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The Present Moment

Volume 10

January 2009

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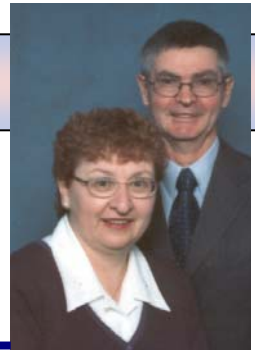
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FROM THE EDITORS ...



by *Raymonde Jetté and Fernand Turgeon*#

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Dear Readers,

The Year of the Fiftieth Anniversary was full: It gave us many opportunities to gather together as a family.

In every country where the Institute is present, we were united in prayer and celebration, to thank God for the Institute founded by Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I. We also prayed to be faithful in carrying out our apostolic objective, to “Build Peace and Fellowship in Jesus Christ.”

The 2009 edition of *The Present Moment* is like a family album with snapshots of all these events that brought us together, in the four corners of the world, as an Institute. You will read, here, about the congresses, retreats and festivities highlighting our fiftieth anniversary. A few photos accompany the texts.

We thank all those who have contributed to this edition of *The Present Moment*. ■

Enjoy!



The Present Moment

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Marvellous!

by *François Hamel*

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I still have the Bible I used as a student in theology. I can't decide to get rid of it even if I have several other, more recent translations in my possession. This Bible, though, is more than a memento. Every time I open it to read the Word of God, I feel once again the enthusiasm that was mine, at the thought of being a priest. Inside the cover I wrote down the following reference: 1 Kings 19:9-19, and Luke 24:13-35. In my Scripture courses, these two references had caught my attention. There is reference, here, to God who is present in the simplest things: a tiny, whispering sound, and God who journeys with us on the path of life.

In celebrating the Institute's fifty years I was reminded of my own coming to the Institute. At the time I wanted to be a priest, I felt God calling me in the deeper reaches of my heart. However, I was hesitating between community life and the diocesan clergy, until the day when Father Gaston Laroche, my former teacher at the Trois-Rivières minor seminary, told me: "Why don't you come to our Institute?" It was then that I felt God inviting me there! It is God who calls, but He chooses us to challenge others.

There is nothing nostalgic about taking my seminarian's Bible to celebrate the Institute's 50th anniversary. Quite the opposite: both rekindle in me the flame that marked my beginnings in the Institute. It is at times like these that I realise how secular consecration is wonderful. It is so because since my joining the Institute I have met wonderful people, but especially because I think that God is wonderful as He shows himself in simplicity, and because He is

wonderful to continue walking with us on the path of life here in Canada as elsewhere.

We celebrated our golden anniversary throughout the Institute. This Journal gives you a bird's-eye view of the local festivities. I thank all those who were involved. I hope that, for you, too, this celebration be an occasion of renewal. Each one of us must take up the torch lit by Father Parent in 1958. Just as in a relay race, he has passed on to us the spirituality he received from the Holy Spirit, and now it is our turn to continue the race... that is, we must now, in turn, invite young men and mature ones, as well as couples, to join us. This will be easy if we believe that secular consecration is wonderful.

"Each one of us must take up the torch lit by Father Parent in 1958. Just as in a relay race, he has passed on to us the spirituality he received from the Holy Spirit, and now it is our turn to continue the race..."

We are already getting ready for the 2010 Assembly General, to be held in Québec City in June of that year. The local directors have already been consulted by the steering committee for the assembly content, and results have already been tabled before

the central council. As a consequence of these consultations, the council retained the following theme: SECULAR CONSECRATION, and the following sub-themes shall be added: formation, commitment to poverty, the service of authority, and openness to other categories of members. Some of you shall be asked shortly to be part of the assembly general: I urge you to be generous in your response. It is together as an assembly, and moved by the Holy Spirit, that we build up our Voluntas Dei Institute. Everyone is called upon to offer prayer. This, too, is a way of taking part in the assembly. The assembly is

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not meant for one group to dominate another, but to be open to one another. This is what it means to be created in the image and likeness of God. Wherever we are, let us answer God's call in a positive way:

“The stars at their posts shine and rejoice; when He calls them, they answer, ‘Here we are!’ shining with joy for their Maker” (Baruch 3:34-35).

I urge you to shine and rejoice in whatever milieu you live your consecration! ■

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Tell us about a happy memory that you have had in the Institute, or about a high point you have lived.

It was when I began my aspirancy, at the August, 2007 annual Congress, a beautiful “yes” of my heart to Christ in the Institute.

Daniel Gagné
Layman, Canada

Every time I experienced a new level of belonging in the Institute was a strong moment in my life. When I received stability, it touched me deeply. It was as great a day as when I said “yes” at my wedding.

Diane Petitclerc
Committed member, Canada



I cannot recall any particular event, but team life is very important and meaningful to me.

Odette Burelle
Committed member, Canada

Faced with a chaotic situation, Father Parent's unconditional welcome, his openness to the will of God to give everyone a chance... a chance that translates for me into 21 years of missionary work and 39 years of priesthood.

Pierre Marois, priest
Canada

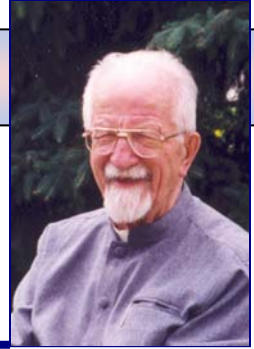
Our first Congress at La Salette has left us a lasting impression. What struck us was the welcome, respect, and the members' love of the Institute. Many other events followed, but this was our first contact with the Institute was memorable, and the Institute captured our hearts.

Lise Durand and Serge Granger
Committed members, Canada



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FROM THE PEN OF FATHER PARENT



Thanksgiving

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

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Dear Voluntas Deis,

We have always been in the mind of God. We are in Him in the form of grace, we are an integral part of His power and goodness forever. Gratitude is a basic element of our lives. We are all given to God, to the great joy of Mary who acts through us, like a real mother.

May this year be a permanent thanksgiving: we are God's and in God, thanks to the ongoing intercession of Mary who so beautifully plays the role of being our mother, through her presence to us and her kindness.

*"I love you,
and I am in a hurry to tell
God himself about it"*

Our life in God is pleasant, and we know that even something more beautiful is awaiting us. Let us try to imagine this beatific vision where Mary's gaze will be the measure of God's joy.

Let us spend the remainder of life in an attitude of thanksgiving, as we consider that greater things are still to come.

Let us be earnest in our spirituality, and may our souls be filled with peace, joy, and gratitude. We are the God's jewels, privileged children of the Virgin who are called to eternal happiness. May our hearts remain full of love for Jesus and the Virgin! I love you, and I am in a hurry to tell God himself about it; this will happen at the time of Jesus' supreme love for each one of us. Let us continue loving one another: God and the Virgin are the elements of this love.

March 13, 2008 ■

50

Ordination Anniversaries

Stephen GNANAPRAKASAM

India

Grégoire LAPOINTE

Canada

Wedding Anniversaries

Selma and Cornelius FLOOD

United States

Louise and Jean-Luc HURTUBISE

Canada

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CELEBRATION IN BASILICA...

Solemn Eucharistic Celebration

by *Raymonde Jetté and Fernand Turgeon*



On Saturday, July 5, 2008, we solemnly celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of foundation of the Voluntas Dei Secular Institute at the shrine of Our Lady of the Cape. The celebration began with a trumpet blast and a crier proclaiming: “Oyez! Oyez, good people!” Then followed a brief



history of the life and work of Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I., who founded the Voluntas Dei Institute on July 2, 1958. This was followed by the choir singing the song composed by Robert Lebel, for the occasion, while the procession bearing the flags of the different countries where the Institute is, got under way.

The Eucharistic celebration was presided by Bishop Martin Veillette of Trois-Rivières. The concelebrants were François Hamel, director general of the Institute, and André Côté, Canadian District director. We were honoured with the presence of Bishop François Thibodeau, C.J.M. of Edmundston, N.B., Bishop Dorylas Moreau of Rouyn-Noranda, Québec, Bishop Eugène Tremblay of Amos, Québec, Archbishop Emeritus Bertrand Blanchet of Rimouski, Québec, and Father Charles-Émile Ancil, representing the Bishop of Ste-Anne-de-la-Pocatière.

About 100 Voluntas Dei priests as well as several other clergy filled the basilica sanctuary.

The celebration was a success, the assembly being most attentive and recollected. Texts from the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 12:4-28) – “The gifts of grace are varied.” – and of Matthew (5:13-16) – “You are the salt of the earth.” – were chosen for the occasion. In his homily the director general François Hamel highlighted the essential values of the Institute and stressed those of authenticity and hope. You will find the text of this homily in the present edition of *The Present Moment*.

At the prayers of the faithful, we offered to the Lord the Institute and its pioneers, and the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate who were collaborators of the first hour. A world globe was brought with the offertory procession as a symbol of all the members of the Institute: priest, single laymen, seminarians, and married couples who answered the call to join the Institute in different parts of the world. At the memento of the dead, the register of deaths was deposited at the foot of the altar.





This Mass of Thanksgiving allowed us to joyfully commemorate the historic moment of Father Louis-Marie Parent's foundation, and this was cause for intoning the Magnificat at the end of the Eucharistic celebration.

The celebration was followed by the banquet, at which the following addressed the gathering: Father Mario Laroche, director general emeritus (1980-1992), representing Father Parent at the head table, Bishop Martin Veillette of Trois-Rivières, Father François Hamel, director general, and Father André Côté, director of the Canadian District.

A few former members of the Institute who had lived at Trois-Rivières (La Salette) at the beginning of the Institute were also present at the festivities. Stories and recollections of the early years enriched the conversation.

Everyone present will long remember this beautiful celebration that was held near the birthplace of the Voluntas Dei Institute.



The head table (from the left to the right): Jean-Guy Brillon, Guy Veer, Claire Nantel (OMMI), André Côté, Bishop Martin Veillette, François Hamel, Bishop François Thibodeau (CJM), Mario Laroche.

Internet sites to be consulted ...



Voluntas Dei Institute: www.voluntasdei.org

www.voluntasdei.org

Voluntas Dei Institute in Chile: www.voluntasdei.cl

www.voluntasdei.cl

Voluntas Dei Institute in the United States: www.voluntasdeiusa.org

www.voluntasdeiusa.org

The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate and the Volunteers of God :

www.ommi-is.org

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate:

www.oblats.qc.ca

The Missionary Recluses:

www.reclusesmiss.org

Canadian Conference of Secular Institutes:

www.ccis-ccis.ca

The World Conference of Secular Institutes:

www.cmis-int.org

CELEBRATION IN BASILICA ... (CONTINUED)

Homily, 50th Anniversary

by François Hamel

We are here today to celebrate the Voluntas Dei Institute's golden jubilee. Fifty years ago – on July 2, 1958, actually – Father Louis-Marie Parent gathered a group of young men and together they founded the Institute. Father Parent's action was in direct response to a request of his superior general Father Leo Deschâtelets who had asked him to found a secular institute for men, with the same spirituality as that of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate that he – Father Parent – had founded in 1952.

Father Parent has given pride of place to living the present moment, making it an essential value for us to develop. So, how should we be celebrating the past? There is no question of looking back and regretting the good old days, nor to look ahead and live in a dream world when everything will be possible. We must keep in mind that the past dies at each moment and the future springs forth. We must be prepared to serve, as the Gospel says. We do not have only to recall and tell the story of the beginnings in 1958, but we have to create a great story today.

On this day we do not only want to look back on something that took place fifty years ago. What we want is to carry out in the present moment the spirituality that Father Parent gave us. The years gone by are like the furnace where our spirituality has been tested and shown to be tried and true. This is the spirituality we know as “the spirituality of the Three Fives.” This strength of our spirituality is seen especially in the “Second Five”:

- Presence of God
- Absence of criticism
- Absence of complaint
- Being of service
- Being peacemakers.

We live this spirituality in our secular consecration, that is, through living the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in the midst of the world. Saint Thomas Aquinas says that grace builds on human nature. To paraphrase this great theologian, I would say that our spirituality should be like second nature to us. We each have our own personality, our own identity, with their ups and downs. We are rooted in our families where we grew up and developed. And when we joined the Institute we added a spirituality to what we already were. This spirituality of the 5-5-5 was grafted on what we already were, and it continues to change us today, in the present moment. We are sons and daughters of the earth, but we are also children of God.

*“Christ refused to tamper
with consciences
and he never forced
anyone to follow him.”*

When we look at the world we live in, we must realise that all is not perfect. This brings to mind our members in Sri Lanka who are living in a country devastated by civil war. This also brings us to mind our members in Haiti who live in dire poverty and in a difficult social context. It also brings to mind the members in Colombia who also experience social troubles. I think of the confreres in Laos and Cuba who are not as free as they should be. Even here in North America, we are marked with religious relativism and over-consumption. What can we do at this historic moment where God has placed us? The

answer lies perhaps less in the doing and more in the being.

What our world needs is HOPE. To celebrate 50 years of existence is to live the present moment with the men and women we encounter every day. Hope must not only characterise us, but we must have a passion for it. We believe in the Word of God, so we must make this Word a part of our lives. Our lives are a sacred history because we read it each day in the light of faith. We acknowledge that God is present and that He is our partner.

He is a partner who comes to us bearing gifts. He gives personal charisms to each one of us. We must look at ourselves HONESTLY. It seems to me that the first scared text we heard speaks of this. The *Voluntas Dei* Institute has no special work to gather us together around a common apostolic objective. If we live in the Institute it is because we want “to be, in the manner of the Virgin of the Annunciation, the instrument of Christ carrying out the will of the Father.” This is what draws us. Saint Paul compares the Church to a human body, and he urges us to respect what we are, with our qualities and our weaknesses. A human body that would be all hands or feet or mouth or eyes would not be human and could not survive. And if it happened that we were to amputated a member of the body, then we would realise how important it was.

Each one of us is a member of the Body of Christ, we are a part of the Church, as are members, parts of the Institute. The team life that is one of our basic values helps us accept one another as different, and see one another as gifts of the Spirit.



Being honest with ourselves also brings us to be authentic real. In his 1996 encyclical on the religious life, Pope John Paul II called on consecrated people to be authentic, to be real. This is what he says: “Do not forget the charisms which have shaped remarkable "seekers of God" and benefactors of humanity, who have provided sure paths for those who seek God with a sincere heart... Does not this world of ours need joyful witnesses and prophets of the beneficent power of God's love? Does it not also need men and women who, by their lives and their work, are able to sow seeds of peace and fraternity?” (*Vita consecrata*, 108).

Christ witnessed to the truth, but he did not want to force it on anyone. He refused to tamper with consciences, and he never forced anyone to follow him. He was TRUE and authentic to the very last, trusting in the Will of the Father.

The world and the Church look for true witnesses, for men and women who are authentic, real. Young people today are demanding, they do not let themselves be controlled. They want to see in us what they cannot see elsewhere. If we are true and authentic, they will

want to join us.

What I want to leave you with today, as we celebrate the golden jubilee of the Institute, is that hope and truth should be the two pillars that should support us in living our secular consecration, that is, consecration in the midst of the world.

Our gratitude to Father Parent – “God’s mailman,” as he calls himself. He has delivered the message of the Holy Spirit to several of us.

Our gratitude to the Church, for her confidence in us.

And thank you to you all who pray with us today and every day. ■

50 YEARS' PRESENCE IN THE MIDST OF THE WORLD!

Canada

by André Côté

The year 2008 marked the golden anniversary celebration of the Voluntas Dei Institute's foundation. In response to a request by the Director General and his council, the district was pleased to take part in the preparation of the festivities. All the sectors (7 of them) were invited to celebrate in a special way this jubilee of the Institute, either with a eucharistic celebration, a meal together, or a special meeting.

On July 4, many members of the Canadian District met together at Trois-Rivières, the seat of our foundation, and more specifically at the shrine of Our Lady of the Cape, in the shadows of the Basilica. The Annual Congress Committee looked after the decorations, flowers, posters, and balloons. A Memory Room with memorabilia and photos, draw the attention of the attendees. At 2:00 P.M., the Canadian District director welcomed everyone and invited all present to join in the anniversary theme song *Pour bâtir la paix* ("To build Peace"), composed by Robert Lebel. Then the director presented a report of the district and sector activities for 2007-2008.



At 2:45, after a short break, the master of ceremonies Jean-Guy Brillon invited all the district directors present to share the important highlights of their mandates. Each one expressed himself according to his personality, and it was a captivating time! For some, it was a reflection on our history, and for others, it was a better understanding of the stages of growth of the Institute and of the influence of our spirituality on persons and groups.

This is the list of our directors since 1972: 1972-1974, Léon Robichaud; 1974-1982, Arthur Beaulieu; 1982, Marcel Forest (interim director); 1982-1991, Jean-Paul Chiasson; 1991-1995, Michel Villeneuve; 1995-2003, Marc-André Lafrenière, and 2003 until now, André Côté.

Like at every family gathering, all the members of the district received a "surprise gift": for the priests and deacons it was a stole with the Institute's insignia, for the laymen it was an icon of Christ the Redeemer, and the married couples were given an icon of the Holy Family.

At 4:30 P.M. the eucharistic celebration was presided by Mario Laroche, director general emeritus, and one of the institute's founding members. The homily, based on scriptural references and articles of our Constitutions that inspired his theme song, was given by Robert Lebel. At the offering we presented to the Lord all those who celebrate in 2008 an anniversary, to the priesthood, marriage, of joining the Institute. At the *Memento*, the deceased members of our district were named and were part of our prayer.



Following the eucharistic celebration, the festivities continued around a glass of wine followed by dinner where joy and fellowship were palpable. And to close the evening, the group *Un brin de Paradis* ("A Bit of Paradise") brought freshness and youth to the assembly as they entertained the members with song and reflection on life, fellowship, and peace.

A thank you to everyone for having joined in the celebration. May the feast continue! ■

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Thank you!

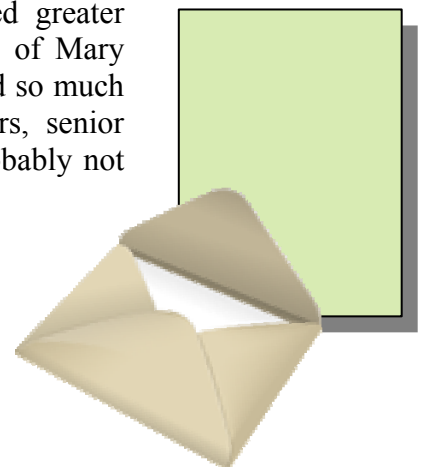
A Thank You note for the cordial invitation you send me to take part in the 50th anniversary celebration of the Institute. This was a very pleasurable time for me, and the jubilee was very well organized. I was quite impressed by the great vitality and the number of members, and I am very happy! This celebration allowed me to renew contacts with old confreres in the Institute.

The homily was appropriate to the occasion. I returned home with greater enthusiasm and comfort because this event was truly festive and joyous.

Allow me, however, to point out that I would have expected greater mention of the inestimable support of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, at the beginning of the Institute. They accomplished so much for us at the time of our greatest poverty, in our early years, senior members like me owe them so much. For instance, I would probably not be a priest today if they had not part paid for my studies.

May the Lord bless the Institute!

Luc Labbé, priest
Member of the Institute (1962 - 1974)



50 YEARS' PRESENCE IN THE MIDST OF THE WORLD! (CONTINUED)

Chile

by Manuel Cornejo Garate

Following information are excerpts from the new brochure on the Chile Region, *Huellas de Chile*. Included are photos taken at the national gathering held at Curicó. The Jubilee celebration was presided by Father Manuel Cornejo, director of the Chile region.

Editors

« HUELLAS DE CHILE »

A national gathering was held in Curicó in April of 2008 to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Voluntas Dei Institute presence in Chile, in La Serena, Coquimbo, Viña del Mar, Santiago, Linares, and Chillán.

At the gathering we took time to reflect on and study new challenges we are faced with. We also had the opportunity to share on the presence of God in our lives and to celebrate together our jubilee year inspired by the Father.

The bonds uniting us are the fraternity that gives us “strength without borders.” Let us continue living this festive time in union with those throughout the world who are celebrating the Voluntas Dei’s fifty years throughout the world.



INTERVIEW WITH FR. MARCOS GUERRA

Father Marcos is director of the house of formation, at Pan de Azúcar, some 20 kilometres from La Serena.

What is the mission of the new house of formation?

The seminarians here are at the initial stage of their formation (aspirancy) in the Institute and are taking pre-university studies. They live a year that is especially devoted to pastoral work and to the study of the Institute’s spirituality.



What is your view of the Institute's 25 years in Chile, from the vantage point of the house of formation?

The Institute is now experiencing an increase in numbers, in Chile. I think that this is very good, and with the new house of formation, we continue to move forward. For a while we had few young candidates, but thanks to God, we now have more.

What is your wish for the Institute, in Chile?

That the Voluntas Dei Institute continue to prosper in our country. We especially need priests for the Institute and for the Church. We must go forward. My role is to interest as many young people as possible in the charism of our Institute and make them want to spread the Gospel, to have hope, and to be peacemakers in the midst of the world.

NEWS:

Two single men and one couple have started a discernment process to join the Institute.

In April, a first vocation day was held in the house of formation. Five single men took part. These were the subjects discussed: the call to the priestly vocation, the call to consecrated celibacy as a layman, the spirituality of the Institute, the mission of the Institute.

The annual single consecrated men's meeting took place in June. The object of the meeting was to strengthen the bonds uniting us, and to reaffirm the sense of secular consecration wherever the celibate single men are, in Chile. ■

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Cuba

by *Néstor Fornaris*

On this occasion, the three of us met together, the seminarian Juan Carlos Borrero, Dr. Eduardo Fonseca, a layman, and myself Néstor Fornaris, priest.

We met at Eduardo's house, and prayed for the Institute that is slowly developing in our country. We also prayed for Father Parent who has now reached the respectable age of 98. We are very happy to belong to the Voluntas Dei Institute. ■



Ordination to Diaconate



Canada
October 12, 2008



Gilles Urquhart
Permanent deacon

Colombia

by *Alonso Posada Echeverry*

In the framework of the fiftieth anniversary of the Voluntas Dei Institute, the Colombia Region gives thanks to God for having given Father Parent the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to found a secular institute with the apostolic objective of « creating peace and fellowship in Jesus Christ.” This objective is well suited to the daily life of every Christian. It promotes the values of love and of service, of positive attitudes and of joy in living fully the present moment.



We were together at Quimbaya (Quindio) for a three-day celebration. There was group sharing of our personal experiences, and time for fellowship. The Eucharist had been wonderfully prepared by our major seminarians. Alonso Posada Echeverry, our regional director, came from Tumaco (some distance from our headquarters in Armenia). The eucharistic celebration was presided by Father Guillermo Pérez.

Our sisters and friends the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate – Marlin Flores and Maria Inés Giraldo – participated actively in our celebration. Their presence brought a pleasing and delicate touch to our celebration. They are members of the wider Voluntas Dei family.

At the gathering the sharing was on the following questions: How do we show the presence of God through the attitude of an authentic life? How do we create peace and fellowship in Jesus Christ in our milieu? How important is our team life?

We also celebrated the 28 years of the Institute in Colombia, and the 33 years of ordination of our confrere Guillermo Pérez who was serenaded with the participation of a musical group from Armenia.

The children of some of our couples also joined in the festivities, and we had games for them. These playful activities helped the older members rediscover their child within. This period of recreation helped us experience the family spirit.

Unfortunately, for personal reasons and travel problems, the members of the Medellin region were unable to come to Quimbaya to celebrate with us. However, they all called to tell us of their joy on the occasion of our fiftieth anniversary, and to assure us of their spiritual presence.

The fiftieth anniversary is therefore an occasion for us to give thanks to God for all these years in service to the Church. Thank You to Father Parent for his love and devotion to the Institute. Thank You to those who have directed the Institute in the past, and to Director General Father François Hamel. And to everyone in the Institute, congratulations and best wishes that we always be **peacemakers** and **specialists of the present moment**. ■



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Members who despite their aging are happy, and who give the witness of their spirituality: in this way it is hope that they contribute to the budding of new vocations.

Renée Croteau and Richard Normandin,
Committed members, Canada

**How do
you see the
future of the
Institute?**

The future of the Institute is in God's hands, and God will always be with us.

Gilbert Doddatto, priest
Canada

I recall the history of the Institute: A man allowed his heart to be moved by a simple inspiration of the Spirit of God who willed this foundation. It is in prayer that the Institute and its members do the will of God.

Daniel Gagné,
Layman, Canada

To me, the Institute is a prophetic sign of the presence of the risen Christ, as seen in our way of living day-to-day life. I see the Institute as being in the fore-front of pastoral work, in daring new approaches adapted to the spiritual sensibility of our contemporary world. An institute with a vision of the future regarding recruiting and the services we could offer to those around us and who hunger and thirst for the Living Word that gives meaning to everything. This is how I see the future of the Institute: open to the world and its needs... moved by the Holy Spirit who inspires our actions and decisions.

Réal Ouellette,
Layman, Canada



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United States

by George Hazler



The main celebration took place at the annual Summer Congress of the United States District-in-Formation. Marking the 50th Anniversary of the foundation of the Voluntas Dei Institute we began our Congress this year with a 3-day retreat (Tuesday to Thursday noon – August 5-7) at Daylesford Abbey in Paol, Pennsylvania. The Abbey (Norbertine Community) has been the sight of our Summer Congress for the past several years and has proved to be a very conducive place for prayer and our summer gathering. There were approximately 30 members present for the retreat. When the Summer Congress began on Thursday over 80 people participated. This has been the largest gathering of the Institute in the United States.

The Congress began with a special prayer service commemorating our foundation and a special blessing with holy water for all present. The Icon of the Annunciation was enthroned as it is for all our gatherings. Each evening of the Congress had a special celebration – with the 4 couples from Trinidad providing a special musical entertainment. The Trinidadians also provided all the liturgical

music during the retreat along with Deacon Joel Livingston on the organ.

On Friday evening following Mass there was a very special served dinner and the cutting of the 50th Anniversary cake. At the tables there were specially prepared centerpieces featuring a picture of Fr. Parent. Prayer cards with a prayer and photo of Fr. Parent served as a special favour at everyone's place at dinner.

Friday evening saw the special presentation in the Abbey atrium of Fr. John Campoli's photo slides commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the foundation of the Voluntas Dei Institute and also the 10th Anniversary of the foundation of the Institute in the United States. It was in August of 1998 that we were formed as a Region.

Saturday's Mass was the liturgy for consecrated life. During this Mass vows and commitments were renewed and Greg Kremer was received into vows. The Eucharist was celebrated by Fr. George Hazler, Director and concelebrating were District Council members, Frs. Andrew Sioleti and John O'Neill.



The Mass of Creation was sung and special General Intercessions were presented marking the Jubilee Mass.

Morning and evening prayers were marked with special readings from Fr. Parent reminding us of the vision of our beloved founder. In all, the week was very special and celebratory.

We will continue to celebrate the 50th Anniversary during the November meeting at Newark, NJ. ■



District Council members (from left to right) : Domenic Basile, George Hazler, Andrew Sioleti, John O'Neil, Elaine Antonucci



25

Ordination Anniversaries

Julián GONZÁLEZ-MONTENEGRO	United States
Jacques HARVEY	Canada
Andrew SIOLETI	United States
Paul TOLVE	United States
Emilyas WILFRED	India

Wedding Anniversaries

Rona and Rosner POLYCARPE	Haiti
Celinda Rosa and Jose Absalon PALACIOS SUAZO	Chile
Bernarda and Bernardo ZAMBRA MORENO	Chile
Bernarda and Guillermino GONZALEZ CALCAÑO	Dominican Republic
Eileen and Paul LANG	United States
Constance and Roger LARIVIÈRE	Canada
Edwin and Crispin EDWIN	Sri Lanka
Ruth and Orlando CARDENAS VALENCIA	Colombia

Ethiopia

by *Terfa Dinka*

The first team in Ethiopia was formed in March of 2004 in Addis Ababa, the country's capital city. The second team was formed in 2005 in the western part of the country, and a third team was formed in October of 2005 in Durame, in the southern part of Ethiopia.

The Institute has many candidates studying the spirituality of the Institute, in order to become full members. We now have married couples, vowed and professed laymen, probationers, and aspirants.

Our founder, Father Michael Craig, has taught us very clearly from the beginning about the *Voluntas Dei* Institute, through letters and emails and booklets on the Institute. Besides that, he has put us in communication with one of the Institute's members in Scotland, Mr. John Flannigan, who does a lot to help us in our understanding of the Institute.

On behalf of the teams in Ethiopia I would like to thank both of them for the work they have done, both spiritually, materially, and financially. We appreciate above all their visits to us in Ethiopia. Special gratitude to Fr. Michael for his four visits to us over a short period of time, to encourage us in being the hidden leaven in the midst of the world, especially in Ethiopia, in order to bring the Good News to our brothers and sisters by witnessing to Christ.



The *Voluntas Dei* Institute Spirituality helps us:

- walk under the grace of God;
- realise that we are present under the grace of God the Almighty One;
- gives us new birth in the Spirit of God, to serve and live in the midst of the world.

We are fully aware of our call to be peacemakers through living a life of unconditional love in action in the midst of the world.

The Anniversary of the *Voluntas Dei* Institute reminds us to reflect more and more on the needs of the destitute, the marginalised and ostracized brothers and sisters, especially the abandoned elderly people. The day after our establishment, our team started serving the poor older persons living on street corners, with financial support from Father Michael. The Institute opened a Feeding Centre (Michael's House) for these poor, older people, and we are now serving over 100 of them by providing basic needs such as food, medical care, shelter and shower facilities, and money. The food programme is five days a week, Monday to Friday. Since our teams are located in three main areas, we offer cash transfer services in Durame, Dembi Dollo, and Debreziet. We are now serving over 600 destitute people.

Our outstanding mission is to transform the world from within by living the Gospel in our professional, social and cultural milieus; in this way, we are light and hidden leaven in the midst of the world.

At our celebrations we praised God by singing songs of happiness and thanksgiving for the great deeds of God for His people, by repeating “Halleluiah” and “Amen.” These are very high points of our celebration of Voluntas Dei Institute Anniversary, of the 50 years of spiritual journey since its foundation.

At the celebration we have recommitted ourselves, offering our total life by presenting ourselves fully to the guidance of Holy Spirit, by living the earthly reality in true obedience and total dedication.

The theme of our celebration was: “Let us go out into the world and do some good, reach out to others and do some good, reach out to and help the vulnerable older persons by being kind and generous, and together we all make the world a better place.”

A Happy life for Fr. Louis-Marie Parent O.M.I! ■

Stability



<i>Canada</i>	Doreen and Jean-Guy BRILLON	July 25, 2008
	Jocelyne and Gilbert LACROIX	July 25, 2008
	Gilles URQUHART	July 25, 2008
<i>Scotland</i>	John FLANNIGAN	June 2, 2008
<i>Chile</i>	Myriam Esther and Carlos Enrique AUSENSI ROMAN	June 2, 2008
<i>United States</i>	Mary and John BUCKMAN	June 3, 2008
<i>India</i>	Saroja and Gratian AYYAPILLAI	April 24, 2007
	Joosa DENSON	June 2, 2008
	Xavier A. IGNACIMUTHU	June 2, 2008
	Martin JEREMIAS	June 2, 2008
	Abraham JOHN CHURCHIL BAS	November 14, 2007
	Martin MUTHIKKAL	December 4, 2007
	Sony Rajan NELLUVILA	June 2, 2008
	John D. PUTHENVEETIL	December 4, 2007
Joseph SENGOL	November 14, 2007	
<i>Dominican Republic</i>	Thekkekalathungal SHYMON	June 2, 2008
	Ana Rita and Mateo MEJIA M.	July 31, 2007
	Valerio and Martha PORTORREAL	July 31, 2007
	Naida and Mariano RAMIREZ	July 31, 2007

50 YEARS' PRESENCE IN THE MIDST OF THE WORLD! (CONTINUED)

Haiti

by *Philippe Désiré*

The 50th anniversary festivities in the Haiti District were a success. Fifty members were present at the Congress, priests, seminarians, single men, and married couples. Besides Fathers Fenel Bourdeau and Jean-Mary Luc of the Dominican Republic were present. Confreres we received phone calls in the United States, Guadeloupe, and France, on the occasion.

There were conferences on the apostolic objective of the Institute by the Director of the national Justice and Peace commission, and by the District Director. The founder of the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of the Incarnation, a Haitian community, spoke to us about the experience of his congregation.



A mass of thanksgiving was celebrated in Saint Bernadette Church at Martissant. The celebrant, Auxiliary Bishop Simon Saintilien of Port-au-Prince, gave a homily based on the spirituality and the teachings of Father Parent.



The celebration was enhanced by the presence of Bishop Willy Roméus, our former Bishop Protector who will shortly be celebrating his golden jubilee as a priest. A commemorative plaque was given by the District Director as a mark of gratitude for his support of the Institute. Several priests of the dioceses of Jacmel and Port-au-Prince attended the festivities as a sign of solidarity. Saint Bernadette parish church was nearly filled with people. Following the mass, a light lunch was served at Bolosse House which had been refreshed for the occasion.

Several couples made their first commitments, a single man began his aspirancy, and two seminarians started their period of probation. The professed priests and seminarians renewed their vows.

We give thanks to God for Father Parent, the Institute, and the Haiti District. ■

India

by Anthony Rebello

A jubilee year is a year for recollecting and refreshing our memory on those who sacrificed their lives for the welfare of a community or an institution. As a symbol of refreshing these memories, we decided to begin our celebrations by lighting the Jubilee torch at the grave of Monsignor Mark Netto who dedicated his whole life for the growth of the Institute in Kerala, India. So, a group of IVD members, priests, married couples, and seminarians visited the tomb at Paruthiyoor and conducted a prayer service together with the family of Msgr. Netto. Then Rev. Fr. Napoleon Gomez carried the torch to Bethel Seminary. Upon arriving at the seminary, Rev. Fr. Director Joseph Thannikkot received the torch and set it on beside the altar.

Holy Eucharist



At 3:30 P.M. there was a reception in honour of the Right Reverend Archbishop Dr. Soosai Pakiam, who has always had a special concern for the IVD. When the liturgical procession reached the altar, His Grace lit the jubilee lamb from the torch that had come for the tomb of Msgr. Netto. The entire IVD family, including many priests and religious from

different communities, married couples from the Trivandrum, Tamilnadu and Ernakulam districts, and seminarians witnessed that historical moment of our Institute.

In his homily, His grace told of how highly appreciated all the members were, for their enthusiasm and hard work in building the Institute, and especially for nourishing vocations to the priesthood. His grace concluded Mass at 5:00 P.M., and then had dinner with us.

Releasing the Jubilee Emblem

After Communion, His Grace unfurled the jubilee emblem designed by Rev. Bro. Victor Everystus, a third-year theology student. Bro. Eugene, a regent, explained the symbolic message of each part of the emblem. The entire community gathered around the altar expressed their joy and happiness by clapping hands.

Jubilee Prayer

After releasing the jubilee emblem, our regional director, the Rev. Joseph Thannikkot, recited the jubilee prayer to the audience; while it was recited in the chapel, all felt the spirit of belonging together as members of the same IVD family. Then prayer cards were distributed to each and everyone for them to pray it in their families and at team meetings during the entire jubilee year.

Launching of the Malayalam Translation of the Book *The Present Moment*

Another highlight of the inaugural function was the launching of the Malayalam translation of *The Present Moment*. The book was given to Rev. Fr. Napoleon Gomez by Archbishop Pakiam.

Jubilee Song

Another particularity of the inaugural function was the jubilee song, composed by Mr. Muhammad and Jubbayar. When the Bethel choir sang the song, the entire community joined in, and it was a wonderful experience to all.

Vote of Thanks

The final moment came to express our feelings of gratitude to God and the Blessed Virgin Mary

especially. The jubilee committee chairman, Fr. Anthony Rebello, expressed special thanks and best wishes to all the members who enriched the function with their esteemed presence.

Refreshment

Following the function the committee arranged a simple dinner, to express our solidarity with one another. ■



#

Would you have a wish, for the Institute?

May its members remain connected to Christ, especially in these difficult times of recruiting new members. Like his Master, wasn't Father Parent a trusting man?

Daniel Gagné
Layman, Canada



That the Institute continue to grow every day through its members, through their way of living the Christian life coloured by the Voluntas ideal, and by developing more and more the sense of fellowship and of mutual help.

Réal Ouellette
Layman, Canada

Dominican Republic

by Raul Santos Peña Peguero

Members of the Institute joyfully celebrated the fifty years of the Voluntas Dei Institute, in the context of the Altagracia District's annual convention, July 18 to 20, 2008. The convention theme was *Voluntas Dei Secular Institute: 50 Years' Mission in the Midst of the World*.



Over 200 members got together for the occasion, priests, deacons, seminarians, and associate members. These three days of celebration were for them an opportunity to share together in an atmosphere of joy and fraternity their experiences of close to 50 years in the Institute.

The topic at hand was, *History of the Voluntas Dei Institute*. The presenter was Father René Désilets, the Institute's first director general, and first director of Altagracia District, who has been nearly fifty years in the Institute.

The main gathering was animated by Archbishop Ramón de la Rosa y Carpio of the diocese of Santiago and great friend of the Institute in the Dominican Republic. He

addressed us on *The Role of Secular Institutes in the Church's Evangelising Mission*. He urged us to be "leaven" in the midst of the world, and to witness Christ in the secular world.

Mass on July 20 was presided by Father Ramón Araujo Tejada, director of Altagracia District. Vows and commitments were renewed at the celebration, and several members were admitted to probation and first commitments.

The 50th anniversary closing Mass was presided by Cardinal Nicolás de Jesús Lopez Rodriguez Archbishop of Santo Domingo and Primate of America. Bishop Rafael Felipe of Barahona concelebrated. Cardinal López Rodriguez, visibly happy for the Institute, congratulated all the members, and especially the priests, for the work accomplished over the years in every diocese where the Institute is present. He praised the Institute formits growth, in its 37 years of presence in the country: We are now present in six of the country's eleven dioceses, and members work in 17 parishes. Cardinal López Rodriguez urged all the members to remain true witnesses wherever they are sent by the Lord.



Representatives of the Conference of Secular Institutes (CONDIS), members of other secular institutes, Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, and several friends of the Institute were present at the celebration.

Mass was followed by a reception that took on the color of the Institute, and all the members, Bishops and guests were filled with joy and enthusiasm. We celebrated together the jubilee in an agreeable family atmosphere.

In building peace and brotherhood in Jesus Christ, the members of the Institute constitute, with their lives and witness, living parables of faith, hope, and charity.

Voluntas Dei Institute: 50 years of mission in the world! ■

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What do the Institute's fifty years mean to you?

For fifty years the Institute has strived to respond to a yearning to do the will of God in the world today. Throughout the years, the Institute's existence has shown that the spirituality of the 5-5-5 is something alive. Fifty years of evolution, where the Institute learned to adapt to our times despite drastic changes. Fifty years of fellowship and mutual respect. Fifty years of family life, with its joys, sorrows, and suffering.

Lise Durand and Serge Granger
Committed members, Canada



These fifty years represent for me the Lord's faithfulness to be with those who call on him.

Jacques Harvey, priest
Canada

For the Institute, this jubilee is an ever-present gift to the Church. It is a time of thanksgiving to celebrate its beginnings as an instrument of Christ in the world. It is also a springboard to continue living the will of God through the new evangelisation.

Pierre Marois, priest
Canada

A celebration of the gift of being the Voluntas Dei family, still young, still growing, a vital part of the Church. The Institute is a growing presence of the Lord in the midst of the world.

Andrew P. Mayer
Layman, Canada

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Sri Lanka

by James Dunstan Selvaratnam

The celebration of the Golden Jubilee was held on February the 9th, 2008. For the occasion the General Director François Hamel and the Apostolic Nuncio His Excellency Mario Zenari, the Bishop of Ratnapura His Lordship Rt. Dr. Cletus Perera were the chiefs of the celebration. Priests, nuns, religious and lay people were also present at the golden jubilee celebration. It was a great pleasure to have five Voluntas Dei priests from India who came all the way to show the solidarity and the fellowship on the occasion of the golden jubilee and the erection of the canonical status as District-in-formation. The celebration was held at De La Salle Chapel, Mutwal, Colombo. The activities of the jubilee were the following.

Jubilee Mass

The thanksgiving Eucharist was presided over by Rev. Fr. François Hamel, the Director General. The concelebrants were Bishop Cletus Perera and Fr. Dunstan, the District Director. The Nuncio was there present in the Holy Mass. There were over thirty religious and diocesan priests concelebrated in the liturgy. All our members took part actively in the liturgy.

Announcement of the Canonical Status

After the homely, the General Director Fr. Hamel read out the juridical status of the canonical erection of Sri Lanka from Region to District-in-formation. It took effect on the same day itself that is February 09, 2008. It was then handed over to the new District Director Fr. Dunstan.



Papal Blessing

The Nuncio expressed the wish of the Pope and his wish towards the end of the Eucharist celebration. In his felicitation message, he stated that the Holy Spirit has inspired our founder Fr. Parent, OMI, to found a secular clerical institute which has reached up to Sri Lanka to spread its branches. He quoted the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI and said, "The need to place the word of God at the center of all things, recalling that at the root of the different expressions of consecrated lives become a living exegesis that can be read as an unfolding of Christ down the ages, as a living gospel actualized in ever new forms". He also gave the papal blessing towards the end of the liturgy after the words of appreciation.

Juridic Status

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

Whereas in the last few years, the process aimed at finding a new juridic status that is better suited to the Sri Lanka Region;

Whereas the number of members in Sri Lanka has grown, thanks to a good promotion of vocations;

Whereas the sectors and teams in Sri Lanka have shown much vitality;

Whereas there is hope for further growth;

Whereas there is sufficient capacity for self-management;

Whereas the Sri Lanka Region, by reaching back to its roots, expects renewed vigour energy in its spiritual life and for living the charism of the Institute;

Whereas the present council is capable of self-management and presents moral guarantees for the future;

After consultation with the members of the central council of the Voluntas Dei Secular Institute at a meeting July 26-27, 2007 (Resolution CC07-156), and on the request of the Sri Lanka Regional Council to be given a new juridic status,

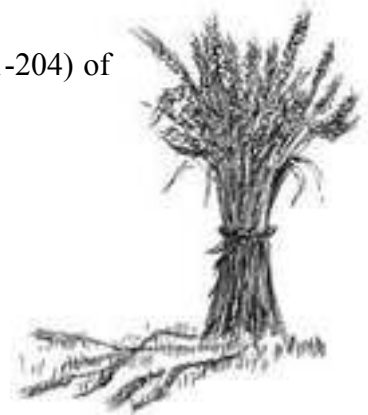
Do hereby decree

THE CANONICAL ERECTION
Effective 9 February 2008, of the
SRI LANKA DISTRICT-in-FORMATION

with all the rights and privileges provided in the Constitutions (art. 201-204) of the Voluntas Dei Secular Institute.

Given at Colombo
9 February 2008

François Hamel, I.V.Dei
Director General



THE LAOTIAN MARTYRS

by *François Hamel*

The official adventure of the process of beatification of the Laotian Martyrs officially began June 12, 2008, at Nantes, France. One of the martyrs was a member of the Institute, Luc Si.

Luc was the baby from a family of six, two girls and four boys. He was born in 1938. He was baptised October 28, 1951, along with Louis Ling, the actual Bishop of Paksé, Laos.

In 1961 there was a coup d'état in Laos, and Luc was forcefully drafted into the army. In 1967 he married Nang Sôt, and together they had a daughter who is now deceased.

Luc was an associate member in the Institute, and had started his probation January 26, 1970, at the time Father Parent was in Laos; it was at this time that Father met the new probationers. Luc was also a catechist.

On March 3 (1970), Deacon Louis Ling directed the retreat at Honey Phong, an out of the way village, and Luc was one of the retreatants.

On March 5, Louis and Pho Inpèng went to Dène Ding to meet families that wanted to become Christians. Luc told Louis: "I am very happy to have made this retreat. Now I am really ready..."

They left the village March 7, 1970. They came across an army truck that accepted to take them aboard. Along the way they were ambushed. Luc Si and Pho Inpèng were killed. Louis was wounded. The attackers stole the contents of the truck and the bags, set fire to the truck, and left. Luc was "really ready!"

"He died for Christ... had wanted to reach the isolated Christians, those who had no one to talk to them about Christ. He knew full well that it was dangerous, but he didn't want to abandon them any longer." ■



**Confidence is a gift of God by which
one's being becomes as firm as a rock.**

Father Louis-Marie Parent

Declaration

I, François Hamel, the undersigned, priest, Director General of the Voluntas Dei Institute, declare the following to serve whomever it may concern, in the cause of canonisation of Luc Si, presumably martyred in Laos (cause of the “Laotian Martyrs”).

According to the archives of the Institute, Luc Si, a Kmhmu catechist was born in 1938 in Laos, and was married;

1. Incorporated in the Institute as an associate member probationer, at a ceremony that took place January 26, 1970
2. Died in Laos March 7, 1970.

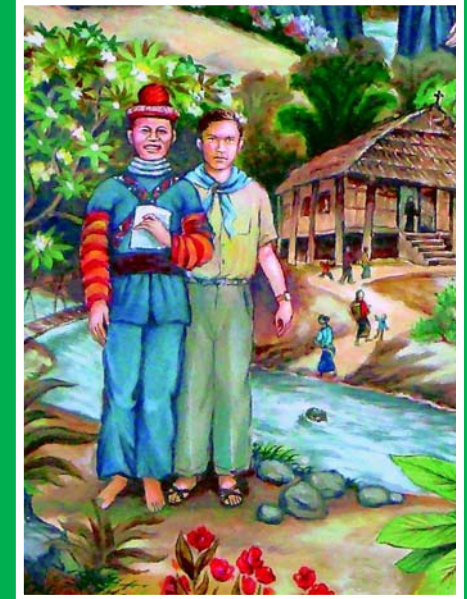
The Institute considers probationers dying during their period of probation full-fledged members in a spiritual, non canonical sense.

The Voluntas Dei Institute rejoices that the cause of canonisation of Luc Si is introduced, and it hopes that it will have a happy outcome, so that the sacrifice Luc made is fully acknowledged and celebrated. The Institute is aware of no fact that could hinder the cause. The few documents in the possession of the Institute, that could shed light on the life of Luc Si, have been given to the Postulator.

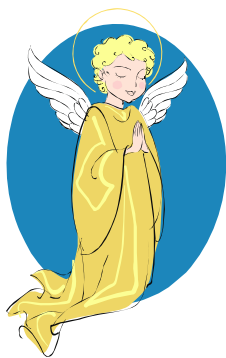
Made at Trois-Rivières, Québec, July 2, 2008

Fr. François Hamel, I.V.Dei
Director General

Fr. Léo Grégoire, I.V.Dei
Secretary General



On the right, in the picture : Luc Si



**We shall be saints
when we are aware
that the Holy Spirit is in us
to form us into other Christs,
other instruments of the Father's will.**

Father Louis-Marie Parent



Prayer for the Beatification of the Laotian Martyrs

*O Lord our God,
You gave to Father Joseph Tiên and his companions,
lay people, catechists, and missionaries,
the courage to pass on the Christian faith at every opportunity.
They obeyed with unshakeable fidelity,
to the directives of Peter's Successor.
They loved the poor, the sick and the children at the peril of their lives.*

*So that a family of believers who were joyful in adversity
grow and develop in Laos,
they gave their lives in union with that of Jesus,
offered for us on the cross.*

*We want to follow and make known
to the younger generations
the example they set.
We pray you, Lord,
may the genuineness of their vocation
to holiness and martyrdom be acknowledged soon.*

*And through their intercession,
give us the grace we confidently ask you.*

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be)



Canada

Ronald CHÂTEAUVERT ~ Married member with stability
January 25, 2008 ~ Husband of Yolaine Bernier

India

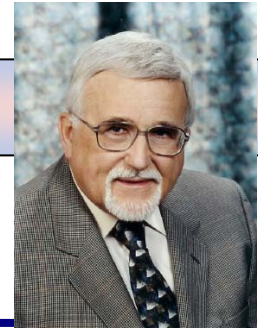
Lissy CORREYA ~ Married member with stability
February 13, 2008 ~ Spouse of Gasper Correya and
Xavier Glen's mother (layman)

Dominican Republic

Juan Pablo JIMENEZ ~ Married member with stability
April 19, 2008 ~ Husband of Saturnina Sosa



ON THE PRESENT MOMENT



by *Vincent Therrien*

As I sat in the shade of a giant pine, on a radiant and warm summer day, my spirit started meditating on “the present moment,” God’s expectations, though virtual but real and infinite, and of which the present moment given to us is redolent.

The expression “present moment” evokes in us a spontaneous image of a pause, a second look, a reflective looking back of wisdom applied, and re-applied. Our yearly publication “*The Present Moment*” bears its name, two words that are dear to Father Parent. Father was to collect, explore and celebrate together the varied experiences of our members who discover, apply and live out in different contexts our special charism of secular institute. In those parts of the world where they are, the members translate, explain and proclaim the Presence of God, His kindness, His calls and His rights, basing these on healthy values, on the legitimate dynamics of the host cultures, to carry them with the action of the Holy Spirit to an unimagined level of accomplishment. How do they achieve this, what are the challenges and joys, what solidarity do they expect from each member and of the Institute as a whole? Our young roots and growing traditions find their undeniable and indispensable vitality there. Besides, the Church expects no less from us.

However, this priority given to life, to the lived experience of people and groups, does not dispense us from reflection on the basic elements of our spirituality. Quite the opposite. It is obvious that while feeding on experience – past or current – our calling and our mission demand constant and ever-more enlightened and deepened creativity. While it is not enough to simply repeat the past in the wake of a rather short-sighted literalism, legalism and fundamentalism, it is of the utmost importance that we be rooted in this experience in order to continue to invent with wisdom and appropriately. God’s expectations for us certainly point in this direction, according to the writings of Benedict

XVI, John Paul II, and Paul VI, among others. To manage or administer (hence, to promote) a spiritual heritage concerning a moral person and, therefore, every single human composing this moral person, has nothing to do with material or economic administration, however sophisticated it may be. This task which is essentially missionary in the evangelical sense of the word, is carried out through a conscientious effort of constant exploration of virtualities, possibilities, and originalities of their fundamental charism(s), to situate them at the very edge of their creative dynamic, inventor of the future, like the prow of a vessel on the high seas. Or better, like a plant that grows and ever renews itself through the activity of its specific vitality.

The elementary wisdom of common sense already draws man, however ignorant he is, to call upon and value the watchful conscience of the present moment as the simplest path to happiness. The past is gone and leaves us powerless before it; the unforeseeable future escapes our grasp, too; only the present moment is alive in our hands as a gift, and it solicits our responsible freedom. This is the first level of perception and of general ethics about the present moment.

More deeply, psychology reminds us that the prudent man refuses the regressive attitude of living or taking pleasure in a morbid or narcissistic manner in the past, a source of psychological blockage and illness of the spirit. Also, being obsessed with the future is just as alienating to the one doing it in existential anxiety or out of fear of the unknown. The life-saving buoy of the present moment where one is fully can save man from drowning or suicide brought about by the inaction or the refusal to accept events in an adult, mature way. This is the second level of ethical wisdom.

Welcome, then, to the innovating horizon of inebriating freedom, a sober, ontological inebriation whose

consequence is the possibility to make us “be” or “not be,” to exist and build oneself at will and autonomously, despite everything and on every occasion, with the shining, psychic health of superior maturity and limitless, blessed responsibility. At this level, the ethic of the common good works from the deepest layers of man and unfolds to him great horizons for the gift of self bent on excellence. At this point, the road to the country of the hero is opened.

Finally, theological experience and knowledge complete human being’s ultimate, evangelical unity through the free exercise of theological faith, hope, and charity. Through the impetus of the Holy Spirit, the present moment can be charged with a tinge of eternity: By a spark of loving freedom, it is transmuted into immediate eternal life in a fascinating, continuous paschal adventure. It is here that human history under the direction of God unfolds in all its density. Like an ice cube that dissolves in warm water, time and eternity are now joined together in the theological love of Christ who said: “Whoever believes in me has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day” (Jn. 6:47). Here we have reached the mystical level of knowledge and of divine, habitual love in the Father’s family, the final possibilities to unfold in human experience and always available at the present moment. Only the meaning of this transcendence evangelises with discernment and makes the present moment Christian, beyond worldly culture, however developed it may be. This evangelical attitude ensures an undeniably effective missionary endeavour in the midst of the world, because it erects it into an active, actual sign of the risen Christ, like yeast in dough. Besides, it draws man away from pagan, selfish or abusive, epicurean ways and perceptions of the present moment – sadly, very common worldly attitudes stemming from a too limited knowledge of perspectives and possibilities that the present moment constantly opens to us. This marks the birth of the new creation, shown forth and growing, a realisation that triggers the reflex of a contemplative pause, one of wonder and of thanksgiving...

How can one best experience in a concrete way and from the vantage point of our daily spirituality, a spirituality of the Incarnation, whose dynamic is both secular and Christian, an extension of Christ’s incarnation, and true

will of God for a secular institute, in the Church? Here, then, in the present moment, the unexpected event of a state of intense awareness where God meets us and challenges us personally through His creative and sanctifying Love. Raised up so imperatively, our wills embrace the thrust of a superior, transparent, and oblation creativeness. Such seems to us the dynamics of God’s expectation for us. The humble acceptance of these grace-filled, infinite, possibilities of the present in a perpetual act of giving birth (Cf. Rm. 8:19 and 22), completes the bearing of a past however gone by, and guarantees the better eternal future.

“Walk in my presence and be perfect,” God said to Abraham. This culture of the living Presence of God, in us and then in the creating that it animates, in humankind that it gets into and Scripture that it inspires, is the great and deep secret of the present moment lived in the world in all its human denseness (human / divine), and in its long-lasting impact, both missionary and apostolic, on our human / cosmic environments. God always looks at people (and situations) as bearers of the future, from what they have the best in them, beyond all distress, because His gaze is one of love. This is the basic principle of a spirituality of the Incarnation.

This is surely a responsibility that challenges every true Christian, because man, even without knowledge of Christ, is loved by God; he already belongs to the order of salvation accomplished in Christ, and he is virtually on the way to Him, and is part of the people of God, the Body of Christ. He is destined to receive the fullness of the most secret vow with which animates him and which guides implicitly and mysteriously his quest, under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The images, symbols and traditions of his culture are an awkward expression of this reality. The mission of the people of God is to gather together all men, as they are and where they are, not through proselytising but through dialogue and enlightened exchange, and the embodied witness of true love (see, here, *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican II). It is the people of God’s fundamental responsibility to root the presence and the mystery of Christ at the centre of the life and culture of all nations, so that “Every tongue proclaim to the glory of God the Father, that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil. 2:11).

Here we see the present moment as a multiple call to basic, fruitful vigilance that a famous mystic described thus: “He whose attitude is true finds himself everywhere and with everyone; but he who lacks rectitude is ill at ease in all places and with everyone. He who possesses God alone has no other thought than God himself. Such a man carries God everywhere and in all things, and that man’s total activity takes on a divine character” (Meister Eckhart, Spiritual Conferences).

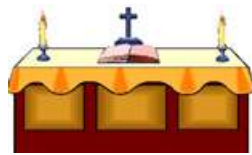
“O God, you are the God whom I seek... Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary to see your power and your glory. For your kindness is a greater good than life; my lips shall glorify you. Thus will I bless you while I live; lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name” (Ps. 62). ■

Priestly Ordinations

Haiti

December 27, 2006

Frédo Lesly André Jean
Fénel Bourdeau
Usnel Deshommes



United States May 10, 2008



Christian Matuschek

India – March 27, 2008



Johny
Puthenveettil



Victor
Everystus



Eugene
Britto



Dassayyan
Shaiju



Martin
Muttickal

In what country was each of the photographs taken ?

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



Answers

1. United States
2. Haiti
3. Sri Lanka
4. Canada
5. Colombia
6. Dominican Republic
7. Sri Lanka
8. India
9. Chile
10. Dominican Republic
11. United States
12. Haiti
13. Canada