his steps in order to become living Gospel in the midst of the world.

Jesus makes me share in his mission, he wants to use me along the path of life to reveal the many faces of God to those I meet. He wants me to be his instrument for action in the world, on the world, and with the means of the world. He wants me to be involved in worldly realities so as to make visible the values of the Kingdom.


God uses me to change the world from within: he “injects” me in this world as one makes a transfusion, He sets me in the world like leaven in dough. He uses my talents, gifts, charism, and even my weakness, to build a better world, a world with more justice, a more human world. For this, He urges me to remember that:

- He is in me to work through me-as-instrument
- the world wants me in its midst to respond to some of its needs

From this flows the fact that I must walk *in the presence of God* to be His instrument, and *in the presence of the world*, to change it from within.

I shall achieve this faith undertaking by letting Christ fill me with his incarnation and resurrection. Through his incarnation my flesh is filled with Christ, I feel his presence, and I let him harmonize my feelings. Through his resurrection I let Christ live in me as the one who helps me respond to the motions of the Spirit to help me always do the Father’s will, as Mary did each present moment... This is the meaning of my mission.

The world may need my voice, my actions, but what it needs first and foremost is my life which brings Christ to within its reach. People often unconsciously require that I be true, real. Where am I on this question, in my *being* and my *acting, in my vocation and my mission?*

Through the daily Eucharist Jesus chooses me as his vehicle. He uses me to bring life to the world, especially where I live and work. The fire that moves me and animates me is truly a sign of his presence and his action. 


Louis-Marie Parent, o.m.i.

Cap-de-la-Madeleine, September 10, 2003

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

by Carmen Deschesnes



CENTRAL COUNCIL

During the August 4-6 central council meeting, the council was pleased to welcome our Founder, Fr. Louis-Marie Parent, who joined us for dinner.

Father is totally enraptured by God, his wisdom and serenity affect us, and his quick wit and legendary smile are real thrillers!



Central Council (Absent : Yves Sévère, Haïti)

Congratulations to our confrere Leo Grégoire, secretary general of the Institute, who graduated from St. Paul University in April, 2003, with a licentiate in canon law (J.C.L.)

The World Congress of Secular Institutes will be held in Czestochowa, Poland, in July 2004.

Theme of the Congress is :
**« Secular Institute, What do you say
about yourself to the young? »**

Our Institute will be represented by the director general, François Hamel, Jacques Harvey, counsellor of the central council and also Joseph Thannikot, director of the India Region.

People from Africa are showing interest in our Institute, and a few of them have already contacted Jacques Harvey and Michael Craig, for further information on our lifestyle of secular consecration.

Jacques and Michael have been in correspondence with them for some time, now, to encourage and support them and introduce them to the Institute's spirituality and, eventually help them to organize a team.

CANADA

The Canadian District held its district assembly May 15 to 19, 2003. the theme of the meeting was : "To sow as one loves", an invitation to the membership to reflect on formation to secular consecration and on recruiting young adults. The discussions brought out the necessity of having a director of formation, and of changing the word "formation" to the expression "new vocations".

A new council was also elected.

The District's annual congress was held July 31, August 1 and 2, 2003. The coordinating committee adopted the same theme as the one the district had for its assembly, "To sow as one loves", animated by Michel Villeneuve.

CHILE

Following the erection of Chile as a region of the Institute, at the conclusion of the October 26-27 council meeting, the director general appointed the director and the members of the regional council.

COLOMBIA

Colombia was also granted region status, and a new director and council was appointed by the director general, October 26, 2003.

SCOTLAND

Mr. John Flannigan of Scotland, member of the Voluntas Dei Institute, visited the Central House in August, 2003, at which time he professed his first vows in the presence of the director general and his council.



François Hamel, John Flannigan, Michael Craig

HAÏTI

The Haiti District held its district assembly May 22 to 25, 2003. The theme of the assembly was ***“The Voluntas Dei and his responsibilities towards the Church, the Institute, and Haiti.”***

The assembly also elected the new district council.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

A request was made to the director general and his council for the Dominican Republic district in formation be erected into a full-fledged district. At the August 4-6 central council meeting, the request was accepted by the director general and his council.

The Dominican Republic held its district assembly July 28 to 31, 2003. The assembly theme was:

« More formation for better service. ».

A new council was elected.

Death

July 6, 2003
Fernand Rajotte, priest – Canada

July 23, 2003
Gérard Hébert (husband of Diane Petitclerc-Hébert) – Canada

October 9, 2003
Jose Antonio Velez A. (husband of María Dora Gonzalez de Velez) – Colombia

Ordination

February 19, 2003,
Sebastiampillai Anton MARIATHAS, to the priesthood,
by Bishop Thomas Savundaranayagam, bishop of Jaffna, Sri Lanka



Prayer for the 2004 General Assembly

Gracious God, Blessed Trinity we love and worship you in the midst of the world. Pour out Your blessings upon us as we gather together to discern your will.

Give us missionary hearts, that we may be ever more inclusive regarding those we serve. Grant us the global vision that inspired our Institute from the very first.

May the inspiration of Father Parent, our Founder, make us instruments of Christ wherever Christ has his rights. Guide our deliberations, and challenge us to boldly explore the means by which the Gospel is proclaimed in word and deed. Make us mindful that peace and justice must always be sought in unity.

Lord may we prepare for the Assembly. Keep us faithful to our spiritual exercises, and may we always live in Your holy presence, in the present moment. May the prayers of Mary, Virgin of the Annunciation and our Immaculate Mother guide us all to a deeper union with Your holy will.

Amen.



Tribute of the Missionary Recluses



On August 14, 1943, Father Parent founded the "**Missionary Recluses**," a religious congregation dedicated to the contemplative life and perpetual adoration.

The Director General sent a letter of good wishes to Sister Louis-Marie Dupras, R.M., on the occasion of the Congregation's sixtieth anniversary.

Sister Louise-Marie replied:

Dear Father François,

I thank you for the message of friendship you sent us on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the founding of our Institute.

Hardly out of a general chapter, we decided to have a celebration stamped by intimacy and interiority. The theme of the chapter and of our jubilee year was "*Put out into the deep.*"

We have looked back and reminisced in thanksgiving, and we welcome the gift of God

who renews our vocation to contemplation and awe which lead us to adoration: such was our "*Put out into the deep,*" throughout the year.

I assure you of our prayers for you, your intentions, and all the Institute.

In profound communion,

Sister Louise-Marie Dupras, R.M.
Superior General

Stability :

Gilbert Doddato, Canada

Jacques Théberge, Canada

Damian Colicchio, United States

Antony Ciorra, United States

Vicente Sanchez Burgos, Dominican Republic

Sebastiampillai Anthony Joseph, Sri Lanka

Tribute to Father Parent ! You are God's gift to us!

A tribute was given to Father Parent at La Madone, Cap-de-la-Madeleine, on November 16, 2003 by the Recluse Missionaries, the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, the Volunteers of God the Voluntas Dei Institute and the Friends of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Here is the message expressed by the Director General on behalf of the Voluntas Dei Institute.

Very Dear Father Parent,

Despite the highs and the lows, we can say that life has been fulfilling for you; and even more, the Author of this life and His Spirit have filled you with grace. How you have desired to share this happiness with your brothers and sisters! From you has flowed a torrent of love and benefits for all those who have crossed your path.

How do we thank you for all of your kindness? No gift could suitably express our gratitude except our constant prayers! This is a joyous meeting that gathers together today some of your good friends to underscore our commitment to you.

In the context of this festive gathering, preceding the great feast of Christmas , where you will be much sought after, let me be the spokesman for all of the members of the Voluntas Dei Institute to wish you a good continuation of the path that you have undertaken with the Lord!

We love you!

*Francois Hamel, I. V. Dei
Director General*



seating :

Isabelle Lamarche, Simone Huneault, Father Louis-Marie Parent, Sister Louise-Marie Dupras, Sister Monique Béland

first row :

Sister Hélène Campagna, Fernande St-Onge, Sister Muriel Bélanger, Léo Grégoire, Claire Nantel, Réjeanne Vidal, Marguerite Rompré, Sister Louise-Marie Lesage, Carmen Trudel-Deschesnes, Jean-Paul Deschesnes, Monique Goulet

second row :

Rose Mathieu, Sister Diane Laplante, Andrée Labbé, Jean-Claude Lepage, Sister Francine Belzil, Pierrette Baril, Jacques Harvey, François Hamel, Paul-René Lavigne

Father Louis-Marie Parent said what follows :

Thank you for inviting me so that I may hear these beautiful testimonies. In a very warm and authentic way, you briefly described the mission that the Lord wanted for each and everyone of you.

You will accomplish what the Lord wants : cultivate joy by leading a life that may have its own austerities and disappointments like for all humans and Christians. The Lord is doing marvellous things in you. He uses each of your souls and plays with your gifts and charisms as he would on an extraordinary keyboard to meet all the harmonies the Trinity desires.

May the Virgin Mary continue to help you! It is truly the work of God. I am a marvellous witness because God has given me the grace to see what he wanted in you by tracing such a beautiful, serene and simple destiny.

Who are you in my life? I would say that you are my whole life: The Recluses, the Oblates, the Voluntas Dei and the Volunteers of God. You make me live. You show me in advance what I will see more clearly when I come before the Lord: the action of God through the souls. The action of God through you is like breathing. You cannot count your breaths (in and out), yet you would not be alive without them. God is the one who continues to live through you, to breathe through you and to give to others through you. I am pleased to be a witness, and I would say, a delighted witness, a joyful witness of the action of God through you.

I thank you for who you are because this is how you make me. As I walk at your own rhythm, I walk with the


gratitude I owe the Lord for the foundation of the Oblates, the Voluntas Dei and the Recluses. IT IS MY PASSPORT TO HEAVEN. If the Lord had not called me to go to heaven, he would not have put me on your path and you would not be on my path. If you believe I make sense just look at yourself in the mirror; if you believe I do not make sense, continue to pray for an increase of faith.



Father Parent, Léo Grégoire, François Hamel, Jacques Harvey, Carmen Deschênes, Jean-Paul Deschênes

I wish to express my gratitude to the Oblates and to the Voluntas Dei. One day, a good old bishop told me, "It is possible to found a community of women, but to found a community of men, it takes either a saint or a genius and I know you, you are neither one nor the other". Therefore, I concluded that I was not the founder, only God was. However, as He is in need of human being and has the power to

manipulate anyone as he likes, I believe the instrument did help... We have to recognize that the instrument did help and this is what you have recognized today. I can say that my hope continues to grow and that you are my faith. When I see you live, I am sure of my salvation and I am sure of yours.

Let us thank the Blessed Virgin Mary because you love her, because you prove it to her by saying the daily rosary and living in the presence of God where she is always present. Amen. 



NEW COUNCILS

Canadian District

André Côté, director
Michel Villeneuve, assistant director
Robert Lebel, councillor
Michel Laroche, councillor
Andrew P. Mayer, councillor
Jean Lebrun, councillor
Marcelle Perrier-Lebrun, councillor

Altagracia District

Pilar Maximinio Mateo Sanchez, director
Dionisio Reyes Gonzalez, councillor
Pablo Daniel Zorilla Ramirez, councillor
Jacobo Payano Santana, councillor
Frank Luis De la Cruz, councillor
Inocencia Ozoria, councillor

Haïti District

Wilner Fils-Aimé, director
Eddy Julien, assistant director
Madelon Eustache, councillor
Francis Evens, councillor
Paul Janvier, councillor

Chile Region

Manuel Cornejo Garate, director
Hernán Gonzalez Medina, assistant director
Richards Eduardo Leiva Muñoz, councillor
Catalina Rosa Gonzalez Menay, councillor

Colombia Region

Jaime Alberto Henao Arroyave, director
Alonso de Jesús Posada Echevery, assistant director
Edward Rengifo Dorado, councillor
Martha Lucia Velasquez Salazar, councillor

United States Region

George F. Hazler, director
John O'Neill, assistant director
Mary Tobin-Buckman, councillor
John H. Buckman, councillor
Anthony J. Ciorra, councillor

2004 General Assembly

Delegates and substitutes ~ August 1st -13, 2004

Ex officio members : François Hamel, General Director
Jacques Harvey, Assistant Director General
Léo Grégoire, Secretary General
Michael Craig, General Councillor
Jean-Paul Deschesnes, General Councillor
Réal Maltais, General Councillor
Guillermo Perez, General Councillor
Carmen Trudel-Deschesnes, General Councillor
Yves Sévère, General Councillor

Yvon Carpentier, the Director General who called the last Assembly

André Côté, Director of the Canadian District
Wilner Fils-Aimé, Director of the District of Haiti
Pilar Maximinio Matos Sanchez, Director of the District Altagracia

Father Parent is by right a member of the Assembly General.

Elected delegates :

Canada :	Jean-Paul Chiasson Pierre Hubert Richard L'Archer Robert Lebel Gérald Michaud Paul-Alain Monpas René Désilets (substitute) Cécile Davidson (substitute)
Colombia :	Jaime Alberto Henao Arroyave
United States:	George F. Hazler John O'Neill (substitute)
Haiti:	Evens Francis Eddy Julien Paul Janvier (substitute)
India :	Joseph Thannikot Variath Xavier Glen Corroya John Remigius
Dominican Republic :	Heriberto Batista Ramon Aridio Cueto Mejia Monica Mercedes Andrés Solano Sosa Ramon A. Araujo Tejada (substitute) Gilsa Elupina Garcia (substitute)
Sri Lanka:	A.R. Lloyd Shanthikumar Anthony Philip (substitute)

JURIDIC STATUS

Father François Hamel, Director General of the Voluntas Dei Secular Institute,

Considering the development of the process for finding a new juridic status more suited to the actual reality of the South America District in Formation ;

Considering the growing number of members especially in Chile, due to the promotion of vocations;

Considering the vitality of the Chile and Colombia sectors and teams;

Considering the great distance between the countries comprising the South America District in Formation;

Considering that the communication and transportation do not allow an unity in the midst of the district in formation America of South;

After consultation of the Central Council of the Voluntas Dei Secular Institute at its meeting of July 29, 30 and 31, concerning the request of its members gathered at its Congress, and with the agreement of the South America District in Formation for the granting of a new juridic status,

Hereby decrees

THE CANONICAL ERECTION

as of January 1, 2003 of the

CHILE REGION

and the

COLOMBIA REGION (including Ecuador)

with all the rights and privileges provided by Rule 15 of the Voluntas Dei Secular Institute.

Given at Trois-Rivières
November 22, 2002

François Hamel, I.V.Dei
Director General



Establishment of the Institute in Colombia

by Pierre Marois, I.V.Dei

In 1978, a missionary momentum begins to develop within the Institute for South America. A member, Pierre Marois, is preparing to go on mission to Africa. At the same time, a Colombian priest, Guillermo Perez, residing in Canada for some time, returns to his country. He is alone, and a request is made to Pierre Marois to team up with him. This is a complete change for them!

Efforts are centered on this country known for its many vocations. For the Institute, Colombia is considered as the entry door to the continent of South America.

To achieve the founding of the Institute in Colombia, Guillermo Perez returns to his country during 1978. He is joined by Pierre Marois, who has been in a training session of several months duration in Mexico to study Spanish. He arrives in Medellin in March of 1979 at the home of the parents of Guillermo.

A short time after, Guillermo and Pierre visit several cities where the Institute could be established: Santa Fe d'Antioquia, Cali, Popayan, Pasto and Pereira. These cities appear to be possible places for the establishment of the Institute. They are particularly impressed with Pereira, a city of 400,000

inhabitants, having a seminary giving day courses, another providing night courses for adult vocations, and finally another one offering weekend courses for those who are working. What a mine of possibilities for the Institute wishing to establish itself in this country! Thus, after ten days of Pierre's arrival, Pereira is the city chosen for the birth of the Institute in this country. The bishop sends Guillermo and Pierre to work in a parish. This is how they began to be present in Colombia commencing March 21, 1979.

Several persons in the parish express an interest in the spirituality of the Voluntas Dei Institute. The beginnings are very slow. On November 21, 1979, a contract is signed with the bishop of the locale in which Voluntas Dei Institute works that makes available to the diocese Voluntas Dei priests who will work in Pereira.

In January 1980, Pierre Marois becomes the pastor of a new parish while Guillermo moves to Armenia, a neighbouring city to set up a team. With those who are interested, two teams are formed: one in Dosquebradas, in the new parish of Pierre, and the other in Armenia with Guillermo. In Pierre's team, three seminarians and several laymen comprise it and live together a pastoral experience. In Armenia, with Guillermo, several couples attempt the experience.

The seminarians study at the day seminary of Pereira. Team meetings take place every two weeks. They progress in knowledge of the Institute. A young man, Jaime Henao Arroyave, continues his studies of philosophy and theology in order to become a priest. He is ordained August 15, 1997, by the Bishop of the Diocese of Armenia where he had completed his studies. He is our first priest since the beginning of the founding of the Institute in Colombia.

Afterwards, another vocation to the priesthood is added: Nestor Salas Alvarez.

Throughout almost 25 years, highs and lows mark the existence of the Institute in this country. During these years the Institute sets up teams while respecting the affinities of persons and their milieus. The first couples have not persevered. Also, it is necessary to mention the witness of one of our celibate laymen, Santiago Armijo Ortiz, remarkable for his simplicity, sincerity and holiness among the workers of the coffee farms.

Since December 1999, Pierre Marois has returned to Canada and the region has become entirely Colombian. The new Director of the Region of Colombia has already been appointed. It is Jaime Henao Arroyave. The Institute, since this time, is recruiting couples. Today, there are 7 couples. Another couple participates in our meetings, but as yet they are not members of the Institute. There are also 3 priests and two celibate laymen as well as two seminarians who will soon begin officially their time of formation.

Many have come. All have not persisted. A seed has been sowed in the Colombian earth. A new mentality is developing from the elements of the spirituality aiming at *creating peace and fellowship in Jesus Christ.* ☩



2004 Jubilees

<i>25 years of priesthood</i>	Normand St-Jean, Canada
<i>25 years of marriage</i>	Malchias and Silvadasan Joseph, India Margaret and Antony Peter, India Mary and Zacharias Thevathas, Sri Lanka Sixta and Antonio Calcano, Dominican Republic Mable Mary and Zacharias Rajappan, India Juana and Domingo De la Cruz, Dominican Republic Marie-Flore and Noé Olive, Haïti Valsala and Michael Chellayyan, India Lourde Mary and Ambrose Sesaian, India
<i>50 years of marriage</i>	Elaine and Domenic Basile, United States

Congratulations !

Children of the Third World and Ecuador

by Guy Veer, president of the Corporation

Our deceased colleague in the Voluntas Dei Institute, Maurice Roy, died in his bedroom of the orphanage of Casa Hagar del Amigo Jesus, Pascuales Ecuador, on May 14 1998. He had as his leitmotif the helping of poor children and the acquisition for them of the same advantages as rich children.

His work among poor children was first carried out in Mexico for 15 years, and then in Ecuador for 10 years. In these two countries, there is extreme poverty, and Maurice Roy could never count on local resources to meet the needs of the poor children (shelter, food and education). He had recourse to his benefactors, friends, foundations, religious communities and government organizations, Canadian, Quebecois, American and European to gather the funds required to support his undertakings and ensure their continuance.

He succeeded to attain his financial objectives. During a dozen years, the Voluntas Dei Institute managed his funds, *El Rancho del Nino*, but in 1991, the Institute and Maurice Roy agreed to found a religious corporation to manage the monies in his fund and

incorporation took place on June 10, 1992.



The objectives of **Children of the Third Word (CTW -555)** are *to promote and support, by whatever legal means, the development of works and activities of charity, education, teaching and well-being for the benefit of children in need, and in particular, the abandoned children of the Third World.*


The name of the corporation specifies well the beneficiaries of the corporation, *the children of the Third World*, and the 555 refers to the three 5's of the spirituality of the Voluntas Dei Institute to which Maurice was committed, being one of the founding members of the Institute on July 2, 1958.

The corporation has a council of administration composed of nine (9) members, and the Director General of the Voluntas Dei

Institute is a part of it as a *visitor* with the powers that are related to his function as defined in the rules of the Corporation.

Five administrators out of nine are members of the Voluntas Dei Institute; Laurier Albert, Raymond Gendron, Real Maltais, Juliette Roy and Guy Veer. Two positions are vacant and the other two are occupied by Pierre Morin and Rejean Trudel.

The financial assistance that CTW (555) gives to the children goes primarily to the works founded by Maurice Roy, and in 2003, 95% went to the orphanage of Pascuales in Ecuador where there are at present 33 children. 5% went to an orphanage in Bolivia to treat children bitten by the insect, Chagas, of which one of the consequences is death.

In Ecuador, I can affirm that Maurice Roy and his colleague Michel Charbonneau were immersed in their milieu, in the Voluntas Dei Institute, and in not being afraid of belonging to the Institute and in naming their school *Voluntas Dei*. This school is attended by hundreds of young people who are in contact with the spirituality of Father Parent. 

Boulevard Parent



Without doubt, you remember that in 2000 the city council of Trois-Rivieres wanted to change the name of Boulevard Parent (*Present Moment*, volume 2, 2001). Those who have come to the Central House know that Boulevard Parent extends into the city of West Trois-Rivieres where it is named Cote Rosemont. The Director General, Francois Hamel, asked me to go around knocking on doors to have a petition signed to keep the name of Boulevard Parent since the city council wanted to adopt the name of Boulevard Rosemont for the entire route. We have won our point of view and no change is forthcoming that will lessen the remembrance of Father Parent.

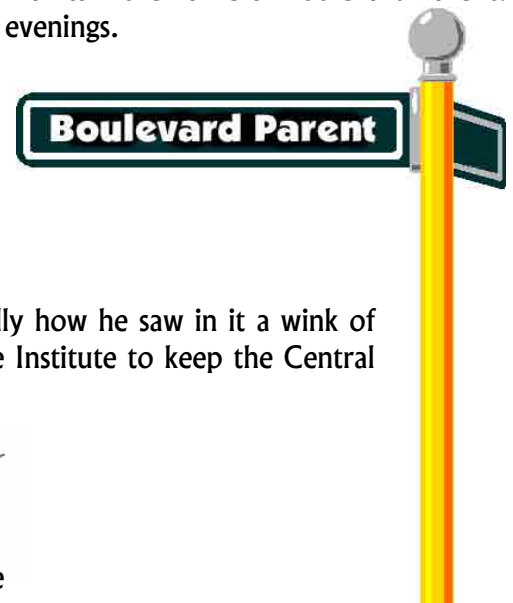
In 2002, the Quebec government proceeded to the amalgamation of certain towns in order to create larger urban centers and thereby establish more economically manageable units. The city of Trois-Rivieres brought together the former towns of Trois-Rivieres, West Trois-Rivieres, Pointe-du-Lac, Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Sainte-Marthe-du-Cap and Louis-de-France.

It was our understanding at the beginning of the summer of 2003 that the councillors of this newly enlarged city of Trois-Rivieres wanted once again to change the name of Boulevard Parent in order to harmonize Boulevard Parent and Cote Rosemont. Your Director General went to work. He wrote a letter of protest and asked me to get involved. I took up the challenge and went again door to door. Everyone followed the initiative of Father Francois.

Francois met with the members of the city council as well as the committee of naming and he indicated how the presence of Father Parent in this sector of the city had been a determining factor in the development of the founding of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate (Oblates) and the Voluntas Dei Institute. Not leaving it at that, he contacted the member of Parliament for the government of Quebec and also the Commission of Naming for the province of Quebec.

The Oblates have also participated in the solidarity movement in order to maintain the name of Boulevard Parent: present at meetings of the city council, press conferences and information evenings.

On December 2, 2003, the Commission of Naming of Quebec wrote the Director General: *Your arguments, as your process of analysis of the situation, have certainly had an impact that we must, however, weigh and assess in regard to the participation of all the contributors who have understood the inconvenience underlying the process of change.*



Francois indicated how he appreciated the action of the city and especially how he saw in it a wink of the Good God following the decision taken by the Central Council of the Institute to keep the Central House in Trois-Rivieres.

Paul-Rene Lavigne
Familiar to the Central House



He meditates the Word of God

by Guillermo Pérez

SANTIAGO ARMIJO ORTIZ

Santiago was born May 1, 1948 in the small village of Tado in the Choco Department of Colombia, the country's poorest region.

Santiago has lost both parents and a sister, and he has one sister living in Cali, Colombia.

Santiago, who was a tailor but has nearly always worked as an agricultural labourer, went to live in the Quindio Department rural region.

While living in another rural region on the municipality of Génova, Quindio, he met a religious sister who introduced him to Guillermo Pérez, who would help him discern his call to consecrated life. From the very first, Santiago realized that the spirituality of the Institute and its way of living the consecrated life were kindred to what he felt to be God's call to him. He therefore began his aspirancy August 10, 1988, and his probation, August 20, 1990. His first profession was August 22, 1994. He was granted stability in the Institute August 7, 1999.

For two years Santiago shared in team life by living in Pierre Marois' parish in Pereira, Colombia. In this way Pierre got to know him better and to benefit from his services.



*François Hamel, director general
Santiago Armijo Ortiz*

Santiago is a quiet man, a man of reflection, a tireless worker whose self-denial has brought him to never eat meat or drink alcoholic beverages. While his friends like soda pop to quench their thirst, Santiago is quite satisfied with plain water. He always helps his team mates find food for themselves, and he comes to meetings with apples or grapes or other fruit from bought at the market with the

little money he earns by his difficult farm labour, which is poorly remunerated in our milieu.

Santiago is the most constant member of the team, always faithful to attending meetings, and always the first there. He is quiet, but when he does speak it is nearly always to quote from Holy Scripture, in reference to the topic at hand. It is very obvious that he frequently reads and meditates the Word of God.

When Fr. Yvon Carpentier was director general of the Institute, he visited Santiago at his workplace, which is the same as now in the municipality of Calarca, Quindio. It is there that the macadamia nut is grown. Fr. Yvon was surprised to discover that Santiago's bookcase held only the Bible and publications of the Institute.

Before, Fr. Mario Laroche as director general had also visited Santiago at the farm, and he witnessed Santiago's poverty and the poverty of his surroundings.

Fr. François Hamel likewise had the opportunity to meet Santiago : he was impressed by this great man of God.

In Santiago the Institute's spirituality, charism, apostolic objective and other spiritual riches has touched and helped him develop as a man, a Christian, and a consecrated person.


Destructive criticism and useless complaint are foreign to Santiago. He is a peacemaker and a man of outstanding fellowship. He is first among his peers, as a man of service.

Rose Mathieu, the Canadian Oblate Missionary of Mary Immaculate, admires Santiago and calls him "mi San Martin de Porres" because of his skin colour but especially because of the impact produced by one's encounter with him, and the kindness which overflows from his heart.

Several people who have had the opportunity of meeting Santiago are drawn to him by his simplicity, joviality, and openness.

When his turn comes for facilitating a meeting, he makes it a very biblically-oriented and serious one, but without unduly prolonging the meeting.

All this is to say that Santiago is our pride, and we are happy to have him in the Institute as an example and role model to us all.

We thank God for the wonders He works, which He wants to have them bear fruit in all of us, if we are available to do His will. 



Picture – by Lucile Authier, oblate

“Jesus chooses me as his vehicle. He uses me to bring life to the world, especially where I live and work.”

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

Thank you to our partners !



Daniel Hubert

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