



The Baltimore Beacon

The Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province

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Provincial Ponderings



Dear Brothers and Sisters: “The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest” (Matthew 9:37-38).

In this month’s issue of *The Baltimore Beacon*, you will read about what is going on with our vocation recruitment, the houses in the Bronx, NY and San Antonio, TX where our seminarians live, study, and pray, as well as get a glimpse at the life of our seminarians on a “pastoral experience” prior to their ordination. While highlighting our seminarians, the words of our Redeemer are never far from mind: “the laborers are few.”

We are thankful for the ordination this summer of Fr. Song You and look forward to celebrating in November the priesthood ordinations of our two Vietnamese confreres, Huan T. Le and Huyen T. Nguyen. God willing, in the summer of 2022 we

will celebrate the ordinations of Royce Thomas and Brian Vaccaro. After that the Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province will not have a priesthood ordination until 2028 ... “so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.”

To all those reading these words I am sure they come as a bit of a shock; they do to me. During my travels when I meet with people, they often ask how our “numbers” are regarding vocations. Our two vocation directors, Fr. Denis Sweeney and Fr. Peter Linh, are out there meeting with candidates, going to vocation fairs, and trying their best to invite young men to join our community. Even with all their great work, the numbers are not what they were in days gone by and perhaps we will never attain those numbers again.

The Lord has promised to be with us to the end of time and I firmly believe that promise includes assuring there are enough religious and priests to minister to His people. The Lord does not abandon His people. A Redemptorist friend of mine used to say on missions we gave together that the problem is not God calling people, but the problem is in people hearing and then responding. The invitation is there ... we must pray that young people have the courage to respond!

I invite all those reading this message to make a daily commitment to pray for an increase of vocations to the priesthood and religious life, especially to the Redemptorist way of life. If

I can, I beg you to remember this intention in your daily prayers – that as God calls people, more may hear and then respond. Besides praying, perhaps you know someone who you feel has a religious vocation. If so, perhaps be so bold as to encourage them. We read in John 1:40-42 that Andrew invited his brother Simon Peter to come and follow the Lord. Imagine if Andrew lacked the courage to invite his brother, where would the Church be today? All of us are called to encourage vocations, not just priests, brothers, and vocation directors. All of us are called to be like Andrew.

We pray: “Provident God, you spoke your dream of plentiful redemption in Jesus Christ. Your Spirit ignited the heart of St. Alphonsus, inspiring him to found a family in the Church dedicated to proclaiming the good news of plentiful redemption to the most abandoned. Raise up among us strong women and men of faith, afire with love for you and zeal for the mission of proclaiming your word among those who do not know you, or who need to hear your word proclaimed anew. Guide men to respond with generosity as vowed Redemptorist priests and brothers, and women and men to serve in joy and hope as partners in the Redemptorist mission. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Word, who is our Life. Amen.

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

Upcoming 2021/2022 Dates

Tuesday, October 26 - Thursday, October 28, 2021 North American Conference Assembly via ZOOM.

Saturday, November 6, 2021 at 10 a.m. Priesthood Ordination for Huan

T. Le, C.Ss.R., and Huyen T. Nguyen, C.Ss.R., (Province of Vietnam) at St. Peter Church/St. John Neumann Shrine; Philadelphia, PA. Bishop Bruce Lewandowski, C.Ss.R., will be the ordaining Bishop.

Sunday, November 7, 2021 at 11:30 a.m. Mass of Thanksgiving (Vietnamese) for Rev. Huan T. Le, C.Ss.R., and Rev. Huyen T. Nguyen, C.Ss.R., at Visitation of the BVM; Philadelphia, PA.

Upcoming 2021/2022 Dates

Sunday, November 14, 2021 at 11:30 a.m. Mass of Thanksgiving (English) for Rev. Huan T. Le, C.Ss.R. and Rev. Huyen T. Nguyen, C.Ss.R. at St. Peter Church/St. John Neumann Shrine; Philadelphia, PA.

Wednesday, January 5, 2022 at 12:15 p.m. Feast Day Mass of St. John Neumann & Final Profession Ceremony for Royce Thomas, C.Ss.R., and Brian Vaccaro, C.Ss.R., at St. Peter Church/St. John Neumann Shrine; Philadelphia, PA

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

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 1 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 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) will be 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) will be the ordaining Bishop.

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

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

Communications Updates

- Daily Audio Podcasts on the readings of the day may be found at redemptorists.net in both Spanish and 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, November 20: Online video service "Praying with the Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help."
- Sunday, December 5 – Tuesday, December 7: Online Triduum in honor of the Immaculate Conception.
- Wednesday, December 8: On-line Feast Day Mass in honor of the Immaculate Conception.

Upcoming Missions

- St. Joseph Catholic Church, Force, PA, Oct. 30-Nov. 2, 2021
- Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Manville, NJ, Nov. 27-Dec. 1, 2021
- St. Martha Catholic Church, Sarasota, FL, Jan. 22-25, 2022
- St. Patrick Catholic Church, Armonk, NY, Feb. 26-March 1, 2022
- St. Paul Catholic Church, Tampa, FL, March 5-9, 2022
- Holy Family Catholic Church Orlando, FL, March 12-16, 2022
- Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church Erie, PA April 23-27, 2022

**All listed will be given by Fr. Kevin MacDonald, C.Ss.R.*

If you would like to submit an event for upcoming issues of *The Baltimore Beacon*, please email Katie Carpenter, Communications Director, at kcarpenter@redemptorists.net.

Upcoming EPC Meetings

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

- October 22, 2021 (San Alfonso; Long Branch, NJ)
- November 17-18, 2021
- December 15-16, 2021
- January 12-13, 2022
- February 16-17, 2022
- March 23-24, 2022
- April 27-28, 2022
- May 25-26, 2022
- June 15-16, 2022
- July 6, 2022 (San Alfonso; Long Branch, NJ)

Meet the Redemptorists: Carl W. Hoegerl, C.Ss.R.

Carl W. Hoegerl was born October 10, 1923, in Harmonsburg, Pennsylvania.

He once fondly reminisced about his youth. When he was a boy in the 1930s, his father asked him to take a basket filled with apples and a bottle of Kimmel schnapps to the local convent as a Christmas gift. After the holiday, the German sisters asked the young man to tell his father that the sisters enjoyed the apples immensely. In Harmonsburg, Pennsylvania, south of Erie, the sisters were part of a community where old-world German Catholicism was deeply ensconced and the cultivation of piety and respect for religious life was normative.

It was not altogether unexpected therefore, that Carl would enter the Redemptorist high school seminary at nearby North East, Pennsylvania, and there he developed a voracious appetite for reading. He was class organist and, in his last year, was valedictorian. After novitiate at Ilchester, Maryland, where he professed vows, he went on to further studies at Mt. St. Alphonsus Seminary. He was ordained a priest in the chapel at Mount St. Alphonsus in 1950. He later began graduate studies in medieval history at the Catholic University of America.

A long period as an educator ensued. Between 1953 and 1972 he was a professor in the Redemptorist minor seminary at North East and then at the major seminary at Esopus, where he also served as prefect of students. A fellowship from the American Association of Theological Schools allowed for study at the University of Münster where he expanded his knowledge of Martin Luther and Reformation history. He even passed through Checkpoint Charlie to East Berlin to attend a conference on the 450th anniversary of Martin Luther posting his 95 Theses.

From 1972 to 1978 he was master of novices for the three American Provinces of the Redemptorists. He incorporated contemporary theology grounded in tradition at a time when the residual effects of the Second Vatican Council were beginning to be felt in profound ways both in religious life and the wider Catholic world.

In 1978, he was appointed pastor of St. James and St. John Church, Baltimore. He enjoyed urban ministry—his only foray into direct pastoral work to this point—and used his brief pastorate to collect a large reservoir of information on Redemptorist history in Baltimore. After only two years, however, he was called to Rome by the Redemptorist Superior General, Most Rev. Joseph Pfab, who appointed Fr. Carl to the Redemptorist Historical Institute at the order's general headquarters.

In 1984 Father Hoegerl began work on the canonization cause of the Servant of God, Francis Xavier Seelos, C.Ss.R., and was appointed by the prefect of the Congregation of Saints Causes as an external assistant. Father Hoegerl was able to canvas important archives around Europe for information on Father Seelos and this also broadened his knowledge of the history of the Baltimore Province as well. In 1987, Fr. Hoegerl began full-time work on the Seelos cause. It proved from documentary sources the heroicity of the virtues of Father Seelos and led to Seelos' beatification on April 9, 2000. He was a concelebrant with Pope St. John



Fr. Carl and Pope St. John Paul II

Paul II at the beatification Mass in St. Peter's Square.

Father Hoegerl was re-assigned to the Provincial House in Brooklyn to become archivist of the Baltimore Province. He became the unofficial province historian.

Among Father Hoegerl's interests is his enjoyment of nature. He assisted in the greenhouse while a student at Esopus and later in life grew orchids. He is also renowned for his walks around Manhattan (where he chronicled every church visited) and earlier in life, for mountain climbing, particularly in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. In the Whites he summited nearly all the "Presidents" in that chain of mountains with elevations above 4000 feet.

For his life-long service and accomplishments, the Institute for North American Redemptorist History presented Father Hoegerl with its 2013 Seelos Award.

Father Hoegerl is now at the Redemptorist residence of St. John Neumann at Stella Maris in Maryland.

Patrick J. Hayes, Archivist

Meet the Staff: Sister Catherine Clark, IHM, Perpetual Help Center



Sister Catherine, IHM

Sister Catherine Clark, IHM, joyfully serves as Director of the Office of the Perpetual Help Center, a devotional ministry that promotes fidelity to Our Mother of Perpetual Help. The Office is in the beautiful and historical building of Saint Peter the Apostle Catholic Church in Philadelphia, and near the Shrine of Saint John Neumann.

Two years ago, Sister's Superiors requested that she interview for a

position at the Redemptorist's Office of the Perpetual Help Center. Sister placed everything in God's hands. Her IHM community assignment to the Center has proven to be a providential grace.

As a child she lived in the Fishtown section of Philadelphia, and often walked to the Church and Shrine. Sister never imagined that one day she would be called to minister there. Her adult life had been spent in education, as teacher, principal, development director, PREP teacher, PREP Director, and librarian. Her own childhood education was in an urban Catholic School, and she attributes her Catholic education as the start of her dedication to the education of children. Quality education, love of God, devotion to Mary and the importance of prayer helped to form her. Her IHM vocation called her to "give back" by teaching in urban Catholic schools.

Sister Catherine readily embraces the mission of the Perpetual Help Center in promoting devotion to the Blessed Mother and she often notes that

those who come to Mary in prayer find healing, forgiveness, comfort, and renewal in Christ, Mary's Son. Sister assists the Redemptorists in their mission to minister to the "poor and abandoned" by providing a "listening ear" to the cares and concerns of the many who call.

Several months ago, Sister Catherine visited the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC, and the altar dedicated to Our Mother Perpetual Help. Above the altar to Our Mother of Perpetual Help, you find these words: "The King said to His Mother, 'Ask and I will not refuse you.'" They brought Sister to a halt! What a reminder that Mary's Son is attentive to the requests of His Mother. Mary's compassion guides Sister Catherine, and she prays that people will continue to speak to Our Mother of Perpetual Help. The love of Jesus and His Mother are beyond human comprehension!

Are you called to deepen or renew your prayer to Jesus, Our Most Holy Redeemer, and to Mary, His mother?

Bronx Formation Community

The students arrived in the Bronx on August 24. Of the seven, three are new this year - two from the Denver Province (Dominick and Andrew) and one from the Baltimore Province (Son). After a day to unpack and begin to settle in, we were off to San Alfonso in Long Branch, NJ for our beginning-of-semester retreat from August 26-29. We were blessed to have the retreat led by our own Bishop Bruce Lewandowski. What a privilege and source of grace for us as we were invited to claim our rights and

responsibilities as children of God. As an aside during those days, we were able to share in Fr. Gene Grohe's 97th birthday celebration. Since Cardinal Tobin also came for the evening, we shared with the "Redemptorist Caucus of the USCCB".

Reality crept in as we returned to the Bronx with its varied sights and sounds - and classes at St. John's University. Most classes are in person this semester. This called for a few tweaks to our weekly schedule, as we

had to calculate time for travel. We are grateful for the continued collaboration of Sr. Maco Cassetta, CND, this year. She comes twice monthly for sessions with the students. Together they treat various themes related to human development, community life, and mission.

Sunday, September 5, was the farewell Mass and get-together in Brooklyn for Fr. Joseph Hung who would be leaving for a pastoral assignment in Dominica. The students were able to share in

Bronx Formation, continued on pg. 6



Participating in Fr. Joseph Hung's farewell



With San Alfonso community, Cardinal Tobin, and Bishop Bruce sharing in Fr. Gene Grohes 97th birthday

the celebration/cultural experience. On September 8, the formation community went to Philadelphia to participate in the memorial Mass for our deceased confrere, Fr. Jacky Merilan.

A definite high point for us was the "Come and See" weekend of September 23-26. There were eight young men who came as "inquirers" about our way of life together with their respective vocation directors – a total of 12 to share the weekend's activities. It was a packed schedule that included Mass and meals together, a Holy Hour, visit to St. John's, meeting with formators, cookout, and a visit

to Manhattan. Then on Saturday, our 12 visitors joined us for our monthly retreat day at San Alfonso. Fr. Ed Faliskie presented some sobering reflections about the time we are given by God and the decisions we make regarding its use. The day concluded with an ice cream cake and charades as we celebrated the birthday of one of the young inquirers. After Sunday morning Mass and breakfast, we returned to the Bronx and our visitors went their separate ways.

The quality of our liturgical celebrations has improved since we now count on the talents of our new community members as well as

our "veterans" from last year. There is also a noticeable joy and sense of fraternity within the group this year. This is evident in the various moments of collaboration among the students whether studying together, helping one another prepare for tests, sharing house responsibilities, or even the variety of our Sunday evening community recreation moments. The present finds the community in the throes of mid-term exams and looking forward to participating in the upcoming Mass of ordination for our two Vietnamese confreres in Philadelphia next month. We hope to see you there!

Robert Wojtek, C.Ss.R.

Come and See Vocation Program

After waiting almost two years due to the pandemic, we were able to hold our "Come and See" Redemptorist vocation program at the St. Alphonsus Formation House in the Bronx.

The dates for this gathering were September 23-26 and eight candidates attended. The present student community consists of Mr. Nhan

Tran Do, Mr. Andy Jones, Mr. John Nguyen, Mr. Son Lai, Mr. Dominick Do-Tong and Mr. Andrew Tran-Chung along with formators, Fr. Bob Wojtek and Fr. Joe Ngo and assistant Br. Gene Patin.

Five candidates were in attendance from our Baltimore Province: Mr. Eric Monahan, Mr. Patrick Blasdell, Mr.

Dang Nguyen, Mr. Curtis Akerley, and Mr. Tuan Anh. There were also three candidates from our Denver Province: Mr. Andrew Nguyen, Mr. Dat Nguyen, and Mr. Cody Hill.

Our eight candidates arrived by air, rail, and car. With a few of the candidates on September 23, we were able to do a bit of sightseeing



Participants from "Come and See" weekend

– Penn Station, Herald Square, New York Public Library, and St. Patrick's Cathedral.

On Thursday evening, seven of the candidates, four vocation directors, and the formation community gathered for Mass at 5:15 p.m. in the main church of the Immaculate Conception with Fr. Joe Ngo presiding.

Our dinner followed the Mass and was prepared by Fr. Bob Wojtek. He prepared an Italian feast of spaghetti, meatballs, and garlic bread. Bravo, Chef Bob! Following the meal, we again gathered at 7:30 p.m. for Holy Hour in the main church.

On Friday, September 24 we all gathered on the campus of St. John's University so that our candidates could get a small sample of student life. We also visited the Dean's office to meet with Mr. Greg Gerdes about application process for our incoming students. As it worked out, some of the men sat in on a philosophy class and others on a Spanish class.

With our return to St. Alphonsus Formation House the eight candidates met with the formators, Fr. Bob

Wojtek and Fr. Joe Ngo. The formators walked candidates through the pre-novitiate program and the expectations of those accepted into this time of formation. It was a good opportunity for questions and answers and to highlight the candidate's human, spiritual, community, pastoral, and academic formation during his time there in the Bronx.

Mass followed again in the main church and then a barbecue in the enclosed parking lot thanks to Chef Br. Gene. Bravo, Chef Gene! The meal was serenaded with music, songs in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, and also a bit of line-dancing. It was so clear that a wonderful and joyous community spirit exists among the student community.

On Saturday, September 25 we all gathered at our San Alfonso Retreat House in Long Branch, NJ for a day retreat under the direction of Fr. Ed Faliskie. He offered a morning talk on the value and use of our time, especially in our spiritual growth and an afternoon talk on the call from our Baptism to be saints. Mass was celebrated in one of the upper chapels with Fr. Ed presiding.

At 7 p.m. we gathered in the conference room to discuss the events of the day. After about an hour or so we moved into a game of charades and it was wonderful fun and many hidden talents were exposed.

We ended the evening with ice-cream cakes to celebrate the birthday of Cody Hill, Fr. Denis, and Fr. Peter. It was all very much appreciated.

On Sunday, September 26 we celebrated Mass in upper chapel at 7:30 a.m. with Fr. Peter presiding and Fr. Denis preaching. Breakfast followed and then it was time for departures.

As vocation directors, the four of us felt that it was a most enriching "Come and See" for our eight candidates. There is a wonderful spirit within the formation community, and this was expressed by the students themselves and by the formation staff. One of the candidates who had made a "Come and See" years before also commented on the joy and spirit he felt this time that was lacking in the previous time.

We ask you to pray for our candidates in this time of their discernment. Pray that God bless them with renewed insight and peace to follow the Redemptorist vocation. Pray for our students there in the Bronx and in San Antonio. Pray for our formators in guiding these men and for our vocation directors that God will lead them to good and holy men to serve the Church as Redemptorists.

May Jesus, the Most Holy Redeemer, bless us. May Mary, Our Mother of Perpetual Help, watch over us. May St. Alphonsus and all our Saints, Blesseds and Martyrs, intercede for us. May it be so!

Denis J. Sweeney, C.Ss.R.

Pastoral Experience: Brian Vaccaro, C.Ss.R.



Brian Vaccaro, C.Ss.R., preaching

My name is Brian Vaccaro, C.Ss.R. and I am currently doing my pastoral experience in Tucson, AZ. I arrived on August 6, 2021, and I will be here until December 28,

2021. While I live with the Redemptorist community at the Redemptorist Renewal Center, I do my ministry at Santa Catalina Catholic Church, which is about 20 miles away. Rev. Lamar Partin, C.Ss.R., the pastor, has me involved in several different ministries. I serve at daily and weekend Masses, and funerals as I am needed. I preach every Tuesday morning at the daily Mass, and I typically preach at one of the weekend Masses. I visit parishioners who cannot come to Mass and bring them Holy Communion, and I help lead a parish bible study.

This month, I began helping with the Religious Education program. Additionally, during my time here, Fr. Lamar has scheduled me to work with various office heads on the parish staff, including the Director of Liturgy, the Director of Music, the Director of Religious Education, the Director of Hispanic Ministry, and the Director of Finance in order to help me to gain a better understanding of the inner workings of the parish and how the various offices work together. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here so far. The parish staff is wonderful to work with, and the parishioners are very warm and welcoming.

Pastoral Experience: Royce Thomas, C.Ss.R.

Arriving at the Redemptorist community in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on August 5 to begin my pastoral experience was somber due to the sudden passing of Fr. Anthony Judge, C.Ss.R., earlier that day. Understandably there was a pervading sense of sadness and grief among the community and parishioners for the first few weeks. Nonetheless, observing the confreres wrestling with the sudden loss of a community member offered me the experience of a fundamental dimension of community life. After a beautiful celebration and home-going for Fr. Judge, the parish life slowly found its rhythm and began to pick up where it had left off. Overall, I am blessed to be a part of this Redemptorist community during this stage of my formation. I consider the experience of their journey through such an intimate and challenging time as sacred. I admire how they worked, prayed, and are healing together through the ordeal.

Being a native of Trinidad and Tobago, the most diverse country in the Caribbean, I must admit that being in the parish of St. Alphonsus left me a bit nostalgic. It is truly remarkable and life-giving to see so many different cultures, nationalities, and languages worshipping and praying together. This leads naturally to a warm, friendly, hospitable parish that invites a stranger like me to be a part of such beauty. Thus far, I have had the opportunity to give reflections on the gospel at several Masses. For me, a moment of grace is the feedback from parishioners of words of affirmation, encouragement, and even their takeaways. An invaluable experience I am engaging in during this time is sitting in on pastoral council meetings and planning meetings to gain knowledge on the dynamic and the ins and outs of planning pastorally for a parish, particularly one that is so diverse.



Royce Thomas, C.Ss.R., preaching

Even though I am a Caribbean man, I am a lover of the cold weather. With the steady winter temperatures approaching, I look enthusiastically to the upcoming events in the parish during this season, such as the annual Advent retreat, Our Lady of Guadalupe novena, and Christmas bazaar. I hope to continue gaining priceless experiences here, not only from ministering in the parish but also from living in community as sons of St. Alphonsus.

Transition to Ministry and Apostolic Community Program

Our last session for the program was our first one once again in person. It was in Oconomowoc from May 17-21. There were 17 confreres within their first five years of ministry participating (five from Denver, four from Baltimore, one from Canada, seven from Extra-Patriam). There were also five absentees, for various reasons. For those unable to assist, there was the option of participating via livestream.

We had two presenters for our meetings. The first was Fr. Ron

Rolheiser, OMI. His presentation was divided into two parts: Sexuality and Celibacy (Part 1) and Chastity (Part 2). He was very well received and there was even a desire for more time to reflect on what he had said. The second presenter was Fr. Steve Rehrauer, C.Ss.R., the Denver Provincial Superior. He spoke about the Plan for Community Life (PCL). Even though the theme was not new, he came at it from a theological perspective, pointing out the rationale for the plan and its impact on community living.

It was a blessing to be once again with one another and to share these excellent presentations. Our next gathering is scheduled for November 15-19 at San Alfonso Retreat House. The central theme is: Racism. We hope to focus on what it is, its history, and its presence in our society with Fr. Maurice Nutt, C.Ss.R., leading the presentation. As a continuation, we will have a panel of three priests and/or religious to examine their own experiences of racism in the Church.

Robert Wojtek, C.Ss.R.

Partners in Mission

On the evening of June 26, 2021, the Redemptorist community stationed at OLPH Church in Brooklyn invited parishioners to consider walking in a set of footprints created nearly three hundred years ago but were still clearly seen today. They were formed by Redemptorist saint and founder St. Alphonsus Liguori and followed by countless Redemptorist priests and brothers over the years. This was our inaugural gathering of Partners In Mission. It has proven to be a fruitful means for the laity to answer their baptismal call to be missionaries of Christ in a “wounded world” with their Redemptorist counterparts.

It is said, “from humble beginnings come great things,” and this adage seems to apply in Brooklyn as well. Our first gathering consisted of four people; it had grown to nine members by the second gathering, and membership has continuously increased from there. Fr. Clement Krug, C.Ss.R., and myself posed a simple statement to those present “Tell us about your experience with the Redemptorists.” In answering this question, many realized that they

knew more about the Redemptorist charism than they first thought. Many spoke about those times in their life of great joy and great sadness when a Redemptorist was at their side, sharing the experience with them. Many began to realize that the things they found appealing in the Redemptorists already resided within themselves, and the prospect of sharing that with others took on a new appeal.

It quickly became evident that the spirit was present in a very profound way that evening. God seems to “tip his hand” when he sends his spirit into our midst, which is demonstrated by the peace, joy, and laughter that follows. God seems to be continuously bringing us together, calling us from one to the many in the form of community. We were more than happy to welcome Lucy McNamara to our second gathering. Lucy is one of the program’s coordinators and is part of a PIM group located at St. Martin of Tours Church in Bethpage, New York. She came bearing practical advice and prayer booklets for our group given to her by Fr. Tom Travers,



C.Ss.R., who coordinates a PIM group in Canandaigua, New York. Our immediate family in Brooklyn became acutely aware that we had extended family located in Bethpage and Canandaigua. Our families were part of the Redemptorist family and part of an even larger family, the Church.

Our group has decided to gather once a month in the upper chapel at OLPH Church in Brooklyn, New York. But before our next gathering, we have decided to take a Partners in Mission pilgrimage to Our Lady of the Island Shrine in Manorville, New York. I’ll let you know how the trip goes. Better yet, why not join us on the journey!

Michael Cunningham, C.Ss.R.

Volunteer Update, St. Vincent and the Grenadines



Br. Anthony serving

Like the Redemptorists, Missionaries of the Poor are a group of religious consecrated to the service of God and

our fellow men. We hear St. James' challenging words "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith but doesn't have works? Can that save him?" (James 2:14-18). And in Mark 8:29-35 we read that God gave up his only begotten son to come and suffer and die and rise in order to redeem us and show us the way to the Father. And so, in life, there are many storms, hardships, challenges, and crosses, but as Christians we are to help one another carry our daily crosses and follow the master. For without the cross, suffering, death, and good works, there is no salvation. In this spirit, from the time of our arrival in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, it has been a great privilege joining and volunteering with Fr. Kevin Murray and Br. Gerard St. Hilaire, Redemptorists, along with other young men like Marcus, Travis, Jelani,

and others – reaching out to those who were affected by the volcanic eruption. I'm proud of our Church which always stands with those who are suffering, a Church of the poor and for the poor. I am thankful for the opportunity to serve. We are all God's instruments and humble servants. May we always be found doing what is the will of God. To God be the glory now and forever. Amen.

Br. Anthony, the Missionaries of the Poor



C.Ss.R. Celebrations



Fr. Francis Gargani celebrated 50 years of ordination as a priest at Holy Redeemer Residence in Washington, DC



Fr Gordon Cannoles' 78 Birthday on September 24 at Ephrata, PA



In Memoriam: Fr. Richard Poetzel, C.Ss.R.



Fr. Richard had many varying interests. Topping that list was researching his family tree, which is usually how he spent his vacations. He would leave Our Lady of Fatima rectory and drive 2 miles to Highlandtown to stay at Sacred Heart of Jesus. He then researched the Baptismal Records for days finding family connections (He was the original Ancestry.com!). The standard reply to parishioners asking for “Poetz” while he “vacationed” was that “He was on a cruise!”

Another interest important to him was the Liturgical functions of the Church. Among his confreres in the Baltimore Province, Richard was well known for his attachment to his “conical vestments.” On more than one occasion,

especially when a fan was in the vicinity, the “flowing” chasuble provided comic relief for an otherwise solemn occasion. Singing the parts of the Liturgy was always part of his presiding style, and in his younger years he excelled; but in his late 70s, this talent began to fade. As pastor, I instructed our cantor to sing the “Exsultet” in lieu of Fr. Poetzel. The cantor hesitated, “Fr. Richard has always sung it,” was his response. I said it was time for a change. “Poetz” did not voice his displeasure, but it was obvious he was not pleased. The following Easter Vigil I was asked to preside at a neighboring parish (they had Catechumens, whereas Fatima had no one that year). Of course, Richard jumped at the chance to preside at Fatima’s Vigil, and promptly informed the Cantor he was singing the “Exsultet”!

One of my most embarrassing moments occurred at the end of a Sunday Mass when I was congratulating Fr. Poetzel (birthday or some anniversary). Three times I could not get his name correct! Three times I called him “Fr. Pretzel”! Of course, the parishioners were hysterical, and I believe “Poetz” believed it was “pay back” for me curtailing his singing!

A final thought is how Richard



embodied his vocation as a Redemptorist Priest. He was always presiding at baptisms, weddings, and funerals for family and friends, and it seemed that there were endless people who fell into that category. One funeral comes to mind. It was a 30-year-old women’s lacrosse coach who was pregnant with her second child. She was killed when the team bus crashed. Here was a person that Richard had baptized; presided at her wedding, baptized her first child; and now was presiding at her funeral. It was obviously a large, emotional event, of which Richard handled with the loving compassion and consolation of a simple parish priest.

*Go rest high on that mountain
Son your work on earth is done
Go to heaven a-shoutin’
Love for the Father and the Son*

Bob Harrison, C.Ss.R.

James McGowan’s Funeral Homily

In today’s Gospel, Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” At this mass I say “Lord, because you were here, my brother has lived.” James lived a great life.

His story would make a great memoir! I would entitle the book or the film with one word “JAIME” – that was the name they called him in his years in the Dominican Republic. His

life story would have many exciting chapters.

Chapter one would tell the tale of a normal boy who grew up on the streets of this parish and neighborhood, the second son of John and Marie McGowan.

Chapter two would cover his years as a Redemptorist seminarian where he made many lifelong friends – where

he cared for bees, collected stamps and coins, and loved to play hockey.

Chapter three would take us through his years of formation becoming a Redemptorist and his Ordination as a priest. All the way to his first assignment to the Caribbean missions.

In chapter four we would see his love for the poor and the underdog in Santo Domingo – his work in the

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Funeral Homily, continued

Centro de Padre Julio where he cared for the campesinos, teaching them how to rise above poverty and develop themselves with good nutrition, hygiene, and methods of farming. His favorite slogan was “Give me a fish and I’ll eat for a day. Teach me how to fish and I’ll eat for a lifetime.”

Chapter five would introduce us to Teresita. James and Teresita did great work together at Las Matas de Farfan in the Centro de Formacion. In time they fell in love. James was dispensed from the priesthood and eventually married Teresita in 1984. Together they continued to serve the poor of that country. He left the priesthood but he never left the ministry.

Chapter six takes us to the Jaime and Teresita years where they ran a language institute – teaching Spanish to American seminarians and priests – inserting them with families – equipping them with language and culture skills. They were husband and wife, teachers and mentors for 18 happy and successful years.

Chapter seven would be the sad chapter in the story. Tragedy came suddenly and unexpectedly with the death of Teresita due to being

poisoned by pesticide spray. Jaime continued alone as best as he could – teaching and ministering.

Chapter eight would see the resurrection years when Judy O’Sullivan brought James back to life. He had known Judy from his early priesthood years when he baptized one of Judy and John’s children. They kept in contact through the years. They had both lost their spouses and decided to become husband and wife in June of 2009.

He continued being involved with the Redemptorists helping them here and there with Spanish services. James left our Congregation, but he never left our community. He never really ceased being a Redemptorist.

Chapter nine - James and Judy had almost 10 happy years together with trips and family gatherings. Then came the darkness again when Judy died. James was alone again – in his diminishing years with frequent visits to the hospitals and stays in nursing homes. Since he was unable to manage on his own, his nieces Nancy and Lisa made him a part of their home and family.

Chapter ten – Dementia, hallucinations and many serious health problems landed him at White Oaks Nursing home in Long Island. I got to visit him a few days before he died. I absolved, anointed, and Holy Eucharisted him and loudly told him that I loved him and thanked him for being a great brother.

He went peacefully home to God on Sept. 13 climaxing an exciting life of love, service, laughter, friendship. and family.

The epilogue shows him smiling with Teresita and Judy and Mom and Pop. They are probably playing cribbage or dominoes and he’s telling them stories of his years here – of the goodness of Judy’s kids and Nancy and Lisa who made their home his home and took great care of him till the very end. The thousands of those he touched and taught and loved were all there applauding and welcoming him at last to his real home.

That’s the way I would envision the James story. If everyone here shared a James experience they had, there would be volumes. So ponder, reflect and enjoy your own personal James memory.



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