



The Baltimore Beacon

The Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province

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Provincial Ponderings



Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Over 100 years ago, as war raged on the mud-covered fields of northern France and Belgium, soldiers put down their guns and came together for a Christmas truce. I'm sure all of us know the story of the first Christmas truce that took place, but for those of you who have never heard about it, let me recap it for you.

As the men serving the forces of the various armies bunkered down into their trenches for the first Christmas of what was to be a long and bloody war, the men of both sides decided that as good Christians, Christmas

was a time for peace, not for war. All up and down the Western Front, the English and the French, and then the Germans, tried to reach out to one another.

First, carols could be heard floating across No Man's Land and Christmas trees poked up above the parapets. After a while, some of the bravest men made their way out onto the battlefield itself, scarred by shelling and covered in barbed wire, not to kill one another, but to shake hands. Men who had been doing nothing but killing one another for months now came together as brothers. The men bonded, showing one another photos of their families, tales from home, and promised to make contact when the war was over. Most famously, games of soccer started breaking out and the men enjoyed a Christmas sporting match together.

Sadly, the truce was then cut short by time itself, and the brave men were forced to fight one another once again. Many of them deliberately shot up in the air for days afterwards, doing their best not to hit one another.

Even though we are not going to war with one another, it feels like we have an even further divide than the men who faced one another across the battlefield. In many ways, this is true. The ordinary men of Europe were not fighting over a difference in values – they all shared the same Christian ones, and thus had something in common to bond over. What does it say about today that such a truce, a time of reconciliation and peace, seems impossible? It's all we can do but to hope and pray that soon enough, Americans will once again come together as one nation, under God, and heal bitter wounds. If the men one hundred years ago can do it, so should we.

May this season of Christmas bring to each of you the peace that the Babe of Bethlehem wished to bring. May the things that divide us be struck down by the Christmas Star and the Light of Christ born for all people. Merry Christmas to you and yours! Blessings as we begin another year of grace in 2022!

In the Spirit of the Redeemer,
Paul J. Borowski, C.Ss.R.

Upcoming 2022/2023 Dates

Wednesday, January 5, 2022 at 12:15 p.m. Feast Day Mass of St. John Neumann & Final Profession Ceremony for Brian Vaccaro, C.Ss.R., and Royce Thomas, C.Ss.R., at St. Peter Church/St. John Neumann Shrine; Philadelphia, PA. Rev. Jack Kingsbury, C.Ss.R., (North American Conference Coordinator) is principal presider and preacher.

Saturday, January 8, 2022 at 10 a.m. Deaconate Ordination for Brian Vaccaro, C.Ss.R., and Royce Thomas, C.Ss.R., at Sacred Heart of Jesus; Baltimore, MD. Bishop Bruce

Lewandowski, C.Ss.R. is the ordaining Bishop.

Sunday, January 9, 2022 at 3:30 p.m. Sunday Mass Celebration of the Feast of St. John Neumann at St. Peter Church/St. John Neumann Shrine; Philadelphia, PA. Rev. Paul Borowski, C.Ss.R. principal presider; Rev. Kevin Zubel, C.Ss.R. preacher.

Monday, February 21-Wednesday, February 23, 2022 Province Retreat (Southeast Region) at St. Alphonsus Villa; New Smyrna Beach, FL

Thursday, February 24, 2022 Province Jubilee Celebration (Southeast Region)

Monday, May 9 - Friday, May 20, 2022 North American Conference Assembly & Phase I of the XXVI General Chapter at San Alfonso Retreat House; Long Branch, NJ

Tuesday, May 31 - Thursday, June 2, 2022 Province Retreat at San Alfonso Retreat House; Long Branch, NJ

Saturday, July 16, 2022 at 11 a.m. Province Jubilee Celebration: Mass

Upcoming Dates, Continued

& Luncheon at Sacred Heart of Jesus; Baltimore, MD

Saturday, July 23, 2022 at 10 a.m.

Priesthood Ordination for Brian Vaccaro, C.Ss.R., at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception; Washington, DC. Bishop Michael Burbidge (Arlington, VA) is the ordaining Bishop.

Saturday, August 13, 2022 at 11 a.m.

Priesthood Ordination for Royce Thomas, C.Ss.R., at St Anthony's; Guapo Cap-de-Ville Main Rd;

Point Fortin, Trinidad. Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon (Port of Spain, Trinidad) is the ordaining Bishop

Monday, August 15, 2022 Convoking of the XVIII Provincial Chapter

Sunday, September 11 - Friday, October 7, 2022 XXVI General Chapter (Phase II -- Canonical Phase); Rome, Italy

Tuesday, November 29 – Thursday, December 1, 2022 Province Convocation at San Alfonso Retreat

House; Long Branch, NJ (Tuesday, November 29, 2022 will be Provincial Candidates Day)

Monday, March 13 – Friday, March 17, 2023 and if necessary Monday, March 20 – Friday, March 24, 2023 XVIII Baltimore Provincial Chapter at San Alfonso Retreat House; Long Branch, NJ

Communications Updates

• Daily Audio Podcasts on the readings of the day may be found at redemptorists.net in either Spanish or English.

• Weekly Video reflections on the upcoming Sunday readings (Cycle B) may be found on Facebook: [facebook.com/RedemptoristsBaltimore](https://www.facebook.com/RedemptoristsBaltimore) or YouTube: [youtube.com/BaltRedemptorists](https://www.youtube.com/BaltRedemptorists). These videos are released each Wednesday.

• Saturday, January 15: On-line video service "Praying with the Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help."

Upcoming EPC Meetings

Future EPC meetings will begin at 9:30 a.m. via ZOOM until further

- January 12th – 13th, 2022
- February 16th – 17th, 2022
- March 23rd – 24th, 2022
- April 27th – 28th, 2022

- May 25th – 26th, 2022
- June 15th – 16th, 2022
- July 6th, 2022 (San Alfonso; Long Branch, NJ)
- NO AUGUST MEETING
- September 7th – 8th

- October 19th – 20th
- November 16th – 17th
- December 2nd (San Alfonso; Long Branch, NJ)

Upcoming Missions, Retreats, and Video Series

• **Jan. 22-25, 2022**, St. Martha Catholic Church, Sarasota, FL, Kevin MacDonald, C.Ss.R.

• **Feb. 26-March 1, 2022**, St. Patrick Catholic Church, Armonk, NY, Kevin MacDonald, C.Ss.R.

• **March 5-9, 2022**, St. Paul Catholic Church, Tampa, FL, Kevin MacDonald, C.Ss.R.

• **March 12-16, 2022**, Holy Family Catholic Church, Orlando, FL, Kevin MacDonald, C.Ss.R.

• **April 23-27, 2022**, Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, Erie, PA, Kevin MacDonald, C.Ss.R.

St. John Neumann Residence at Stella Maris

Normally we celebrate the recitation of the Rosary every single day. As a rule, I, as Rector, will lead the prayers. But I will also ask the various confreres to lead a decade. I try to be as democratic as possible. Priest, Bishop, or Brother—it makes no difference.

I even try to get those suffering from dementia to lead a decade. Though they frequently forget which prayers to say, it is heart-warming when they get the whole decade correct. The other confreres will gently cue them to the right prayer. Sometimes a confrere will get so involved that he'll say 12-13 Hail Marys, and then instead of a Glory Be, will begin all over again with an Our Father.

It is truly inspirational to see more than half of the community at prayer.



The men at St. John Neumann Residence enjoy daily Mass together.

One might ask what happened to the other half of the community. Well, some are bed-bound, some lose sight of the time, and still others simply opt out; they prefer to say the Rosary privately. Besides, during the on-going pandemic it is probably better that we don't have everyone in the

chapel at the same time. It is better to have every other seat empty—social distancing, as they say. The important thing to us as Redemptorists is that we recite the Rosary. And this is what we're doing.

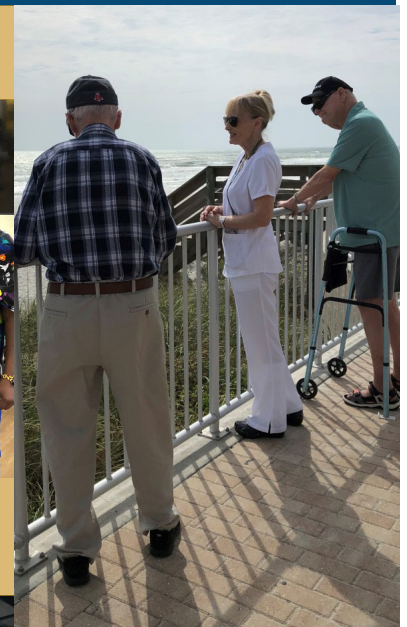
John Harrison, C.Ss.R.

St. Alphonsus Villa at New Smyrna Beach



Confreres listening to one of the offered workshops.

Celebrating Halloween as a community.



Fr. Bill Spillane, on a day of some water exercises in the pool.



Community pontoon boat ride.



Our residents and community got to enjoy a day out at the beach.

Senior Shepherds on the Move at Boston

John Glenn once said: “If there is one thing I’ve learned in my years on this planet, it’s that the happiest and most fulfilled people are those who have devoted themselves to something bigger and more profound than merely their own self-interest.”



Fr. Devin celebrates his 89th birthday.

Our older confreres here in Boston have certainly made a commitment to continue to minister and move beyond themselves; they have been a real source of inspiration for the rest of our Redemptorist community and for the members of our parish community.

At 91, Bob Lennon continues to have a deep interest in life. He enjoys reading, learning, and discussing the issues of the day. It’s the 91-year-old who is the most difficult to keep track of. A frequently asked question is: “Have you seen Fr. Lennon?” When he is able, Bob concelebrates at the Wednesday novena mass and at Sunday liturgy. Deeply loved in the parish community, he is frequently on the phone praying and counseling people in need.

Due to the pandemic, Bob continues to preside at the monthly healing service online and he can’t wait to get back to in-person services. Bob also has resumed leading the weekly English prayer group, faithfully joining them every Monday night. Finally,

for our November 9th celebration of the birthday of the Congregation, we asked Bob, as the oldest member of the community to blow out the candles on the cake.

At 87, John Furey has just begun a new outreach to our Hispanic community. Together with one of our Hispanic

community leaders, Rene Ruiz, John has begun a group called “Seguidores de Cristo.” This group gathers every Monday at 4 p.m. in the church for prayer and faith sharing and has been growing each week. John also continues to work with the Legion of Mary and assists in helping with weekday Masses as well as celebrating



Fr. Furey, pictured, above has begun a new Hispanic outreach.



Fr. Lennon blowing out the candles.

Mass for the Poor Clares and Carmelites. Of course, John is always available to play the accordion at every celebration.

At 89, John Devin had begun to once again serve the Portuguese community here in Boston, assisting pastors on weekends, and presiding at weddings and other celebrations. Unfortunately, John suffered a bout of COVID pneumonia spending more than a week in the hospital and two weeks at St. Patrick’s Manor in Framingham for rehab. He has begun to stage a remarkable recovery and is now at Stella Maris to continue to regain his strength; we hope he will be back here in Boston soon. While at St. Patrick’s Manor, there was a tremendous outpouring of love for John from the Portuguese community, with a near constant stream of visitors. A nurse at the station by his room referred to him as a “rock star”—what a great tribute to his ministry!

Joe Tizio, C.Ss.R.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines – a Fancy Mission



Since arriving in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Redemptorist community has reached out to many areas where people are in need, particularly considering the volcanic eruption earlier in the year. Even before that event, though, evangelization was beginning in communities within the parish territory. The focus being in areas where there is no Catholic church or chapel building. One such place is Fancy.

Nestled high at the top of Saint Vincent, it is the northernmost community on the island. The landscape is lush with locally grown crops. They can be seen for miles as the terrain is rather steep. The road there is narrow and bumpy and covers many hills. Fancy is not the easiest community to reach, but the trip is well worth the time and effort. The main shop in “town” is owned and operated by a lovely lady who is affectionately known as Tanty. She is very warm and gracious. The initial contact on the part of the Redemptorists with Tanty came on a tour of the island. Stopping by her shop for refreshments, our conversation with Tanty evolved into asking for eventual use of space for a prayer service for the community. She opened her heart to the idea and soon afterwards her shop.

It was the day after Ash Wednesday 2020. Parishioners from Sandy Bay and youth group members from the wider parish communities accompanied the Redemptorists for a Lenten prayer service. The evening service was advertised with flyers posted around the community, including in Tanty’s shop. All were welcome to come and sing, pray, listen to Scripture and reflection, and to pray some more – giving thanks and praise to God.

A small group gathered in the simple yet cozy space and outdoors. The evening was pleasant and uplifting. A return visit and service netted a few more persons than the first. The plan, at the time, was to continue monthly; however, mass gatherings were suspended shortly thereafter due to the pandemic.

More than a year passed without a return to Fancy, the reason now compounded by the volcanic eruptions of La Soufriere. Being in the red zone, the area was off limits and visits there strictly prohibited for a long time. Weeks turned into months before the “all clear” was given by the government to travel again to the top of the mainland.

Finally in mid-August, the Redemptorists, this time with young relief workers, water, and supplies, were back in the area. Sadly, as in so many places within the parish territory, much destruction was witnessed. The roads were passable but hardly devoid of debris. The heavy ash from the explosive eruptions (over 31), coupled with the effects of heavy rains and winds, left its mark on Fancy, including Tanty’s shop. She herself was still away, an evacuee since April, and her shop was inoperable. The door was opened – due to damages – and the

flyer announcing the inaugural prayer service still hung on the ash-scarred wall. A keen reminder of the first prayer gathering and a sense that the Church never left.



Tanty has always been a gracious host.

A few more relief visits followed before seeing Tanty at home again. She was happy to see those who ventured up to share goods. She was asked about using her shop again – this time to bring more parcels of food, water, and necessities for distribution: 180 bundles! Names of returning evacuees had been collected by parish volunteers, who also helped in preparing for the distribution.

Again, Tanty was a very gracious host. She was all smiles, happy to see her shop, which is still recuperating, used for the good of the community. Upon leaving, gratitude was expressed as well as the desire to see each other again. With a twinkle in her eye, Tanty – who is not Catholic – asked, when are we having another prayer service?

With an invitation so kind and welcoming, it will be soon. Hopefully during the Christmas season – giving thanks to God who has taken on our flesh and always, be it in times of tragedy or triumph, dwells among us.

Kevin R. Murray, C.Ss.R.

National Catholic Youth Conference, Indianapolis

The Theme: "Ablaze – Enciendo el Fuego"

Last month on November 17-20 the Redemptorist Vocation Directors, Fr. Peter Nguyen, Fr. Thomas Pham, Fr. Chuong Cao, and Fr. Denis Sweeney attended the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) held at the Indianapolis Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium, home of the Indianapolis Colts. The focus, as highlighted in the theme "Ablaze, Enciendo el Fuego," was to celebrate the power of the Holy Spirit and to call forth in a special way our youth to be Ablaze with the power of the Holy Spirit and be that light of the world as Christians and as Catholics.

Under normal conditions this Conference would host 25,000 high school students, chaperones, priests, deacons, religious, seminarians, as well as vendors who would be selling shirts, sweatshirts, religious articles, books, music, etc. Due to the ongoing crisis and concerns with Covid, this year the conference allowed only 10,000 participants.

The weekend schedule consisted of morning prayer at the stadium and a morning talk on the theme. Daily Mass was offered at different locations and there was opportune time for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. A chapel was set up within the convention center for anyone wishing to spend quiet time before the Blessed Sacrament throughout the day. Lectures would be offered by guest speakers at the convention center and the evening gatherings held at the stadium offered a different talk centered around the theme of the conference – "Ablaze, Enciendo el Fuego." Music was provided by Christian bands and on one night Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament was celebrated as the

Monstrance was carried to all parts of the Stadium.

"The Village" as it was called was where booths were on display to promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Catholic colleges and universities were also on hand to display their campus life and curriculum. Here vendors were selling their wares and here also was where we had our booth to promote Redemptorist vocations. Our booth displayed the banners of Our Mother of Perpetual Help and St. John Neumann. We had wristbands to hand out that promoted Redemptorist vocations as well as magnets that portrayed our Redemptorist spirituality – Crib, Cross, Eucharist, Blessed Mother. We had ample material to pass out including bookmarks portraying Our Mother of Perpetual Help and our Saints as well as our Redemptorist flyer that showcases our formation system from pre-Novitiate to Novitiate to Consecrated Life to Priesthood. We also had an information form that we encouraged the young men that stopped by our booth to fill out. We received five names that are within our Province. We have reached out to them and are encouraging them to attend our next "Come and Pray" weekend that will be January 14-16 at St. Clement Mission House in Ephrata, PA.

Of course, having candy on site including tootsie rolls and Hershey kisses was an enticing feature along



with our Tic-Tac-Toe game that was a wonderful icebreaker and has become a great crowd pleaser. And yes, we offered prizes in a wide display of hats and Mardi-Gras beads. Nothing was overlooked to promote Jesus Christ and the Redemptorists!

I must say though that by far the most captivating piece to our booth was in displaying the First-Class Relics of St. John Neumann and Bl. Francis Xavier Seelos. All ages were drawn to our booth and the relics. With one of the parishes the chaperones, after visiting our booth by themselves, later brought their entire high school group to the booth for prayer and blessing. There had to be about 20-25 of them. What we discovered is that many of those in high school know little or nothing at all about relics and their place in our Catholic faith. It was a

Conference, Continued

wonderful and graced moment to do some evangelization and speak about our Shrines in Philadelphia and New Orleans.

We encouraged all who came to our booth to write a personal intention to St. John Neumann. They placed these on the poster. By the end of each day that poster would be filled with personal intentions. We would then bless each person with the relic of St. John Neumann. We also let them know that all these intentions would be brought back to the Shrine of St. John Neumann and that each one would be read aloud before his body as we called upon his powerful intercession.

The conference concluded with a

concelebrated Mass at Lucas Oil Stadium on Saturday at 8 p.m. The Archbishop of Indianapolis, Charles Thompson, was presider and preacher. Again, he resonated the theme to all gathered and most especially to the youth – “Ablaze, Enciendo el Fuego.” It was a wonderful showing of priests, deacons, seminarians, and our youth. And a wonderful sending forth!

On Sunday Fr. Thomas flew back to San Antonio, Fr. Choung rented a car at the airport in Indianapolis and headed out to visit a candidate in Indiana, and Fr. Peter and I flew back to DC. They were good and blessed days. They were long days! You are on your feet at the booth from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. But you meet wonderful people; grandparents, parents, teachers,

chaperones, seminarians, vendors, and especially the young – and all in Love with Jesus Christ and of carrying and sharing His message of Peace, Joy, and Love.

Pray for Vocations to the Redemptorists! As we say in encouraging a son, a daughter, a relative, a friend, a neighbor: “If you see something, say something!”

Pray that from your home, your street, your neighborhood, your parish, your school, because of your encouragement, that someone will respond to the words of Jesus Christ, “Come, follow Me” as a Redemptorist.

Denis J. Sweeney, C.Ss.R.

Partners in Mission

At the Baltimore Province Convocation via Zoom on Thursday, October 21, 2021 at 1:30 p.m., three different confreres in varying locations of our Province shared their experience of recently forming a Partner in Mission ‘Circle of Associates.’ Fathers John Olenick, Anthony Michalik, and Michael Cunningham are members of our own PIM Baltimore Province Committee.

Our group in St. Lucia has only been meeting since May and already it is obvious to me that the laity have a hunger for our Redemptorist Spirituality. I believe that so often we as Redemptorists take for granted what we have inherited from our founder, St. Alphonsus, and other Redemptorist Saints and Blesseds. We have not done the best job in sharing this treasure with our collaborators and I believe that Partners in Mission is a wonderful

way to open ourselves, our spirituality, and our charism to lay folks.

The group here has asked many questions about not only the Redemptorists but also Religious Life in general. Again, we as consecrated religious can assume that all the persons in our apostolates are familiar with the difference between a diocesan and a religious priest, an active brother and a monk, and the vows we profess. The truth is that many are uninformed. Partners in Mission opens up to lay men and women a greater understanding not only of the Redemptorists but also the truths of our Catholic faith.

A good number of our members were able to participate in the North American Conference Virtual Retreat on October 15-16. They enjoyed sharing with other people and learning

about who the Redemptorists are on a broader scale. As “newbies” in the Redemptorist Family, some of the terms we casually use regarding structures, such as province, conference, etc., were not clear to them so I had to do some explaining at our next gathering. The retreat has inspired our members to begin a project in reaching out to the wounded among us here in St. Lucia. We have chosen to work with disadvantaged families with vulnerable children who have fallen far behind in their schoolwork during the COVID-19 pandemic because of the reality of virtual learning and a lack of access to tablets, internet, etc. The group has also decided to assist the parents of these children regarding parenting skills and other needs that they may have. We are very excited to begin!

*John Olenick, C.Ss.R.
Assumption Parish
Palmiste, St. Lucia*

PIM, continued on pg. 9

Good afternoon, everyone. When I was asked to form a “Partners in Mission” circle here in Boston, I was uncertain how to begin. I was concerned that those parishioners I would approach might feel obligated to say yes, and I was unsure exactly how best to present the idea itself. But I could hear a voice within saying to me: “Just begin...and stop worrying! It will unfold of its own.” And so, I began by approaching certain members of the parish who were already active within the parish, and their response was positive and genuine. There was an enthusiasm and a sincere sense of gratitude for having been asked – almost as if it was something that they had been waiting for – or wanting to happen. Then, members began to suggest others who they thought might be interested, and this proved to be a very effective way of growing in number. At this point, here at Mission Church, we have fifteen members in our “circle of disciples” – our “Partners in Mission.”

From the very start there was an immediate sense of something very right beginning to happen; there was a real sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit and a feeling of community – of family – which quickly began to form. It was important to stress that to be a “Partner in Mission” meant that you were becoming, in a very real and personal way, a member of the Redemptorist family, and, being here in Boston, you were becoming an important member of our particular Redemptorist community. We began by studying the history of the family, how and where it all began with Alphonsus and how it has been kept alive through the centuries by the example and prayers of our great Redemptorist Saints and Blesseds. There was an understanding that we came together to share our faith and to grow in faith particularly as we began to learn about and sharing more intimately in the charism and spirituality of the Congregation – coming to understand

– through a Redemptorist lens – that God has given to all of humanity “plentiful redemption” in Jesus Christ, and, in a very unique way, we are called to bring this message of unconditional, merciful, and redemptive love to all of God’s children, especially to the most abandoned – to those who are most in need. We would begin simply by bringing this message of God’s merciful love into the realities of our everyday lives within our families and into our places of work. We would then begin to explore in what areas of life Christ might be calling us to a true Redemptorist form of Apostolic outreach – some form of active discipleship in this very wounded world. The important realization would be that – though we have all been called in a unique and personal way – both as professed and as laity – yet, we move forward as one family, as “Partners in Christ’s Mission,” embracing our baptismal calling together – in the work of the Kingdom.

This is indeed a movement of the Holy Spirit and I believe that all we are really asked to do is – in deepest faith – cooperate with this great gift.

*Anthony E. Michalik, C.Ss.R.
OLPH Mission Church
Boston, MA*

The message of Partners in Mission is a timely one. We heard earlier in the day the challenges of staffing parishes now and in the very near future. Often, God is in our midst in a very profound and real way, and we don’t always recognize his presence. It could be that God is saying to us, “I’ve heard your needs and your prayers in relation to vocations and staffing, and I am responding to that need; it may not look like what you anticipated but be open to the possibilities.” It appears we may have a beautiful opportunity at hand -- the opportunity to wed a need with a resource. Staffing, which is the need, with the resource, which is PIM. The resource of PIM that is already fully

developed and that which still requires maturation. Maybe God is asking us to invite the laity to walk closer with us Redemptorists to share in our charism more intimately as to Lay missionaries.

There are a few noteworthy things to mention with regards to PIM and its members albeit from my very limited experience with PIM and its members here at OLPH:

The element people find appealing about the CSSR charism that already resides within them is our common humanity. The way the Redemptorists navigate our common human experience many people find appealing. Instead of viewing the challenges of life through some lofty esoteric philosophy, we CSSR’s seek the remedy through very human means common to all people. So that what people find appealing in us already resides within them. This realization inspires hope because what they like about us, they already possess, and this can give them a new appreciation of themselves.

Lucy Burich McNamara’s testimonial video speaks of building blocks. Here at OLPH, we aren’t reinventing the wheel in relation to PIM. We have had many that have come before us that have laid the foundation, namely Frs. Pat Woods and Charlie McDonald, and currently Fr. Clem Krug with a wealth of experience in a similar movement in Brazil. The challenge is to build upon that which has already been established in new and creative ways.
*Michael Cunningham, C.Ss.R.
Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Brooklyn, NY*

We invite you share your feedback or questions with Fr. Francis Gargani, C.Ss.R. at francescogcssr@yahoo.com or Lucy Burich McNamara at mcnamaraLucy@aol.com
Partners in Mission Province Co-ordinators
Fr. Francis Gargani, CSsR
Lucy Burich McNamara

Transition to Ministry and Apostolic Community

Along the Atlantic shores of San Alfonso Retreat House in Long Branch, NJ the Transition to Ministry and Apostolic Community met November 15-19 for our second scheduled week-long session of the calendar year. There were 13 participants from Extra-Patriam, 7 from Baltimore, 3 from Denver (Chung Tran, John Son Tran and Huy Vu), and 1 from Canada. Two confreres from Extra-Patriam had good reason to be absent: one is studying in Canada and the other lives and ministers in the Czech Republic. Monday is a travel day given the fact most participants minister in parishes and then travel distances. By Monday evening, everyone had arrived safely and enjoyed the chance to reunite over pizza.

Tuesday morning began with the welcoming of eight new participants: five men from Extra-Patriam and three men from Baltimore. The morning was spent in three smaller groups checking in with one another. After lunch Father Maurice Nutt, C.Ss.R. of our New Orleans community presented on the topic of Racism in Ministry. Maurice is filled with a wealth of knowledge

and experience and engaged us well. The afternoon ended with Eucharist. Following dinner there was another hour long session on the same topic. The rest of the evening down time was spent relaxing with one other and more food!

A key part of the program is to allow participants a chance to rest as well as spend time with one another to chit-chat. That was accomplished on Wednesday.

Thursday morning Fr. Kenny Gaddy, C.Ss.R. (African-American) stationed in Baltimore, Sister Ivette Diaz, RSM (Puerto Rican/Latina) living and ministering in New York, and Father Joseph Lu, a diocesan priest living in our CSSR community in Brooklyn and ministering to the Chinese parishioners, formed a panel and began the day sharing their experiences of racism in community life. Their sharings were followed by small group discussions before gathering back together for a plenary session that took us to lunch. All three people allowed us to tread on the sacred ground of their lives which led to lively sharing in both small and large groups. On Thursday afternoon, we did the

usual evaluation of our time together first in groups and then in plenary session. Both presentations as well as the presenters were much appreciated and found to be beneficial. Prior to dinner, we celebrated Eucharist. After supper we gathered for Eucharistic adoration before spending the rest of the night in conversation and games all the while sharing food and drink. Throughout our time together each participant spent individual time with his unit director.

Our time together concluded Friday with Mass and breakfast before all began the trek back to their assignments for weekend ministry. We thank our confreres at Long Branch for their hospitality. We will return to San Alfonso May 16-20, 2022 for our next week-long session. Patrick Hayes, the Archivist for the Baltimore Province, will join us to share about the early years of the Redemptorists in North America. Our other presenter will be Wendy Barnes who works at Liguori Publications, and is a longtime Partner in Mission. She will address, among other things, the formation of PIM circles at the local level.

Pete Schavitz, Co-Director



The Vieux Fort community hosted their staff and volunteers for a traditional Thanksgiving Day feast. Fr. Kevin Murray came over from St. Vincent to work his magic on our two turkeys and ham. Needless to say, everyone left overly stuffed and happy.

In Memoriam: Fr. Ronnie Bonneau, C.Ss.R.

The Obituary, wake service, funeral Mass, reflections, and prayers on Fr. Ronnie Bonneau's, C.Ss.R., passing away were very touching and inspiring. They reflected the journey of an authentic son of Saint Alphonsus in the following of Jesus, our Redeemer.

Rather than repeat what has already been so eloquently presented about Ronnie by many, including on social media, of his pilgrimage of 56 years of professed Redemptorist life and fifty years of priesthood, especially by those who were so very close to him, I would like to add a few additional reflections of a more personal nature.

We, of the ordination class of '71, are all products of that rebellious decade of the '60s. I always admired Ronnie for his many talents, including his intelligence, singing voice, and especially his "fighter spirit" and Redemptorist prophetic energies in defense of the poor abandoned.

The good Lord gave Ronnie's classmates the joy and privilege to be with him as he/we celebrated 50 years of ordination. So many have commented how happy Ronnie was to celebrate with us and his many friends and family. The occasion impressed me how friendships from teen years and young adulthood create close bonds that last into our mid-seventies and beyond. These relationships are part of who we are.

In 1989, Ronnie and I were privileged to do a six-month renewal program with the Divine Word Missionaries in Nemi, Italy. My room was just above the entrance to the Center, and I would often hear Ronnie singing, talking, and joking with others at the door. I would kid him, calling him "God" because Ronnie was "in the midst of them" whenever two or three were gathered. When Ronnie wasn't singing, he was talking. As one of his classmates and a close friend put it, "He was gregarious as all get out!"



I was saddened at the news of Ronnie's death. Death is always like a thief in the night. Although even in conditions where a loved one is especially fragile, we always feel that we have been robbed, deprived of something ours. Ronnie was always ours. He was our friend, our brother, our classmate, our companion, our mentor, our formator, our pastor, our priest, in Paraguay and the Metuchen (NJ) Diocese and elsewhere, he was our defender of rights and dignity. We feel we have been unjustly deprived of his accompaniment, friendship, and example.

On September 19th, 2021, the 25th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Ronnie gave his last Sunday homily, which was streamed in St. Mary's Church, Annapolis, Maryland. That homily, for me, was a reflection of Ronnie's faith journey and even seemed to be a preparation for his

family, friends, and parishioners of his possible death. The homily, which lasted only eight minutes, contained a profound message of God's love for us, His protection, our relationship and response to His love, a profound "credo" on sinfulness, death, and life.

Allow me to share three messages from Ronnie's homily:

After clearly announcing his condition, a surgical intervention that following Thursday, and anxiety because of the possible pain involved, not fear, he talked about his intimate relationship with a God he knows loves and protects him, as God loved and protected his only Son, Jesus. Ronnie continues to reflect on himself, but it is also applicable to us when he shares that this intimate relationship with God is not because Ronnie or we are perfect, but it is precisely because of sinfulness when our relationship with God becomes strongest. We hand over to God our sinfulness, and He destroys it, takes it, frees us, and gives us renewed grace. After all, God made us for himself, and we were created in his image and likeness.

From here, Ronnie forcefully addresses



Left to right Manny Rodríguez, Pedro Gennaro, Patrick Grile, Ronnie Bonneau, Tom Picton, Norman Bennett and Francis Gargani, celebrating 35 years of priesthood together in 2006 in Denver, Co.

In Memoriam, Continued

the doubters who respond, "If God protects you, what if you die?" Here Ronnie makes a genuinely profound and emphatic assertion, "I am not going to die! Jesus died so we don't have to die! We will never die! We pass on to another level of existence!"

As mentioned by Fr. Jim Gilmour in the homily of Ronnie's funeral Mass on November 18th, Ronnie's final priestly invitation was that we all think about our relationship with God and that

At prayer this morning Rich Luberti announced to us here in Seattle that Ronnie passed away yesterday. Yes, his full eternal awakening on the Feast of the Congregation.

Ronnie – missionary, formation director, spiritual director, spiritual energizer, spiritual seeker, lover, full of life, humorist, drawing all to God through his many talents and gifts. We will all miss him and carry him in

love that He has for us even beyond our capacity to understand. Yet, we recognize that we were created to love Him back. The meaning of Ronnie's life and death is not that we have been deprived, but instead are supported and enriched by our brother and friend now in Heaven.

My sincere condolences to Ronnie's five sisters, family, friends, confreres, and classmates; my prayers and Eucharist are offered for our friend and classmate's eternal rest.

our hearts and allow his spirit and memories of his brotherhood to touch us and inspire us and to persevere with God's grace to cross the final threshold.

Tom Picton, C.Ss.R.

Fr. Bonneau administering a wedding.

May Our Mother of Perpetual Help embrace and take Ronnie to her Son, our Most Holy Redeemer.

Manuel Rodríguez Delgado, C.Ss.R.

Note: The video of Father Ronnie's homily is provided courtesy of St. Mary's Parish in Annapolis and can be viewed at the following address: <https://tinyurl.com/vpz22jsa>



Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province
Holy Redeemer
3112 7th St NE
Washington, DC 20017