



# HIGHLIGHTS

## ONTARIO DISTRICT NEWS

September 2021

### Interim Superior of Ontario District – OMI Lacombe Province



On August 17, 2021, we met at Springhurst for the Installation of Hahn Van Tran OMI as Interim Superior of Ontario District. Ontario District Council members joined the Springhurst community at their daily Mass with Fr. Ken Thorson presiding and after a short homily he installed Hahn as Superior for the coming year.

Following daily Mass, the council met in the library and then joined the men upstairs for lunch.

Hahn's council has Eugene Whyte, Director of Springhurst, Tim Coonen as District Treasurer, Eleanor Rabnett as Lay Advisor and Jane Brennan as District Director.

Welcome Hahn, we are grateful for your obedience to what is already a heavy workload. And so, begins a new chapter in the ongoing story of Ontario District.

Please keep Fr. Hahn and the members of his council in your prayers in the coming months ahead.



## Differences Are Good

Being able to think differently from those around us and being able to function lovingly with people who think otherwise is the ultimate in human endeavor. It requires three things: a heart large enough to deal with conflict positively, enduringly, and kindly; a keen sense of personal purpose, the notion that there is something on the horizon that is worth debating; and a soul sensitive enough to transcend the tensions of the immediate for the sake of the quality of the future.

by: Joan Chittister "Called to Community"

## **fabiociardi**

Monday 5th July 2021

### **Happy with who we are**

Let's meet again!



After a long time, today the first meeting in the presence of the Generalate has begun. There are only five people who come from outside: Indonesia, Pakistan, Cameroon, Italy. Others are internal members of the community. Still others share the conference via the internet. A shy but hopeful start.

We began with a Eucharistic celebration "In thanksgiving for

our vocation".

Being happy with who you are and thanking God for it is something truly great. In a society of discontented, angry, people who are always looking for what they do not have, who envy others, it is nice to recognize that we are a gift from God, that Dei has chosen us, has called us, that we are worth in his eyes, that we are precious to him ...

## From Springhurst: Summer...



Getting ready to ride... let's keep Tim in our thoughts and prayers while he is away on holidays.

Frank and Eugene having a beer – looking great Frank!



Vaughan out for a walk – sometimes the sun is just too darned bright.



# ORAISON

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2021**

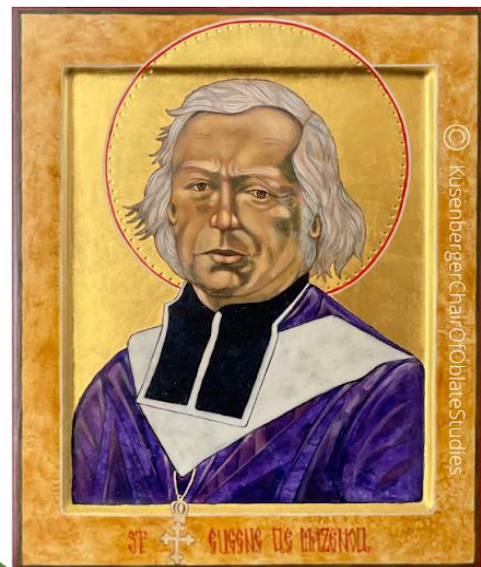
“In prolonged silent prayer[...], we let ourselves be molded by the Lord, and find in him the inspiration of our conduct” (OMI Rule of Life, 33). The practice of Oraison was an important part of St. Eugene’s daily prayer during which he entered into communion with the members of his missionary family. In this spirit let us become aware that we are praying in communion with members of the Mazenodian Family throughout the world.

Jesus and his disciples left from there and began a journey through Galilee, but he did not wish anyone to know about it. He was teaching his disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise.” But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him. They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.” Taking a child, he placed it in the their midst, and putting his arms around it, he said to them, “Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me.” (Mark. 9:30-37)

Be humble and you will do much good; you know that it is to the humble that the Lord gives grace.

The cleverest amongst us and amongst all men is nothing by himself but a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, it is the good God who does all and to whom alone all should be attributed; of that we must all be persuaded.

(St. Eugene to Fr. Marcou,  
27 January, 1824)



## From St. Eugene de Mazenod...

Eugene's words from 178 years ago continue to be relevant for all of the members of our Mazenodian Family.

*"These are the wonders of Providence upon us and an ever more pressing reason to thank the Lord who has given us such a vocation and to accomplish even more faithfully the apostolic virtues that this vocation demands of us."*

*St. Eugene de Mazenod in  
his opening address at the 7<sup>th</sup>  
General Chapter, July 1843,  
Marseilles*



## A Prayer for Today's World

My prayer these days begin with hearing the suffering of the people of Haiti, who are often the victims of earthquakes, storms, and political instability. With over 2,000 already dead and many others injured, we cannot forget the souls of those who are working to restore the people's livelihood and return to good health.

My prayer reaches to the frightened people of Afghanistan as political turmoil ensues. May God be merciful to those who helped the Allied forces and give them safe passage to a land that will ensure their freedom and safety. May God give compassion to the new government so that human rights are protected and promoted.

May God keep the world safe from the variants of the Coronavirus and may no more variants mutate. I pray that the world come together to rally around a common purpose - to eradicate the virus through whatever means possible. May God change the hearts of people to give them hearts of compassion, hearts that care for others, and hearts that are concerned for the common good.

May God unite the Church, that we may find beauty in diversity, but that we unite around the Lord in joy and discover each other's innate goodness. May we focus upon the Lord who unites us rather than our differences. May we become a church that dances because we live in the joy of the Resurrection.

May God give us all an understanding heart that we may bear with one another in charity and goodwill.

*John Predmore, SJ – Set the World Ablaze*

## In Our Love and Prayers...

We continue to pray for all whose lives have been touched by COVID19, especially those in the more densely populated and poorest countries in the world. We cannot forget all who are suffering with the radical climate changes and political strife around the world.

We continue to hold Vaughan Quinn in our thoughts and prayers as he continues to improve as well as Oliver Rich and Frank Kavanagh in their respective homes. We also remember Wayne Jarvo and his challenges these days.

We continue to hold Brian Kerr in our prayers and all who are struggling in any way and Jane McDonald who continues to improve following her surgery this past summer.

Let's not forget about our new **'At the foot of the Cross:' Saint Eugene's Prayer Group** which is announced and can be found in the Member's section of OMI Lacombe website.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**September 19th – Monthly Oraison** Our Monthly Oraison for the Mazenodian Family will take place in in reflection and prayer with all who wish to join us from their homes and workplaces. All are welcome.

**September 30<sup>th</sup> - The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation** What are your plans to honour this day?

**November 3, 4** – Mark your calendars for District Meetings with the Provincial Team. We will let you know more once we receive the information from the Provincial Office.

## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



Paul Howard – September 2

John Malazdrewich – September 9

Suzanne Manchevsky – September 23

Arnie Francis – October 3

Tim Coonen - October 10

Joseph Hattie – September 6

Eugene Whyte - September 15

Vaughan Quinn – September 28

Oliver Rich – October 8

## **LISTENING AND SPEAKING OUT – A Reflection during this Season of Creation**

We continue to listen to our Indigenous brothers and sisters, as they speak out and share their suffering and struggles with us. We walk with them, in silence and in solidarity as we listen.

This also a time of solidarity with our planet, which is suffering deeply. Many of us have turned a deaf ear to her cries. But it is not too late. We can find ways to speak out, again in solidarity with our brothers and sisters and all of creation. For they honour and respect this earth and all of God's creation. They are willing and eager to teach us and share with us their ancient ways. In that way we can learn to change our ways and to join them in speaking out.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin held that "our nature is already endowed with grace, and thus our task "is to be attentive to that which is within and that which is without – mind and heart so that we may contribute to building up the world in love. Every action can be sacred action if [it] is rooted in love, and in this way, both Christians and non-Christians can participate in the emerging body of Christ..."

"Our lives have meaning and purpose.... We either help build this world up in love or tear it apart. Either way, we bear the responsibility for the world's future, and thus we bear responsibility for God's life as well." (Ilia Delio, *The Hours of the Universe: Reflections on God, Science, and the Human Journey* 2021)

*By: Eleanor Rabnett, Oblate Associate*

## **FROM THE OBLATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY:**

### [Part 1: Daring to Listen to God's Call](#)

**Mondays, October 4 – 25 | 10:00 am – 11:00 am Central Time | Online Asynchronous (also offered in Spanish & French)**

#### **Leaving Nothing Undared with St. Eugene de Mazenod**

A four-part enrichment series focused on the life, spirituality, and mission of St. Eugene de Mazenod, founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, who also inspired the formation of a charism family of laity around the world.

The series consists of a weekly invitation to experience St. Eugene through prayer, through the example of his life, and his writings. Resources for personal or group reflection and prayer will be available to class participants.

This is a free course; however, they do ask for donations. We are working on being able to offer it via ZOOM for our Oblate parishes and Oblate Associate groups across the Province. Stay tuned for more information & how to sign up for this locally.



## From Galilee Centre:

PASSION & ACTION: INTEGRATING THE INNER LIFE WITH JUSTICE – OCTOBER 1-3, 2021

Perhaps we are witnessing the beginning of a new chapter of social and cultural change. Some of this is gaining momentum through grassroots movements that are understandably energized by compassion, anger, frustration, hope, and desperation. Without these passions would we ever confront injustice? Unfortunately, our feelings can also be too raw and wild to help. Sometimes they are just unfamiliar, coming from little or no previous Shadow work or lacking an awareness of projection and scapegoating mechanisms. These undercurrents can draw more attention to ourselves than the injustice we are trying to change! How can we wield the energies of our passions – and not have them wield *us*? This retreat will bring the range of our passions to the power of Transformative Love so that our social action does not pivot, as the adage goes, on “seeing things as *they are*, but on seeing things as we are”.

**Cost: Single: \$320, Double: \$275, Commuter: \$180 (includes all meals) Virtual: \$90**

To register, please contact us at 613 623 4242 ext 21 or at [info@galileecentre.com](mailto:info@galileecentre.com).

*If you wish to register for virtual attendance ONLY ... you can do so [Here](#)*

## PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

### Is the Church “irredeemably flawed”?

There's nothing "irredeemably flawed" about the Catholic Church, in spite of what its critics say.

Firstly, because 'flaws' are part of the human condition, and secondly -- this is tongue-in-cheek -- because Christ's 'redemptive action' touches everything, even the Roman Catholic Church.

But more seriously now, we are witnessing the slow and total collapse of one form of church government -- the Vatican monarchy -- a system which oppressed Catholics for over a thousand years.

The kicking and screaming we hear is from those who have a vested interest in it's carrying on.

Therefore, it is *this form* of church government which is disintegrating, *not the community of the faithful*. Christ said that his Church, the community of believers, would stay firm forever.

But he made no such promises about church government.



There's no denying that when governments totter and fall, the whole country is in disarray. Take a look at Afghanistan today.

Go back a little in history and consider Russia in 1917: the country had lost a major war; the Tsar and his family were in captivity; and the country was being ruled by a group of fanatical revolutionaries, who didn't know the second thing about running a country.

It took imperial Russia almost four years of bloody civil war to settle down and become the Soviet Union.

There are similar examples from the French Revolution, the collapse of the Mughal Empire in India, and almost every nation where one government is replaced by another.

The old saying rings true, "When two elephants fight, it's the grass beneath which gets crushed."

Violent transitions aren't new to the Church either. In the great Schism [1054] the Pope and the Patriarch of Constantinople excommunicated each other, a division between Catholic and Orthodox which has lasted until today.

Through the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the violent "wars of religion" between Catholic and Protestant convulsed most of Europe.

On the Catholic side, it was only the Council of Trent [1545-1563] which settled points of doctrine and liturgy, and usually by force.

The question of jurisdiction had to wait another century for the Peace of Westphalia [1648].

### **Righteous action more important than right doctrine**

So is the Church as we know it, on the verge of collapse? Probably yes, for this Church, the post-Tridentine Church, has passed its "sell by" date.

The paedophile scandals in the churches of Europe and America, and their cover-up by the hierarchy, have revealed to us all just how rotten the whole structure of the celibate clergy is.

[Pope Francis](#)' cleansing of the "Augean stables" -- the Vatican financial institutions -- have told us what a pretence the following of Jesus poor has become.

As the Catholic communities of Asia, Africa and Latin America grow to maturity, they demand a theology and a liturgy in mesh with their own cultures, and not the Eurocentric form taught in most seminaries.

The Church is a global entity, and can no longer be controlled from one city, even one as historically significant as Rome.

In other words, the future of the Catholic Church lies *in pluriformity*, not in uniformity.

The very word 'catholic' [*kat'holos*] means 'universal', and *Roman Catholic* is a contradiction in terms.

This is what Pope Francis ["the man from a far country"] has realized, and slowly but surely he is moving to achieve his objectives.

Through earlier synods, he has encouraged participation, even dissent.

He wants everyone to speak out, discuss, express their points of view.

He has also encouraged an active involvement of the faithful with the poor, the homeless, refugees and those stricken by wars and persecution.

His encyclical on ecology and climate change has been hailed by men and women of all persuasions.

He considers righteous action [*orthopraxis*], more important than right doctrine [*orthodoxy*].

In this, he is striking different from his predecessors, who clamped down on and silenced theologians who thought "out of the box".

This what "synodality" means -- "walking together with" -- a word precious to the present pope, for it implies that the "pilgrim Church" belongs to all, not just the hierarchy.

This means, the Church belongs specially to the poor, to the young, to women, to the laity.

In this multi-religious world, we may add synodality encourages dialogue between faiths.

"Collegiality" implied bishops acting in concert. A word dear to Vatican II. It has now been displaced, and looking at the way so many bishops behave, we can quietly thank God.

Synodality goes far beyond.

And gradually and deliberately, Francis has chosen as cardinals men from the margins of the Church, who will implement his new vision of the Church after he has gone. Men who are not careerists, but -- in his inimitable words -- "smell of the sheep".

This then is Pope Francis' vision. It is such a game-changer that no wonder it is being bitterly opposed by those who have benefited from the *ancien regime*.

But all those who believe that Christ's Spirit guides and supports his Church rest confident.

For flawed though his Church may be, yet it is his "...chosen people,... claimed by God for his own, to proclaim the triumphs of him who called us out of darkness into his marvellous light." [1 Peter 2.9]

**Myron J. Pereira**, a Jesuit author based in Mumbai, writes regularly on topics of religious, cultural and socio-political interest.