

60th Anniversary of Ordination

Fr. Alfred Groleau's Homily from Dec. 20, 2024



"Welcome all and I am grateful for all of you who have come and joined with me to celebrate these 60 years of priesthood. My first thought is to give thanks to God for this calling. I must tell you that I feel humbled in being here and celebrating these 60 years. And I thank you for responding to my invitation.

I am humbled when I think of how bold I was even to enter on this venture when I left home at the age of 18 and travelled to St. Norbert, south of Winnipeg, where I met 24 other young men from western Canada who were also eager to begin on this journey. At the end of 365 days, 20 of us pronounced temporary vows as Oblates of Mary Immaculate and we moved onto our theological studies in preparation for the priesthood.

This was in the 1960's. Cardinal Roncalli ... became Pope John XXIII and he surprised the world by calling an ecumenical Council called Vatican II that gave the Catholic Church a new face in the world. The Church has not yet absorbed the shock that this caused. We began to pray in vernacular languages. During several months during the subsequent four years, Cardinals and Bishops from around the world

met in Rome and composed a new charter for the Catholic Church. Soon and perhaps, too quickly furniture was moved in our churches and substantial changes brought to our liturgy.

I came into Church ministry with the brazen naivety of a 25-year-old who had a myopic view of what the Church should offer to the world. The Council of Vatican II did not rewrite the constitution of the Roman Catholic Church, but it certainly brought about profound changes that have not yet been integrated since Catholics are still feeling the tremors.

Far be it for me to explain all of this event, but you have all experienced the effects of this event in your own way. I can recall one experience as a young priest still in my twenties when I was to preside Eucharist at a Sunday Mass where the pastor preached on the commandments of the Church, when Catholics must fast and when church attendance is compulsory. My own style at the time was very much off the cuff. I feel remorse today for some of this laissez-faire. And I repent for it. I look back with much gratitude for the prophetic courage of Pope John XXIII who dare to open the windows of the Vatican and who affected the movements of the Catholic Church since then.

And today on the 60th Anniversary of my ordination, I remember that it was a cold winter day, and the Archbishop had to find another route to reach St. Albert Church. I am grateful to all those who have been patient with me over the years, those who have accompanied me in years when I was teaching High School, those who lived in residence when we had boarders at College St. Jean, those to whom I ministered at St. Bernard's in Grouard, Alberta, to all the people I met in Pakistan during five years, and then in Kenya for nine years. I am especially grateful to the Oblates who have lived with me and who have been my companions for over 66 years. Most of all, I thank my family that laid my foundation. And I thank you for coming to celebrate this anniversary with me."



A luncheon was held following Mass to celebrate Fr. Alfred. Family and friends joyfully attended to honour Fr. Alfred's faithful service on this special occasion.

OBEDIENCES - Fr. Alfred Groleau

Date	Location	Assignments
1965	Collège St-Jean, Edmonton, AB	Studies
1974	St. Paul University, Ottawa, ON	Studies
1975	Edmonton, AB	Formation Ministry
1986	Kisemanito Centre, Grouard, AB	First Nations Ministry
1992	Grandin Province, Edmonton, AB	Prov. Treasurer
1992	Lac Ste Anne Missions, AB	First Nations Ministry
1996	St. Charles Scholasticate, St. Albert, AB	Formation Team Member
1999	St. Charles Scholasticate, St. Albert, AB	Superior
2001	Pakistan	Scholastic Superior
2006	Kenya Mission, Kenya, Africa	Mission Superior
2010	Kenya, Meru	Formation Team Member
2015 Dec	Vital Grandin Centre, St. Albert, AB	Un-assigned - Casual
2017	June-Sep Kenya	
2016	Br. Anthony District, St. Albert, AB	Superior (3 yrs)
2017	Foyer Lacombe	Oblate Director

Oblate Feast Day, February 17th

Monday, February 17, 2025 marked the **199th Anniversary** of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate Constitutions and Rules. Every year, Oblates and Associates gather to mark this special day with a renewal of Vows for professed Oblates and renewal of commitments for Associates. We gathered at Sacred Heart Church for a wonderful turkey meal with all the trimmings, including the much-loved Bannock. Following the meal, the gathering moved to the church for a lively liturgy with drummers and musicians where Professed Oblates renewed their vows, and a large group of Associates then renewed their commitments. Four Associates then made their first commitments after a two-year formation process. Oblates and Associates are thankful for the wonderful hospitality and incredible food.



Receiving the Oblate Cross



Four 1st year committed Associates



O-BOC Pilot: Online Community

After much discussion and planning, on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, we hosted our first afternoon 'Online Basic Oblate Community' (O-BOC). This ZOOM gathering offers Professed Oblates and Associates from across the country a monthly opportunity for community and ongoing formation, especially those living in places where in-person gathering is not possible, or for those who are facing mobility challenges.

We started the afternoon O-BOC at 3:00 pm MDST, after opening the ZOOM link thirty minutes earlier to encourage informal conversations. Following an opening song (Circle of Friends) and opening prayer, we spent thirty minutes witnessing a 'round-the-screen' introduction of the 30 people present. It was so wonderful to see so many familiar faces spanning from B.C. to Ontario.

We then posed some questions for the whole group to consider: *What are your expectations of this OBOC? Should it be an open group (able to join when you are unable to attend your local BOC in person) or a closed group (for those without a group to attend in person or faced with health challenges)?*

There was a real sense of synodal listening that included the following comments:

- If these gatherings get to be large, great! If not, great.
- Good to be with people; such a large geography. How else will we get to know one another?
- Biggest gift of being with and knowing each other.
- Sharing from our hearts gives permission for others to be comfortable.
- Sharing is life giving.
- Totally agree with this on-line gathering.
- This will help us get into ministries together.
- There will be no shortage of topics; I know my own Oblate heart.
- We are on the same journey.
- Anything I would say or what to hear would be very rich.
- Open ourselves to the unknown, to see what it must give us.
- I have difficulty sharing; but Oblates/Associates help me get out of that anxiety.
- Let's take advantage of this technology.
- This is another form of community; it is exciting.
- Another concept of Oblate Community; we can have access to this.



We were pleased with the openness and eagerness expressed by all those present when we introduced the structure, we intend to use for ongoing formation in the months ahead using the CC&RR Animation Tools provided by the Congregation during the 37th Chapter. We look forward to meeting together online with many Oblates and Associates who will join us from across the country and beyond. All are welcome!

Dan and Joanne Friedt

Provincial Oblate Associate Animators

OMI Lacombe Canada

Brother Anthony Upcoming Monthly Anniversaries

2nd Quarter - April, May and June 2025

APRIL

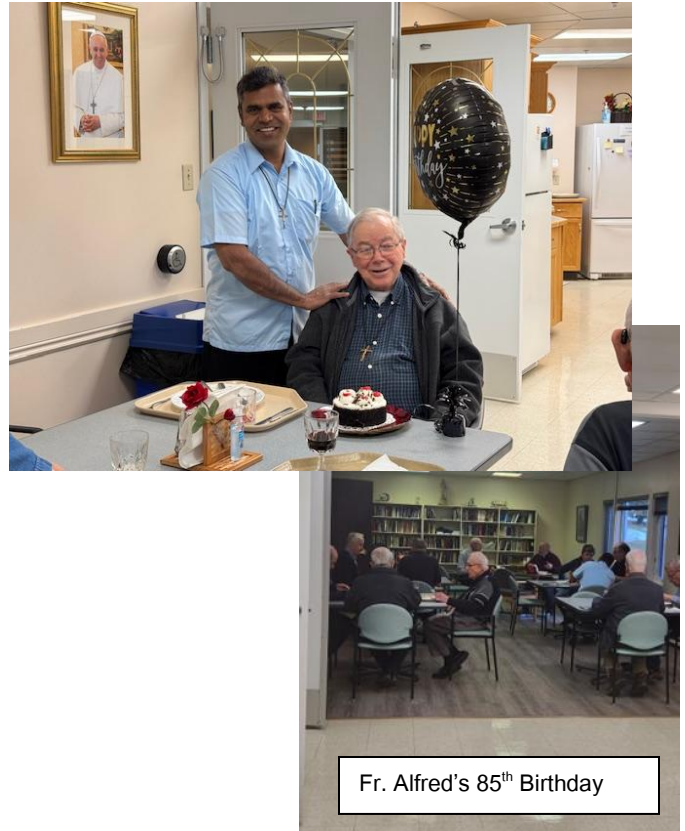
18-Apr-96	First Vows	Susai Jesu
22-Apr-47	Birthday	Sylvain Lavoie

MAY

02-May-37	Birthday	Gerard LeStrat
03-May-56	First Vows	Edward Kosa
09-May-41	Birthday	Edward McSheffrey
17-May-71	Birthday	Susai Jesu
29-May-60	Birthday	Rusty Gardiner
31-May-65	First Vows	Donald Claerhout

JUNE

03-Jun-57	Birthday	Peter Doherty
03-Jun-72	Ordination	Edward McSheffrey
08-Jun-86	Episcopal Ordination	Denis Croteau
16-Jun-56	Ordination	Maurice Joly
17-Jun-87	Ordination	Leszek Kwiatkowski
21-Jun-63	Birthday	Mark Blom
21-Jun-05	Ordination	Marek Pisarek
24-Jun-67	Ordination	Gerard LeStrat



The Challenge of Contentment

Paul's young disciple Timothy had his hands full in Ephesus. The apostle had left Timothy in that city to oversee the organization of the church. Timothy was to provide consistent teaching; help the church choose leaders and model personal integrity as a leader.

Paul's first letter to Timothy contains both direction and encouragement for Timothy. Among his memorable objectives Paul included the following: "Now godliness with contentment is great gain" (6:6). Obviously, the absence of both godliness and contentment would indicate great loss, especially in the Christian life. Godliness without contentment would be a joyless and legalist righteousness. Contentment without godliness describes a person sadly disconnect from God's Truth.

What kind of life is Paul describing when he speaks of godly contentment? Paul describes such a person as having a firm understanding of the passing nature of life. The things of this world are here when we arrive and are left behind when we leave. Neither godliness nor contentment can be found in accumulating them. Things beyond God's provision of our basic needs ("food and clothing," 6:8) can be enjoyed without becoming a necessity. Paul understood that if godliness (our desire to see God's character reproduced in us) and contentment (our acceptance of God's will in our lives) depend on our environment or circumstances, both will always be unstable.

Elsewhere, Paul indicates that godly contentment must be a learned response (see Phil 4:11-13). Developing godly contentment lies well beyond our abilities. That is why along with Paul we must appeal to the right source for such a character trait: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).



*Happy First Day of Spring!
May you feel God's loving presence in every step
along your life's journey in the spring ahead.
May God Bless you!*

THE OLDEST COMPUTER CAN BE
TRACED BACK TO ADAM AND EVE.
SURPRISE! SURPRISE! IT WAS AN
APPLE. BUT WITH EXTREMELY
LIMITED MEMORY. JUST 1 BYTE.
THEN EVERYTHING CRASHED.

~ Theological Humour

Star of the North Website, press Cntrl + Click to open

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All are welcome to subscribe for the Star Gazer Newsletter

Oblates & Parish Staff share a Valentine's Lunch



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